

THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN THE CHURCH : THE RELIGIOUS LIFE FOR WOMEN IN AUSTRALIAN ANGLICANISM, 1892-1995

BY

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

Department of Studies in Religion

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AARC	Australasian Advisory Council of Religious Communities
ABM	Australian(asian) Board of Missions
ACRC	Advisory Council of Religious Communities
BCA	Bush Church Aid Society
BGS	Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd
CEA	Church Extension Association
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CC*	The Clare Community
CA	Community of the Ascension
CCK	Community of Christ the King
CDL	Community of Divine Love,UK
CHN	Community of the Holy Name
CR	Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield
CSN	Community of the Sacred Name, NZ
CSJB	Community of St John the Baptist,Clewer
CSMV	Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage
CSHC*	Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross
CSC	Community of the Sisters of the Church
COV	Community of the Visitation, PNG
DSC	Daughters of St Clare
MSL	Mission to the Streets and Lanes
MOW	Movement for the Ordination of Women
OGS	Order of the Good Shepherd, NZ
OSEH	Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SCK *	Servants of Christ the King
SI	Sisters of the Incarnation
SLG	Sisters of the Love of God, Fairacres
SSF	Society of St Francis
SSJE	Society of St John the Evangelist, Cowley
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SSA	Society of the Sacred Advent
SSM	Society of the Sacred Mission

* not in common use

One shilling = 10 cents

20 shillings = one pound (two dollars)

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PART TWO CHAPTERS 7-12

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the 'religious life' for women in Australian Anglicanism. In this context, the life is one of consecration to God following a vocational call to live a particular life-style with like-minded people. Consequently this special mode of life, which comes in different forms, constitutes a covenantal relationship not just with God but with the community as well. It is a disciplined life of prescribed, communal, daily prayer with the aim of searching for God and extending charity to others. This concept of service to humanity comes from the aim of loving God above all else, a love that must be translated into actions. A missionary role is fulfilled through the work undertaken in the hope that God will be revealed to those who benefit from those endeavours. On formal entry promises are made which always include the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. These vows are an extension of the baptismal covenant and are seen to be the means which enable the vocational call to be followed. Therefore, this life led under vows has always been seen in principle as a prophetic one because it shows the possibility of leading the Christian life.

The motivation for this thesis was the realisation that there exists a general lack of knowledge of the achievements and contribution of women leading this life in Australian Anglicanism. This is evident not only in Australian society but in the Anglican Church itself. On the one hand, this is not surprising given the deficiencies in the recognition of the input of women to the development of this country; on the other, the reasons why there has been so little coverage by the Church of the existence, let alone the accomplishments of Anglican sisterhoods, need clarification.

At the end of the 20th century, the Archbishop of Canterbury described the position of the religious life in the Anglican Communion as a secret¹. On the surface this appears to be correct given the lack of knowledge of the life, its work, the influence or very often even the existence of such a phenomenon in Anglicanism. While this outcome can be

¹ CSC Newsletter, Vol 29 No 2 1996, p.3

related to the accent on hiddenness and humility engendered for much of the existence of the religious community, it can have nothing to do with the missionary endeavours inherent in all Anglican communities involved in both a rigorous prayer life and intensive outreach. Therefore the reasons for this situation will be an underlying theme in this work. Accordingly the forces operating in this issue will be examined in combination with the introduction, the development and the present position of the life and its future. The theological climate and clerical influences surrounding these stages will be particularly relevant. Within this framework it is proposed to firstly, elucidate the accomplishments of these women as well as their influence on the Australian versions of Anglicanism; secondly, to ascertain whether the transplantation was successful in terms of the missionary role which was undertaken; and thirdly to examine the changes which have occurred in the life over a century.

It became apparent that although there were accounts of a good deal of the individual histories of the communities in Australia, there has not been a comprehensive, comparative overview of their establishment, growth and contribution either religiously or socially. This was a situation which needed to be rectified if the contribution of the communities was to be properly appreciated. To attempt this reconstruction, two different approaches were possible - one thematic, the other chronological. To clarify and compare the achievements of the various communities the latter was felt to be more appropriate. However as the aim was to look at both aspects of the life, external and internal, the second section dealing with the inner life necessarily needed a more thematic approach.

The published sources of available information were mainly produced or commissioned by the sisterhoods at various significant anniversaries of each community, or of particular institutions they established². The only independent overview of religious

²For example: - CHN, Esther, Mother Foundress of the Community of the Holy Name, Melbourne, [1948]; Moores E., One Hundred Years of Ministry, A History of the Society of the Sacred Advent, 1892-1992, Brisbane, [1993]; CSC, A Valiant Victorian, the Life and Times of Emily Ayckbown, London, 1964

communities in Australia is a small, almost hagiographical, publication seventy years old³. Several authors had included sections on religious orders in larger works on women in the Anglican Church, particularly in relation to the priesting of women and the growth of feminism in the Church⁴. In addition to these recent works, unpublished theses were produced in the last three decades, which helped clarify particular aspects of the outreach of individual communities, even though the studies had other subject or agendas⁵.

From the archival sources of the communities, new insights were gained into the published works, but as in all such material gaps remain. This can be attributed in part to a failure of the communities to record or collect information and in some cases to its destruction. The primary sources that this study uses were in the main produced by the communities for their own use. These included the formal Rules, Constitutions and Customaries as well as informal writings, such as memoirs, biographies, meditations and other simple epistles and correspondence of an historical, religious and spiritual nature. The communities had published some of this material but much is handwritten or typewritten. Relevant diocesan papers and publications were consulted but usually provided little information. This was the case as well with the episcopal sources that were investigated. Unfortunately much of the early episcopal material that may have provided valuable insights into the institution and development of the communities was unavailable.

Apart from a consideration of the history of the communities, other considerations were examined such as the secular, physical, religious and geographical environments while wider trends in spirituality and theological thought were pursued. The methodology

³ Stacy F., The Religious Communities in the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929

⁴ For example: - Porter M., Women in the Church: The Great Ordination Debate in Australia, Melbourne, 1989; Rose M., Freedom From Sanctified Sexism: Women Transforming the Church, MacGregor, 1996

⁵ For example: - Frappell R., The Anglican Ministry to the Unsettled Rural Districts of Australia, Unpub. PhD Thesis, Uni. Of Sydney, 1992; Sturrock M., The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, An Office coveted by Few, Unpub. BTh Thesis, MCOT, 1989

extended to interviews and a questionnaire aimed at clarifying a range of these and other influences on each of the communities since inception.

In a study of the religious life, one obvious approach is a comparison of the experience of the religious communal life in Anglicanism and its counterpart in the Roman Catholic Church. Despite the extensive use by the Tractarian founders of the model of the 19th century Roman congregation for Anglican sisterhoods, this will not be undertaken in any depth because of the intrinsic differences between the two. First the two groups are separated by the wide gulf between authority and government in the two denominations; secondly the fundamental position and role of the religious order in Roman Catholicism is in great contrast to Anglicanism where the life is on the periphery of the Church. Hence the religious life in the Roman Church in Australia will only be considered as it bears upon its Anglican counterpart. Similarly the Deaconess Movement that tends to be bonded with the religious order in Anglicanism, as another expression of a dedicated life style, has no affinity with the religious life at all. In contrast to the Anglican nun, the deaconess has been a part of the Church and under clerical control since inception. Further the spiritual nature of the religious life has nothing to do with that of the deaconess whose vocation is to an active outreach in the Church. Therefore any such comparisons will be limited.

Female members of Anglican religious orders have adopted the title, *Sister*. As many deaconesses, even in Protestant denominations have used this form of address, confusion has eventuated at times pertaining to the nature of the lifestyle led by a *sister*. On the one hand, this seems to be one good reason to describe those women leading the vowed religious life in Anglicanism as *religious* or *nuns*, as they are popularly known in Roman Catholicism; on the other hand, however, this is not strictly correct because *religious* are those who have been fully professed and *nuns* are enclosed and cloistered.⁶ Moreover, most Anglican sisters in Australia leading the mixed religious life of prayer and action, pointedly do not refer to themselves as nuns Therefore the use of this term

⁶ Advisory Council of the Religious Life, A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, pp. 9-10

for these women will be restricted to occasions when such nomenclature leads to ease of identification.

Women leading the religious life in Anglicanism, certainly before Vatican II, seem not to have equated themselves with their counterparts leading a similar lifestyle in Roman Catholicism. The explanation for this must point to a perception Anglican sisterhoods hold of themselves and their lifestyle. The Anglo-Catholic Movement in the Church of England had developed an affinity with the theology of the Eastern Church. Moreover, like the English Church, Orthodoxy was seen as a purer form of the Apostolic Church than Rome. In a similar vein, members of Anglican orders held this outlook. This can be extended to their form of the religious life that was always popularly described in the early days as a *sisterhood*. It seems likely that a further reason for the rejection of *nun*, with its alien religious connotations, concerned the struggle for the acceptance of the religious life in the Protestant Church of England.

Anglican religious orders for women in Australia were introduced, grew and developed in line with the country. A consideration of the transferral of the Tractarian English model of the life to the Australian colonies will be made and the subsequent establishment of different groups, their development and social outreach will be analysed. This will be done in the light of the unique way in which the Church spread across the continent adapting to a vastly different scene from England, geographically, demographically and politically.

The first section begins with a review of the surprising, almost casual, way the religious life was introduced into a Church, which despite its diversity of thought saw itself as basically Protestant. How this life, seen generally as foreign and papist, attained eventual legitimacy and episcopal recognition will be examined. The path to acceptance at the end of the 19th century is traced through the Victorian era in line with the evolution of the Tractarian Movement that led to wide-ranging changes in Church practice and outlook. Consideration will be paid to the models, used by the Tractarian innovators for the new phenomenon of sisterhoods, and the influence exerted by the

Benedictine and Augustinian Rules. The part attributed to the sisterhoods in the movement towards democratic reform and universal suffrage will be briefly perused in line with the momentum of middle class women moving into philanthropic and paid work. Moreover this will be in conjunction with the Deaconess Movement, the Evangelical competition to the High Church religious communities.

At a time of great change associated with the move to Federation and universal suffrage, the two forms of dedicated life for women were introduced to the Australian colonies. The interaction of the transplanted Tractarian paradigm with religio-cultural differences in the colonies will be considered. These include the consequences of a non-Established Church, with its government fragmented into virtually autonomous dioceses; the polarisation of support for deaconesses and sisterhoods along religious party lines and the shortage of well-educated middle class citizens. Moreover, the move to a common form of Protestant outlook, in concert with great antipathy to the dominant Irish form of Roman Catholicism, is a theme which runs through the early chapters comprising the historical review. The positive and negative outcome on the acceptance of sisterhoods, due to the intensity of lay thought in this regard, will be addressed.

The establishment and growth of the three major sisterhoods and the introduction of smaller groups is examined. This involves the theological, geographical and social problems that were encountered and these effects on the diversification of the outreach. This will be in concert with a perusal of their missionary capability. The shift that the communities underwent after the Second World War are traced, as the Western world moved into the rapid change apparently inherent in the late 20th century. In this dynamic, institutions from an earlier time could not remain unchallenged. The result was that most of the practical reasons for this type of religious community were undermined. One difficulty in the life had always been the paradox of maintaining a balance between the success of the large institutions and the basic vision of assisting the poor and dispossessed. The dramatically changing world from the sixties saw the emergence of a general exploration in the Christian Church for direction. The religious communities were not immune and the result was a reappraisal of their role and

function. At the end of the century these questions had not been resolved and the future remained unclear. The result has been a loss of members and a dearth of recruits so that the sisterhoods have undertaken a more hidden existence usually in individual ministries. A further outcome saw the introduction of purely contemplative groups.

Spirituality involves all aspects of life. Therefore the spirituality of an individual or group is defined as the whole of life, both external and internal. Accordingly the external life, its history and outreach, is as much a part of the spiritual life as the inner, hidden core. Moreover in a comprehensive examination of the religious life, it is imperative to examine as far as possible the inner life of the members of the communities. While the historical review points to external influences on this interior life, other means such as the interviews and questionnaire will be used. It is hoped that this methodology will facilitate the provision of further information needed to answer these and other concerns. These questions include the particular spiritual ethos and distinguishing characteristics of the present-day major communities and the apparent lack of interest in the Church for the religious life.

The second section mainly concentrates on aspects of spirituality of consequence for the religious life in general and in particular features of relevance to the Australian Anglican groups. These factors include vocation, the Rules, Constitutions and Customaries, integrated with the influences of individuals within the communities and that of spiritual advisors. From the questionnaire, trends in the membership of each community such as age, religious background, length of profession, community experience, spiritual thought and concerns for the future are discerned. All of this information is correlated to produce a comparison of the distinguishing characteristics and spiritual ethos of the major institutions at the end of the twentieth century.

Consideration is given to a comparative view of the stages through which the sisterhoods in Australia have progressed since their institution. The focus is on the interaction of the internal and external forces surrounding the life and the subsequent

effect on the achievements and direction of the life. One outcome in the religious life has been the redefinition of the basic aim of the quest for perfection to mean the development of the wholeness of the individual in human terms. The result has been an attitudinal shift from the traditional world-rejecting view. Further change has seen the reassessment of the original vision of the founders of the communities with a resultant search for new directions. This has been in conjunction with a general transformation in the concept of 'community' and to human needs within such organisations. Finally the expectations for the future direction and viability of the religious life in Anglicanism are considered in relationship to this shift in perspective.

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CHAPTER ONE The Introduction of the Religious Life into the Church of England in the Nineteenth Century

The third decade of the 19th century saw the birth of a theological movement at Oxford University that was to have profound implications for the Church of England. One outcome was the introduction and development of the vowed, communal religious life in the form of sisterhoods. Whilst the primary part played by the theological and spiritual influence of the Oxford Movement is beyond doubt, its development was in conjunction with the realisation that the dedicated work performed by such women was one solution to the pressing social needs of the day.

The religious life in England, in the form of monasticism, had come to an abrupt end in the earlier part of the sixteenth century. This was due to the political ambitions and avarice of King Henry VIII. As a result, by 1600 there were no religious left in England¹. The dissolution of the monasteries and the acquisition of their wealth affected about 10,000 monks and 2,000 nuns. This was accomplished with very little opposition from the religious, the secular clergy or the general population². The lack of opposition from the laity was because the system was deemed dissolute and moribund, even though there was little animosity towards the religious themselves³. The outcome was that most of the monks and nuns received reasonable pensions for their support outside the cloister⁴. The destruction of monasticism in England was thus abrupt, systematic and complete. Those who wished to follow the religious life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were compelled to do so in English Roman Catholic institutions in Europe⁵. In contrast there were Continental monasteries of monks and nuns which became Lutheran and continued to lead the full monastic life for varying periods. The nuns at the Abbey of Quedlinberg even continued in this way for nearly 300 years⁶.

After secular concerns brought about the end of the control of the English Church by

¹ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.33

² Butler L., & Given-Wilson C. (ed) Medieval Monasteries of Great Britain, London, 1979, p.109

³ *Ibid.*, p.141

⁴ Knowles D., The Religious Orders in England - The Tudor Age, Cambridge, 1959, p.414

⁵ Anson, P., The Call of the Cloister, p.xii

⁶ Sr Edna Mary, The Religious Life, Middlesex, 1958, pp.56-7

Rome, the theological movement of the Reformation built on this beginning of change. The Established Church of England, which developed, became a diverse theological group held together by adherence to the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion. The former was central to the development of the ethos of Anglicanism and allowed the development of its diverse forms⁷. The spirituality that developed was family orientated with a theology far removed from the monastic life. The Church described itself as both Catholic and Reformed; it encompassed the wide theological spectrum from a Catholic or High Church outlook to a Low Church or Protestant view⁸. Despite this diversity, the English people believed that England was a Protestant country and for centuries it was the chief fortress of Protestantism in Europe⁹. The feelings against Roman Catholicism solidified over the centuries, aided in later times by the Irish problem, so that the Reformation's most effective argument of the Pope as the "anti-Christ" became a general deep rooted fear and detestation of Rome¹⁰.

Monasticism was seen as an integral part of Romanism and the many new style post-Tridentine religious orders which developed, like the Jesuits and some of the more active women's orders, were regarded with at least as much suspicion as older style monasticism. Therefore, the introduction of the religious life for women into this Reformed Church in the nineteenth century, despite the broad aspects of belief, which had developed, was surprising. Apart from the social needs of the day, other reasons proposed for this development were the endurance of the concept of the religious life in some sections of the Church and the retention of the monastic office in the BCP in the

⁷ See Evans G.R., & Wright J.R., (eds) The Anglican Tradition, A Handbook of Sources, London, 1991, pp.138-263; Stevick D.B. 'The Spirituality of BCP', Wolf W. (ed), Anglican Spirituality, Connecticut, 1982, pp.105-107

⁸ Coleman R. (ed), Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences, 1867-1988, Toronto, 1992, p.xix Hill M., The Religious Order, London, 1973, p.108; Pickering W.S.F., Anglo-Catholicism, London, 1989, p.11 - these terms were used because the High Church held to a "higher" concept of the Church as a divine society.

⁹ *Ibid.*, also Hastings A., A History of English Christianity, London, 1986, p.31

¹⁰ Hughes P., The Reformation in England, III, London, 1954, p.77

form of Morning and Evening Prayer¹¹.

The proponents of the approach that the ideal of the religious life did not die, argue, that despite strong anti-monastic feelings which did arise in some sections of the Church, the unique composition of Reformed English Christianity, with its retention of ecclesiastical orders and blend of a broad spectrum of theological thought, created a different attitude to monasticism from the Continental Reformed Churches¹².

Apologists for this view always cite as evidence the well-documented attempt at living a type of community life made by Nicholas Ferrar and his extended family at Little Gidding, ninety years after the Reformation¹³. This group lived a frugal life of continual prayer based on the Benedictine sevenfold Divine Office or Opus Dei, much of which had been retained in the BCP in the form of Morning and Evening prayer¹⁴. Nevertheless, this group's familial life style has resulted in the general agreement that it was in no way monastic, but more an attempt to revive the common life of the Primitive Church of Acts¹⁵.

Over the next few centuries, there were occasional unsuccessful calls for the institution of Protestant religious communities. These were mainly aimed at women to perform charitable or educational work and cannot be seen as serious attempts at the revival of the traditional religious life¹⁶. Nevertheless, there was theological support for the idea of the religious life amongst some of the upholders of the Catholic nature of the English Church. In the seventeenth century, the most significant of these men were the Caroline Divines who held theological views midway between the extreme Protestant and Roman positions – the *via media*¹⁷. They were succeeded in the following century by

¹¹ Allchin A.M., The Silent Rebellion, London, 1958, p.25; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.3

¹² Hill *op.cit.*, p.160

¹³ See Maycock A.L., Chronicles of Little Gidding, London, 1938

¹⁴ Sr Edna Mary, *op.cit.*, p.70

¹⁵ Maycock, *op.cit.*, p.12 - the suggestion that Ferrar wished to restore monasticism is rejected by Maycock as "a romantic misunderstanding".

¹⁶ Allchin, *op.cit.*, p.23ff

¹⁷ Stranks C.J., The Life and Times of Jeremy Taylor, London, 1952, p.283

Hill, *op.cit.*, p.163 - the Caroline Divines included Hooker, Andrewes, Montague and Laud.

the Non-Jurors of whom the most significant was William Law (1686-1761)¹⁸. Through his famous work, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, he influenced the creation of a male religious society at Oxford University by John Wesley (1703-1791)¹⁹. This society resembled slightly earlier models so that a sevenfold daily prayer routine was followed, and fasting practised. The Evangelicalism inspired by Wesley stressed an outward and practical life; it did not encompass an inner, contemplative spirituality. Consequently, his society did not develop into a religious community²⁰. So, while it can be argued that the ideal of the religious life was not completely forgotten in some sections of the English Church, from the Reformation no serious attempt had been made to establish a religious order in the Church of England for three centuries. By the end of the eighteenth century no religious community of any denomination had existed in England since the Reformation, and the religious life was seen as papist and alien by the majority of the English people.

By the last decades of the 18th century, the Church remained in a state of apathy that had endured all century. This was despite the stirrings of a new beginning which had appeared earlier with Wesley's Evangelical revival. His mission was to reform the Church, convert the indifferent and to seek individual Christian perfection²¹. Wesley's Methodist Movement mainly attracted the upper echelons of the lower classes and he did not want the split from the Church which eventuated²². Subsequently the growth of Evangelicalism in the Church, nurtured by those wealthier followers who had remained with the Establishment, was slow and began in quiet country parishes²³. This form of Evangelicalism looked to the Reformation for its legitimacy, which Hill argues was a crucial difference with Wesley's outlook. Like the later Oxford Movement, Methodists looked to the period of the Church up to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.²⁴.

¹⁸ Perchenet A., The Revival of the Religious Life and Christian Unity, London, 1969, pp.39-40; see also Hill, *op.cit.*, p.261.

¹⁹ Treasure G (ed), Who's Who in British History (WWBH), Vol I, London, 1998, pp.1285-6; Johnson P., A History of Christianity, Penguin Books, London, 1988, pp.365-370

²⁰ Allchin, *op.cit.*, p.26

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.23

²² Osborn J., 'Its Prelude: The Evangelical Revival', Moses J.A.(ed), From Oxford to the Bush, Brisbane, 1997, p.113

²³ Edwards D.L., Christian England, Vol III, London, 1989, p.76

²⁴ Hill M., *op.cit.*, p.117

Evangelical theology was based on the atonement and the literal interpretation of the Bible. It was primarily concerned with moral reform but also to an extent with social restructuring. By the middle of the 19th century, this group became the strongest force in the Church²⁵. Through its emphasis on conversion, Evangelicalism reinvigorated the older missionary movements, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) as well as instituting missionary organisations of its own, like the Church Missionary Society (CMS)²⁶.

By the early nineteenth century, great social problems had been caused by industrialisation and a huge increase in population. The outcome was the creation of appalling conditions in the English cities amongst the lowest classes, who were mostly indifferent to religion. Both Church and society seemed powerless to deal with the situation. After the French Revolution, England had given refuge to Roman Catholics from anti-clericalism and many nuns settled in the country. Anson argues that in conjunction with the new religious orders that began to be established in resurgent English Roman Catholicism, the sight of these women working in slums and hospitals presented the possibilities of similar groups in the English Church²⁷. In 1829, Robert Southey, the poet-laureate, made a serious call for the foundation of Protestant nursing orders along the lines of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity²⁸. This interest in the institution of dedicated forms of life for women in Protestantism to undertake charitable works was not isolated. In the 1830's, deaconess communities were founded in France, Germany and Switzerland, without any apparent connection between their pioneers²⁹. A community of Protestant Sisters of Charity was also established in France at Reuilly in 1842. These women were known as deaconesses but were orientated towards the

²⁵ Johnson, *op.cit.*, pp.370-374

²⁶ CMS, The Church Missionary Society, Vol 1, London, 1899, p.66; Thompson H.P., Into All Lands, London, 1951, p.104

²⁷ Anson, *op.cit.* p.25

²⁸ O'Sullivan M.M.K., A Cause of Trouble, Sydney 1995, p.5 – the Irish Sisters of Charity were founded in 1815 by Mary Aikenhead and Archbishop Daniel Murray to bring relief to the poor in Ireland.

²⁹ Biot F., The Rise of Protestant Monasticism, Baltimore, 1963, p.74; Bp of St Andrews, 'The Diaconate', Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Essays on Ministry, London, 1968, p.66- Deaconing had a very strong revival in Lutheranism in the early 19th century. This ministry of care (reinstated from the Apostolic Church) saw the introduction of deacons and deaconesses, neither of which office was bestowed by episcopal ordination.

religious life with an intention of lifelong vows. It appears that there was a widespread trend towards the organisation of groups of Protestant women to meet the societal need of the times. With the advent of the Oxford Movement, the major impetus for the institution of religious orders in the English Church was in place.

Traditionally the Oxford Movement is seen to have begun with the Assize Sermon on "National Apostasy" given by John Keble (1792-1866), the Professor of Poetry at Oxford University in 1833³⁰. Keble's group believed that apart from a weakening of spiritual devotion, the Church, through political reforms, had lost its autonomy and influence³¹. This High Church Movement to reform the Church was greatly influenced by Romanticism, seen in the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher. In this outlook, emotions were emphasised over reason in a reaction against rationalism and secularism. A further development was a fascination with the certainties of the medieval world³².

Keble and his followers spread their message by preaching and distributing articles as tracts. The early papers, written by the charismatic John Henry Newman (1801-1890), concerned the true nature of the Church³³. They concentrated on its relationship to earlier ages, its Catholicity, its authority, government and position in relation to Rome and Dissenters³⁴. In 1835 Dr Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882), Professor of Hebrew at Oxford joined the Tractarians and was subsequently acknowledged as the leader because of his great standing in the community³⁵. Although the Movement remained suspect because of its Romanising tendencies, by the end of the thirties it appeared to be reasonably successful. Due to the Movement, alterations were occurring

³⁰ WWBH, Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.751-2; Grindrod J., 'A Sermon preached to commemorate the Catholic Revival in the Church of England', Porter B. (ed.) Colonial Tractarians, Melbourne, 1989, p.10

³¹ Casteras S.P., 'Virgin Vows', Malmgreen G. (ed.) Religion in the Lives of English Women (1760-1930), London, 1986, p.130; also Nockles P., 'Pusey and the Question of Church and State', Butler P. (ed.), Pusey Rediscovered, Oxford, 1983, p.257

³² Johnson, *op.cit.*, p.375

³³ WWBH, Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.908-911

³⁴ Church R.W., The Oxford Movement, London, 1892, p.111

³⁵ WWBH, Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.1013-4; Chadwick O., The Victorian Church, Part 1, London, 1966, pp.168-9 - Chadwick argued that Newman was really the leader after Pusey joined, even though the group became known as Puseyites (or Tractarians). On the other hand, Church (*op.cit.*, p.187, 135), believed that Newman was incapable of being a great leader because of his sensitivity; when Pusey joined he took over as leader and the Movement became responsible and respectable.

in Church practice, teaching, living and the style of worship. These changes were to become a true spiritual reformation in the Church³⁶.

Keble, Pusey and Newman were very much in favour of the development of religious communities. Although it was not a central concern of Tractarianism, they believed the religious life had been an essential part of the Catholic Church since the Patristic centuries³⁷. The Oxford Movement was influenced by William Law as Wesley had been in the previous century. However in this later scenario, Law's spirituality was instrumental in the institution and development of the religious life in the Church of England³⁸.

The beginning of the religious life in the Church is seen to have been in 1841 when Marian Hughes took the vows of religion before Dr Pusey³⁹. In the following year, Newman attempted to set up a type of monastery near Littlemore in his incumbency of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford⁴⁰. When he became sceptical of the Catholicity of the English Church and with all the members of the Littlemore community went over to Rome, Tractarianism was disgraced and repudiated by the Church and Oxford University⁴¹. The result was that the Movement shifted into the wider world outside the confines of the University. Despite this outcome, Keble and Pusey never questioned the Reformation or doubted the Catholic nature of the Church. Unlike Newman, with his Evangelical background, they were the inheritors of the old High Church emphasis on the *via media* of the Church of England⁴².

³⁶ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.252; Perchenet, *op.cit.*, p.50

³⁷ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.152

³⁸ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.105; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.23

³⁹ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.506; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.288 – Marian Hughes was unable to found a community at that time. It was not until 1849 that she began the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

⁴⁰ Davies H., Worship and Theology in England, New Jersey, 1962, Book IV, p.250

⁴¹ Church, *op. cit.*, p.242

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.397; Frappell L., 'Science in the Service of Orthodoxy: The Early Intellectual Development of E.B.Pusey', Butler, Pusey Rediscovered, *op.cit.*, p.6 - Pusey believed that the true father of Tractarianism was the Regius Professor of Divinity, Bishop Charles Lloyd of Oxford (1823 – 1829) - he demonstrated the influence on the Prayer Book of the Roman Missal and Breviary, and the Continental Reformers on the Thirty Nine Articles.

In the following year another male community was begun at Elton, Huntingdon, by the Rev.F.Faber; like Newman's group all the members seceded to Rome⁴³. Despite other attempts, no successful men's religious community was founded until the Society of St John the Evangelist in 1866⁴⁴. Instead, Pusey and some leading Tractarian laymen at Park Village West established the first sisterhood very quietly in 1845⁴⁵. It was dedicated to Robert Southey.

In North America, conventual religious communities for women also emerged in the more Catholic-orientated Episcopalian Church at much the same time as in the English Church⁴⁶. Anson argues that the first such group, formed in 1845, was not influenced in any way by the Oxford movement. As this group was not a true religious order this was probably so. Nevertheless, Tractarian influence on the institution and development of later religious communities cannot be discounted. By 1839, the Movement reached the USA and although initially well received in the Episcopalian Church, much ground was lost when defections to Rome, attributable to the Movement, began.

The Tractarians realised that caution was necessary in the way the institution of religious communities was presented because of the general antipathy to all perceived manifestations of Rome in the English Church. Victorian England was religious, certainly much more so than in the previous century. This was a religiosity of the expanding middle classes and usually not from the upper or lower end of the social spectrum. Indeed the latter continued to remain unreachable by any denomination. Theological considerations aside, most Victorians were as much concerned with the concept of sisterhoods, which seemed to undermine the primacy of the patriarchal family on which church and state were built. Hence, despite the spiritual side of the life being the prime motivation for the establishment of religious orders, it was the social aspect of the work that was repeatedly stressed to the public. This accent on the active

⁴³ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.43; Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.507

⁴⁴ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.72, p.594

⁴⁵ Liddon H.P., Life of E.B.Pusey, London, 1894, p.21; Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.506

⁴⁶ Sr Edna Mary, *op.cit.*, pp.70-1

side of community life continued for many decades and was reproduced when the religious life reached the colonies.

The primary obligation of nearly all the early sisterhoods was the Benedictine sevenfold *Opus Dei* in various forms. This was taken directly from the breviaries of Roman Catholic orders. Despite this prayer life, and although the appeal of a romanticised concept of medieval monasticism can be discerned in Tractarianism, these early communities were not a revival of pre-Reformation, enclosed monasticism. They were copies of contemporary Roman Catholic orders, but unlike that paradigm, an arduous prayer life was supplemented with a diverse non-specialised outreach. As a result, there was no rigid separation between the contemplative and active life of Anglican religious communities successfully established in the nineteenth century. This changed later on when more emphasis on the contemplative life occurred within the established communities and purely contemplative orders began to form⁴⁷.

In the Rules and customs for the sisterhoods, the Benedictine and the Augustinian Rules were highly influential⁴⁸. The overriding aim was the search for personal holiness. To aid this endeavour, devotional elements of the Roman Church and monasticism were added with times for silence and retreat⁴⁹. Training for entry to all the sisterhoods was similar and taken from the monastic paradigm. It consisted of a short postulancy, followed by the novitiate stage, during which time of training and testing the object was on humbling the novice by strict discipline and isolation from the world. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were intended to be taken and renewed at intervals until life profession into the order⁵⁰. The notion of perpetual vows caused such debate however, that in most of the early communities they were not taken until sisterhoods became more established and acceptable.

⁴⁷ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.292

⁴⁸ see Anson, *op.cit.*, The use of these Rules was particularly as interpreted by Francis de Sales and Vincent de Paul.

⁴⁹ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.508 - Pusey had introduced auricular confession as early as 1838; Pickering, *op.cit.*, p.79 - In later years some priests caused tension within their congregations when they tried to make confession compulsory. Pickering sees that they moved from the Tractarian position of "some should, all may, none must".

⁵⁰ Vicinus M., Independent Women, London, 1985, p.57

In 1848, the Rev.W.Butler founded a second group of sisters, the Community of St. Mary the Virgin (CSMV) in the parish of Wantage, Oxford. This was with the approval of the Tractarian bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), the son of the late leading Evangelical and slave emancipator, William Wilberforce⁵¹. The defection to Rome of Newman and the first superior of Wantage, as well as most of the bishop's family, made Wilberforce determined to keep Tractarianism under control. Accordingly, he was very wary of the excesses of the religious life and kept a strict eye on communities for their own protection. In 1852, the Community of St John the Baptist (CSJB), Clewer, was formed at Windsor by the Rev.T.T.Carter and Harriet Monsell, also under the patronage of Wilberforce. Although the bishop's attitude to sisterhoods was conservative, particularly on the question of vows, he is acknowledged to have done more than any other member of the episcopate to help the task of implanting the religious life into the Victorian Church⁵². These two communities became amongst the most successful of English religious orders; they were the prototypes for the two major Australian sisterhoods, the Community of the Holy Name and the Society of the Sacred Advent begun half a century later.

From the middle of the century, sisterhoods formed with increasing regularity but the initial dislike for these institutions persisted. This attitude even degenerated into crowd persecution on several occasions in the early days. The secession of some sisters to Rome, including the first superiors of Park Village West and Wantage, reinforced the fear of the papacy, which the orders engendered⁵³. The trepidation, with which nuns were seen, is apparent in the art and literature of the period. Many anti-sisterhood works were published and the sisters were regularly ridiculed in the popular magazine, *Punch*, for their Romish ways⁵⁴. In paintings, they were often portrayed as women who had suffered disappointing love affairs. This helped reinforce the male Protestant concept

⁵¹ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.506; WWBH, Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.1298-9, Wilberforce was bishop of Oxford 1843-1869, Winchester 1869-1873.

⁵² Chadwick, *op.cit.*, pp.508-9

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.507

⁵⁴ Malmgreen/Casteras, *op.cit.*, p.133, 138 – *Punch* carried on an anti-Tractarian campaign for years.

"that no woman could possibly prefer the life of a nun to that of wife and mother"⁵⁵. As a corollary to this attitude, there was also a popular conception that those who entered sisterhoods were the "waifs and strays of unmarried women"⁵⁶. When the position of the spinster in middle class Victorian society is considered, this was an extremely derogatory attitude. Southey exemplified the outlook to spinsterhood in the earlier calls in the century for the formation of Protestant nursing orders. Like Newman, he believed that an added social advantage in forming these institutions would be that these unfortunate women would be "soaked up"⁵⁷.

The authoritarian family was further challenged by the control that women who entered a sisterhood enjoyed over their bodies and property - a freedom, which married women, did not possess.⁵⁸ Apart from the question of vows, further points of dissension were the freedom to leave a community and the necessity of withdrawing from the world to perform the social work, which the sisters undertook⁵⁹. This last query is understandable given that women were already engaged in similar social parochial work when sisterhoods were introduced; as the century progressed, more and more moved into philanthropic work often in similar institutions undertaken by the sisterhoods. Therefore this question points to a misunderstanding of the ultimate aim of those in the religious life - a situation which eventuated because of the emphasis given to the social aspects of the formation of sisterhoods.

Ostensibly the Roman Catholic and Anglican communities appeared to be very similar because the English groups were modelled in many ways on the Irish and Continental congregations⁶⁰. The divergence between Roman Catholic and Anglican communities

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.130

⁵⁶ Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.50

⁵⁷ Deacon A., & Hill M., "The Problems of Surplus Women in the Nineteenth century', pp.89-90, Hill M. (ed), A Sociological Yearbook of Religion In Britain, No 5, London, 1972; see also Malmgreen/Casteras, *op.cit.*, p.131

⁵⁸ Encel S, Mackenzie N., Tebbutt M., Women and Society, Melbourne, 1974, p.16- it was not until the English Married Women's Property Acts from 1882 that married women could control their own property.

⁵⁹ Malmgreen/Casteras, *op.cit.*, pp.136-7

⁶⁰ Clear C., Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland, Dublin, 1988, pp.76-7- a religious congregation is one, which takes simple vows and is not under strict enclosure(c below). There are three kinds of enclosure (a) Major Papal Enclosure-contemplatives who only leave if life is threatened (b)

was illustrated by the conflict over the question of perpetual vows and the freedom of the individual to leave a community. The prestigious position and the intrinsic nature of the nun in Roman Catholicism was not then, nor has ever been, paralleled in the English Church. One consequence of this situation is that the traditional stigma that adhered to the apostate nun who left a Roman community has not been a part of Anglicanism. Instead, the main problem for the Anglican sisterhood in the 19th century was its legitimation in the Church. In contrast, for the Roman congregation at that time, the major difficulty was diluting the power of the diocesan bishop and overcoming the post-Tridentine insistence on strict enclosure⁶¹.

The women who entered the early English communities were generally from the upper classes. They were expected to bring a dowry and to contribute to their upkeep⁶². One of the reasons for the early higher-class sister was that Victorians believed that only women of this class and breeding were able to perform the meanest of social work without it degrading them⁶³. This was understood particularly with their involvement in recue work or the reclamation of “fallen women” – a work of mercy close to the heart of many Victorians. On the one hand, the majority of these upper class women were undoubtedly strong minded and determined individuals who believed they had a God-given vocation; on the other, some entered for less altruistic reasons, while there is no doubt others were decidedly strange, even unbalanced⁶⁴. As more communities were established, women without money were also welcomed but were encouraged to become Lay sisters and perform the domestic work. This situation was similar to most contemporary Roman Orders and medieval nunneries where the members were differentiated into Choir or educated and Lay or uneducated sisters⁶⁵.

Minor Papal Enclosure- apostolic work with solemn vows and enclosure e.g. Presentation nuns, Dominicans, Ursulines, Poor Clares(c) Episcopal Cloister- can not leave diocese without permission, e.g. Sisters of Mercy, Charity.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.45- initially strict enclosure had been enforced by invalidating those orders who wished to take simple vows and work outside the cloister e.g. Ursulines (1535), Visitation Order (1610) O’Sullivan, *op.cit.*, p.3, Nevertheless from the 18th century associations of women with simple vows were often tolerated but without official sanction.

⁶² Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.55

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.77

⁶⁴ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.508

⁶⁵ Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.55

Sisterhoods faced many problems apart from the covert and open hostility. One of the chief difficulties was reconciling the expectations with the reality of communal life. Finding a superior with the right approach was another common obstacle because this type of leadership was a new task to learn⁶⁶. A further major reason that added to the dislike and suspicion in which the sisterhoods were held, was their association with the long-lived ritualist controversy. Ritualism was initiated by second generation Tractarians, and it has been argued, was a natural outcome of their spirituality with its emphasis on beauty in ceremonial and church decoration. The Oxford Movement had been originally more concerned with doctrine than ceremonial worship and many Tractarians disapproved of the introduction of ritualistic practices⁶⁷. The more extreme Tractarian priests initially found cooperation in some of the private chapels of the sisterhoods for these practices. By 1856, some churches were using all sorts of paraphernalia that on several occasions brought about mob violence and episcopal sanction. On top of the apostasy of Newman and so many others, ritual was suspected as being a plot by Tractarianism to take the English Church over to Rome. This fear was reinforced by various actions taken by the papacy, beginning with the restoration of the archbishopric of Westminster by Pius IX in 1850 and the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870⁶⁸.

The point had been reached where it was feared that ritualism would create schism in the Church. To fight the threat, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) installed Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-1882) as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1868⁶⁹. Tait was

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.69; Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.507, -the most controversial early superior was Lydia Sellon of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity (Devonport sisters) who aroused either great hatred or loyalty among her sisters. Pusey saw her as a possible superior- general of all the sisterhoods.

⁶⁷ Davies *op.cit.*, p.118; Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.213; Rodd L., John Hope, Sydney, 1972, p.35 The most visible outward sign was the use of Eucharistic vestments. Ritualism came to stand for:- (a) Eastward position of the celebrant at the Eucharist (b) Celebrant facing the altar (c) Eucharistic Vestments (d) Altar Lights (e) Mixing of water and wine in the chalice (f) Use of unleavened bread (g) Use of Incense.

⁶⁸ Malmgreen/Casteras, *op.cit.*, p.133; Johnson, *op.cit.*, pp.393-4 - the proclamation of papal infallibility was greatly encouraged by some Tractarian converts to Rome like Cardinal Manning and W.G.Ward.

⁶⁹ WWBH, Vol 1, *op.cit.*, pp.362-5, Disraeli became Earl of Beaconsfield and was Prime Minister in 1868, 1874-80; p. 1185 - Tait had formerly been bishop of London; Edwards D.L., Leaders of the Church of England, London, 1971, p.116 - It has been suggested that if Gladstone had been

a Broad churchman, a liberal position between the extremes of Tractarianism and Evangelicalism⁷⁰. He believed ritualism was more damaging to the Church than the free thought that others saw as the Church's main enemy. Accordingly, he vigorously fought to bring it under control and in 1874, the Public Worship Regulation Act was passed. The outcome was that the opponents of ritualism instituted legal action that tended to polarise public attitude more than would otherwise have occurred.

The growth of ritualism was in tandem with the emergence of Anglo-Catholicism, the offspring of Tractarianism that became its extreme wing. In general, the Catholic Movement supported the centrality of the Eucharist, auricular confession and religious orders⁷¹. However there were varying degrees of support for ritualism in the High Church and even within Anglo-Catholicism. This was because many ritualistic practices had been taken directly from 19th century Roman procedures and contravened what was allowable in the BCP. Although Anglo-Catholicism had a fair following amongst the middle classes of the south of England by the turn of the century, it was a lower clergy-led movement. The English bishops were not usually happy with it; the laity too, was far less advanced in outlook⁷². Nevertheless, despite its association with the dreaded ritualism, it became a major phenomenon that the Church had to accommodate. The ceremonial turmoil that ensued was fed by the lack of centralised authority in the Church of England⁷³.

Despite all the problems endured by the sisterhoods, acceptance was slowly achieved through their selfless social outreach. One remaining obstacle was the lack of episcopal support. The bishops always had reservations about religious communities even though they liked the social work performed by the sisters. Even Tractarian bishops were unenthusiastic and usually most concerned about the question of perpetual vows; as

prime minister at the time, Wilberforce would have attained Canterbury.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5 – many denied that the Broad Church position really existed.

⁷¹ Pickering, *op.cit.*, p. 119

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.57; Lloyd R., The History of the Church of England, 1900-1965, London, 1966, p.125 – in 1900 it was estimated that 40% clergy were High Church (a figure which held in 1980's), not necessarily Anglo-Catholic, but only 5% of the laity.

⁷³ Briden T., English Canon Law, London, 1992, p.49

well, many Anglo-Catholic priests only paid lip service to the ideal of the religious life⁷⁴. An important factor in this lack of genuine clerical support was the independence of the communities from clerical control⁷⁵. This was despite the initial creation of most sisterhoods for parochial work and the position usually held in communities by the episcopal visitor and the warden. While these roles guarded and guaranteed certain matters in the community, the clergy had no right of intervention in the affairs of the order⁷⁶. An exception to the ambiguous feelings of the Anglican episcopate towards sisterhoods was the outlook developed later in the century by some colonial Tractarian bishops. Like the Anglo-Catholic clergy in the slum missions of industrial England, they held a belief in the value of religious orders in evangelising the urban and rural districts in the colonies⁷⁷. A precedent was the somewhat similar use of monks and nuns in the Abbey system in Anglo-Saxon times, to Christianise the English people before the establishment of parishes⁷⁸.

The evangelising bent of Tractarianism has led to the argument that the Movement was the second phase of the Evangelical Movement of the eighteenth century - a position which would have been strenuously denied by the nineteenth century adherents of both groups. This point of view sees the emphasis on Baptismal regeneration of the first Tractarians and on the Eucharist by their heirs, as the equivalent of conversion for Evangelicals⁷⁹. The close relationship between the Tractarian emphasis on conversion in mission work later in the nineteenth century and the ideals and aims propounded by the religious orders, led Bishop Walter Frere to say in 1914, "Evangelicalism contributed the spirit and Tractarianism the form of the revival of the religious life"⁸⁰.

⁷⁴ Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.510

⁷⁵ Cary H.L.M., 'Revival of the Religious Life', Williams N.P.(ed) Northern Catholicism, London, 1933, p.349

⁷⁶ Advisory Council of Religious Communities (ACRC), A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, p.28

⁷⁷ Voll D., Catholic Evangelicalism, London, 1963, pp.120-3

⁷⁸ King E.B. (ed), Monks, Nuns and Friars in Mediaeval Society, Tennessee, 1989, p.110

⁷⁹ Voll, *op.cit.*, pp.120-121 - Voll is quoting Brillioth who was first to argue the close relationship of Evangelicalism and the Oxford Movement.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.131; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.125 – Frere was the second superior of the Community of the Resurrection established by Charles Gore in 1892.

Twenty years after the introduction of the religious life, men from the Low and Broad Church introduced deaconess institutions as an alternative to the Tractarian sisterhoods. The hope was that these dedicated women, under the control of the clergy, would become the principal group of women workers in the Church⁸¹. In 1860, the Rev. W. Pennefather and his wife formed the Mildmay Deaconess Institution. The Lutheran, Kaiserwerth deaconesses were the models for this institution; a bishop did not dedicate the members and in the true sense of the word, they were not deaconesses⁸². The first deaconess was Elizabeth Ferard who was commissioned by the then bishop of London, A.C.Tait, in 1861. Vows were not taken but the dedication was performed by a ceremonial laying on of hands⁸³.

Once deaconesses appeared a fierce debate began between their proponents and those of the sisterhoods. One of the major points of argument was the attempt to authenticate each group by reference to a particular time in Church history⁸⁴. After much controversy, a committee was appointed to look into the relationship of both groups of women to the Church. By 1890, the episcopate acknowledged the spiritual side of sisterhood life, including lifelong vows. It was not until the Lambeth Conference of 1897 that the introduction of brotherhoods, sisterhoods and deaconesses was officially recognised⁸⁵. In many ways this acceptance can be seen as due to the desire for episcopal control of these institutions, as by then there were between 2,000 and 3,000 women in religious orders - more than at the time of the Reformation. The ranks of the sisterhoods were further expanded by at least the same numbers of associates, usually far more, who lived in the world, followed a very simple Rule and supported the sisters

⁸¹ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.150

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.143-144; St Andrews/ Lambeth Essays, *op.cit.*, p.66

⁸³ Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.57-8

⁸⁴ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.89, the period for deaconesses was seen to be the Apostolic Church while that for sisterhoods the Apostolic Church as well as the Patristic church; Grierson J., The Deaconess, London, 1981, p.12 - the deaconess disappeared from the Western Church after the 11th century.

⁸⁵ Coleman, *op.cit.*, p.18 - Resolution 11; p.10 -The Lambeth Conferences are summoned by the archbishop of Canterbury as a forum for all Anglican bishops. They have no legal status but their decisions carry weight in matters of faith and morals.

with their work and prayer⁸⁶.

The institution and development of the religious life in England occurred at the same time as an explosion in the growth of Roman communities in Ireland – a factor of great consequence for the Australian scene. The growth of Irish communities corresponded to the consolidation of the power of the Roman Church in Ireland during the century. In the 60 years between 1841 and 1901 the number of nuns in Ireland multiplied eightfold despite the halving of the population by migration and famine⁸⁷. As a result, women in the religious congregations mainly undertook the escalation of philanthropic work in Ireland during the century. This was in contrast to the situation in England. There the rapid increase of women in the religious life, and its outreach, by the second half of the 19th century, was dwarfed by those outside the cloister becoming involved in philanthropic work. Although many middle class women had been involved in charitable religious work from early in the century, the potential for such pursuits increased during the century. By the 1890's there were estimated to be over five hundred thousand women involved in benevolent activities with several hundred thousand working for the Church of England⁸⁸. While lower class women usually worked in paid employment outside the home, few middle class women did so. Nevertheless, by the end of the century there were expanded opportunities in the paid work force for these latter groups. Although related to the increased educational opportunities for women as both students and teachers, it has been argued that the mass move into philanthropic work had much to do with this outcome. This was because it broadened women's outlook beyond domesticity and it heightened self-esteem⁸⁹.

A reason advanced for the surge of middle class women into paid and unpaid employment was the excessive ratio of women to men in Britain. In the 1851 census, there were over 400,000 more women than men over twenty years of age. This had

⁸⁶ Heeney B., The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930, Oxford, 1988, p.63; Allchin, *op.cit.*, p.119

⁸⁷ Clear, *op.cit.*, p.40

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.19, 22; McGrath S., 'Beyond Florence Nightingale', Hutchinson M. & Campion E., Long Patient Struggle, Sydney, 1994, p.48

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.66

been mainly brought about by migration and maintaining the Empire⁹⁰. The number later increased to 700,000 and helped ensure that one in seven Victorian women never married⁹¹. After the mid-century survey, there was a general feeling that the statistics revealed a crisis and the problem was widely debated⁹². The basis of middle class Victorian society was one of separate spheres of activity for men and women. Men were concerned with the public world, while women concentrated on the private domestic scene. Despite a general perception of women's inferiority, they were usually seen - that is those of the middle and upper classes - to be more religious and chaste than men and so well suited to be involved in philanthropy and social reform⁹³. Accordingly, married and unmarried women were encouraged to move into charitable work in either the Church or general society⁹⁴. Vicinus believes that the outcome was that the zeal for meaningful work by single women became the centre of these women's lives. The outcome was an active spirituality and a passionate philanthropy⁹⁵. This argument must extend as well to married women who, given the numbers involved, obviously sought fulfilment outside domesticity, through philanthropic means.

Despite the influx of women workers, the principal role for women in the Church remained that of the clergyman's unpaid wife. She had a well-defined position and function in the parish and female volunteer work revolved around her. She was even described as "a sister of mercy who requires no vows to help her do her duty"⁹⁶. Apart from the parochial endeavours of district visiting, women dominated Sunday School teaching, study circles and raising money; while wider involvement was in the established missionary societies, parochial missions, rescue and preventative work and temperance societies. The huge numbers of volunteers resulted in the establishment of large, popular organisations like the Mothers' Union and the Girls' Friendly Society.

⁹⁰ Hill/Deacon, *Sociological Yearbook*, *op.cit.*, p.90.

⁹¹ Coleman D. & Salt J., *The British Populations, Patterns, Trends and Processes*, Oxford, 1992, p.180

⁹² Vicinus, *op.cit.*, pp.3-4 – one proposal was the emigration of hundreds of thousands of these women to the colonies and USA where men were in the majority.

⁹³ Gill S., *Women and the Church of England*, London, 1994, p.79

⁹⁴ Hill/Deacon, *op.cit.*, p.89

⁹⁵ Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.5

⁹⁶ Ditchfield P.H., *The Old Time Parson*, London, 1909, p.244

Hill, *op.cit.*, p.174 - an argument presented by an Archdeacon Ffoulkes at the 1862 Convocation for the recognition of sisterhoods was that they would be able to relieve the work of clergy wives.

The trained and paid Biblewomen's Movement, the Church Army and the foreign missionary service for single women from the eighties, were other fields of work introduced⁹⁷. None of these groups of women had the autonomy of the sisterhoods, which once established, became independent. Nevertheless, most of the religious communities, particularly the early ones, would not have survived without the backing of powerful male friends in the Church⁹⁸.

By the turn of the century, there were ten times as many sisters as there were deaconesses. This trend continued well into the twentieth century and for many years sisterhoods remained the most attractive dedicated church work for women, although the least encouraged by the hierarchy⁹⁹. Despite the growth in these forms of the dedicated life, the numbers who answered such a call were minuscule in comparison to the total number of married and unmarried women involved in other forms of work in the Church. Nevertheless, apart from the growth in the influence of Tractarian spirituality, the huge numbers of women involved in Church work must have been instrumental in boosting the creation of sisterhoods.

Despite the excessive numbers of women in late Victorian times and the popularity of church work, no positive effect was seen on the recruitment of deaconesses. Various reasons have been suggested for the unpopularity of this form of dedicated work in comparison to the religious life. These range from the inferior social classes from which deaconesses were usually drawn, to their uncertain status in relation to the diaconate and the legitimacy of their commissioning¹⁰⁰. The outcome was that the deaconess was seen as a second-class type of religious sister. This situation arose because the early deaconess institutions were ones where the women were trained and then remained to live in the community. The tendency was for these institutions to develop into religious communities where either the members were both religious and deaconesses or, there was a core of professed nuns with deaconesses who went outside to work¹⁰¹. This latter

⁹⁷ Heeney, *op.cit.*, pp.45-6; 54-8.

⁹⁸ Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.50.

⁹⁹ Heeney, *op.cit.*, p.63

¹⁰⁰ Vicinus, *op.cit.* p.55; see also Grierson, *op.cit.*, p.36-7

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.21-29 – this happened with Elizabeth Ferard's group - the Community of St Andrews,

situation proved to be too difficult to manage. Consequently, the norm for the Deaconess Movement in England in the 20th century was the independent deaconess who worked under the parochial clergy¹⁰². Such a distinctly non-community style of deaconess had been first introduced by the Bishop of Rochester in 1887¹⁰³.

It has been further argued that the popularity of sisterhoods in comparison to deaconesses was due to their greater autonomy from male interference¹⁰⁴. The Oxford Movement itself is seen to have held a more open outlook on the role of women in society than was current at the time of its formation. Thus as an offshoot of the Movement, the early sisterhoods are seen by many as an important step in the first stages of female emancipation. This is because of their involvement in nursing, teaching and social work, which set the example for deaconesses and laywomen later in the century¹⁰⁵.

Emily Ayckbowm (1836-1900), who founded the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) in 1870, has frequently been cited as epitomising the independent woman of the nineteenth century who found freedom from male domination in a religious community¹⁰⁶. While Emily had the cooperation of a priest in the institution of her community, no male took any real part in the foundation of the sisterhood¹⁰⁷. Her Community became one of the most enduring of sisterhoods and in just thirty years spread to many parts of the world, including Australia¹⁰⁸. The Community was financially based on a charitable organisation - the Church Extension Association (CEA) - that Emily began in a very modest fashion. By the 1880's due to her drive and

Winchester Deaconess Institute, East London Deaconess Institution, Durham Deaconesses.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.31

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*; also Sturrock M., *The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne: An Office Coveted by Few*, Unpub. BTh Thesis, 1989, Melbourne College of Theology, p.13

¹⁰⁴ Allchin *op.cit.* p.116; Hill, *op.cit.*, p.10; Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.48

¹⁰⁵ Hill, *op.cit.*, pp.285-6

¹⁰⁶ CSC, *A Valiant Victorian*, London, 1964, p.55

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.20-21; p.33 - the Rev. R.C. Kirkpatrick admitted Emily as the first novice of the CSC and at the same time admitted four associates. He was the rector of St Augustine's, Kilburn, where the community was situated. Subsequently they became popularly known as the Kilburn Sisters.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.147; 230 -By 1893 there were over 100 fully professed sisters with 40 novices and postulants. The average number of professed for much of the 20th.century held at about 150.

vision, it had become one of the largest charitable organisations in England¹⁰⁹. At this stage, CEA and the sisterhood had become officially amalgamated with the mother superior as the chief executive officer of the Association.

The success of CSC was despite many difficulties on every step of the way¹¹⁰. The most public crisis began in the early nineties when the sisterhood experienced a multi-faceted assault; firstly, an attack from rival charitable groups; secondly, from the Protestant Alliance, fearful of the Romish tendencies of communities and thirdly, from accusations of cruelty in the Community's orphanages¹¹¹. Archbishop Edward White Benson of Canterbury (1829-1896), a High Churchman, became involved in the controversies¹¹². Benson was part of a group of scholars from Cambridge University who had great influence on the Church in the latter part of the 19th century. They introduced a more liberal approach to the great theological questions of the day and helped change the conservative older-style Tractarianism to a different outlook¹¹³. When Benson became archbishop in 1882, the Church remained torn by controversies exacerbated by the alienation of many people. Like Archbishop Tait, his predecessor, he was concerned with the possibility of schism by the Evangelicals over ritualism.¹¹⁴. Benson was very interested in the religious life and particularly the formation of male religious communities, which he urged in his inaugural address at the opening of the 1888 Lambeth Conference¹¹⁵. Nevertheless, like many people he had reservations about the question of vows and was concerned at the apparent lack of canonical obedience of some sisterhoods, particularly CSC¹¹⁶. Benson noted disapprovingly in his diary that a particular group of sisters was under no one but their chaplain. Whether he meant CSC is unknown, but in 1895 he saw the Kilburn sisters (CSC),

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.83

¹¹⁰ CEA, Memories of Emily Harriet Elizabeth Ayckbown, London, 1914, p.128

¹¹¹ Allchin, *op.cit.*, p.205

¹¹² WWBH, Vol 1, *op.cit.*, p.99; Edwards, *Leaders*, *op.cit.*, p.184 – Benson was the first bishop of Truro, archbishop of Canterbury, 1882-1896

¹¹³ Allchin, *op.cit.*, p.219-220 – this group included B.F.Westcott, A.F.Hort, and J.B.Lightfoot all were all heavily influenced by the thought of F.D.Maurice.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *Leaders*, *op.cit.*, p.201

¹¹⁵ Allchin, *op.cit.*, p. 219

¹¹⁶ Benson A.C., The Life of E.W.Benson, Vol 11, London, 1899, p.306

as a dissenting community owning no bishop or authority of any kind. And there are no worse mines under the Church than such bodies¹¹⁷.

The archbishop believed that CSC was a formidable body and realised the part these sisters and other communities were playing in the difficulty of putting down ritualism, which,

these magnificent bodies are sedulously propagating with every advantage, worldly and spiritually¹¹⁸.

It appears that Benson was upset because the communities saw themselves as Church-wide rather than under the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop. He believed that this placed the sisterhoods in danger because of the lack of a champion in times of trouble. Benson theorised that the monastic orders in England at the time of the Reformation would have lasted longer if they had been controlled in this manner rather than under the direct authority of the papacy¹¹⁹. When the attacks first began on CSC in 1893, Benson, who was a patron of CEA, tried to correct the situation. He strongly criticised CSC's policy of looking after illegitimate babies and felt the Community should have a fixed constitution as well as a visitor - a position he was happy to fill as long as certain conditions of submission were met. Lord Nelson who was chairman of the patrons of CEA supported him in these criticisms. In response, Mother Emily dropped all male patrons from her Association. Appalled at such effrontery Benson called her "the most comical Mother in the Universe" as the dispute between the two was taken up in the press¹²⁰. Ultimately the Community was exonerated on the charges of cruelty and mishandling funds but the dispute was not resolved until after the death of both the Archbishop and Emily, when CSC finally appointed a visitor¹²¹.

The achievements of superiors like Mother Emily and the example they set for women's ability to run large organisations led to these women being seen as the forerunners of female emancipation. Nevertheless, it is not clear that they would have agreed with this assessment. The fact that the sisterhoods appeared to have little interest in the

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.643;

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.273

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.306

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.639

¹²¹ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.250 - This was Bishop A.F. Winnington - Ingram of London (1901-1939) in 1903.

movement for emancipation and the enfranchisement of women tends to refute this 20th century argument¹²². While the ambiguity of the religious life, which sought to instil humility and self-abnegation, can partially explain this apparent lack of enthusiasm, Emily Ayckbown, for example, held a lower opinion of women's temperament than that of men. Although her concept of women's abilities in general was higher than that of Florence Nightingale, with whom she has been linked as a champion of women's rights, she believed that,

women as a rule are neither logical nor deep-thinkers and in consequence are far more likely than men to be led astray by inaccurate arguments, novelties in doctrine as well as the unrealities of emotional and sentimental religion¹²³.

Moreover, as the goal of the religious life was personal holiness, it would seem that the compassionate active work that was undertaken, while it may have served as a corollary in improving the status of women, was a consequence primarily of the search for God and was used for the overriding cause of religious education and conversion.

Despite the great opposition to sisterhoods, the selfless nursing and social work performed by the sisters eventually helped overcome the reservations of many people. It has been argued that this work smoothed the path for the institution of stable men's groups towards the end of the century, after the earlier, generally eccentric failed attempts¹²⁴. The majority of these later groups were communities of priests with or without lay members, instituted to perform a specific outreach¹²⁵. They were aided in their success by the adoption of a positive attitude to episcopal authority and the use only of the liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer¹²⁶. There have been far fewer men's communities than sisterhoods and Davies believes that the opportunities for men in the priesthood were an essential contributing factor, as it was to their later

¹²² Gill, *op.cit.*, p.154

¹²³ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.92, also Vicinus, *op.cit.*, p.72

¹²⁴ Davies, *op.cit.*, p.135; Allchin, *op.cit.*, pp.208-9 - Even the success of CSC did not help the establishment of an allied brotherhood - "The Workers for the Brotherhood of the Faith" was to be set up in relation to CEA in the same way as CSC. By 1880 there were four brothers led by Father Simeon with 100 associates, but for reasons unknown the venture failed.

¹²⁵ Mason A., The History of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Norwich, 1993,p.158 –until the 1930's there were no successful lay brotherhoods.

¹²⁶ Holden C., Ritualist on a Tricycle, Perth, 1977, p.302

emergence. He further sees that the increasing secularisation of society as the 19th century progressed diluted the general unacceptability of male monasticism held earlier¹²⁷.

It can be seen that there were many facets to the unexpected establishment and rapid growth of the religious life in the Church. The primary reason can be attributed to the spirituality and theology of Tractarianism and its progeny, Anglo-Catholicism. If social and religious concerns motivated women to undertake charitable work in the Church and society, there was far more scope outside the religious life than within. Therefore, the utilitarian explanations that were advanced to promote acceptance of the sisterhoods, although an intrinsic part of the life, were of secondary concern on the spiritual path to which the individuals involved were devoted.

Over the centuries, religious orders had always played a part in the Church's evangelisation. Consequently, there has often been a symbiotic relationship between the prophetic nature of religious orders and the desire in the Church for the conversion of the indifferent or the heathen. This relationship was repeated in the Church with Tractarianism and the religious orders which it founded in the mother country. In the Australian colonies in the last decades of the nineteenth century, individual bishops sought to help consolidate and disperse their particular forms of Anglicanism by using the dedicated lifestyles of sisters, brothers and deaconesses.

¹²⁷ Davies., *op.cit.*, p.136

CHAPTER TWO The Introduction of Dedicated Work for Women in the Australian Colonies

An organised plot to destroy the Protestant nature of the Church of England

The move towards the establishment of dedicated women's work in the Church of England in the Australian colonies began in the second last decade of the nineteenth century. This movement had to win acceptance in a vastly different social and ecclesiastical environment to that in England. Migration, both voluntary and enforced, had resulted in a scarcity of educated members of the upper and middle classes, traditionally the backbone of the Church. In addition, each colony had a different sectarian mix of settlers and there was a high proportion overall of Irish Roman Catholics and Nonconformists, quite unlike the situation in England¹.

1891	ANGLICANS	ROMAN CATHOLICS	PRESBYTERIANS	METHODISTS	POPULATION
Australia	1,232,000(40%)	745,000(24%)			3,100,000
NSW	507,000(46%)	300,000(27%)	108,000	96,000	1,122,000
Victoria	402,000(36%)	249,000(23%)	170,000	139,000	1,140,000
Queens land	140,000(37%)	93,000(25%)			365,000
Tasmania	73,000(52%)	26,000(18%)			140,000
Western Australia	25,000(52%)	13,000(27%)			47,000
South Australia	83,000(27%)	45,000(15%)	18,000(6%)	42,000(14%)	308,000

FIGURE 1

From the table it can be seen for example, that while the populations of NSW and Victoria were very similar the denominational mix was quite different. NSW was strongly Anglican as was Tasmania and Western Australia. On the other hand, Victoria had less Anglicans than NSW, similar Roman Catholic numbers and far more Protestants. The situation, where one quarter was Roman Catholic, corresponded to the total numbers in Australia despite the much lower proportion in South Australia and

¹ Vamplew W. (ed), Australians: Historical Statistics, Sydney, 1987, p.421-425, and Scott-Keltie J., The Statesman's Year Book, London, 1892, p.243ff

Tasmania. The Protestant mix varied in each state with South Australia having a higher proportion of Methodists (who were in coalition with Baptists and Congregationalists) and slightly more Lutherans than Presbyterians, a figure not shown. The figures in the table reflect the way each area was colonised, the effect of the gold rushes and the slow development of Western Australia. The denominational mix varied in percentage terms in each colony, although the Church of England remained the largest as it did in the Australian population, with 40% of the total². This overall religious demography remained virtually static until after the migrant intake following World War 11³. The large numbers of Irish Roman Catholics alarmed many Protestants. This contributed to the development of a common form of Protestant Christianity in concert with Anglicanism, particularly in its Evangelical form, which despised and feared Rome.

Even in the early period of settlement the Church of England was never officially the "Established Church", although it was in practice before the Church Act of 1836. This Act provided for the support of Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican clergy as well as their denominational schools⁴. In comparison to the other denominations, the Church of England gained most materially from the Act. The Anglican dioceses that developed were unendowed and thus lacked the status of those in England. Nevertheless the generally high quality of its English bishops over many years and the fact that in most colonies, with the major exception of Adelaide, Anglicans were at the top of the social scale reinforced the Church's prime position despite some loss of dominance⁵. The aid given by donations from England and the long-term financial assistance of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) to all dioceses was crucial to this situation. The Colonial Bishopricks Fund, which supported many

² Breward I., A History of the Australian Churches, Sydney, 1993, p.235 - In the 1980's, Roman Catholicism took over from Anglicanism as the largest Christian denomination.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 220

⁴ Cooper A., 'Bishop Broughton and the Diocese of Australia', Porter B. (ed), Colonial Tractarians, Melbourne, 1989, p.26

⁵ Carey H., Believing in Australia, Sydney, 1996, p.90

episcopal appointees to new dioceses in the colonies, was itself financed by SPG⁶. This great missionary Society with its sister organisation, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), was founded at the beginning of the 18th century for foreign and domestic conversion. Towards the end of the century, they had both reached a low point of energy and efficiency⁷. This situation changed dramatically with the emergence first of Evangelicalism and then Tractarianism, and the consequent emphasis on missionary work in the ever expanding Empire⁸.

The aim of SPG was to establish the Church with its ministry and sacraments and then to withdraw⁹. The tendency was for moderate to High churchmen to support the Society while Low and Evangelical churchmen supported the Church Missionary Society (CMS). This had been formed in 1799 by an Evangelical group, the Eclectic Society one of whose members, the Rev. Charles Simeon (1759-1836), had begun discussions within the group three years earlier on the need for missions to the heathen.¹⁰ It was instituted because the small numbers of Evangelical clergy in the Church at that stage were unable to influence the existing bodies¹¹. The CMS originally concentrated on work amongst the heathen leaving the SPG to work in the colonies. Both these missionary societies played a major part in the establishment of autonomous Anglican communities throughout the British Empire. It has been argued that this feat was the

⁶Thompson H.P., Into All Lands, London, 1951, p.212; the Colonial Bishopricks Fund had been inaugurated in England in 1841 after an appeal by Bishop C.V.Blomfield.

⁷ CMS, The Church Missionary Society, Vol 1, London, 1899, p.66

⁸ Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.104 - from 1786 nearly 30 religious and philanthropic societies were begun in just 25 years. Amongst these were the London Missionary Society, Baptist Missionary Society, and CMS.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.715-717

¹⁰Treasure G. (ed) Who's Who in British History (WWBH), London, 1998, Vol 2, pp.1124

¹¹ CMS, *op.cit.*, pp.60 –64, the Eclectic Society was founded, in 1783, for discussion by clergy and lay Evangelicals. It was responsible for sending the Rev. Richard Johnson on the first Fleet and later Samuel Marsden to Australia (1764-1838)- see Australian Dictionary of Biography, (ADB) Vol 2, pp.207-212.

greatest missionary endeavour since that of Francis Xavier in the sixteenth century¹².

The early colonial bishop had autocratic powers because of the different church/state relationships in the colonies compared to the English situation. These episcopal appointees were mainly Tractarians because of the influence that followers of the Movement, like W.E.Gladstone (1809-1898), had at the time on such assignments¹³. They held a more exalted view of the episcopacy and its authority than other schools of thought, even the old High Churchmen. In addition, Australian bishops had more influence than their English counterparts in appointing clergy given the lack of the lay patronage system that prevailed in England. Thus the creation of the authoritarian colonial bishop led to the building of strongholds of particular churchmanship in the different areas¹⁴. The long terms of service of many of the early bishops aided this situation, as did a shortage of a well-educated middle class and the lack of the appointment of Broad churchmen as bishops. Therefore the preponderance of extreme views imposed by the early major clerical approach in each area led to dioceses, which, with few exceptions, displayed a great homogeneity of churchmanship – outlooks which proved remarkably resistant to change. This situation was unlike the English picture where dioceses were much more heterogeneous in theological outlook and as a consequence more tolerant of divergent views.

Following the attainment of male suffrage in the lower houses of the Australian colonial parliaments in the middle of the century, a great degree of independence was gained from the Mother Church by the establishment of diocesan synods of laity and clergy¹⁵.

¹² Rayner K., *The Church of England in Australia*, Unpub. PhD Thesis, Uni. of Queensland, 1962, p.12

¹³ WWBH, Vol 1, pp.519-523 – William Ewart Gladstone was Liberal Prime minister from 1868-74, 1880-5, 1886; 1892-4.

¹⁴ Elkin A.P., *The Diocese of Newcastle*, Sydney, 1955, pp.259-260

¹⁵ Cooper/Porter, 'Bp Broughton', *op.cit.*, p.40 - this outcome eventuated only after many difficulties and the use of different methods by the dioceses to legalise their institution; see also Elkin, *op.cit.*, p.285; Rayner, *op.cit.*, p.377- despite the establishment of lay and clerical synods there was still a great deal of confusion concerning the relationship between the Australian and English Churches for many years. This was not overcome until the Australian Church became autonomous in 1962.

A presiding synod over all the dioceses was agreed upon but when this was instituted in 1872, its power was debilitated by the proviso that none of its decisions were binding unless agreed on by a diocese. This led to the diocese becoming established as the "unit of ecclesiastical government"¹⁶. While the dioceses became virtually autonomous, the older and larger amongst them experienced a modification of episcopal power due to the synodical system. Although as Hilliard points out, the clergy still dominated synodical rule because of their automatic right of appointment in comparison to that of election for the layman¹⁷. The autocratic nature of the colonial bishop was retained only in the underpopulated country dioceses. All of these bishops had problems in attracting and retaining clergy and often were forced to train their own. The method was usually a system of Lay readers or catechists training on the job with the outcome that men were ordained with meagre formal education for the priesthood. Therefore, as Frappell argues, the dominance of bishops in the country dioceses was reinforced by the low standard of the clergy, the predominance of women in the active membership of the Church and the indifference of much of the male laity¹⁸.

Most of the early colonial clergy had been Low Church Evangelicals. In the penal colony of Sydney this climate was challenged by the High churchmanship of the pioneer bishop of Sydney and Australia, William Grant Broughton (1788-1853)¹⁹. Arising from Broughton's emphasis on the special position of the Church of England against the strong colonial trend to a common Protestantism, NSW had an "Oxford Movement of its own"²⁰. A Movement that had little support among the laity. Indeed

¹⁶ Judd S. & Cable K., Sydney Anglicans, Sydney, 1987, p.86

¹⁷ Hilliard D., 'Anglicanism', Goldberg S. & Smith T.B. (ed.), Australian Cultural History, Melbourne, 1988, p.16

¹⁸ Frappell R., The Anglican Ministry to the Unsettled Rural Districts of Australia, Unpub.Thesis, Uni. of Sydney, 1992, p.38ff; 92

¹⁹ Elkin *op.cit.*, p.209; ADB, Vol 1, pp.158-164 – Broughton was bishop of Australia from 1836-1853. He was not the first bishop as that distinction belonged to the Roman Catholic, John Bede Polding (1794-1877), who was bishop and archbishop of Sydney from 1834-1877 (ADB, Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.340-7); see also Shaw G.P., Patriarch and Patriot, Brisbane, 1978

²⁰ Cooper /Porter, 'Bishop Broughton', *op.cit.*, p.28, 30

Broughton suffered severe criticism from many for his churchmanship and his successor, the Evangelical bishop, Frederic Barker (1808-1882), was far more acceptable to the majority of church members²¹. In his long episcopate Barker changed the character of the clergy in Sydney. This was accomplished first by recruiting Evangelicals and Low churchmen, particularly from the Church of Ireland; and secondly by establishing the conservative, Evangelical, Moore Theological College.

In 1842 the dioceses of Tasmania and New Zealand were established. Broughton became the metropolitan of Australasia in 1847 when the colonial episcopate was further enlarged with the division of the Sydney diocese into the sees of Adelaide, Newcastle and Melbourne²². Only one of the new bishops, Charles Perry of Melbourne (1807-1891), was not a High churchman and consequently Tractarianism began to spread into rural areas as new dioceses were created²³. Initially this was seen in the influence that William Tyrrell's (1807-1879) churchmanship had on the northern part of NSW and southern Queensland that were part of his Newcastle diocese²⁴. After Brisbane became a separate diocese from Newcastle in 1859 under Bishop E.W. Tufnell (1814-1896), the High Church outlook of Broughton and Tyrrell persisted despite the Low Churchmanship of the second bishop of Brisbane, Mathew Blagden Hale (1811-1895)²⁵. Despite the concern of many of the laity, even in the late 1920's about ritualism, this outlook, which moved towards Anglo-Catholicism, later became entrenched in North Queensland in the twentieth century under Bishop J.O. Feetham

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.30-2

Cable K., 'The Dioceses of Sydney and Melbourne', Porter, Tractarians, *op.cit.*, p.42; ADB Vol 3, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-94 – Barker was bishop of Sydney from 1856-1881

²² Cooper/ Porter, *op.cit.*, p.32;
Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.210

²³ Elkin, *op.cit.*, p.125-7; ADB, Vol 5, pp.432-6, Perry was bishop of Melbourne, 1847-1876

²⁴ ADB, Vol 6, pp.318-9, Tyrrell was bishop of Newcastle, 1847-1879

²⁵ Elkin, *op.cit.*, p.249; ADB Vol 6, *op.cit.*, pp.307-8 – Edward Wyndham Tufnell, bishop of Brisbane, 1859-1874; ADB Vol 4, pp.317-9 – Mathew Blagden Hale, bishop of Perth, 1857-1875, Brisbane, 1875-85

(1873-1947)²⁶.

In Melbourne the main aim of Bishop Perry, an intellectual Evangelical, was the unity of the Church and the avoidance of the disagreement which party formation would bring. He was a very popular bishop and the first in the Church to offer the laity a share in government²⁷. Nevertheless he was seen by some as a “narrow-minded bigot”, as he was a dogged anti-ritualist who tried to exclude clergy who disagreed with his churchmanship. Despite this tendency, once he ordained clergy, like Henry Handfield or J.H. Gregory, who then displayed “advanced” views, he was supportive and loyal²⁸. Consequently in his long episcopate of nearly thirty years the diocese did not develop the monochrome appearance he had hoped for²⁹. Instead his successor, James Moorhouse (1826-1915) introduced a new era of tolerant churchmanship. Moorhouse was a brilliant prelate and a moral and intellectual force in Melbourne. He founded Trinity Theological College, started the construction of the cathedral and was a strong advocate of the admission of women to the University. Surprised by the hatred shown to Roman Catholics, in his ten years in Melbourne, he managed to direct the diocese to the development of an “open” character unlike that of Sydney and so many other dioceses³⁰.

In contrast to Sydney the penal colony of Tasmania had begun with a chaplain from the

²⁶ Rayner, *op.cit.*, p.9ff; ADB, Vol 8, *op.cit.*, pp.476-7, John Oliver Feetham was the 2nd principal of the Bush Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd and bishop of North Queensland, 1913-1947

²⁷ Nunn B.A., A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria 1847-1947, Melbourne, 1947, p.23

²⁸ Grant J., ‘The Diocese of Melbourne (and Victoria), Porter, Tractarians, *op.cit.*, p.67; ADB, Vol 4, *op.cit.*, pp.334-5 – Henry Hewlett Paulet Handfield (1828-1900) was made rural dean of Melbourne by Moorhouse in 1879.

²⁹ Grant, *op.cit.*, p.69

³⁰ Nunn, *op.cit.*, p.48;

Hilliard D., 'The Anglo-Catholic Tradition in Australian Anglicanism', St Mark's Review, Winter 1994, p.19; Grant, *op.cit.*, p. 47; ADB Vol 5, *op.cit.*, pp.281-3 – Moorhouse was bishop of Melbourne, 1877-1886, bishop of Manchester, 1886-1903

old style High Church³¹. This theological outlook was not popular with the laity or many of the clergy and the first bishop, F.R.Nixon (1803-1879), had to establish episcopal authority against much opposition. In doing this he made a serious attempt at the establishment of Tractarianism in this "gaol of the empire" where half the population were convicts³². His endeavours were partially successful. Although Anglo-Catholicism did not take hold in Tasmania, Nixon's successors cemented his hope of establishing a "high" concept of the episcopate³³. Stephens believes that the resultant churchmanship of the diocese has not suffered from an image either of conservatism or radicalism³⁴.

In the carefully planned free colony of Adelaide the first chaplain was an Evangelical Anglican. Despite the low proportion of Anglicans among the settlers he was appointed because of the strong feeling of a common Protestant Christianity among these pioneers - an outlook that was reinforced by the Evangelical outlook of most early Anglican clergy. The first bishop, Augustus Short (1802-1883) set about changing this attitude by recruiting Tractarian clergy for his huge diocese of Adelaide. This diocese covered the whole of Western Australia as well as South Australia. Short travelled extensively visiting new settlers and creating new parishes until eventually Perth was created as a new diocese in 1857³⁵. Like all the early colonial missionary bishops, Short's work was hampered by the lack of clergy, the enormous diocese and the distances that had to be covered. Moderately High churchmen succeeded him as bishops and they established this theological approach in South Australia³⁶.

³¹ Stephens G., 'The Diocese of Tasmania', Porter, *op.cit.*, p.49

³² *Ibid.*, p.53; Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.217; ADB Vol 2, *op.cit.*, pp.285-288, Francis Russell Nixon was bishop of Tasmania from 1842-63.

³³ Stephens/ Porter, *op.cit.*, pp.60 -1

³⁴ Stephens G., The Church of England in Tasmania, Hobart, 1991, p.196

³⁵ Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.408; ADB Vol 6, *op.cit.*, pp.112-3, Short was bishop of Adelaide, 1848-1881

³⁶ Hilliard D., Godliness and Good Order, Adelaide, 1986, p.32

When the diocese of Perth was established as a separate entity from Adelaide, the first bishop was the Evangelical missionary to the Aborigines, and later the second bishop of Brisbane, M.B.Hale (1857-75)³⁷. After his departure for Brisbane, tolerant Low churchmen and fervent missionaries - Henry Hutton Parry (1826-1893) and Charles Owen Leaver Riley (1854-1929) followed him. These men were more concerned with education, missionary work and keeping the Church alive in the vast state than with party dissent³⁸. A tradition has grown that the Church in Western Australia did not experience the antipathy between the parties that occurred elsewhere in the country. Holden argues that there was as much acrimony in Perth in the early days as was found in Sydney or Melbourne³⁹. He feels this was expressed in the debate in August and September 1898 over Romanism in the Church, culminating in the last major press row over ritualism in the *Perth Morning Herald* in 1900⁴⁰. Despite his Low churchmanship, Riley worked very hard to encourage an acceptance of all streams of thought⁴¹. Although his successor Archbishop Henry Frewen Le Fanu (1870-1946) was an Anglo-Catholic, he too held to a broad concept of thought in the Church of England⁴². The result has been an absence of radicalism in the Church in Western Australia.

So towards the end of the century, the trend was to the establishment of dioceses of a monochrome hue as particular theologies and forms of worship tended to become dominant in each diocese. Despite this the laity were not usually of any particular "colour". They had always tended to lean more to a common Protestant solidarity with Nonconformists in their detestation of Irish Catholics and Rome – a situation fuelled by the high proportion of Roman Catholics. Accordingly Tractarianism was mainly a

³⁷ Alexander F., (ed) Four Bishops and their See, Nedlands, 1957, p.14 – Hale was bishop of Perth, 1857-1875.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.35; ADB Vol 5, *op.cit.*, pp. 707-8, Parry was bishop of Perth, 1876-1893; ADB Vol 11, pp.393-4, Riley was bishop, 1895-1914, archbishop, 1914-1929.

³⁹ Holden C., Ritualist on a Tricycle: Church, Nationalism and Society in Western Australia, 1880-1920, Perth, 1977, p.4; p.11 – Holden argues strongly against Hawtry, Boyce and others, opposing the united nature of thought in W.A. at turn of the century.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.85

⁴¹ Boyce P.J., 'The First Archbishop', Alexander, *Four Bishops*, *op.cit.*, p.51

⁴² ADB, Vol 10, pp.60-2, Le Fanu, archbishop of Perth, 1929-1946, primate, 1935-1946.

clerical viewpoint and the subsequent emergence of ritualism in the Church in the colonies was greeted with horror by many of the laity. Often this was due to ignorance of the influence that Tractarianism was having in England on the style and type of worship. An influence in later times which even surprised dedicated Anglo-Catholic bishops who had spent some time in Australia⁴³ Combined with the fear of Irish Catholicism, the tensions in Ireland and popery, this attitude later led to the extreme concept during the First World War that all things Irish and Roman Catholic and as an extension, Anglo-Catholic, were “a conspiracy and subversive to the nation”⁴⁴.

Initially what was condemned as ritual was very mild and hardly more than the beautification of churches and more frequent communion services. The first anti-ritualist organisation, the Church of England Association, was formed in Adelaide by the end of the seventies⁴⁵. In Melbourne Bishop Perry was having trouble with some of the more advanced clergy, particularly Henry Handfield at St Peter's Eastern Hill. This situation was repeated in Sydney where his counterpart, Bishop Barker, was stamping on any sign of ritual that emerged⁴⁶. In 1884 Low churchmen in Sydney formed the Church of England Association to try and stop ritualism in general and the Rev.C.F.Garnsey at Christ Church, St Lawrence, in particular⁴⁷. By this time Bishop Alfred Barry (1826-1910) had replaced Barker and, although a Low churchman, had a broader outlook than his predecessor. Consequently he was thought to be ineffectual by many Evangelicals⁴⁸. In response to the Low Church Association, the Anglo-Catholics rejuvenated the colonial branch of the English Church Union and then the Churchman's Union in 1891. Not to be outdone the Evangelicals replied with the Churchman's

⁴³ Kidd A.P. (ed), Halford: The Friar Bishop, Brisbane, 1998, p.95

⁴⁴ Holden C., From Tories at Prayer to Socialists at Mass- St Peter's Eastern Hill, 1846-1990, Melbourne, 1990, p.84; 149 – Holden sees that it was also a betrayal of the middle class pretensions of Anglicans compared to the lower class nature of all Irish immigrants.

⁴⁵ Scarfe J., The Diocese of Adelaide (and the West), Porter, *op.cit.*, p.91

⁴⁶ Cable/ Porter, Sydney, *op.cit.*, p.46

⁴⁷ ADB, Vol 4, *op.cit.*, p.232 – Charles Frederick Garnsey (1828-1884)

⁴⁸ ADB, Vol 3, pp.105-6 – Barry was bishop of Sydney 1884-1889

Alliance in 1893⁴⁹. Into this highly charged atmosphere the question of the institution of dedicated women's work in the Church was raised.

Apart from theological considerations, this step arose as it had in England because of the social needs of the day. In addition the changing status of women, in a society moving towards emancipation, saw their increasing emergence from the domestic scene into charitable and paid work. This whole movement engendered great concern about the possibility of a lessening of male authority throughout society, as even the legal situation that enshrined the subordination of women began to change. For instance, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 allowed divorce under limited circumstances in England. The Australian colonies followed suit as they did with Acts to allow women to be the guardians of their children from 1887 onwards. Even the right of women to retain their property on marriage came into force in Acts from 1884⁵⁰. By this stage the colonies were experiencing a time of great change in line with the movement towards Federation. The population was rapidly increasing, although just over 3,000,000, and pushing further and further into the outback areas⁵¹. The quality of life in the cities was improving and technological advances were changing the way people lived and communicated. As the cities expanded, new suburbs developed with the formation of new parishes.

From the 1860's the main work undertaken by women in the parish was the raising of funds through traditional activities like collecting money and running fetes and concerts. Despite this financial contribution, women had no input on the management of these funds nor was there any role for women in the Church's liturgy. Nevertheless the Church became more feminised towards the end of the century, as the suburban parish churches became distinct communities and centres of activity. This eventuated because women, who made up the majority of worshipping members, took over the mundane

⁴⁹ Judd/Cable, *op.cit.*, p.144

⁵⁰ Encel S., Mackenzie N., Tebbutt M., Women and Society: An Australian Study, Melbourne, 1974, p.16, 36

⁵¹ See Figure 1, p.34

aspects of parish management. Most Sunday school teachers were women, although under the authority of a male head. The transplantation of English Church movements began. The Biblewomen's Movement and the Girls' Friendly Society were established and in 1892, the Mother's Union arrived in Tasmania. This organisation was the most popular ever established in the Church of England and it quickly spread to the other colonies. It became an essential part of the parish and was built on the belief that motherhood was a holy vocation and as important as any other in the Christian life. As Dickey points out, in combination with the concept that the main role of a mother was in shaping community values, the power of the mother in society was acknowledged⁵². Thus while Rose can argue in the late 20th century that this Union, through its conservatism, helped maintain the subservient role of women in the Church, other observers stress the benefits it brought; particularly by providing a social outlet for women from domesticity and through its success aiding the growing visibility of women in church affairs⁵³.

Women were also entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers. In many ways this was due to the Education Acts that had been introduced in the colonies. Lower class women had always worked and in the colonies were more interested in shop and factory work, as this became available from the nineties, than work as servants. Before the sixties, when the professional training of nurses began, there were few respectable occupations for middle class women outside the home apart from dressmaking and teaching. In the following decades women were employed as clerical workers in the public service and private businesses; small commercial ventures were undertaken and from the seventies women became involved in journalism. Secondary and tertiary education slowly expanded and opened up for men and women as the latter moved

⁵² Dickey B., Not Just Tea and Biscuits, The Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Adelaide, 1895-1995, Adelaide, 1995, p.10, also Matheson A., A History of the Mothers' Union in Australia, Toowoomba, 1992, p.11, and Heeney B., The Women's Movement in the Church of England, 1850-1930, Oxford, 1988, p.45

⁵³ Rose M., Freedom from Sanctified Sexism, Queensland, 1996, p.26 – Rose points out that the conservatism of the Mother's Union even displeased some clergy in the late 20th century; see also Hilliard, Godliness, *op.cit.*, p.72 and Breward, *op.cit.*, p.101

towards enfranchisement. From the eighties women were graduating from the universities and the medical and related professions were slowly opened to them, although only after much prejudice and ridicule. Many female university graduates undertook teaching in ladies' colleges, while the less well educated teachers trained and studied on the job⁵⁴. The movement into tertiary education and the professions was not without a great deal of ongoing opposition – a situation that was only slowly overcome. The breaking down of resistance to change was undertaken chiefly by powerful men. Even so women continued to be seen as inferior and to face discrimination in salaries and job opportunities⁵⁵. Given the conflict over women entering professional and later political life, it has not been surprising that even stronger and more extended opposition to sharing any power would occur in the male-governed 2000-year-old traditional Church. Women in the Anglican Church gained no real power until the last decade of the 20th century when most Anglican dioceses accepted their ordination as priests⁵⁶.

On top of the positive changes in society, the end of the 19th century saw the development of awful slums in the major cities, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney. The country was also moving into a severe depression and in the days before social security the Churches felt a need to provide help. Women had always been involved in charitable work in the colonies and middle class Protestant women had pioneered charity work, like the Temperance Movement in the early days⁵⁷. The first philanthropic work on a large scale was that of the Roman Catholic convert, Caroline Chisholm and her work with migrant girls⁵⁸. As the century progressed many women were occupied in charitable work in one form or another. In the sixties and seventies a

⁵⁴ Teale R. (ed), Colonial Eve, Melbourne, 1978, p.210ff

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.204

⁵⁶ Breward, *op.cit.*, p. 206 - the beginning of lay power sharing was seen in the Sydney diocese for example, when women were first permitted to serve on synod and as church wardens – they had been allowed on vestries in the 1920's.

⁵⁷ Teale, *op.cit.*, p.192

⁵⁸ ADB, Vol 1, *op.cit.*, pp.221-3 – Caroline Chisholm, 1808-1877

dearth of organised Anglican philanthropy saw Anglican women supporting other nondenominational movements. Involvement in preventative, medical and child welfare institutions and organisations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union tended to strengthen women's interest in politics and enfranchisement. The attainment of female suffrage however, did not develop into the struggle it became in England. Instead it was first granted in South Australia in 1894⁵⁹.

In spite of a trend to the involvement of women in philanthropy, colonial society militated against the magnitude of the charitable scene in England. This was because of the priority of the expansion and development of the country. There was also a lack of the equivalent English middle and upper class women with time on their hands⁶⁰. On top of this situation, a large pool of available young women who would never marry did not exist in Australia as it did in England. Marriageable women were in high demand because men had always outnumbered women in the colonies. Initially this was caused by the higher number of male convicts and the members of the army and government officials. A change in the ratio of the sexes had been aimed for in assisted female passage after 1850 but had been nullified to some extent by the gold rushes⁶¹. By the turn of the century the numbers of men and women were almost even in the older colonies of NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and in South Australia, but there were many more men in Queensland and Western Australia and in all rural areas. Consequently in 1891, 93% of women aged between 40 and 44 had been married⁶².

Apart from the social needs that had appeared by the eighties, great concern had arisen in the Churches with education. This occurred because the type of society that

⁵⁹ Teale, *Ibid.*, p.253-4; SA, 1894; WA, 1899; Commonwealth, 1902; NSW, 1902; Tasmania, 1903; Queensland, 1905; Victoria, 1908

⁶⁰ Sturme R., *Women and the Anglican Church in Australia*, Unpub. PhD Thesis, Uni. of Sydney, 1989, pp.123-124

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4

⁶² Borrie W.D., *The European Peopling of Australia, A Demographic History 1788-1988*, Canberra, 1994, pp.140-1; p.166 - while in 1891, 93% of women aged 40-44 had been married and in 1901, 90% - this fell in 1921 to 83% and 86% in 1933, due to the mortality rates for men in WW1 and the Depression.

developed from 1850 leant towards secular education. Religious division, lack of a dominant denomination and the pioneering aspects of the colonies aided the trend to secularism⁶³. From 1840 onwards, great importance had been placed on education, which was seen as necessary for social stability and the move towards democratisation of the colonies. Reflecting the low social classes of the settlers, the 1846 census revealed that one quarter to one third of people were virtually illiterate. This rate increased enormously in rural areas⁶⁴. To change this situation it appeared that funds should be redirected from the state-supported denominational education system, to the public system. Barcan points out that by 1867 the secularist movement in education was a powerful force in all the colonies except Western Australia⁶⁵. Initially this produced supervision of the denominational schools by general boards. Although there were many church schools in NSW and Victoria, there were few in South Australia, Tasmania or Queensland, although some state schools in the former two colonies had assumed a denominational character⁶⁶. The movement for change in the nature of the educational systems brought about a long and often passionate conflict between the churches and secular forces⁶⁷. The result was that, following the lead of Victoria, various Education Acts were introduced in all the colonies between 1872 and 1894, as can be seen in Figure II. These acts were popularly known as the "free, compulsory and secular acts"⁶⁸. Initially this catchcry was only an ideal and in practice various definitions were applied. As far as secularisation was concerned, the outcome was that religious education was restricted in different degrees in each system and state aid to Church schools ended⁶⁹.

⁶³ Barcan A., A History of Australian Education, Melbourne, 1980, p.93, 113

⁶⁴ Elkin, *op.cit.*, p.70,

⁶⁵ Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.113 – see Fig.2, p.45

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Breward, *op.cit.*, p.32 – “Theological and political division over education have been one of the most enduring features of Australian history”.

⁶⁸ Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.151

⁶⁹ Elkin, *op.cit.*, p.361; Nunn, *op.cit.*, p.32; Hilliard, Godliness, *Op.cit.*, p.67; Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.151 –for example, NSW and WA allowed religious education in school hours, Victoria did not, nor did Queensland until it was reinstated in 1910 or SA for 60 years.

EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION

	<u>Free</u>	<u>Compulsory</u>	<u>Secular</u>	<u>Ministerial Control</u>
Vic.	1872	1872	1872	1872
NSW	1906	1880	1880-2	1880
SA	1892	1875	1852	1878
Tas.	1908	1868	1854	1885
Queens.	1870	1900	1875-80	1875
WA	1901	1871	1894	1894

FIGURE II

The outcome of the education acts saw the decline of the Church of England and Nonconformist parochial school systems. Although these denominations believed they had a duty to educate their children, little effort was made to retain their primary schools. Instead they began to concentrate on filling the gaps the state had not yet addressed in secondary education. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church, which had lost most by the withdrawal of State aid, managed to retain and expand all its schools by the increased introduction of religious teaching orders from overseas. Recruitment began very slowly but by the 1880's the arrival of nuns had become a flood. This endeavour was aided by the enormous growth in the popularity of the religious life in Ireland in the nineteenth century. The result was that most of the early groups were Irish, like the majority of the clergy and the Roman Catholic population. The first group of nuns to arrive were the Irish Sisters of Charity in 1838 and like other groups who followed or were founded in Australia, they experienced difficulties over clerical authority and autonomy⁷⁰.

The secularisation of education from the sixties onwards, saw the religious orders being

⁷⁰ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.73 – In their case with Archbishop John Bede Polding (1794-1877), an Englishman and Benedictine (see ADB, Vol. 3, *op.cit.*, p.340-7). The women's orders were not alone in this regard, as male religious who arrived from 1843 also had similar problem; see also O'Sullivan M.M.K., A Cause of Trouble, Sydney, 1995

recruited or formed to concentrate on education. The Josephite sisters for example, were founded in 1866 by Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Woods specifically to teach poor primary rural children in South Australia⁷¹. According to MacGinley many of the women who joined the Josephites in the early days were poorly educated. In contrast the upper and middle levels of the social stratum in Ireland provided the Choir sisters for the Irish congregations in Australia⁷². These well-educated and cultured women, like their counterparts in the European congregations, enabled the establishment of excellent secondary schools, as well as the major initial role in the parochial system. The education and cultural pursuits provided by the nuns were highly regarded and used by large numbers of Protestant girls, particularly in Queensland⁷³. Many Protestant church leaders met this with alarm and the new Roman Catholic schools were seen as another sign of the Church's "divisiveness and hostility to the nation"⁷⁴. The outcome of the full scale introduction of male and female religious orders into the Roman Catholic educational system created a unique system whereby Roman Catholic schools were staffed almost entirely by religious⁷⁵. This achievement which had the ultimate effect of a general raising of the social status of the working class Irish Catholic, created a more immediate effect of exacerbating sectarian divisions, particularly given the triumphalist attitude that the Roman Church was presenting at the time.

⁷¹ MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.157; see ADB Vol 5, *op.cit.*, p.174 for Mary Helen MacKillop (1842-1909); ADB Vol 6, *op.cit.*, pp.254-5 for Julian Edmund Tenison Woods (1832-1889).

⁷² MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.288 –the recruitment of Irish nuns continued until after WW2 even though the personnel became mainly Australian between 1910-40.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.126ff – For many years the dominant group of nuns involved in education in Queensland were the Sisters of Mercy. They came to Brisbane in 1861; p.98 – Sisters of Mercy were founded by Catherine McAuley in Ireland in 1831. The congregation was to become the most numerous Roman nuns in Australia as they were in the English-speaking world. They arrived in Perth in 1846; Fogarty R., Catholic Education in Australia, Melbourne, 1959, p.347 - points out that the school fees paid in the Melbourne archdiocese in 1900 by Protestants amounted to 12% of the total; in Brisbane a little earlier, 40-50%; while in Perth in the early days almost 100%.

⁷⁴ Austin A.G., Australian Education, 1788-1900, Melbourne, 1965, p.213 - further unease was caused when the bishops emphasised the mortal nature of the sin committed by parents when children were sent to a State school instead of the parochial one.

Australian Record, 15/8/1891 – At the 8th Sydney synod, the dangers of girls attending Roman Catholic schools were stressed and calls made for the establishment of Anglican High Schools.

⁷⁵ Fogarty, *op.cit.*, p.268

Bishop Alfred Barry, who had succeeded the conservative Evangelical, Bishop Frederic Barker in Sydney, was in the same tolerant mould as Moorhouse in Melbourne but without his brilliance. He was unable to affect the conservatism that had become entrenched in the Sydney diocese, becoming very unpopular and was eventually forced to resign. As a former headmaster, he had shown great interest in education in his diocese and urged the clergy to fulfil their allowable teaching role in the State education system. Like the other denominations in the eighties, he pushed for the establishment of Church boarding schools particularly to provide secondary education for middle class girls, which the state system had yet to address⁷⁶. The Church could afford to pay teaching staff in the expensive secondary schools that were being proposed. On the other hand, as the secularisation of education took hold and given the success of the Roman nuns, many Anglican clergy believed that the educational circumstances demanded the benefits, particularly, the stability of the work of such dedicated women. Nevertheless, despite the success Anglican nuns had achieved in such undertakings in the Mother country, this could only ever be a minor movement in the colonies in comparison to the scale of the Roman endeavour.

Barry was the first bishop to act to legitimate the introduction of sisterhoods and deaconesses. At the 1884 Sydney synod a motion was moved for a Select committee to report on the ministry of women in the diocese⁷⁷. Acting on the advice of the committee, a resolution was passed by the Sydney synod in 1885 that approved the introduction of deaconesses but not of sisterhoods⁷⁸. Barry was greatly disappointed, as he had hoped that both groups of women would be sanctioned⁷⁹. The synod had shown its power in overriding Barry's proposal and firmly rejecting the use of

⁷⁶ Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.188; Judd/Cable, *op.cit.*, p.128

⁷⁷ Proceedings of the Second Session of the Sixth Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, June 8th – July 15th 1884, Sydney, 1884, p.35; pp.53-5 - The motion for the formation of a Select committee was moved by the Rev. Clarendon Stuart, seconded by Dr J.C. Corlette of Ashfield.

⁷⁸ Proceedings of the Third Session of the Sixth Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, July 21st – July 30th 1885, Sydney 1885, p.58.

⁷⁹ The Australian Record, 25/2/1893, p.11; 2 2/4/1893, p.12

Anglican nuns in the Church educational system⁸⁰. The recommendations that the committee had endorsed were based on a Declaration of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and 18 bishops in 1871 concerning deaconesses. It reflected the major episcopal concerns about sisterhoods. Deaconesses were acceptable because they did not take vows, they could be married, unmarried or widowed and unlike nuns, completely subject to the authority of the parish minister and the bishop. The committee finished its recommendations by stating that whatever synod decided, if sisterhoods were established, vows should not be taken and the bishop's permission for every aspect of institution, including government, must be obtained. In the approval given for the introduction of deaconess work in Sydney, the synod explicitly stated that deaconesses were to take no part in church services and the traditional subservient role of women was emphasised⁸¹.

As a result of the Sydney decision, the first deaconess in Australia was "ordained" by Barry in 1886 - Mary Schleicher, whose sister, Selma, he also commissioned in 1888⁸². Following this action, Bishop Field Flowers Goe (1832-1910) in Melbourne commissioned as deaconess, two of the three women workers at the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) - Christina Cameron and Ellen Okins in 1890⁸³. This mission to the poor had been set up by Bishop Moorhouse in 1885 and by 1888 was being run by Emma Caroline Silcock (1858-1931), a novice nun on leave from the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage⁸⁴.

⁸⁰ Breward, *op.cit.*, p. 96 – the Sydney synod also rejected the Church Army which Barry wanted to introduce.

⁸¹ Proceedings, Third Session, *op.cit.*, App. No XIX, pp.128-131

⁸² Porter M., Women in the Church, Victoria, 1989, p.43

⁸³ ADB Vol 9, p.39 – Gow was bishop of Melbourne, 1887-1901; Sturrock M., The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, An Office Coveted by Few, Unpub. BTh Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1989, p.1

⁸⁴ Stacy F., The Religious Communities of Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, p.30; ADB Vol 11, pp.606-7

In contrast, the Adelaide synod passed a resolution in 1885 favouring the establishment of a sisterhood. Bishop D.F. Sandford (1831-1906) used this fact in a pastoral letter to his diocese of Tasmania in support of sisterhoods⁸⁵. This epistle was in reply to an enormous public outcry and contrary petitions he had received following the sanction by synod in 1887 of the introduction of sisterhoods. Dean C.L.Dundas, an Anglo-Catholic, had proposed the motion. He had been chosen by Sandford as dean, even though their churchmanship differed. Sandford has been described as a liberal and moderate churchman who had acted as chaplain to a sisterhood in England for nine years. Although the majority of leading churchmen in Tasmania approved of the resolution, there was a strong minority who condemned the action. In his pastoral letter Sandford pointed out that the Convocations in England saw no reason for sisterhoods not to be formed and that the tide of the movement could not be stopped. To appease the dissenters he pointed out that authority in the colonies could more easily be brought to bear than in England, and that any sisterhood would be under the authority of the bishop and synod. This would ensure the work undertaken would be uppermost; vows could be easily dispensed if they were taken, and any Romanising tendencies controlled. Despite Sandford's efforts the synod resolution was amended in the following year. The reason was that the majority of the members had become concerned with "the great divergence of opinion" concerning sisterhoods and "the general lack of knowledge throughout the diocese" about these women's communities. The attitude of the majority of synod was not necessarily theologically based, as the principal concerns expressed were the traditional problems of perpetual vows and the breaking of family ties - questions that had still not been resolved in England⁸⁶.

The hierarchy in Hobart were obviously very keen to have a religious order, particularly

⁸⁵ Lambeth Palace Library, Miscellaneous Collection, Edward White Benson Papers, M2764, Vol 54, Folio 305; D.F.Sandford, A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Laity of his Diocese on the Resolution of Synod, 14th June, Hobart, 1887, Folio 302 – Letter, D.F.Sandford to Archbishop Benson, 12th August, 1887 - These petitions were of great concern to Sandford and he wrote to Archbishop Benson of Canterbury asking for his advice; Stephens, The C of E in Tasmania, *op.cit.*, pp.101-2; ADB Vol 6, *op.cit.*, p.85 – Daniel Fox Sandford was bishop of Tasmania, 1883-1888.

⁸⁶ Australian Record, 5/9/1891, p.11

Dean Dundas. Several years later he let it be known that there were two women novices training at an English sisterhood with a view to beginning a religious community in Hobart. In Adelaide Bishop G.W. Kennion (1845-1922) had gone a step further and started a community of women at St Peter's House, Ovingham, in 1889, that he hoped would develop into a religious order⁸⁷. The women performed charitable and nursing work and although vows were not taken, a Rule was followed⁸⁸.

In 1891 at the General Synod a bid was made to establish dedicated women's work in the Australian Church⁸⁹. A motion was proposed by the Rev. George Spencer of Bega and seconded by Canon W. Chalmers of Melbourne⁹⁰. The aim of the proposal was to legalise religious orders in the colonies⁹¹. An unsuccessful amendment to delete any reference to sisterhoods was moved by Archdeacon H.A. Langley of Gippsland and seconded by Archdeacon H.T.A. Bentzen of Mudgee⁹².

The resolution stated,

This Synod recognising the importance of the works of mercy carried on by Deaconesses and Sisterhoods in various parts of the Anglican Communion, considers that the Australian portion of the Communion need such workers; and that it is desirable under proper safeguards, to

⁸⁷ Frost M., St Peter's Collegiate Girl's School, Adelaide, 1972, p.3; ADB Vol 5, *op.cit.*, p.17 – George Wyndham Kennion, bishop of Adelaide 1883-1894, Bath and Wells 1894-1919.

⁸⁸ Hilliard, *Godliness*, *op.cit.*, p.73.

⁸⁹ The Sydney Morning Herald, 29/9/1891, p.6

⁹⁰ ADB Vol 3, *op.cit.*, pp.376-7, William Chalmers (1833-1901) - bishop of Goulburn 1892-1901

⁹¹ CSC Archives- Letters from the Rev. George Spencer of Bega to CSC, 7/7/1891; 11/10/1891 – Spencer, a senior clergyman in the Goulburn diocese with a voice on the General Synod, had informed Mother Emily that he, Corlette from Sydney and Chalmers from Melbourne intended to propose and support a motion to sanction deaconesses and sisterhoods at the forthcoming Synod. Spencer spoke of the strange prejudice against sisterhoods in Australia and lamented the fact that there were 1,000 Roman nuns in NSW and no Anglican sisters.

⁹² Archdeacon Langley was the brother of J.D.Langley of St Phillip's, Church Hill, Sydney (later both were bishops of Bendigo), a member of the Evangelistic Union which founded the Deaconess Institution at Bethany (see Tress N., Caught for Life, Sydney, 1993, p.23ff)

encourage the formation in Australia of Deaconess institutions, and the employment of Deaconesses in Australian parishes and parochial districts, as well as the establishment and work of Sisterhoods in Australia, or of branches of existing Sisterhoods⁹³.

The motion was passed with a majority of 10 of the 12 bishops, 33 of the 49 clergy, and 19 of the 28 laymen. Most of the Sydney representatives dissented from the motion and there was strong opposition from many Melbourne delegates⁹⁴.

Criticism of the General Synod's resolution began immediately in the Evangelical Sydney Church press as well as the daily newspapers. The *Daily Telegraph* railed against "Puseyite schismatics", while an editorial in the *Australian Record* decried the attempts of Anglican sisterhoods to mimic the Roman Catholic Church – "Romans themselves regard it with unspeakable scorn". Obviously concerned with the autonomy sisterhoods displayed and embellishing the argument, the editor went on to say that the setting up of sisterhoods would result in "the degradation of women" as well as "the disorganization of the Church". The former argument illustrated an earlier point, which declared convents to be "enemies to women's greatness, purity, mental freedom and individual effort"⁹⁵. While the rhetoric concerning the effect on women can be treated as overcoloured, it nevertheless illustrates the alien nature, to many, of the religious life for women in the Church of England. The former comment concerning the Roman attitude to the institution of the religious life in Anglicanism has undoubted merit. This can be read in the tone of an address given by Cardinal Patrick Moran at the opening of a new parochial school in Sydney when he brought up the subject of the institution of Protestant nuns in Australia⁹⁶. He felt the resolution of the Anglican General Synod

⁹³ Proceedings of the General Synod of the Dioceses in Australia and Tasmania, Session 1891, Official Report, Sydney, 1891, pp.60-61

⁹⁴ Holden, *Tories at Prayer*, *op.cit.*, p.62ff ; Australian Record, 12/9/1891, p.6; 3/10/1891, p.1

⁹⁵ Daily Telegraph, 20/10/1891, p.4

Australian Record, 5/9/1891, *op.cit.*, p.9

⁹⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, 19/10,1891, p.4; ADB Vol 10, pp.606-7 – Patrick Francis Moran (1830-1911), archbishop of Sydney 1884, cardinal 1885-1911 – in 1901 he refused to attend the official inauguration of the Commonwealth because the Church of England was given precedence.

showed appreciation for the wonderful work being performed by Roman nuns. He wished the Anglicans luck but feared their wishes would be unfulfilled as many sisters would soon go over to Rome or return to secular life. He then stated that this had already occurred when a Puseyite sisterhood had been set up in another diocese. He doubted that Anglican sisters would have the same training and dedication that adherents of the *real* religious life would have. As he did not name the diocese or the sisterhood he described and as no Anglican seemed to have any knowledge of such a community, it would appear that the Cardinal was embroidering the truth⁹⁷. At the very least he was demonstrating the growing exultant nature of Roman Catholicism in its achievements.

The establishment of sisterhoods and deaconess institutions in England had been primarily a consequence of specific churchmanship in concert with societal factors that were secondary. While religious communities were viewed by the colonials as an expression of Tractarianism, they were invited and instituted with the accent more on their utilitarian capabilities demonstrated in their proven success in education and other mission work. Consequently following the General Synod's resolution invitations were quickly sent to the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC), well known for its educational achievements. These requests for help were made by Bishop H.H. Montgomery of Tasmania and Bishop Kennion of Adelaide⁹⁸; the Anglo-Catholic, Canon M. Stone-Wigg of Brisbane and Archdeacon Gilbert White of North Queensland on behalf of their bishops⁹⁹. White explained that the Community's presence was

⁹⁷ Daily Telegraph, 26/10/1891, - the Rev. C.F. Garnsey of Christ Church, St Lawrence, a champion of sisterhoods, called Moran's assertion "vague" in describing an Anglican sisterhood "somewhere or other in Australia" .

Hobart Mercury, 24/9/1892 (clipping, CSC Archives) - this was further reinforced by Dean Dundas the following year, when welcoming CSC to Tasmania, he described Hobart as the first place where an English sister had entered Australia. A possibility is that Moran was referring to Kennion's group in South Australia but Dundas and Garnsey would both have been well aware of this community.

⁹⁸ ADB Vol 10, *op.cit.*, pp.558-9 – Henry Hutchinson Montgomery (1847-1932), bishop of Tasmania 1889-1901, became episcopal secretary of SPG in 1901, KCMG in 1929

⁹⁹ Our Work, Christmas Issue, 1893, p.79; CSC Australian Archives, (APIA) – in a handwritten letter to Emily, Bishop Kennion explained that the group of women he had hoped would become a religious community had failed because the stability of religious vows was needed.

necessary because secondary education was entirely in the hands of the Romans¹⁰⁰.

Mother Emily of CSC had extended her sisterhood worldwide in the belief she shared with many others, that God had given England her Empire to further the English Church.¹⁰¹ As far as Australia was concerned, Emily was further influenced by the absence of Anglican sisters in the continent and various representations that "every town was overrun with Roman Catholic nuns"¹⁰². This no doubt fuelled her missionary zeal and the aim of her Community to further the Church. Subsequently the first sisters from CSC arrived in Australia in September 1892 with the object of being mainly involved in education in church schools¹⁰³. This aim led in later years to the erroneous impression that the Community was only an educational order. Canon Stone-Wigg of Brisbane was very keen to set up a network of Church schools as well, because by 1888 the higher education of girls in the Brisbane diocese was in the hands of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy¹⁰⁴. After CSC had declined his invitation to Brisbane, he was able to persuade Sister Caroline Amy Balquay (1837? –1915) a former member of the Community of St John the Baptist, Clewer, to come instead. She arrived in Brisbane in December of the same year¹⁰⁵.

Prior to the General Synod's positive resolution on women's work, the Bethany Deaconess Institute had been started in Sydney in August 1891 by the Evangelical Union. This was under the authority of the new bishop, William Saumarez Smith

¹⁰⁰ The Australian Record, 28/1/1893, p.7; ADB Vol 12, pp.103-4, Montagu John Stone-Wigg (1861-1918) later became the first bishop of New Guinea 1898- 1908; *Ibid.*, p.466 - Gilbert White (1859-1933) first bishop of Carpentaria in 1900-1915 and of Willochra 1915-1925.

¹⁰¹ Allchin A.M., The Silent Rebellion, London, 1958, p.271

¹⁰² CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, pp.126-7

¹⁰³ CSC, The Beginning, pp, [1993], p.1

¹⁰⁴ see F.N.73 – Mercy nuns had arrived in 1861.

¹⁰⁵ See, Oct. 1971, p.5; Anson P. The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, p.588

(1836-1909), a conservative Evangelical who had arrived the year before, and the guidance of Canon Mervyn Archdall¹⁰⁶. This training school was located in Archdall's Balmain rectory with Deaconess Menia Maspero as the first superintendent¹⁰⁷. It was based on the Bethanein Institution, which was associated with the Lutheran Kaiserwerth deaconesses¹⁰⁸. The concept of deaconess work in Sydney, like the English counterpart at the time, was to be that of a job outside the Institute while living in community. This changed very early and most trained women lived quite independent lives in which many married but continued their dedicated lifestyle¹⁰⁹. In the first eight years only five deaconesses were commissioned but these women were able to promote the "proper supporting role" of their sex by becoming involved in parish work under the supervision of the clergy¹¹⁰. Sustained by the help given by the introduction of a system of associates, the deaconesses also opened children's homes in connection with day and boarding schools at Balmain and Lewisham. Bethany settled in Redfern in 1896 where it remained for twenty years before Deaconess House was established in Carillion Avenue, Newtown¹¹¹.

Over the years many deaconesses became involved with missionary work, at least at one stage in their careers. Samuel Marsden had introduced an auxiliary branch of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Sydney in 1825 to work among the

¹⁰⁶ Tress *op.cit.*, p.23;
The Australian Record, 12/8/1893, p.6; ADB Vol 7, pp.85-86 – Mervyn Archdall (1846-1917); ADB, Vol 11, pp.675-6 – Smith was bishop of Sydney, 1890-1897, archbishop 1897-1909

¹⁰⁷ The Vision Unfolding - Deaconess Institution 1891-1991, PP [1992], p.2 – she became a missionary two years later.

¹⁰⁸ Tress, *op.cit.*, pp.21-2

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.40

¹¹⁰ Rodgers M., *Deaconesses in the Church of England in the Nineteenth Century with special attention to the early years of 'Bethany'*, Unpub. BD (Hons) Thesis, Uni.of Sydney, p.131; Judd/ Cable, *op.cit.*, p.154

¹¹¹ Tress, *op.cit.*, pp.25-6

Aborigines¹¹². In 1850, at the meeting of the Australasian bishops that had agreed to the establishment of diocesan synods, the Australasian Board of Missions (ABM) was established to convert the Aborigines and the Melanesians. CMS violently disagreed with the High Church mode of operation of ABM and withdrew from ABM¹¹³. For a while CMS suffered a decline in influence but with the re-establishment of the Evangelical outlook in the Sydney diocese under Bishop Barker, the situation became reversed. This was because the largest and richest Sydney and Melbourne dioceses supported CMS while ABM was mainly funded from the smaller dioceses. In 1892 CMS became independent in Australia at a time when enthusiasm for mission work was increasing in the Church generally¹¹⁴. Subsequently it sent women with increasing regularity to the mission fields as independent missionaries, and 39 women worked for CMS in this capacity between 1892 and 1899. These numbers continued to grow for much of the twentieth century¹¹⁵.

When CSC began work in the dioceses of Tasmania and Adelaide where the Community had been invited by bishops, the sisters were warmly welcomed and experienced little lay or clerical censure. Sister Caroline received a similar reception in Brisbane. In contrast to the friendly reception in Tasmania and Adelaide, CSC encountered suspicion and dislike in Sydney and Melbourne when the sisters arrived without episcopal invitation or sanction into unfriendly dioceses. Despite these varying reactions, the supportive clergy were always concerned about the reaction of the laity to this alien Anglican phenomenon. As a result, the emphasis that had been placed on the outreach of religious orders in England was repeated and the prayer life played down.

From the beginning of the deaconess Mission to the Streets and Lanes in Melbourne, many Low churchmen had disapproved of the new establishment and frequent criticism

¹¹² Cole K., A History of the Church Missionary Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1971, p.12

¹¹³ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14

¹¹⁴ Cole, *op.cit.*, p.18 – in 1892 autonomous NSW and Victorian Associations formed. In 1916, CMS in the states was unified.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.322ff

came from Church members¹¹⁶. On the one hand, this attitude can be attributed to the dislike for the churchmanship of the deaconesses; on the other, it can be equated with fear of the changing subordinate role of women in society noted in the animosity directed at women moving into the professions. From early in her association with MSL, Emma Silcock had hoped to found a religious community. She learned through experience the need to proceed cautiously with this aim. Apart from verbal attacks, the deaconesses had even experienced physical violence and had been stoned, pushed and hissed, as they went to church. What actually provoked such violence is unclear but it may have been to do with the way the women dressed, although this is speculative - there is uncertainty as to what they actually wore apart from the fact that it was a distinctive uniform. Despite the backing of the diocese for the Mission there appears to have been no official championing of the deaconesses in these frightening attacks¹¹⁷. The animosity lasted for many years and culminated in the loyalty of the deaconesses to the Church of England even being questioned¹¹⁸.

In Sydney a similar sentiment was echoed in a letter to a newspaper in which the arrival of the "Kilburn" sisters of CSC was seen as "an organised plot to destroy the Protestant character of the Church of England"¹¹⁹. This letter was an example of the rhetoric that developed into a wildly heated debate over the legitimacy of the Community after the sisters arrived in December 1892. The protagonists were either the supporters of sisterhoods or of deaconesses, as they were represented at Bethany. The polemic raged in church and secular newspapers for several years and was fuelled by the problems CSC was having in England at the time.

¹¹⁶ CHN, Esther Mother Foundress, Melbourne, [1948] p.117
In Our Midst, 1/8/1896, p.1; pp.3-4
In Our Midst, 1/1/1900, p.4

¹¹⁷ Sturrock, *op.cit.*, pp.19-20

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, quoting In Our Midst, Aug. 1906

¹¹⁹ Australian Record, 18/11/1893, p.12

Given the resolution of the Sydney synod in 1885 against the introduction of sisterhoods, it was not surprising that when CSC arrived in Sydney, the nuns were a prime target for vilification. Even the possibility of the legalisation of religious communities by the colonial churches had created great consternation. The early condemnation of the Community concentrated on the general lack of submission to clerical jurisdiction of sisterhoods, illustrated by the arrival of CSC without episcopal invitation or approval. It was argued that this action was in contravention of Church custom and those who supported the sisters were accused of disloyalty to the bishop. The counter argument submitted by their supporters was that because religious communities were recognised by the Church of England and were independent entities of laywomen, they could work wherever they chose. After an address given by Bishop Saumarez Smith at the Sydney synod in August 1893, the criticism moved to the need to uphold the principles of the Reformation which were being undermined by the churchmanship, teaching and ritualistic practices of the Community¹²⁰. Considering the few sisters who had arrived in Sydney, this fear of Romanism, personified by Anglo-Catholic nuns, was the crux of the animosity which eventuated and which simmered for so many years.

After the bishop's address, the sisters consented to a newspaper interview to defend themselves against their opponents and the question of their Romanising tendencies. The sister who was interviewed was emphatic,

The fact is we come into antagonism with Rome. We come to prevent if we can, the Roman from getting our friends to their schools. We are as loyal members of the Church of England as anybody living. The bishop is just as likely to go over to Rome as I am. We are entirely in sympathy with the Church of England and not only are we not allowed to go into a

¹²⁰ The chief supporter of the sisters in the press was Dr.J.C.Corlette of Ashfield, others were C.F.Garnsey and F.L.Fitzmaurice. The major early critic was a columnist at the *Australian Record* who worked under the pseudonym, Colin Clout. Others were synod members and many anonymous writers. One of the latter took the argument onto another plane when discussing Transubstantiation - "Real Absence" wrote that, "The seductive influence of women is relied on to hypnotise the common sense of mankind"(Daily Telegraph, 24/8/1893, p.7)

Roman chapel we are forbidden even to look at one¹²¹.

In view of Bishop Saumarez Smith's disapproval of the Community's churchmanship and the way in which the sisters had arrived without his sanction, the synodical address was surprisingly conciliatory. He was concerned that party feeling had become embittered because of these factors – a concern which had been raised earlier by the editor of the *Australian Record*¹²² – but he went on to say that “no personal antagonism or want of courteous toleration will be shown” nor would “he interfere with any clergyman who wanted to make use of their efforts”. He concluded by saying he would be happy if they were successful in their work¹²³. It seems obvious from this statement and later actions of the bishop that his public pronouncements were controlled by the opinion of the diocesan synod. Sister May believed this was so, as did Bishop Montgomery who in conjunction with other bishops like Kennion, W.T.T. Webber of Brisbane and J.F.Turner of Armidale had opposed his selection as Primate¹²⁴.

Montgomery was bishop of Tasmania from 1889-1901, when he became the episcopal secretary of SPG. He was one of the best bishops Australia ever had and his vision for the country was far beyond others of his time. While he was missionary-minded, innovative and enthusiastic he had little effect on Tasmania¹²⁵. He found Saumarez Smith a problem and after the General Synod of 1891 wrote that he was “glad to leave the bigoted ecclesiastical atmosphere of Sydney”. The Sydney synod he found “a narrow-minded incapable set” and thought that Smith was “as hopelessly incapable of

¹²¹ Daily Telegraph, 2/9/1893, p.4

¹²² Australian Record, 5/9/1891, *op.cit.*, p.9 – “If sisterhoods are introduced the laity of Australia will strongly protest against them and our divisions, instead of being healed will be inflamed”.

¹²³ Proceedings of the Second Session of the 9th Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, Aug.8-16, Sydney, 1893, pp.24-25

also Sydney Morning Herald, 9/8/1893, p.8

¹²⁴ Quarterly Chronicle, July 1899, p.16; ADB Vol 12, *op.cit.*, p.429 – William Thomas Thornhill Webber (1837-1903), bishop of Brisbane 1885-1903.

Lambeth Palace Library Miscellaneous Collection, Davidson Papers, M2840, Folio 6ff, Official Letters, 1892, Bishop H. H. Montgomery of Tasmania to Bishop R. Davidson (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1903-1928) 5/10/1891; E.W.Benson Papers, *op.cit.* Letter Bp G.W.Kennion to Benson, 1889.

¹²⁵ Hart P.R., The Church of England in Tasmania under Bishop Montgomery, 1889-1901, Unpub. MA Thesis, Uni. of Tas., 1963, pp.306-8

grasping the duties of a Minister as his diocese"¹²⁶. Montgomery believed that the undue influence of the synod on Smith was personified by that of his chaplain, A.W. Pain who was from the early 70's the clerical secretary of synod and later the first bishop of Gippsland (1902-1917).¹²⁷ The ecclesiastics were not alone in their opinion of Smith. The Governor of NSW, Sir Henry Rawson, described Smith as "ineffective and a perfect nonentity"¹²⁸. Whatever the character of Smith, his actions and that of the Sydney synod are a prime example of the influence which men on the large city synods were able to exert on their episcopal leaders¹²⁹.

The furore fuelled by the arrival of CSC began to abate in the press at the end of 1893 when the public were requested to end the almost daily correspondence. It seems to have been a lot of fuss over the arrival of two or three Anglican nuns. In actuality it was an argument over churchmanship at a time when sectarian bitterness was increasing over the successful achievements of the large Irish Catholic population. Although the debate over Anglican nuns subsided for a while, as far as the diocesan synod was concerned, it was never far from the surface. Several years later when the sisters named a school they had started "The Chatswood Church of England School", the synod questioned the validity of the Community's membership of the Church of England. In a letter to Mother Emily, the sister who ran the school explained that she felt it unnecessary to defend the Community against this accusation and commented, "There are a good many popes in the Church of England, certainly in the Sydney diocese"¹³⁰.

The result of the vitriolic conflict between the champions of sisterhoods and deaconesses led to the complete alienation between the two fields of women's work

¹²⁶ Montgomery to Davidson, 5/10/91, *op.cit.*

¹²⁷ Montgomery to Davidson, 22/11/1891

¹²⁸ Holden C., Anglo-Catholicism in Melbourne, 1997, p.9

¹²⁹ Patrick A., The Ideals of a Neglected Archbishop: William Saumarez Smith, a Comprehensive Church and a Christianised Society, Sydney, ND, - argues that Smith had a difficult time in the Sydney diocese in his struggle for a comprehensive diocese. The outcome was that he failed in this aim and pleased nobody.

¹³⁰ Quarterly Chronicle, July 1898 No 26, p.13

in Sydney. Consequently those who would have supported both groups were forced to side with one or the other. For instance, the Rev. Charles Barber, rector of Petersham, member of the council of Bethany deaconesses, wrote of his support for CSC. Severely criticised, he was told he could not support both groups because they were diametrically opposed. He resigned from the Bethany council in June 1894¹³¹. A wider consequence was that this polarising effect seemed to extend more throughout the other colonies than may otherwise have been the case, although the solidifying of the divisions in churchmanship in the different dioceses would play an important role as well.

Before the bitter altercation in Sydney there were churchmen who were happy to endorse both types of women's work in the Church. A prime example was Bishop Montgomery who, apart from his invitation to CSC, had "ordained" a deaconess in Tasmania in 1894¹³². The Adelaide diocese appointed two deaconesses in the late nineties but after this few deaconesses were commissioned to work in Tasmania or South Australia¹³³. When this did finally eventuate, it was not until at least 30 years after the bitter altercation in Sydney. This was mirrored in the handful of deaconesses who were commissioned in Perth, but only from 1938 onwards. In contrast, CSC made its most successful marks in Australia in these dioceses during those years¹³⁴. The polarising trend was even more pronounced in the High Church Brisbane diocese where there has never been a commissioning of a deaconess¹³⁵. In contrast the Society of the Sacred Advent was encouraged and the Church Army later became very strong¹³⁶.

¹³¹ Australian Record, 15/4/1893, pp.11-12

¹³² Tress, *op.cit.*, p.97

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp.107-8; see also Hilliard, Godliness, *op.cit.*, p.73

¹³⁴ Honniball J.H.M., 'Archbishop and Primate, Henry Frewen Le Fanu', Alexander, Four Bishops, *op.cit.*, p. 187 – The first commissioning in Perth was in 1938, although a dss had been invited to work in Perth in 1928

¹³⁵ Letter, Brisbane Diocesan Archives, Patricia Ramsay, 19/4/95 - this is not to say that deaconesses have never worked in individual parishes in Brisbane and Tress, *op.cit.*, p.120, cites four as having done that.

¹³⁶ Church Chronicle, 1/9/1944, p.271; 1/9/65, p.3 –The Church Army was founded in London in 1882 by Rev. Wilson Carlile. A missionary society of men and women who joined with commissions

Therefore the lack of deaconesses or the institution of their training schools in the High Church dioceses can be attributed to the preference for religious orders. Nevertheless financial considerations may have played a part because the parish was responsible for the remuneration that deaconesses received, whereas the religious communities were self-supporting.

In comparison to the High Church dioceses, the encouragement and support given to the Bethany Deaconess Institute by the Sydney synod led to the success story of this form of women's work in the Australian Church. In contrast, although the first deaconesses in Melbourne from MSL developed into a religious community, the Community of the Holy Name, this was only after years of struggle in the face of implicit and outright opposition. This outcome eventuated because of the effectiveness of the Mission's outreach and the development of Melbourne into a more open diocese – one that could accept both forms of dedicated women's work. Nevertheless, the Deaconess Movement outside the MSL did not emulate the success of the Sydney scene. Until the 1920's there were only a few who worked independently under the authority of the parish clergy in Melbourne.

The introduction of dedicated women's work in the Australia colonies occurred primarily because of educational and social concerns. In few exceptions this was in association with those holding similar theological views to these women. Despite the invitational nature of the foundation of religious communities, there is little doubt that they would have arrived or formed in Australia anyway, whatever the hierarchical view. This can be seen in the determined spread of this small movement throughout the Empire in response to the missionary nature of the Anglo-Catholic Movement¹³⁷.

like the Salvation Army, it is made up of lay workers led by priests. The Rev.J.S Cowland established it in Australia in 1934. The outreach involves training colleges mission caravans in bush, parish work, children's homes, bookshops and hostels. It also trains Aboriginal workers in social and evangelistic work.

¹³⁷ Davies J.D., The Faith Abroad, Oxford, 1983, p.1; p.131

Both sisterhoods and deaconess institutions had been established in England in an urban environment where these women lived in regimented communities. In the case of the sisterhoods, the combination of the spiritual and active life that the communities undertook was extremely onerous and necessarily restrictive of mobility. This model of the religious life that developed in a vastly different environment was transplanted into Australia in miniature. It was expected to be as effective in both the expanding urban and rural dioceses as it had been in the southern English cities. As the growth of women's religious orders in Australia is examined the question of their relevance to the missionary needs of the Church and to the Australian experience of Anglicanism must be considered.

CHAPTER THREE The Establishment and Diversification of the Outreach of Religious Communities in Australia: 1892 - 1914

The invitations to the Australian colonies received by the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) were due to its great success in education and mission work - the areas of great concern to the colonial bishops. The Community had become immersed from its inception in a wide range of social work and large institutions were started for orphans, foundlings and destitute children. The first of the Education Acts introduced by Gladstone's Liberal government in 1870 made primary school education compulsory. This led to the promotion of secular education. Consequently more of the Community's attention became concentrated on providing Christian education and schools were begun for the middle classes¹. Ten years after its institution, the Community began to spread overseas and centres were established in Canada, India and Burma².

CSC was financially based on a charitable organisation, the Church Extension Association (CEA), begun by Emily Ayckbowm in 1864³. This foundation enabled the Community to set up many large and varied institutions and involve itself in a wide range of social work. Much financial assistance was given to overseas mission work and by the nineties CEA had members in every continent, including Australia. It has been calculated that at that stage the Association's magazine, *Our Work*, had 50,000 readers⁴.

A volunteer group of seven sisters, several women helpers and five orphan girls arrived

¹ CEA, Some Memories of Emily Harriet Elizabeth Ayckbowm Mother Foundress of the CSC, London, 1914, p.86; CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, p.71

² *Ibid.*, pp.72-74

³ *Ibid.*, p.16 - the motto of the CEA was to become "Pro Ecclesia Dei"(for the Church of God) which later was adopted by CSC.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.55

in Hobart on 14 September 1892 to establish CSC in the Australian colonies⁵. The party was under the direction of Sister May, later the second mother superior. She had just organised the establishment of the Community in Canada and was to stay temporarily to arrange the work⁶. The group received a very warm welcome from the Tasmanian civic leaders and the diocesan representatives who were led by Dean Dundas, since Bishop Montgomery was in Melanesia. A few days later most of the party set off for Melbourne and Adelaide, leaving Sister May and two of the sisters in Hobart to find rental accommodation⁷.

Mother Emily's independent stance aimed to minimise clerical interference in her Community. The sisters therefore informed Bishop Montgomery that they would be starting work in Hobart without the help of the diocese. The Bishop was delighted with this proposal as it made it "so much easier for him"⁸. Hart believes this was because Montgomery did not want to be seen as officially in charge of the Community. Montgomery explained to the sisters that he respected the independent stance they had consciously built from the episcopate, and he placed no restrictions on their style of worship. In return the sisters agreed to respect his ruling on any doctrinal disputes⁹.

Although the Community was financially supported by CEA, funding had been stretched to the limit by the rapid worldwide expansion of the sisterhood. Accordingly the sisters had to find income to start their work and help support themselves. The gathering force of a severe economic depression made this a difficult task and hardship

⁵ CSC, CSC Australia, 1892-1992, The Beginning, (pamphlet), [1993], p.1 -The seven volunteer sisters were May, Lucy, Hannah, Irene, Phyllis, Bridget and Rose; Miss Lang of Adelaide accompanied them with Miss Rock and Lily Gardner.

⁶ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.118

⁷ Beginning, *op.cit.*, pp.1-2. The two sisters were Phyllis and Hannah.

⁸ CSC, Life for the Sisters in the 1890's (printed sheet - quoting an early Hobart Journal of the Community)

⁹ Hart P.H., The Church of England in Tasmania under Bishop Montgomery, 1889-1901, Unpub.MA Thesis, Uni. Of Tasmania, 1963, pp.285-286

was encountered in all the centres which they established. The first moneymaking venture in Hobart was a depot for second-hand goods in Campbell Street, where a mission to the poor was conducted in the same premises¹⁰.

Education was the field where the Community was most urgently needed as state aid to Church schools had been abolished in Tasmania in 1854¹¹. By the nineties the aim in the colonies was the provision of universal public education at an elementary level. There were few secondary state schools, a situation that left a niche for the Churches to fill¹². Such was the encouragement of many of the clergy in Hobart that the sisters believed they were going to take over schooling in the colony¹³. Confidence grew that if adequate human and monetary resources could be obtained at least six schools could be opened¹⁴. No time was wasted and on 3 October they began a higher-grade elementary school for boys and girls in Old Synod Hall, lent rent-free by Dean Dundas. This was in the grounds of the cathedral, St David's, which was being constructed and after which the school was named¹⁵. Like all the Community's schools it was to be in competition with state education, so fees of one shilling and sixpence a week were charged, in comparison to one shilling in the public schools¹⁶. Bishop Montgomery was looking forward to this school becoming "quite a High school". Although the sisters intended to prepare girls for university and the professions, the bishop's expectations made them "quake", due to the lack of a proper teaching college and a dearth of English-trained teachers in the colony¹⁷.

¹⁰ Sister Elizabeth May, A History of the Community of the Sisters of the Church in Australia, Paper delivered to the Melbourne Church of England Historical Society, 1970 (typewritten)

¹¹ Barcan A., A History of Australian Education, Melbourne, 1980, p.89

¹² *Ibid.*, p.175

¹³ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan. 1893, p.34

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.58

¹⁵ *Beginning, op.cit.*, p.3

¹⁶ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1893, *op.cit.*, pp.33-4

¹⁷ Quarterly Chronicle, 5/3/1893, p.36; 8/7/1893, p.37

In this first experience of teaching in Australia, the sisters found the children quite different to their English counterparts and one sister wrote to Mother Emily,

The work in Australia is intensely interesting, but ignorance is deplorable; reverence is not understood and it will take a long time to instil it into the minds of Australians¹⁸.

The Community, led by Sister Phyllis, established a pattern in the outreach and the educational work undertaken. Apart from mission work, the institution of second-hand clothing depots and teaching in Sunday schools, the sisters became involved immediately in primary schools. Usually these schools were run in rent-free parish halls or when these were unavailable, schools were begun in rented accommodation. This was often in the same quarters where the sisters lived. Eventually one of the primary schools expanded into a girls' boarding school that progressed to offering secondary education. Although the depression of the nineties made life difficult in many respects, there were unexpected bonuses. For instance, large properties needed to establish schools were readily available at cheap rental rates and there was much demand for the second-hand clothing outlets.

Given the two or three sisters present in each centre, a number which did not ever increase to more than six or seven, the Community outreach was of necessity undertaken with much external assistance, either paid or voluntary. The paid assistance was for domestic help and for teaching staff as the educational outreach grew. Recruitment to the sisterhood was slow and by the beginning of World War I less than a dozen Australians had been fully professed. This was in contrast to the relative popularity of associate membership, a general feature of Anglican communities. These associate groups were external members of either sex, tied to a community by a simple prayer life. In the development of religious communities in Anglicanism these associates were indispensable because of their financial, physical and spiritual support.

¹⁸ Quarterly Chronicle, April 1896, p.17

In combination with the use of volunteers from supportive parishes, unpaid assistance in all aspects of the work was thus obtained. CSC gained further help through the formation of auxiliaries from the local branches of CEA. These had been previously formed in Brisbane, Ballarat, Melbourne, Sydney and Tasmania to distribute copies of *Our Work* to provide money for the Community¹⁹. Over the years donations of property and financial gifts from wealthy benefactors, even from relatives and friends of particular sisters, assisted the purchase and expansion of the major school undertaken in each centre.

The opening of St David's Cathedral was celebrated twelve months after CSC arrived in Hobart. Eight bishops from Australia and New Zealand gathered for the occasion, which gave Bishop Montgomery and Bishop G.W. Kennion of Adelaide the opportunity to praise the work of the sisters. To show his confidence in CSC, Bishop Montgomery informed the episcopal gathering that his young sons were being educated by the sisters²⁰. Further invitations were extended to the Community from the bishops of Dunedin, Rockhampton and the Riverina²¹. The sisters accepted the New Zealand request and went there in 1895, again under the leadership of Sister May. As a result two schools were established - St Hilda's, Dunedin, in 1896 and St Margaret's, Christchurch, in 1910²².

As well as running the Collegiate school, which St David's had been renamed at the end of 1893, CSC also controlled two elementary schools²³. The largest was in Holy Trinity Parish where the numbers varied according to the weather from 130 to 150 boys and

¹⁹ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.126

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.129; CSC, History of Tasmania (handwritten) - The younger boy later became Viscount Montgomery. The sisters attributed much of his later success to the good early grounding he had received in Hobart; Hart, *op.cit.*, p.286 – when the sisters' school was in great financial trouble at one stage, Mrs Montgomery provided monetary aid.

²¹ Quarterly Chronicle, April 1894, p.58

²² Stacy F., The Religious Communities of the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, p.20

²³ Tasmania, History, *op.cit.*, - in 1895 the collegiate school moved to “Stephenville”; boys were no longer taken after 1898.

girls²⁴. When this school closed nearly twenty years later, a similar school, St David's or Synod Hall, was opened in Cathedral Street²⁵. The depression began to ease by the turn of the century and this saw a general expansion of the Collegiate High school that had become a boarding school in 1895. By 1910 Collegiate had 112 day pupils and boarders, which made it the largest girls' school in Tasmania²⁶.

Notwithstanding the Broad Church outlook of Bishop Montgomery and the strength of support for sisterhoods amongst the clerical hierarchy, opposition from some quarters in Tasmania remained. This attitude was evident when a motion passed at the Tasmanian synod in 1887 in favour of sisterhoods was rescinded in the following year²⁷. Wherever an Anglican religious community appeared it was an instantly visible embodiment of all the fears of the anti-ritualists. Once the sisters' schools were begun in Hobart, debate arose again about nuns, confession, anti-Romanism and anti-feminism²⁸. Although disquiet about the Roman orientation of CSC continued for the following decade, this was unrecorded in the Community archives²⁹. What was recorded was a specific attack at the synod in 1901 by Captain Thomas de Hoghton, a leading Evangelical. His attack on the teachings and practices of CSC was the culmination of several years of sustained opposition that he and others had mounted in synod and the parishes, against what they believed was ritualism in the Tasmanian diocese. As Hart points out, his narrow outlook was in complete contrast to the liberal, tolerant outlook of Montgomery. In reality the allegations of ritualism were more relevant to some practices in England than those in Hobart and the bishop, who had never been a ritualist, was astonished by the attack³⁰. Following firm support given to Montgomery at the 1900 synod, a letter in the *Church News* attacked de Hoghton. This instigated a flood of correspondence that argued over

²⁴ Our Work, Jan.1906, p.72 - all the teachers at this school were old girls from the Collegiate School.

²⁵ Sr Elizabeth May, *History CSC, op.cit.*, - this seems to have been in the same premises as the original St David's.

²⁶ Quarterly Chronicle, March 1910, p.14; Scarfe J., Memoirs of Sister Jessica, (typewritten) – this name was retained until 1946 when the school was renamed St Michael's Collegiate School.

²⁷ See Chapter Two, p. 53

²⁸ Stephens G., The Anglican Church in Tasmania, Hobart, 1991, p.114

²⁹ Hart, *op.cit.*, p.284

ritual as well as apostasy, because two of the lay teachers at the Collegiate school had recently gone over to Rome.

At the synod of the following year, the attack on the sisters by de Hoghton and his supporters lasted for two days. The basis of the attack was that apart from their nun-like attire, the sisters were promoting teachings which were opposed to those of the Church of England - notably, the encouragement of auricular confession, prayers for the dead, the proposal of seven sacraments instead of two and fasting communion. Further the sisters used statues and believed in the "sacrifice of the altar" and the "real presence". Montgomery, who had the support of the majority of the synod, felt that the accusations should not be addressed in that forum. This prompted Sister Phyllis to ask for an external inquiry and a commission was formed to investigate. While the allegations against the Community were no doubt correct, the commission concluded that there were divergent views in the Church and some sections found a need for more ritual than others. Despite de Hoghton's complaint that the commission was only composed of one school of thought with no Evangelical presence, the bishop concluded that the sisters were undoubtedly loyal to the Church³¹. The outcome was that the support given to the Community by Bishop Montgomery continued in the diocese and the sisters became very popular³². Consequently, CSC felt very comfortable in Hobart and this is borne out by the bishop of Hobart always being appointed as the visitor and the dean of Hobart as the chaplain to the Community in Tasmania³³.

The majority of the pioneer sisters had left Hobart for Melbourne and Adelaide on 19 September 1892³⁴. In Melbourne Sister Esther from the Deaconess Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) met them at the dock. She organised temporary

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.245-247

³¹ CSC Archives, HP8 - Newspaper clipping, 16/3/1901; also Hart, *op.cit.*, p.291

³² Stephens, *op.cit.*, p.111

³³ Our Work, Jan.1905, p.70

³⁴ Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.2

accommodation for those who would remain in Melbourne³⁵. The rest of the party continued on to Adelaide where they were greeted by Bishop Kennion and Canon Samuel Green, the rector of St Peter's Glenelg³⁶. The bishop was an innovative ecclesiastic who, apart from an attempt at the earlier formation of a sisterhood, had also established itinerant mission chaplaincies in South Australia in 1883³⁷. The former venture had failed and Miss Lang, who had funded that group, helped Kennion to persuade CSC to come to Australia³⁸. She helped finance the sisters' voyage, travelled to England to accompany them on the trip and initially provided a house for the Community in Adelaide³⁹.

A few weeks after the sisters arrived, Kennion arranged a formal welcome at Bishops Court that was attended by about 100 supportive guests. The bishop's wife later told the sisters how good it was to see all the clergy united in this welcome⁴⁰. This unity was aided by the support amongst Anglicans in Adelaide for an "authorised or organised body" to perform a similar outreach to that being successfully undertaken by the Roman Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart begun by Mary MacKillop and Julian Woods in 1866 at Penola in South Australia⁴¹.

When Sister May arrived to help the sisters get established, St Paul's City Church

³⁵ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, pp.132-3

³⁶ Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.2; Hilliard D., Godliness and Good Order, Adelaide, 1986, p.61 – Green, a High churchman declined to be nominated in 1894 for the episcopal election to replace Kennion who returned to England as the bishop of Bath and Wells.

³⁷ see Chapter 2, p.54; Frost M., St Peter's Collegiate Girl's School, Adelaide, 1972, p.3; Frappell R., The Anglican Ministry to the Unsettled Rural Districts of Australia, Unpub.Thesis, Uni. of Sydney, 1992, pp.159-160 – these have been seen as forerunners of bush brotherhoods.

³⁸ CSC Archives(APIA)- Letter from Bp Kennion to Mother Emily(handwritten)1892

³⁹ Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁴⁰ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, pp.130-131

⁴¹ Hilliard D., Godliness, *op.cit.*, p.72; Frost, *op.cit.*, p.8 - As was usually the case wherever the sisters settled a vice-regal meeting was arranged and the Governor, Lord Kintore, expressed his wish to help their work.

elementary school was taken over rent-free. Fees were charged of between sixpence and one shilling a week, and to further finance their work a site was found in Hindley Street for the usual depot to sell second-hand goods⁴². In April 1893, the Commercial Bank suspended withdrawals, making the financial situation more difficult since money was unavailable to pay the employed teachers. Apart from trying to consolidate their position in Adelaide in the first year, the sisters spent considerable time travelling and opening new branches of CEA⁴³. This helped them to become known and aided their meagre finances. The deepening depression led to the sisters' involvement in feeding the unemployed at the Hindley St depot and establishing a working-man's club⁴⁴. Besides educational and parish work, in 1894 a convalescent hospital was established which ran in collaboration with the South Australian Children's Hospital for some years⁴⁵. At this stage, there were six sisters in Adelaide and St Peter's School for girls was opened in the building that was the rented home of the sisters in Kermode Street⁴⁶. This school (which had no connection with the prestigious boys' school of the same name) grew slowly with the pupils being very lax in their attendance - an Australian trait⁴⁷. It was not until 1912 that it became a secondary boarding school⁴⁸.

The South Australian government spent less on education than any state except Tasmania and many parents preferred to send their children to private elementary schools⁴⁹. The Community consequently began several more diocesan elementary schools over the next few years in cooperative parishes; as well a new venture in

⁴² Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁴³ Frost, *op.cit.*, p.6

⁴⁴ Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.4

⁴⁵ Frost, *op.cit.*, p.8

⁴⁶ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.131

⁴⁷ Beginning, *op.cit.*, p.4; Frost, *op.cit.*, p.2; CSC, History of South Australia (handwritten)

⁴⁸ Frost, *op.cit.*, pp.28-29, p.34

⁴⁹ Barcan, *op.cit.*, pp.213-4

mission schools was undertaken at Gawler⁵⁰. By 1911 the sisters and their assistants ran four of the twenty-five diocesan schools in Adelaide and were educating one-quarter of the children in the diocesan system⁵¹. Several more elementary schools were opened in the next few years and ran until after the First World War.

Mother Emily had taken the decision to establish a centre in Western Australia before her death and a second wave of pioneering sisters arrived in Perth in November 1901. The first appeal to CSC to take charge of an orphanage in Adelaide Terrace had been made in 1890 by the Anglo-Catholic, Dean F.W.Goldsmith (1853-1932)⁵². He had assured Emily that Bishop H.H. Parry would welcome the Community as he wished to establish a sisterhood in Western Australia. Requests for help continued from Parry and his successor C.O.L.Riley, as neither was able to maintain Church schools in the colony⁵³. Both bishops were Low Churchmen but were more concerned with the introduction of stable Church schools in the diocese than the churchmanship of CSC⁵⁴. When Riley arrived in the colony, there were only two church schools in a community of 50,000 Anglicans. In contrast there were 23 Roman Catholic schools in which 600 Protestant children were enrolled. The education system in the colony had always been weak, under-resourced and slow to develop⁵⁵. This was related to the sluggish growth of Western Australia until the discovery of gold in 1892 - an event that enabled the colony to escape the depression of the nineties and rapidly expand⁵⁶.

⁵⁰ Frost, *op.cit.*, p.18

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Foreword, Bishop Thomas

⁵² Whittington V., Sister Kate, Nedlands, 1999, p.63 (quoting CSC England Archives, letter, 8/5/1890); see also, ADB, Vol 9, pp.42-3 – Frederick William Goldsmith was dean of Perth from 1888-1904 and 1st bishop of Bunbury, 1904-1917.

⁵³ Hawtrey C.L.M., The Availing Struggle, Perth, 1949, pp.112-3

⁵⁴ Holden C., Ritualist on a Tricycle, Perth, 1977, p.40 - Parry(1877-1893) had originally wanted Clewer to come to Perth, as Beatrice, one of his two sisters who were both nuns, was a member. She had hoped to establish a community in Western Australia in concert with Sr Caroline in Brisbane.

⁵⁵ Boyce P.J., 'The First Archbishop', Alexander F (ed.), Four Bishops and Their See, Nedlands, 1957, p.61

⁵⁶ Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.149, 196

The arrival of CSC in Perth was not well planned. Three sisters arrived in the hottest November for years with no one to greet them⁵⁷. Mother May had informed Bishop Riley that the sisters were coming but had neglected to say on which ship⁵⁸. The whole letter from May had been very vague and the bishop had no idea of their intentions⁵⁹. Once again the financial prospects for the Community were extremely poor, as the sisters had limited money. This situation was exacerbated when a second group of sisters, with 26 orphans and two lady helpers, arrived a few weeks later. Finances were so limited that the sisters were unable to afford the tram fares and so everyone walked around the town. Notwithstanding the circumstances there was no question of any monetary assistance from the diocese, even though Bishop Riley expected a girls' boarding school to be opened almost immediately. Despite the problems, a school managed to open in February 1902 in rented premises in St Mary's Church hall in Colin Street. Suitable living accommodation had been found nearby but conditions were initially uncomfortable due to the furniture they expected from England failing to arrive. The only furniture they possessed were "three stretcher beds, some packing cases and a lamp"⁶⁰.

As in all the other centres the sisters opened a clothing depot to help support themselves and their charges⁶¹. Mission work was begun at the cathedral with the organisation of Sunday teas using donated food for unemployed men. Although none of the sisters had ever taught secondary school and despite the initial financial strain, the great heat,

⁵⁷Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.140 - the three sisters were Vera, Rosalie and Susannah. Vera was in charge and had been one of Mother Emily's chief helpers as well as novice mistress at Kilburn. After Emily died, she had been in charge of the Community until May returned from the Boer War to assume control.

⁵⁸ Hawtreys, *op.cit.*, p.113

⁵⁹ Whittington, *op.cit.*, p.255 – despite the early difficulties, Riley was a loyal friend and visitor to the sisters until his death in 1929. Boyce, *op.cit.*, p.72- in later years Sr Rosalie spoke of his encouragement and paternal interest in the Community.

⁶⁰ Hawtreys, *op.cit.*, p.113

⁶¹ Sr Rosalie, Early History in Perth, (handwritten for sisters only)

illness and lack of personnel, the school grew rapidly into a secondary school - Perth College - the first such Anglican school in Western Australia⁶². Between 1908 and 1914, the Community was able to expand into several preparatory schools for Perth College. A primary school at the Cathedral was taken over, rent free, and this school became St George's High School⁶³.

In 1902, two sisters and a lady helper, accompanied by nine orphans to ease the congestion in Perth, undertook a small parish school in Kalgoorlie. The living conditions were extremely primitive but the school was soon self-supporting. The lack of staff was a continuing problem and by 1916 there was only one sister to run the school; the Community withdrew as the loneliness became too much for her.

Apart from education, the major undertaking in Perth was the establishment of an orphanage at Parkerville. Sister Kate and Sister Sarah had come from England specifically to run an orphanage for destitute infants and older children. They had brought with them 22 orphan boys and girls aged between six and ten, as well as several older girls. These children were to be the nucleus of the orphanage where it was hoped to give them a better life. The sisters bought a block of land at Parkerville and in 1903 the first building was erected - it was a house of waste timber built free of charge by two local men⁶⁴. Sister Kate was in charge of Parkerville, which was run on a cottage home system of shared accommodation for boys and girls, a concept unheard of in Western Australia⁶⁵. For many years the orphanage was supported by Perth College

⁶² Sr Rosalie, Perth College - Record of the work of the Sisters of the Church in Western Australia: Memoirs of a Pioneer Sister, Perth, 1958, p. 18 – There were five women among the first graduates of the University of WA, two of them had been educated at Perth College.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.8, pp.12-14 - To assist the lack of personnel, some of the older girls being educated at the High schools helped teach the younger children under the supervision of the sisters; Boyce, *op.cit.*, p.72 – Bishop Riley's two daughters attended the sisters' cathedral day school.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.10

⁶⁵ Whittington, *op.cit.*, p.1

until eventual recognition from the public and government resulted in support and generous gifts. Nevertheless the orphanage continued to struggle financially because of the continual increase of children in care, some of whom were handicapped⁶⁶.

In those dioceses where CSC had received episcopal invitation, the sisters experienced little lay or clerical censure. In any criticism they did receive, the bishops and the clerical hierarchy championed them. This was not the case in Melbourne (or Sydney) where the sisters arrived uninvited into an unfriendly diocese. Melbourne had become the premier city of the Australian colonies and was the centre of finance and communications in the continent. "Marvellous Melbourne", had a population of 500,000, one quarter of which was involved in manufacturing⁶⁷. This industrialisation had created slums like those in Sydney, which although not as shocking as their counterparts in Britain, were grim. The depression was felt more in Melbourne than elsewhere and cost her the pre-eminent place among Australian cities⁶⁸. After the banking system collapsed in 1893, unemployment in Melbourne reached thirty percent⁶⁹. This situation did not augur well for the pioneers. Often the sisters were down to their last penny and were very glad for donations of food and money. Apart from this dismal financial state they were subjected to violent attacks for their churchmanship in the *Victorian Churchman*⁷⁰. These events were exacerbated by the attack on the Community in England, described in the first chapter⁷¹. Despite the opposition, there were some letters to the Melbourne newspapers championing the Community's cause in England. The gist of this defence was that the sisters were being badly treated either because of their sex or their success⁷². These gestures of support did

⁶⁶ Sr Rosalie, Perth College, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12; Quarterly Chronicle, June 1908, p.32

⁶⁷ Davison G., The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978, p.7

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15

⁶⁹ CSC Newsletter, Vol. 25 No 3 1992, pp.3-4

⁷⁰ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.133

⁷¹ See Chapter I, p.30; Allchin A.M., The Silent Rebellion, London, 1958, p.205

not lead to an easier road for the Community in Melbourne and the journey to acceptance was hard and long⁷³.

The sisters found few friends among the clergy although some High churchmen were supportive⁷⁴. The sisters were encouraged to start a secondary boarding school for girls because they believed there were only two such Anglican schools in Melbourne. An added incentive to press ahead with this project was their opinion that the Church in Melbourne was in a state of stagnation and that children educated in the state schools were terribly ignorant both generally and religiously⁷⁵. The teaching of religion had been banned in Victorian state schools since 1872 in the same act that ended state aid to church schools. This ban only applied during school hours and by 1894 the sisters with the assistance of some women helpers were teaching religion in three state schools⁷⁶.

In 1895 the Community established St Michael's Collegiate School in a rented property, "Marlton House", South Yarra. Like all CSC's schools it was intended to be in competition with the state schools, not the expensive private schools⁷⁷. Due to the effects of the depression it was quite a few years before the school was on a viable financial footing and in the early years it was often hard to find the rent. On the other hand, the depression enabled the Community to obtain the property in 1897 for much

⁷² Quarterly Chronicle, April 1896, *op.cit.*, p.18ff.

⁷³ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.134 – Sr Rose wrote home that one day on walking down a street she heard a boy remark, "I thought Henry VIII done away with monks and nuns".

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.132 - Canon J.H.Gregory of All Saints, St Kilda, where the sisters lived, was one friend. Another was E.S.Hughes, later the vicar of the centre of Anglo-Catholicism in Melbourne, St Peter's Eastern Hill. In 1893 he was running the Fitzroy St Mission along the lines of those run by CSC in England.

⁷⁵ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1893, *op.cit.*, p.31; April 1893, p.32

⁷⁶ Barcan, *op.cit.*, p.133; CSC, History In Victoria (handwritten); see also Beginning, *op.cit.*, - The size of the religious classes by today's standards was extremely high with up to 120 students. In 1895, religion was being taught at the High St State School where there were 250 pupils between three teachers.

⁷⁷ Quarterly Chronicle, July 1895, p.34 – The annual rent was 100 pounds, the sale price 3,000 pounds.

less than the asking price a few years earlier⁷⁸. As the economy improved it began to expand and eventually developed into St.Michael's Grammar School.

On the sisters' arrival in Melbourne they had begun the inevitable shop for second-hand goods, over which they lived and from where they ran the mission work.⁷⁹ Apart from a pinafore society and a young-workers' club, another venture, which began accidentally and expanded rapidly, was a dog shelter. This was seen as a good way to become known and accepted and over the years satisfied customers gave many donations⁸⁰. When Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee was celebrated in 1897, six dogs from the shelter were in the procession. It was still functioning in 1906⁸¹.

The great feeling of clerical distrust that the sisters experienced in the early days in Melbourne was alleviated in 1905 when Archbishop H. Lowther Clarke (1850-1926) volunteered to be their visitor⁸². He insisted that they attend the diocesan assembly, as did the deaconesses from the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL). This was because he wanted to show the diocese that he recognised the Community. While the sisters were pleased at his interest they were not enthusiastic and one wrote, "I suppose we will have to go and sit humbly in a corner"⁸³. Lowther Clarke was very interested in education and during his term many church secondary schools were begun⁸⁴. He was

⁷⁸ *Beginning, op.cit., p.7* – CSC bought the property for 2,000 pounds.

⁷⁹ *Ibid., p.6*

⁸⁰ *Valiant Victorian, op.cit., p.81* - a pinafore society was an innovation of Mother Emily's in 1886. The intention was to cover the ragged clothes of the poor children in CSC's schools by a pinafore, donated by the members of the society; *Quarterly Chronicle*, April 1897, pp.11-12; July 1898, p.16

⁸¹ *Beginning, op.cit., p.7*; *Quarterly Chronicle*, July 1898, *op.cit., p.16*; *Quarterly Chronicle*, June 1906, p.70

⁸² ADB, Vol 8, pp.14-15, Lowther Clarke was bishop 1903 and archbishop of Melbourne, 1905 – 1919

⁸³ *Quarterly Chronicle*, Jan 1905, p.17

⁸⁴ Nunn H.W., *A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria, 1847-1947*, Melbourne, 1947, p.58.

happy with St Michael's School and particularly pleased that the sisters did not ask for any funds. He subsequently suggested that CSC take over a boys' school and establish another girls' secondary boarding school. Neither of these ventures eventuated because of a growing problem with a shortage of sisters in the worldwide Community⁸⁵.

Sydney had not originally been on CSC's agenda but Sister May was persuaded by Dean Dundas and some supportive clergy in NSW to personally investigate the situation. The dean even suggested that the presence of the sisters in Sydney was a question of the existence of the English Church in NSW, because of the numbers of Roman Catholic nuns⁸⁶. On May's arrival in Sydney she was feted by an enthusiastic group of clergy and well-wishers. This convinced her that circumstances were right to begin in Sydney. She later described the welcome in Hobart and Adelaide as "most earnest" but that in Sydney as "wonderful"⁸⁷. The enthusiastic welcome Sister May had received in Sydney quickly deteriorated into a wildly heated debate over the legitimacy of the Community. The problems experienced by the Community in England at the time had shaken the sisters' supporters. It added further ammunition to their detractors in Sydney, as it had in Melbourne. The sisters were taken by surprise by the attack because May had been advised by the Rev. C.F.Garnsey and Dr J.C.Corlette to proceed quietly and the bishop would "come around" once the work commenced. Mother Emily was incredulous that her sisterhood was unwelcome as she was used to bishops begging her for assistance⁸⁸. Perhaps more notice should have been taken of the Rev. G. Spencer who warned the Community that because the Church in Australia was far behind the English Church, "many trying things may happen"⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ Quarterly Chronicle, May 1910, p.70; Jan 1911, p.21

⁸⁶ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1893, *op.cit.*, pp.33-4

⁸⁷ Quarterly Chronicle, Oct.1892, p.45

⁸⁸ Quarterly Chronicle, Oct. 1893, pp.1-2. The attitude Emily advocated to outsiders concerning Bishop Saumarez Smith was that "even the best of men make mistakes".

⁸⁹ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1893, *op.cit.*, pp.40-1; Letter to Sr May from the Rev. G. Spencer, Bega,

In spite of continuing hostility, the sisters got on with their involvement in the types of social work the Community undertook in England. Once again a clothing depot was opened, primary schools were started, Sunday schools were run and orphans and foundlings were cared for. A training school for teachers at all levels was begun and recognised by the NSW National Teachers' Union. The sisters became very involved in mission work, feeding the unemployed and visiting gaols and hospitals⁹⁰.

The first primary school was started early in 1893 at St Stephen's Edgecliff but soon moved to Waverley House. The orphans and foundlings were housed with the sisters in the same rented premises as the school, which seems to have been known as the National High School. As the number of English orphans being brought to Sydney was increasing and the school growing, it was decided to find another site in the country for the orphans. The resultant institution at Chatswood became a primary school for boys and girls by 1898⁹¹. Another small orphanage for girls was opened in the Eastern suburbs but eventually all the orphans were moved to larger premises in Burwood in 1905⁹². In that year Mother May decreed that no more orphans were to be taken and the orphanage was relinquished in 1907⁹³. Due to the financial assistance of Bishop Montagu Stone-Wigg, a great friend and benefactor to CSC in Sydney, the orphanage continues today as the "Bishop Stone-Wigg Memorial Children's Home"⁹⁴. The National High School was renamed the Collegiate school after another move to "Glen Ayr", Paddington, when it developed into a boarding school. A further move to Waverley followed in 1912 when the Community bought a large house with the aid of several benefactors including Stone-Wigg. The school was at first known in 1912 as

13/9/1892

⁹⁰ CSC, History of St Gabriel's School, 1893-1953, Sydney, [1953], p.12; Our Work, Jan 1906, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8

⁹¹ Quarterly Chronicle, July 1898, No 26, *op.cit.*, p.11; Our Work, Nov 1897, p.407

⁹² Our Work, March 1907, p.100

⁹³ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.121, 228

⁹⁴ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1908, p.16

Preston College but later named St Gabriel's School⁹⁵.

In 1912 at the request of Bishop G.M.Long, CSC became involved in a limited capacity in the diocese of Bathurst, which was not an Evangelical diocese.⁹⁶ Here the sisters worked in close collaboration with the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd (BGS). In Gilgandra they took over St Hilda's Day and Boarding School of 66 students, owned by BGS. The Brotherhood built a house for the sisters and provided money for maintenance from the "Rolfe Sylvester Trust"⁹⁷. The association of CSC with the Brotherhood resulted in the appointment of the Principal of BGS, the Rev. J. E. Hardy, as the chaplain to the sisters in Sydney⁹⁸. This brotherhood was begun in 1903 in Dubbo, NSW, by Frederick Henry Campion and Charles Matthews⁹⁹. It was one of many such brotherhoods, which were instituted as a solution to the difficulties of obtaining clergy to work in the Australian bush¹⁰⁰. Archbishop Saumarez Smith was seen as a good friend of the High Church BGS and supported its appeals for funds in his diocese. This was in total contrast to the attitude that he adopted towards CSC. The brothers apparently regarded him as a man of peace and tolerant of those whose churchmanship differed from his¹⁰¹. As the brotherhood was not working in the Sydney diocese, this reinforces the earlier argument that his refusal to welcome CSC to Sydney was governed by the influence of the Sydney synod.

It was obvious that the pioneering sisters of CSC found Australia very different from England. The Church of England was not the Established Church and the polarity and

⁹⁵ St Gabriel's School, *op.cit.*, pp.6-9

⁹⁶ ADB, Vol 10, pp.134-5 – George Merrick Long (1874-1930), bishop of Bathurst, 1911-1927, Newcastle, 1928-1930

⁹⁷ CSC, History of NSW (handwritten)

⁹⁸ Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.28

⁹⁹ Rowland E.C., The Tropics for Christ, Townsville, 1960, pp.54-6; ADB, Vol 7, p.554.

¹⁰⁰ Frappell, *op.cit.*, p.149

¹⁰¹ Norman J., John Oliver North Queensland, Melbourne, [1947], p.44

antipathy between the extremes of churchmanship in the two major dioceses of Sydney and Melbourne were not at first understood. Further was the need to gain acceptance for the religious life from church members more inclined to a common form of Protestant Christianity - an outlook that did not condone any hint of Roman Catholicism. Because it was an established, independent sisterhood, CSC was the community which bore the brunt of the fiery exchanges over authority, ritualism and churchmanship. On top of these considerations, in the very early days there was the heat, the terrors of wild animals like Tasmanian tigers and poisonous snakes, and the badly disciplined children who often only came to school if the weather was not too hot. As one sister wrote,

Australia is full of horrors in many ways, which there can be no doubt are due to irreligion and secular schools, yet the people seem so nice¹⁰².

The struggle to become established with little financial support was hindered by the problem of the volume and variety of the work undertaken with too few personnel, even with the employment of external assistance. Over the years there were often only two or three sisters in large centres, while in isolated areas a single sister was sometimes alone for weeks or months at a time. Thus, loneliness and overwork caused quite a few to leave the order. This exacerbated the problem for those who were left¹⁰³. Mother May realised through personal experience the difficulties of pioneering work. Apart from Australia, she had been responsible for trail-blazing the way in Canada, Burma and New Zealand, as well as nursing in South Africa during the Boer War. She believed the difficulties that had arisen were due to the overextension of the Community. Therefore, she spent most of her term in office trying to rectify and consolidate the situation.

Whilst CSC was being established across the continent, the Deaconess Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) was moving slowly towards recognition as a religious order.

¹⁰² Letter, to Sr Caroline, from Waverley House, 16 July, [1895]

¹⁰³ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.136., CSC, NSW History, *op.cit.*, - for example, Sr Francesca worked in the Bathurst diocese from 1912-1922 with only ever one other sister. From 1918-1922 she was alone.

This Mission began in 1885 in the inner city slums of Melbourne and grew from the concern of Bishop Moorhouse to contact the people living in extreme poverty in the lanes behind the major streets of the city - people who seemed to be unreachable by ordinary parochial means¹⁰⁴. Initially a meeting of clergy from the inner city churches formed a ladies' committee of "Ways and Means" which purchased an old bakery for a Mission House in Little Lonsdale Street - "an area of notorious reputation"¹⁰⁵. A council was formed to administer the Mission under the direction of Bishop Moorhouse; the chaplain was Canon Henry Handfield of St. Peter's, Eastern Hill¹⁰⁶.

In 1888, Emma Silcock from the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage in Oxford, was persuaded by the new bishop, Field Flowers Goe, to run the Mission for a short while before she returned to England¹⁰⁷. As Sister Esther Emma she had been received as a novice at Wantage in October 1884 where she became involved in mission and rescue work¹⁰⁸. A severe back injury compelled her to seek a leave of absence from the Community and she travelled to Australia to convalesce. After Sister Esther was engaged to run MSL, she recruited two volunteer workers - Emma Jane Okins, a nurse, and Christina Editha Cameron. At the dedication of the mission house a year later, Canon H. Handfield stated, "the three ladies, who as yet are not under religious vows, form the beginning of a religious community"¹⁰⁹. It is evident that Sister Esther's intention was to found a religious community but she was compelled to move very slowly due to the theological climate in Melbourne¹¹⁰. Thus she gave her consent

¹⁰⁴ Nunn, *op.cit.*, p.48

¹⁰⁵ CHN, Esther, Mother Foundress of the Community of the Holy Name, (EMF), Melbourne [1948], p.12

¹⁰⁶ In Our Midst (IOM), (Newsletter of the Mission to the Streets and Lanes, May, 1925, p.1

¹⁰⁷ Sister Esther, First Yearbook 1889 (handwritten)

¹⁰⁸ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.21, 26

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.36

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14 – Esther's biography claims that Bishop Moorhouse was always keen for a religious

for her companions to be commissioned as deaconesses in April 1890, but this was a step she did not take¹¹¹. Instead, she was professed as a religious in 1894 by Archdeacon J. F. Stretch (1855-1919) in the diocese of Ballarat, wearing a ring and a girdle sent by the Wantage Community for the occasion¹¹².

Very little publicity was given to the commissioning of the deaconesses or their work at MSL. There were brief references in the *Church of England Messenger* and the Diocesan Year book in 1891, but in subsequent years the names of the deaconesses were unrecorded until the diocesan record of 1925. Sturrock proposes that the Mission comprised the first of three periods of deaconess life in Melbourne where, until the 1920's, there were only two deaconesses "ordained" outside MSL¹¹³. These women were trained with the CMS missionaries in East Melbourne and then led quite independent lives working in a parochial situation under the authority of the clergy¹¹⁴.

The trend that emerged in the Mission was for the members to be "ordained" as deaconesses, often many years after their profession as religious. In the official record of CHN only the date of profession is recorded. This indicates that to most of the early sisters it was their profession, not their commissioning as deaconesses that counted. The outstanding exceptions to this rule were the pioneer deaconesses, Sister Ellen, who died

order to begin in Melbourne; p.11 - After Moorhouse returned to England to the see of Manchester, he and his wife always retained a great interest in the venture, particularly financially. Mrs Moorhouse became an associate of the Deaconess Mission (IOM, 1/12/1896, p.2)

¹¹¹ IOM, May 1925, *op.cit.*, p.2 - There is disagreement in the sources as to the actual date of this ordination i.e. April, 1889 or 1890, but the records of CHN give the date as 1890. Despite this confusion there is no doubt that these women were the first deaconesses ordained in Victoria. Tress in her book is quite incorrect in stating that Florence Cole was the first ordained in Melbourne in 1902.

¹¹² EMF, *op.cit.*, pp.117-8 - Stretch was one of the clergy who helped at the Melbourne Mission and Esther's confessor; see also ADB Vol 12, pp.122-3 - John Francis Stretch was dean of Bathurst in 1894. He became the first Australian born bishop - first as assistant bishop in Brisbane from 1896-1900, suffragan bishop in Newcastle in 1900 and bishop of Newcastle 1906-1919.

¹¹³ Sturrock M., *The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, an Office Covered by Few*, Unpub. Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1989, pp.(i)-(ii);

¹¹⁴ Tress N., *Caught for Life*, NSW, 1993, p.82; Sturrock, *op.cit.*, p.25

in 1902, and Sister Christina. Although they lived the religious life as nuns, neither of them was ever professed¹¹⁵. It was not until well into the episcopate of Archbishop Lowther Clarke that he professed a sister in 1911¹¹⁶. This step enabled the Community to emerge from behind the deaconess front, where Sturrock argues they worked very much in "the shadows of the Church". In 1912, the Community became a fully chartered religious order with the archbishop as visitor¹¹⁷. CHN had therefore developed in a similar way to those deaconess communities overseas, which became religious sisterhoods. The best example is the Community of St. Andrew begun by the first deaconess in the Church of England, Elizabeth Ferard. In this Community the members are both deaconesses and professed religious as were most members of CHN until 1909¹¹⁸.

Archbishop Lowther Clarke was very cautious about his commissioning of CHN and there was no mention of the event in any Church publication until 1914¹¹⁹. Although he had recognised CSC quite a few years before, it was a different proposition to commission an Australian religious community. Given the history of opposition to sisterhoods, plus the depth of feeling that existed against any Romanising tendency personified by Anglican nuns, it is not surprising that the archbishop trod carefully before sanctioning CHN. It has been seen that there was criticism of the deaconesses from members of the Church in Melbourne, which seemed to have been primarily because of their resemblance to a religious order¹²⁰. The Eucharistic vestments that Esther and her sisters made for the High Church clergy would not have enhanced the

¹¹⁵ Sturrock, *op.cit.*, p.10; 22

¹¹⁶ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.120 - This was Sister Ida, later mother superior.

¹¹⁷ Sturrock, *op.cit.*, p.9

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.21; Anson P., The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, p.393ff

¹¹⁹ Strahan L., Out of the Silence, Melbourne, 1988, p.46, 88

¹²⁰ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.117; IOM, 1/8/1896, pp.1, 3-4; Sturrock, *op.cit.*, p.23 - quoting In Our Midst, Aug.1906; Quarterly Chronicle, July 1898, *op.cit.*, p.13.

popularity of the deaconesses with the Low churchmen and the anti-ritualists. From the beginning vestments made by Esther were worn in the sisters' chapel. This was a skill very much promoted by the Wantage Community. The development of a more open diocese in Melbourne is illustrated by Archbishop Lowther Clarke wearing a cope for the first time in the cathedral at a memorial service for Edward VII¹²¹. This step was a signpost that he was succeeding in building on the tolerant, broad approach begun by Bishop Moorhouse to a more "open" diocese - the commissioning of CHN was another.

In 1899, the sisters had received an episcopal request to work in the diocese of Auckland. Sister Mary went to New Zealand to assist in the formation of a sisterhood from an established deaconess mission¹²². This "Mission to the Lanes" was concerned with rescue and social work as well as a children's home; in later years it was a home for unmarried mothers. Sister Mary was installed as superior of the Order of the Good Shepherd (OGS) in August 1900¹²³. Following the usual pattern of the institution of religious communities, OGS was not without its detractors in the diocese and there was the usual criticism of High Church sisters from the clergy and laity¹²⁴.

Initially the deaconess numbers at MSL had grown very slowly. By 1894 there were five deaconesses, in 1907 there were still only eight full members and by 1912 the Community was thinking of trying to recruit from England¹²⁵. One reason advanced for the lack of aspirants to the life was that Australians were not very keen to lead dedicated lives¹²⁶. To add fuel to this argument, most sisterhoods found that the acquisition of the external assistant associate member was never a problem. As early as

¹²¹ EMF, *op.cit.*, pp.97-8

¹²² IOM, 1/5/1899, p.4

¹²³ IOM, 1/11/1900, p.3

¹²⁴ IOM, 1/1/1900, p.4.

¹²⁵ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.50

¹²⁶ IOM, 1/6/1897, p.9

1891 there were nine associates and by 1896 this had increased to thirty-eight¹²⁷. Towards the end of the century a membership drive was initiated in the MSL newsletter. Apart from the call for deaconesses, these articles questioned the persistently poor response of aspirants. They concluded that the lack of recruits was because the work of the deaconesses at the Mission was virtually unknown and unpublicised, even among the clergy. It was even proposed (half jokingly) that the sisters should promote themselves by wearing sandwich boards and parading in Collins Street and important suburbs¹²⁸.

The little-known work of the deaconesses was not due to lack of effort on the part of Esther and her sisters. From the beginning they visited urban and rural parishes to show lantern slides of their work and to speak to Church members. The object was threefold, firstly, to make their work and themselves known; secondly, to aid the recognition of the religious life and the Catholic revival in the Church of England; and thirdly, to prod the members of the Church to their social responsibilities¹²⁹. Despite these endeavours there was little effect as far as acknowledgment of the work or increase in full members was concerned.

The type of work undertaken by the three deaconesses in the early days can be seen in Esther's journal for 1889. Apart from rescuing desperate women and children, they handled drunks, separated fighting men and women, provided overnight accommodation for drunken or abused women and children, visited women and children's factories and the sick in their own homes and hospitals. They even organised for destitute people to be admitted to hospital since an order form was needed from a respectable citizen to obtain a place. A factory girls' club was started, as were mothers' meetings, a children's choir, a branch of the Temperance Society and the selling of second-hand clothes at the Mission. Various clergy also came in to conduct missions

¹²⁷ IOM, 1/8/1896, *op.cit.*, p.1

¹²⁸ IOM, 1/2/1899, p.4

¹²⁹ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.102

and the sisters organised baptisms and confirmations¹³⁰.

A soup kitchen that fed up to 500 men a day was begun at the Mission in 1890, and continued through the winters of the depression that followed. In 1891 the sisters moved in to work among the women prisoners in Melbourne Gaol. There they held services, gave religious instruction and visited the sick. The babies of women in the condemned cells were sometimes given into the care of the sisters. When a new female penitentiary was occupied at Pentridge in 1894, the sisters were appointed official visitors and their influence brought about the building of a chapel at the gaol¹³¹.

At that time there were very few appropriate Anglican establishments, so the sisters had to find shelter in other institutions for the women and children they were rescuing from the streets or who were brought to them by the police. Through her interest in this area, the Governor's wife, Lady Brassey, enlisted Esther's help in 1896 to take the first steps towards forming the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children¹³².

In 1894 a new mission hall was acquired and named after St George, Esther's favourite saint¹³³. Here a medical consultancy room was set up where minor operations were performed voluntarily by doctors. Free medicine was also distributed, paid for by the sale of used clothing at the Mission¹³⁴. The people who lived in the streets and lanes were of mixed ethnic origin and amongst them were many Orthodox Christians. In cooperation with Bishop Goe, Esther offered them the use of the Mission House to hold services with the help of Anglican clergy until Orthodox priests were able to take over¹³⁵. As a result of this gesture, the sisters were remembered every Thursday at the

¹³⁰ Sr Esther, Year Book, *op.cit.*, 1889; EMF, *op.cit.*, p.44

¹³¹ Early visits to the Melbourne Eye and Ear, Homoeopathic and Children's Hospitals, the Melbourne Gaol and the Carlton Refuge (printed sheet)

¹³² EMF, *op.cit.*, p.57, 60.

¹³³ IOM, 1925, *op.cit.*, p.4; Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.50.

¹³⁴ In Our Midst, 1/12/1896, pp.5-6

¹³⁵ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.67

Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and it was promised this would continue "until the end of time"¹³⁶.

The result of the sisters' work with the outcasts of society saw a House of Mercy for rescue work built and an orphanage begun for children. The House of Mercy at Cheltenham became a reformatory under the control of the pioneer, Sister Christina¹³⁷. She held this position for forty years. Sister Ellen, the third original member of the Mission, took charge of the care of homeless and neglected children at Brighton in 1894. The work was expanded with a Babies' Home in 1916. In later years the babies were moved to "Darling" and the home at Brighton was extended to include a hostel for the older children¹³⁸. CHN also became involved in education, although not to the same extent as the other religious communities in Australia. Religious education had always been a part of the deaconesses' work, but the first real step into education was the take over of a Hornbrook school in 1911. A new school, named for St George, was built on the site and occupied until 1925¹³⁹. Another small elementary school with which they became involved was St John's Church in Latrobe Street, where they remained for 15 years¹⁴⁰.

In contrast to the beginning of CHN in Melbourne and the problems that were encountered by CSC in the southern capitals, the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) was started by clerical invitation and enjoyed far greater general support. By 1890 Brisbane was a city of 100,000 people that because of rapid growth had developed areas

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.109

¹³⁷ Sr Phillipa, The Story of the Retreat House (printed sheet)

¹³⁸ EMF, *op.cit.*, pp.61-2

¹³⁹ IOM May 1925, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8, - The Hornbrook schools were named after the benefactress who had made an endowment in 1863 for schools in the poorest parts of the city to be set up to provide free religious and general education .

¹⁴⁰ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.79

of deprivation and poverty¹⁴¹. While Brisbane was the foremost importing port in the colony, it did not become a commercial centre or develop servicing and market industries like Melbourne or Sydney until well after the Second World War¹⁴². Consequently the depression of the nineties was felt more in the southern states than in the north. Instead a long drought that followed the depression greatly affected the rural colony of Queensland.

Bishop W.T.T. Webber, who became the incumbent in 1885, inherited a “rough and disorganised diocese”, which unlike other dioceses had received no government subsidies or Crown Land grants¹⁴³. Although Anglicans were the majority in the colony, there was a distinct lack of interest in the Church. This situation persisted and as a consequence finance was a continual worry¹⁴⁴. As far as education was concerned, the teaching of religion had been banned in state schools since 1875 and there was no established Anglican system of education¹⁴⁵. On top of this there was great concern with the spread and success of Roman Catholic schools throughout the important centres in the colony. Bishop Webber had written,

The position of the Church is indirectly weakened by the strong position occupied by the Romans. Their schools create earnest laymen and considerably augment the ranks of the clergy, while our boys fall an easy prey to the charms of the well-educated Irish lasses and mixed marriages follow, while the Anglican Church has to face serious loss¹⁴⁶.

Given this concern with education and developing social problems, Canon Montagu

¹⁴¹ Moores E., One Hundred years of Ministry, A History of the Society of the Sacred Advent, 1892-1992, Brisbane, [1993], p.4

¹⁴² Gough M. et al., Queensland-Industrial Enigma, Melbourne, 1964, p.2

¹⁴³ Kidd A.P., The Brisbane Episcopate of St Clair Donaldson (1904-21), Unpub.PhD Thesis, Uni. Of Queensld., 1995, p.37; ADB, Vol 12, p.429, Webber was bishop of Brisbane, 1885-1903

¹⁴⁴ Year Book of the Diocese of Brisbane 1909, p. 103 – in the years 1907-8 only 11% Anglicans attended Church. The ratio of women to men was 3:1.

¹⁴⁵ Barcan, *op.cit.*, pp.103-104

¹⁴⁶ Bishop Webber Correspondence, Brisbane Diocesan Archives, AH6 - Webber to S.S.Mary & Nicholas Corporation concerning affiliation of Church schools [undated]

Stone-Wigg (1861-1918), Sub-Dean of St John's Pro-Cathedral in Brisbane, with Webber's encouragement, had invited CSC and the Clewer Community of St. John the Baptist to be involved in education and mission work in Queensland¹⁴⁷. When they were unable to help he enlisted the help of his predecessor, the Rev. Bernard Wilson who had returned to England¹⁴⁸. Wilson began making inquiries among the sisterhoods and advertising in the newspapers¹⁴⁹. A reply was received from Caroline Amy Balquay (1837? -1915), a professed sister who had been legally dispensed from the Clewer Community, at that stage the largest and richest sisterhood in England¹⁵⁰. An extensive correspondence began between Caroline, Wilson and Stone-Wigg¹⁵¹. This revealed that after taking life profession in 1876, Caroline had become involved in mission work among the very poor in the London slums. Here she had been sister-in-charge of St Frideswide's Mission House, Poplar, for ten years until she withdrew from Clewer¹⁵². One reason for her withdrawal from the Community was that she was "looking to foreign mission work"¹⁵³. A second reason was that Caroline was "actuated by the discovery that much of my views were out of harmony with the Warden's mind"¹⁵⁴.

¹⁴⁷ Church Chronicle, 1/2/1891, p.5; ADB, Vol 12, *op. cit.*, p.103-4 – Stone-Wigg was canon and sub-dean at St John's Cathedral 1892-1898 when he became the 1st bishop of New Guinea, 1898-1908 Bonham V., A Place in Life, Windsor, 1992, p.134 - Clewer had to refuse because of over commitment in USA and India; Bonham V., A Joyous Service, Windsor, 1989, p.123 - In 1929 Clewer also refused another request from Queensland for help.

¹⁴⁸ Cable K., Australian Clerical Register (unpub), - Wilson was in Brisbane at St John's Cathedral from 1886-91. On returning to England, became vicar of Kettering, Nth Hampshire. From 1898 was involved in mission work, first at Oxford House Mission, Bethnel Green, then as vicar of Portsea where a large Anglo-Catholic slum mission was established. He was offered the See of Brisbane by the Brisbane diocese in 1903 on the death of Webber, but declined.

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Sister Caroline to Stone-Wigg, 17/10/1892

¹⁵⁰ Moores, *op.cit.*, p.4; Letter from Sister Caroline to the Rev. Bernard Wilson, 6/4/1892; Letter from H.L.Paget to Wilson, from St.Patrick's Bickenridge, 5/4/1892

¹⁵¹ Letter from Sister Caroline, Leonard-on Sea, to the Rev. B. Wilson , 1/4/1892,

¹⁵² Letter from Wilson to Stone-Wigg, 28/4/1892; Moores, *op. cit.*, p.4

¹⁵³ Letter from Caroline to Wilson, 12/4/1892 - A friend, Mrs.Wigram, had contacted her brother Bishop Saumarez Smith in Sydney to enquire which Australian diocese would be likely to accept Caroline.

¹⁵⁴ Letter Caroline to Wilson, 6/4/1892, *op.cit.*; Letter from Rev. P. Waggett, Southwark to Wilson, 8/4/1892

Caroline's feelings for the warden of Clewer were in contrast to those she held for Harriet Monsell, the co-founder and former superior of Clewer, of whom Caroline spoke with great affection. There are contrasting opinions about the personality of Canon T.T. but perhaps Caroline, in her capacity in charge of a mission, disliked his opinion that women were incapable of managing without constant male guidance. As Carter is quoted as saying, "a male spiritual superior needs to have his authority felt, otherwise the female element has it all its own way"¹⁵⁵.

It became apparent that Caroline and a friend, Sister Beatrice, the sister of Bishop Parry of Perth, had planned for quite a while to start a new missionary sisterhood. This community,

was to be devoted to lead souls to look forward to the second Advent and in the power of the first Advent, the Incarnation, to prepare for it¹⁵⁶.

Although the two nuns realised they would be unable to work together because of their age and health, they considered it to be their association. Beatrice hoped to begin a branch of the sisterhood in Perth with the encouragement of her brother; she had prepared badges and crosses for the proposed community some time before.

The referees whom Caroline had nominated all gave her glowing endorsements and after a personal interview Wilson was convinced of her suitability. He described her to Stone-Wigg as "a kind, benevolent attractive lady, old and tired and liberal minded". He felt that she should start quietly reclaiming the fallen in the parish, be in charge of the refuge and above all train one or two women as sisters¹⁵⁷. A further appealing point was

¹⁵⁵ Hutchings W.H.(ed) Life and Letters of Thomas Thellusson Carter, London, 1903, p.139; Allchin, *op.cit.*, pp.83-4

¹⁵⁶ Letter from Caroline to Stone-Wigg, 28/9/1892, *op.cit.*

¹⁵⁷ Letter from Wilson to Stone-Wigg, 28/4/1892, *op.cit.*

that Caroline was prepared to pay for her fare and maintenance and thus would not be a direct financial burden on the diocese. It appeared that she would not insist on any extreme ritual and was eager to leave for Australia in the near future, as long as she had the sanction of the diocesan bishop¹⁵⁸. This was not a problem, as Bishop Webber had no difficulty taking the responsibility for the arrival of the first Anglican sister in Queensland and later the institution of the first indigenous sisterhood in Australia. As early as 1885, he had initiated a five-year plan of mission service for English clergy based in Brisbane, which had enticed Stone-Wigg to Australia. This scheme was a precursor of the bush brotherhoods that were instituted a decade later¹⁵⁹. Webber was also instrumental in the formation of the Charleville Bush Brotherhood later known as St Paul's Brotherhood¹⁶⁰.

Caroline accepted the episcopal invitation and accompanied by Sister Minnie, a deaconess, arrived in Brisbane in December 1892. The two women were warmly received at receptions given by the diocese where Canon Stone-Wigg welcomed them and explained that he believed that some work in the parish could only be "reached by an organised sisterhood". He went on to say that the onus for the establishment of a religious community was the responsibility of the whole of the Church¹⁶¹.

The birth of the new venture was not auspicious, despite the goodwill and support of the parish. The sisters "had their endurance sorely tested by heat and flood" and they were twice flooded out of their home, which had been provided by the diocese¹⁶². Despite the initial setbacks no time was wasted in beginning the work. One of the first

¹⁵⁸ Letter from Wilson to Stone-Wigg, 8/4/1892; Letter from Caroline to Wilson, 12/4/1892, *op.cit.*

¹⁵⁹ Frappell, Thesis, *op.cit.*, p.163

¹⁶⁰ Kidd, St Clair Donaldson, *op.cit.*, p.37 – quoting a letter from Montgomery to Archbishop Donaldson, 6/2/1904, in which Montgomery wrote that although Webber cleaned up the Brisbane diocese, he became hated by most of the clergy. Further he believed that Webber's continued reliance on importing English clergy was a mistake because colonials should have been trained

¹⁶¹ Brisbane Courier, 10/12/1892, p.5; Church Chronicle, 1/1/1893, p.3.

¹⁶² Church Chronicle, 1/3/1893, p.3; SSA, A Short History of the Society of the Sacred Advent (1892-1942), Brisbane, [1943], p.7 -A great part of Brisbane was inundated by the floods and the Victoria and Indooroopilly Bridges were washed away.

undertakings was a retreat for women that became an annual event and one of the central features of the sisters' work over the years¹⁶³. A factory girls' club was begun, mothers' meetings were organised and a depot was opened for second-hand goods. Added to all this activity were Bible classes and the formation of several guilds for young women. A plan was also in place for the formation of a school and a District Nurses' Guild to send nurses "up country"¹⁶⁴. The sisters were also quickly accepted by the Ministry of Public Instruction to care for and train orphanage girls for domestic service. As a result the Governor's wife, Lady Norman, opened the "Home of the Good Shepherd" with government support at Nundah in June¹⁶⁵.

On 21 December 1893, Bishop Nathaniel Dawes of Rockhampton (1843-1910) in the absence of Bishop Webber received Miss Jobling as Sister Mary, the first novice of the SSA.¹⁶⁶ At the same ceremony Sister Caroline was inducted as "Lady Superior" of the Society of the Sacred Advent. The first Australian religious community had come into being¹⁶⁷. It is fitting that Dawes was so involved in the institution of the first Australian community for women in Australia, because he was responsible for the introduction in his diocese of the first bush brotherhood in Australia in 1897 – the Brotherhood of St Andrew¹⁶⁸. To counteract the dearth of clergy available to evangelise the outback regions, other men had advocated similar schemes in the late eighties and early nineties¹⁶⁹. Between 1884 and 1914 eleven new outback dioceses were created and in response to the need for priests, five brotherhoods were established in different outback areas from 1897 to 1914¹⁷⁰. All of these brothers were High Church or Anglo-Catholic

¹⁶³ Moores, *op.cit.*, p.9

¹⁶⁴ Church Chronicle, 1/6/1893, p.3; 1/8/1893, p.3; 1/9/1893, p.3

¹⁶⁵ Church Chronicle, 1/5/1893, p.3; 1/6/1893, p.3

¹⁶⁶ ADB, Vol 8, pp.243-4, Dawes was the 1st bishop of Rockhampton from 1892-1908. He had refused the see of Brisbane in 1903.

¹⁶⁷ Church Chronicle, 1/1/1894, p.3; Year Book of the Diocese of Brisbane 1893, Brisbane, 1893, p.25

¹⁶⁸ Allchin, *op.cit.*, 1958, p.219 - Bishop B.F. Westcott of Durham had greatly assisted Dawes in this undertaking.

¹⁶⁹ Holden, *op.cit.*, p.286 – Dean Goldsmith of Perth had advocated a similar scheme at a congress in Sydney in 1889.

¹⁷⁰ Frappell, *op.cit.*, p.105, 165

priests. This orientation fitted into the type of churchmanship already introduced in many rural areas and helped consolidate its hold on those dioceses, particularly when the brothers became bishops¹⁷¹.

The number of government orphans was not large enough to keep the Home of the Good Shepherd full so non-government orphans, children from the bush and neglected waifs were taken as well. This added to the financial difficulties that the sisters were experiencing because they looked after many of these children free of charge. As a result the Society was forced to make continual requests for assistance from the public that were usually very successful¹⁷². Due to an influx of novices, the Society felt able to start a girls' elementary boarding school in the same premises as the orphanage by September 1894¹⁷³. The clergy heavily influenced the sisters in this venture, particularly Stone-Wigg who envisaged a network of Church schools run by SSA¹⁷⁴. This aspiration was encouraged by the absence in Queensland of any Church secondary schools that were not Roman Catholic.

Other ventures begun by SSA were St Mary's, a rescue home for "fallen women" and their children in South Brisbane and in 1903, a girl's reformatory at Nundah, later known as St.Michael's Industrial School. The profession of new members - three in April 1895, two more by 1897 and another two in 1901, helped this expansion. Caroline had also formed an associate group immediately on her arrival and with other voluntary workers they helped enable the growth of the Society¹⁷⁵.

Like the other communities in Australia, the social work undertaken by SSA was in

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp.178-9; Frappell R., 'Anglican Bush Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods', Hutchinson M. & Campion E. (ed), Long Patient Struggle, Sydney 1994, pp.122-3; Frappell, Thesis, *op.cit.*, p.221-220 - 20 brothers became bishops, 18 of them in Australia.

¹⁷² Church Chronicle, 1/4/1894, p.3; 1/7/1894, p.3; 1/11/1894, p.3

¹⁷³ Church Chronicle, 1/9/1894, p.12

¹⁷⁴ Church Chronicle, 1/1/1895, p.12

¹⁷⁵ Church Chronicle, 1/10/1894, p.3; 1/12/1894, p.12; 1/4/1895, p.3; 1/5/1895, p.12; 1/10/1896, p.1; 1/2/1898, p.1; Moores, *op.cit.*, p.65

areas of need, either ignored or covered inadequately by the state. Despite the social value of the undertakings of the Society, government assistance to the orphanage and rescue home was deplored in some quarters as state aid to religion - a charge that was vigorously denied by the government¹⁷⁶. An attack in the press followed allegations in the *Brisbane Courier* of a lack of discipline at the Nundah orphanage. Of greater concern to others was the Romish background of the environment to which Protestant children were being exposed. These allegations were adamantly contradicted by Canon Stone-Wigg who pointed out that the complainant concerning religious indoctrination was a Wesleyan minister¹⁷⁷. Despite this antagonism the orphanage and the rescue home continued to grow with financial assistance from the public and in June 1897 the state orphans were moved to Ormiston Place. In 1901 a new orphanage was opened at Nundah. This was due to the generosity of Mrs Tufnell after whose late husband, the first bishop of Brisbane, the sisters' orphanages were eventually all named¹⁷⁸. At the same time the "Sandeman Nursery" for infants was opened at Wynnum in connection with the rescue home¹⁷⁹. The proposal was for the little children to remain there until they were old enough to go to the Home of the Good Shepherd for state orphans at Ormiston¹⁸⁰.

The sisters' boarding school developed very slowly. It later became the Eton Girls' High School and settled at Ascot but was not a viable proposition until 1903. This was due to the depressed economy and particularly the widespread drought in the bush¹⁸¹. In contrast to the public's disinterest in this school, a highly successful elementary day school was begun at St John's Cathedral. In later years, St John's became one of two

¹⁷⁶ Church Chronicle, 1/9/1898, p.26; 1/6/1897, p.2

¹⁷⁷ Brisbane Courier, 20/3/1897(cutting);
Church Chronicle, 1/4/1897, *op.cit.*, p.2, 5

¹⁷⁸ Church Chronicle, 1/6/1897, p.1; Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.43ff

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11. The orphanage was due to the charity of Captain Sandeman who had initially funded the rescue home.

¹⁸⁰ Church Chronicle, 1/6/1897, *op.cit.*, p.2; 2/5/1898, p.3; 1/9/1898, p.26; Moores, *op.cit.*, p.65 - St Mary's Home moved from West end to Taringa and by 1900 was under the direct control of the Society.

¹⁸¹ Church Chronicle, 1/1/1903, p.88; 1/5/1903, p.154

preparatory schools for the Eton High School that had been renamed St Margaret's¹⁸². When the University of Queensland opened in 1911 there were two St Margaret's girls among the first students¹⁸³.

In 1897 Stone-Wigg was appointed the first Anglican bishop in New Guinea¹⁸⁴. The Church in Brisbane was reluctant to see him go after nine years and SSA also viewed his departure with mixed feelings. He had been intimately involved with the Society as well as being its founder, warden and champion¹⁸⁵. With the departure of Stone-Wigg a period of internal instability that had been brewing for several years in the Society emerged. This was a result of personality clashes as well as the different outlook of the Australians who were joining the Society¹⁸⁶. An example of this can be seen in the refusal of the Chapter to agree to Caroline's proposal, which Stone-Wigg endorsed, of a merger with an English community - St Peter the Apostle Community, Horbury¹⁸⁷. The outcome was that Sister Caroline decided to return to England in 1905 with the regret that she had ever "attempted to bring English vocations to Queensland"¹⁸⁸. She rejoined Clewer in 1909 where she remained until her death in 1915. The animosity that she felt is illustrated by the fact that the Clewer Community had no idea until thirty years later that the sisterhood, which Caroline had started in Brisbane, had survived¹⁸⁹.

Apart from the internal problems, external factors appear to have played a part in the problems that brought about the resignation of the founding superior of SSA. The obvious personality differences, which caused friction, must have been exacerbated by

¹⁸² The Advent, Christmas, 1927, p.16 – the other preparatory school was St Augustine's Hamilton.

¹⁸³ Sr Emma's Diary 1910 (handwritten); Church Chronicle, June, 1910, p.507

¹⁸⁴ Wetherell D., Reluctant Mission, St Lucia, 1977, pp.52-4

¹⁸⁵ Sr Emma's Diary 1898 (handwritten); Church Chronicle, 2/8/1897, pp.1, 4; Sept.1898, *op.cit.*, p.26

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Sister Emma to Caroline, August 1903

¹⁸⁷ Church Chronicle, June, 1900, p.172; Sister Emma's Diary 1904 (handwritten)

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Sister Caroline to Bishop St. Clair Donaldson, 1/1/1905

¹⁸⁹ Bonham, Place in Life, *op.cit.*, p.34; Sister Elisabeth, The Society of the Sacred Advent, Past, Present and Future: Memoirs from 1917-1969 (typewritten), [1970], p.41

the heavy load of work and prayer undertaken by the sisters, as well as the need to support themselves financially in a depressed economy. From the earliest days of the Society, the Brisbane diocese (which had great financial problems itself) was only able to give moral support to the sisters and they were left to fend for themselves financially. This outcome was foreseen in the clergy's delight that Sister Caroline did not expect the Church in Brisbane to finance the establishment of a community. This attitude was a typical one in Australia. It was seen in the approach of Bishop Montgomery in Hobart, Archbishop Lowther Clarke in Melbourne and Bishop Riley in Perth to the pioneer sisters of CSC.

The loss of Stone-Wigg to New Guinea played a part in the destabilisation of the Society that he had founded. It is an indication of his disappointment with the way events unfolded for his sisterhood that he seemed to have no further connection or interest in SSA after he resigned from New Guinea. He did not return to Brisbane but lived in Sydney where he became a major financial benefactor, friend and spiritual supporter of CSC¹⁹⁰. When Caroline left Brisbane the Society was in a most unstable position and the financial situation was precarious. Through the partnership of the new superior, Mother Emma Crawford (1864? -1939) and the sub-Dean of Brisbane, Henry Frewen Le Fanu, the Society was able to stabilise itself and a long period of expansion eventuated¹⁹¹. Therefore while it is acknowledged by SSA that Sister Caroline Amy was the foundress, it is to Mother Emma that the Society owes its heart and ethos.

The introduction and establishment of the religious life in Australia was not an easy undertaking for the pioneer sisters. Churchmanship, the economic depression and

¹⁹⁰ CSC, History of SGS, *op.cit.*, pp.6-7. On his return to Australia, Stone-Wigg married and lived in Burwood, Sydney. His major endeavour in Sydney from 1908 to his death in 1918 was founding and editing the Church Standard newspaper, later the Anglican.

¹⁹¹ Moores, *op.cit.*, p.68 - Le Fanu was warden of SSA from 1905-29 and chaplain from 1911-1929. see also ADB, Vol 10, pp.60-2 - Le Fanu was Archbishop of Perth from 1929-46 and Primate from 1935-46; Letter, Stephen Le Fanu to Sr.Marianne, 26/2/1990; Mother Emma Crawford, see ADB, Vol 8, p.140

devastating drought of the 1890's caused varying difficulties in the centres where the three separate groups settled. The diverse outreaches undertaken in social work and teaching were those inadequately covered or neglected completely by the state. Given the small numbers of women involved and the slow process of recruitment of full members, these endeavours were necessarily in conjunction with the cooperation of friendly parishes, paid help, the benefaction of supporters and the establishment of associate members who, with other volunteers, provided essential support.

All Anglican communities following the mixed life have experienced difficulties in keeping a balance between social work in the outside world and that of the prayer life. This was particularly so in the early days in Australia before the prayer life was shortened in the second half of the 20th century. While CSC had an established Rule and prescribed prayer life, which must often have been moderated to fit the pioneering life, the formulation of a Rule and community prayer life for SSA and the Deaconess Mission grew slowly from the experience of the communities¹⁹². While a rigorous prayer life was the goal, flexibility had to be the key to the life given the call of the work undertaken. Thus the sense of a communal spiritual life under Rule, which is the basis of the religious life, was difficult to maintain in a pioneering scene.

All supporters of the sisterhoods placed great stress on their social work with little public recognition of the devotional life. This was foreseen in the correspondence between Wilson and Stone-Wigg, in which Wilson was convinced, erroneously, that Caroline was more "devoted to works of mercy than the recitation of offices"¹⁹³. Even in the High Church diocese of Brisbane the clergy knew that to gain synodical and public acceptance for a religious order, emphasis on the apostolic work of the sisters was necessary¹⁹⁴. Indeed Stone-Wigg, a fervent Anglo-Catholic, always felt it

¹⁹² Sr Esther, The Internal and External Rule (handwritten) ND

¹⁹³ Letter from Wilson to Stone-Wigg, Southampton, 28/4/1892, *op.cit.*

¹⁹⁴ St.Colomb's Parish Notes, Vol. 11, No 2, Feb.1924, p.5 -the editor writes of the many misgivings in his parish concerning the inauguration of a religious order by Bishop Webber.

necessary to publicly present the sisters in their active role¹⁹⁵. This prevalent attitude in the Church was to have severe consequences for the promotion of the concept of vocation by the clergy and the lack of recognition for the spiritual side of the religious life.

The path of Anglican sisterhoods in Australia from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the First World War was one of establishment. The interwar years were to see the expansion of the two indigenous communities and the consolidation of the outreach of CSC.

¹⁹⁵ Rayner K., *The Church of England in Queensland*, Unpub. PhD Thesis: Uni. of Queensland, 1962, p.346

CHAPTER FOUR From Federation to the Second World War: a Time of Expansion and Consolidation for the Religious Life

The years leading from Federation to the Second World War encompassed decades of great change in the secular world. As far as religion was concerned, there had always been a definite lack of male interest in Australia in organised religion, which was inclined to be seen as a feminine pursuit. In conjunction with increasing secularism, this tended to amplify in the 20th century and the trend continued to a feminisation of the Church of England in so far as numbers filling pews were concerned¹. After Federation, the Edwardian era saw the continuation of the suburbanisation of the large Australian cities of the previous decades. This era was one of prosperity and expansion following the depression of the 1890's but it disappeared in the cataclysm of World War I. The Australian population at the end of the War was 5,000,000 and large numbers of British migrants were encouraged to help Australia's problem of under-population². The following decade of apparent affluence ended in the world depression of the thirties leading into a Second World War.

Following the First World War, in which Australia's participation had been encouraged by much religious jingoism, the recognition of the contribution of the Anzacs to the national psyche was part of a growing patriotic sense of identity. Nevertheless, the concept of an independent Australian identity was not reflected in the Church whose dioceses were unable to agree on a constitutional national model of self-government. Much of the argument reflected divisions over churchmanship, seen in the strengthening of the monochrome appearance of most dioceses that had developed by the end of the 19th century and which in the main, tended towards a modified form of Anglo-Catholicism.

¹ Carey H., Believing in Australia, Sydney, 1996, p.116ff; Sturmev R., 'Anglicanism and Gender', Black A.W. (ed), Religion in Australia: Sociological Perspectives, Sydney, 1991, pp. 50-1; Rose M., Freedom from Sanctified Sexism, Queensland, 1996, pp. 7-8; Patrick A., The Ideals of a Neglected Archbishop, Sydney, ND, p.8 – in 1891 and 1900, the proportion of females to males confirmed in the Sydney diocese was 5:3.

² Breward I., A History of the Australian Churches, Sydney, 1991, pp.110-111.

There was certainly support within the Church for a closer reflection of an Australian sense of nationalism, initially in regard to a change of title and later an Australian Prayer and Hymnbook³. However this was inhibited by the Englishness of the clergy that only changed slowly after the First War and which lasted much longer in episcopal selections. As most of the bishops were English, the emphasis stressed for Anglicans was a sense of belonging to a church that was intimately entwined with the characteristics and achievements of the English people. Consequently the Church of England extolled the virtues of the British Empire and Australia's place in it. Fletcher believes that this influence on the Australian psyche and the general attitudes to nationalism were considerable, given the primary place in the allegiance of the majority of Australians to the Church until much later in the century⁴.

In 1904, after the death of Bishop Webber, St Clair G.A. Donaldson (1863-1935) attained the Brisbane See⁵. He came to believe that the Church should be "Australian in name as in fact"⁶. Like his predecessors and contemporaries in other dioceses, Donaldson was much concerned with the perceived threat of the growing influence of Roman Catholicism through the continual spread of its schools. This fear of the large powerful minority Roman Church has been seen as another reason for the longevity of the excessive dependence of the Church in Australia on the English connection⁷. In the Brisbane diocese there were only two Anglican high schools, neither owned by the Church – the Southport Boy's School and the Eton High School owned by the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA). Donaldson was able to build on these institutions and laid the foundation for the diocesan school system of the present. In doing this he emphasised secondary education in contrast to the Roman Catholic stress on primary schools run by the virtually free efforts of religious. This emphasis was similar to that

³Fletcher B.H., 'Anglicanism and Nationalism in Australia, 1901-1962', Journal of Religious History, Vol 23 No2, June 1999, pp.228-232

⁴*Ibid.* pp.216-7; Black, *op.cit.*, p.13 – In the 1986 Australian Census, Roman Catholics made up 26.1% of the population, surpassing for the first time the numbers of Anglicans; Breward, *op.cit.*, p.235

⁵Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), Vol 8, pp.319-320, St Clair George Alfred Donaldson, bishop of Brisbane 1904, archbishop 1905-1921, bishop of Salisbury 1921-1935

⁶Fletcher, *op.cit.* p.231

⁷*Ibid.*, p.233

of other Anglican diocesan schemes and developed, as did all non-Roman denominational schools, into an elitist system of education⁸.

The years between the installation of Mother Emma as superior in 1906 and the First World War were of necessity ones of consolidation for SSA. This was due to the instability of the Society, which was expressed in the withdrawal of most of the pioneer members. Apart from Sister Emma, four of the first seven professed nuns left the community before 1905, while the remainder left in later years. After several moves the Eton High School settled at Albion and was renamed St Margaret's. This relocation set in place a long period of expansion for the school. The primary school of St John's continued to expand and although Donaldson wanted the Society to run the diocesan Glennie School in Toowoomba, the only new venture undertaken was a small secondary boarding school, St Catharine's in Stanthorpe in 1909⁹.

Between 1905 and the end of the First World War, eleven sisters were professed and most of these women entered the Society from 1913 onwards. In 1917 many missions were conducted in Brisbane. The sisters, having established a mission centre near the cathedral, became very involved in the outreach of Bishop G. D. Halford (1865-1948), the second bishop of Rockhampton¹⁰. They even joined in marches through the streets. These efforts seemed to bear fruit and were seen as being partly responsible for knowledge of SSA expanding at the time. The initial effect of the missions was to bring in 70 women for the Society's annual retreat, far more than usual. A later result was an

⁸ Kidd A.P., *The Brisbane Episcopate of St Clair Donaldson, 1904-1921*, Unpub. PhD Thesis, Uni. of Queensland, p.147-149

⁹ Moores E., *One Hundred Years of Ministry, A History of the Society of the Sacred Advent, 1892-1992*, Brisbane, [1993], p.13 - the spelling of this school's name varies in the histories which have been produced. In Moores' book there is a photograph of a prospectus produced for the school in which the name is Catharine and this will be followed.

¹⁰ Frappell R., *The Anglican Ministry to the Unsettled Rural Districts of Australia, 1890-1940*, Unpublished Thesis, 1992, p.432; *Australian Church Quarterly* (ACQ), 30/9/1948, p.40- George Dowglass Halford was earlier the foundation warden of St Andrew's Rockhampton, the first bush brotherhood; ADB Vol 12, p.356 – bishop of Rockhampton, 1909-1921; Kidd A (ed), *Halford: The Friar Bishop*, Brisbane, 1998, p.100 - He resigned Rockhampton in 1921 and instituted a male religious community, "the Order of Witness" at Tingalpa. This failed and he became an itinerant Franciscan friar.

influx of postulants, some of who were very odd and few stayed¹¹. Nevertheless, SSA experienced a threefold increase in the number of professed sisters in a short time and subsequently entered its greatest period of expansion. The growth in numbers continued for the entire interwar period and over 30 sisters were professed¹².

By 1917 SSA felt able to accept the invitation of Bishop J.O. Feetham, a strong Anglo-Catholic, to open a boarding school in his diocese of North Queensland. Feetham had earlier approached the Society but the sisters had to refuse his request due to lack of personnel. Subsequently he had extended his invitation to several English communities without success¹³. Feetham had come to Australia in 1907 and served as the head of the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd (BGS) in Dubbo until his consecration in 1913¹⁴. The founding bishop of North Queensland, George Henry Stanton (1835-1905), who arrived in 1879, was a Low Church Evangelical¹⁵. Even though his successors were High Churchmen, the laity had not been completely won over to this viewpoint when Feetham, the fourth bishop, arrived in Townsville. A group of prominent Anglicans, concerned by his Anglo-Catholicism, had approached him and insisted they wanted a Protestant religion. The bishop's reply was that he would teach the Catholic faith¹⁶.

The three bishops preceding Feetham had been very concerned with the spread of Roman Catholicism through the schools run by nuns in the outback areas. In the years before he arrived in North Queensland several unsuccessful church schools for boys

¹¹ Sr Elisabeth, Society of the Sacred Advent, Past, Present and Future - Memoirs from 1917-1969 (typewritten) [1970], p.7

¹² SSA, A Short History of the Society of the Sacred Advent, 1892-1942, Brisbane, [1943], p.16 – this history states that in 1910 there were 10 sisters and by 1930 there were 30. From SSA archives there seem to have only been six professed members in 1910 and the former figure may include those not fully professed. The rate of loss of professed from the Society has always been high – 30%; the years from 1910 – 1940 were no exception although 55 took perpetual vows, far more than the numbers seen in the records provided by either CHN (31) or CSC (19); see also Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.71-2

¹³ Feetham J.O. & Rymer W.V.(ed) North Queensland Jubilee Book, 1878-1929, Townsville, 1929, p.82. Feetham was bishop of North Queensland for 34 years.

¹⁴ Rowland E.C., The Tropics for Christ, Townsville, 1960, p.56

¹⁵ ADB Vol 6, p.174 – bishop of North Queensland 1879-1890, Newcastle 1891-1905

¹⁶ ACQ, 30/9/48, *lit.cit.*, pp.21-23

and girls had been begun. Feetham saw the solution as schools run by Anglican religious because, "they offered permanence and spiritual values as opposed to change and materialism"¹⁷. The arrangement between Bishop Feetham and SSA was that the diocese would provide the school building and the sisters run the school. The first school was St Anne's Townsville and, although the Anglicans in Townsville had been exposed to the bishop's churchmanship for four years, the arrival of three nuns from SSA caused a sensation¹⁸. St Mary's Herberton, run by Miss Philpott, an associate who later joined the Society, and St Gabriel's Charters Towers, followed the Townsville school¹⁹. In North Queensland, the Society worked in close co-operation with the Bush Brotherhood of St Barnabas. This was repeated with the Charleville brotherhood in the Rockhampton diocese, when the sisters took charge of the brothers' hostel for school children in Charleville in 1921. The following years were ones of rapid expansion for the schools although finances were precarious²⁰. Despite the problems, the schools all developed to offer secondary education and were a great success. Feetham gave all the credit to SSA, particularly Sister Alice, whom he described as "the inspiration and the mainspring of the work of secondary education in the Church in North Queensland"²¹.

The Society had fulfilled Feetham's belief in the validity of staffing schools with religious orders. As a result, and through the insistence of Sister Alice, he encouraged the Brotherhood of St. Barnabas, under the Rev. R. C. Halse, to open the All Souls' War Memorial School for boys at Charters Towers²². This brotherhood was the only one to remain stable during the First World War and, with the encouragement of Feetham, it

¹⁷ SSA, Jubilee Handbook, 1892-1952, Brisbane, [1953], p.21

¹⁸ ACQ, *lit. cit.*, 30/9/48, p.21

¹⁹ Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.36-39 – St Mary's became the largest girl's boarding school in the diocese and was situated on the tableland behind Cairns.

²⁰ Stacy F., The Religious Communities of the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, p.41 - When St Mary's outgrew Brotherhood House in Herberton, SSA bought new premises with an overdraft which Sister Rosa, formerly Miss Philpott, worked long and hard to overcome until her death in 1928.

²¹ Bp of North Queensland, Memoir - The Sister Alice Mary SSA, Townsville, [1947], pp.8-9

²² Feetham/Rymer, *op.cit.*, p.90; ADB Vol 13, pp.362-362 -Reginald Charles Halse (1881-1962), bishop of Riverina 1926-1943, archbishop of Brisbane 1943-1962

became identified with the diocese of North Queensland. Its influence was later extended into the Gulf country in the diocese of Carpentaria²³.

Initially the bush brotherhoods worked in the scattered pastoral districts where only isolated bush towns were found. The brotherhoods may have resembled orders of priests leading the religious life, based as they were in brotherhood houses from where they dispersed for varying periods of time into the outback. However they were not religious communities in the traditional monastic sense; the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were only temporary and taken for a set term. The brotherhoods were formed for the specific task of evangelising the bush and were associated with a particular diocese and answerable to the bishop²⁴. While the brotherhoods proved to be successful in their mission to the outlying pastoral areas, they were less effective in the parochial situation they helped develop as the population expanded. Frappell points out one reason was that congregations preferred married clergy²⁵. Nevertheless, the inroads that the High Church bush brotherhoods were making in rural and outback areas by the second decade of the century, in part prompted the Evangelical response to the problems the Church faced in the bush²⁶. The outcome was the creation in 1919 of the Bush Church Aid Society (BCA), an offspring of the Colonial and Continental Church Association (CCCS). The parent organisation had been designed to attract the support of Evangelicals in the Church for the religious maintenance of the “white man”, as the CMS did for the heathen²⁷. For that reason, CCCS had assisted work in Australian country dioceses for many years. One such instance, during Bishop Stanton’s episcopate in North Queensland, was the supply of funds for clergy. This was

²³ Frappell *op.cit.*, pp.182-4

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.133

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.206

²⁶ George P. (ed) BCA Seventy Five Not Out, Sydney, 1993, p.6

²⁷ Underwood B., Faith at the Frontiers: Anglican Evangelicals and their Faith Overseas, Cheshire, 1972, p.11 – CCCS had its origins as an educational organisation in England, the Newfoundland School Society in 1823. By 1861 CCCS had been created through amalgamations of various bodies. In 1958 Commonwealth was substituted for Colonial in the title of CCCS.

particularly to counteract the spread of Roman Catholicism and the influence of the schools run by nuns²⁸.

The Bush Church Aid Society, under the guidance of the organising missionary, the Rev. Sydney James Kirkby (1879-1935), later the president, was formed to work in the outback throughout the continent²⁹. Beginning in the diocese of the Riverina, centred in Wilcannia and Broken Hill, the aim was to reach those people who were poorly serviced by the Church³⁰. The Society began by recruiting clergy, married or unmarried, who travelled and ministered over huge distances, like the bush brothers. Deaconesses, nurses and other independent Christian workers were also engaged or trained and all were seen as missionaries. Evangelical bush brotherhoods were instituted, and assistance was provided for building churches, schools and hostels. Above all a large medical ministry based on outback hospitals and a flying doctor service was formed.

In contrast to the type of recruits which BCA engaged, a typical early bush brother was an upper class Englishman with a Public school and Oxbridge education, as were the large majority of Anglo-Catholic priests in England until the Second World War³¹. In comparison to the romantic brotherhood call for English priests who could “ride like cowboys and preach like Apostles”, BCA hoped to interest manly, virile, real Australians, men of “vision, venturesomeness and vim”³². Nevertheless the Society had difficulty recruiting clergy or women, particularly deaconesses, for its operations and was forced to try England several times over the years. By the fifties the catch cry had become “clergy of grace, guts and gumption”³³.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.79

²⁹ ADB Vol 9, pp.608-9 – Bishop Kirkby, co-adjutor bishop Sydney, 1932-5; The Real Australian, 9/7/32, p.1

³⁰ The Real Australian, Vol No 1, 1920, p.1

³¹ Pickering W.S.F., Anglo-Catholicism, London, 1989, p.98

³² Frappell, *op.cit.*, p.154 – quote by Bishop Frodsham (from Webb R.A.F., Brothers in the Sun, Adelaide, 1978, p.46); Real Australian, 29/2/1924, p.1

³³ Real Australian, June 1950, p.4

The First World War saw many of the bush brothers return to England to assist in the War effort, and recruitment after the War dried up³⁴. Consequently, BCA began to take over in some areas in the outback. Frappell points out that as the High Church bishops in the rural areas were usually hostile to the Evangelical BCA, the Society was most successful in its medical services and deaconess operations³⁵. The former were finally given up in 1998 because of increasing government control of medical services in rural areas³⁶. By the end of the century, the main area of mission work for BCA was in Northwestern Australia and an increasing involvement in Aboriginal ministry and training³⁷.

While many small brotherhoods were formed between the Wars, not all Anglo-Catholic, they were nearly all extinct by 1947³⁸. Eventually the brotherhoods seemed to have "outlived their time" and by 1972 there were only three remaining. These all ceased working in the outback³⁹. It appears that the bush brotherhoods, which remained stable over time, were those that held a strong concept of community and a common life. Holden believes that in the earliest days, the idea that the model for the brotherhoods was that of a religious community was downplayed, because of the prejudice against anything resembling Roman Catholicism⁴⁰. This was seen in the case of the sisterhoods and led to the external accent placed on the outreach, while scant regard was paid to the communal, monastic prayer life that, unlike the bush brotherhoods or the deaconesses, was their first priority.

³⁴ Frappell, *op.cit.*, pp.178-9

³⁵ *Ibid.* pp.258-9; Real Australian, 12/3/28, p.3 – in response to High Church criticism that BCA was “not Anglican”, the editor wrote that BCA’s workers were not “pale imitations of some seminaristic institution”.

³⁶ Real Australian, Winter 1998, p.1

³⁷ Real Australian, Nov. 1995, p.11

³⁸ Frappell, *op.cit.*, p.191- the only one to survive after this date was St John the Evangelist at Dalby.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.209;432 - the remaining Brotherhoods were St Barnabas (1902, Nth.Queensland); Good Shepherd (Bathurst, 1903); St Paul (Melbourne, 1916).

⁴⁰ Holden C., Ritualist on a Tricycle, Perth, 1977, pp.288-289 (quoting C. Matthews, Parson in the Australian Bush)

From the inception of the bush brotherhoods and the sisterhoods, great interest was shown in their work by the aristocratic vice-regal administrators. This was especially so in the case of BGS which was greatly assisted by the connections of the first principal, F.H.Campion. His uncle, Viscount Hampden was the Governor of NSW from 1895 to 1899 and his elder brother was later the Governor of Western Australia from 1924 to 1931⁴¹. In the west, Governor William R. Campion and his wife were instrumental in encouraging the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary (OSEH) to become established in the diocese of Bunbury in 1928⁴². This interest was analogous to that shown by the aristocracy to the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) and other sisterhoods in the Mother Country⁴³. Apart from the High churchmanship of the religious orders, a connecting link appears to have been the common social milieu of these high- class English sisters, brothers and administrators⁴⁴. Vice-regal interest in the indigenous communities was not as pronounced as that shown to CSC. Although they too were begun by well-bred English women, they quickly became Australian groups⁴⁵. Interest in CSC also waned among the governors and their ladies after the First World War. Many factors could account for this change but the character of the two groups had begun to change by that time. On the one hand, the vice-regal appointments became predominantly high-ranking ex-military men; on the other, the women who were entering the sisterhoods from the beginning of the century were not all English "ladies".

It has been seen that CSC began working in collaboration with BGS in the Bathurst diocese before the First World War. In this decade 42 professed CSC sisters worked in the various centres in Australia of whom 70% were English⁴⁶. The outreach in the

⁴¹ Australians: The Guide and Index, Sydney, 1987, p.37, 42; ADB Vol 7, p.555

⁴² Bignell M., Little Grey Sparrows, Nedlands, 1992, p.21

⁴³ see for example, CSC, History of SGS, 1893-1953, [1953], p.4; CEA, Memories of Emily Harriet Elizabeth Ayckbown, London, 1914, pp.205-211

⁴⁴ CSC Archives, LPI - Sr Bridget, one of the pioneer sisters, was the sister of the Admiral and Commander of the Australian Fleet, Sir Richard Poole; CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, p.38 - Sir Freda, an Australian, was from an upper class Sydney family.

⁴⁵ Strahan L., Out of the Silence, Melbourne, 1988, p.92

⁴⁶ CSC Archives

Bathurst diocese included a hostel in Dubbo, to enable children from the Far West to attend the local high school, as well as a day and boarding school undertaken in Gilgandra. A smaller school in Deniliquin in the Riverina diocese was run until 1929. A small sisterhood had formerly run this school - the Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross (CSHC) founded and led by Mother Mary Gloriana until her death in 1913⁴⁷. The records concerning this small community are contradictory but it began between 1900 and 1905 in either Rockhampton or Charters Towers and over the years professed at least ten recruits.

The last surviving member of CSHC, Sister Janet Mary, wrote a brief account of the history of the Community much of which she received second hand and which she emphasised could not be verified as authentic⁴⁸. From her version it seems that Mary Gloriana and another novice from an English community left England for health reasons. Both lived in Victoria for a few years as religious and gathered a few others around them. An amicable split occurred with one forming a Deaconess community and the other, Mary Gloriana, beginning CSHC in Rockhampton. The unnamed of these women bears a great similarity to Sister Esther of the Deaconess Mission in Melbourne, but the Community of the Holy Name (CHN) has no record of these events. It is of interest that Rowland notes that Mary Gloriana was originally a deaconess from the Melbourne Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) where he believed she had been commissioned in 1893⁴⁹. At the turn of the century she had gone to Auckland and formed a small community with four novices⁵⁰. From the archives of SSA it appears that in 1903 and again in 1904, Sister Mary Gloriana stayed with the Society in Brisbane with a view to joining the sisterhood⁵¹. At the same time a Sister Monica was reportedly unhappy in SSA. In 1906 she had been dispensed from the Society and with

⁴⁷ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1913 No 97 p.21; Feb 1915, pp.10-11

⁴⁸ Letter, Sr Janet Mary to Fr. N. Nixon, 5th Aug. 1982

⁴⁹ This event does not appear in the deaconess records given by Tress N., Caught for Life, NSW, 1993 or Sturrock M., The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, Unpub. BTh Thesis, MCD, 1989

⁵⁰ Rowland E.C., 'The History of the Religious Life in Australia', ACQ, Sept 1970, p.23

⁵¹ Sister Emma's Diaries, 1903, 1904

Novice Mary Clare had gone to Charters Towers⁵². Rowland reports that Sister Mary Gloriana was working in Charters Towers from 1905 with a Novice Monica. Two years later CSHC was formally constituted in Rockhampton with Sister Mary Gloriana as superior and several novices, one of whom was Monica⁵³. Therefore it seems likely that Monica was the former professed member of SSA. Sister Janet Mary believed she had been a missionary in the Solomon Islands but that could have been before joining SSA⁵⁴

The community became involved in parish work and education in rural Queensland between 1907 and 1912 with the help of a group of associates. Some sisters may have gone to New Zealand for a short while but by 1912 Mother Gloriana, Sister Monica Mary and at least three others appeared in Deniliquin⁵⁵. When Gloriana died in the following year, three sisters went over to Rome and by 1915, Monica had attached herself to CSC as an associate sister. She later left the Community and appeared in Nyngan where she was joined by some novices and opened a kindergarten in 1922⁵⁶. Subsequently Monica reinstated the Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross (CSHC), which was blessed by Bishop Long of Bathurst. The aims of CSHC, which became known in the late twenties as the "Bush Sisterhood", were vague. A simple Rule was adopted and triennial vows were taken after a novitiate of two years. The community was much more like an active sisterhood than most Anglican orders and the sisters ran Sunday schools and undertook missionary work⁵⁷.

⁵² Sister Evelyn's Diary, 1906

⁵³ Rowland, *ACQ*, , *lit.cit.*, p.23 - Rowland reports that a Sister Monica arrived in Charters Towers with Mary Gloriana from Auckland in 1905.

⁵⁴ Sr Janet Mary, *op.cit*

⁵⁵ Rayner K., *The Church of England in Queensland*, Brisbane, Unpub. PhD Thesis, Uni. of Queensland, 1962, p.349; Clyde L., *In a Strange Land*, Melbourne, 1979, p.225; Rowlands, *Tropics*, *op.cit.*, pp.113-4; Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.51 - this is the only source which mentions a return to New Zealand; Sr Janet Mary, *op.cit.*, – on final profession, members added "Mary" to their religious name.

⁵⁶ *Quarterly Chronicle*, Jan 1913, *op.cit.*, p.21; Feb 1915, *op.cit.* pp.10-11

⁵⁷ Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.51

CSHC left Nyngan for Coonamble in 1925 and a hard financial struggle ensued in the new location. In 1929 the sisters were given the opportunity to go to Gilgandra where they were accommodated at the old community house occupied by CSC from 1912 to 1915⁵⁸. At this stage, one sister was running St Saviour's Anglican Children's Home in Goulburn. This was taken over soon afterwards by CHN when CSHC made another move to the Riverina in 1932. There, much against the advice of other bishops, Bishop R.C. Halse, former warden of the Bush Brotherhood of St Barnabas, welcomed the community. In the following years CSHC established Holy Cross House in Broken Hill and ran St Faith's School, where commercial classes for older pupils were conducted. This school also accepted boarders who were mainly from the pastoral districts around the city. The community increased with two new postulants admitted in the next few years⁵⁹. In 1937, they were invited by Bishop Francis de Witt Batty (1879-1961) to run the diocesan children's homes at Lochinvar and Mayfield as CHN wanted to return to Melbourne⁶⁰. However, the sisters once again departed hastily in 1939 for Port Elliott-Goolwa in the Adelaide diocese where they were involved in parish and educational work and a home for elderly ladies. A year later Mother Monica Mary and Sister Janet Mary accepted an invitation from the Rev. Percy Wise to run the large diocesan school in his parish of St George, Goodwood, Adelaide⁶¹. Wise had become the dominant Anglo-Catholic figure in the diocese after becoming rector of St George's in 1900⁶². When Mother Monica died in 1942, Janet Mary worked at the Adelaide diocesan

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.53-54; Quarterly Chronicle, Feb 1915, pp.10-11

⁵⁹ Clyde, *op.cit.*, pp.225-226

⁶⁰ R.C.Halse Papers - Letter, Bp Batty of Newcastle to Halse (Hay), 9/2/1937; ADB Vol 7, p.210, Batty was bishop of Newcastle, 1931-1958

⁶¹ ADB Vol 12, *op.cit.*, p.550 –Percy William Charlton Wise (1870-1950)

⁶² Harrison H.J. & Truran J.M., St George's Goodwood, 1880-1980, Hawthorndene: Investigator Press, 1980, pp.18-19 – Wise had been encouraged to come to Australia by Bishop J.R.Harmer (1857-1944) and was associated for all the years of his ministry with CSC at St Peter's Collegiate School. As Wise's ritualism increased in the early decades of the century, he fell into dispute with the new bishop, Nutter Thomas, a less ritualistic Anglo-Catholic. Several major rows occurred, up to and including the threat of civil court action in the twenties. This was instituted against Wise's disobedience, was never pursued but was never withdrawn; ACQ, 30/12/1950, p.22- the Australian Church Union was begun in Adelaide to defend Wise in the court case which did not eventuate; ADB Vol 9,*op.cit.*, pp.199-200, John Reginald Harmer, bishop of Adelaide, 1895-1905, Rochester 1905-1930.

Retreat House and then at the Farr House orphanage before she left for England in 1944 to join the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage⁶³.

After the furore of the 1890's, debate in Sydney concerning the legality of CSC finally abated. Archbishop J.C.Wright (1861-1933), who succeeded Saumarez Smith, took an interest in the Sydney Community and even consented to be the visitor in 1918⁶⁴. Wright was deeply involved with the recognition of women workers in the Church, even though, like others, he was concerned with its growing feminisation, which he feared could encourage the lack of the appeal of the Church to men⁶⁵. Another reason for his interest in CSC may have been connected with his concern to stamp out ritualism⁶⁶. To gain permission to build a chapel at the Waverley school, the sisters had to agree to a rigid list of conditions that the Archbishop hoped would preclude these practices⁶⁷. The length of time the Community obeyed these conditions is not recorded but, even though J.C.Wright remained as Archbishop until his death in 1933, by 1930 the chapel contained a shrine to the Virgin Mary, in 1931 Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament commenced and by 1947 there was a shrine to the Sacred Heart⁶⁸.

In contrast to the diocesan attitude to CSC in Sydney, great encouragement and support continued for the Bethany Deaconess Institute. Deaconess House opened in Newtown in 1916 from where the work was conducted and women were trained for employment in other dioceses⁶⁹. Initially the work undertaken by both the Sydney deaconesses and CSC was similar but the deaconesses remained in individual parish work where they

⁶³ Rowland, *ACQ*, *lit.cit.*, p.24

⁶⁴ ADB Vol 12, *op.cit.*, p.585-6 – John Charles Wright, archbishop of Sydney 1909-1933

⁶⁵ Rose, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8

⁶⁶ Celebration of One Hundred Years of Service in Sydney, St. John's Bishopthorpe, Glebe, (pamphlet) 26/9/1992.

⁶⁷ CSC Archives - Conditions for permission to build a chapel at SGS, Waverley (typewritten).

⁶⁸ CSC Archives- SFF 15. Although some clergy encouraged the Marian Cult and that of the Sacred Heart, these outlooks did not become generally popular in Anglo-Catholicism

⁶⁹ Tress, *op.cit.*, p.27

worked quite independently under the clergy. They later moved into providing care for the chronically and terminally ill, as well as the aged, in hospitals and nursing homes run and funded by the diocese. The encouragement given to deaconesses in Sydney was seen in the attitude of Archbishop Wright who even went as far as allowing them a limited role in speaking and preaching in the Church⁷⁰. During these years the encouragement of women missionaries also increased as more and more were sent overseas by the Church Missionary Society.

The next incumbent of the Sydney diocese, Archbishop Howard W.K.Mowll (1890-1958), who was in charge for 25 years, had been a missionary⁷¹. He was even more enthusiastic about the Deaconess Movement and wanted "to see a deaconess in every parish"⁷². In contrast the Sydney Church ignored CSC as far as possible. This led to the suggestion that St Gabriel's School was "an offence to the Diocese of Sydney"⁷³. Notwithstanding this situation Archbishop Mowll made the obligatory visit to the school in 1935 when he surprised everyone by revealing his relationship to the superior of the Community, Mother Adele, his cousin⁷⁴. This disclosure did nothing to improve the relationship between the sisters, the deaconesses and the Sydney synod. The lack of contact between the groups continued⁷⁵. Despite this situation CSC always acknowledged the kindness shown by the archbishop during the difficult times the sisters faced with evacuation during World War II⁷⁶.

The number of deaconesses in rural dioceses over the years was sparse and usually

⁷⁰ Porter M., Women in the Church, Victoria, 1989, p.43

⁷¹ Bernard J.R.L. (ed) Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of People and Places (PMD), Sydney, 1987, p.454 –Howard West Kilvinton Mowll, archbishop of Sydney 1933-58, Primate 1947-58

⁷² Interview, Deaconess Mary Andrews, Sydney, 16/12/93; Porter, *op.cit.*, p.44

⁷³ Rodd L.C., John Hope of Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney, 1972, p.152

⁷⁴ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, pp.138-9

⁷⁵ Mary Andrews, *op.cit.*

⁷⁶ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.139

connected with BCA. By far the majority have worked in Sydney⁷⁷. After the formation of the Community of the Holy Name (CHN), the second era of deaconess life in Melbourne did not begin until the foundation of a training school for deaconesses in 1924. This was in conjunction with St. Hilda's Church Missionary College and was headed by the Evangelical, Minna Johnson, by all accounts a highly talented visionary. She had trained in Sydney before serving for over forty years in Melbourne⁷⁸. Despite the new training system the number of deaconesses continued to grow very slowly from six to thirteen in 1936. These women wore distinctive dress, undertook two years training in practical work and religious studies and at the end of this time they were "ordained"⁷⁹.

The third era in Melbourne began when some women from Deaconess House broke away to establish their own independent centre in Fitzroy in 1940. The intention was to be part of mainstream Anglicanism and free of the Evangelical domination that held sway at the former institution. It was in this third stage that deaconesses came into their own as a group and the membership increased to twenty by the end of the fifties⁸⁰.

In a limited way, the exception to the lack of deaconesses in rural areas was in the diocese of Gippsland. Most of the deaconesses had been trained in Sydney and from 1918 the Movement became quite strong. The second bishop of the diocese, G.H. Cranswick (1882-1954), who with his wife had been a missionary in India, was responsible for this eventuality⁸¹. An innovative man, he instituted as well the unsuccessful Low Church Bush Brotherhood of St John, Sale. Cranswick commissioned the deaconesses by using the ordinal for deacons and thus always

⁷⁷ Porter, *op.cit.*, p.46 – over 150 deaconesses served in Sydney in comparison to about 50 in Melbourne.

⁷⁸ Sturrock, *op.cit.* p.83; pp. (i) -(ii)

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.33, 35

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.37

⁸¹ ADB Vol 13, *op.cit.*, pp.526-7 – George Harvard Cranswick, second bishop of Gippsland 1917-1942, brought out five women from England, one a deaconess and he ordained the others. They ran Deaconess House which he established and opened a hostel for girls.

considered them to be a part of the diaconate. They were titled the "Reverend Sister" and allowed to sit as clergy in synod⁸². From the success of the Deaconess Movement in Gippsland it could be argued that the model of the independent deaconess working in rural areas, without the constraints of a compulsory communal prayer life, was more appropriate for the evangelising concerns of the Church than the sisterhoods. Despite the far greater flexibility of deaconesses, lack of numbers was again the problem for those who worked in the outback and rural areas for BCA. Loneliness and the huge distances involved led to a similar predicament as confronted the religious communities.

The problems for religious communities working in rural areas were exemplified in the northern boarding schools run by SSA. While these schools were very successful they were operated under very difficult conditions for these women. There were very few of them and they were isolated from the sisters in Brisbane as well as from one another. Herberton, for example, was a two-day trip from Charters Towers by train⁸³. Another outcome of the isolation was that provisions for the schools were often precarious as a result of shipping strike action. This situation existed because the rail link between Brisbane and Cairns was not completed until 1924⁸⁴.

Apart from the move into education in North Queensland, SSA expanded its operations into running and staffing hospitals. In 1916 the sisters were placed in charge of a Brisbane Diocesan Hospital, "Pymont", and from 1918 to 1924 they worked in the "Mary Sumner Maternity Hospital". After the War Pymont was demolished and due to the drive of Bishop Le Fanu, who was allowed to run most of the daily business in the diocese by Archbishop Gerald Sharp (1865-1933), St Martin's Hospital was erected on the site as a memorial to the war dead⁸⁵. This quite large private hospital was run and

⁸² Tress, *op.cit.*, p.91; p.96 - altogether eleven deaconesses worked in this diocese.

⁸³ Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.43

⁸⁴ Gough M. et al., Queensland, Industrial Enigma, Melbourne, 1964, p.6

⁸⁵ ADB Vol 11, pp.580-581 – second bishop of New Guinea 1910-1921, archbishop of Brisbane, 1921-1933; see also, Kidd A.P., The Brisbane Episcopate of Gerald Sharp, 1921-1933, Unpub. MA

staffed by the sisters for many years.

In 1926 Mother Emma appointed Sister Elisabeth as assistant superintendent and sister-in-charge of St Margaret's School. After several years it became obvious to Elisabeth that a branch of St Margaret's should be opened in South Brisbane. Again with the assistance of Le Fanu, St Aidan's, Corinda was opened in 1929⁸⁶. As the country was moving into a depression, this was not an auspicious time to begin such a new venture. Nevertheless, although the school was a drain on the resources of St Margaret's for many years, it later became a great success. By the 1930's the financial position of St Catharine's School in Stanthorpe had become precarious and the decision was made to amalgamate with the Warwick Girl's School. This school had been in severe financial trouble for years and an earlier appeal for SSA to take over the school had been rejected. Despite the depression the new St Catharine's located in Warwick was operated very successfully by the Society until the sixties⁸⁷. Perhaps showing more faith than logic, the Society agreed to take over St. Faith's, Yeppoon, in 1932 in the middle of the depression. This was in the diocese of Rockhampton and as a result it meant that in forty years the Society had extended its work to three of the four dioceses in the Province of Queensland⁸⁸.

In the late twenties, SSA became involved in guiding a small Franciscan sisterhood, the Daughters of St Clare (DSC), which was in the process of establishment in Brisbane. The wider Church had rediscovered the Franciscan tradition in the late nineteenth century and communities began to emerge in the English Church based on the Franciscan Rule after the First World War. Father R.E. Bates, the rector of All Saint's Church, founded DSC in 1928. A former warden of the Bush Brotherhood of Our Saviour, in the Grafton diocese from 1924-6, he firmly believed that the Australian Church was hindered by the lack of the religious life. Consequently he was very keen to

Qualifying Thesis, Uni. of Queensland, 1988

⁸⁶ Sr Elisabeth's Memoirs, *op.cit.*, p.17

⁸⁷ Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.32-34

⁸⁸ Short History SSA, *op.cit.*, p.21

begin communities for both males and females based on the First Order of St Francis. The sisterhood began with a nucleus of three women who were professed in 1930 after a novitiate of two years⁸⁹. In that same year, Bates sent three women to England to train at the Fairacres Community as contemplatives in order to set up such a community in Brisbane. This did not eventuate. Initially the chief work of DSC was the care of aged and sick poor that expanded to involvement in a boy's hostel⁹⁰. A later addition to the work was the making of altar bread that had a wide distribution in Australia and New Zealand⁹¹.

Another community constituted in the Franciscan ideal began work in the same year as DSC on the other side of the continent at Bunbury in Western Australia⁹². The Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary (OEH) had grown out of the Confraternity of Divine Love (CDL), a lay prayer group that had been started in 1912 by Sister Mabel Anne Hodges of the Society of St Margaret, East Grinstead. The only daily obligation on the Confraternity members was a prayer - "Baptise us O God with the Holy Ghost and kindle in our hearts the fire of thy love"⁹³. In 1921 Mabel had been installed as Mother Elizabeth, the first superior of OEH. It was intended that the community would be supported financially and spiritually by CDL⁹⁴. The aim of the sisterhood was to live in small groups under an extremely simple Rule so as to be ready to respond to calls for help. Paradoxically the grey habit with touches of black, white and brown which they adopted, was strikingly complicated and resulted in their being nicknamed "little grey

⁸⁹ The Franciscan (quarterly paper of the Brisbane Franciscan Community), March 1939, 12th Issue, p.2

⁹⁰ Kissick D.L., All Saint's Church, Brisbane, 1862-1937, Brisbane, 1937, pp.111-112 – the sisters ran St Clare's Home, Taringa; St John's Home of Rest, Brookfield; St Christopher's Home, Brookfield.

⁹¹ Sr Elisabeth, *Memoirs, op.cit.*, p.55

⁹² Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.61

⁹³ Anson P., The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, pp.503-4

⁹⁴ Bignell, *op.cit.*, p.12

sparrows" in Western Australia⁹⁵.

The stages of the Order were similar to other communities and a more complicated habit was adopted at each new phase. The postulancy was for six months, followed by a novitiate of at least two years after which simple vows were taken for five years⁹⁶. Perpetual vows were taken at final profession, all possessions were sold and no payment was ever accepted for the work undertaken. Service to others was seen to be of the greatest importance and while the sevenfold Divine Office was followed it was not obligatory if the work took a sister away from prayer. The aims of the Order were to trust in God and to minister to the needy in body and soul. As a result retreats and missions were run, neglected children and orphans were cared for, as were the sick and elderly⁹⁷.

By 1926 the Order had grown rapidly and begun work in a hospital in Christchurch, New Zealand⁹⁸. Through the suggestion of the Rev. John Foley, a priest in Bunbury, and the influence of Lady Champion, the wife of the Governor of Western Australia, the sisters were invited to Bunbury by Bishop C. Wilson, the second bishop of the diocese from 1917-1938⁹⁹. It has been seen that Lady Champion's brother-in-law was the first principal of BGS in Bathurst¹⁰⁰. She knew of the Confraternity, as did Canon John Frewer, the head of the Bush Brotherhood of St Boniface founded and based in Bunbury from 1911¹⁰¹. This diocese had been created in 1904 and comprised the southwestern portion of Western Australia. Bishop F. Goldsmith, the former Anglo-Catholic dean of Perth was the first bishop. Under his direction the St Boniface

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.138-140

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.12-14

⁹⁸ Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.60

⁹⁹ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.504

¹⁰⁰ Australians: The Guide, *op.cit.*, p.42

¹⁰¹ Bignell, *op.cit.*, p.21 – Frewer was warden from 1919. In 1929 he became the first bishop of North-West Australia. He was Goldsmith's nephew.

Brotherhood worked in the remote districts of the diocese. It is usually believed that this brotherhood was another variation on the bush brotherhood model. On the contrary, Holden argues that the brotherhood was the first male religious community in Australia, an outcome of Goldsmith's vision of such a community based on a life of prayer¹⁰². Although the brotherhood was instituted to alleviate the problems in the bush, this was apparently seen as a corollary to train candidates for the priesthood. The brotherhood was always very understaffed and only ever attracted one Australian member. It became non-viable after the First World War and the elevation of Frewer to the episcopate was the end of the community¹⁰³. It was finally disbanded as OSEH arrived in the diocese and the sisters were able to help fill the gap in pastoral care created by its demise¹⁰⁴.

The major work in Bunbury was the ministry to thousands of English migrants who had come to the undeveloped southern rural districts of Western Australia after the War. This flood of migrants occurred at the instigation of the state government, which wanted to settle 5,000,000 acres of crown land between Bunbury on the west coast and Albany on the south coast. To facilitate this aim, an arrangement was made by the Commonwealth and the state with the UK for joint assisted migration¹⁰⁵. By 1922 there were forty settlements of about 9,000 people many of whom were farming¹⁰⁶. Three sisters led by Mother Margaret, the deputy superior of the Order, began work from a house in South Bunbury in 1928. This was bought for them by members of CDL in England who at first entirely supported the group financially. Initially the work of the sisters was teaching the children of the group settlers by correspondence and assisting the clergy in parochial work. By 1929 there were five sisters working in the district and

¹⁰² Holden, *op.cit.*, p.285; pp.294-6

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.342

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.300 – in 1926 the Brotherhood of St Margaret was formed to minister south of Busselton. It was suggested the two brotherhoods should merge but this did not eventuate.

¹⁰⁵ Gabbedy J.P., Group Settlement, Part 1, Its Origins, Politics and Administration, Nedlands, 1988, pp.231-232 – the aim was to provide for 75,000 English people over five years.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.234; Bignell, *op.cit.*, pp.17-18; - these farms had been built by the settlers with materials supplied by the government. On completion they were allocated by ballot and the settler entered into a mortgage to repay the money spent on building and equipment.

a second centre had been opened at Margaret River¹⁰⁷. Three sisters from New Zealand bolstered the Order the following year and this resulted in the opening of another centre and convent at Busselton¹⁰⁸. Over the next few years, Mother Elizabeth tried to organise a joint medical mission to be run by the Order and the government for the Margaret River district. This did not eventuate because of the depression.

The arrival of OSEH did not occur without opposition. There existed a strong Protestant element amongst the laity in the diocese, despite the predominant Anglo-Catholicism of the clergy. As was usually the case in Anglo-Catholic dioceses, the laity was many steps behind the clergy in their commitment to that form of churchmanship. As a result many Anglicans were suspicious of the real objective of the "Roman-like nuns". Even so the sisters were quickly accepted and appreciated because of their selfless work in the deteriorating conditions of the intensifying depression¹⁰⁹.

The settlers were mainly dairy farmers and only a minority earned enough money to support their families during these years. Conditions were made worse because of the very tough repayment conditions that had been imposed on the settlers for their mortgages. As an outcome many of these enterprises failed. Life was also very hard for the sisters, as they had to rely on these people for food and gifts. Nevertheless the Order still managed to open the Mary Clementina Hostel in 1931, for state high school girls in South Bunbury. Apart from this involvement they continued with their ministry of help and friendship to the people in the bleak times¹¹⁰.

During the depression there were on average nine sisters in Bunbury, which in comparison to some of the other sisterhoods in Australia, was quite a large number in

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.44

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p.51, 53

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63; pp.83-84.

one area¹¹¹. This number was necessary because, unlike other communities, OSEH never employed outside help. Ultimately the health of all these English women was affected by overwork, the sparse Franciscan vegetarian diet and wearing the extremely cumbersome habit in the enervating heat. As a result the convent in Busselton was closed owing to a depletion of sisters through illness¹¹².

In 1933, SSA went to Western Australia to help CSC at the Parkerville orphanage because the Community was experiencing a shortage of personnel¹¹³. This was the only time the Society ever worked outside Queensland and was due to the specific request of Archbishop Le Fanu, the former great mentor of the Society in Brisbane. Le Fanu changed the episcopal Low Church trend in Perth and in 1935 was the first primate of Australia not elected from the Sydney diocese¹¹⁴. Apart from the large number of Australian dioceses, which exhibited a moderated form of Anglo-Catholicism and would prefer the Primate to be in a similar mould, Honniball has attributed this event to growing nationalism in Australia. Although Le Fanu was English, he had been in Australia for over 30 years whereas Mowll had only arrived the year before¹¹⁵.

Controversy surrounds Le Fanu's role in the arrival of SSA at Parkerville, as it does around his time in Brisbane. However by 1931 it was obvious that CSC needed help in running Parkerville as the pioneer, Sister Kate, was the only member of the Community available to work in the orphanage. She enlisted the help of Le Fanu, who was going to England, to persuade Mother Adele that either more sisters were needed to retain the orphanage or, if that were not possible, to allow the Church Army to take over. The archbishop gained authority from Adele to act as he saw fit in the affairs of the orphanage. This was a far cry from the independent stance that CSC had always maintained from clerical interference in the Community's affairs; it was probably a reflection of the influence that the Benedictines of Nashdom were wielding at the time

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.139 – At the opening of the Hostel there were 12 sisters present. In these years, seven of the sisters made their final vows in Bunbury.

¹¹² Anson, *op.cit.*, p.504; Bignell, *op.cit.*, p.95, 100

¹¹³ Moores, *op.cit.*, p.66

¹¹⁴ Alexander F(ed), Four Bishops and Their See, Nedlands, 1957, p.30

¹¹⁵ Honniball J.H.M., 'Archbishop and Primate', Alexander, *Ibid.*, pp.161-2

on CSC. The outcome saw Sister Kate forced to resign from managing Parkerville after being awarded an MBE for services to children. Sister Rosalie, who was in charge of the Community in Perth, apparently agreed with the decision, but even though Kate virtually severed connection with the Community the two remained close¹¹⁶. Once Kate left Parkerville, she began the Queen's Park Children's Home for part-Aboriginal children, which she ran on the same lines as Parkerville¹¹⁷. During the 30 years in which Kate established and ran the first endeavour, 800 children had lived at the orphanage and 130 orphans were in residence when she left. Le Fanu incurred much criticism at Sister Kate's removal from Parkerville, particularly from the many ex-residents of the Home¹¹⁸.

Despite the lack of sisters in Perth during the depression, the trend in Australia for CSC after the First World War was for an increase in the number of recruits. In England the religious life had attained its greatest membership by the turn of the century and between the two World Wars postulants to the religious life began to decline. Despite this trend, CSC managed to retain its worldwide membership at about 150 until much later in the century. In the years from 1910 to 1940, the number of sisters in Australia was maintained at about 45 overall but there was a gradual change in the proportion of Australian to English sisters. This saw an increase from a 30% Australian contingent in the second decade to 50% by the Second World War. The first Australian novitiate had been established in Hobart in 1920 which, given its geographical isolation, was a display of confidence in that diocese¹¹⁹. After clothing, novices spent three years in Hobart before further training in England, prior to profession, whence most returned to work in Australia. The continual increase in postulants, although miniscule in Roman Catholic terms, eventually necessitated a more central location for training on the Australian continent and the novitiate was moved to Brunswick in Melbourne in

¹¹⁶ Whittington V., Sister Kate, A Life Dedicated to Children in Need of Care, Nedlands, 1999, pp.272-275

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, - these children were sent to Kate from the Moore River Aboriginal Settlement. This settlement was receiving Aborigines from all over W.A. as the white population expanded and pushed out the indigenous people.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.295; Honniball, *op.cit.*, p.195, 205

¹¹⁹ History CSC in Tasmania (handwritten)

1928¹²⁰.

It seems likely that one reason for the reversal of the trend in England to a decline in postulants between the Wars was because the communities in Australia were assuming a higher profile with their expansion into varied institutions. The extremely high Australian male death rate in the First World War followed by the depression resulted in the unusual situation of fewer and later marriages. This may also have played a part. Despite the Australian situation, a shortage of recruits had begun for CSC early in the century. Following the deaths of many of the original sisters the schools in New Zealand, Ottawa and Madras had been handed over to the dioceses¹²¹. In the twenties and thirties, the third superior, Mother Adele contributed to the necessity of instituting changes in the work undertaken by CSC through her close association with the Benedictines of Nashdom. This was at the time of the greatest strength of the Anglo-Catholic movement in England. The outlook of this contemplative group became highly influential in the sisterhood and apart from the move to a more Roman perspective, the spiritual direction of the monks led to a more introspective prayer life¹²². The latter was seen in the substitution of the *Monastic Diurnal* for the office, from the *Day Hours of the Church of England* used by many sisterhoods, including SSA. For many years afterwards the intensification of the prayer life was seen as balancing the life in community that had been lacking because of the concentrated outreach undertaken¹²³.

Despite the consolidation occurring world wide, CSC began a school in Canberra at the urgent request of the first High Church bishop of the Goulburn diocese, Lewis B. Radford (1869-1937) in 1926¹²⁴. During Radford's years in Goulburn, the diocese had the distinction of being the only Australian bush diocese to accommodate four religious

¹²⁰ Our Work, March 1930, p.58

¹²¹ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.143

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.233

¹²³ Interview, Sr Marguerite Mae, Richmond, UK, 7/6/94

¹²⁴ ADB Vol 11, pp.322-3 – Lewis Bostock Radford, fourth bishop of Goulburn, 1915-1933

communities. A general consensus holds that the first to be established in the area, the Community of the Ascension (CA), was the first male community to follow the religious life in Australia. After the First World War, three army chaplains decided to form a religious order for men in Australia¹²⁵. They undertook a novitiate at the Community of the Resurrection (CR), Mirfield – one of the few stable male communities instituted in the 19th century. In 1921 the Community was commissioned at Goulburn by Bishop Radford who professed two of the three priests. He had offered the men old Bishopthorpe as a residence on the condition they undertook its restoration. Although it had been partially burnt out in 1913, there remained some liveable sections. Edward Kempe was the first superior and the visitor was Archbishop Gerald Sharp of Brisbane¹²⁶. A Fraternity of associates and friends was established to help the new Community and for many years it was guided by members of Mirfield. Although the Community was not a branch of CR, its Rule and Constitution were very similar. As usual whenever an Anglican religious order appeared in Australia there was criticism. One press report proclaimed that the House of the Ascension was indistinguishable from a Catholic monastery. Bishop Radford's reply was that CA were "in but not of" the diocese of Goulburn¹²⁷.

Although disagreement about the type of community outreach continued for the life of CA, Bishopthorpe was restored and used for the rest and retreat of guests. One aim was the establishment of a theological college similar to Mirfield or Kelham (run by the Society of the Sacred Mission); another was the collection of a comprehensive theological library. The latter was accomplished. The peak of the membership was reached in 1935 with 12 professed members, some of whom were laymen. Beginning with the apostasy to Rome of the superior, Fr. Davies in 1936, the Community began to decline. Further internal difficulties and personality clashes ensured the end of CA. In June 1943, the visitor, Bishop Halse of the Riverina, informed Bishop E.H. Burgmann

¹²⁵ Rowland, ACQ 1970, *lit.cit.*, pp.25-27 – the three men were Maurice Kelly, Charles Kempe, Stanley Homersham.

¹²⁶ Webster G. & Frame T., Labouring in Vain, Goulburn, 1996, pp.43-45

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

(1885-1967) of Goulburn, that the Community was dissolved¹²⁸. Like its predecessors in England, the Community had copied the early pattern of the establishment of stable women's sisterhoods followed by unstable male communities. It was commented that one reason among many for the failure of CA was "the real and widespread prejudice against, and ignorance of the work of the Community"¹²⁹. Cecil Cohen, the last superior returned to Britain and was professed in CR in 1951¹³⁰.

As early as 1912, it had been mooted that CSC be invited to take over the existing Bishopthorpe High School in Goulburn. At the time the Community was considered to be too High Church, but this changed in the movement towards various forms of modified Anglo-Catholicism in many country dioceses. The rumour that only one church school was to be allowed in the emerging Australian Capital Territory (ACT) prompted CSC to accept Bishop Radford's invitation. The sisters were concerned that if they refused the offer the Roman Catholics or Presbyterians would take their place¹³¹. This establishment initially grew very rapidly and was also named St.Gabriel's like the Sydney school. The money for the enterprise was obtained by mortgaging the latter, which continued to be responsible for its support. As was seen in the early pioneering days, one or two sisters in an institution present great difficulties for a successful communal life. Therefore the lack of available sisters was as much a problem as financial considerations and the situation quickly became non-viable during the depression. Consequently the diocese took over responsibility for the school. For many years the Waverley school suffered from the diversion of resources to Canberra and it was not until 1946 that the Sydney school was free of the debt that had been incurred. The Canberra school was the last large institution begun in Australia and was renamed the Canberra Church of England Girls' Grammar School¹³².

A further effect of the depression saw the relinquishment of St Saviour's, a large

¹²⁸ Church Standard, 2/7/43, p.6; ADB Vol 12, *op.cit.*, pp.300-301 – Ernest Henry Burgmann, bishop of Goulburn 1934-1961, Canberra and Goulburn 1950- 1961

¹²⁹ Webster/Frame, *op.cit.*, p.58

¹³⁰ Wilkinson A., The Community of the Resurrection, London, 1992,p.180

¹³¹ Waterhouse J., A Light in the Bush, ACT, 1978, p.34 (quoting, Our Work, March 1931, p.55)

¹³² CSC, History of St Gabriel's School, 1893-1953, [1953], p.22

primary school CSC had controlled in the Sydney suburb of Redfern for many years. Like the Canberra school it had never been economically independent and due to the added financial difficulties had to be closed¹³³. Other consequences of these years were the withdrawal from all the primary schools run in the different states. In Hobart, Synod Hall, a large primary school for boys and girls begun in 1913 was given up, as were the small primary schools in Adelaide. By 1937 Melbourne had become the provincial centre of CSC because of its central location and the establishment of the novitiate there some years before. After this time the Community in Australia began to concentrate almost solely on the large boarding schools it had founded.

Until the end of World War 1, Mother Esther had often refused requests for assistance because of the slow growth of CHN. A successful recruitment drive after the War saw over 30 sisters professed between 1910 and the end of the interwar period. By the early twenties, the increase enabled the sisterhood to accept a request for help from Bishop R. Stephen of Newcastle (1919-1928)¹³⁴. The first work was undertaken in NSW at the St Alban's Boys' Home Morpeth in 1921. Further expansion occurred in 1926 when five sisters worked in the diocese and St Elizabeth's Girls' Home, Mayfield, and St Christopher's Babies Home, Lochinvar, were added to the list¹³⁵.

Mother Esther died in Melbourne on 11 September 1931. At her request she was buried in her Wantage habit and cross, which she had kept especially for the occasion. The wimple, veil, cross and girdle of CHN were added to the symbols of the community where she had entered the religious life¹³⁶. In describing her, an English bishop said that,

She was one of those gifted women who see great visions - whom God raises up once in a generation to revive our faith in his power and in his

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.11

¹³⁴ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.74, 76

¹³⁵ CHN, *Esther Mother (EMF)*, Melbourne, [1948], pp.87-8; Stacy, *op.cit.*, p.37.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.135; *Associates Newsletter*, Sept.1994, p.1 - Esther is to be included in the Australian Prayer Book and will be remembered on the day of her death.

Church¹³⁷.

Sister Alice was appointed as interim superior until Mother Ida was elected in 1934. That was the same year as the Community withdrew from much of its outreach in NSW. In 1932, two sisters had gone to Young in the Goulburn diocese to run an orphanage but, due to the depression, it was felt that consolidation was needed in the work that had become very diverse and extensive¹³⁸. So from 1934 the sisters gradually withdrew from the Newcastle diocese and the work became concentrated in NSW in an expanded effort at Goulburn¹³⁹. The major undertaking in the 1930's was the building of a Community House on land next to the rescue home at Cheltenham. This type of conventual accommodation was needed to house the influx of postulants but its major function was to be in memory of Esther. Although extra acreage was acquired over the years, the initial venture was mainly financed through donations because at that time the sisters had few assets¹⁴⁰.

The precarious financial situation of the Community had concerned Esther towards the end of her life. The problem was that while the sisters worked for MSL and in reality were the Mission, all the institutions were owned by the diocese. Over the years many donations of money and often of substantial property had been given specifically to the sisters who had then handed these gifts over to the Mission. The result was that the Community owned nothing of its own and had absolutely no security. An example of one of these gifts was a valuable property that the Mission turned into St. George's Intermediate Private Hospital in 1912 - the first Anglican Hospital in Melbourne¹⁴¹. Sister Agnes, the first Australian to be professed in CHN, ran the hospital with two other sisters and the aid of probationers and secular staff¹⁴². Further expansion in the

¹³⁷ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.77;

¹³⁸ Wyatt R.T., The History of Goulburn, Sydney, 1972, p.392 – In 1933 CHN took over from the Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross at St Saviour's Children's Home.

¹³⁹ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.138-9

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.108, 178; Church Scene 17/4/92, No 648/9, p.12

¹⁴¹ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.83

¹⁴² In Our Midst (IOM), May 1925, p.14; Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.52; p.6 - the chapel which the sisters

medical field eventuated when the St Ives Private Hospital was opened in 1918. This property was rented on a ten years lease with an option to purchase. Financial problems developed in the early twenties and Mother Esther agreed to take over the hospital in her own name to avoid embarrassment for the Church. Eventually the sisters were able to purchase the property and that helped put the Community on a more equitable financial footing¹⁴³.

In the thirties a close friendship developed between Mother Ida of CHN and Sister Elisabeth of SSA, the heir-apparent to Mother Emma. This arose through the desire of the two Australian communities to register with the Advisory Council of Religious Communities, set up by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. The two groups decided to forward their submissions together and through this association became very close. This connection greatly pleased Sister Elisabeth who after a time in England felt that SSA was very isolated in Brisbane, which she believed was on the periphery of Church Life¹⁴⁴. As a copy of the Rule had to be submitted for registration, reviews of both community Rules, formulated by Mother Emma and Esther, were conducted. The outcome was that SSA drew up a similar customary to CHN and further followed CHN's example by changing the *Day Hours* office to *Hours of Prayer*¹⁴⁵.

The years of expansion influenced by the vision of the pioneer sisters were coming to an end. The work of SSA had been described as the great romance of the Church in Queensland and when Mother Emma of SSA died in 1939, Bishop Feetham wrote of her pervasive influence,

Of all the people who have lived in Queensland few have affected it so powerfully as Mother Emma. She ranks as the principal benefactress of

erected in the grounds of the hospital was dedicated to the memory of Laurence Oldfield, Esther's adopted son who had died in WWI.

¹⁴³ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.85- in later times there was internal criticism of CHN's involvement with this hospital specifically for the rich. This outlook was part of the earlier philosophy of the deaconess Mission which had been critical of the work of CSC with middle class girls in Melbourne (IOM, Nov 1899, pp.4-6

¹⁴⁴ Sr Elisabeth, *Memoirs*, *op.cit.*, pp.48-49

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.53-54

this diocese¹⁴⁶.

He went on to comment that it was remarkable that such a small handful of women had been able to handle so many institutions so efficiently¹⁴⁷. Such praise was also applicable to the sisters of CSC and CHN. The volume and diversity of the work, which these sisterhoods had undertaken, was far out of proportion to their numbers. This was even taking into consideration the practical help given by the much larger number of associates they were able to attract.

Despite the uncertainties and problems of the first four decades of the century, these years were fruitful for the dedicated religious workers. This era saw the firm establishment of the early organisations begun by the sisterhoods and the undertaking of additional institutions. In the early decades, the work of the bush brotherhoods, instituted specifically to evangelise the outback areas, was bearing fruit as parishes were created. The Deaconess Movement expanded in Sydney to work in parochial and diocesan institutions; while in Gippsland, a small but strong group were formed who worked in a similar way to those employed by BCA. The male and female missionaries used by BCA worked in the outback and soon initiated the success story of their work in the medical field. The lonely lifestyle and the difficulty of covering the distances to evangelise the outback areas made this outreach arduous for all organisations. This was enhanced by the difficulty of attracting and retaining volunteers for the various forms of such a lifestyle. The advantage the deaconesses had over the sisterhoods in these areas was that their specific vocation was to a particular job of active work, not to a communal life of prayer.

Although no comparisons can be made with the numerical strength of Roman Catholic congregations, overall in this period the number of professed Anglican nuns steadily

¹⁴⁶ Church Chronicle, 1/5/39, p.1458 (Church Chronicle has been collected in volume form since 1898)

¹⁴⁷ Northern Churchman, 1 April 1939, Vol XL No 573 (article by the Bp of N. Queensland)

increased and three new orders formed. The depression years of the thirties saw a consolidation, and in some cases a loss, of the work of the sisterhoods due to financial problems and overextension in some areas. Nevertheless the depression years made little difference to recruitment for CSC, which maintained a fairly even intake of six or seven professions in each decade. What did change over the four decades was the proportion of Australians to English professed which increased from 30%, in the early decades, to 50% by 1940. CHN had one of its largest intakes of 17 in the thirties while SSA had eleven professions, preceded by the largest total of 34 in the two decades before the depression years.

It is impossible to adequately assess the success of the evangelisation effort of Anglican nuns in Australia. However it must have been considerable, particularly when they were involved in the care and education of the young. Whatever was achieved did not translate into large numbers of aspirants to the religious life however. The distances of the Australian continent, the lack of members and the nature of the religious life, particularly in regard to the major importance placed on "community" in the commitment to a rigorous program of prayer, meant that the endeavours of the sisterhoods really needed to be restricted to an urban environment. The exception to this was seen when the rural dioceses gave co-operation and a great deal of support, as was the case in Queensland. However it is plain that for any religious community to be secure and successful in Australia, at least the moral support of the diocese is a great advantage.

The Second World War affected the sisterhoods in Australia in varying degrees, but none could remain unscathed by its aftermath in which a vastly different world developed. The second half of the century was to see changes that caused most of the practical reasons for the existence of this type of religious order to become undermined.

CHAPTER FIVE The Established Communities from the Second World War

Fresh Visions of Ministry

The years from the Second World War to the end of the century saw unprecedented rapid change, in every aspect of life, worldwide. One outcome of the Second World War was that it helped bring about the end of the British Empire. This event in conjunction with Australia's reliance on the USA, instead of Britain, to help defend the country was to be highly significant in the move towards the forging of a concept of the independence of Australia. The predominant Anglo-Celtic population mix and outlook that developed by selective migration to Australia from the British Isles, began to change irrevocably with the migration firstly of refugees and then of peoples from most countries on earth. In the later part of the century this changed the overall predominance of the Church of England in the population¹. Following several decades of strong growth for the Church to the sixties, this trend proceeded in conjunction with a growing disinterest in traditional Christianity, a decline in church attendance and in denominational affiliation. The Australian Church was finally able to agree on a form of self-government in 1962 that in concert with growing nationalism, led to the attainment of a new sense of Australian identity in the Church with a consequent indigenisation of the liturgy.

Following the difficulties of the depression years, the Second World War was to exacerbate many of the problems which the communities had encountered. In 1943, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA), Archbishop J.W.C. Wand (1885-1977) could call the Society, "the most important institution in the Anglican Church in Queensland"². At this stage the community appeared to be flourishing as the Society controlled many important institutions in Queensland and had attracted reasonable numbers of new recruits in the preceding

¹ Fletcher B.H., 'Anglicanism and Nationalism in Australia', Journal of Religious History, Vol 23 No 2, June 1999, p.216

² Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), Vol 12, p.377 – John William Charles Wand was archbishop of Brisbane 1934-1943, bishop of Bath and Wells 1943-5, bishop of London 1945-1956; SSA, A Short History of the Society of the Sacred Advent (1892-1942), Brisbane, [1943], p.3

decades. Appearances were deceptive, as there were only 35 sisters, of whom one third was elderly and many were invalids; there were no novices or postulants. This situation continued throughout the decade and although there were numbers of aspirants, those who joined the Society were not young women. To add to the problems, the depression years of the thirties had resulted in financial embarrassment for the community, as it had for the Church itself³. The country schools had been most badly affected because of the devastating drought that followed the depression. The outcome was that while the Society owned valuable property in Brisbane, the sisters lived on an overdraft⁴.

This financial situation was one that had existed throughout the history of SSA. Despite the archbishops of Brisbane being involved as visitors with the Society for much of its history, the diocese, because of its own continual financial difficulties, only ever gave moral support to the community. Even this tended to wane over time, as the diocesan schools became the main concern. From the establishment of SSA, the sisters were on their own financially, unless they were running institutions like the schools in North Queensland in association with the diocese. Consequently they depended on donations and income from works, which frequently did not cover expenses. Despite the help given in the north, a great deal of economic strain was thus experienced as the Society expanded its operations throughout Queensland.

When Mother Emma died in 1939 after leading the Society for 33 years, the community had no record of the process of the appointment of a superior. After obtaining guidance from Clewer, Sister Elisabeth was elected and installed as the second superior. Although she had been prepared over the years by Mother Emma and Le Fanu to expect her election, she felt she was in for a difficult time in office. As she later wrote "my

³Kidd A.P., *The Brisbane Episcopate of Gerald Sharp, 1921-1933*, Unpub. MA Qualifying Thesis, Uni. of Queensld., 1988, p.iii, p.37 – Bishop Le Fanu saw himself as a financial expert and Sharp allowed him to run diocesan finances. In the depression, Kidd believes, he was rather unfairly blamed for the diocesan financial mess, see Sharp Correspondence, Letter to St Clair Donaldson, 28/8/31.

⁴ Sr Elisabeth SSA, Society of the Sacred Advent, Past, Present and Future, Memoirs from 1917-1969, (typewritten)[1970], pp.41-42

expectations were fully justified⁵. The Society remembers Le Fanu with great affection and respect, which he reciprocated. However the criticism has been made that Mother Emma under the influence of Le Fanu, undertook too many projects to be managed by the number of available personnel. The problem was that after so many years as head of this highly visible community in Queensland, there was no one to question her judgement or decisions. An example of this was the decision to send sisters to run the Parkerville Home in Perth in the middle of the depression, when personnel were already stretched to the limit. A former associate believes that she was allowed to stay in office far too long and consequently the rectification of the over-extension and the delay in changing the situation badly weakened the Society. The state of affairs that Mother Elizabeth inherited convinced her that to cope with the financial situation and the lack of personnel, there was a need for geographical centralisation of the Society's outreach. This meant the withdrawal from the remote northern schools - a move she knew would be highly unpopular with many of the sisters⁶. Before any shift in this direction could begin World War II intervened and brought even greater worries.

In the early forties Australia was threatened by the potential invasion of the Japanese. This prompted the brief suspension of all schools in the city area of Brisbane, which came to resemble a garrison town. Until the danger was past the sisters arranged for the country girls from the Brisbane schools to take correspondence courses, while the pupils in the city were tutored in groups in private homes⁷. In the north, St Anne's School was taken over by the American forces in 1941 and the pupils, with those from St Gabriel's, Charters Towers, were forced to move further inland for safety. Closer to Brisbane St Faith's Yeppoon, was also evacuated, while the Tufnell Children's Home and St John's Cathedral School in Brisbane were both seconded by the United States army⁸. The latter was an immediate casualty of the War for SSA and it did not reopen.

⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.43

⁷ Amies H., *The Aims, Ideals and Achievements of the Society of the Sacred Advent in Queensland, 1892-1962*, Unpub.BA (Hons) Thesis: Uni of Queensland, 1968, p.113

⁸ Moores E., *One Hundred Years of Ministry, A History of the Society of the Sacred Advent, 1892-*

Another was the Yeppoon school, which was handed back to the diocese in 1944⁹.

The war years exacerbated the problems with finance and staffing which Elisabeth had recognised in 1939. Consequently, she began a serious campaign for the withdrawal from the northern schools after the war. As she had feared the Chapter disagreed with this proposal and a new superior was elected in her place in 1948. The new superior, Mother Frances, had been the assistant superior in 1925 but had relinquished the post when she went to work in the North Queensland schools¹⁰.

Just before the end of Elisabeth's tenure, three remaining sisters of the Daughters of St Clare (DSC), the small Brisbane Franciscan community, applied to join SSA. Despite an encouraging beginning in the twenties and thirties, this sisterhood had not attracted many members and there were few professions. By 1948 the numbers were back to three and the sisters were anxious about their future. A formal request was made to join SSA, as the two communities had continued to maintain a close relationship. The amalgamated communities retained and expanded the altar bread business run by DSC but the fusion of the two sisterhoods was not an easy matter for either side. The main problem was SSA's disagreement with the Franciscan concept of poverty, especially in the matter of food and fasting. Otherwise SSA had nothing but admiration for the religious life of the former Franciscans and felt that they brought with them the spirit of true religion¹¹.

Problems had arisen in the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary (OSEH), the other Franciscan order, which had settled in Western Australia. These were centred on the post-war economic boom that resulted in widespread housing development in the semi-

1992, Brisbane [1993], p.15

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42; Church Chronicle, 1/11/44, p.324 – Bishop F.L.Ash of Rockhampton (1928-1947) wrote of the great spiritual loss which SSA's departure would cause.

¹⁰ Sr.Elisabeth's Memoirs, *op.cit.*, p.12

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.55-56

rural districts of Bunbury. While this development ensured there was plenty of scope for the work of OSEH, the sisters had become badly understaffed. This community had not managed to attract any Australians to join its ranks permanently and there was a dearth of younger sisters in the aging English community. Therefore the increasing prosperity of the area worked in reverse for the sisters who had trouble coping with the escalating cost of living. This situation was exacerbated by the reduction in donations from the Confraternity of Divine Love, which had always supported the Order and enabled the community to remain independent from diocesan support¹².

In the early fifties, the government planned to build modern hostels throughout the state for high school students. The sisters realised they would be unable to compete with these facilities. Consequently the Bunbury hostel was closed. By 1956 there were six sisters left in Bunbury who had been reduced to running prayer meetings and quiet days. The decision was made to withdraw from the country in the following year. Bishop R.G.Hawkins at his first synod meeting as the fifth bishop of Bunbury (1957-1977), summed up the situation,

For well nigh thirty years the Sisters of the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary have served the Church of God in this Diocese. In that time they have helped the whole work of the Diocese in a multitude of ways, but it is for another reason that I believe they have made their greatest contribution. They were a Religious Order and they lived according to a special Rule of life and their lives were chiefly occupied by prayer. The implements of those lives so lived for so long a period of time, no man can estimate. It was brought home to me most of all by the large body of lay folk who gathered at Fremantle to say farewell as they sailed for England. Brethren, no words of mine can adequately express what this Diocese owes to the Sisters of the Order of St. Elizabeth of Hungary¹³.

¹² Bignell M., *Little Grey Sparrows*, Nedlands, 1992, pp.138-140 –One woman from Albany, W.A., who met the sisters in 1951, joined the Order in England in 1967.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.184; 190 - Bishop Hawkins twice invited OSEH back to Bunbury in 1959 and 1960 to run retreat and guesthouses. The invitation had to be declined because of dwindling numbers. In 1992 there were three elderly sisters left in the Order. Nevertheless the membership of the Confraternity continued to be healthy with 200 members throughout the world, much the same number as there had always been.

The War years brought massive disruption to the work of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) worldwide, particularly in the U.K. where the Mother House at Kilburn had been destroyed by bombing. Like its SSA counterparts, St Gabriel's School in Sydney had to be evacuated because of the fear of invasion. In 1941 the school moved to Goulburn and premises were exchanged with the Community of the Ascension (CA), which by this stage was nearing its end. The senior boarders of St Gabriel's attended the Brotherhood House of the Resurrection for tuition and were accommodated at PLC Goulburn¹⁴. The school stayed for three years and Bishop Burgmann tried unsuccessfully to get the sisters to retain a presence in the diocese¹⁵. In Melbourne the army needed the junior section of St Michael's Grammar School and the pupils were evacuated to Wandin - a country retreat owned by the Community¹⁶. After the slow growth earlier in the century the school had expanded to an enrolment approaching 500 pupils and many additional properties had been acquired. The Community's schools in Tasmania and South Australia were unaffected by the dislocation of evacuation but Perth College was seconded by the Australian Army as the headquarters of General Gordon Bennett¹⁷. Until the end of 1943 the boarders were accommodated at the Parkerville Orphanage and the daygirls at a small house in Lawley Crescent¹⁸. This was a difficult time for all involved, as there was a definite clash between the privileged boarders and the disadvantaged Parkerville orphans¹⁹.

CSC had been struggling to run Parkerville since the depression. SSA had come to the assistance of the Community in the early thirties but, due to their own lack of personnel,

¹⁴ CSC, History of St.Gabriel's School, 1893-1953,pp. [1953], p.26

¹⁵ Webster G., & Frame T., A History of Bishopthorpe, Goulburn, 1996, p.56 – Burgmann tried in vain to persuade CHN to begin an orphanage at Bishopthorpe.

¹⁶ History of the CSC in Victoria (handwritten)

¹⁷ Our Work, July 1944, p.54

¹⁸ Sister Rosalie, Perth College, Record of the work of the Sisters of the Church in Western Australia: Memoirs of a Pioneer Sister, Perth, 1958, p.37

¹⁹ Curtis T.P., The Sisters' Vision Continues, Perth College, 1952-1977, Perth, [1978], p.36

this was discontinued in 1941. Sister Kate continued to run the Queen's Park Orphanage until she died in 1946. While her death rated a front-page mention on the afternoon newspaper in Perth, it was fifty years later that the name of the orphanage was changed to Sister Kate's Home. By the end of the century much criticism has been given to similar homes as Kate founded for Aboriginal children. This is because they are seen by some to have supported a mission of genocide using 'stolen generations' of these children. Despite this criticism, few of the children Kate cared for seem to feel anything but affection towards her. Perhaps this is because as Sir Paul Hasluck said in 1972,

There is an immense love, which encompasses people whom nobody else wants to love, and it was this love, which inspired Sister Kate when she started off her work, and sustains it to this day²⁰.

By 1947 the sisters of CSC were unable to cope with the lack of staff and difficult conditions and Parkerville was handed over to the diocese²¹. On the other hand, Perth College, which had always been one of the most successful of the Australian schools, had no problems surviving the exigencies of the war years.

In the decade of the forties, CSC had 48 professed sisters working in the country. This was slightly more than the average number and the proportion of Australians had risen to 60%. As the Church in Australia was in a stage of growth, the optimistic outlook of the Community saw the establishment of a second novitiate in Perth in 1949, to complement the Melbourne establishment. Consequently there were two novitiates in Australia until 1956, although it eventuated that only four Australians were professed in those years. The promise of the forties for continuing growth in numbers had not eventuated and the number of aspirants to the religious life began to dwindle. Consequently the novitiate in Melbourne was closed and Perth became the only Australian training centre until the community left Western Australia in 1968²².

²⁰ Whittington., Sister Kate, Nedlands, 1999, p.428

²¹ Hawtrey C.L.M., The Availing Struggle, Perth, 1949, pp.141-142; Whittington, *op.cit.*, p.437 – in 1998, Parkerville celebrated its 95th anniversary. Today it is the principal childcare agency of the Anglican Church in Perth.

²² CSC Archives -(i) List of Professions (ii) Histories of CSC in Australia (handwritten).

The Community of the Holy Name (CHN) had continued to receive many requests for help during the War. These were all refused because it was felt that in the difficult times prayer for the world was the main work of the Community²³. The Melbourne sisters were fortunate to be able to pursue this option, as compared to CSC and particularly SSA, they were in comparatively safe locations.

In 1939 Mother Ida had taken the regulation tour of religious communities in the mother country and picked up new ideas. CHN had always been very informal but on her return she ushered in an era of much more rigid formalised behaviour. This formality has been criticised by some sisters who remember her regime, but others believe that it was necessary to control the increasing numbers entering the novitiate²⁴. From the trends, which she observed in her pre-War trip to England, Ida realised that the state would begin to encroach more and more on the institutions run by CHN after the war²⁵. This would be done by the insistence on professionally qualified people and drastic alterations would be expected in the way children's orphanages and correctional institutions would be run. She spent much time trying to impress on her sisters the inevitability of the coming changes and to prepare them for the unavoidable trauma.

True to Ida's forecast new policies of the State Welfare Department closed all reformatory-type homes in 1947 and replaced them with hostels. The House of Mercy, which had been extended in 1938, was converted into a retreat house for the Melbourne diocese²⁶. The next major change was the withdrawal from hospital work, as the two institutions which the sisters ran had been experiencing financial difficulties since the depression. After much resentment, St George's Hospital was sold to the government in

²³ Strahan L., Out of the Silence, Melbourne, 1988, p.115

²⁴ Interview, Sr Elizabeth Gwen CHN, 6/10/95; Interview, Sr Winifred Muriel CHN, 5/10/95 - for example a Chapter of Faults was introduced and curtsying to the superior. After Ida's time the earlier informality very slowly returned.

²⁵ Strahan, op.cit., p.152

²⁶ Sr Phillipa, The Story of the Retreat House (printed Sheet)

1949 for a sum well below its value. In the following year the money from the sale was used to buy a house in Auburn for the care of the elderly²⁷. St Ives Hospital managed to survive until 1954 when the sisters were forced to withdraw and the property sold²⁸.

Distress was caused to many of the sisters by the adjustments which CHN had to make to the traditional outreach. The appropriation by the government of the Mission house and the Hornbrook School site, that still belonged to the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL), was a further blow. The money from the sale was used to procure the St Mary's Mission Church in Fitzroy as the new centre for the work. In hindsight this was the beginning of the end of the intimate association between the sisters and MSL²⁹. Mother Ida had foreseen this shift from the Community's origins during her observations of the English situation and the growth of CHN into other independent fields apart from the Mission and its activities³⁰.

Ironically these changes began as the sisters celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the beginning of Sister Esther's work. 16 bishops who were meeting at the Retreat House at Cheltenham attended a commemoration. The speech given by Archbishop J. J. Booth of Melbourne clearly illustrated the change in the diocesan outlook on the religious life, which had occurred in sixty years. The archbishop described CHN as,

A Community, which has done great things, not only for the diocese of Melbourne, but even further afield. To my great joy the sisters have been inspired to emulate what was one of the glories of monasticism at its best³¹

To ease the loss of so much of the Community's traditional work, new opportunities of care began to emerge. Just after the War an invitation was accepted from Bishop Bryan

²⁷ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.128, p.131

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.130

²⁹ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.137

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.152

³¹ Australian Church Quarterly (ACQ), 30/12/49, p.2; pp.12-14

Robin to work in the Adelaide diocese at the newly opened Diocesan Mission House in North Adelaide³². In later years CHN ran a hostel for girls and staffed the Adelaide diocesan retreat house³³. Bishop Robin, an ex-bush brother, was responsible for the establishment of the Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) in Australia in 1947. Robin had invited SSM to come to Australia to establish a theological college on the lines of "Kelham College" in England. Moreover he believed there was a need for a male religious order to replace the Community of the Ascension, which had recently disbanded³⁴. The outcome was that Crafers College with its theologically liberal, moderate Anglo-Catholic outlook, moved the diocese in Adelaide to a more Anglo-Catholic view³⁵.

SSM had originally been founded in England in 1893 as a missionary order to provide lay brothers for the Korean mission fields. Although training priests quickly became a major task, the Society has always been composed of lay and clerical members³⁶. Despite quite severe initial difficulties between the two groups, this innovative organisation formed the first successful community with lay brothers in the Church. The founder Herbert Kelly believed this was because the lay members were taken on to perform specific tasks, not just to be monks. Another reason for the successful mixing of the two groups was that theoretically no distinction was made in status between the two³⁷.

In Melbourne, the diminution of the ties with MSL paradoxically coincided with a large growth in the membership of CHN. In the fifties the Church, in general, and Anglo-Catholicism, in particular, was experiencing an upsurge of popularity in Australia. This

³² Who's Who in Australia (WWA), 1959, p.683 – Bryan Percival Robin (b.1887), bishop of Adelaide 1941-1956

³³ Adelaide Church Guardian, Nov 1988 Vol. 83 No 2, p.3; Associates Newsletter, June 1989, pp.3-4

³⁴ Mason A., History of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Norwich, 1993, p.227

³⁵ Hilliard D., Godliness and Good Order, Adelaide, 1986, p.117

³⁶ Mason, *op.cit.*, p.158 – the Society has usually comprised 80% clergy.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 282; Australian Religious, Vol. 2 No 1, Feb 1999, p.1 – In 1989, the English provincial, Brother Rodney Hart was a layman. In February 1999, the Society decided to admit women members.

translated into an added interest in the religious life³⁸. SSM, for example, experienced a growth in postulants and large numbers entered CHN but this was not a general trend in the women's communities. It seems to have been more a phenomenon of the communities in the southern states. Nevertheless SSA and CSC continued to attract reasonable numbers until the early 1970's when a major decline became apparent. In the years between 1945 and 1973, CHN records show 43 sisters professed in comparison to 22 for SSA and 13 for CSC³⁹.

Archbishop Mowll had become the primate in 1947 and the following years saw a large expansion of the Sydney diocese. The Church of England was not alone in this development and all denominations flourished until a peak was reached in the early sixties⁴⁰. In line with a large expansion in ordinations, youth groups and Sunday schools, the added interest in religion was seen in an extension of the training program at Sydney's Deaconess House for missionaries and deaconess aspirants which both increased dramatically. Deaconess Mary Andrews who had worked in China as a missionary during the Japanese occupation had become the head deaconess in Sydney under Archbishop Mowll in 1951. She was an influential force internationally for the recognition of the status of deaconesses and at the forefront for the ordination of women to the priesthood⁴¹. By 1961 Deaconess House was said to be training more students for these forms of work than any other institute in the world⁴². This situation was primarily

³⁸ Mason, *op.cit.*,p.232

³⁹ CSC, SSA, CHN, Archives – there may have been considerably more CHN professed but the Community does not include on the register those professed members who leave.

⁴⁰ Breward I., A History of the Australian Churches, Sydney, 1993, p.138, 147

⁴¹ Interview, Deaconess Mary Andrews, Sydney, 16/12/93; see also, Porter M., Women in the Church, Melbourne, 1989, p.52

⁴² Sturrock M., The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, An Office Coveted by Few, Thesis BTh., Melbourne College of Divinity, 1989, Appendix B., p.1 - quoting Southern Cross, 10/8/61.

due to the wholehearted moral and financial support given by the Sydney diocese to the work of deaconesses in the parish scene and in the large diocesan controlled institutions. There was as well a large increase in male recruits to the priesthood in Sydney at about the same time. Some observers have attributed this to the popularity of the Billy Graham Campaign in 1959⁴³.

The membership of CHN was further bolstered at this time by the absorption of the Order of the Good Shepherd (OGS) from Auckland. It has been seen this sisterhood started life under Sister Mary on secondment from CHN. In the fifties a period of instability ensued which culminated in OGS asking the Melbourne Community for help. After a two-year trial period at Cheltenham eight members of the Order merged with CHN in 1958⁴⁴. To placate the bishop of Auckland, who was furious at what he considered to be the poaching of his sisterhood by CHN, the Community ran OGS House in Remuera as a girls' hostel for quite a few years afterwards⁴⁵. The merger was difficult for the New Zealand sisters, who in addition to leaving their country, had virtually to go through another novitiate for two years. Further unhappiness was created when half of the New Zealanders had to change the name they had taken on profession, as there were already sisters at CHN with those names⁴⁶.

A completely new challenge was accepted by CHN when Bishop P.N.W.Strong of New Guinea invited the Community to work in his diocese to help raise the status of Papuan women⁴⁷. The sisters arrived in New Guinea in 1951 just after the eruption of Mount Lamington that killed two thousand people. The cream of the Anglican community in PNG was attending a conference on the St Agnes' day eruption and they were all killed,

⁴³ Interview, Dss Margaret Rodgers, Sydney, 7/9/95; see also Piggis S., 'Billy Graham in Australia, 1959: Was it revival', CSAC Working Papers, Series 1, No 4; Piggis S., Evangelical Christianity in Australia, Melbourne, 1996, p.167

⁴⁴ Sr Joyce Anne, Order of the Good Shepherd, Melbourne, 1987, pp.1-3

⁴⁵ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.146

⁴⁶ Interview CHN, 6/10/95

⁴⁷ WWA, 1977, p.1005 –Philip Nigel Warrington Strong (b.1899), bishop of New Guinea 1936-1962, archbishop of Brisbane 1962-1970, primate 1966-1970

except for the bishop who was absent⁴⁸. The concept of what Bishop Strong wanted CHN to do and the sisters' expectations were soon found to be at odds. Much to the chagrin of the bishop, who seemed to be happy to have the sisters "floating around and looking pious" in between domestic chores, the sisters decided that they should do something concrete for the native women and girls in Dogura. The obvious step was in education as there was none in the whole country for girls past the fourth class in primary school⁴⁹. Strong was not happy with this idea and only capitulated when he was given the alternative of the withdrawal of CHN⁵⁰. Subsequently by June 1956 the Holy Name School had taken root at Bola Bola. The sisters worked under difficulties, always with the feeling that the indigenous men were waiting and hoping for them to make mistakes⁵¹. Initially domestic subjects were taught but gradually the curriculum became more academic and by 1964 the school had become the Holy Name High School⁵².

In the early sixties, the instigation of Vatican II and the resultant change in outlook on the Roman Church and Christianity in general, as well as the profound changes which were taking place in society, were symptomatic of a shift in thought which had been in progress for some while. At the same time, a movement that had been underway in religious communities came to the fore. This resulted in the questioning by religious of all aspects of the life, its role and relevance. All Anglican religious communities were to be profoundly affected but CSC was the first Anglican group to feel the effects of this movement in Australia.

In re-evaluating the mission in the world and the way to approach the active vocation,

⁴⁸ Interview, Sr Margaret Anne CHN, 10/10/95

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.149

⁵⁰ Sr Margaret Anne, *op.cit.*; Gates A.B., The History of the Holy Name, PNG, 1993, p.1 - the sisters' explanation of events contrasts with that of this author who states that Bp Strong invited CHN to accept responsibility for the education of girls in PNG.

⁵¹ Sr Margaret Anne, *op.cit.*

⁵² Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.150

CSC came to the conclusion that the future lay in reverting to the original aim of caring for those who live on the fringe of society - the poor in body or spirit⁵³. Part of the inherent tension, which has always existed in the religious life, is that the successful growth of a community combined with the human propensity for institutionalisation creates difficulties in marrying the basic thrust of the life with the maintenance of the successful outreach. The realisation by CSC that there was no longer the capability or, in some cases, the desire to retain the large highly visible institutions, which had become the focus of the work, helped ease the pain and difficulty of the Community's decision to withdraw from this work⁵⁴. On the other hand, these upheavals, which were being paralleled in other communities, resulted in many sisters leaving the order. This seems to have been because the certainty of the life had been changed irrevocably.

The departure from the Australian schools was accomplished gradually and the sisters began to disengage themselves from all the large institutions they ran worldwide⁵⁵. Unlike similar Roman Catholic organisations there was no question of help from the Church in this difficult time - not that the sisterhood wanted this type of assistance given their independent attitude. Nonetheless this situation illustrated the difference in the situation of Anglican communities in the Church to the structural position of their Roman counterparts. Apart from the difference in the canonical status and ultimate government of the two denominational expressions of the religious life, the small sizes of the Anglican groups, particularly in Australia, lent a greater flexibility to their ability to a dramatic change in direction which was more difficult for the much larger Roman organisations.

The retirement from the Australian schools began with St Gabriel's in 1965 and ended with St Michael's Hobart, in 1973. The Sydney school was the only one to close down and it seems likely this was in part due to the lack of diocesan support for the

⁵³ CSC, The Rule, pp.1984, p.9

⁵⁴ St Gabriel's School Log Books, 1964, 1965 - The difficulty of this decision can be seen in the way the first withdrawal was made from the Sydney school in an abrupt and unheralded way.

⁵⁵ Interview with Sister Marguerite Mae CSC, Richmond, UK, 8/6/94

Community in Sydney. The official reason advanced was its small size and the changes that would be necessary with the introduction of a new approach to high school education in the Wyndham Scheme⁵⁶. All the other schools continued to flourish and those in Hobart, Melbourne and Adelaide were handed over to be run by committees while Perth College was given as a gift to the Province of Western Australia⁵⁷.

In 1966 after the Sydney school had closed, a new experiment in community life was begun at a small house in Glebe. This was as a result of the influence on some of the Community of the Roman Catholic, Charles de Foucauld, and to the orders founded in his name. Charles spent most of his time as a missionary monk in the North African desert in the early decades of the twentieth century. He believed he had a special spiritual mission, which involved an attempt to share the humbleness and sacrifices of Jesus and his life. The Gospel was to be proclaimed, not by speech, but by actions⁵⁸. He had no disciples and founded no orders, even though it was one of his greatest desires to do so. Nevertheless, sixteen years after his martyrdom in the desert, the “family” of Brother Charles came into being in the Algerian desert in 1933. Today this family consists of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, and groups of priests and laity who devote themselves to Foucauld's principles of living in a hidden, simple way as he believed Jesus did at Nazareth⁵⁹. The brothers and sisters see themselves as unenclosed contemplatives; no distinctive costume or habit is worn, there is no monastery or convent, no large properties or expenditure, but real poverty. The work they perform to support themselves is manual unskilled labour like the work of the people they have chosen to live and work amongst in rural or urban areas⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ Interview Sr Frances CSC, Provincial Superior, Glebe, NSW, 2/8/93

⁵⁷ Curtis, *op.cit.*, p.34

⁵⁸ Little Brother, Silent Pilgrimage to God, London, 1974, p.84 - quoting Foucauld's "Ecrits Spirituels", pp.128-9

⁵⁹ Curtis, *op.cit.*, p.56; Anson P., The Call of the Desert, London, 1964, p.209 - By the seventies the Little Brothers had spread to 25 countries where they lived in small fraternities or groups. By this stage the Little Sisters numbered over 1100 sisters of 50 nationalities and lived in over 200 Fraternities.

⁶⁰ De Foucauld C., Letters from the Desert, London, 1977, pp.143-144

The prime mover in Foucauld's influence on CSC was Sister Helen, an Australian. She felt his approach was a proper exposition of what the religious life should be and often was not. The superior, Mother Dorothea, was also very interested in Foucauld and the first experiments at living this type of life were conducted at Glebe and in Northern Ireland. The latter venture in 1972 was conducted in collaboration with the community of Mother Teresa of Calcutta but was not altogether successful⁶¹. The aim at Glebe was for the sisters to share as far as possible the lives of the residents of the area. The hope was that the vocation of spreading the faith could be accomplished through friendship and the way they lived, not by active proselytisation. Therefore the sisters lived in the same sort of houses and worked at the same type of jobs as their neighbours. One sister worked as a cleaner at an animal house at Sydney University, another was employed in a Christmas tree factory, while others worked in laundries and hospitals. One even worked as a cook at Deaconess House⁶²!

In 1970 the centenary year of the founding of CSC, a new provincial centre was built at East Burwood in Melbourne. This decade saw the election of the first Australian superior, Mother Frances, who was followed by Mother Judith, another Australian. Obviously Australians were playing a greater role in the affairs of the Community. In these two decades, the proportion of Australians to their English compatriots working in Australia, rose from just over 60% to 80%⁶³. This was mainly due to a decrease of English professed sisters who came to the continent. At the centre in Melbourne accommodation was available, there were facilities for conferences and retreats and a wide range of spiritual programs and workshops were offered.

The sisters conceded that it was not until the sixties that CSC was recognised as part of the Melbourne Church. The feeling of the Community was that over their eighty years in the diocese, "Catholic priests have gravitated to us but not the Church as a whole"⁶⁴.

⁶¹ Interview, Sr Helen, Dondingalong, NSW, 7/9/94; CSC Newsletter, Vol 6 No 3 Sept 1972, p.10

⁶² Sr Frances, *op.cit*; CSC Newsletter, Vol.6 No 1 March 1972, p.14; Vol.7 No 1 1973, p.6

⁶³ CSC Archives

⁶⁴ Letter from Sr Karina to Mother Raphael, a Roman Catholic nun, Septuagesima, 1964.

This outcome was despite the endeavours of Archbishop Lowther Clarke early in the century, the tolerance to different forms of churchmanship that developed in the Melbourne diocese and the success of CHN. On the surface it is difficult to explain the different attitudes to the two Communities, given their similarities in so many ways. It is incorrect that CHN blocked the work of CSC in Melbourne, as West states⁶⁵. When CSC arrived in the city in 1892, there were two commissioned deaconesses working under the leadership of Sister Esther, who at that stage had not been professed. The Community was not commissioned as a religious order for a further 20 years. The deaconess Mission like SSA, was not flourishing by the turn of the century⁶⁶. This small band of women that later developed into CHN could hardly have constituted enough force or outreach to undermine the establishment of CSC in the 1890's. There was certainly room in Melbourne for the educational outreach on which CSC concentrated in Australia as CHN became mainly involved in other areas. If CSC had been able to accept Archbishop Clarke's invitation to operate more schools in the diocese, the feeling of isolation may not have arisen. Nevertheless it seems likely that the explanation can be found in the independence that CSC maintained from diocesan control. An indication of the annoyance this policy created can be found in a letter from Bishop G.F.Cranswick, of Tasmania (1944-1963) to Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher of Canterbury in 1957⁶⁷. Cranswick complained that CSC had created embarrassment for him by refusing to allow the girls at their prestigious Collegiate school to attend an ecumenical Empire Youth Service in a Presbyterian Church. As the archbishop of Melbourne had complained of related problems, Cranswick questioned the relationship of religious communities to diocesan bishops. Fisher's reply gave little comfort in that there was not very much that a bishop could do about such a situation⁶⁸.

The lack of enthusiasm for CSC in Melbourne was more severe in Sydney. The one exception was during the incumbency of Archbishop Hugh Gough (1958-1965) who

⁶⁵ West J., Daughters of Freedom, Sydney, 1997, p.173

⁶⁶ see Chapter 3, p.89; Chapter 4, p.106

⁶⁷ PMD, p.223 –Geoffrey Francis Fisher (1887-1972), archbishop of Canterbury 1945-1961; WWA 1955, p.201, Geoffrey Franceys Cranswick (b.1894), bishop of Tasmania 1944-1963

⁶⁸ Frappell R., et al.(ed), Anglicans in the Antipodes, Sydney, 1999, Archbishop G.F.Fisher Correspondence and Papers, Vol 193, ff 240-2, p.328-9, letters, 22/1/57; 4/2/57

followed the champion of deaconesses, Archbishop Mowll. Despite his Low churchmanship, Gough was not interested in the Australian deaconesses because he disapproved of the idea that women could be ordained as deaconesses and then marry⁶⁹. He was the first Sydney archbishop in the 20th century to show any positive interest in religious communities and at one stage he even gave the Australian communities his blessing and wished them an increase in vocation⁷⁰.

In contrast to the diocesan attitude to CSC in Sydney and Melbourne, the work of the sisters in Adelaide, Tasmania and Perth was recognised by Church and state. This was seen expressed at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Community in Adelaide when Bishop Robin spoke of the impossibility of measuring the contribution, which CSC had made to the life of the Church and the whole community of South Australia⁷¹. A similar sentiment was seen several years later when the government of Western Australia awarded the OBE to the pioneer, Sister Rosalie, for her services to education⁷². Considering the success of CSC in these three centres and given the perpetual problem with gaining new recruits to run the enterprises across the continent, it may have been wiser to have concentrated the available human resources in supportive dioceses and to have left the more difficult areas. Of course this is in retrospect and does not take into account the tenacity of these women.

In the early seventies CSC, like CHN, began a venture in Melanesia, in this case in the Solomon Islands. This was in response to an invitation from Bishop J.W. Chisholm who had approached CHN and the Community of St Margaret's, East Grinstead, without success⁷³. It appeared that the Church was facing great difficulties in the Solomons, particularly in Honiara. This situation was primarily due to western

⁶⁹ WWA 1959, p.323- Hugh Rowlands Gough (b.1905), archbishop of Sydney 1958-1966; Dss Mary Andrews, *op.cit.*

⁷⁰ Sr Elizabeth May, History of the CSC in Australia, Paper given to the Church of England Melbourne Historical Society, 1970 (typewritten)

⁷¹ Frost M., St Peter's Collegiate Girl's School, 1894-1968, Adelaide, 1972, p.117

⁷² Curtis, *op.cit.*, pp.41-2, p.12

⁷³ WWA 1971, p.194 – John Wallace Chisholm (b.1922)

influences and the changes in society. Bishop Chisolm felt that sisters were needed because the women in particular were mixed up and frightened and in Melanesian society could only be ministered to by other women. He strongly felt that any help, which the Church could give, would be an opportunity to make up for past neglect. This situation had been compounded by a small English community, the Community of the Cross, which had been founded to work in Melanesia in 1928 and arrived in 1936 to run several schools. After suffering great hardships during World War 11, the sisters had dealt a blow to the faith of the women and girls when they had left for Rome without warning in 1950, taking several postulants and novices with them⁷⁴.

Three CSC members from Australia, England and Canada went to the Solomons and became involved in a shared mission with the brothers of the Society of St Francis from Brisbane⁷⁵. Initially the work began in Honiara where the sisters and brothers provided pastoral care. They were involved in visiting in hospitals and homes as well as giving religious instruction in schools⁷⁶. This was really like a return to the social work in which the sisters were originally involved in England and Australia before the existence of social security. The outcome was the creation of four centres; three in Honiara and one in Malaita Island and the foundations were laid for a flourishing branch of CSC⁷⁷.

From the 1960's the two Australian sisterhoods, like CSC before them, entered a period of review, which resulted in painful consolidation in the changing world and church scene. At CHN Sister Flora had taken over as superior from Sister Ida in 1958. Her untimely death shortly afterwards meant a new superior was elected in 1960. Mother Faith was introverted, intellectual and drawn to the contemplative life. She accepted her new role with reluctance as she realised the extremely difficult times the Community

⁷⁴ Letter from Bishop Chisolm of Melanesia, to the Mother Superior CSC, 12/7/69; also Anson P., Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, p.593; see also Anglicans/ Antipodes, *op.cit.*, Fisher Correspondence, Vol 74, ff 46-50, p.295 – Secession to RC Church of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (Cross) Letter, A. Grace Padwick to Fisher, 9/7/1950 – re secession of Mother Margaret and entire community.

⁷⁵ Interview, Brother William SSF, 28/2/1995 – SSF had arrived in Brisbane in 1965.

⁷⁶ CSC, Australia-Pacific Province, pp, nd, p.4

⁷⁷ CSC Newsletter, Vol.24 No 2, 1991, p.24

was entering⁷⁸. Faith went to England in 1964 to see how the communities there were coping with increasing secularisation⁷⁹. From her observations it was apparent that the sisters had to become qualified, particularly in courses on childcare, probation and education. This inevitably led to tension between those sisters who undertook academic pursuits and those who did not. It further exacerbated a decline in members, after the peak years of the early sixties, as quite a few sisters left the Community once they were qualified⁸⁰.

By the mid sixties the Community was considering changes to the Rule, Customs and Constitution and modifications were made to the habit and the Office. Over and above these changes was the shift in thought, in common with other religious communities, from self-abnegation to personal responsibility. The uncertainty, which this change in outlook engendered, resulted in more sisters leaving the Community. This outcome coincided with the deaths of eight elderly members so that by the eighties the number of sisters was seriously depleted. By this time the outreach undertaken by CHN included work among juvenile offenders and pastoral visiting; hospital chaplaincies increased and ecumenical work with Roman Catholic sisters was undertaken. The Brighton Children's Home was converted into flats so that the children lived in small family - type units run by seculars. By 1967 the Darling Babies' Home had become a temporary refuge for unmarried mothers, deserted wives and their children. The end had come for the involvement of CHN with children, its most cherished work⁸¹.

SSA, like its compatriots, did not escape a time of trial through the internal and external changes to the religious life after the sixties. The influx of new recruits to CHN in the fifties was not experienced to the same extent by the Brisbane sisterhood and the problems the Society encountered were exacerbated by the added loss of members

⁷⁸ Strahan, *op.cit.*, pp.159-160

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.164

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.169

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.170-1

through death and departure. In 1960 under a new superior, Mother Kathleen, the withdrawal from the schools run by the Society had begun. Between 1960 and 1965, St Mary's, St Gabriel's and All Saint's Hostel in the north were given over to diocesan management⁸². Mother Lois oversaw the withdrawal from St Michael's Preparatory boarding school in Brisbane in 1968 and St Catharine's, Warwick in 1970. In the same year the Tufnell Children's Home was handed over to the diocese and in 1971 St Martin's Hospital was closed.

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As a result of all the circumstances, further withdrawals from the traditional activities of CHN and SSA continued. Between 1977 and 1980 under Mother Joan, SSA withdrew from running the very successful St Margaret's and St Aidans's Schools in Brisbane. St Anne's in Townsville was the last to be handed over to outside control and became a diocesan school. St Martin's Hospital had been closed to make way for the building of a geriatric hospital at Symes Grove⁸³. When this was completed in 1982 it enabled the many aged and frail SSA sisters, who needed specialised care, to be accommodated together. The Society obtained permission to build a unit for the more able-bodied elderly sisters next to this complex. This was named St Michael's House and it enabled the sisters to continue their work of counselling and friendship amongst the other elderly residents⁸⁴. In the eighties a retreat centre was opened in the grounds of St Margaret's School and by 1990 the wafer business was abandoned⁸⁵. Since then the sisters of SSA have endeavoured to find new directions in the rapidly changing world inside and outside the community. The Society believed that these new ventures had to be in line with the spirit of service of the founders of the community. By 1995 the

⁸² Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.66-67

⁸³ Amies, *op.cit.*, p.47; Moores, *op.cit.*, p.54

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.57

⁸⁵ Moores, *op.cit.*, pp.66-67

superior, Mother Eunice, felt confident that fresh visions of ministry had been found which fulfilled this aim. While the Society retained ownership and some involvement in its large Brisbane schools, the sisters moved into community and parish work, youth and adult counselling, hospital chaplaincy and visiting, retreat work and spiritual counselling⁸⁶.

From the seventies, retirement from CHN's institutional activities continued with the branch houses at Goulburn and Auckland, some chaplaincies and much of the work at the MSL. In 1977, CHN withdrew from the Holy Name School, PNG, which had become the best in the country and where many of the women leaders in PNG had been educated⁸⁷. The good academic results were seen by the sisters as being due to the hard fight they had put up to retain the school's single sex status. This had been done because the sisters believed that education without males present allowed the girls to escape for a time their culturally induced sense of inferiority and perform to the best of their ability⁸⁸. In 1960 two girls in their final school year had broached the subject of starting a religious community. The Australian sisters agreed to help but with the stipulation that it should be an indigenous sisterhood quite separate and distinct from CHN. Consequently in 1964 after the two girls had trained as nurses, CHN began guiding them to the formation of the Community of the Visitation (COV)⁸⁹.

In the early years the outreach of COV to women and children was conducted from a community house and chapel at Popondetta. The aim was self-sufficiency and despite much hard work the building of such a community was not easy in a country with so many different languages and custom groups⁹⁰. In 1977 Sister Cora was elected as the

⁸⁶ Church Scene, No.683, 18/12/92, p.6

⁸⁷ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.188

⁸⁸ Sr Margaret Anne, *op.cit.*

⁸⁹ Gates, *op.cit.*, p.14

⁹⁰ The Community of the Visitation (printed sheet)

first sister guardian of COV and for some years a relay of Australian sisters lived in PNG as advisers. Over the following decades the Community had mixed fortunes. Many women came to test their vocation and even stayed for some years, although only a few persevered with an obvious life intention. It appeared that the cultural concept of the primacy of marriage in Melanesian society had a powerfully negative effect on lifelong vows. CSC had experienced a similar attitude in the Solomons where although a flourishing branch of the Community was established, most Melanesian sisters had only taken triennial vows.

In the outreach in Melanesia, CSC and CHN had chosen opposite paths to follow in the institution of the religious life. CSC had a long history of the integration of colonial members into the Community and so this was the way forward in the Solomons. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of COV, Bishop David Hand raised the question of the correctness of the decision to indigenise the Community and not merge with CHN⁹¹. Despite their extreme poverty and hardships the sisters of COV had suffered, he felt that the chosen option had been correct⁹².

CHN's withdrawal from so many of its traditional areas of work helped the trend in the Community to a more contemplative outlook. This was encouraged by Mother Faith who had always been inclined in that direction. In England she had been drawn to a thriving contemplative community, the Sisters of the Love of God, Fairacres (SLG)⁹³. This attraction had made her determined to increase the mystical aspect of life at CHN. As a result three hermitages were built in the grounds at Cheltenham. In 1974 two sisters made a request to live in greater enclosure after attempting to lead a much more contemplative life in the midst of the Community. This group grew and later moved to the diocese of Wangaratta where it evolved into the Community of Christ the King⁹⁴. A

⁹¹ WWA 1977, p.483 – Geoffrey David Hand (b.1918), bishop PNG 1963-77, archbishop PNG 1977

⁹² Associates Newsletter, Sept.1989, p.1; Sept. 1992, p.2 – the financial difficulties have been partly alleviated by the adoption of COV as one of the projects of the Australian Board of Missions.

⁹³ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.168

⁹⁴ Interview, Sr Pamela CHN, Melbourne, 4 /10/95; Interview, Sr Josephine Margaret CHN, Melbourne, 9/10/95

further result of the shift to a more monastic approach was that several sisters left in protest to form a modern, more active group - the Sisters of the Incarnation - to work under the auspices of the archbishop of Adelaide⁹⁵.

In 1980 Sister Elizabeth Gwen was elected as superior and faced the task of consolidation and guidance through the outcome of the changes, which had been instituted by Faith. During her term in office the novitiate was reopened after no professions between 1973 and 1987. In this period women entered the diaconate and Sister Margaret Anne of CHN was the first Australian woman religious to be made deacon - she was priested in December 1992⁹⁶. Sister Valmai was elected as the seventh Mother in 1994 and by this time many of the sisters had exacting individual ministries among the sick, aged, destitute and physically and emotionally disturbed people. The Community still ran the retreat house and a limited involvement with the MSL continued until 1995 when that long association finally came to an end. The explanation given for this by MSL was so "the sisters could take up more personal forms of ministry rather than the material aid which the Mission undertakes"⁹⁷.

By the last decade of the twentieth century, CSC had become a much more informal institution with a simplified prayer life and as few regulations as possible. Overall the community had become much more democratic with each province having its own council as part of an advisory body to the superior and Chapter. The latter controlled the direction of the Community and tended to meet in one or other of the three provinces every three years⁹⁸. At times it was tortuous finding a new role and there remained uncertainty about the future. However the flexibility of the Community enabled different avenues to be explored successfully in the greatly changing times. At Glebe for example, by the middle of the nineties, the ethos of the Community had moved on from Foucauld. This was because the needs of the area had changed and new emphasis

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ CHN Associates Newsletter, Passiontide, 1989, p.5; CHN Associates Newsletter, Advent, 1992, p.2

⁹⁷ Salt Newsletter - Mission to the Streets and Lanes, Vol.8 No 2, 1995, p.4

⁹⁸ These provinces are England, Canada and Australia/ Pacific.

was given to working within the local parish⁹⁹. As a result social work was undertaken in several parishes around Glebe, while spiritual counselling and retreats were conducted and non-religious workshops on meditation were undertaken. Although the venture has not been publicly presented as such, a continuing aspect of Foucauld's thought is seen in an endeavour, which Sister Helen began in the early seventies on forty acres of land at Dondingalong near Kempsey in northern NSW. Here CSC shared with its neighbours the common problem of running a small farm. The agricultural methods used were at the forefront of innovative ecological and environmental practices necessary in the climate. By 1995, apart from its function as the Australian novitiate, the aim for the property, known as "The House of Prayer", was to be a spiritual centre and several hermitages were built to assist in this goal¹⁰⁰. The location on the North Coast of NSW was chosen because of its geographical accessibility to Sydney, Melbourne and the Solomon Islands¹⁰¹.

By the nineties a new, improved relationship, had eventuated between CSC and the Sydney diocese. This was attributed by the sisters to the earlier encouragement of Archbishop Gough¹⁰². On the centenary of the Community in Sydney a congratulatory letter was even received from the Sydney synod,

The Synod of the Diocese wishes to congratulate the CSC on their one hundred year's work in the Diocese, and prayerfully wishes them God's continuing blessing¹⁰³

This was a watershed, as the main antagonists of the sisters had always been the synod. There is evidence to show that even in the furore of the 1890's, the refusal of Bishop Saumarez Smith to sanction the arrival of CSC was inordinately influenced by the

⁹⁹ Interview, Sr Elspeth CSC, Glebe, 13/7/94

¹⁰⁰ Church Scene, 2/8/79, p.15

¹⁰¹ Sr Helen, *op.cit.*

¹⁰² Sr Francis, *op.cit.*

¹⁰³ Letter from the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, 30/10/92 - To Sr Frances from W.G.S.Copley, the Diocesan Secretary.

attitude of these men¹⁰⁴. Of course it has to be remembered that a century later the sisters had become a more hidden presence in Sydney having long since left the Waverley School. The diocese was also trying to cope with more pressing problems that had arisen with women in the Church, with which the sisters were not perceived to be involved - the admission of women to the diaconate and the priesthood.

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In 1945 the three major communities in Australia controlled between them a variety of large, important institutions. The post-war new world order that emerged, slowly led to a movement for identity and direction that was to affect all those living the religious life. From the sixties, this movement caused withdrawal from the highly visible institutions and a major reduction in the number of Anglican sisters worldwide. The outcome was a trend in England to amalgamations, often with a more contemplative prayer life and more personal forms of pastoral work being undertaken. Wantage and Clewer, the prototypes for CHN and SSA, survived in a much-reduced fashion with Wantage, like CSC still retaining several of its overseas houses. The outcome for all Anglican sisterhoods was that by the end of the twentieth century the members of the communities lived in a much more hidden way than in the past.

There is no question that the outreach of the women's religious communities in Australia over a century helped alleviate social distress. This was in areas initially neglected by the state in social welfare, teaching, the care of orphans and hospital work. When more responsibility for social concerns was accepted by the state, the sisterhoods were unable to compete with the institutional governmental scale, financially or professionally. In many cases this involved state assistance to the churches, which all

¹⁰⁴ Quarterly Chronicle, Jan 1893, p.3; Quarterly Chronicle, July 1899, p.16 – CSC obviously believed that the synod held great power over Saumarez Smith, as did Bishop Montgomery.

developed large institutional ministries¹⁰⁵. In concert with the decreasing numbers of personnel, this outcome spelt the end of the institutional work in which all the sisterhoods had been involved, particularly CHN and SSA.

The Anglican mixed religious orders were founded primarily to lead a communal life of prayer from which the resultant spiritual sense of commitment to all God's creation directed them to particular communal works. Although the nature of their vocation had always resulted in a struggle to do justice to both aspects of the life, when the traditional outreach was removed the major focus of the life did not change. Instead, the independent, flexible small communities undertook more personal aspects of care. So although the picture of the loss of so much of the outreach built up over a hundred years seems to be depressing, the Anglican communities have really done surprisingly well given their small numbers in the negative Christian climate in the country over the last few decades - a time in which 50% of the population see themselves as outside Christianity¹⁰⁶. The ecumenical age, which developed from the World War II, was helped by the liberalism which Vatican II helped foster so that Anglican and Roman nuns have moved close together in some instances. Of importance to Anglican nuns now is their prophetic role in society with a rediscovered emphasis on pastoral care.

The major problem for Anglican communities in Australia was the lack of recruits, a situation they shared with other forms of the dedicated life such as deaconesses and bush brotherhoods. Nevertheless they were far more successful than their numbers could have foreseen particularly when their independent outlook is considered. A solution to the difficulties created by the Anglican model of the religious life for proselytising purposes in teaching and social outreach in the unique Australian field could have been a widening of the scope of the Associate system, which all Anglican communities introduced with success. In 1960 in line with the strengthening of the prayer life at CHN and the increased interest in religion in society at the time, an order of Oblates was formed within the Community. This group continued to grow and at the end of 1995 numbered 50 men and women. A similar organisation was formed within

¹⁰⁵ Breward, *op.cit.*, p.192

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.235ff

SSA in 1987 and named the Company of the Sacred Advent. The aim of this group was to proclaim with the sisters the Advent challenge, "Prepare the Way of the Lord"¹⁰⁷. In hindsight, if these innovations or some similar schemes were tested many years earlier, the outcome for the communities may have been different. Given the Tractarian dream of vowed religious orders in the Church and the rapid growth of sisterhoods in England in the 19th century, this does not seem to have been seriously considered as an option. When the great expansion in numbers did not continue after the early 20th century, or eventuate, as in the colonial scene, it seems that an alternative version should have been considered. Perhaps it was, and it may not have been possible to devise a paradigm that would have provided the stability which, Anglo-Catholics rightly felt, was necessary for a successful outreach and that maintained the priority of the communal prayer life of the religious order.

It can be suggested that an alternative may have seen an inner core of life professed members following the rigorous prayer life, surrounded by women who for a specified time, were prepared to make a more intense commitment to the outreach, than was usual for associates. This structure is similar to the way many of the first English deaconess communities evolved with a core of professed, surrounded by an active group of deaconesses not formally bound for life. This arrangement proved to be too difficult to maintain in England. However the restrictive life style of the Anglican mixed communities was not an appropriate model for the pioneering missionary needs of the Australian colonies outside the urban areas. While it was a romantic idea to have contemplated that this type of religious order could fulfil such expectations of evangelism, it was a mistake, no matter how effective it was in a different context. Again this comes back to the small number of recruits. Admittedly some Roman orders, which became very successful, experienced similar initial hardships. The Josephite sisters in South Australia were one such congregation who went in very small groups to bush towns. These nuns and their founder Mary MacKillop, like most Roman communities, either imported or instituted in Australia in the 19th century, experienced great difficulty over clerical domination. However this community was set up as an

¹⁰⁷ Church Scene, Dec 1992, pp.6-7

active order with the advantage of a less intense prayer life, great support of the laity and a back-up system of ever increasing numbers¹⁰⁸.

Since the beginning of the era of uncertainty for the religious life in the early sixties, new, small communities have formed in the Australian scene. In the main these have been purely contemplative orders in line with the spiritual trend in the broader Church. The next chapter will survey the results of this movement. At the same time as these communities were forming, a push for the priesting of women was underway and this will be examined as well.

¹⁰⁸ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, pp.149-184 - This congregation and its founder Mary MacKillop, like most Roman communities, either imported or instituted in Australia in the 19th century, experienced great difficulty over clerical domination.

CHAPTER SIX The Formation of New Communities between 1960 and 1995*This ancient way for modern times*

The search for identity and direction that grew in the Australian sisterhoods from the 1960s was not confined to religious communities. It was a general exploration in the Church necessitated by the rapidly changing world and a general slump in Church membership and participation. One outcome was a trend towards a more contemplative way of approaching the immanent God. This was expressed in the form of meditative prayer, liturgical experimentation and charismatic worship. In religious communities this resulted in a tendency to a deeper, more personal life of prayer and even in some, the eremitic lifestyle. It led as well to the formation of purely contemplative orders, which concentrated more fully on the worship of God. A second consequence was the drive for greater, even equal, female participation in all aspects of government of the institutional Church, both lay and clerical. The ultimate expression of this drive was the successful struggle for the ordination of women to the diaconate and the priesthood. On the surface, the priesting of women seems to be the antithesis of the formation of enclosed, contemplative orders and the low-key individual outreach undertaken by the modern, mixed sisterhoods. Nevertheless it can be seen in one way as an enhanced desire to participate fully in the deeper and unique spirituality of the priestly life, particularly in its liturgical expression.

Apart from the trend to a deeper prayer life in general as well as in the religious life, there have been two recorded attempts at the establishment of more active, mixed communities of women since the Second World War. The first began in Alice Springs under the inspiration of the Rev. Alfred Bott. He and his wife Dorothy were missionaries and in later life became professed Tertiary Franciscans. Bott had been stationed in Adelaide as the state secretary of the Australian Board of Missions and, at the end of his tenure in 1958, became rector of Alice Springs, at that stage in the diocese of Carpentaria¹.

¹ Telephone Interview with Dorothy Bott, Townsville, 8/11/95

In 1960 Nell Williams and another young woman, who were caring for Aboriginal children at the St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service, agreed to be part of a religious community which Bott and the diocesan bishop, W.J.Hudson were very keen to start². As Sister Isabel and Sister Margaret Mary of the Servants of Christ the King (SCK), the two novices were clothed in a habit that consisted of a long grey frock with a blue girdle and a white veil³. The work of the sisters at St Mary's involved being cottage mothers to groups of about ten Aboriginal children who went each day to the school in the town. These children had come from the outback stations and were considered by non-indigenous Australians to be neglected. At the end of the century they are regarded as part of the "stolen children" phenomenon⁴. The community was more like an active sisterhood because caring for these children was obviously a full time job. The prayer life and the other usual concerns of religious life, such as times of silence, were difficult to maintain. In spite of the time consuming work, the sisters received daily communion and followed a fourfold Office.

Several novices later joined the community and although the sisterhood lasted for about five years, it never reached the stage of having a constitution and ended before guidance or recognition could be gained from the Advisory Council of Religious Communities for Australasia and the Pacific. The creation of this body was set in motion at the 1967 Anglican Bishops' Conference, and the inaugural meeting was held at the Retreat House, Cheltenham, Victoria, in March 1968. The Council was instituted to report to Conference annually on matters relating to religious communities. In function it was equivalent to the English Advisory Council and that body agreed to recognise any communities approved by the Australasian counterpart. The Council is comprised of all the heads of Anglican religious communities in Australasia and the Pacific, as well as

² *Ibid.* - This institution had originally been started by a deaconess, Eileen Heath; Who's Who in Australia (WWA) 1959, p.403 – Wilfred John Hudson, bishop of Carpentaria 1950-60

³ Interview, Nell Williams (Sister Isobel), Strathfield, 22/11/95

⁴ Australian Newspaper, Aug. 7th-8th, 1999, p.21 – In 1999, Peter Gunner, a former resident of the hostel sued the Commonwealth for his removal from Utopia Station and being forced to live at St Mary's Home from 1956.

selected bishops and clergy⁵.

When SCK was terminated, one of the novices, Sister Odette, went to Jerusalem where she joined a Roman Catholic Order. Sister Isabel continued a nursing education in the southern states and was professed into the Community of the Sacred Name (CSN), Christchurch, NZ⁶. This Community, like the Community of the Holy Name (CHN) in Melbourne, started ostensibly as a deaconess institution with the agenda that the recruits intended to lead the religious life⁷. Like its Melbourne cousin it was a pioneer in providing social services in the South Island of New Zealand⁸.

After the Second World War, the only other attempt at the formation of a mixed community began in Adelaide as a breakaway from CHN – the Sisters of the Incarnation (SI) are the smallest community to be recognised by the Australasian Advisory Council on the Religious Life. It was seen in Chapter Five, that two sisters left CHN in 1982 to live in Adelaide because they felt that aspects of the religious life that had developed at CHN did not relate to the contemporary world⁹. After two years in Adelaide, Sister Patricia and Sister Juliana took vows with "obedience grounded in the Archbishop of Adelaide" for twelve-month periods. Profession for life was taken in October 1988 and by 1992 recognition of SI as a religious community was obtained. This was despite the number of members being less than usually needed for such acceptance¹⁰.

⁵ Correspondence, Bishop H. John Lewis SSM of North Queensland, 11/5/2000; General Synod of Australia, 1969 Bishops' Conference Minutes; Matters arising from 1967 Conference and General matters: (i) Report on the Advisory Council of Religious Communities for Australasia and the Pacific (ii) The Constitution of the Advisory Council of Religious Communities for Australasia and the Pacific

⁶ Nell Williams, *op.cit.*

⁷ Stacy F., The Religious Communities of the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, p.56

⁸ Fry R., The Community of the Sacred Name, A Centennial History, Christchurch, 1993, p.22

⁹ Sr. Patricia, Questionnaire to Australian Sisterhoods

¹⁰ Letter, Sr Patricia, *op.cit.*

The Rule of SI attempted to give a simple, modern outlook on the unchanging way in which the religious life has always been lived in community under vow. Every aspect of the Rule was related to the Incarnation, the central doctrine on which lay the spirituality of the community¹¹. A daily Eucharist, extemporary prayer and a fourfold Office, which used the contemporary prayer book of the Australian Church, strengthened this spirituality. The aim of SI was broad and was to do God's will with the aid of the Holy Spirit. It was hoped that through living a simple lifestyle, the objective of showing the "positive aspects and prophetic witness" of the vowed life to people in the Church could be realised¹².

It is apparent that the Rule and Constitution of CHN influenced, however inadvertently, that of the new Community. Emphasis was placed throughout SI's Rule on the need in the new community for a true equilibrium between the work and prayer life necessary for a mixed community¹³. This modern community, in which one of the sisters was a priest, changed the title of "mother superior" to that of "guardian", the "administrator of the Constitution"¹⁴. This change in nomenclature was a move that some other sisterhoods had contemplated. One such group was the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) but the members came to the conclusion that change was not necessary¹⁵. Another departure from tradition was that the position of episcopal visitor became an elected one held for a period of three years. The two priestly positions of warden and chaplain were combined into the position of "community adviser", also an elected position for a two-year period¹⁶. In keeping with the modern outlook the sisters

¹¹The Rule of the Sisters of the Incarnation, (typewritten) p.1

¹²*Ibid.*, pp.1-4

¹³*Ibid.*, p.6

¹⁴The Constitution of the Sisters of the Incarnation, (typewritten) pp.10-11

¹⁵ CSC Archives - See, Nov 1992, Article by Muriel Porter re sermon by Mother Judith, (clipping)

¹⁶ Constitution SI, p.12

wore distinctive street dress in navy and blue with a specially designed cross symbolising the Incarnation. They became involved in chaplaincy and parish work as well as a ministry in spirituality conducted from the "House of the Incarnation" in Wynn Vale¹⁷.

The sisters of SI made a brave attempt to found a mixed community in terms of recent Christian thought and in the light of the changes which emerged in the expression of the religious life in the last 30 years. In formation it went against the Australian trend to develop religious communities with a more concentrated inner life. The fifteen years between the formation of this community and 1995 were a lean time for new recruits to any Australian community and there were no additions in membership. This raised the question of the longevity of the community and the sisters were realistic about the probability of their survival. Nevertheless they were optimistic that the religious life, in communities of small groups like themselves, would survive¹⁸.

The formation of contemplative groups had been attempted in the nineteenth century English Church but all failed. Despite the emphasis placed on the social outreach of religious communities, there were enough difficulties winning acceptance for the active religious life, let alone medieval monasticism. This had begun to change by the turn of the century and interest in the contemplative life style developed in the Church. In the broader society, mysticism in general became a "fashionable craze"¹⁹. Subsequently the establishment of stable, purely contemplative communities began with the institution of the Benedictine Community at Nashdom in 1914²⁰. The move to a deeper contemplative prayer life in England was further evidenced by the effect that this community later had on CSC and other English sisterhoods. Apart from these spiritual

¹⁷ Letter Sr Patricia, *op.cit.*

¹⁸ Questionnaire to Australian Sisterhoods

¹⁹ Anson P., The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, p.498

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.183

influences, a trend to contemplative groups accelerated in the 1930s as the state began to take over the social work that the religious communities had performed and the avenues for outreach began to shrink. There were glimpses of interest expressed in the contemplative way of life at the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) in the thirties as an attempt to foster aspirants. Sister Elisabeth from the Society had spent a year with the Benedictines at Malling Abbey in Kent in 1936. Nevertheless the English trend did not really manifest itself until the creation of purely contemplative Australian communities in the sixties²¹.

The question arises as to why the contemplative life took so long to reach Australia after its introduction in the mother church? While a definitive answer cannot be given there are several factors that appear to have played a part in this delay. Firstly, until the last decades of this century Australia was very much a backwater and overseas trends often took many years to arrive. As an example, Anglo-Catholicism did not reach its zenith in popularity in Australia until thirty years after it did so in England. This time gap was also seen in the intensification of the secularisation of the institutional social work with which the communities were traditionally involved. Both these factors corresponded in time to the first concrete interest shown in the formation of contemplative groups in the early sixties. Secondly, the religious communities in Australia in the twenties and early thirties were at a different stage of their development to the English paradigm as they were still in expansionist phases. Other elements, which could also have influenced the slower development of Australian interest in the contemplative life, involve differences in the Australian and English Church and in the character and outlook of the populations, or at least the Anglican population. Another possibility is that the stress placed on the social work of religious communities, in order to gain acceptance for sisterhoods in the early days, added to the lack of understanding or sympathy with the mystical aspects of the religious life.

The first contemplative community established in Australia was begun on the initiative

²¹ Sr Elisabeth, Society of the Sacred Advent, Past, Present and Future, Memoirs from 1917-1969 (typewritten) pp.34-5; The Advent, Easter, 1929, p.2

of Archbishop Felix Arnott of Brisbane and Bishop Ian Shevill of Newcastle²². In 1970 they had written independently to all the contemplative groups in England suggesting they would be most welcome in Australia. The Community of St Clare, Freeland, Oxford, was the only one to reply and this may have been because there were several Australians and New Zealanders in the sisterhood²³. The Freeland Community was established between 1940 and 1950 and was the first Anglican sisterhood of nuns to live by an adaptation of the Rule of St Clare²⁴. The Rev. Douglas Downes who had become the superior of the First Order of the Society of St Francis (SSF) in 1937 began this Second Order of St. Francis. The Society was formed after an amalgamation of Franciscan groups originally based in England²⁵. At the end of the twentieth century the First Order comprises communities for men and women and in Australia the men have houses in Brisbane and Stroud. The contemplative Clares provide a spiritual background for the First Order while the Third Order is for people living in the world. There are also companions who pray for the SSF and support it financially²⁶.

The original Franciscan brotherhood led by Downes devoted itself to caring for tramps who roamed the roads of England. Eventually a group of five women were formed to support the brotherhood with prayer and they began using the original Rule of St. Clare. This Rule had only been rediscovered in the late nineteenth century and has as its aim a life of contemplation and enclosure²⁷. This group of women tested their vocations under the direction of the Wantage sisters and later learned the fundamentals of the contemplative life with the Society of the Sacred Cross and the Community of the Holy

²² WWA, 1962, p.48 – Felix Raymond Arnott (b. 1911), archbishop of Brisbane 1970-80; WWA, 1959, *op.cit.*, p.726 – Ian Wotton Allnut Shevill (b. 1917) – bishop of North Queensland 1953-1970, Newcastle 1973-8

²³ Interview Sister Angela, Community of St Clare, Stroud, NSW, 2/12/93

²⁴ Anson, p.525

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.205-6

²⁶ Church Scene, 10/5/79, p.5

²⁷ Robinson P., 'St Clare', Sabatier P. & Others, Franciscan Essays, Aberdeen, 1966, p.32

Name, Malvern Link²⁸.

In 1965 five SSF brothers arrived in Brisbane and following the Australian episcopal invitations, three nuns were dispatched from Freeland to the Newcastle diocese in 1975. Leading the group was Sister Angela, formerly Wendy Solling, a sculptor, who had lived in the Maitland area as a young girl. The other two members were English and a New Zealander and another Australian later joined them.²⁹ Bishop Shevill enclosed the nuns in the picturesque but dilapidated convict-built rectory at Stroud. Members from CSC were present as was a representative group from a Roman Catholic Order of St Clare. The rectory was in an extremely bad state of repair and the Roman Catholic Josephite sisters, who lived nearby, could not believe the state of the accommodation³⁰. Despite the initial difficulties and after much hard work on the part of the sisters and an army of volunteers, a monastery was built from 50,000 mud bricks in the countryside surrounding Stroud³¹. Several years before the sisters moved into this monastery, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, the profession of the first Anglican contemplative nun in Australia had been performed at Stroud by the Bishop Protector of the SSF, Archbishop Frank Woods³².

Priests from SSF in Brisbane lived at Stroud on a rotational basis as chaplains to the Clare Community. In 1987 the Society decided to relocate to Stroud, although some of the brothers later returned to set up a new centre in Brisbane at Annerley³³. The brothers constructed a similar adjoining monastery to the Clares and shared their life in what

²⁸ Anson, pp.525-6

²⁹ Sr Angela, 1993, *op.cit.*; Sister Anne, a professed sister from the Society of the Sacred Advent transferred to Stroud in 70's.

³⁰ Church Scene, 11/9/75, p.7

³¹ Church Scene, 31/7/80, p.6

³² Church Scene, 19/10/78, p.3

³³ Church Scene, 22/4/76, p.19; Church Scene, 16/12/76, pp.19-20

amounted to almost a double monastery³⁴. By 1988 Sister Angela was the only nun left of those who had come from Freeland. She felt that the English women who were in the original team had all returned home because they were unable to adapt to the rural atmosphere in a small Australian bush town³⁵. Angela maintained that as an Australian community it was imperative for the Clares to adapt to the unique Australian attitude to all aspects of life, including the pace of life in the country, the climate and spirituality. It was envisaged that the Community could develop into a group with a core of contemplatives whose life would be shared for varying times by lay people³⁶. On the other hand, it could become an ecumenical monastic contemplative community open to both men and women and even married couples³⁷.

The Community became fully autonomous from Freeland in November 1993 and Sister Angela then modified Clare's original Rule to fit an adaptable, contemplative community living in a small rural town in the Australian Bush³⁸. By 1993 Angela had been ordained as a priest and, although she was the only professed nun left at Stroud, there were several novices testing their calling. In the new community being formed the outlook was ecumenical, strongly feminist and "green". There was also a perception of belonging to a broad Church that encompassed all denominations, while retaining the sacramentalism of the Catholic wing of the Anglican Church³⁹.

While the group was still a contemplative one and enclosed in the eyes of the world, Angela believed that enclosure was too strong a word. She considered that seclusion, as

³⁴ Church Scene, 3/7/87, Vol 3, No 419, p.7; Interview, Brother William, SSF, Brisbane, 28/2/95 - an offshoot contemplative group has moved to Tabulum, known as the Little Brothers of Francis.

³⁵ Sr Angela, 1993, *op.cit.*

³⁶ Church Scene, 7/10/88, p.21

³⁷ Interview Sr Angela CC, Stroud, 8/2/95

³⁸ Campbell-Jones S., In Habit, London, 1979, p.57 - argues that the degree of charismatic authority which traditionally Franciscan leaders possess has always been decisive in the Franciscan capacity for innovation. The terms charismatic and innovative can both be applied to Sister Angela.

³⁹ Interview, Sr. Angela, 1995, *op.cit.*; Church Scene, 7/10/88, p.21

in Clare's original community, was a more appropriate description⁴⁰. This meant that people were welcomed to the monastery at certain times for retreats, discussions, prayer and counselling. Indeed, accommodation was provided by the nuns, which constituted the main source of their income. Money was also made from craftwork which used wherever possible the raw materials from the area. The products were always related to prayer, for example, woodcarvings of crosses or icons were made and religious sculptures produced. These were sold in a shop attached to the monastery, and apart from the business aspect this proved to be a good way to meet the local people⁴¹. Like all religious communities at the end of the twentieth century, the Clare Community was in a state of flux. The future was seen to be fluid, unknown but very exciting.

From 1990, a second offshoot from the Community of the Holy Name quietly established itself in the Victorian diocese of Wangaratta. It was not until the time of Mother Ida and particularly during the tenure of Mother Faith at CHN, that a definite trend towards the enclosed and eremitic life style was seen. One outcome was that Sisters Rita Mary, Marjory and Clare were allowed to lead an experimental, contemplative life within CHN at Cheltenham in 1975⁴². This lifestyle created controversy within CHN, as there was never a concept of such a life when Sister Esther began the deaconess Mission in the late nineteenth century. This arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory and after several moves to other solitary community houses, two of the sisters went to the Community of the Sisters of the Love of God, Fairacres, in England. This contemplative order had been particularly influential on the spirituality of Mother Faith⁴³. On returning from Fairacres and after the acquisition of several new recruits, the group moved to Wangaratta at the invitation of the bishop in 1990. The sisters were warmly welcomed by the diocese and established a branch house of CHN

⁴⁰Armstrong E.A., St Francis, Nature Mystic, London, 1973, pp.74-5.

⁴¹Interview, Sr Angela, 1993, op.cit.

⁴² Interview, Sr Josephine Margaret CHN, 9/10/95; Interview, Mother Rita Mary & Sisters, CCK, 13/10/95

⁴³ Strahan L., Out of the Silence, Melbourne, 1988, p.168

at "Taminick", a property owned by the Church⁴⁴. After several years it became apparent that novices trained in the contemplative life at Wangaratta could not be fully members of CHN. Consequently in February 1994, the Community of Christ the King was inaugurated in Wangaratta Cathedral with Mother Rita Mary as the superior. There was no animosity involved in the formation of the new community and nine members of CHN were present at the inauguration⁴⁵.

At Wangaratta the nuns followed a daily round of prayer and work in the traditional monastic pattern. Therefore the sevenfold daily Office was followed and silence and enclosure were two of the essential elements of the life⁴⁶. For a while the nuns lived by the Rule of their former sisterhood; however by the end of 1995 they were in the process of defining a new Rule and Constitution. The establishment of an independent, enclosed community was not an easy task and the nuns faced many difficulties. Although the future remained obscure, the members of the Community believed that it was a "definite act of faith" which led them to take the step at Taminick, where they intended to continue with their vision and major undertaking to pray for and to suffer with the needs of the world⁴⁷.

In the diocese of Ballarat, an unusual Anglican Benedictine community of men and women has been established near the town of Camperdown in the western districts of Victoria⁴⁸. The location of the St Mark's Priory is spectacular and overlooks the great crater lake, Bullen Merri. The silence is intense adding to the aura of timelessness pervading the monastery and its surrounds and seems particularly appropriate for a

⁴⁴ Associates Newsletter, Passiontide, 1989, p.1; Associates Newsletter, Sept.1990, p.3

⁴⁵ Associates Newsletter, Easter, 1994, p.8 - CCK adopted a long habit of pale grey scapula over white, black veil and a plain black cross inlaid with a small ivory crown.

⁴⁶ Associates Newsletter, June, 1991, p.7

⁴⁷ Interview CCK sisters, *op.cit.* - By 1998, CCK had embraced the Benedictine Rule.

⁴⁸ Church Scene, 29 Oct 1993, No 724, p.8

tradition that goes back fifteen centuries. The Community was founded by Father Michael King, who in 1975 when vicar of the Fitzroy parish in Melbourne, was persuaded by Archbishop Frank Woods to start an active religious order⁴⁹. After fairly rapid growth followed by a period of instability, the group of four felt they were being called to a more contemplative way of life⁵⁰. Michael had always had a leaning to Benedictinism and consequently spent a period at St Gregory's Benedictine Abbey, Three Rivers, Michigan. In July 1979, his group embraced the Benedictine Rule with the approval of the Benedictine Orders in the Anglican Communion⁵¹. An offer of a house by Bishop John Hazlewood of Ballarat in Camperdown was accepted and several years later the group built an imposing monastery just outside the town⁵².

In 1991 the monks felt called to institute a group of Benedictine nuns and approached the abbess of St. Mary's Malling Abbey, UK, for help. When Sister Mary Philip arrived from Malling this concept changed and it was decided to incorporate the sexes into a progressive, mixed community⁵³. This is an unusual occurrence as there is only one other such mixed Benedictine order in the Anglican Communion and that is the Community of the Salutation of St Mary the Virgin at Burford Priory, Oxfordshire. What makes the Camperdown community unique is that the monks invited the women to participate, whereas in contrast, the English community was started by a group of sisters from the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, who subsequently invited men to join⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ Bernard J.R.L.(ed), Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of People and Places (PMD), Sydney, 1987, p.716 – Frank Woods (b.1907) archbishop of Melbourne 1957-1977, primate 1971-77.

⁵⁰ Interview with Father Prior Michael King, Camperdown, 12/10/95

⁵¹ Anson, *op.cit.*, pp.192-3 – the Benedictines of Nashdom originally founded St Gregory's.

⁵² WWA 1974, p.489 – John Hazlewood (b.1924) – bishop of Ballarat 1975-1994; Father Michael, *op.cit.*; Church Scene, 29/3/85, Vol 4 No 311 p.9

⁵³ Father Michael, *op.cit.*

⁵⁴ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.522

Father Michael believed that this monastic group "jumped the barriers of denominationalism". This is because Benedictines see themselves foremost as followers of Benedict and only secondarily as Roman Catholics, Anglicans or Lutherans. A feeling of family is strengthened by regular prayer being offered for all Benedictines around the world⁵⁵. At Camperdown the Community offered traditional Benedictine hospitality to outsiders as well as being involved in a commercial printery and the manufacture of icons, pot pourri and herbs. The two sides of Benedictine life, prayer and manual work, were performed in an enclosed situation, so that there was no outside staff in the monastery and the members did not go out unnecessarily. Unlike many other communities that spent much effort simplifying their lifestyle, traditional habits were worn at Camperdown and the style of worship was formal like most Benedictine communities. On the other hand, the group tried to be as up to date as possible, used inclusive language wherever viable and supported the ordination of women⁵⁶. The latter was against the leaning in the diocese of Ballarat.

Most Benedictine monasteries have attached to them seculars or persons under vows, known as "oblates"⁵⁷. Strictly speaking oblates do not form a Third Order as each belongs, as does each monk or nun, to the monastery of their profession⁵⁸. Although observances for the oblates were fairly stringent, at the end of 1995 there were 52 such members in the Camperdown Community and Father Michael expressed the wish that they could get as many into enclosure. The oblates, monks and nuns, had established a warm filial relationship and the former were seen as the hands and feet of the

⁵⁵ Interview with Father Michael King by Stephen Godley, ABC Encounter Program, 30/4/95; Advisory Council of Religious Communities (ACRC), A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, p.43 - "The Benedictine House is an autonomous unit and this makes possible authentic foundations of the Order within the Anglican Communion".

⁵⁶ Father Michael, *op.cit.*

⁵⁷ Benedictines of Nashdom, The Jubilee Book of the Benedictines of Nashdom, London, 1964, p.83; Fry T. (ed), The Rule of St. Benedict in English, Minnesota, 1992, p.81, RB 59.1-8

⁵⁸ ACRC, *op.cit.*, p.45

movement because of the relatively strict enclosure of the monastics⁵⁹.

At the end of 1995 the numbers of monks and nuns were small. There were two men and four women members; one man had recently died and another left. The founder acknowledged that there were problems and was not sure whether this "ancient way for modern times" would be successful. While the remaining monks and nuns felt that this new form of existence had enhanced their lives, the problems that existed were seen to be mainly concerned with the differences between the sexes - it is very different living in a mixed rather than a single sex community.

By the end of the century, the tendency to form contemplative sisterhoods was overshadowed by a greater change in the institutional role of women in the Church. This was the general acceptance of the ordination of women to the priesthood, achieved after a great deal of bitterness and controversy. Despite the greater participation of women than men in supporting all branches of Christianity in Australia, the road to emancipation for women in the Anglican Church has been far more acrimonious than the same process in secular colonial society. In the late 19th century when the colonies were moving towards federation and the enfranchisement of women, Church government, both synodical and parochial was reformed along more democratic lines. This did not include women, even though dedicated women's work had begun to be sanctioned in the Church. Nevertheless in retrospect the movement for the ordination of women can be traced to the introduction of the Deaconess Movement into the English Church. Whereas the role played by women in the mission fields, given their exclusion from leadership roles at home, is generally seen as the major force that led to the push for ordination⁶⁰.

The Deaconess Movement involved a dedicated life without the involvement of taking vows. Nevertheless they were often implicit although many deaconesses married and

⁵⁹ Father Michael, *op.cit.*

⁶⁰ Piggin S., Evangelical Christianity in Australia, Melbourne, 1996, p.82

continued their work for various periods. In contrast to religious orders, deaconesses have been far more popular in Australia than in England. It can be seen in Figure III that the reverse situation applied to professed sisters. In the first chapter, it was pointed out that early in the 20th century, at the height of the popularity of the religious life for women in Great Britain, there were between 2,000 and 3,000 professed sisters. In contrast there were only about 200 deaconesses. Although statistics are not collected in Britain on religious affiliation, Figure III shows there were approximately 22 million nominal Anglicans at that time. At the end of the 1960's in Australia, the decade of Anglo-Catholicism's greatest strength, there were about 130 professed sisters and the Anglican population was nearly four million. For the numbers to be equivalent for each country there should have been many hundreds more professed Australian sisters.

Deaconesses and Nuns in Great Britain

<u>Year</u>	<u>Anglicans G.B.</u>	<u>Anglicans,Aust.</u>	<u>Deaconesses, G.B.</u>	<u>Nuns, G.B.</u>	<u>Nuns, Aust.</u>
1901	22m	1.5m	200	2,000-3,000	30
1921	23m	2.4m	300	2,000-3,000	80
1931	22m	2.6m	216	2,000-3000	120
1971	27.5m	3.9m	120	<2,000	130
1981	27.2m	3.8m	285	<1,000	110

Figure III

While neither group of women attracted great numbers, it can be seen that deaconess membership remained fairly constant in Britain as the population increased. On the other hand, from the thirties the sisterhoods had slowly decreased until by the 80's only one third of the maximum total remained. The most deaconesses to have worked in Great Britain was about 300, one tenth of the religious who were working at the turn of the century when they were most popular⁶¹. The strength of the Deaconess Movement

⁶¹ These statistics have been compiled from the Statesman's Year Book, 1882-1992; Vamplen W., Australians: Historical Statistics, Sydney, 1987; Daily Mail Year Book, 1914-1984; Porter M., Women in the Church, Melbourne, 1989; Grierson J., The Deaconess, London, 1981; Sturrock M., The Anglican Deaconess Movement in Melbourne, BTh Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1989; Tress N.,

in Australia centred on the Sydney diocese where about 150 of the approximate total of 230 deaconesses, were commissioned in the 20th century⁶².

From the time of the institution of deaconesses, their actual status was always ambiguous. Initially their proponents had to persuade people they were a reinstatement from the Apostolic Church⁶³. Following this was the claim of the deaconess to be a member of the diaconate and as such a part of the threefold ministry of the Church⁶⁴. This inevitably led to a powerful argument for full ordination to the priesthood. From 1919, attempts were made in England to address the position of the deaconess, as there was no official recognition of her status and duties in the Church, nor any one authorised form of commission⁶⁵. This resulted in the affirmation at the 1920 Lambeth Conference that the deaconess was not a member of the diaconate and that ordination to the priesthood was out of the question – a position being raised by some newly enfranchised English women⁶⁶. This same conference affirmed that women could hold any lay office in the Church. Breward points out that the Australian Church did little to implement this resolution and few women took up the offer⁶⁷.

Following an even stronger push for women's ordination, the 1930 Lambeth

Caught For Life, Sydney, 1993; Archives of CSC, CHN, SSA - These figures are approximate, particularly the number of Anglicans in Great Britain, as these statistics have never been collected in a national survey and are estimates only from several sources.

⁶² Porter *op.cit.*, p.46; Tress, *op.cit.*, pp.171 -204.

⁶³ Grierson, *op.cit.*, p.12 – despite the disappearance of deaconesses from the Western Church at least 1,000 years before, the Eastern Church retains the office at the end of the 20th century in association with religious orders.

⁶⁴ The evidence from scripture is ambiguous. The proponents of women as members of the diaconate cite Rom 16:1, where Phoebe is called *ousan diakonon*, not *diakonissa* (deaconess).

⁶⁵ Porter, *op.cit.*, p.15

⁶⁶ Coleman R, (ed), Resolutions of the Twelve Lambeth Conferences, 1867 –1988, Toronto, 1992, pp.60-1

⁶⁷ Breward I., A History of the Australian Churches, Sydney, 1993, p.206 - In Melbourne, women could serve on synod from 1924 cp. Sydney, 1972; vestries in Melbourne in 1956, cp. Sydney 1921 where female churchwardens only permitted in 1978.

Conference reaffirmed the earlier ruling. Consequently, several groups were formed in England to continue the fight⁶⁸. It was not until 30 years later that the hierarchy again addressed the concept of the diaconate. The conclusion was that it should be restored to its original place as a distinctive ministry and not just, as it had become, a preparatory phase before priesthood⁶⁹. This was a crucial step in the recognition of the ordination of women. Ten years later the Lambeth conference acknowledged that the Order of Deaconesses was within the diaconate⁷⁰.

Despite their weight in the Anglican Communion in the areas of faith and morals, the Lambeth conferences have no legal status. In 1969, the Australian General Synod rejected this proposal⁷¹. This decision was extremely upsetting to Australian deaconesses, most of whom were incredulous at the veto. Archbishop Marcus Loane of Sydney had given warning of this outcome at Lambeth in 1968 when he said that the admission of women to the threefold order of ministry would spell the “death knoll” of the appeal of the Church to men⁷². No doubt the growing feminisation of the Church by the middle of the 20th century had increased concern in the traditional widespread disinterest of men in organised Christianity in Australian society. The outcome of the synodical rejection saw the galvanisation of those in favour of women priests. This movement was strengthened following a further rejection of the 1972 English report stating there were no theological objections to the ordination of women. Subsequently this position was agreed to by the General Synod in 1977, which resulted in the institution of several activist groups to pursue ordination. This saw the formation of the Sydney based, but Australia-wide group, the Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) in 1983⁷³.

⁶⁸ Rose M., Freedom from Sanctified Sexism, MacGregor, 1996, p.135

⁶⁹ Bp of St Andrews, “The Diaconate”, Archbishop of Canterbury (ed), Lambeth Essays on Ministry, London, 1968, p.62

⁷⁰ Coleman, p.162

⁷¹ Porter, p.18; also Tress, *op.cit.*, pp.159-161

⁷² PMD, *op.cit.*, p.386 – Archbishop Sir Marcus Lawrence Loane (b.1911)- archbishop of Sydney 1966-82, 1st Australian-born primate 1978-1982; Sturrock, *op.cit.*, p.39.

⁷³ Rose, *op.cit.*, p.163

After much controversy, both theological and constitutional, Archbishop David Penman of Melbourne (1984-1990) ordained the first women deacons in Australia in February 1986⁷⁴. Most of these women were former deaconesses⁷⁵. This began the exodus of some Anglo-Catholics, either to Rome or into schismatic sects, like it did in England⁷⁶. While not all women deacons aspired to the priesthood, Penman's move opened the floodgates and since 1992 when Archbishop Peter Carnley priested women in Perth, they have been ordained as priests in most Australian dioceses, with the notable exception of Sydney⁷⁷. In Figure IV it can be seen that by the end of the century over 200 women had been priested in Australia. A further consequence of the ordination of women to the diaconate has been the virtual end to the recruitment of deaconesses⁷⁸.

Women Deacons and Priests in Australia⁷⁹

Year	Deacons	Priests
1995	114	139
1996	124	159
1997	132	171
1998	155	182
1999	152	211

Figure IV

⁷⁴ WWA 1991, p.713 – David John Penman (b.1936), archbishop Melbourne 1984-1990

⁷⁵ Church Scene, 7/2/86, Vol 3, No 351/2, p.1.

⁷⁶ Cotes A., “The Monstrous Regiment, Anglo-Catholics in Australia since the Ordination of Women”, Moses J.A.(ed), From Oxford to the Bush, St Lucia, 1997, p.301ff – Since the ordination of women priests this has intensified. Cotes sees three distinct groups have formed in Australia – (1) The schismatic Anglican Catholic Church (2) converts to Rome (3) Forward in Faith, an import from England where it claims 6,000 clergy and 35,000 lay people. They have remained in the Church but refuse to have anything to do with women priests. In Australia it seems to be confined to Brisbane. This latter group has been vocal in calling for the creation of cultural, not just area bishops.

⁷⁷ Church Scene, 13/3/92, Vol 4, No 643, p.1; By the end of 1992, 80 women had been ordained in 9 dioceses; WWA 1991, p.249 – Peter Frederick Carnley (b.1937), archbishop Perth 1984, primate 2000

⁷⁸ Interview, Deaconess Margaret Rodgers, 7/9/95

⁷⁹ Focus, June, 1999, p.8

All major change results in stress and the difficulty of coping with such a dramatic transformation in power relationships must follow the general acceptance of a mixed priesthood. Apart from the defection of some of those diametrically opposed to women priests, a vital question concerns the path that these women will follow. Like their counterparts in the secular world, they will find the proverbial glass ceiling difficult to penetrate. One scenario, feared by some, is that as clergy, women will join the hierarchical, patriarchal system. The hope is that they will bring a fresh and different perspective to the office of priest. The one certainty is that controversy will continue as the question of episcopal office moves onto the ordination agenda.

The debate over women's ordination has been bitter. Once thought to be a fairly marginal issue, Porter believes it has been shown to concern the very essence of the Church, namely the nature of God⁸⁰. The respective arguments against ordination have been discussed in numerous publications and revolve around two positions – the particular hermeneutical interpretation of select portions of scripture, or the nature of tradition in the Church. The opponents of ordination usually come from the conservative, opposite poles of the theological spectrum. On the one hand, Anglo-Catholics are mainly concerned with the 2,000-year tradition of an exclusively male priesthood in which is embedded the concept of the maleness of God and the inferiority of women. On the other hand, fundamentalist Evangelicals rely on selected passages of scripture to affirm the headship of males in every sphere of life (e.g., 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22-3; Col 3:18-19). Anglo-Catholics who emphasise the Catholicity of the Anglican Church, expressed in its claim of Apostolic Succession, are particularly concerned that the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Orthodox Church, who comprise the vast block of catholicity, refuse to even discuss the ordination of women.

Although the push for ordination has often been ridiculed as an expression of Western radical feminism, latterly expressed in Australia by MOW, the whole debate is not just

⁸⁰ Porter, *op.cit.*, p.159

one between the sexes⁸¹. Porter and Rose both acknowledge that men were the main advocates of female ordination⁸². Conversely many women either agree with the proposed theological objections or are happy in the role they had undertaken in the Church, wielding influence through men. Further like many men, not all women desire to undertake leadership roles and often dislike women who do.

The fundamental role of men in the successful push for female ordination is similar to the part they played in the institution of women's religious orders and the Deaconess Movement in the 19th century. Given the strong opposition of many Anglo-Catholics to ordination it would not be surprising if many of the sisters in the religious life, who were part of that theological outlook, agreed with this point of view. No doubt some did and probably still do. By the time the issue was raised in Australia, CSC had decided the Community attitude was one of support, including that of priests within their own ranks. Indeed CSC had a female priest as a member in Canada ten years before the Australian struggle succeeded. CHN and the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) were in a different position being exclusively related to the Australian Church. CHN as a Community did not intend or attempt to take a particular stand either way and it was not seen as a Community issue. Like the sisters of SSA, various positions were held initially by individuals that became modified over time. This reflected what was happening in the Church generally. Overall only a few sisters were involved in the activities of MOW but many supported the Movement morally and in prayer⁸³. The sisters were in a different situation to other Anglicans, because as well they had to resolve the question of ordained members within their own ranks. This position was removed from the general question of female ordination but was just as revolutionary in the history of Christianity. Collectively all the communities in Australia supported both these aspects of ordination.

⁸¹ This seem to be particularly prevalent in Eastern Orthodoxy which also sees the attitude of the Reformation Churches as responsible for such a feminist push – see Limouris G., (ed), The Place of the Woman in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of Women, Katerini, 1992

⁸² see Chapter 4, pp.118-119 - an example was Bp G.H.Cranswick of Gippsland, an early champion of the diaconate status of deaconesses and a supporter of the equal participation of women in the Church.

⁸³ Personal communications with members of the religious communities.

Therefore a century after their institution in Australia, the two forms of dedicated life for women which were introduced primarily for their social outreach and missionary role appear to have reached different outcomes. On the one hand, the Deaconess Movement, which was supported financially and morally by the Church, has ended as women choose to enter the diaconate or the priesthood. As the thrust for equal power became a major concern of many in the Church, the contemplative communities formed as this push was accelerating, have attracted very few members. On the other hand, the mixed religious communities, while maintaining their independence as far as was possible and thus always suffering from a lack of real support survive, although in a much reduced state. The lukewarm attitude of the Church to the religious life has not been confined to Australia even though it was originally accepted by the Church hierarchy at the Lambeth Conference in 1897. In 1930, the Lambeth Conference recognised "with thankfulness the growth of religious communities" and advised closer cooperation between the episcopate and the communities, either by "canonical recognition or other means"⁸⁴. As a result of this resolution, the "Advisory Council of Religious Communities" was established in 1935. This outcome showed promise of the concrete recognition of the religious life, but in 1947 a report of the Archbishops' Commission on Canon Law stated, "the time was not ripe for securing the essential values of the Religious Life by way of Canonical legislation"⁸⁵. That time had still not arrived at the end of 1995.

The three major communities, which began in late nineteenth century Australia, overcame difficult initiation periods to establish important social institutions in areas which were neglected by the State. Their institution and growth was encouraged by the emphasis of their supporters on the social outreach and a virtual denial of the spiritual side that constitutes the inner life. This neglect must have played a major role in the general lack of understanding or sympathy with communal spirituality, not just in the

⁸⁴ Coleman, *op.cit.*, p.90

⁸⁵ Commission on Canon Law, The Canon Law of the Church of England, London, 1947, p.86

laity but in many of the clergy as well. The outcome has been that Anglicanism, as a whole, has not embraced the religious life. This has contributed to a lack of the acknowledgment of the outstanding achievements that this relatively small group of women in Australia has achieved through their determination and faith.

The interwar years saw the influence of the Australian communities at their widest, although CHN expanded its membership and outreach until the end of the sixties. The post-war years, which resulted in the Welfare State, saw the institutional outreach of most religious orders being taken over by secular concerns. Combined with the questioning of many aspects of Western civilisation, religious life entered a time of trauma in a search for relevance. This time of change introduced a trend to the contemplative life in Australian communities that involved a deeper life of prayer for some in the established mixed communities. This even found expression in the eremitic lifestyle and from the sixties, with two minor exceptions, the new small communities, which have formed, have followed the monastic life. The contemplative life has never been as popular as other forms of the religious life and the numbers involved in these communities in Australia have been tiny. This has not been helped by the late arrival of the life in Australia at a time of increasing uncertainty and change for traditional Christianity. Although the ideal of these groups is enclosure, as in traditional monasticism, this is not incarceration but more seclusion or an enclosure of the mind. The strictness of the enclosure varies due to situation, size and circumstances, and members do leave the cloister in certain circumstances when to do otherwise would be impractical. In this communication age, all are aware of world events and through hospitality offered in the monastic tradition, there is consequently much contact with people from outside the communities.

While the three major communities were still in existence at the end of the twentieth century, their numbers were dwindling. The life had become a much more hidden one than in the past but the first priority of the life remained, as always, prayer followed by Christian service and community support, just as the founders envisaged. Unlike the past there were no specific areas in which all were involved. Change was the order of

the day.

The overview of the religious life presented has considered the external life of the communities. The next section will examine the inner life and that relationship to the outreach, especially as expressed in the three major communities. To achieve this end all the sisterhoods in Australia were visited, with the exception of SI, as was the headquarters of CSC in England. Group and personal interviews were conducted and questions were orientated to individual and community ethos and spirituality. To gain more information all the communities were asked to participate in a survey on various aspects of the religious life to help elucidate the differences between the outlook and the characteristics of each community. A further aim was to gain information about other questions raised by the historical review. These concerned the attitude of Australian Anglicans to the religious life and the future of the life.

CHAPTER SEVEN An Appraisal of Spirituality particularly as it relates to the Religious Community

Spirituality is an integral, dynamic force in human life. Because it is difficult to explain it has been defined in many ways. As a universal phenomenon among humans, built on the consciousness or hope of something beyond the material universe it is the longing to find "God"¹. Spirituality is usually perceived to stand apart from the intellect and is equated more with the "heart" or feelings. From a Christian standpoint it is always the interaction between the human spirit and the divine spirit.

In Christian spirituality the search for God has been experienced either by turning outwards to find the transcendent God, or inwards to find the transcendent God as immanent, at the bottom of self. This latter apprehension of ultimate reality is understood to occur in the spiritual core of the person, at the deepest centre of the psyche². While an ability to perceive God presupposes a concept of humans as creatures "open" to transcendence, it also posits the capability of self-transcendence, or the ability to remove the ego from centre stage and replace it with some Other. These characteristics are limited by a combination of genetics and environmental background, psychological type and life opportunities³.

Spirituality involves an understanding of the world in relation to God. It is influenced by religious belief and its symbols and is associated with the society in which it occurs. So at its most basic, spirituality, as an expression of experience, is the way a person

¹ Louth A., The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition, Oxford, 1981, p.3

² Dupre L. & Saliers D.E. (ed) Christian Spirituality, New York, 1989, p.xii

³ Kelleher M.M., 'The Meaning of Christian Spirituality', Klenick L. & Huck G. (ed) Spirituality and Prayer, New York, 1983, p.19

responds to life⁴. Therefore it permeates the whole of the life of a person, which is the interior and the exterior life of thought and action.

Since spirituality is an integral part of life it is moulded by various external factors. The physical environment, race, gender, life style, shifts in perception and events in the world can all give rise to particular forms of spirituality. In the Australian context it has been argued that a major effect on the national character is that of a spirituality of exile and loss. Begun initially with the enforced and voluntary exile of convicts and migrants from Europe and the resultant loss of traditional lands by the indigenous inhabitants, it has been reinforced by the recent creation of a wide-ranging ethnicity⁵.

Of deep significance for individual and group spirituality has been the change in the nature of a society's inter-relationship with the individual. An example of great importance in this context, has been the development of the concept of the pre-eminence of the individual over the collective community since the Enlightenment. The diminution of the magnitude of the dualism of the mind/body split, in the ascendancy for most of the Christian experience, is another factor that has had profound consequences for spirituality. This attitudinal change has included a new Christian importance attached to life on earth and the concept of the Kingdom of God being here and now and not some future outcome of an eschatological event. This has seen the development of a spirituality related to creation and the preservation of the environment or a global spirituality.

In Anglicanism, unlike Roman Catholicism or Orthodoxy, great emphasis has always been placed on the spiritual freedom of the individual⁶. Anglican spirituality has its roots in that of the Middle Ages and mysticism, but since the Reformation Cranmer's

⁴ Lonsdale D., Eyes to See, Ears to Hear, Minnesota, 1990, p.2

⁵ see Millikan D., The Sunburnt Soul, Sydney, 1981; Goonan M., A Community of Exiles, Sydney, 1996

⁶ Lloyd R., The History of the Church of England, London, 1966, p.19

Book of Common Prayer has been highly influential. As a result classical Anglicanism became based on morality, the concern to lead "a godly and sober life"⁷. This practical spirituality, grounded in human experience fitted well with the diverse theologies in the Church. This can be seen particularly in the later arrival of Evangelicalism and the transportation of this moral earnestness to the colonial Churches. In a way this emphasis was one which confused religion and spirituality and contributed to a lack of understanding of group spirituality.

The dominant feature in twentieth century Anglicanism has been a new openness to others as part of an ecumenical movement in the broader Church⁸. Aside from a new tolerance to other religions, this universal movement has resulted in general changes in most denominational liturgies and the production of a widespread understanding that social action must be performed in conjunction with prayer⁹. In the last part of the 20th century, a concept has arisen of the need to seek a new understanding of spirituality. This has resulted in diverse accents on praying such as contemplative prayer, charismatic worship and healing ministries.

Adding to these shifts in perspective has been the rise of feminism in the Western secular world, which by the seventies led to feminist theology. One outcome has been an enormous debate over the question of gender specific spirituality. Initially feminists refused to concede innate differences between male and female, arguing instead for the cultural determination of gender. Although this concept has become modified over the decades, the debate concerning "nature or nurture" remains. A middle way of looking at the question has been to see some characteristics being more accessible to one sex than the other, although not exclusively so. The outcome has been the recognition of the diversity of human spirituality, but despite this it remains true that traditional spirituality has been male centred. The aim of feminism is to assert that the female experience of

⁷ Wakefield G., 'Anglican Spirituality', Dupre & Saliers, *op.cit.*, p.264

⁸ Allchin A.M., 'Anglicanism', Jones C., Wainwright G. & Yarnold E., (ed) The Study of Spirituality, London, 1986, p.538; also Lloyd, *op.cit.*, p.213

⁹ Wakefield, *op.cit.*, p.286

life is equal to and is as authentic as that of men. Therefore, the centre of spirituality for feminists has either been the abandonment of male symbols or the insertion of the female equivalent in conjunction with reform of language and rewriting of the liturgies¹⁰. Despite the strong antagonism of many, feminism has effected change in varying degrees in these latter areas. On top of this has been the ordination of women in many Reformed churches and in much of the Anglican Communion. This must have profound long-lasting effects on Anglican spirituality in general.

Therefore all these many movements, in combination with the modern ascendancy of the laity have brought radical changes to the way Christians perceive themselves in relation to God and the Church. Accordingly the religious community could not be immune to these changes.

The most obvious expression of religious spirituality is prayer. Like spirituality, prayer is very much an individual characteristic and is almost impossible to adequately explain. Often people who pray find it quite upsetting to be asked to describe their feelings, or the way they approach the divine, as they are unable to articulate the experiences¹¹. Prayer takes different forms that are either communal or individual, but personal spirituality has rarely been separated from formal collective worship. Prayer is not something that necessarily comes naturally and humans need to be taught how to pray. The aim of prayer is to enter a relationship, a state of life in God¹². As spirituality can be understood as a combination of praying and living, prayer and action belong together. One religious expressed the ultimate aim as not to "pray prayers but to pray life"¹³.

¹⁰ Bynum C.W., 'The Complexity of Symbols', Bynum C.W., Harrell S., Paula R., (ed), Gender and Religion, Boston, 1986, p.1; also Zappone K., The Hope for Wholeness, Connecticut, 1991, p.32

¹¹ Sr Madeleine, Solitary Refinement, London, 1972, p.111

¹² CSC, The Rule, pp, 1984, p.34

¹³ Sr Madeleine, *op.cit.*, p.111

The worship and adoration of God are viewed as the chief function of the Christian Church in heaven and on earth. Thus praise and thanksgiving form the centre of the various liturgies that have developed. Liturgy and ceremonial ritual are themselves forms of individual and communal spirituality¹⁴. On the other hand, private prayer involves speaking to God in an individual way. It can extend from verbal to mental prayer and like liturgical prayer, can lead to meditation and contemplation.

Meditation is a prayer of movement in which the mind moves from thought to thought. In contrast to contemplation it can be taught and the feeling of a simple union with God can develop. Contemplation has often been over defined and in varying degrees of complexity. At its most basic level it is seen to be looking towards God and thinking deeply about him. Therefore it is difficult to define the exact borderline between meditation and true contemplation, but the latter is a progression through various stages to a much deeper experience. It is finally a prayer of motionlessness where "the mind stands still and looks"¹⁵. So simple prayer can be defined as talking to God while contemplative prayer is listening for God¹⁶.

The contemplative aims to experience a meeting or union with God in the depths of the psyche. Difficulty arises in attaining this state as the capacity for this type of mystical prayer varies. As it requires emptying the mind, a great deal of training and practice is involved, usually in silence and solitude¹⁷. It is further believed that this encounter is a gift from God over which the individual has no control. Therefore it is not surprising that there are few true contemplatives in the religious life¹⁸.

Contemplative prayer is part of a wider occurrence known as mysticism. While there is

¹⁴ Wakefield G., *op.cit.*, p.285

¹⁵ Sr Judith, Christian Meditation, PP, nd, p.2; Taylor J.V., The Go-Between God, London, 1972, p.236

¹⁶ SSA Archives - Sr Margaret, Meditation Notes (handwritten)

¹⁷ Sr Audrey CSC, Prayer as Relationship with God, PP, nd, p.5

¹⁸ Merton T., The Monastic Journey, London, 1977, p.169

no reason to suppose the mystical consciousness is miraculous or supernatural and, despite its comparative rarity, there is no doubt it exists. The full extent of mysticism is unknown but it can occur in many varied situations and as differing phenomena. It is probably at least as old as human religious thought and many primitive religions practise the attainment of ecstatic trance by various means. The meaning of mysticism agrees with the viewpoint of the person using it and the interpretation is always an expression of a particular culture or creed. In religious terminology it is a belief that an experience of the unifying principle of all reality has been achieved. This seems to involve the loss of individuality by a feeling of merging into the infinite¹⁹. While the description of the event seems to be beyond the capacity of language, the encounter is usually so overwhelming that mystics often try to describe it. This is done using symbolism, which is a part of all religious spirituality. These symbols describe a wide range of feelings of union from ecstasy to peace - descriptions that seem to depend on psychological outlook and temperament²⁰. They do not appear to fall into gender patterns but rather are divergent trans-sexual types of experience²¹.

The contemplative path to God is uncommon among Christians but the journey to the divine, or the search for perfect holiness, has traditionally been seen to also necessitate self-suppression. In the modern age this concept of the abnegation of self in order to find God is frequently disputed. This is a result of the change in perception of the dualism of the finite and infinite and the resultant trend in spirituality that it is wrong to deny humanness²². Therefore in modern terms perfect holiness, or the love of God, can be defined as the "process of becoming a person in the fullest sense" - "wholeness" of the body and spirit²³.

¹⁹ Stace W.T., The Teachings of the Mystics, New York, 1960, p.230

²⁰ Underhill E., Mysticism, London, 1949, p.336

²¹ King U., Women and Spirituality, London, 1989, p.98

²² Ulenov a & B., 'Personal Prayer', Jones et al, *op.cit*, p.24

²³ Jones C.P.M., 'Liturgy and Personal Devotion', Jones et al, *Ibid.*, p.9 - as defined by John Macquarrie.

These two outlooks move towards compatibility when the spiritual pathway is described as a psychological journey of self-discovery²⁴. In these terms the sublimation of self, as explained by Carl Jung, becomes the suppression of the conscious self or the ego. This is necessary before the real self can be found in the unconscious at the bottom of the psyche²⁵ - a step which is seen to be necessary before the infinite can be perceived. In other words, the movement towards the authentic self is the movement towards "God" and self-knowledge. Thus wholeness of the personality develops as the union with God deepens. This is in contrast to the traditional religious view of the body as a handicap to the spiritual life that needed harsh discipline. From the modern perspective, prayer involves bringing the whole self, mind and body, to God. Detachment and renunciation of the world, combined with self-abnegation, from this view are held to stunt personal development and so impede any hope of finding wholeness of body and spirit.

This change in outlook is an example of one of the major problems which confront all religious people and particularly religious communities - the need to balance the perceived eternal truths of the faith and the way of the religious life with the sociological and psychological insights of the age²⁶. Unless this dilemma is resolved the tendency must be towards a spirituality of conflict. As far as the religious life is concerned this situation has existed for the last three or four decades and has created much tension and analysis.

An earlier example of the relationship between changes in society and theological thought was seen in the spiritual reformation generated by the Oxford Movement. This led away from the ascendancy of lay spirituality and with Evangelicalism inspired the missionary outreach of the nineteenth century. In combination with Victorian social

²⁴ Welsh J., Spiritual Pilgrims, Carl Jung and Teresa of Avila, New York, 1982, p.105

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.107

²⁶ Sr Eileen Mary, The Contemplative Life, A Current Approach, Oxford, 1973, p.7

concern, the Movement produced the Anglican religious order with its accent on incarnational theology and mission. The concept of such an institution is of a family of like-minded people who are called to give their lives to God in the pursuit of holiness or wholeness. An individual may join a particular community for many reasons but uppermost because of a perception of the characteristic spirit and beliefs of that group. This spirituality may be difficult to elucidate except in general terms because of the unique and inexplicable spirituality of the individual. To examine the spiritual ethos of a community, the range of influences on the institution since its inception must be considered. Consequently, the vocation, the aim of the community, the Rule, the prayer and active life, the influences of liturgy, literature and spiritual guides, as well as the secular, physical and religious environments and wider trends in theological thought and spirituality all play a part.

The vocation of an individual is an expression of the spirituality of that person, whatever way of life it may involve. A vocation to the religious life is one to fulfil the spiritual needs of the individual and the best way to fulfil this aim has usually been seen to be through a prayer life in common²⁷. The spirituality of a religious community must initially rest on the vocation, which is shared by the members who have entered a covenantal relationship with God and the community.

The Rule of a community enables the vocation of the members to be fulfilled and in turn clarifies and helps further consolidate the vocation of the individual and the community. It continually evolves and in turn is influenced principally by the individuals in the group. Hence it is the major influence on the corporate spirituality of the community. A Rule always has as its aim the search for God and charity to others. Traditionally it has been understood that the best way to find God is to follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. These vows are seen as expressions of love towards God and an imitation of the life of Christ²⁸. The spiritual

²⁷ Sr Madeleine, *op.cit.*, p.116; Jones C.P.M., 'Liturgy', *op.cit.*, p.8

²⁸ CSC, Rule, *op.cit.*, p.8

ethos of each community only begins to vary as different accents are placed on the vows and the way in which charity is extended to the world. This means in practice, that it often takes a long while for the ethos of communities to be distinguishable to outsiders. It has been pointed out that in the modern day as communities have attempted to reconstruct their outlook in line with current thought, much more emphasis is given to self-knowledge and self-fulfilment. Nevertheless it is still stressed that God is found when the individual offers the whole person to God in every circumstance.

All the Rules of the nineteenth century Anglican communities for women were based on combinations of the ancient Rules of Augustine and Benedict. Augustine (354-430 AD) who instituted several religious orders was responsible for the first monastic Rule in the Western Church. He lived in the last days of the power of the Roman Empire and while there has been much controversy about the origins of the Rule attributed to him, the latest research generally concludes that it was written in the last years of the fourth century²⁹. The Rule was based on love - of God and neighbour - and for Augustine the religious life was grounded in the Biblical text that to serve is Martha's work and to contemplate is Mary's (Jn 12:1-3). He pointed out that Mary however, could not pray if Martha did not work³⁰. This Rule was short and general and very much Biblically based. Its notion of community life rested on the Jerusalem community of Acts 4:31-5 in which everything was shared in common³¹. There was almost a total lack of asceticism in the Rule and the accent leaned more to a successful life in community as being, "a victory over self-seeking"³². It seems likely that the continuing popularity of this Rule in Anglicanism has been because it fitted well with the emphasis placed equally on the combined life of prayer and work by most English sisterhoods. This is unlike most Roman Catholic Orders, which have usually been rigidly differentiated into

²⁹ Van Bavel T.J., The Rule of St Augustine London, 1984, p.4

³⁰ Camis J.P.(ed & trans, Kelly C.F.), The Spirit of St Francois de Sales, London, 1953, p.228; Van Bavel, *op.cit.*, p.7

³¹ Tinsley A., Pax: The Benedictine Way, 1995, p.18

³² *Ibid.*, p.8

"active" or "contemplative" communities³³.

An important divergence between the Augustinian Rule and that formulated by Benedict at least a century later, is the difference in the weight placed on the superior of the community. In Augustinian thought, the superior of the community is regarded in many ways as the servant of the members, so that every person in the community is responsible for the other³⁴. This democratic outlook contrasts sharply with the Benedictine position where the superior holds the position for life and is very powerful.

In contrast to Augustine, Benedict (480-547 AD) lived in an era when the Empire was disintegrating and the world was war-torn and chaotic³⁵. Although he founded no community, his Rule drew on both Eastern and Western monastic traditions³⁶. Like that of the Western Church, the spirituality is Biblically based and Christocentric with the love of Christ seen to come before anything else³⁷. It is a very detailed, balanced Rule

³³ see Anson P., The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964 -While all Anglican Sisterhoods used aspects of Augustinian and Benedictine thought, some are more firmly based on one of these or on Franciscan thought. Anson has given the basis of the Rule for many of the English Communities formed between 1845 and 1964.

1845-51 - six founded of which at least three were based on the Augustinian Rule taken from the Visitation or Ursuline Orders; one used the Benedictine Rule with a Franciscan Rule and two other communities' Rules were unknown (pp.220-288).

1851-58- nine communities formed, five followed Augustine, one Benedict, three unknown (pp.298-375).

1860-70- ten communities formed, one Augustinian, one St. Vincent de Paul, one Benedictine and seven unknown (pp.377-429).

1870-1900-- fifteen communities, three Augustinian, five Benedictine, one Franciscan, six unknown.

1900-1964 - twenty-one, which still existed in 1964, seven Augustinian, six Benedictine, five Franciscan, three unknown.

Therefore in the earlier communities, St Augustine's Rule was very popular and this had much to do with Dr. Pusey's involvement. From 1870 Benedict's Rule gained in popularity, particularly from 1900, as did the Franciscan Rules. Allowing for the 20 or so communities where the Rules are unknown, the Augustinian Rule has been the most popular.

³⁴ Van Bavel, *op.cit.*, p.103

³⁵ Tinsley, *op.cit.*, p.18

³⁶ Van Bavel, *op.cit.*, p.4

³⁷ Fry T. (ed), The Rule of St Benedict in English, Minnesota, 1982, p.12

of prayer and work. The life is based on the Opus Dei, the prayer and praise of the psalms, which it is believed must in time instil the spirituality of the psalmists³⁸. To the daily Office is added the meditative scriptural reading of *Lexio Divina*. Vows are taken of obedience, stability and conversion of character, which includes poverty and chastity³⁹. Manual work is also undertaken and hospitality to outsiders is a feature of Benedictinism. In the modern world Benedictines do not leave the monastery unnecessarily but the enclosure can really be seen as one of "enclosure of the heart", a single-minded search for God⁴⁰.

Anglicanism did not see successful monastic communities following the Benedictine Rule appear until the early twentieth century. This coincided with the upsurge in popularity of the spirituality of St Francis of Assisi that also played quite a part in the establishment of religious orders in Australia. Francis and his vision of Holy Poverty arose in a time of economic growth and great intellectual revival in the early thirteenth century. He based his spirituality on poverty, fasting, humiliation and a search for martyrdom - an imitation of the life of Christ⁴¹. The ideal of brotherhood, individualism and equality was stressed, as was the kinship of all creation⁴². Unlike other groups in which poverty is seen as admirable, the Franciscans see it as "the life beautiful, the revealer of the truth and a joy of life"⁴³. This concept of poverty was supposed to be

³⁸ Jones, Liturgy, *op.cit.*, p.8; Southern R.W., Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages, 1986, 221 - The two Biblical pillars which underline this Office are (i) "at midnight I will rise to praise thee"(Ps.119: 62) and (ii) "seven times a day do I praise thee"(Ps.119: 164); Sr Edna Mary, The Religious Life, Middlesex, 1968, p.70 – apart from the night office, the times of prayer are matins or lauds, prime, terce, sext, nones, vespers and compline

³⁹ Advisory Council of Religious Communities, A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, p.44

⁴⁰ Interview Father Prior Michael King, Camperdown, 12/10/95

⁴¹ Southern, *op.cit.*, p.31

⁴² Armstrong E.A., Saint Francis, Nature Mystic, London, 1973, p.8

⁴³ Fr Cuthbert, 'St Francis and Holy Poverty', Sabatier P. et al, Franciscan Essays, Aberdeen, 1966, p.19, 24

applied communally as well as individually and the disciple who most upheld this spirit was St Clare. She introduced a Second Order for women, which was contemplative and enclosed⁴⁴.

Initially the three major Australian sisterhoods followed the Benedictine sevenfold Office in the form of the *Day Hours of the Church of England*. In this Office each hour of prayer commemorates some event in the passion of Jesus,

At Matins bound, at Prime reviled, condemned to death at Terse, nailed to the cross at Sext, at None his bless'd side they pierced, they take him down at Vesper tide, in grave at Compline lay, who henceforth bids his Church observe the seven hours always⁴⁵.

Apart from the Office, the communities were under the sway of the ritualistic practices of Anglo-Catholicism. This varied because of influences on the sisterhoods and the predominant churchmanship of the centres in which the communities were based. Changes occurred over the years in the Office and in modern times the elaborate ritual of earlier days has been greatly modified. At one stage the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) was using the *Monastic Diurnal* when the other two communities were following the *Hours of Prayer*. At the end of the twentieth century they all follow a similar fourfold Office, still based on the continual recitation of the psalms.

Paradoxically this simplification of the prayer life seems to have occurred in conjunction with a definite trend to a more mystical way of praying in the contemporary Church. This is not as contradictory as it appears because this move, in line with the ascendancy of lay spirituality, is manifested in a widespread desire for simpler, deeper prayer, the emergence of charismatic worship and dissatisfaction with materialism⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Robinson P., 'St Clare', Sabatier, *Ibid.*, p.31

⁴⁵ Sr Esther, Instructions to Novices on the Rule of CHN, (handwritten) 1914, p.40

⁴⁶ Sr Inez CSC, The Christian Today and Tomorrow, PP, nd, p.3

The outcome for the mixed sisterhoods has been the acknowledgment of the need for much greater latitude in the prayer life. The combination of this outlook with that of ecumenism has seen the members of communities following a range of religious experience in prayer often under the guidance of Roman Catholic nuns.

Apart from the small contemplative enclosed communities, the only major group in Australia to teach a specific way of prayer is CSC. From the beginning Emily Ayckbowm ensured that all novices were taught the path of mental prayer devised by St Ignatius⁴⁷. Ignatian spirituality is one for busy people and complements the exacting life of prayer and action in a mixed community. Nevertheless, while some members of CSC find the Ignatian exercises helpful, it is not true to say that Ignatian spirituality is the Community spirituality⁴⁸. The Society of the Sacred Advent and the Community of the Holy Name have not taught any specific way of prayer but instead present various methods and then leave the individual to find her own way.

Symbols, like myths, are expressions of human experience that work on feelings and attitudes, deeply affect human lives and influence the meaning of future experience. They are ascribed different interpretations depending on different life-experiences of a group or individual. However it has become clear that gender has to be taken into account when the meaning of symbols is considered. Innate anthropomorphism aside and despite contrary arguments that males and females experience religious symbolism in an indistinguishable way, studies do seem to show that given the same circumstances of tradition, lifestyle, and education, as far as that is possible, certain consistent differences in the use of symbol are found between the sexes⁴⁹. This was observed in a large Combined Churches Survey in Australia in 1987. Although age was a highly significant factor, and over forty images of God were presented, significantly more

⁴⁷ CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, p.45

⁴⁸ Interview Sr Catherine CSC, Dondingalong, 7/9/94

⁴⁹ Bynum et al, *op.cit.*, p.13; Blombery T., 'Social factors and Individual Preferences for Images of God', Black A.W., Religion in Australia, Sociological Perspectives, Sydney, 1991, p.78

women than men selected a close, personal image of God.⁵⁰

All religious spirituality is deeply entwined with symbolism and accordingly it abounds in religious communities. The specific name of each community and the patron saint that represents the aims of the group are potent symbols in the religious life; another of great significance is ritual, which is symbolic behaviour. The most obvious form of symbol in a religious community has always been the habit. This attracted much spiritual significance being the representation of the vocation and the corporate identity. From the fourth century in the Western Church, the veiling of a virgin into the religious life was celebrated in the style of a wedding with the bishop presiding⁵¹. Although aspects of the ceremony on life profession are very similar in each Anglican community in Australia, there are variations in the rite that represent specific characteristics of each community. The member to be professed does not dress as a bride for the occasion but after the bishop accepts the vows of the sister, the new member receives a plain gold "wedding" ring. This is blessed by the bishop and worn on the third finger of the right hand. It symbolises a "romance of love" with God, his perfect faithfulness and the eternal betrothal with Christ⁵².

Obviously symbols die when they lose their meaning and since Vatican II many Roman Catholic and Anglican orders have virtually abandoned the idea of a habit. This eventuated because many began to regard it as unnecessary, medieval and a contributing factor in a decline in vocations⁵³. The belief is that the important point is the life of the sister not what she wears⁵⁴. By 1995, most Anglican nuns in the

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.82

⁵¹ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.3

⁵² Interview Sr Elspeth CSC, 13/7/94;

SSA, Office for the Admission of a Novice, Brisbane, nd., p.3;

SSA, SSA Jubilee Handbook, 1892-1952, Brisbane, [1953], p.9;

SSA, Service for the Profession of a Sister, Brisbane, nd. pp.3-4;

CHN, Associate Newsletter, Lent, 1995, pp.2-3. After the ring is accepted on profession into CHN, the bishop presents a copy of the Rule and Constitution. At profession into CSC and SSA, a candle is lit and given to the sister after the ring is accepted. This candle is kept and used on other significant occasions.

⁵³ Vocations Seminar, Xavier College, Melbourne, Melbourne, 1962, p.24

⁵⁴ Interview Sr Scholastica CSC; Sr Marguerite CSC, 16/9/93

Australian mixed communities had adopted greatly modified habits, often only compulsory on official occasions. In contrast the contemplative orders usually retained the full medieval uniform. The traditional outlook holds that, regardless of the person in the habit, it bears testimony to another dimension of life that is often ignored. Its loss is the end of the most important symbol of the religious life.

Despite the changes to the outlook of the religious community in recent decades, what has not altered is the perception of the essential loneliness of the religious life. As an expression of the solitude of all humans, it has been described as "crying loneliness" which needs to be converted to silent solitude⁵⁵. Silence and periodic aloneness, to aid the development of this inner quiet, are a fundamental part of the religious life and seen as necessary for spiritual growth⁵⁶. Strict instructions have been laid down over the years in the Australian communities to achieve this end. While these rules have been slightly modified in recent times, great emphasis remains on the necessity for external silence to aid the inner silence where God is found⁵⁷.

Spirituality and its major expression, prayer, involve many aspects of life and is a style of living. The active work undertaken by the communities is part of the life of prayer and influences the communal spiritual ethos - "to labour is to pray", providing "you labour rightly"⁵⁸. The work is also an expression of love for God because in serving others he is also being served. The principle of the religious life then becomes "not to do extraordinary things but to do ordinary things extraordinarily well"⁵⁹.

In this chapter the aspects of spirituality discussed are broad. Those that have been

⁵⁵ Nouwen H.J.M., Reaching Out, The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life, London, 1980, p.105

⁵⁶ Sr Madeleine, *op.cit.*, p.117

⁵⁷ Sr Elspeth, *op.cit.*

⁵⁸ SSA, The First Constitution and Rule of the SSA, Brisbane, 1947, p.21

⁵⁹ The Advent, Feb 1926, p.4

specifically related to the religious life are applicable to each of the three mixed groups being examined. In order to try and distinguish the spirituality of these communities a more detailed look will be directed in the following chapters to vocation, the Rules and other specific influences on each community.

CHAPTER EIGHT Vocation

The best kept secret in the Church

Does the soul who comes to give herself to God with an absolute dedication tremble to think what is involved? Shall I have courage to go on knowing that for me life is to live in Christ?

Oh my God give me grace not merely to form to myself the thought of thee, to speak words about thee, but by the power of the Holy Ghost to see thee and thy greatness.

How should I bear the dignity, not as a servant, not merely as a child but as a companion of his heart, of his love?

The world greatly wonders why I have taken up this life not knowing the cruel strength of the "love call". The world greatly hates it but I see him in the manger and in the gaze of that little child, I see the eternal love looking steadfastly into the face of the Father. There I see my future life and is that all? I look again and I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. I see him on the throne and see around him ten thousand times ten thousand of thousands of angels adoring him high and lifted up. Then I see my life, my future life.

Is this too high for me, can I really imagine another miracle of grace calling me to such a life as this? To be inhabited by the spirit of the eternal God, to live so surrendered to it as to live no other life.

Consider how for evermore our littlenesses must pass away from our lives. Our little partialities, little feelings of contempt, little regrets, little temptations.

Do not let some little annoyance of the devil vex your soul. For a soul resting in the power of Jesus cannot be troubled. Let us meditate upon the greatness of our high calling and humble ourselves that having died to self, we find ourselves exalted in Christ¹.

A vocation to a particular profession or a way of life is an expression of the spirituality of the person as it is the way the individual relates to life. The vocation to the religious life takes on a different aspect as traditionally the religious community has seen it as a call or invitation from God - "You did not choose me, I chose you" (Jn 15:16)². Such calls are promoted as being "individual, specific and comparatively rare"³. While this

¹ Sr Esther, 'A Meditation on the Religious Life', Associate Newsletter (CHN), Michaelmas 1995, p.6

² Vocations Seminar, Xavier College, Melbourne, Melbourne, 1962, p.11

³ Pinchard A., The Religious Life, London, 1934, p.68, 70

desire to live all of life with God is a call from God to God, it is not to a specific job nor is it seen as a command⁴. The acceptance of such a call is therefore a voluntary response to a life in which the self is completely surrendered to God in the search for perfection, traditionally seen as the love of God⁵. This submission is usually expressed as an imitation of Mary, the mother of Jesus - "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

The aim of all Christians is to find God and the religious life points in this direction through withdrawal from the world to a communal life of prayer⁶. This life has been defined in its spiritual aspect as a mystery, a divine secret between God and humans⁷. In a more practical vein it includes both individual and corporate aspects, which ensure a distinct pattern and rhythm for each community⁸. It has been seen that the religious life properly followed demands discipline. This is spelt out in the Rule and based on the evangelical vows. These vows can be either temporary or permanent and are designed to help the individual surrender to God.

A.M.Benson, founder of the Society of St John the Evangelist, Cowley, the first successful male community in the Church of England, exerted great influence on the thought of many Anglican religious orders. In his interpretation of vocation and the religious life he perceived that poverty breaks the soul from the world, chastity lifts up the soul to God and obedience binds the soul under the common law of the

⁴ Kemsley R., *The Religious Life*, Smith M. (ed) Benson of Cowley, Oxford, 1980, p.100

⁵ Kirsch F.M., The Spiritual Direction of Sisters, London, 1931, p.41

⁶ Advisory Council of Religious Communities (ACRC), A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, p.7

⁷ Sr Karina CSC, Book of Memoirs (handwritten)

⁸ Sr Pamela, 'The Christian Vocation', Reflections on CHN 1888-1988, Melbourne, 1988, p.4

community⁹. He explained that these vows were intended to secure humility, purity and detachment from the world¹⁰. The vows are an extension of the baptismal covenant and are seen to be the means by which the freedom to follow the vocational call is obtained. In this context they should therefore never be seen as an end in themselves¹¹. The drastic nature of the vows has ensured that the followers of this way of life have usually been seen as a radical group. This has led to the argument that the religious community has most of the characteristics of a sect within the Church because of its life style and symbolism¹².

The religious life can be differentiated into three modes of living - the contemplative, the active, or a combination of the two known as the mixed life. An individual feels drawn to a community that follows one or other of these expressions of the life. All of these practices have as their essence a concept of service to humanity. This principle comes from the aim of loving God before all else and loving all things in God, a love which must be translated into actions¹³. The missionary role of the religious life is thus fulfilled through the work undertaken in the hope that God will reveal himself to those who benefit from these endeavours.

The English Advisory Council of Religious Communities defines the contemplative life as having for its essential purpose, the worship of God, together with contemplation and

⁹ Benson R.M., The Religious Vocation, London, 1939, p.103

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p.108, 120,132

¹¹ Harrison A., Bound for Life, Oxford, 1983, p.74

¹² Hill M., The Religious Order, London, 1973, p.12

¹³ Kirsch, *op.cit.*, pp.41-41; Cary H.L.M., 'Revival of the Religious Life', Williams N.P. & Harris C. (ed) Northern Catholicism, London, 1933, p.341

"the pursuit of occupations as may tend to the perfecting of this"¹⁴. After the aim to search for and praise God so as to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, a vocation towards humans also exists. This is because of God's love for his creation, which becomes clearer through the contemplative life as the world is seen through the eyes of God¹⁵. The special work of the contemplative is seen as intercession with God for the needs of the world, some known specifically but many unknown. As one sister explained, this standing before God is an explicit response to mission and includes the Church's work of reconciliation and healing¹⁶. The life of the contemplative involves solitude, silence, poverty, obedience, humility, prayer and contemplation¹⁷. Many in the outside world see this life as incomprehensible and valueless and there are far fewer aspirants to this form of the religious life than any other. Despite the negativity of many people, the enclosed contemplative life, which is in practice a female preserve, has always been seen by those who enter and remain in it as an enormous privilege and certainly not a waste of a life or a tragedy. The contemplative believes that the life of prayer is "filling the world with the spirit of God, the work which matters"¹⁸. Thomas Merton likened the function of the contemplative to "a tree, which purifies the air from the impurities created by our technological barbarism"¹⁹.

The active mode of the religious life is one in which the community's vocation is devoted to various works of mercy and is encouraged by regulated spiritual exercises which are designed to fit in with the work. The communal life of prayer is less onerous than the mixed life and is subordinate to the work when circumstances dictate.

¹⁴ ACRC, *op.cit.*, pp.8-9

¹⁵ Pinchard, *op.cit.*, p.30

¹⁶ Sr Patience, 'The Spirit of CHN', Reflections, *op.cit.*, p.13

¹⁷ Pinchard, *op.cit.*, p.36

¹⁸ Sister of Clare Community, 'The Heart of the Church', St Mark's Review, Dec.1980, pp.36-7

¹⁹ Merton T., The Monastic Journey, London, 1977, p.38

The mixed life is far less easy to define as it entails features of both the contemplative and active modes. Nevertheless it must enshrine in its Rule the spiritual quality of the contemplative life²⁰. The emphasis on the mixed religious life is believed to be attributable to Thomas Aquinas who saw this life as "sharing the fruits of contemplation with others"²¹. He equated this type of life with that of Jesus. The founder of the Jesuits went even further and saw that not only would the benefits of contemplation be shared but also that God would be experienced in action. Thus finding God in all aspects of life became the basis of Ignatian spirituality²².

Most religious communities for women in the Anglican Church have followed a mixed life of contemplation and active work. It was suggested earlier that this was necessary to legitimise the concept of the religious life through the social work undertaken. It did not necessarily reflect the spiritual aims of many of the members of these groups. As Roman communities did not have to justify their existence, this may explain why this type of mixed order has been rare for women in Roman Catholicism. The mixed life is undoubtedly an extremely hard road to follow and some have suggested it is almost impossible²³. There is no question that before the reforms of the last twenty-five years, enormous tensions resulted because of the call of the work in which the communities were involved and the intense prayer life which was attempted. Indeed it is likely that this is one very important reason that the numbers of aspirants to the religious life for women in Anglicanism did not live up to the expectations generated by the early fervour in the nineteenth century.

Apart from the particular difficulties of the mixed life, any form of the religious life has innate aspects of tension. This is because the individual forfeits features of human life,

²⁰ ACRC, *op.cit.*, pp.8-9

²¹ Johnston W., The Inner Eye of Love, London, 1978, pp.25-26

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Kemsley/Smith, *op.cit.*, p.100

which are of paramount importance, in order to lead a monotonous and difficult existence. It has often been commented that religious display a larger number of nervous conditions, depression and even cancer than would normally be seen in the general population. Teresa of Avila, for example, wrote about the nervous complaints of her sisters²⁴. While these impressions may be correct, account must be taken of the number of sisters who live to very old age. For instance, when the ages of death were examined for the Australian sisters of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC), 75% died when they were older than the average age of death, which was 73. There is really no way of testing the effects of the religious life on health or longevity but as far as the latter is concerned, religious are certainly less likely to be exposed to life-style risk factors and particularly physical accidents.

There have not been many Anglican nuns in Australia. Nevertheless it is difficult to ascertain the exact numbers of Australian women who became full members of Anglican religious communities or those who followed their vocation in the country. The three major communities provided records of their professed numbers, so those facts combined with other information from varying sources indicate that until 1995, there had been a total of about 340 professed Anglican nuns in Australia. This does not include the professed sisters who left the Community of the Holy Name (CHN), as those sisters who did so were removed from the register. Archival material from the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) indicates that 30% of fully professed left that community, while for CSC the number given by the Community is 14% of those who were in Australia. Assumptions cannot be made about the number professed at CHN but it can be supposed that the total numbers of professed should be increased to well over 350. English pioneer sisters established the Society of the Sacred Advent and the Community of the Holy Name. There have been about 80 English sisters of the Community of the Sisters of the Church in Australia; 12 English sisters from the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary; several Freeland nuns in the Clare Community (CC) at Stroud and one English nun from Malling Abbey at the Benedictine Community,

²⁴ Bernstein M., Nuns, London, 1976, p.319

Camperdown. Approximately 50 Australians were fully professed in CSC, 82 members in SSA, of whom 27% were English, and 86 within CHN, at least eight of whom were New Zealanders. There were about 12 members of the Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross (CSHC), whose founder at least was English, possibly five Daughters of St Clare and six members of the Clare Community. Of the two members of the Sisters of the Incarnation (SI), one has been included in the statistics for CHN, as have three of the members of the Community of Christ the King (CCK)²⁵. Therefore since 1892 there had been over 350 professed Anglican nuns in the country. This included at least 230 Australians. At the end of 1995 the members of religious communities numbered approximately 65, a few of whom were novices.

In 1995, a survey was conducted by way of a questionnaire to help gain an insight into the communal and individual inner life of the sisters. Their experience of the attitude of Australian Anglicans to the life was of concern as were their expectations of the future. Moreover it was hoped to elucidate some of the different characteristics of the three major communities. Of the total number of members of religious communities, 38 replied to the questionnaire and they comprised 60% of the sisters from CSC, 50% of CHN, 55% of SSA and 90% of the smaller groups²⁶. In analysing the answers it had to be remembered that while 60% of the sisters replied, 40% did not. The quality of the information varied between replies and within individual questionnaires. Often there was either no reply to particular questions or some related questions were ignored. This was attributable in part to most sisters being unaccustomed to answering questionnaires. Another point that had to be kept in mind when assessing the results was that the answers were from respondents who were the survivors in the religious life. They were

²⁵ See Appendix 1 - Compiled from the archives CSC, CHN, SSA; Information on the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary from Bignell M., Little Grey Sparrows, Nedlands, 1992; Community of the Servants of the Holy Cross from last surviving member, Sister Janet Mary; Daughters of St Clare compiled from SSA records and research of Father Neville Nixon; Information supplied by the Clare Community (CC), Camperdown Benedictines (BEN), the Community of Christ the King (CCK) and the Sisters of the Incarnation (SI). There have been some Australians who joined English or other overseas orders but not very many. One such was Sister Allyne who in 1998 was the superior of the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage.

²⁶ This comprised CHN =15; CCK =3; SI =2); CSC =8; SSA =6; BEN. = 3; CC =1.

women who were looking back, often over a lifetime, to events that may have been idealised to fit changes in their spiritual development or in compliance, possibly unintentional, with community attitudes.

The first questions were concerned with the age on entry to the community and when this occurred. The year 1970 was chosen as the dividing date for joining the religious life because of the changes that were occurring in the Church at that time. These appeared to be due to societal influences and the impact on all Christian denominations expressed by Vatican II. Between 1970 and 1995 only two Australians were fully professed into CSC; CHN had ten professions, although there were none between 1973 and 1987; while SSA had nine, some had only taken first vows²⁷.

Age on entering the community?

(a) Under 30 (b) 30-45 (c) Over 45 Years.

Did you enter the community before or after 1970?

From the answers to the survey, 54% had joined a community before 1970. While a majority was anticipated because of the drop in vocations after this time, it was much smaller than expected. Virtually equal numbers had joined before and after 1970 and this may be explained by the many departures and the mortality rate after that date. It could be related as well to the 40% who did not answer the questionnaire of whom some were the older, possibly infirm, members of the communities. Half of the sisters had joined before they were 30 and of this group 72% entered before 1970. On the other hand, 27% of the total were aged over 45 and they all joined a community after 1970 - among this group were widows and divorcees. The remaining 23% were between 30 and 45 and equal numbers entered before and after 1970.

It can be seen that the age ratio on entry was reversed before and after 1970, with the greatest number of entrants under 30 before 1970 and the greatest number over 45 after

²⁷ Archives CSC, CHN, SSA

1970. Those who joined under 30 after 1970 numbered the same as those who did so between 30 and 45. On the other hand, no sister joined over 45 before 1970 and after that date a very slight majority were over 45 on joining. If there had been entrants to the religious life who were over 45 before 1970, a reasonable number would have died by 1995, however in those years there was no encouragement for women of that age to enter the life.

A vocation usually grows slowly but quite often it comes as a sudden, shocking revelation. In whatever way it occurs its validity needs to be tested in community and there are always far more aspirants to the religious life than ever reach final profession.

Did the sense of a vocation to the religious life grow slowly or suddenly emerge - was it welcome?

The vocation was welcomed by 60% of the sisters but the difference between those who entered before and after 1970 was striking. Only half of those who joined before 1970 had a positive reaction, while after 1970 this increased to 75%. This correlates to the ages of the women joining before and after 1970 because 90% of the women over 45 who joined welcomed the vocation, and none in this group joined before 1970. Alternatively, over two-thirds of those who were initially unhappy with the call were under 30 on entry and had joined before 1970. When the vocation grew gradually, which it did in 60% of cases, three-quarters of the sisters welcomed it. On the other hand, when it suddenly emerged these statistics were reversed and initially, at least, caused great confusion to the recipient.

Those who have responded to a vocation to the religious life speak of the great privilege of having been chosen. Nevertheless even the religious question how much of this concept of call is instilled in the novitiate to cover the varied motives for entry to the religious life. A person can come to believe they have a vocation in a variety of ways that can be ordinary or quite strange. It is even believed that a vocation can be valid if it

is seen as a refuge from the world, as long as there are other reasons²⁸. This is because God is seen to use many methods of fulfilling his purpose.

While it is hard for an individual to explain such a vocation, apart from the feeling of a call there must be the necessary personal characteristics to lead the life. Once the decision is made to test the vocation, a short postulancy period of several months is undertaken. During this time the aspirant is assessed to see if there is a real call to the life. Preparation for commitment to the life follows in the novitiate. This lasts for several years, depending on the person and the community. Traditionally the novice was clothed in a habit on entry but in modern times this may be replaced with another symbol such as a community cross. The habit was always seen as representing the call to vocation of a life set apart - "the garment of salvation" and the way to God via the threefold vows²⁹. It varied in cut and colour from one community to another and in each stage of the testing process. For example, that worn for nearly a century by CSC had nine buttons on the cape, which represented the letters in the word "obedience", the chief vow of the Community³⁰. The spiritual significance of other pieces of the habit was common to most communities. The scapula that rested on the shoulders and fell front and back like an apron symbolised that the sisters were the servants of God. If the communities wore a girdle it had three knots that represented the vows. The community cross which was worn around the neck was given as a sign of salvation and the veil signified purity. The veil also symbolised the growth of the soul into an ever-deepening relationship with God and the hiddenness of the life.

One of the strongest spiritual aspects of the religious life is the actual living in community. To create a harmonious community life is challenging because humans find it very difficult to live together; not surprisingly this is where many fledgling communities have floundered. When a novice is admitted to SSA, psalm 133 is used in the ceremony. This psalm was seen by St Augustine as the model for the institution of

²⁸ Sister Edna Mary, The Religious Life, London, 1968 p.15

²⁹ CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, p.45

³⁰ Interview with Archivist, Sister Marguerite Mae CSC, Richmond, UK, 8/6/94

monasteries as it set before humans "the beauty of community life, happy fellowship and the assurance of God's blessing",

Behold how good and joyful a thing it is brethren to dwell together in
unity
It is like the precious ointment upon the head³¹

While the ethos must vary between communities, the actual stages and the style of testing are very similar. So the reason a particular community is chosen in which to test the vocation should show the underlying basis for the expectation of the individual in following the call. When the analysis is concentrated on particular communities, as it will be in a later chapter, these questions may also illuminate differences in the ethos of the community or alternatively differences in the personalities of the members who choose each group.

Realising no human institution is perfect, why did you choose the particular community of which you are a member?

For example: -

- (a) Locality
- (b) Spiritual feeling of the community
- (c) Particular spiritual emphases of the community
- (d) The Rule/Constitution/Customary
- (e) A conservative or liberal outlook to e.g. change
- (f) Amount of time for prayer and retreats
- (g) Feeling of the community life
- (h) Age of the other sisters
- (i) Type of work undertaken by the community
- (j) Personal contact in the community e.g. a friend
- (k) Other reasons?

³¹ A Novice SSA, Consideration of the Office for Receiving a Novice into the Community (handwritten)

In the replies to this question many sisters gave more than one reason for their decision and these too will be considered in more detail later on. The most popular reply, which was given by half of the respondents, was one submitted in addition to the suggested reasons. It was always similarly worded and proposed that the community "felt" right or was chosen by God. Two-thirds of this group had initially welcomed the call and this "feeling" arose before any real knowledge of a particular community was gained. This unsolicited reply given by so many of the sisters could be explained as a particular personality trait or part of the total surrender to God in the acceptance of the vocational call. Alternatively it could be an idealised assessment many years after the event or even a part of the ethos of the community. Whatever the basis of this trend it is not feasible to distinguish between these possibilities in the individual.

The spiritual feeling of the community (b) was chosen by 40% of the sisters, followed by 35% who selected the type of work (i). No sister who chose this latter reason did so exclusively; in keeping with the concept of the vocation as being a call from God, the overwhelming accent was on spirituality and ethos, prayer and community life. Of the total number of respondents, 32 had originally joined a mixed community and eight of these were between 30 and 45 on joining. It is of interest that all the women in this age group listed the type of work as of importance in their decision to join a particular community. No other comparable trend in any other factor could be seen in any age group. This group has usually been seen to be the one that chooses to leave the religious life because of the desire for children. Therefore these women had dismissed this biological urge before entry and had formed distinct preferences in the practical outreach in which they wished to be involved in community. It is also significant that 75% of them welcomed the vocation.

A comment was made by one elderly sister on the recent trend of the entry of widowed and divorced aspirants with children to community life. She explained that the loss of motherhood was the facet of the religious life that many women, including herself, found most difficult to forego. Consequently she had initially felt great resentment towards these new style novices who were mothers and therefore "had it all". Subsequently, after experiencing this new presence, she felt that they had brought with

them a sense of warmth and caring which had been absent. The statistics from the survey can be further humanised by looking at the different ways in which three sisters from the communities in Australia received the call to a vocation.

Sister A had experienced a full and satisfying life and had undertaken a variety of jobs. An associate of a community and happy with her life, she experienced a sudden call at the age of about forty. This sense of a call was a great shock and made her feel very nervous, although she did not feel drawn to a particular community and certainly not to the one in which she was an associate. After choosing a community in which to test her vocation she entered as a postulant with the thought that she would probably only stay for a month or so. Looking back thirty years later, Sister A believed that her maturity and experience before entering the life helped her through the difficult times that all undergo in community living, particularly since the great changes of the last quarter of a century.

Sister B was very frightened of nuns when she was a little girl. She attended several schools and much against her will, as her childhood fear had not dissipated, her mother enrolled her in a school run by Anglican sisters. In this atmosphere she became influenced by one particular sister who gave confirmation instruction. This was the decisive period in her life as far as vocation was concerned and she experienced a strong sense of call. She found the novitiate rather like boarding school but nevertheless persevered. Looking back a lifetime later, Sister B expressed the view that while she had regrets about some actions in her life there were absolutely none about joining a religious community.

Sister C had been brought up by her father and other relatives as her mother had died when she was three. She trained to be a teacher and was sent to Broken Hill where she became interested in the Church. Her first experience of a call came suddenly and she wrote to a community and expressed the wish to test her vocation. The letter was as far as she went and for the next twelve months put any thought of the religious life behind her. Kneeling in church one day and not really concentrating on anything very much, the word "sister" entered her mind. Her immediate reaction was to say aloud, "they are

not the right shape", in reference to her hands, which were short and chubby, not long and sensitive as she imagined a nun's hands would be. Sister C experienced much inner turmoil over the next few weeks and peace only came when she approached the same community and arranged to enter as a postulant. She found this time difficult but stayed and experienced an extremely happy life.

Within the active and contemplative modes of the life there has been great variety in the work undertaken. This is because of the different methods used to strive for personal perfection. Indeed the type of active work undertaken by a particular community is often an essential part of a vocation and is the reason the community is chosen³². The following question was intended to see the reaction to leaving the community during and after the testing of the vocation.

When you entered the community of which you are now a member did you ever consider leaving?

Overall 60% never thought of leaving their community while 40% did. Once the decision to test the vocation was made the initial reaction to the call made little difference to those who considered leaving, as overall about 40% of those who opposed or were happy with the call felt like leaving at some stage. These overall percentages cloud the differences between the communities. In comparison to most members of CSC and SSA only one third of CHN were unhappy with a sudden vocational call. These differences were mirrored in the replies to this question and will be addressed in another chapter.

Despite the original call, the vocation is not necessarily static and can change over a lifetime. Often a person called to a more active life can find themselves drawn after a significant number of years to the contemplative life or the shared priestly /religious state. A later call to the contemplative life can often be seen to be due to spiritual development from meditative to contemplative prayer. It can also be a reaction against

³² Sr Madeleine, Solitary Refinements, London, 1972, pp.121-122

overwork, which limits the available time for prayer³³. Another motivation in this age has been the disappearance of the traditional areas of active institutional work undertaken by the sisterhoods. In the following question the movement between the communities was examined.

Have you tested your vocation in more than one community?

The three sisters who replied from CCK all entered the religious life at CHN before 1970 and were then between 30 and 45. One of the professed sisters from SSA also spent a long novitiate in CHN before 1970 when she was under 30. Of the two sisters who comprised SI, one joined CHN before 1970 under 30 while the other entered after 1970 aged between 30 and 45. In the Benedictine group one had been a member of the contemplatives at Malling Abbey, UK, which she had joined before 1970 when she was under 30. The respondent from CC had joined the English Freeland Community before 1970 when she too was under 30. So apart from the two sisters who left CHN to form SI, those professed sisters who left one community for another did so when moving from the mixed to a contemplative life style, often after many years.

All orders in the Western world are suffering from a dearth of aspirants to the religious life at the end of the 20th century. The Anglican communities in Australia always struggled to attract members but managed to establish and develop important institutions particularly in the care and education of children. Little recognition has been forthcoming for their achievements from the Church or the broader community. Several major reasons can be seen for this situation. Foremost amongst these was the effects of patriarchy in the Church and society which led to the general invisibility of women in Australian history until very recently³⁴. This situation was compounded in the case of the sisterhoods, which as independent bodies were removed from any real ecclesiastical control. A further reason was the lack of self-promotion by these dedicated women.

³³ Moorhouse G., Against All Reason, Middlesex, 1972, p.159

³⁴ Dixson M., The Real Matilda, Victoria, Penguin Books, 1976, pp.12-13.

Apart from being products of their time, much of this attitude can probably be attributed to the accent placed in Christianity on humility, especially for women. In religious life the lack of self-promotion was also intimately linked to the vow of poverty, which included a sense of personal nothingness, hiddenness and being lost to the world³⁵. Finally there is a strong impression that Anglicans are ignorant of the religious life, or disinterested, or both, and not very keen to lead dedicated lives.

This last reason was first gleaned in the early days of the Melbourne Mission to the Streets and Lanes after a persistently poor response for personnel. The conclusion was reached that apart from a general lack of interest on the part of the church members in the dedicated life, the work of the deaconesses was virtually unknown and unpublicised even among the clergy³⁶. Several decades later SSA and CSC faced up to a similar problem with recruitment. Both these sisterhoods had undoubtedly hoped that the religious attitude in their schools would encourage aspirants to the religious life³⁷. When St Aidan's was begun in Brisbane in the late twenties, a diocesan committee was formed to help publicise SSA. This committee, of which Sister Una Mary of the Society was a member, worked very hard but was not very successful.

Sister Una Mary illustrated the ignorance of the laity when it came to religious orders by describing the belief she had come across that Anglican sisters always wore blue, like SSA, while Roman Catholics nuns wore black like the Sisters of Mercy in Brisbane³⁸. Initially Una Mary believed that this reflected the isolation of Brisbane from the rest of the world. After a trip to England she realised this was not the case as, despite the existence of thousands of Anglican sisters, the Church of England laity seemed to be unaware of such an "alien" thing as the religious life³⁹. Sister Rosemary of

³⁵ see SSA, The First Constitution of the SSA and the Rule of Life of SSA, Brisbane, 1947, p.20 and The Rule CHN (Former Rule 1965) (typewritten), p.8,11

³⁶ In Our Midst, 1/2/1899, p.4; In Our Midst, 1/6/1897, p.9

³⁷ The Advent, Lent, 1940, p.9

³⁸ The Advent, Michaelmas, 1928, p.16

³⁹ The Advent, Christmas, 1928, p.18

CSC expounded this same view in 1933 at the centenary celebration of the Tractarian Movement in Australia⁴⁰. Una Mary felt that this situation was mainly due to the clergy who gladly accepted the social work which religious performed in the name of the Church but, gave "little thought, and less publicity, to the significance of vocation in this work"⁴¹.

Sister Una Mary also revealed that when a woman decided she had a vocation to the religious life it was met often, but particularly by her family, with consternation, horror and sometimes bitter opposition⁴². This situation was compounded by a lack of promotion in the parish or the home to foster vocations⁴³. While the Anglo-Catholic clergy in Queensland supported the concept of vocation to the religious life, there were only four professions from those recruited from the North Queensland schools until the end of World War II. This number was larger than those aspirants received from the southern schools, which until the sixties produced only three sisters⁴⁴. In 1944, when SSA withdrew from St Faith's Yeppoon, Bishop F.L. Ash of Rockhampton wrote of the great spiritual loss that went with the departure and lamented the lack of vocations to the life,

Surely there must be in the Australian Church some vocation for this type of work⁴⁵.

In the decade after the Second World War, SSA made a concerted effort to spread knowledge of sisterhoods and encourage vocations. The Society visited parishes in

⁴⁰ Rose M., Freedom From Sanctified Sexism, MacGregor, 1996, p.83

⁴¹ Advent, Christmas, *op.cit.*, pp.18-19

⁴² Loudon M., Unveiled – Nuns Talking, London, 1993 – This publication contains many examples of familial opposition to the entry of daughters to the religious life, e.g., p.120

⁴³ Advent, *op.cit.*, Christmas, pp.18-19.

⁴⁴ SSA Archives - Percentages of sisters from different areas (typewritten):-

Brisbane - 43% of Sisters recruited
 England - 27% " " "
 Australia (apart from Queensland) 17%
 Diocese of North Queensland 11%
 Diocese of Rockhampton 2%

⁴⁵ Church Chronicle, 1/11/44, p.324

Queensland and northern NSW and a diocesan committee was formed to publicise the idea of vocation, particularly by urging its promotion by parish priests⁴⁶. Once again it was found that large numbers of church people were unaware of the existence of religious orders and those who knew of their existence had little sympathy for the work or the concept of vocation⁴⁷. This was emphasised by the *Australian Church Quarterly* in 1948, which stated that,

The religious life in Australia is little known outside a small circle of parish priests and lay people who have come into contact with the communities⁴⁸

When looking at a similar lack of vocations to the bush brotherhoods, Frappell suggested that Anglican Australian males appeared not very interested in celibacy or permanent vows⁴⁹. This also seemed to apply to Anglican women⁵⁰.

It has to be concluded that the failure to attract aspirants to the religious life has been due to a lack of direction to vocations by the Anglican Church as a whole. Even in strong Anglo-Catholic dioceses, where there was certainly theoretical support for the religious life, this did not manifest itself in many practical attempts to foster vocations. Although some bishops, like Archbishop Halse of Brisbane, urged that no parish should rest until it had provided at least one candidate for the priesthood, missionary service or SSA, the concept of the religious life remained generally unpopular with the clergy and particularly the laity.⁵¹ This attitude of the laity to vocation is probably related to their lesser enthusiasm than the clergy for Anglo-Catholicism⁵². Consequently it would

⁴⁶ Anon, The Anglican Girls' Schools in North Queensland, (Mss typewritten)

⁴⁷ Sister Marianne, Summary of Handwritten Reports, 1948-1955

⁴⁸ Australian Church Quarterly (ACQ), 30/6/48, p.19

⁴⁹ Frappell R., The Anglican Ministry to the Unsettled Rural Districts of Australia, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Uni. of Syd., 1992, p.180, 213

⁵⁰ Stacey F., The Religious Communities of the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, p.96 – This was certainly not the case with Roman Catholic members. In 1913, Bp Halford, an Anglican, commented that in 10 years in Queensland, 27 priests, 12 brothers and 250 nuns, all Australian born, had been ordained or professed into the Roman Church.

⁵¹ ACQ, 30/6/48, *lit.cit.*, p.18; Church Chronicle, 1/9/53, p.262

⁵² Lloyd R., The Church of England, 1900 - 1965, London, 1966, p.125

appear that Michael Hill is correct when he argues that the preparatory socialisation of children in a family to the religious life is of primary importance in nourishing successful vocations to the life.⁵³

Lack of vocations came to be seen in Roman Catholicism as an indication of the state of the health of the Church. This coexists with the knowledge that the richer the country the fewer the vocations and correspondingly in depressed economic times in the West there are always more recruits⁵⁴. Although vocations in Europe had been on the decline since the fifties, the success of the ongoing recruitment drive of the Roman Church only tended to falter in Australia after Vatican II, when the Council attempted to loosen the autocratic power of the Church⁵⁵. Combined with the changes in society, the rise of feminism and the depleted birth rate, postulants to the religious life have been decreasing dramatically in the West ever since. This has been illustrated no more powerfully than in Australia where, in the sixties, there were about 14,500 nuns but by the middle of the nineties this had decreased to about 8,000 in an increasing Roman Catholic population⁵⁶. Due to the lack of vocations, the laity now mainly staffs Roman Catholic schools. This means children often see few religious and consequently are not as influenced by them as they were in the past.

Anglican sisterhoods have generally not had a policy of active recruitment to the religious life. This is despite being involved in many large institutions where they were involved with thousands of potential recruits. The small numbers of sisters meant that much of the institutional work had to be done by associates or employees, and consequently there was only a limited influence exerted on the concept of vocation through the sisters' example. Exceptions to this situation were in the orphanages and the boarding houses of the schools where the sisters and children lived on the same premises. A problem here was that these situations were ones the inmates were usually very happy to leave behind and which perhaps were equated with life in a religious

⁵³ Hill, *op.cit.*, p.39

⁵⁴ Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p.307

⁵⁵ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, pp. 317-8

⁵⁶ Leavey C., & O'Neill R., Gathered in God's Name, Sydney, 1996,p.xi

community.

The lack of active recruitment from the sisters and the Anglican Church was in stark contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, which believed that "discovering and directing vocations was a long term project"⁵⁷. This systematic enterprise required the collaboration of the home, the priesthood, nuns, brothers and youth organisations. The family, particularly the mother, was seen as the greatest influence and parents were encouraged to hope for a vocation among their children. To do this they were urged to encourage attitudes of chastity, generosity and self-denial. It was emphasised that those parents who actively campaigned against a true vocation were sinning⁵⁸. The concept of vocation to the priesthood and the religious life was introduced early with the teaching of the catechism⁵⁹. This was followed by encouragement, which it was emphasised, was to be strong but discreet, particularly in early adolescence when it was believed most vocations occurred⁶⁰. It was stressed by some congregations that vocations came in different forms, not necessarily dramatic or mystical, and if the religious life seemed like a good idea it should be followed⁶¹. It was believed that if there were no role models and no encouragement from the Church, there would be no vocations. If this argument is valid, Anglican communities, particularly in Australia, have been fortunate in the number of recruits they have attracted to the life.

Part of the survey that the sisters answered tried to determine if these conclusions concerning the Church and vocation were reflected in the sisters' experiences.

What was the reaction of family, friends or clergy to your vocation?

Did you come from a Protestant, Anglo-Catholic or non-religious background?

Did you know of the existence of Anglican religious sisterhoods (as compared to

⁵⁷ Lesage G., Personalism and Vocation, New York, 1966, p.126

⁵⁸ Vocations Seminar, *op.cit.*, p.21

⁵⁹ Lesage, *op.cit.*, p.131

⁶⁰ Vocations Seminar, *op.cit.*, p.26

⁶¹ Massam K., Sacred Threads, Sydney, 1996, p.28

Roman Catholic sisterhoods)?

If you came from an Anglo-Catholic background or Anglo-Catholic school, was there any encouragement or publicity given to the concept of vocation to the religious life?

85% of the sisters came from an Anglican environment and 50% of these were from a High Church or Anglo-Catholic background. While 75% overall knew of the existence of Anglican sisterhoods and 25% did not, this negative response increased to nearly 60% when the sisters did not describe themselves as High Church or Anglo-Catholic. Only half of the High Church Anglicans felt they had received encouragement to the religious life from their religious institutional background. Of the few other Anglicans who felt this question was applicable to them, none had received any encouragement. If this answer is correlated with the previous one, where nearly 60% of Anglicans did not know of the existence of sisterhoods, it is obvious there was little publicity given to the religious life in the Church. In a similar vein the 50% from a High Church background that experienced no encouragement was a very high proportion to have been involved with a section of the Church that would have been expected to support the concept of vocation to the religious life.

It is of interest as well to correlate the opposition or encouragement to the religious life from the families of those who came from a High or non-High Church background. This showed that while nearly 70% of all the Anglicans of all ages experienced familial opposition, a High Church or Anglo-Catholic background reduced this to 55%. While opposition of family, friends and clergy to the vocation occurred in nearly 70% of cases, not all three groups necessarily did so. This was related to the age and the theological background of the recipient. As far as the family was concerned, when the woman was under thirty the opposition stood at just over 70%, while in those over forty five the familial opposition was reduced to 40%.

It appears that the Anglican attitude, or those members who have an attitude to the religious life, is a complex one. While it reflects the wide spectrum of theological thought that co-exists in Anglicanism, the Protestant background of the Church has been particularly influential. The Reformers renounced the concept of the more perfect

state and thus higher status of the religious life and the celibate priesthood. Further the accent in Protestantism was always on individual responsibility for salvation. From the Reformation there was never any serious move for the restoration of religious orders in England until the social conditions of the nineteenth century collided with the religious ideals of the Oxford Movement. Anglicans have always affirmed that the religious vocation is in itself no more worthy of following than any other vocation. This is because it is simply living the Christian life⁶². This is also seen to be true in Roman Catholicism where it is held as wrong to imply that the religious state is the best way to attain holiness. Despite this attitude, nuns and monks have always been given a higher status than the laity⁶³. This has been connected with the emphasis in the Church on the ideal of celibacy. The exalted status of Mary as the pure, virgin mother, the epitome of ideal womanhood, helped confer a higher status on the celibate nun than the ordinary Christian woman.

The Victorian concept, which held that women who joined sisterhoods were those who could not cope with the world outside the cloister, has lingered on. The thought of a call from God, which would convince young women to renounce motherhood, was anathema to the average member of the laity. This continues in the fairly general resistance of parents to the entry of their young daughters to the religious life. The expressions used by many of the sisters in the survey to convey the feelings of their parents concerning their entry to the religious life were telling. For example, horror, pain, mystification, sadness, distress, disbelief, anger, stunned, hostile, shock and the less descriptive, negative. Although the hierarchy gave a grudging acceptance of women in religious orders at the end of the nineteenth century in England, this came about firstly, because of the selfless social work undertaken; and secondly with the hope of exerting more control over the sisterhoods. Like the situation in Australia the spiritual life of the communities was always underplayed. As a result the significance of vocation has been neglected and this has led to a general lack of understanding in the Australian Church of the cultivation of individual spirituality in a communal sense. In

⁶² Sr Edna Mary, *op.cit.*, p.21

⁶³ Lesage, *op.cit.*, pp.158-9

the 1980's, Alan Harrison, a former secretary of the English Advisory Council of the Religious Life, commented that there was still great misunderstanding and unawareness of Anglican religious orders in the Church⁶⁴. So it is not surprising that the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, described Anglican religious orders as "the best kept secret in the Church"⁶⁵.

It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that the religious life has been less popular in Australia than England⁶⁶. Several reasons can be seen for this situation. In the first place the very small numbers in Australia kept the visibility of these groups of women low. This was exacerbated by the spread of the sisterhoods throughout the huge continent instead of being concentrated in the southern half of a small island as they were in England. Secondly, the late Victorian popularity of sisterhoods in Britain was due to social factors peculiar to the time and place. In Australia some of these factors did not exist or were beginning to disappear when sisterhoods were being founded. Among these variations was the different ratio of the sexes and the high marriage rate that meant there was never a large pool of single young women to draw upon. Statistical evidence points to the importance of this situation. For example, in the late 1930's the average age for marriage in England and Europe began to decrease and the numbers of people marrying began to increase, so that by the seventies marriage was the most popular it had been for centuries. This has corresponded to the increasing lack of recruits to the religious life⁶⁷. While other factors played a part, the greatest proportional increase in sisterhoods occurred in Australia after World War I and during the depression of the thirties. This corresponded to a dramatic drop in the marriage rate⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.26ff

⁶⁵ CSC Newsletter, Vol 29 No 2 1996, p.3

⁶⁶ see Chapter 6, p.178

⁶⁷ Coleman D., & Salt J., The British Population, Patterns, Trends and Processes, Oxford, 1992, p.181

⁶⁸ Borrie W.D., The European Peopling of Australia: A Demographic History, 1788-1988, Canberra, 1994, pp.140-141

Finally the differences in the Tractarian Movement and its uneven spread in the independent, generally homogeneous Australian dioceses contributed to less enthusiasm for religious orders than in the Mother Country. It ensured too that the preference for deaconesses or religious in Australia, like the different forms of churchmanship, became far more polarised. Initially Anglo-Catholicism became strongest in the "sparsely settled rural and outback dioceses" and eventually became "a tolerated minority" in most other dioceses⁶⁹. This meant that when the sisterhoods were being established, the numbers of High Church Anglicans to draw upon for recruits from the large Anglican urban areas was small.

Comparison of Anglican Numbers in Victoria and Queensland

	<u>Victoria</u>	<u>Queensland</u>
1891	400,000 (36%)	140,000 (37%)
1901	425,000	185,000
1911	450,000	210,000
1921	600,000	310,000
1933	625,000	330,000
1947	730,000	390,000
1954	830,000	450,000
1961	890,000	490,000
1971	890,000	545,000
1981	780,000 (18%)	600,000 (25%)

Figure V

Despite the general neglect of publicity and encouragement to the religious life by many High Church clergy, in Figure V the importance of regional churchmanship on recruitment to the religious life can be seen. In the case of SSA, this community only once worked outside the High Church dioceses of Queensland, and then in a limited

⁶⁹ Hilliard D., 'The Anglo- Catholic Tradition in Australian Anglicanism', St. Mark's Review, Winter 1994, p.15

capacity, but managed to attract and profess not dissimilar numbers of sisters as CHN, which worked in three states and New Guinea. Added to this lack of exposure, in the years of most professions before the seventies, SSA had far fewer nominal Anglicans to draw upon than the Melbourne Community. Further it worked in a state which for many of the early years had a high excess ratio of males to females, which tended to favour marriage, seen illustrated in Figure VI⁷⁰. By 1901 the sex ratio was almost even in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania but there were many more males in Queensland and particularly in Western Australia. This increase in the former states had come about mainly through natural increase and not through a change in the sex composition of migration. At this stage there were still 110 to 100 males to females in the continent. The years to the Second World War were ones of a greater mortality rate for young to middle age men and until the end of the century there were always more men than women in Australia.

Ratio of Males to 100 Females⁷¹

	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>
<u>Australia</u>	110	109
<u>Vic</u>	101	99
<u>Queens.</u>	125	119

Figure VI

In Figure V it can be seen that in 1881, in actual numbers, there were three times as many Anglicans in Victoria as in Queensland, but the proportion of the population was the same at about 36%. The percentages of Roman Catholics in each state were also virtually the same at about 25%. Between 1911 and 1961, the years of the overall major increase in vocations for the Anglican orders, there were double the actual numbers of Anglicans in Victoria in comparison to Queensland. The changes to the religious mix in

⁷⁰ Vamplen W., Australians: Historical Statistics, Sydney, 1987, pp.422-3

⁷¹ Borrie, *op.cit.*, p.150

the states, due to migration and the non-committed, saw a great change in the percentages number of Anglicans in each state. By 1981, the numbers in Queensland began to approach those in Victoria, whereas the Anglican percentage of the population in the two states dropped dramatically, particularly in Victoria where it decreased from 36% to 18%. The Roman Catholic population percentage in Victoria rose slightly, while that in Queensland hardly changed over the 100-year period.

Even though the fifties and sixties proved popular for the recruitment of deaconesses in Sydney and religious orders in the southern states, this proved to be a short lived event. Since then recruits to the religious life in all denominations have been decimated while women, who would once have been interested in serving as deaconesses in Anglicanism, have opted to be ordained as deacons and priests. Thus the ordination of women to the priesthood in Anglicanism has introduced a religious vocation that has always been denied to them. At the end of 1995, CSC had one Australian member priested, as had CHN, SI and the Clare Community. The question was posed to the sisters on the effect that ordination constituted for vocations to the religious life.

Do you think the expanded opportunities for women in the Church as seen in the ordination to the priesthood is a further blow to the hope for vocations to sisterhoods?

While the lack of vocations was an obvious indicator of the future health of the communities, 50% of the sisters did not believe that the ordination of women to the priesthood would affect vocations to the religious life. Over 65% of this group joined a community after 1970 and the reason given by many was that the two vocations were quite different. Of the remaining half, a large minority believed ordination could have some effect and 15% percent were sure that it would. This latter group joined a community before 1970, while the former group of 35% entered equally before and after 1970.

In the small communities of CCK and SI, all the sisters believed that ordination would or had the potential to affect vocations. There was only one reply from the Benedictines and she believed, as did the sister from CC that the two vocations were dissimilar and

would co-exist as they have always done in the history of monasticism.

In this chapter a general appraisal of vocation to the religious life has been undertaken for the present day Anglican nuns in Australia. A vocation to the religious life is seen by those who choose to follow the “call” as an invitation from God. Consequently the most popular reason given by the sisters for choosing a particular community was that God had chosen it. Although one third of the sisters had been concerned with the outreach of their chosen community, this was never the exclusive issue and the overwhelming accent was on spirituality and ethos, prayer and community life. It was observed that the invitation to the religious life can occur in a variety of ways and most women who enter a community in Anglicanism choose the mixed mode of the life. While a person may be more inclined to the active or contemplative aspect of the life, most Anglican communities formed in the 19th century were instituted as mixed orders partly to legitimise the life in the Church. Consequently, the priority of the spiritual side of the life was underplayed and in conjunction with the Protestant emphasis on individual responsibility for salvation led to a lack of understanding of the communal spiritual aspect of the life for many in Anglicanism. This situation combined with a lack of recognition or publicity of the contribution made by these women to the Church, prompted Archbishop Carey of Canterbury to describe the religious order as “the best kept secret in the Church”.

In the meditation on the vocation to the religious life by Mother Esther which began this chapter, she emphasised the strength of the call to the life and commented on the negativity with which such a call is generally viewed by the world. While no doubt a reflection of her experiences in Melbourne, it may have been influenced by the thought of Father Benson of Cowley. He believed that religious orders were only of real value to humanity when they were hated and correspondingly had outlived their usefulness when they were honoured in the world⁷². Apart from this attitude, Anglicans and Protestants commonly see entry to the religious life as escapism, often with shades of

⁷² Kemsley, *op.cit.*, p.98

homosexuality⁷³. This negativity arises from the difficulty of comprehending the denial of basic human rights that the vows demand. It also makes no sense in view of the Anglican outlook, which insists that the religious life does not ensure a seat in heaven. The strength of the call, which Mother Esther described, begins to become apparent when seen in this light. It also illustrates the strength of character, which Anglican sisters have always possessed, to enter the life against strong opposition.

The Rule of Life of a community is a document which outlines the spiritual, disciplinary and moral principles for the members to follow⁷⁴. The acceptance of the Rule is an essential part of profession to the religious life. It is seen to empower the vocational call to the religious life to be led, like Baptism enables the Christian life to be followed. Therefore it is the most important influence on individual and community spirituality. To compare the interior life and the characteristics of the three major Australian communities, their Rules will be examined in the next chapter.

⁷³ Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.3

⁷⁴ ACRC, *op.cit.*, p.37

CHAPTER NINE Rules, Government and Customs

The Evil one fears not austerity but obedience

The Rule of a community is its focal point. It is more than a code of conduct and regulations because it is a statement of the purpose of the direction and government of a religious community. It grows out of the life of the community and in turn influences the ethos and spirituality of the life. It sets out the spiritual, disciplinary and moral principles, which are the standard of conduct for each member¹. By practical directions it shows the way for the fulfilment of the aims of the community through "the ordinary habits, work and duties of every day life"².

After Emily Ayckbowm instituted the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) in 1870, it took a further sixteen years for the Rule of Life for her community to be finalised. The Constitutions, which lay down the way a community governs itself, were not accepted and published by CSC until 1901. The extended time for the completion of the Rule and Constitutions ensured that, apart from the influence of other religious orders, they grew out of the practical experiences of the sisterhood³. In keeping with Emily's independent stand against male domination, it was not until after her death that an official visitor was appointed to the Community⁴. Unlike many other sisterhoods the position of warden, which held considerable power, was never instituted in the Community.

Emily emphasised that the Rule was to be "the companion and director" of each member's life⁵. To aid the sisters in this endeavour and to make perfectly clear her

¹ Sr Esther, The Internal and External Rule (handwritten), no.6

² Sr Esther, Instructions to Novices on the Rule of CHN, (handwritten), 1914, p.10; Advisory Council of Religious Communities (ACRC), A Directory of the Religious Life, London, 1957, p.37

³ CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, pp.37-38

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.227

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.37-38

intentions, there is found amongst Emily's prolific literary output, instructions and comments on every aspect of community life. In these commentaries she quoted extensively from theologians and the founders of religious orders like Benedict, Augustine, Francis de Sales and Sophie Barat of the Sacred Heart Community⁶. It is apparent that Emily's spiritual influence was all-pervasive in the early Community and apart from receiving a weekly newsletter written by her, the sisters in the colonies also received appropriate spiritual literature to read.

The Rule devised by Emily consisted of three parts⁷. The General Rule set out the main aim of the life and work while every aspect of the life from the novitiate to death was examined. This included the prayer life, vows, daily work and community living. Emily had chosen the name, Sisters of the Church, because the main aim of the life was to be the promotion of the honour and glory of God and the advancement of Christ's Church⁸. To symbolise this aim, the patron saints of the sisterhood became Michael and all the angels who portrayed a mixed life of work and prayer in the world. Emily believed this lifestyle most closely resembled that of Jesus and his disciples⁹. In this life, prayer, self-sacrifice and striving for holiness was always to come first and the work second. The second section on the "Works of Mercy" was concerned with the active work to be undertaken. To alleviate human suffering, parochial work was to be assumed with men, women and children. The main outreach was particularly with poor children in orphanages, schools and hospitals¹⁰. The third section, or the "Individual Rule", evolved into the Constitution and covered the nature and function of the office bearers in the Community from the mother superior to the chaplains.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Ayckbowm E., The Rule, London, 1886

⁸ Ayckbowm E., Instructions on the Rule of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, London, 1912, pp.14-15

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10; CSC Newsletter Vol 25 No 3 1992, p.13; Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.42

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.36

The main obligation of the members was the keeping of the threefold vows¹¹. From a practical point of view the vow of religious poverty meant the renunciation of all material possessions so that everything an individual owned became common property¹². The concept was that if an individual owned nothing, or sought to own nothing, "the heart rested entirely in God"¹³. While the sisters were without possessions (this even extended to marking names on clothing and other items in pencil for convenience and easy erasure) they were to live comfortably but austere with, for example, no costly carpets or furnishings. Food was to be nutritious but bland and of second quality. Nothing was to be wasted such as food, heating, time or money. Everything was to be done for the common life¹⁴. The renunciation of the perception of ownership was believed to aid the subjugation of self that was seen to be necessary to know God and God's will.

In the vow of chastity the religious dedicated herself to Jesus in a life of perfect purity. This led to the ancient concept of the Lord being seen as the lover or spouse of the virgin religious who, without external cares of family, is able to devote herself wholly to God¹⁵. To help this chaste outlook, great modesty in personal dress and habits was to be followed. Anything to do with matters of a sexual nature was not to be dwelt upon or discussed with anyone but the mother superior. In this vein Emily warned against the euphemism of "particular friendships" with other sisters or entering another sister's bedroom¹⁶. Restrictions were placed on visits by family and friends but, unlike some communities, family ties were not discouraged and family likenesses were permitted to be kept by the sisters¹⁷.

¹¹ Ayckbowm, *Instructions on the Rule, op.cit.*, p.45

¹² CSC, Customs of the Sisters of the Church, London, 1957, p.1

¹³ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.45

¹⁴ Customs, *op.cit.*, pp.2-8; p.13

¹⁵ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, pp.48-9

¹⁶ Customs, *op.cit.*, pp.14-16; Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.49

¹⁷ Customs, *op.cit.*, p.4, 30

Following in the footsteps of Francis de Sales, the founder of the Visitation Order, Emily believed that obedience was the most important vow and the "secret of sanctity"¹⁸. Some communities have only taken this vow because of the outlook that in obedience the will or the self was given and this encompassed poverty and chastity¹⁹. Obedience to the Rule and Constitutions was seen by the foundress to be the most necessary thing for the survival of a community. Emily quoted de Sales - "the Evil one fears not austerity but obedience"²⁰. Therefore in the Benedictine tradition, unquestioned obedience was to be given to the mother superior who held the position for life. Great deference was to be shown as well to others in the chain of authority²¹.

The mother superior ran the Community and formulated policy with an inner council of fourteen senior sisters whom she selected. Decisions were then presented to the Chapter for approval. Theoretically the Rule or Constitutions could be overturned by five-sixths of the Chapter but this did not happen until the 1960's. Before this time the mother superior was never questioned²². This subservience was aided by the members of Chapter being elected before 1967 and they were the only ones ever to see the Constitutions²³. As a result of this lack of democracy the Community was very Victorian in its outlook.

In response to the radical changes occurring in society, a total review of all aspects of the Community was made in the sixties to redefine what the religious life meant in the modern day. The outcome was a revision of the Rule and Constitutions in 1977 that was

¹⁸ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.50

¹⁹ SSA, Notes on the Rule, Brisbane, [1947], p.4

²⁰ Ayckbowm, Instructions on the Rule, *op.cit.*, p.234; see also Camis J., The Spirit of St Francois de Sales, London, 1953, p.189-190

²¹ Customs, *op.cit.*, p.17

²² Interview, Sister Scholastica CSC, Melbourne, 16/9/93

²³ Interview, Sr Marguerite May CSC, Archivist, Surry UK, 8/6/94

updated in 1984²⁴. This meant it had taken almost a century before any formal revision was made to Emily's Rule. Small changes had appeared earlier although it is hard to determine exactly when. The first important alteration was in 1946 in Mother Rosemary's time when the retirement of the superior became compulsory at 75. During her regime other minor changes ensued to the Chapter of Faults and the regulation of scripture reading²⁵.

The compilation in 1977 recorded how the sisters saw their vocation and how the Community was to be organised. At first it seemed that it was necessary to have one Constitution that would try to cover a continually changing community. Through the difficulty of trying to fit the sisters in the Solomons in with those in the more developed Western countries, it was realised that the unity of the Community depended on the "appreciation of differences" and that "variety produces vitality"²⁶. The outcome was that the Rule/Constitutions were to be seen as fluid and transitional. An enormous alteration had occurred in the concept of the religious life, whose strength was always seen to be its changelessness. This shift in outlook, which considers change is necessary, beneficial and for the greater good, has only developed in society since the advent of the scientific and technological age.

The review of CSC resulted in the Community becoming much simpler and more informal with as few regulations as possible²⁷. While the basis of the life remained the vows, their interpretation changed in line with the accent on responsibility used as a guide to self-knowledge. The vow of poverty is expressed as a simple lifestyle in keeping with a pilgrim Church in which the renunciation of all possessions or a possessive attitude to anything has not changed²⁸. Stress is laid on the responsible

²⁴ Sr Jessica CSC - Memoirs, as dictated to Dr. Janet Scarfe, (typewritten), 1989

²⁵ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.227; Ayckbown, Instructions on the Rule, *op.cit.*, - these changes were noted in pencil in a copy of this book in the English Archives.

²⁶ Sr Audrey CSC, Reflections on the Constitution Twenty years down the Track (typewritten)[1987], p.1, 3

²⁷ Interview with Sr Frances CSC, 2/8/93

²⁸ CSC, The Rule, pp, 1984, pp.8-13

stewardship of all that has been given to share. This includes all of creation and thus necessitates a great concern with the environment²⁹. It is emphasised that to fully follow the vow of chastity, shown outwardly in celibacy, each individual needs to grow in self-knowledge as well as love and acceptance of self. Celibacy is not a renouncing of love because the whole life is based on love. Rather the vow is concerned with the concept that the religious cannot belong exclusively to any one human³⁰. The vow of obedience is an expression of the love which makes a total commitment and surrender to God. When it is freely given to those in authority in a spirit of responsibility, it is seen to be a way of freedom³¹.

The accent on responsibility saw a great modification of the hierarchical structure of the sisterhood with far less authority centred in the mother superior. A change in title from mother superior to one with less connotations of status was considered, but rejected. In the new Constitution the superior, who is also the English provincial, is elected for a minimum of one and a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms. The provincial superiors are elected for a minimum of one and maximum of three, three-year terms in a row. Overall the way in which the Community is run has become very democratic. Everyone has a say in the mechanics of everyday life and the direction the Community is taking, even those who are not fully professed. The status of each centre is equal as are the personnel. This has resulted in each province now having its own council as part of an advisory body to the superior. Many things are passed on from this advisory body to be discussed and approved in Chapter, which is now held every three years. Until 1986 it was always held in England but since then had tended to go around the provinces³².

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.10-12

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.17

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.23

³² Sr Marguerite Mae, *op.cit.*

In the changes instituted from the sixties, a modified version of the sevenfold Office of the *Monastic Diurnal* was introduced, so that at the end of 1995 there were four set times of prayer; morning, noon, evening and compline. It was emphasised that "the pressure of work should never displace the priority of prayer"³³. In this period liturgical practices changed as well because many became seen as medieval hangovers and unnecessary. A consequence of these changes, in conjunction with alterations to the Prayer Book in the last decades, has meant that opportunities have arisen for liturgical experimentation.

In line with the general trend to ecumenism in the Church, CSC has become increasingly tolerant of other denominations and sees itself as part of a changing or new Church³⁴. This change in attitude and practice has been assisted by the diminution of the influence of the Benedictines of Nashdom, which became very strong from the 1920's under Mother Adele³⁵. This Benedictine community was almost an exact copy of Roman Catholic Benedictinism and due to its sway many accretions were introduced to CSC³⁶. For example, the mother superior was installed with a large amethyst ring like those worn by medieval abbesses and practices like the use of the rosary and benediction were introduced. The outcome was that CSC became much more Roman in outlook than most other comparable sisterhoods like Wantage or Clewer³⁷.

Even though CSC struggled to maintain its independence from male interference in the Community, clergy were necessary to provide the sacramental life of the Church. Therefore the sisters' clerical advisers or confessors contributed to the group spirituality through their influence on the individual. Apart from the Benedictines, the spirituality of the Society of St John the Evangelist (SSJE), Cowley, and the Community of the

³³ 1984 Rule, *op.cit.*, p.37

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.233

³⁶ Anson P., The Call of the Cloister, London, 1964, p.189

³⁷ Pickering W.S.F., Anglo-Catholicism, London, 1989, pp.250-2; Sr Jessica, *Memoirs*, *op.cit.*

Resurrection, Mirfield (CR), has been directly influential on the Community since the nineteenth century.

SSJE was the first successful men's religious order in the Church. It was instituted to perform mission work at home and abroad in hiddenness and humility³⁸. The founder, R.M.Benson, exerted a wide influence on thought in religious orders. His spirituality was particularly influential in the early days of CSC through retreats that were conducted for the sisters - events that were an unusual occurrence in the latter part of the 19th century³⁹. The Mirfield Community, on the other hand, was quite different from the autocratic Cowley Society and had been formed by Charles Gore as a democratic, priestly order. It used the Rule of St Basil the Great and was greatly influenced by the Christian Socialism of its founder. While this Community conducted retreats for CSC as well, the emphases would have been different from the mystical spirituality of Benson and his Society⁴⁰.

Over the years some of the Cowley priests became chaplains at various CSC centres and at times even exerted influence on the way the community was run⁴¹. In the latter part of the 20th, the influence of Mirfield has become much stronger as CSC emerged as one of the most progressive of sisterhoods. This association resulted in the appointment of the Rev. Eric Simmons, the superior of CR, as the chaplain-general of the CSC in the early seventies. At the end of 1995 he still retained the position. This appointment occurred when Mother Frances was the superior and replaced the Benedictine lord abbots of Nashdom who had held the position since 1924⁴².

The outstanding clerical influence on CSC in Canada was from the Holy Cross fathers. This group was the first male community to survive in the Episcopalian Church in the

³⁸ Anson, *op.cit.*, pp.73-83

³⁹ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.230; Sr Marguerite Mae, *op.cit.*

⁴⁰ Ramsey M., From Gore to Temple, London, 1961, p.15

⁴¹ Sr Marguerite Mae, *op.cit.*

⁴² Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.251

USA and its outlook has always stressed individual responsibility and initiative⁴³. In Australia, High Church clergy from local parishes, overseas missions and brotherhoods are recorded as ministering to the sisters and being interested in their work. Mirfield extended its contact with CSC through the establishment of the Community of the Ascension (CA) at Goulburn in 1921 as the founders of this Community made their profession at CR⁴⁴. The Society of the Sacred Mission was another influence when it was established in Adelaide and Perth after the Second World War. In the last twenty-five years the Society of St Francis has developed a close association with CSC, particularly with the work in the Solomons. These brotherhoods have been closely connected with all the religious communities in Australia in a clerical capacity. Since the sixties this has been extended through the regular meetings of the Australasian Advisory Council of the Religious Life attended by all religious communities.

The spiritual influence of Charles de Foucauld on the outreach of the Community from the sixties has been noted⁴⁵. His concept of "proclamation by presence and identification" was not unique. An earlier example can be seen in the outlook of S.W.O'Neill, a founding members of the Cowley Community. He lived with this aim among the destitute in Bombay in the nineteenth century. This outlook can be seen emulated in many ways in Liberation theology and has been hailed in some quarters as the most effective form of Christian mission⁴⁶. While Foucauld's spirituality did not become that of CSC as a whole, continuing aspects of his thought remains in the work of the rural novitiate at Dondingalong. In this atmosphere CSC has given much thought to the spirituality, which develops from the relationship of a community and the individual to the earth and creation. Living on the land, moving out into the community,

⁴³ Sr Marguerite Mae, *op.cit*; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.531

⁴⁴ Stacy F., The Religious Communities of the Church of England in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, 1929, pp.70-74

⁴⁵ see Chapter 5, p.149, 159

⁴⁶ Allchin A.M., 'The Man in his Time', Smith M.L.(ed) Benson of Cowley, London, 1980, p.10

the changing pattern of weather and the contribution of each new sister to the small group can be seen as the development of an environmental spirituality⁴⁷.

The radical changes that began in the sixties under Mother Dorothea were brought in very slowly, after much consultation within the Community. The first changes to occur were in superficial areas like eating in public or travelling alone. A major change was in the habit that was seen as highly symbolic of what the Community represented. The early sisters had worn different coloured habits to differentiate their active work, for example, teaching or nursing⁴⁸. When the work became more diverse all wore the black habit. The change from this outfit occurred in stages until a short teal frock and black veil was selected⁴⁹. Only recently has the habit generally become optional for everyday wear while remaining compulsory for ceremonial occasions. The exception to this is in the Solomons where a check habit with a veil is always worn.

The way in which change occurred with consultation at every step of the way reflected the greatest transformation to emerge in the religious life. This was the change in attitude to the vow of obedience, which in many cases had become the abrogation of responsibility. As total obedience was fostered from the novitiate and continued through every aspect of daily life, some sisters made this transition with great difficulty. Dependence and obedience had been strengthened by allowing little contact of the sisters with the broader community except through their work. They were not allowed to go out alone, or without permission, or to attend public amusements. There was limited contact with family and the superior screened all correspondence. Only sacred music was to be listened to and reading material was carefully chosen⁵⁰. The direction of every aspect of the sister's lives even applied to voting in general elections. Voting was not compulsory in England and Canada and for many years the sisters were not

⁴⁷ Interview, Sr Helen CSC, Sr Linda Mary CSC, et al., 7/9/94

⁴⁸ Telephone Interview, Sr Frances CSC 3/12/97

⁴⁹ Memoirs of Sr Jessica, *op.cit.*

⁵⁰ 1886 Rule, *op.cit.*, pp.63-4

included on the electoral role. Once this situation changed, and presumably in Australia where voting became compulsory in the 1920's, they were instructed how to vote⁵¹. Given the contrariness of human nature and the secret ballot this could not be policed but given the outlook on obedience, most sisters probably did as they were told.

The policy of CSC was always to exchange personnel between provinces. In a positive way this developed a sense of unity and a family spirit within the Community and avoided the breakaway of indigenous communities from the mother institution, which happened to other English orders⁵². The negative side of this policy was the lack of choice as to where they would go, or what sort of work each sister was to do. This was especially difficult for some who were sent to the other side of the world for extended periods, would finally settle in, and then again be uprooted⁵³. By the nineties there was much more choice for the individual in movement and the type of work in which each became involved. The change from self-negation to self-responsibility further meant a greater duty of care for individual physical well being. This was related to a new outlook and activism on the environment and concerns for social justice and human rights⁵⁴.

Silence and stillness are seen to be essential to nourish the relationship with God in prayer. Therefore the maintenance of silence is one aspect of the life that has not changed. Specific times for silence vary from one centre to another depending on work and circumstances. However, the "Great Silence" from compline until after morning prayers or the Eucharist is always in place. Moreover each centre tries to have one quiet day a week; and it is compulsory to have at least one or two days of silence in retreat per month as well as one full week each year⁵⁵.

⁵¹ Sr Margaret Mae, *op.cit.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Interview Sr Elspeth CSC, 13/7/94

⁵⁴ 1984 Rule, *op.cit.*, p.10, 12, 29

⁵⁵ Sr Scholastica, *op.cit.*

The great changes in the organisation and the outlook of CSC created profound uncertainty amongst many of the sisters. This outcome, which has been repeated in all communities, made it necessary to allow a leave of absence to any sister or novice who requested it between 1967 and 1977 - many did not return⁵⁶. In a drastically altered world the way to go about the active vocation (the alleviation of human suffering and the reconciliation of all people with God) presented a great dilemma. The sisters concluded that their future lay in reverting to Emily's original aim of caring for those who live on the fringe of society - the poor in body or spirit⁵⁷. The outcome was that the Community divested itself of its large highly visible institutions. As a result, the more hidden and humble way of life was seen in the new Rule as a positive step in the sisters' "creative witness to the power of God"⁵⁸.

The Rule and Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA), like all sisterhoods, grew from the experiences of the community. Nevertheless there is no doubt that the long involvement of the first superior, Sister Caroline Amy, with the Community of St John the Baptist, Clewer, inspired the formation of SSA. Moreover the English Community influenced the Rule, Constitution and spiritual ethos. The active work undertaken by SSA in the early days paralleled as far as numbers would allow the life of Clewer. While it took a few years to begin work with "penitents"(usually prostitutes or unmarried mothers), the major early work of Clewer, Caroline and her group began work immediately with orphans following Clewer's example. The outcome was that even after Caroline's departure, SSA always felt it had a very close association with Clewer. Nonetheless the relationship was one-sided until Clewer became aware in the thirties that the sisterhood founded by Caroline during her absence from that Community had survived⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ Sr Audrey, Reflections, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁵⁷ CSC Rule 1984,*op.cit.*, pp.1-2

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.18

⁵⁹ Sr Elisabeth, Society of the Sacred Advent, Past, Present and Future, Memoirs from 1917-1969, (typewritten), [1970], p.27

The aim of the Clewer Community was to find union with God through the yielding of self and finding and accepting his will. This central theme was based on the example of the penitent, humble character and pure life of John the Baptist, the friend of Jesus⁶⁰. Together Sister Caroline Amy and her friend, Sister Beatrice, conceived the idea of SSA and adopted John the Baptist as the patron saint of their sisterhood. In line with his role in the Christian story they saw the aim of the Society as being, "to lead souls to the second Advent and in the power of the first Advent, the Incarnation, to prepare for it"⁶¹. After consultation with the first novice mistress of Clewer, Caroline formulated the way the new community should be constituted. Simplicity was to be the mainstay and a Rule, the Office and training would be instituted with adaptations made for the country⁶².

Caroline felt herself to have too much "liberality and breadth of mind" for the crop of Anglican sisterhoods in England at the time - attributes she believed were shared with Harriet Monsell, the former mother superior and founder of Clewer, who had retired in 1875⁶³. Caroline did not see them as characteristics of the warden and Harriet's co-founder, Canon T.T.Carter⁶⁴. Carter was one of the major forces in the Tractarian Movement and profoundly influenced many religious communities through his prolific literary output of spiritual and devotional works⁶⁵. This extended to SSA where his outlook figures prominently in the handwritten notebooks of the early sisters. Carter's influence was felt further through his input to the Rule and prayer life of Clewer, which

⁶⁰ Bonham, A Joyous Service, London, 1989, p.82; CSJB, The Founders of Clewer, London, 1952, p.31, 79

⁶¹ Letter from Caroline to Stone-Wigg, 28/9/1892; see Chapter 3, p.95

⁶² Letter from Caroline to Stone-Wigg, 14/7/1892; Bonham, *op.cit.*, p.16 – in 1860's Clewer introduced the two-tier system of lay and choir sisters which lasted until 1946. Caroline did not copy this move.

⁶³ Letter from Rev. H.L.Paget to Wilson, 5/4/1892 - this opinion of Caroline's was shared by Paget with whom she performed mission work.

⁶⁴ Letter from Caroline to Wilson, 6/4/1892; Bonham, *op.cit.*, p.9; Carter T.T., Harriet Monsell, A Memoir, London, 1884, p.50

⁶⁵ Hutchings W.H., The Life and Letters of Thomas Thelluson Carter, London, 1903, p.102

affected that of SSA⁶⁶. The Clewer Rule was based on that of Augustine but it also owed much to Dr. Pusey's first community, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Park Village West⁶⁷. Again following Clewer, SSA adopted *The Day Hours of the Church of England* as the daily Office⁶⁸.

The Constitution of SSA was based on the way in which the government of Clewer was conducted. As a result, the bishop of Brisbane was the visitor and priests were formally installed as the warden and chaplain to the Community. When the Society became large enough the actual governing body was the Chapter of professed sisters. Following the Constitution of Clewer this body was very much under the control of the warden. Carter had ensured this power by ruling that no change could be made to the Constitution without the permission of the warden⁶⁹.

The authority, which the first visitor of Clewer, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, wielded over that community and subsequently on SSA, has to be acknowledged. He was against perpetual vows and excessive ritual, fearful of Roman Catholicism and deeply suspicious of Dr Pusey⁷⁰. It was not until the eighties, at least ten years after his death that incense and vestments were used in the Clewer chapel and life vows were taken⁷¹. In a similar vein perpetual vows were not taken in Brisbane until 1902, nearly ten years after the formation of SSA⁷². The restrained outlook on ritual that held sway at Clewer was brought to SSA with Caroline, even though this changed later on in the life of the community. In a letter Caroline had written that she was "not devoted to ritual" and that "there is always room for denial in spiritual matters for the sake of others"⁷³. Even in

⁶⁶ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.308

⁶⁷ Bonham, *op.cit.*, p.15; Allchin A.M., *The Silent Rebellion*, London, 1958, p.72

⁶⁸ Anson, *op.cit.*, p.315 – It seems *Day Hours* evolved from *Occasional Offices for the Hour of Prayer*, compiled by F.G.Lee and Canon Liddon for Liddon's students at Cuddleston Theological College. Lord Beauchamp prepared the more complete *Day Hours*.

⁶⁹ Bonham, *op.cit.*, p.89; SSA, *The First Constitution and Rule of Life*, Brisbane, 1947, pp.1-2

⁷⁰ Hutchings, *op.cit.*, p.73; see Chapter 1, p.19

⁷¹ Bonham, *op.cit.*, p.86, 89

⁷² SSA Archives Sister Emma, Diary, 1902

Mother Emma's time it was seen to be part of the vow of poverty to share in the "spiritual poverty of the country"⁷⁴. As late as 1917 there was still only one Eucharist a week and the Angelus was not used until the early thirties⁷⁵.

The influence of clergy on the spirituality and outlook of the Society began with that of the first warden and co-founder of SSA, Montagu Stone-Wigg. This was directed in later years to CSC to whom he became a great friend, spiritual adviser and financial benefactor⁷⁶. During the thirty-five years of Emma's leadership, the assistance of Bishop Le Fanu, Bishop Feetham and the bush brotherhoods in Queensland saw great development in the outreach of SSA. Other priests are recorded in the archives and various histories of the Society as having been involved in different aspects of the life of the sisters. Spiritually the writings of the Cowley Fathers and Father Benson of the Community of the Ascension at Goulburn were important. All the Brisbane based clergy associated with the Society over the years in the capacity of constitutional officials and confessors would have influenced the sisters in varying ways.

The development of the government of SSA saw a temporary Constitution in place in 1895. This was intended to be binding for two years after the profession of the first sisters⁷⁷. By the turn of the century, SSA was being governed by a Chapter and in 1903 Caroline had drawn up a draft Interior or Devotional Rule. In 1904 controversy erupted over this Rule and a proposal Caroline had made for SSA's affiliation with the English Horbury Community⁷⁸. In 1906 it appears that the new superior, Mother Emma, was working on a Rule but after this there is a thirty-year gap on any further information⁷⁹.

⁷³ Caroline to the Rev. B. Wilson, 6/4/1892, *op.cit.*

⁷⁴ Church Chronicle, 1/5/1939, p.1458

⁷⁵ Sister Elisabeth, *Memoirs, op.cit.*, p.2

⁷⁶ CSC, History of St.Gabriel's School, 1893-1953, pp, [1953], pp.6-7

⁷⁷ Temporary SSA Constitution, April 1895 (typewritten)

⁷⁸ Sr Emma's Diaries, 1903,1904

⁷⁹ Sister Evelyn SSA, Diary 1906

During the stewardship of Emma, the Rule and Constitutions were fully developed and accepted by the Society. Emma appears not to have been a prolific writer and there is nothing that gives any indication of her spirituality except for the Rule she developed. Nevertheless, as few modifications have been made to this Rule and as the members read it every week, her spiritual input to the Society must be beyond question.

SSA has retained many handwritten notebooks that belonged to the sisters over the years. These contain retreat notes, lectures, individual meditations and thoughts, poems and references to books on aid to prayer and the Christian life. Amongst all these simple records another sister stands out as being spiritually influential on the Society. This was Sister Una Mary who wrote extensively for the Society's various publications on the life in community usually given as expositions on the threefold vows.

In contrast to Mother Emma, her successor Elisabeth, wrote copiously on spiritual matters. Elisabeth's spirituality must have been affected by time she spent at Malling Abbey, a Benedictine enclosed Order in England. At that time in the thirties, many of the sisterhoods in England had moved towards a more interior form of the religious life⁸⁰. On her return from England the impetus to re-examine Emma's Rule emerged with the institution of the "Advisory Council of the Religious Life" set up by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. To register with Lambeth a copy of the Rule had to be submitted for approval. After reviewing their Rules and Constitutions, the two Australian communities decided to forward their submissions together⁸¹. How the revised SSA Rule differed from the first Rule is not recorded. At about the same time as the Rule was printed in 1947, a very similar Customary to that of CHN was drawn up. The Society also followed CHN by moving from the *Day Hours* Office to the *Hours of Prayer*⁸².

⁸⁰ Sr Elisabeth, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.48-49; see Chapter 4, p.132

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.53-4

Elisabeth's thought on the spiritual basis of the Society formed the prologue to the 1947 Rule that she wrote after consultation with Bishop G.D.Halford⁸³. It is an enlargement of the particular spiritual ethos of the SSA in the light of the Advent, seen not just as a past event but also as an eternal, continuing reality. The purpose of the Society - "to seek to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus to others" - could be fulfilled through imitating the work of Jesus on earth, by teaching and ministering to the poor, the sick and the outcast⁸⁴. Elisabeth's preamble is also a statement of general Christian belief in the revelation of God through Jesus in the light of his redemption of humanity and the creation of the Church. In this introduction she also gave a broad picture of the religious life as it is usually lived and the underlying principles common to all its expressions⁸⁵.

The 1947 Rule was divided into five sections with a final piece on the novitiate. In the General Rule the aim was "to try and live at all times as one devoted in a special manner to the service of God". Apart from performing works of mercy this entailed cultivating self-lowliness, contentedness, calmness and restful joy⁸⁶. Following Clewer, the Fundamental Rule was based on the Visitation Order's interpretation of the Augustinian Rule. Therefore the religious life entailed the struggle for perfection - the love of God and neighbour. A neighbour was anyone who needed help and to enable this love to grow any inordinate self-love had to be destroyed. The true foundation of the religious life was seen to be obedience, which covered the vows of poverty and chastity⁸⁷. Apart from the total lack of ownership which the vow of poverty entailed, it was stressed (as in the Rule of CSC) that there must be no waste or carelessness with communal possessions. Moreover it was emphasised that the body, offered in chastity, must be cared for, as health is a trust to be used for God. Likewise every member had a

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.48

⁸⁴ SSA, First Constitution, *op.cit.*, pp.1-2,15-17

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.15-17

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.18

⁸⁷ SSA, Notes on the Rule, Brisbane, [1947], p.4

duty to improve the mind⁸⁸. In order to preserve purity of mind and body, a combination of prayer and fasting was urged but this was not to include any fanaticism⁸⁹.

The Devotional Rule concerned the prayer life and the sevenfold daily Office was adopted to fulfil the apostle's command to "pray without ceasing". Intercessory prayer was urged and the use of ejaculatory prayer during active work was advocated - again following the teaching of Francis de Sales. Emphasis was laid on self-knowledge through self-examination and a greater knowledge of God through meditation⁹⁰.

Towards the end of the century small changes occurred in the Rule, Constitution and Customary. By 1992 they were rewritten but the amendments were not extreme and that Rule has been reserved for the edification of novices. The preamble written by Sister Elisabeth to the earlier Rule has been retained in the amended 1992 Rule. This stemmed from the value placed by the Society on its contribution to the understanding of the spiritual ethos of the Society. Although the sevenfold Office has been simplified, the prayer life remains the framework on which the sisterhood is built⁹¹. At the end of 1995, a fourfold Office was in place and except for midday prayer was taken from *An Australian Prayer Book*⁹². Apart from the Office, the Eucharist and private prayer, intercessory prayer and self-examination were all part of the daily cultivation of the inner life.

The Community Rule concerns the way "to live happily and harmoniously in the shared life". The Daily Rule is really an expansion of the Community Rule and explains how the daily work as an extension of the inner life of prayer should be carried out. It is

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7

⁸⁹ SSA, First Constitution/Rule, *op.cit.*, p.20

⁹⁰ SSA, Notes on the Rule, *op.cit.*, p.21, 23

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.10

⁹² Interview Sr Marianne SSA, 3/3/95

stressed that the relationship of the community members with outsiders is the most obvious way of witnessing the Advent message of the healing power of Christ⁹³. To ensure the essence of the unity of the active and contemplative aspects of the life, great emphasis is placed on silence. Outward silence is seen to cultivate inner silence and calmness of the mind. The individual can thus grow in God in a life apart⁹⁴.

In comparing the original Constitution and the rewritten statement of 1992, changes are slight but the male clergy have less power. Both documents begin by setting out the way the Society is governed by its office holders and Chapter. The officers are the visitor, warden and chaplain, the mother superior, assistant superior and the novice mistress⁹⁵. The visitor holds a similar position to that held in other communities. In a break with tradition, it is no longer necessary for the visitor to be the archbishop of Brisbane but he must give his consent for the appointment of another bishop⁹⁶. The warden is elected by a two-thirds majority of Chapter with the approval of the visitor. He and the chaplain are both appointed for renewable terms of five years. In the original Constitution no changes could be made to the Rule or Constitution without the approval of the warden. He appointed the chaplain with the consent of the mother superior but he could dismiss him on his own volition. Although he had no vote in Chapter, he presided at its meetings - altogether a very powerful position⁹⁷. In the new Constitution it is no longer seen to be necessary to have a warden, as he no longer presides over Chapter. His position and that of the chaplain can be terminated with two months notice. The added emphasis on the freedom of choice of the individual ensures that with the agreement of the superior, an alternate confessor to the chaplain can be appointed,⁹⁸.

⁹³ SSA, First Constitution, *op.cit.*, pp.24-5
Notes on Rule, *op.cit.*, p.22

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.19-20

⁹⁵ SSA, First Constitution, *op.cit.*, pp.1-2

⁹⁶ SSA, The Constitution of the SSA and the Rule of Life, as amended to May 1992 (typewritten), p.2

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.2, 18

The duties of the mother superior are set out in the amended constitution. She has to be fully professed and completed at least five years membership of the Society. Her election is by a two-thirds majority of the Chapter. Originally her term of office was for three years and renewable. This has been amended so re-election for a further five-year term, to constitute an eight-year incumbency, is possible. Extension times after this may be given for two-year periods⁹⁹. No doubt due to the problems of the early years, provision was always in place for the resignation or removal of a superior who had become incompetent for any reason¹⁰⁰. In the 1947 Constitution the Executive Council was elected yearly. It consisted of the officers, except the visitor, plus six other sisters and had the authority to call upon the Chapter to resolve the matter of the superior's position¹⁰¹. This did not change in the Constitution of the nineties.

SSA always saw democracy as the form of government most in keeping with Christian principles. Hence the Society insisted that each professed member should exercise her voting rights in Chapter¹⁰². No new members could be admitted, no sister discharged or dispensed from vows, readmitted or professed, no work given up or undertaken, no change to the Rule, Constitution or to the formula of profession, without a two-thirds majority of Chapter. Furthermore, if three (formerly five) sisters petitioned the superior in writing, a meeting of Chapter had to be called within one month of the request¹⁰³. Due to the upheavals that affected all religious communities in the previous decades, the 1992 Constitution includes conditions for the temporary release from the community of a member without loss of status¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.2

¹⁰⁰ SSA, First Constitution, *op.cit.* p.3

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.4

¹⁰² Notes on the Rule, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹⁰³ First Constitution, *op.cit.*, p.5

¹⁰⁴ 1992 Constitution *op.cit.*, p.9

Admission to SSA as a postulant was normally open to women between the ages of 19 and 40 years. In the First Constitution, an Executive Council was empowered to make a decision on those over 40. In the 1992 Constitution, widowed and divorced aspirants are permitted. Slight changes have also occurred in the number of years spent in the various stages of the life. In the newest Constitution, final vows are taken between three and ten years after first vows¹⁰⁵.

The Constitution covers every aspect of the life, such as daily community recreation, weekly group reading of the Rule, the habit, house rules and finance. In the matter of personal finance each member on entry to the Society always had to make a will but like Clewer, there was no compulsion to leave property to the Society although many have¹⁰⁶. Upon undertaking life profession, a sister's personal possessions, such as books or paintings, were deemed as Community property. Any money earned either through work or interest on property or shares went into a common fund. From this fund an amount of pocket money was given to each member while everything else was found by the Society¹⁰⁷.

In the 1992 Constitution there is provision for the creation of a finance committee to consist of the warden and two others nominated by Chapter. Its ultimate duty would arise in the dissolution of the Society. If this eventuates the Society's property will be sold and provision made for each sister. Anything remaining after this will be donated to the Anglican Church of Australia¹⁰⁸.

The Customary of 1992 sets out Community ritual and order of precedence in church and chapel services¹⁰⁹. It includes the regulations on wearing the habit which has been modernised from its former medievalism. The habit was first slightly modified from the

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.5-7

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11; Hutchings, *op.cit.*, p.134

¹⁰⁷ First Constitution, *op.cit.*, p.13

¹⁰⁸ 1992 Constitution, *op.cit.*, p.15

¹⁰⁹ SSA, The Customary, 19 Feb.1992 (typewritten) p.1

long dark blue habit and black veil when the question of the relevance of religious communities began to be debated in the sixties. By 1978 it was very much altered for casual occasions, but it was not until the nineties that a simple habit was introduced. This consisted of a pale blue frock or navy skirt and white blouse with a black veil. By 1995 the habit was compulsory but wearing the veil was not obligatory except in chapel or on official occasions¹¹⁰.

SSA realised that the Rule, Constitution and Customary, drawn up in 1992 would need further revision in the future. The changes from the original Rule and Constitution of 1947 were not extensive; in many cases appeared as just a rewording and simplification of the original. The concept of the utter baseness of humans who were seen to be "laiden with sin and corruption" was modified¹¹¹. In line with this trend, the stress on the cultivation of lowliness, humility and total subordination was changed to reasoned obedience and responsibility. The latter has entailed fewer rules on self-examination and confession with less emphasis on group expression of ceremonial. Of great importance was the cultivation of a more individual approach in the way of prayer and meditation¹¹². A worldlier outlook became encouraged which meant that a sister was to keep well abreast of current trends in all areas of life¹¹³. This approach also sanctioned the cultivation of meaningful relationships outside the community. These became seen as creative and not destructive of community life as they once were. The old bogey of "particular friendships", always seen as disruptive to community life, was also addressed. Like other communities the only admonition on friendship between sisters became that it should not be exclusive¹¹⁴.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.8; Sr Marianne, *op.cit.*

¹¹¹ First Constitution, *op.cit.*, p.22

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.21, 23

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.20, 21,26.

¹¹⁴ SSA, Notes of Possible Changes to the Rule, (typewritten), [1990], p.4

Overall it can be seen that there has been a shift in emphasis in line with the concept of greater freedom and responsibility of each member of the community. Individuality and the development of each sister's potential had always been recognised; it became understood that more care had to be taken not to crush personality but to train each member to become responsible participants of the Community¹¹⁵.

The foundation of the Community of the Holy Name (CHN) as a religious community was entirely the responsibility of Mother Esther. She was the prime instigator in the creation of the ethos of the CHN and her background in the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, ensured that this sisterhood was the prototype for Esther's approach to the religious life. The concept of community and the Rule developed by Esther had much to do with her personal spirituality and experience of life. Like so many of the early sisters she was tenacious and single minded. This was seen in the work undertaken and the determined way she establishing her Community in the face of implicit and outright opposition.

Esther was reluctant to remain in Australia and only stayed on the insistence of Wantage that her duty lay in Melbourne. This probably had much to do with her concept of the life of the religious as one bearing the cross through life until crucifixion comes at the end¹¹⁶. Such an outlook was likely to have been strengthened by the emphases of the founder of Wantage, W.J.Butler. He based every retreat and address on sacrifice and endurance in the vocation with the need for faith and courage¹¹⁷.

Butler believed that the Christian ideal was service - the service of God and men, which comes from love¹¹⁸. He instituted the Community at Wantage in 1847 when religious orders were at the incipient stage. Despite the apostasy to Rome of the first superior Elizabeth Lockhart, Wantage survived to become one of the largest and most successful

¹¹⁵ Notes on the Rule, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹¹⁶ CHN, Esther Mother Foundress (EMF), Melbourne, [1948], p.133

¹¹⁷ CSMV, One Hundred Years of Blessing in a Religious Community, London, 1946, p.17

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.14

sisterhoods. Given the unfortunate beginning, Butler reiterated that religious communities should be under episcopal and clerical supervision and he emphasised that his Community was based on absolute loyalty to the English Church. This outlook was carried by Esther to Australia¹¹⁹.

Butler was opposed to the trend to ritualism within the Church like many of the early Tractarians. He later came to believe in confession and the "real presence" but this did not go as far as reservation of the sacrament. He felt the latter was unlawful at that time in the English Church¹²⁰. This conservative attitude to ritual also extended to the deaconess community in Melbourne and even for many years after CHN was instituted. No doubt the power invested in the archbishop of Melbourne as the visitor was influential in this regard. An example of this conservatism can be seen in the absence of the reserved sacrament in CHN's chapel until the 1940's, because of the disapproval of the Melbourne archbishops¹²¹.

Butler stressed the virtues of simplicity, distrust of emotionalism, obedience, punctuality, regularity in prayer and the Christian ideal of service¹²². Esther transposed all these principles into the Rule she drew up for her Melbourne sisters¹²³. Although Butler held the view of the primacy of vows, it was not until 1896 that perpetual vows were taken at Wantage, well after Esther's arrival in Australia. This delay was no doubt due to the visitor, Bishop Wilberforce, who had extended the same restriction on the Clewer Community.

The first Rule and Constitution of CHN was written by Esther and called the "Internal and External Rule". There is no indication as to the year this Rule was first formulated. Nevertheless, it was obviously written before the institution of CHN as a religious order

¹¹⁹ Butler A.J., Life and Letters of W.J. Butler, London, 1898, p.154; Esther, Internal and External Rule, *op.cit.*, p.15

¹²⁰ Life of Butler, *op.cit.*, p.192, 204; Anson, *op.cit.*, p.249

¹²¹ Interview Sr Winifred Muriel CHN, 5/10/95.

¹²² CSMV, Hundred Years, *op.cit.*, p.14

¹²³ Life of Butler, *op.cit.*, p.155

in 1912 because Esther speaks of the members as deaconesses. It was heavily influenced by the Visitation Order like the Rules that Butler drew up for Wantage¹²⁴. Therefore the Rule was based on the two axioms of the evangelical law emphasised by Augustine - love of God and neighbour¹²⁵. Service undertaken for the Church was to be done for the honour and glory of Jesus in the power of the Holy Name, "the name which has worked such wonders through faith in that name"¹²⁶. He was to be served in "the persons of all God's children, both spiritually and corporally - rich or poor, needy or fallen, young or old" with no distinctions¹²⁷. At the formative stage of the Community the special work was seen to be among the poor, the sick and suffering. Canon Henry Handfield, the first chaplain of the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) and later warden of the fledgling deaconess community summarised the urban missionary aim,

The goal of the deaconesses was to visit in the lanes and courts and bring the message of the Gospel to the poor and fallen, and by the force of their sisterly example compel the outcast to come in to the house of their Father¹²⁸.

The government of the deaconess community was by a Chapter of the deaconesses but any decisions reached were subject to the approval of the warden who was also the warden to the MSL¹²⁹. His approval with that of the head sister was necessary if a probationer wished to become a member of the community. The probationary period was for two years and an examination had to be passed in theology before licensing as a deaconess¹³⁰. This accent on the power of the warden, which was repeated in practical terms in the visitor in later years, eventuated in a parallel situation to the authority of the

¹²⁴ One Hundred years, *op.cit.*, p.25

¹²⁵ Sr Esther, Instructions to Novices, *op.cit.*, p.12

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23

¹²⁷ Esther, Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No.1

¹²⁸ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.13

¹²⁹ Esther, External Rule, *op.cit.*, No.7; Interview with Sr Josephine Margaret CHN, 9/10/95

¹³⁰ External Rule, *op.cit.*, No. 2 & 3

two male offices in the constitution of the Brisbane sisterhood. In both cases a reflection of the government of the two English communities in Oxford.

In the early years the deaconesses recited the canonical Offices from *the Day Hours of the Church of England*, like the Wantage community in England¹³¹. All members were expected to attend if possible and communion was to be received on Sundays and holy days¹³². While the External Rule set aside appropriate times for devotion it was accepted that the busy nature of the mission work must at times limit outward forms of prayer. To counteract this situation, the cultivation of a spirit of "calm re-collectedness" and inward dependence was recommended. Recollection is the act of recalling to memory the presence and omniscience of God and was to be strengthened by extemporary prayer¹³³. An admonition was also given against fanatical fasting as it was in CSC and SSA. These two tenets again show the influence of Francis de Sales. In an exposition on fasting he had pointed out that it was better to mortify the body through the spirit, than the spirit through the body¹³⁴.

The Rule discussed the obligation of each sister to obey the Church, the Rule and her superiors in the Community. Particular emphasis was given to the reverence, respect, honour and submission that were the due of the mother superior¹³⁵. In response the superior was urged to treat all sisters with strict impartiality and to govern with the law of love and the Rule of the Community. Much attention was devoted to the difficulty of leadership and it was concluded that to obey is much easier than to rule¹³⁶. Nowhere in this Rule are the taking of vows specifically mentioned. As this first Rule was written before CHN was commissioned, Esther was obviously wary of promoting the controversial concept of vows. Even in the Instructions on the Rule written two years

¹³¹ Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No.3

¹³² *Ibid.*, No.4; Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.61

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.22, 31

¹³⁴ Camis, *op.cit.*, p.48, 228; pp.189-190; Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No.6, 7; Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.72

¹³⁵ External Rule, *op.cit.*, No 12

¹³⁶ Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No 8-10

after the institution of the Community, poverty is discussed but Esther makes no mention of the word "vow". Apart from being acceptable for a deaconess community, this silence is reminiscent of the reticent outlook shown by Wantage and Clewer towards perpetual vows, insisted on by Bishop Wilberforce¹³⁷. A change in attitude from the early days is seen in an addition to this document made by Mother Alice in 1933 on the threefold vows¹³⁸.

Esther was very concerned with the maintenance of a congenial community life and realised the fragility of the adhesion of a disparate group of people. Consequently she continually emphasised that the centre of a community was love and the members, like a family, are bound together by a threefold cord - love of Christ, love of all in need and love of one another¹³⁹. To this end a code of conduct for personal relationships was included which revolved around tolerance and forbearance towards the faults of others and was linked to the aims of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice¹⁴⁰. Self-renunciation of the individual was alleviated by her practical call for a sense of humour without "fussiness" or too much selfish introspection¹⁴¹. According to Anson in his definitive work on English sisterhoods, the feeling that pervades the Community at Wantage is that of a family - the only time he used that description about any of the many communities he studied¹⁴². Whatever the ethos that created this impression of a loving family, Esther attempted to transfer and instil in CHN.

Silence was discussed in the Rule and it was considered to be of a sacramental nature and to be observed whenever possible in the house¹⁴³. Other behavioural disciplines

¹³⁷ CSMV, One Hundred years, *op.cit.*, p.28

¹³⁸ Instructions, *op.cit.*, - this commentary was taken directly from Father Benson of Cowley's Instructions on the Religious Life.

¹³⁹ Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.169

¹⁴⁰ Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No.10

¹⁴¹ Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.205; Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No. 7

¹⁴² Anson, *op.cit.*, p.244

¹⁴³ Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.181

that were enshrined were punctuality, calmness and the preservation of health¹⁴⁴. In common with other sisterhoods, the members of CHN were never to discuss the Community's work with seculars and in these outside relationships a quiet and dignified reserve was to be practised. This was not to become sanctimonious but "polite, natural and unaffected"¹⁴⁵. The Rule concluded with the admonition not to despair and encouraged perseverance - "let all take courage"¹⁴⁶.

It has been stressed that while the spirituality of a community can never be static, its fundamentals are expressed in the Rule, which in turn is a means of developing spirituality. Although the influence of Mother Esther's outlook and spirituality on CHN was of prime importance, a community is also affected by the life experiences of its members and their individual spirituality. This in turn is influenced by every mother superior, novice mistress and the clergy with whom the members of the community associate. In the early years, the priests whose parishes were concerned with MSL would have influenced the young deaconesses. Moreover in the progression to recognition as a religious community, the spiritual advisers would have been chosen for their churchmanship and their support of Esther's aim. An example was the Rev.J.S.Stretch, the deaconesses' first confessor and later the bishop of Newcastle, who professed Esther in 1894 in Ballarat Cathedral¹⁴⁷.

The impact of Mother Ida, the third superior, on the Community was considerable and controversial. During her incumbency the Rule and Constitution were revised to register with the Advisory Council and the intimate connection with the MSL slowly began to unravel¹⁴⁸. Possibly the greatest spiritual influence on CHN in modern times was Mother Faith, the fifth superior. To Faith, love could not be overemphasised and

¹⁴⁴ Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, Nos 18; 20

¹⁴⁵ Instructions, *op.cit.*, pp.212-3, 216-17

¹⁴⁶ Internal Rule, *op.cit.*, No.25; Instructions, *op.cit.*, p.237

¹⁴⁷ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.52

¹⁴⁸ Strahan L., Out of the Silence, Melbourne, 1988, p.114

she saw CHN's vocation was "to be prepared to accept the outpouring of the love which is the heart of God"¹⁴⁹. This vocation was based on the creation of the Community to "hear the word of Jesus, to love, obey and follow him in his own joy and minister his salvation to others"¹⁵⁰.

Faith's bent to the contemplative life was reinforced by a period with the Fairacre Community in England¹⁵¹. During that time she became convinced that many of the customs that had been transposed from Wantage to CHN needed simplification. This led to a Constitutional review, the rewriting of the Rule and a radical re-evaluation of the customary, under the change from self-abnegation to individual responsibility¹⁵².

In Faith's Rule the original object and aim of the Community was elaborated. The object of CHN was taken verbatim from the Rule of Fairacres and defined as "to give glory to God". The struggle for the perfection of the individual was made by offering to God "the Community's life of prayer and the work with his children in need"¹⁵³. The second and third section of this Rule dealt in depth with the vows that were skirted in Esther's Rule¹⁵⁴. These were linked to an added emphasis on humility and meekness so that there was no choice in the work undertaken¹⁵⁵. Unlike earlier times when communion was only taken weekly, it had now become the central and preferably daily occurrence of the life. Although it had always been the central act of worship new emphasis was placed on spiritual preparedness, mandatory fasting and the offering of a

¹⁴⁹ Sr Avril, 'Sr Faith - In her own words', CHN, Reflection on the CHN 1888-1988, Melbourne, 1988, p.17

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.16

¹⁵¹ Moorhouse G, Against All Reason, Middlesex, 1972, see p.282 ff-the Rule of Fairacres.

¹⁵² Strahan, *op.cit.*, pp.165-7, 173-4

¹⁵³ CHN, The Rule (The Former Rule 1965) (typewritten) p.1

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8, 11.

special intention for each participation in the sacrament¹⁵⁶. Specific times were decreed for private prayer and scripture study, while special actions were advised to be undertaken in times of temptation. Silence was to be maintained most of the time at the Community House so that the mind could be a "thoroughfare for the holy thoughts of God"¹⁵⁷. Correspondingly there was a new emphasis on enclosure that meant that attendance at external gatherings was discouraged. This permeated through to an accent on greater reserve with seculars, even relatives. In line with the greater emphasis on monasticism, the bedroom of each member (that Esther had emphasised was the only private domain of a religious) was now known as a "cell"¹⁵⁸.

Faith's Rule survived with little alteration through the next twenty-five years. This was a time of trial for all religious communities and the beginning of many changes were seen under the guidance of Mother Elizabeth Gwen. These were reflected in the introduction of an experimental revision and simplification of the Rule and Customary in 1994. In the first section of this document the acceptance of a vocation is stressed as being a "free response of self-giving". Whereas this was always the case, the language emphasises the alteration from the accent on self-abnegation to one of personal responsibility. This notion is further seen in the acknowledgment and usefulness to the Community of each individual's specific talents and gifts. This is in stark contrast to the surrender of those gifts, albeit in varying degrees, in obedience and humility that dominated the earlier way of religious life¹⁵⁹.

As far as the evangelical counsels are concerned, the vow of poverty has become associated with the modern accent on the concept of the unity of creation and the intimate link of the natural and supernatural, which ceases to be a duality of opposites. This is expressed in a concern for the whole of the created universe and is a familiar

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.4-5

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.6-8

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

¹⁵⁹ CHN, 1994 Experimental Revision to the Rule of 1972, (typewritten) p.1

theme in modern Rules¹⁶⁰. In the section on the vow of chastity, freedom of choice and personal responsibility is emphasised. Unlike the earlier Rules there are no instructions on the desirability of only reading appropriate books for the profit of the soul. Instead the focus is on the wholeness of the individual and is another move towards the negation of the body/soul split. The vow of obedience is part of the total commitment made each day in community¹⁶¹. In association with the other vows, obedience is seen as the way to freedom in God, so that each individual may grow to her full potential, or wholeness, as a human in Christ. In Faith's Rule obedience was related to loyalty to the scriptures and the Anglican Church as part of Catholicism - this is not mentioned in the revised version¹⁶².

The formerly authoritative figure of the mother superior has been softened and more emphasis has been placed on the generation of love, trust and respect between the superior and her sisters. This is extended to the sharing of love within the community understood as the primary means for the individual's entry into the "life of grace" and the prophetic witness of God's power and redemptive love¹⁶³. The centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the community is again stressed but the old requirement of fasting, daily communion and monthly confession has been abandoned. So too has any strict rule on the absolute need for attendance at the Office. Therefore the imposed discipline of the past has become self-discipline through self-knowledge.

Like other communities the attitude to silence has not changed. Exterior silence is seen to encourage an interior quiet where God can be known and loved. So theoretically most of the day at Community House is spent in silence. In practice a fair amount of latitude is allowed because of circumstances. As in the other communities, provision is made for quiet days and a yearly retreat, with specified times allocated for holidays and

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² 1965 Rule, *op.cit.*, p.3

¹⁶³ 1994 Revision, *op.cit.*, p.1

free days. There are no restrictions on the use of radio, tapes, television or reading material but it is suggested that care should be taken in their use. This is to ensure that the inherent loneliness that must be part of the religious life and spiritual growth is not inhibited¹⁶⁴. The trend towards enclosure of the body in Faith's Rule has gone and instead has become a state of mind - a concept of enclosure within the disciplined life¹⁶⁵.

Since the 1960's there has been experimentation with the habit. It is not known when the long black habit and veil was first worn but the first change occurred with the need for a suitable tropical outfit in New Guinea in the fifties. As a result a white habit and veil in lighter material was designed. In the early seventies, after the black habit had been slightly shortened, an optional dark blue-mid calf habit and veil was introduced, as was a shorter version of the tropical white habit. By 1985 normal street dress of a navy skirt and individual blouse was allowed to be worn with the Community cross. At the end of 1995 much diversity in dress existed. One sister, a hermit, wore the original black habit while the others were wearing a mixture of the short darker habits and ordinary clothes.

The Constitution of CHN appears similar to that of SSA. Despite the different paths taken in the early years, this is not surprising given the background of their founders. Furthermore, the Rules and Constitutions accepted by the Advisory Council for the registration of the two Australian communities in the late thirties were prepared with much consultation between the two groups. Neither Constitutions have changed to any great extent since.

The Constitution of the 1930's was an expansion of the External Rule written by Mother Esther¹⁶⁶. In the mid-sixties changes were made to the powers of Chapter so that it had

¹⁶⁴ The Customary - Guidelines (typewritten)[1994]

¹⁶⁵ 1994 Revision, *op.cit.*, p.2

¹⁶⁶ Strahan, *op.cit.*, p.114

the responsibility for the election to community membership of novices¹⁶⁷. A new Constitution formulated in 1981 defined the object of the Community as the "glory of God" and the "perfection of its members", who living under vows, honour the holy name of Jesus through prayer and work¹⁶⁸. The work to be undertaken was any mission work at home or abroad. This was not to interfere with the work of the MSL, the purpose for which the Community was founded. This clause will have to be withdrawn in any future Constitution because the association between CHN and MSL was terminated at the end of 1995¹⁶⁹.

The visitor to the Community remains the archbishop of Melbourne. This has always been a powerful position in the ordering of CHN. Like all visitors of religious communities he is the final right of appeal for any member of the Community. He can call meetings of Chapter, regulate liturgy and ritual in the chapels and his sanction is required for any alteration to the Rule and Constitution. The Community also has an elected warden and chaplain, both of whom can be dismissed in the same way as these office holders at SSA¹⁷⁰. Originally the warden was also the warden to the MSL but this had changed by 1981¹⁷¹. The warden, like his counterpart at SSA, has a very powerful influence on the Community in all governmental, spiritual and liturgical matters. He can even appeal to the visitor on any matter passed by chapter with which he disagrees, even the admission of a novice to profession. The responsibilities of the mother superior do not seem to vary from one community to another. She is elected by Chapter for a period of three years followed by a possible two successive terms of five years. In SSA's Constitution the mother's term of office is more open ended¹⁷².

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.173

¹⁶⁸ The 1981 Constitution of CHN (typewritten), p.1

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*,

Salt Newsletter, MSL, Vol 8 No 2 Nov 1995, p.3

¹⁷⁰ Constitution, *op.cit.*, p.3

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.34; Interview Sr Josephine Margaret, *op.cit.*

¹⁷² 1981 Constitution, *op.cit.*, pp.3-4

CHN is governed by the Chapter and a Council. The Chapter meets annually and is made up of all the professed sisters including those who have taken triennial vows. This latter group can vote after two years of profession on all matters except life profession or changes to the Constitution. This is like the constitution of SSA and both differ slightly from CSC where all professed have full voting rights. The Council consists of the office holders and six other sisters elected by Chapter for no more than four consecutive years¹⁷³. It has limited powers but there is enough scope to be involved in the day to day running of the Community.

A sister can be dismissed from the Community with the consent of the superior and Chapter but she has the right of appeal to the visitor. Similarly a member can be released from her obligations with their consent. A period of absence can also be granted for up to one year but after then a clause of excommunication from the visitor is necessary¹⁷⁴. A recent addition has been made in recognition of the possibility that CHN may not survive as a religious community. In a similar clause to SSA any property left after this event, when all the debts and liabilities of the Community have been settled, is to be given to "such organisations having objects similar to those of the Community as selected by the Archbishop and Council of the diocese of Melbourne"¹⁷⁵.

Most Anglican communities formed to lead a mixed life in the 19th century developed Rules and Constitutions which were not unlike. CHN and SSA began in a parochial situation under women who came from English communities instituted in the same diocese at about the same time and under the influence of the same bishop. Although the Australian communities were completely independent from the English models and were founded in quite different circumstances to their origins and each other, it is not surprising that there are similarities between their government and ordering. In contrast, Emily Ayckbowm founded CSC a generation after the Oxford prototypes of the late

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.6

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.12-13

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.19

19th century Australian sisterhoods. She was entirely responsible for formulating the Rule and Constitutions. Nevertheless although little power is given to the clergy, CSC's Constitution is similar to the other two sisterhoods. While Emily Ayckbowm spent much time acquainting herself with many older Rules and more Benedictine influence can be discerned, the Visitation Order had a large impact on her thought as it did on the Rules of SSA and CHN.

The variation in the time span of the life of the Rules appears to reflect a particular community outlook, just as it mirrors external pressures that necessitated change or stability. It took nearly a century for CSC to revise its Rule. This exhibits the pervasive influence and foresight of Emily Ayckbowm that did not need to be reassessed until the turbulent modern era. In comparison CHN and SSA had to revise their original Rules to register with the Advisory Council in the 1930's. CHN underwent a further major revision of this Rule in the sixties, which was then reviewed 30 years later. In contrast, SSA did not revise the Rule of the thirties for 50 years and has been more conservative in its attitude to change than the other communities.

When a comparison is made of the construction of the modern Rules with their predecessors, the outstanding characteristic is simplicity. The compilers of the latest Rule of CSC stress that every aspect of the Rule is based on the New Testament. This is shown through extensive quotation from the Gospels and Letters. CHN uses a similar method but the quotes in the Rule are taken equally from the Old and New Testament, particularly from the Psalms and the Letters. On the other hand, the Rule of SSA does not use Biblical quotes.

Other distinctive accents can be discerned in the Rules. One example is the specific mention of the special place held by the Virgin Mary in the thought of CSC¹⁷⁶. Another is the far more detailed discussion of community life in CHN's Rule than the other

¹⁷⁶ Although some Anglo-Catholics tried to introduce the Marian Cult into the Church, they were not very successful. While the status of Mary as the mother of Jesus was elevated in Anglo-Catholic thought, this was more in keeping with her role (given the Incarnation) than that acknowledged in Protestantism. The influence of the Nashdom Benedictines seen in the shrines to Mary in some of the sister's chapels may illustrate the basis for this emphasis in CSC's Rule

communities. Further obvious variations in the three Rules are the symbolic names and patron saints. These have been chosen to convey the particular spiritual outlook which prompted the institution of each community and which underlines its purpose. The major thrust of the outreach of each community, enshrined in the Rule, was to perform works of mercy among the disadvantaged. The hope was that God would reach these people through their efforts. In the case of CSC, the initial outreach was in parochial work but concentrated on ministering to poor children in hospitals, schools and orphanages¹⁷⁷. SSA's aim to bring Jesus to others was seen initially through a ministry to the sick, poor and outcast as well as an outreach of teaching¹⁷⁸. On the other hand, CHN grew from the deaconess Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) in its outreach to the poor, sick and suffering. In so doing, the overall mission was to all God's children with no distinction¹⁷⁹. So although these aims appear to be very similar, they were obviously specific enough to lay the foundations for the individual spiritual ethos which developed and is exhibited by each community.

The changes that have occurred to the Rules may be seen as a form of deconstructionism. From this perspective the earlier Rules and Constitutions were capable of different interpretations because of the distinct hermeneutical approach of a different age. In actual deconstruction the opposite of the way the text had been understood would be seen as valid. Deconstructive writing is always paradoxical and can possess no final or proper meaning. Therefore it remains transitional¹⁸⁰.

The vow of obedience permeates the whole of community life. Its transformation to a concept of individual responsibility could be seen as the focal point for a wave of deconstructionist change. Many ramifications are seen when the exchange of subservience with responsibility is made in a religious community. The desirability of a youthful entry to the community because of the perceived malleability of the young alters to a preference for maturity and self-knowledge. The relationship of superior to

¹⁷⁷ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.36

¹⁷⁸ SSA, *Rule of Life*, Brisbane, 1947, p.17

¹⁷⁹ CHN, *Esther Mother Foundress*, Melbourne [1948], p.13

¹⁸⁰ Taylor M., *Erring*, Chicago, 1984, p.10

inferior also dramatically changes so that the role of the mother becomes primarily a pastoral rather than a controlling one. The emphasis on self-knowledge or awareness is directly opposite to the subjugation of self that has always been part of the religious life. The renunciation of self was believed to be aided by wearing an encompassing anonymous uniform. Paradoxically the reverse was true because by relinquishing the habit sisters became much more unseen than in the past. The abandonment of the large institutions, where they were in contact with many people, has made them virtually invisible. Added to all this reversal is a new ecumenical approach. While an argument can be advanced for deconstruction, there is no alteration to the original aims of each community. Therefore the changes which have occurred can really only be seen as reconstruction.

All the Rules emphasise the shift from self-abnegation to self-knowledge and responsibility but it is a difficult task to bridge this chasm in perspective, when the aim of the life remains to follow a vocation based on total obedience - a life which still requires the emptying of self for the love of God and neighbour in the quest for individual perfection or wholeness.

In the attempt to compare the three major communities in Australia, factors that appear to influence group spirituality have been examined for each community. There is no doubt that the Rule is the overriding influence on the spirituality of a religious community. Just as spirituality cannot remain static, so too the Rules have all changed over the last century. Contrasts in emphasis have been discerned in each community over time, as have differences between each community that reflect the character of each. Nevertheless it is easier to find similarities among the Rules of the communities than elements of sufficient significance to constitute major differences. The following chapter will examine the sisters' attitude to the specific spiritual or ethical factors of their community.

CHAPTER TEN The Communities Compared

The selection by an individual of a particular religious community in which to follow the vocational call to the religious life is governed foremost by the perceived spiritual ethos of that community. Of the many elements that constitute the development of that spirituality, those of primary importance are the shared vocation and above all the Rule, which enables the fulfilment of the vocation in communal life. The spiritual ethos of communities develops and varies as different accents are placed on the vows and the outreach. The vocation, the Rule and the influence of the spirituality of some individuals and groups on the three major communities have been examined. In this chapter the three communities will be compared after the set of questions specifically asked to see if the sisters could clarify their perception of their own or their community's spirituality are examined in more depth. The first of these questions was seen in the chapter on vocation where a general summary of the results was given. This question was designed to see if particular features could be identified in a community, which attract and retain an individual. It was suggested in the chapter on vocation that those who receive a call to the religious life may share common personality traits, as may those who select a particular community. It was pointed out that while this may be the case and if those traits could be identified, it would still not be possible to ascertain whether these shared characteristics were innate or induced by specific community attitudes.

Realising no human institution is perfect, why did you choose the particular community of which you are a member?

- (a) Locality
- (b) Spiritual feeling of the Community
- (c) Particular spiritual emphases of the Community
- (d) The Rule/Constitution/Customary
- (e) A conservative or liberal outlook to, for example, change
- (f) Amount of time for prayer and retreats
- (g) Feeling of the Community life

- (h) Age of the other sisters
- (i) Type of work undertaken by the community
- (j) Personal contact in the community e.g. a friend
- (k) Other reasons

It has been pointed out that the most popular reason for choosing a particular community was one submitted in addition to those suggested¹. Overall 50% of the respondents stated that God had chosen their community for them. This comprised nine members of the Community of the Holy Name (CHN), four members of the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA), but only one member of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC). The spiritual feeling of the community (b) was the second most popular choice with 40% of the total because over half of CHN cited this option. This compared to two members of CSC and one of SSA. The later option of the feeling of community life (g) was more popular with CHN at 33% than the other communities whose percentages mirrored the answers on spiritual feeling. Although it was never given as the only reason, the type of work (i) was the next most popular reason given by 35%. This figure again comprised nearly half of CHN but only two from SSA and one member of CSC².

Spiritual emphases (c) and the amount of time for prayer and retreats (f), which was chosen by 25% overall, were virtually grouped together with spiritual feeling (b) by the respondents. A significant difference was that only 20% of CHN chose the time allocated for prayer and retreats compared to 40% of CSC and one half of SSA. This seems to correlate with the emphasis placed on work by a large percentage of CHN. The locality (a) was important to four out of six members of SSA, three CSC members and only one fifth of CHN. SSA members had no choice between communities in Queensland and almost the same number of sisters felt locality was important as had felt that God had chosen the community for them. Answers to other survey questions on

¹ See Chapter 8, p.214

² Questionnaire was answered by 8 members of CSC; 6 members of SSA; 18 members of CHN which includes three former members from CCK when applicable.

community showed that some of the sisters only knew of the existence of the sisterhood they had chosen, while others did not know there were Anglican orders. Several respondents from CHN stated that they chose not to enter CSC because they felt it was too English.

Personal contact in the community scored only 15% overall but was selected by 3 (35%) from CSC - a far greater proportion than either of the other communities. The approach to change and the age of the other sisters seemed to be unimportant while the Rule/Constitutions/Customary were of no importance to any member in choosing a particular community. As one sister replied this may have been because nothing was really known about these things at the time of entry. It may also indicate that the rules and regulations of all religious communities appear on the surface to be very similar.

The first of the following two questions was hoped to illuminate a pattern in the type of spiritual mentor favoured by members of a particular community, which in turn could point to differences in spiritual outlook between communities. The second question was to see to what extent the vision of the foundress remained as an influence on the spiritual ethos of the present-day community.

Is there a particular mentor to whom you felt close in the past or to whom you feel close now, whose emphasis appeals to you (or are there several - this would include another sister, member of the clergy, saint or theologian)?

Overall three sisters did not reply to the question and four others felt there was no particular mentor - three of this latter group came from CHN. Of those who answered in the affirmative, most had spiritual mentors who were priests or religious, few chose theologians or saints and the religious background showed little effect on their answers. There was also no trend to be discerned in age or year of joining and the only point was that no one from a Protestant background chose a theologian or a saint.

Only six sisters listed theologians or saints, three members from CSC (40%) and three

from CHN (20%). Those who were chosen by CHN were mainly individuals with a contemplative inclination, for example Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, Benedict and Augustine. On the other hand, the selection from CSC was mixed, with St Ignatius de Loyola, Charles de Foucauld, Henry Nouwen and Alan Jones. An equal number to those who listed theologians from CSC, listed clergy or religious and so did half of CHN members. No one from these two communities mentioned a layperson. In contrast none of the sisters from SSA listed a theologian as a mentor, while all of them listed clergy and half listed lay people. Once again the religious background made little difference to these replies.

Is the spirituality or teaching of the foundress emphasised in the community?

Is the spirituality/ethos foreseen by the foundress in evidence today or has the emphasis changed?

If it has changed is this only because of the great changes in society and the Church?

Overall 85% of the sisters saw the spirituality and teaching of their foundress in evidence in the present day. From CHN all those who answered the question believed it was so, as did all the sisters from CSC. Despite this reply these two groups believed that the emphasis had changed and most agreed it was due to changes in society or the Church or both. Several cited other reasons for the changes, for example, the altered active work, or changes in the community life and individual needs. While all except one of the sisters at SSA agreed that the spirituality and teaching of the foundress was still in evidence, over half believed this was only to a degree. They mainly conceded that the reasons were as suggested but one sister thought it had more to do with the growth of individuality, while another believed a definite trend to the contemplative life had emerged.

The following two questions were specifically to find the basis of the group and individual spirituality of the sisters.

(1) Is there a particular doctrine of the Church or aspect of the life of Jesus that your

community focuses much of its attention upon?

The members of the smaller communities all gave homogeneous sets of answers as they did to the following question on individual spirituality. The Sisters of the Incarnation (SI) see the Incarnation as the basis of both group and individual spirituality, while the members of Christ the King (CCK) see the concept of Christ as king, creator and redeemer as the foundation. On the other hand, the Benedictines see their spirituality as gospel based, as did one member from CSC. In a similar vein to SI and CCK, the five members of SSA who answered the question saw the basis of their community's spirituality resting on the outlook of John the Baptist and the Advent of Jesus. Two sisters explained that their community's aim is to reach people through the active work. This is to allow Jesus to come into individual hearts so that he can reconcile them to God through healing, physical or mental, just as was seen in the first Advent. The Second Advent was given different interpretations. It was either seen as a future event when Jesus will reappear physically, or as that time when Jesus is accepted into the heart of the individual.

60% of CHN members who answered the question replied that through the power of the Holy Name their community is concerned to work to help bring others to know and love Jesus. While the other answers from CHN did not mention the Holy Name, the aim was seen to be to help the spiritually and materially disadvantaged so that the reconciling love of God would be revealed. These replies reflect the interpretation by Mother Valmai of the composition of the spirit of CHN. She stressed that its foundation was built on the objective to work with people in need, not necessarily those in poverty³.

While one third of CSC gives no basis for community or individual spirituality, the answers that were given were in contrast to the uniformity of those of the members from CHN and SSA. Two sisters saw the obedience of Jesus to God and individual humility and obedience as the basis of their community's spirituality, while several

³ Interview, Mother Valmai by Stephen Godley, ABC Encounter Program, 30/4/95

others saw it as reconciliation in and through Christ.

(2) Is there a particular doctrine or aspect of the life of Jesus, which is the centre of your individual spirituality?

The reconciling love of God, which was a major theme in the responses on group spirituality, was also present in individual spirituality, particularly from CHN. Many of this group again stressed the nature of their call to aid the poor, spiritually and materially, as underlying individual spirituality. On the other hand, all of the members of CSC and SSA who replied to this question gave quite independent answers. From CSC, the Incarnation, human wholeness/divinity and the cross/resurrection were cited. Whereas some from SSA proposed the love of God and neighbour, the way Jesus points to ultimate reality, or the life of Jesus as the basis of individual spiritual life. Some similarities could be seen across community lines, for example, five sisters (one from CHN, two each from CSC and CCK) saw their group spirituality to be based on the healing and reconciling love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. These words or their equivalent, particularly love, are used repeatedly across the communities in the explanation of both group and individual spirituality. This indicates the common approach to the purpose of the outreach of those following the religious life in its mixed and contemplative forms.

Overall ten sisters (more than one quarter) did not give a reply to the first question concerning group spirituality. Although six of these women did attempt to describe what was at the centre of their own spirituality, there were still seven sisters who gave no reply to the second question on individual spirituality. One sister who did not answer either question explained that it was too difficult to describe her feelings or understandings on either of these questions. While the large percentage who did not answer these questions was disappointing it was not unexpected in light of the reply of the last sister. As the failure to answer was fairly evenly spread over the communities, hopefully the conclusions should not be too distorted.

The question on group spirituality may have elicited a different response if it had excluded the use of the definitions used by the Rules for community spiritual ethos. This seemed to be apparent in the answers from CSC, which produced more diversity of thought in line with the much less specific motto - Pro Ecclesia Dei, For the Church of God - than the Australian groups. On the other hand, the diversity of answers from CSC and the similarity from the other two may also point to specific communal or individual characteristics. It appears that these original definitions are still the best way to explain in a few words the elusive nature of each communal spirituality. It seems to be apparent that the divergence in spiritual ethos of each community only begins to be seen in the specific inspiration that each Rule explains is fundamental to its work.

The first of the following three questions was looked at in the chapter on Vocation and the second and third will be examined again in a later chapter. The reason for including these questions here is to see if the answers from the different communities help shed light on the outlook of the different orders.

Do you think that the expanded opportunities for women in the Church as seen in the ordination of women to the priesthood is a further blow to the hope of vocations to sisterhoods?

Given the dearth of new aspirants to the Religious Life do you think that (a) your community will survive or (b) Anglican Communities in general will survive - or have they outlived their time? If you can see the latter is this because of their present makeup, or another reason, perhaps because of the concept of a life long commitment?

If you believe that Anglican Sisterhoods will not survive in their present form, do you think that they could survive in another shape?

It was seen earlier that slightly over half of all the sisters surveyed believed that ordination would not affect vocations to the religious life. While a large minority believed that it might have some effect, only five sisters (15%) believed that it would

definitely be a negative influence. All of the sisters who belonged to this latter group entered the religious life before 1970. In contrast, of those who saw no effect from ordination, 70% joined a community after 1970. Those who thought ordination might have an effect were evenly divided on the date of entry to the religious life. In the replies from CHN, two-thirds saw no negative consequence on vocations and only one sister answered definitely in the affirmative. From CSC the same percentage as CHN saw no impact while the answers were evenly divided from SSA.

While all the groups of sisters in Australia have resolved that the communal attitude of each is one of approval to the priesting of a professed member, reservations were expressed by Mother Eunice of SSA⁴. Her argument, which is perfectly reasonable, is that given the higher status of the cleric in the church regarding the all important sacramental life, the authority structure within community could be confused by the inclusion of female priests. In the new world created by the ordination of women, consensus appears to be leaning to the use of the term “Mother” as the acceptable equivalent title to the Anglo-Catholic use of the term “Father” for male priests⁵. Although this move could raise female concerns about patriarchal issues, it seems that the use of the title “Mother” further bolsters the argument proposed by Mother Eunice and confuses the titles of priest and head of female religious communities⁶.

A large majority (75%) of the overall group believed that some of the religious orders in the Anglican Church would survive. This was qualified by one third believing that none would survive in their present form. The sisters had more faith in the survival of

⁴ Rose M., Freedom From Sanctified Sexism, MacGregor, 1996, p.88; Questionnaire

⁵ Cotes A., ‘The Monstrous Regiment’, Moses J.A. (ed), From Oxford to the Bush: Essays on Catholic Anglicanism in Australia, Brisbane, 1997, p.314 – the chaplain at Perth College, Christine Simes, is given the title “Mother” in the parish where she is the assistant priest but is not allowed to be called by that title at the college.

⁶ Bynum C.W., Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages, Berkeley, 1984, p.112-115; Evans G.R., & Wright J.R., The Anglican Tradition, London, 1991, p.104 - Although some may consider the term Mother to traditionally be a subservient one to Father, it is of interest to note the medieval popularity of the use of maternal imagery to describe God, Jesus, and male religious authority figures. This was used extensively by Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century and Dame Julian of Norwich in the 14th. The latter developed theologically the concept of Jesus as Mother.

Anglican communities in general than in their own particular sisterhood. 65% believed their own community would survive, 25% did not know and eleven percent believed it would not. The question of the survival of the individual's community was related to the numbers of members in each group. Therefore the small newer groups were most uncertain about their future.

Two-thirds of CHN, which had about 30 members, believed both religious communities in general and CHN would survive. They were not very informative on what new directions the religious life might take and one third did not answer this question. While the overwhelming feeling was that flexibility and openness to change was needed, three sisters who did answer saw that "it was in God's hands anyway". This spiritual attitude is not uncommon among religious and holds that it does not matter if a community survives, just as it does not matter if the individual dies, because both were created for a particular finite purpose ⁷. All of the members of SSA believed that the religious life would survive but only half felt that their Society, which had only eleven members at the end of 1995, would do so. Most of the members of this community had suggestions for the way in which the life may evolve and one particular answer summarised the community attitude,

I believe that the sisterhoods will survive but not necessarily in the form that we know today. Whether the habit will be part of it is doubtful, but I see smaller groups living together – probably in diverse occupations but agreeing to maintain a prayer life in common. And it is the prayer life in common which is the stay and backbone of any religious community be it of two people or one hundred and two.

What kind of Rules would they observe? Perhaps there would be a fluid arrangement whereby individuals would come for a time before moving on, to another group, to a family or to the solitary life.

It may be that in any religious community some could come for a limited time before returning to whatever, whenever.

It is difficult to imagine younger people entering for somehow we have been unable to reach them with any conviction, which may touch their hearts. The Lord will have to do some mighty work for that to happen - for even among the older generation, scepticism is rife. In my understanding it takes years of development of faith to reach a point

⁷ Strudwick V., 'The Role of Religious Communities in Renewal', Cranston C. (ed), Open to the Spirit: Anglicans and the Spirit of Renewal, Sydney, 1987, p.133

where one is not only willing but is also aware of an urgency to commit one's life to Christ and the religious lifestyle of a community.

The answers from CSC were different again to the other communities and it had to be remembered that worldwide the Community was in a fairly healthy shape with about 90 sisters and novices. So while all believed that the religious life would survive, as would CSC, 90% stressed that there would have to be ongoing evolution in varying ways for survival, just as has been happening in the last quarter of a century.

The results of the survey in the earlier chapter on vocation were considered only as general trends across the Australian communities. To build up a profile of the respondents from each community, the specific answers from these questions given by the three major communities will be combined with those given earlier.

The members of CSC were originally all Anglicans and six (80%) were from an Anglo-Catholic background. Well over half experienced opposition from family and clergy on entry but in those from a High Church background the results were evenly split. A similar homogeneous tendency to the religious background was seen in the age of entry to the Community. Over half joined before 1970 and all except one were under 30 and she was between 30 and 45. This contrasts to the ages of joining CSC of the Australian sisters who are now deceased. In that group, the average age on entry was 31 but 50% were between 30 and 45. The conformity in the age on joining of the present group extended to most of them being unhappy with a sudden call to the religious life and half had considered leaving the Community at one stage. Only one sister was concerned with the type of work undertaken and most were mainly interested in the spiritual influences in the Community, particularly the amount of time for prayer. Locality and personal contact in the Community had been factors in choice for a large minority. In contrast to the other communities only one sister stated that she experienced the feeling that God had chosen CSC for her to enter.

Every member believed the influence of Mother Emily to be very much in evidence in the present day and the great majority named a spiritual mentor. These were evenly

divided between clergy and theologians but like CHN no lay mentors were mentioned. The replies to the questions on group and individual spirituality were disappointing, as nearly 40% gave no answer. While no trend could be seen in those who did reply, what did emerge was the diverse nature of the perception of their individual and group outlook. Two-thirds of the sisters felt that ordination to the priesthood for women would not affect vocations. This was of special interest because the Community had experienced a female priest from Canada as a community member for over ten years before the Australian sister was ordained. Finally, all of the respondents were confident of the long-term survival of religious orders and CSC, although three members were not sure about the Australian branch.

Only one member of SSA had been under 30 on joining the community and two-thirds were over 45. Most had joined after 1970 and none of these members were under 30 on entry. While most welcomed the vocation, those who had felt a sudden call were unhappy. At some stage all the sisters had felt like leaving the community and as quite a few remarked "often". There was an assorted religious background in this group as although four of the six members were Anglicans, only two of these were from a High Church background. The other two members were from a Protestant upbringing. Most of the Anglicans had experienced familial or clerical opposition to their vocation.

A large majority specifically stated that they joined the community because God had chosen it and this correlated to the importance of the location. While one-third of the sisters had been interested in the work undertaken, half had chosen the time available for prayer as important. On the other hand, only one sister singled out the spiritual feeling of the community or the feel of community life. All the sisters cited priests, religious or lay people as being spiritual mentors but unlike the other communities, none chose theologians or saints. While most members came from Queensland, but from diverse religious backgrounds, the reason for this is hard to explain. It may be because of a similar personality trait or educational background.

Most of the sisters believed the charism of the foundress was evident but over half felt

this was not a strong influence. This may be related to the difficult beginnings of the community and the emphasis placed on the second superior, Mother Emma, as the originator of the ethos of the Society. While all except one sister (80%) proposed the Baptist and the Advent as the centre of group spirituality, the same proportion answered the personal spirituality question in an individual way. In general the answers to most questions had a monochrome hue and only really diverged on individual spirituality and the effects of ordination on vocation to the religious life. As far as this latter question was concerned, the respondents were divided equally on the effect of ordination to the priesthood. On the other hand, while all the sisters believed that the religious life would survive only half believed their community would do so.

At CHN the age on entry was more evenly balanced than either of the other communities with virtually equal numbers over and under 30 years of age on joining. Following the trend in Australia since 1970, the new members have mainly been over 45 and none under 30 have joined. Three of CHN respondents were formerly non-Anglicans - two Protestants and one from a non-religious background. Of the remaining fifteen Anglicans, nine were from a High Church or Anglo-Catholic background. Eleven (70%) of those from Anglican backgrounds experienced opposition from family and clergy on their entry to the life, as did five (55%) of those from High Church background. Twelve (two-thirds) of CHN members appeared to be happy with a sudden call to the religious life and only three ever considered the possibility of leaving the Community. Although half the respondents said that they chose the Community because it felt "right", half also selected the spiritual feeling of the community. This corresponded with the 40% who chose the feeling of community life. In contrast only 20% chose the amount of time set aside for prayer but 50% had felt the work undertaken was important. This latter choice was never given as the only reason.

As far as a spiritual mentor was concerned, three members from CHN (20%) chose a theologian or saint, half cited clergy or religious but no sister mentioned a layperson. All of the members believed that community spirituality was based on helping the disadvantaged, the poor and needy in body and soul and to bring them the reconciling

love of God - 60% added that this was to be done in the power of the Holy Name. This was also the major theme in individual spirituality and all the members believed that the influence of the foundress was evident. While only one member definitely felt there would be an effect on vocation from ordination, two-thirds saw no adverse effect at all. The same percentage believed that religious orders would survive, as would their community.

On comparing the profiles of the communities that have been constructed, it can be seen that similarities exist usually between one or other community in the responses to each question. These differences help explain the unique nature of each community. The only aspect of the survey with which they were all in harmony was in the importance of the spiritual side of the religious life. This was seen in the reasons given for selecting a particular community. When all the relevant data is examined from the survey, in conjunction with that from other sources, it becomes obvious that the three communities are quite distinct organisations. This is despite the fundamental similarities in the way in which they lead the religious life.

In the outline compiled from the questionnaire, the age ratio on joining each community was quite different as was the religious background. The replies from CHN and SSA tended to a more monochrome hue than those of CSC which diverged particularly in the concept of the basis of individual and group spirituality. The answers from CHN were unexpectedly similar given the larger numbers of respondents and the broader nature of its composition. This outcome may reflect the great emphasis it seems has always been placed on a positive, harmonious community life. This accent on the cohesion of the community was undoubtedly aided by the struggle to establish CHN in the atmosphere of spiritual isolation and loneliness experienced in the early years in Melbourne⁸. It may also be mirrored in the removal of the names from the records of those professed sisters who left the Community.

The similar outlook of CHN members was in contrast to the diverse points of view and

⁸ CHN, Esther Mother Foundress (EMF), Melbourne, [1948], p.112

personalities exhibited by the sisters in person. This uniformity was first seen in the apparent lack of distress shown to a sudden vocation by CHN members. This was followed by few sisters ever suggesting a desire to leave the community. Both these results were in sharp contrast to the other two communities and seem to be related. This result may involve some specific characteristic of the women entering the different sisterhoods or perhaps correlate to a particular attitude that is emphasised in each community. A minor example of this can be seen in the widespread attitude in CHN to the term "Anglo-Catholic", which was disliked and seen as old fashioned - a point of view not apparent in the other communities. The emphasis placed on the adherence of community life in the latest CHN Rule is expressed in the importance placed in the survey on the spirituality and feeling of community life. This divergence from the other communities is also seen in the interest in the work undertaken by the Community and less attention shown to the amount of time available for prayer. This may reflect the origins of the Community as a deaconess mission, the 20% of surveyed members who were originally called to the mission fields and the establishment of a separate community - CCK - for some of the more contemplatively inclined members. All of CHN members agreed on the basis of community spirituality and the same conformity was seen for individual spirituality. The answers to the rest of the questions hardly varied and the lack of response to suggestions for the future confirmed the similar outlook of the community members that appeared to be that the question was irrelevant. This again points to a cohesive community outlook.

On the surface the trends, which have appeared in each community, seem to show the conformity of the outlook of CHN and SSA members and the greater diversity of those of CSC. Nonetheless the individuality of the replies from CSC may be as much a reflection of the promotion of a particular community attitude as the apparent monochrome hue of the replies from the other communities. What has to be concluded from the survey is that it has not been possible to determine any new insight into the current spiritual ethos of each community, which the Rules and their predecessors reflect and have helped develop. From the perspective of an outsider, the terms that have always been used to define the ethos do not really differentiate the feeling that the

individual community spirituality must convey to its members. A point of view exists which explains this on the basis of the short time of the existence of religious orders in Anglicanism. This position points to the fact that it took centuries for major difference in Roman Catholic religious orders to be obvious⁹.

What the survey has shown is a diversity of thought in and between the communities so that trends are apparent. Some of these characteristics were seen in direct observations of each community and seem analogous to the geographical origins, growth and outreach. CSC members made the transition easily from the grandeur of St Michael's Convent in England to a small farm on the north coast of NSW. Despite the belief of some members of the other communities that CSC was very English, this was not easy to discern in the Australian centres. It has to be remembered that the overwhelming majority of CSC sisters working in Australia are Australian and that the last two superiors of the Community have also been Australians.

In person CHN members were eclectic and outgoing products of Melbourne's geographical situation and its liberal and central role in Australian affairs. In contrast, the members of SSA displayed a more conservative, uniform outlook, reflecting a small city's isolation in a large rural state. There has been one instance of a sister who belonged to both CHN and SSA. She tried to explain the differences she found in the ethos of the two communities. Unfortunately her feeling was that any conclusions she could draw were probably out of date. This was because she spent four years in the novitiate of CHN in the early sixties and it was another seven years before she joined SSA. In comparing the two communities she felt that the much larger numbers at CHN at the time made a great difference to the ethos of the community. At CHN in the early sixties there were rigid lines of demarcation between the novices and the professed sisters. The mother superior was a remote figure to whom everyone curtsied and to whom a novice rarely spoke. In contrast the novice mistress, who was later the superior, was very kind and approachable, even though she ran a very strict novitiate. At this

⁹ Cary H.L.M., 'Revival of the Religious Life', Williams N.P. & Harris C. (ed), Northern Catholicism, London, 1933, p.345

stage in this sister's life she felt this atmosphere perfectly proper and very "nun-like", but in retrospect it was cold and impersonal.

At SSA the sister found a much more relaxed attitude even though the sisterhood was conservative in some ways. The outlook was in great contrast to the rigidity of the earlier experience at CHN and great emphasis was placed on common sense. The superior at the time, Mother Lois, was an academic and placed great value on reading as a way of insight into the religious life. The sister hastened to point out that by that time the outlook at CHN had also probably changed, so it was difficult to make comparisons. She did feel that there was a large difference to the feeling of the community life she experienced at both communities. This she attributed mainly to the life CHN lived in a separate convent, in comparison to SSA where the Community House was in the grounds of St Margaret's school.

Apart from being a very much larger community CSC has always had a different outlook and it can be argued, been a dissimilar sort of sisterhood from the purely Australian groups. This has been due to many factors and in particular it's international nature. The influence of the monasticism of the Nashdom Benedictines on the Community from the twenties led to a deeper inner prayer life being emphasised many decades before the purely Australian communities experienced this trend. The Nashdom influence saw as well the addition of many practices that bent the Community to a more Roman orientation than most other similar Anglican sisterhoods. The Community's independence from male interference or authority, which was different to CHN and SSA, has also been of major importance. As a result of the personality of Emily Ayckbown, this most successful of communities, was governed in an autocratic fashion with more continual power found in the person of the mother superior than in the two Australian groups. This is not to discount in any way the achievements or the influence of Mother Esther CHN or Mother Emma SSA, who led their communities until their death. Indeed both of the Australian communities were more democratic for much of their history than CSC and, unlike that Community, were always governed by a Chapter of all the sisters. Nevertheless, more power was given to the visitor and

warden in the constitutions of SSA and CHN

Given the different backgrounds of the sisterhoods, it is interesting that they did not introduce the common division in the status of the members into Choir and Lay sisters adopted by many English groups and most Roman congregations introduced into Australia in the 19th century. Many of the first English members of CSC were from the educated middle to upper classes, like the founders of SSA and CHN. This social status paralleled that of the Roman nuns who pioneered the Irish and European congregations in Australia¹⁰. It has not been possible to determine with certainty the social status or the educational standards of the women who joined the Anglican religious communities in Australia. Investigation into this type of information rests on the availability of the surname, occupation and address of an individual's father. Little information has been forthcoming from the communities in this regard. However given the general middle class membership of the Anglican Church as well as the outreach of the communities, it can be assumed that all of these women were reasonably well educated for their time. As far as class division at CHN was concerned, it seems that Butler, the founder of Wantage, always had a deep abhorrence of this system with which Mother Esther agreed¹¹. In contrast, Clewer instituted a two-tiered First Order in the 1860's, which lasted for over eighty years¹². Why Sister Caroline did not follow her former Community in this regard is unknown. Despite her belief that she was liberal and broadminded, it has been pointed out that there were disagreements between Caroline and the Australians who were joining the Society. Perhaps the issue of division was one of the points of disagreement. As far as CSC was concerned it has been suggested that the Australian sisters would not have tolerated a move to such class division by their Community given the more egalitarian nature of Australian society¹³. From the end of the 19th century, new Roman congregations also tended to one form of membership so this overall trend was probably due to the growth in democratic ideas.

¹⁰ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.63

¹¹ EMF, *op.cit.*, p.20

Butler A.J., Life and Letters of W.J.Butler, London, 1898, p.142

¹² Bonham V., A Place in Life, The Clewer House of Mercy 1849-83, Windsor, 1989, p.16

¹³ Interview Sr Frances CSC, Sydney, 3/12/97

The divergence in the position of the mother superior and the outlook on government in the earlier days of the three communities can be attributed to the different emphases of the Benedictine and Augustinian Rules. The function of the Augustinian superior is more one of service than the authoritarian leader in Benedictinism. While his lack of democracy in Benedictine monasticism was theoretically tempered by the humaneness of the Benedictine Rule, those communities following the Rule of Augustine tended to develop institutions in which each person felt responsible for everyone else¹⁴. Despite the influence of Benedict on the Community, it has been seen that the Rule of CSC was not the Benedictine Rule but the inspiration taken from several Rules including much from Augustine. The old authoritarianism invested in the superior of CSC has dramatically changed since the Community responded to the rapidly changing world of the second half of the twentieth century. Although much of its reform and current outlook have been in place now for many years, it is still seen in Anglicanism as a highly innovative community.

It appears that SSA initially held a more democratic outlook that developed and maintained less formal behaviour than either of the other groups and showed more concern for the development of individual talents. Although this latter outlook may have been only an ideal, it is in contrast to the early approach of most communities. These reasons perhaps explain why the Society has seen little need to drastically change the Rule or the Constitution¹⁵. Much of the current outlook of SSA has been effected by its comparative isolation from trends in Anglicanism in general, and Anglo-Catholicism in particular, which the Society faced working only in Queensland. For example, at the end of 1995, there was no deacon or priest among the members, although there were few objections to this concept¹⁶. There had also been little liturgical experimentation and less of an ecumenical spirit was obvious. After all the changes of the last quarter

¹⁴Van Bavel T.J., The Rule of Saint Augustine, London, 1984, pp.101-103.

¹⁵ SSA, Notes on the Rule, Brisbane, [1947], p.27

¹⁶ Personal correspondence with SSA – this situation had changed by 1999 with the ordination of Sister Gillian.

century, the Society appeared to be a more conservative group than either of the other sisterhoods. Yet the concept that change is always necessary and beneficial is only a modern idea.

There were different influences on the two Australian groups from the former sisterhoods of their founders. Nevertheless many effects were very similar and were to be found in most religious communities including CSC. The attitude of the original Rules to the aims, vows, community life, government and the correct behaviour of a religious were all related although different accents could be seen. This contributed to the unique spiritual development of each community. So while many of the spiritual influences over the years on the communities were alike, the practical outreach of each community varied in its accents and helped develop the specific characteristics of each group. This is particularly seen in the origins of CHN as a deaconess mission and its continual involvement for so long in this type of outreach.

Initially the active work of the sisterhoods was tailored to meet the founder's outlook and the social needs of the time and places of the establishment of the groups. The way in which the initial outreach changed was influenced by external changes in society and the Church. These also exerted an effect on the inner life of the individual and the group. This will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN Outreach - An Overview

The religious community has been under intense scholarly scrutiny for the last thirty years of the twentieth century. This eventuated because of the call for renewal of the religious life by Vatican II in "Perfectae caritatis" and the subsequent dearth of vocations to the religious life¹. This latter event is illustrated in Australia, where the 19,500 Roman Catholic religious of both sexes in 1966 had decreased to just over 13,000 by 1990, and about 8,000 nuns by 1995². This type of investigation has not been limited to the religious life. Many basic social institutions are also under examination including the Church itself, marriage and the family. As far as religion generally is concerned, there appears to remain a very high proportion of people in Australia with a belief in a God, but what has been challenged is institutional religion³. While the optimistic view is that enthusiasm for the Church may involve 100-year cycles, it appears that the soul searching, which has been conducted, is part of a broader movement to understand a cultural transition occurring in the Western world. This transition is not yet understood but is a shift from the interpretation of the world by Modernistic thought which has been in vogue since the Enlightenment⁴.

The era of Modernism arose with Rationalism and the resultant scientific and technological advances of which one product was the Industrial Revolution. It has been one of individualism, demystification, secularisation, a rapid expansion of knowledge and the belief that science has all the answers to the understanding of reality. The dubious nature of this last supposition became very apparent by the middle of the twentieth century, so that by the end of the century it appears that the more knowledge we acquire the less we understand. It has also been realised that a radical shift in

¹ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.328

² Murphy D., The Death and Rebirth of Religious Life, Sydney, 1995, p.93; MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.332

³ Carey H., Believing in Australia, Sydney 1996, p.174-5; Kaye B., A Church Without Walls, Melbourne, 1995, p.33; Breward I., A History of the Australian Churches, Sydney, 1993, p.232; Millikan D., The Sunburnt Soul, Sydney, 1981, pp. 77-79; Black A.W.(ed), Religion in Australia, Sydney, 1991, pp.1-4

⁴Penhale F., The Anglican Church Today: Catholics in Crisis, London, 1986, p.141

outlook has been in progress for quite some time. It is probably still too early to say where the new outlook is heading. All that can really be asserted is that "the only certainty is continuing uncertainty"⁵.

The studies undertaken on the religious life have used Roman Catholic models but in many ways the results are applicable to Anglican orders. In Australia the loss of personnel since the peak in the fifties and sixties has been similar to the Roman Catholic experience and this corresponds to the situation in England. As the religious life has been a part of every major religion and culture, it would be premature, even given the enormous drop in the numbers of those undertaking the life, to predict its demise. However it is beyond doubt that its outward presentation will change.

It appears that the series of changes which the religious life, in its Christian expression, has undergone over time, has been related to specific social changes in history. As a result the last 1800 years can be divided into eras in which particular forms of the religious life were overwhelmingly predominant. Each of these eras seems to have been separated by an often cataclysmic event such as the fall of the Roman Empire, the Reformation or the French Revolution. What has to be remembered is that even when a particular expression of the life became dominant, the previous principal form did not entirely disappear. The best example is the survival for 1500 years of Benedictine monasticism.

The proposed periods are⁶: -

1st Era - Time Span: 200-500 AD; Form: Desert Fathers;

Social Milieu: Christianisation of the Roman Empire, which led to the 1st Transition that was the rise of Monasticism.

⁵Crook S., Pakulski J., Waters M., Postmodernization - Change in Advanced Society, London, 1992, pp.2-3

⁶ Murphy D., *op.cit.*, pp.18-19 – taken from the work of scholars, which include Hostie (1972), Cada & Fitz (1975), Foley, Giardino and Lichtenberg (1985).

2nd Era (a) - Time Span: 500-900 AD; Form: Benedictine Monasticism; Social Milieu: Fall of the Roman Empire and the Dark Ages.

2nd Era (b) - Time Span: 900-1200 AD; Form: Benedictine Monasticism; Social Milieu: Early Middle Ages and much corruption of monastic ideals. This led to the 2nd Transition of the rise of the mendicants.

3rd Era - Time Span: 1200-1500 AD; Form: Franciscan model, no landed wealth so freedom to go where needed to serve the poor; Social Milieu: Urbanisation, Renaissance, secularisation of society, which culminated in the Reformation and the 3rd Transition of the Counter Reformation.

4th Era - Time Span: 1500-1800; Form: Apostolic Orders with great missionary zeal; Social Milieu: Enlightenment, Scientific Revolution, European Nationalism, leading to Modernistic thought and the 4th Transition of the French Revolution. This event and its aftermath decimated the male religious in Europe from 300,000 to 30,000 in 40 years.

5th Era - Time Span: 1800 to present; Form: Teaching Congregations - continuation of missionary fervour; Social Milieu: Combination of intense personal holiness with highly active apostolic service. Mainly geared to education or institutional work; Social Milieu: Industrial Revolution - Technological revolution - Space Age - Modern psychology and sociology - Vatican II⁷.

While each of these eras is of similar length, every expression of the life appears to exist for a similar time span as well. This seems to be between 200 and 300 years before a major change occurs in the makeup of the community. It has been further proposed that within this time span, the religious life goes through a cyclical series of phases in the growth, deterioration and the death or rebirth of a religious community⁸.

These stages are (after Fitz & Cada)⁹:

1. Foundation, a period of about 20 or 30 years, which centres on the vision of the founder. This person who is usually a charismatic, dynamic leader with a new outlook,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.19; Sr Cecilia Cahill, 'Woman of the Church', St Mark's Review Sept 1980, pp.30-31

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.28; Murphy, *op.cit.*, p.4, 7

⁹ Cahill, *op.cit.*, pp.31-32; Murphy, *op.cit.*, p.18

persuades disciples of the wisdom of his/her vision and together they decide on the way forward under the founder's inspiration. At this stage all followers are welcome but only the more committed persevere. The group then becomes more discriminating in selecting new members. In this initial stage the group often has difficulty in gaining recognition from the Church.

2.Expansion, a period of about 50 years or several generations in which the Rule emerges as does the ethos of the community. The great enthusiasm of the foundation members gives rise to growth in outreach and membership. One of the problems of this era, with the growth in new members, is the need to ensure the adhesion of the community and the retention of the vision of the founder.

3.Stabilisation, up to 100 years in which expansion slows and consolidation occurs. This is the peak time for community satisfaction. All appears well, the community is respected and successful and nothing seems to need change. This is the danger time for the community because at this stage the original aim of finding God can be diluted by the importance of the successful outreach.

4.Breakdown, a stage that may be imperceptible over at least half a century, or rapid and occurs over a few decades. Dissatisfaction sets in with aspects of community life and outreach, questions remain unanswered, members begin to leave, recruitment slows and a crisis situation develops. Changes occur, but in many ways this exacerbates the uncertainty about identity as the symbols of the life, like the habit, change radically¹⁰. The answer appears to be a reversion to the ideals of the founder and large changes are made in the practical work undertaken. None of these measures prove successful, the rate of withdrawal accelerates and the community moves into a crisis situation.

5.Transition, in this phase there are several possibilities from extinction to minimal survival and revival, based on a renewed accent on the founder's vision. As three-quarters of all men's communities established before 1500 and two-thirds of those before 1800 are extinct, it seems reasonable to assume that most religious communities in existence today will eventually cease to exist. This may be preceded by a stage of survival but in very reduced circumstances and numbers.

¹⁰Arbuckle G., Strategies for Growth in Religious Life, Sydney, 1987, p.25

Survival in a reanimated form only seems to succeed in ten percent of cases, so it has been argued that it is pointless to try and reinvigorate a community using the original vision. Nevertheless this is usually one of the first steps in survival strategy undertaken by religious communities. Cada et al also believe that the renewal process of a religious community duplicates the first three steps in the original phases of its institution and growth¹¹. So if this is the case it would seem that what is needed is a new vision for the new age.

This hypothesis of the growth and decline of religious life is a useful basic paradigm for the Anglican communities in Australia. It appears on first examination that a major difference to the Roman Catholic model is the time span from Foundation to the Transition phase. This seems to be 100, not 300 years, with a resultant diminution in each phase of the cycle after Foundation. On closer scrutiny however, this time difference is also seen in Roman Catholic active religious orders founded in Australia since 1850¹². The shortened time of each phase in these relatively recent communities adds another dimension to the life that did not exist in those older communities following more closely the time span of the paradigm. The situation arises in which the members experience more than one phase of existence of the community's life. For example, there are members of the Australian communities who entered before World War II and have lived through every era, except the Foundational phase. As well, such members would have had contact with sisters who were involved in that initial phase. Therefore there is a much closer link to the vision of the founders than in the older Roman Catholic communities.

It is postulated that each change in the predominant nature and outreach of the religious life in Christianity has been associated with a wide-ranging cataclysmic event. In this century these have been numerous and the pace of change has become so great that a

¹¹ Murphy, *op.cit.*, p.211

¹² see MacGinley, *op.cit.*

trigger event, like the French Revolution in an earlier era, does not stand out. The massive instability of the century has no doubt helped precipitate the cultural shift which seems to have accelerated the Breakdown and Transition phases of religious orders. This hypothesis is borne out by the greatest difference in the Australian communities being almost a lack of a Stabilisation phase. In adopting the phase-classification, it can be seen that the outreach from the developing spirituality of the three major Australian communities is related to each era. The practical work undertaken was affected as well by external events like depressions, world war, the enormous pace of change and the outlook of society.

The Foundational phase of the nineteenth century religious communities in the Church of England was under the influence of the spirituality of the Oxford Movement and its offspring, Anglo-Catholicism. The Movement was part of a European-wide reaction against Rationalism. In conjunction with this trend that looked to the certainties of the medieval Church, the spirituality engendered by the Movement, with its emphasis on true Catholic values, lay behind the reason for the preference of the old Classical model of monasticism for the introduction of the religious life¹³. The emergence of Anglo-Catholicism was itself a further response to a time of rapid change and uncertainty seen for example, in the ramifications of evolutionary theory. Much of its success was based on absolute conviction in religious matters¹⁴. A similar grasping for certainty in a time of rapid change is seen in the late twentieth century in the growth of fundamentalism in many areas.

The Tractarian originators of the first Anglican orders tried to combine the paradigm of community life, the prescribed liturgy of monasticism and meditative prayer, with social work among the poor and distressed. This coincided with the beginning of a general crusade in society to alleviate suffering and bring about social change. This was seen for example, in the secular formation of the Red Cross and Dr. Barnardo's Homes

¹³ Hill M., The Religious Order, London, 1973, p.8

¹⁴ Penhale, *op.cit.*, p.1

by the 1860's and the establishment of general education¹⁵. The mission work that the early communities undertook expanded into institutional social work similar to that being undertaken by many of the European and Irish Roman Catholic women's orders. These orders were the models for the formulation of Rules, outreach, dress and the prayer life in the Anglican sisterhood. This was justified by the Tractarian insistence on the continuity of the pre-Reformation Church in England with that of the 19th century Church of England, and the accent on its Catholicity, albeit a purer form closer to the Orthodox Church.

From the institution of the first Anglican community, a difficult task was undertaken in trying to combine two distinct and almost incompatible ways of the religious life in the rigorous combination of prayer and work in a mixed community. To win acceptance for the life, the active work was always stressed, as the Victorian Church would not tolerate contemplative monasticism. Theologically this was due to the Reformation emphasis on personal responsibility for salvation, and the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Rules, which the mixed communities developed in the institutional phase, presented an ideal combination of life in community. In reality it would have been almost impossible to do justice to the contradictory aspects, particularly the meditative facet of the inner life. This seems to have been recognised in the Rule of CSC and those developed later by the Australian groups, where the use was encouraged of extemporary prayer for meditative purposes during active work, as well as the substitution of a spiritual act of communion in place of attendance at the Eucharist.

An example of the tension created by the difficult nature of the mixed life can be seen in the secession of fourteen sisters and novices from the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) in 1894, to form two new orders. This outcome had been aided by the rapid growth of the Community and the demanding workload that left little time for the deeper prayer life these sisters required. Their complaint was that "the religious life

¹⁵Norman E., The Victorian Christian Socialists, Cambridge, 1987, p.1

of the Community was being sacrificed to the pressure of work¹⁶.

Despite the difficulties of the mixed life, sisterhoods were succeeding and being instituted at a rapid rate. The Protestant answer was intended to be the Deaconess Movement in which corporate spirituality was not a feature. While similar active work to the sisterhoods was undertaken under the control of the clergy, this was never seen as leading to salvation but rather was an outcome of faith that already existed. Whether the religious life could have been introduced in the English Church without adopting the communal spirituality of medieval monasticism is a moot point. Given the trend in English deaconess communities and a similar move in the Protestant communities of Taize and Grandchamp in this century, it can be maintained that communality necessarily leads to a deeper monastic-type spiritual life. It is arguable that the sisters derived added strength from community life for the difficult task of the establishment and acceptance of the religious life, which they could not have found elsewhere.

Superficially the Christian social ethic of human equality and dignity (which should result in concern for the poor, sick and underprivileged) is similar to that of political socialism. In the nineteenth century a Christian socialist movement arose. This was based on the thought of F.D.Maurice whose theology centred on the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God¹⁷. The response of most Christian Socialists to social conditions was far more religious than political. In many cases the main concern was for the reclamation of the lower classes to the Church. Charles Gore, the founder of the Community of the Resurrection (CR), was one who argued that workers needed to be educated to compete with capitalism¹⁸. Mother Emily of CSC was another who anticipated the coming influence of the working classes and this inspired her strategy in seeking to equip them with true religious education¹⁹.

¹⁶ Allchin A.M., The Silent Rebellion, London, 1958, pp.212-213

¹⁷ Rowell G., 'Historical Retrospective', Morgan R. (ed), The Religion of the Incarnation, Bristol, 1989, p.207

¹⁸ Carpenter J., Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought, London, 1960, p.257

¹⁹ CEA, Memories of Emily Harriet Elizabeth Ayckbown, London, 1914, p.203.

A time span of several decades for the Foundational phase was postulated in the model, to which the Anglican communities all seem to have conformed. Further they appear to have emulated the major characteristics of the institution of a community in this period by facing the difficulty in gaining recognition from the Church. In Anglicanism this constituted the fundamental struggle of achieving legitimacy for the religious life itself.

On the surface it appears that CSC had a very short Foundational stage of about a decade from 1870. But this period had really begun with the institution of the Church Extension Association (CEA) by Emily Ayckbowm in 1864. Apart from the alleviation of poverty and distress, Emily was also very concerned with social justice and this shaped her public achievements. She was appalled at the system of pew ownership by the wealthy that was symptomatic of the English class system²⁰. Consequently she created the CEA in 1864 to build free and open churches and to assist church beautification²¹. Emily's concern with social justice later manifested itself in teaching new skills to the unemployed. Political activism was undertaken as well by agitating for fairer wages and better conditions for Irish labourers and women breadwinners²². As a result of her work and outspokenness, Emily was accused of being a socialist - at the time a derogatory term in many circles. Although CSC was associated over the years with many socialist priests, Emily had begun her work before Christian socialism had really emerged. Her outlook can be seen as part of the background of its growth.

CSC expanded rapidly after the Foundational phase and quickly became an international community. The era of Expansion continued for about twenty years to the turn of the century. The mission of the furtherance of the Church concentrated on the poor, particularly children in institutional work. Emily grew to believe it was necessary to target middle class children, girls in particular, for a Christian education to counter

²⁰ CSC, A Valiant Victorian, London, 1964, p.4

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.7

²² Sr Marguerite Mae CSC, 7/6/94

the creeping secularisation in state education. Thus the mission work that the community undertook at home and abroad was a part of the general evangelisation aim of the Church. As part of Anglo-Catholicism this was to convert to the ideals of the Catholic revival.

In later years a general realisation developed in the Church that the value of religious in the mission of conversion was primarily in such institutional work. This was mainly because of the relatively small numbers of Anglican nuns and their late arrival in the mission fields. Pickering argues that these factors ensured that the religious orders in Anglicanism never reached the dominant position in missionary work of their Roman Catholic counterparts²³. Apart from the active conversion work of mission, the way of life of the religious community has always been seen as part of their missionary outreach. This is because of the example it sets in the Christian way of life²⁴.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was the beginning of the Foundational years of the three major religious communities in Australia. This era was a watershed in the history of the country as the colonies moved towards Federation and universal suffrage. It was also a decade of severe depression and drought that greatly affected all the sisterhoods in their institution and outreach. The Anglican religious orders therefore were born, struggled, found their identity and grew in line with the new country.

The Foundational phase of CSC in Australia was short because the community was well established and could operate without the immediate necessity of finding local recruits. The practical spiritual outreach concerned social work, the care of orphans and particularly education. Intimately entwined in the ethos of the outreach of CSC was Mother Emily's belief that prayer could be performed anywhere and was a style of

²³ Pickering W.S.F., Anglo-Catholicism, London, 1989, p.74

²⁴ Morgan E.R.(ed), Essays Catholic and Missionary, London, 1928, p.308

living²⁵. From this approach the active life and the prayer life were viewed as one. This attitude is illustrated in her condemnation of the actions of an individual who would teach a child the creed but not the alphabet; or hear an orphan say prayers while leaving the child dirty or hungry²⁶.

The Expansionist period was extended in Australia for CSC when in other countries a Stabilization or consolidation phase was being entered. This was because of the spread of the work and its pioneering aspect across the large, empty continent, particularly in the west. This time of Expansion was conducted in the new country that was finding its way; it took about a decade for Australian autonomy to emerge in the fundamental areas of society. By this stage over 80% of the inhabitants were Australian-born and most lived in the cities around the coastal fringes²⁷. It was also a time of the acceleration of unmarried women into the work force and the growth of suburbia in the large cities.

The sense of an Australian identity was aided by the events of the First World War and the horrific loss of life. The optimistic outlook of Modernistic thought, so epitomised by the wealth, the power and the progress of the Empire of Edwardian England, was sorely tested by the events of the second decade of the century²⁸. As far as religion was concerned, the first years of the century in Europe saw the rediscovery of Franciscan ideals and the growth of interest in the contemplative religious life. These trends are also indicative of a continuing reaction by some people against Rationalism that reached its height in religion at the time in Liberal Christianity. While there was obvious disenchantment with aspects of Modernism in the nineteenth century, the overall trend was to an acceleration of secularisation in the 20th century.

²⁵ Valiant Victorian, *op.cit.*, p.43

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.47

²⁷ MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.277

²⁸ Lloyd R., The History of the Church of England 1900-1965, London, 1966, p.56

The Expansion phase of CSC certainly followed the proposed hypothesis in membership growth and the characteristics of development. The time span of this period was not nearly as long as the paradigm and this negated the difficulty posed in retaining the original vision. This was because many of the pioneer members survived into this Expansionist phase. The Stabilisation era of consolidation, which was consciously undertaken by CSC under the second superior, was in evidence in Australia by the 1920's and lasted as elsewhere in the Community until after the Second World War. The interwar period was a time of great upheaval dominated by the world depression, which accelerated the desire and movement towards a Welfare State in Western democracies. In Australia this period was one of the continuing growth of an Australian identity even though the ties with the British Empire remained very strong.

The Foundational time span of the Community of the Holy Name (CHN) and the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) was similar and lasted for about twenty-five years. This is allowing for the reality of the deaconess Mission to the Streets and Lanes ((MSL) being a religious community. Both organisations were affected by the depression and drought of the 1890's and the growth in membership was generally very slow. This should not have been unexpected given the innovative nature of the groups being formed and the difficulty of making their lifestyle legitimate.

The women who joined Anglican communities were not socialised from childhood to consider the possibility of the religious life, as were those many recruits into the ever-expanding Roman Catholic communities of the time. Instead, they were highly individualistic and motivated women who chose to enter the life often against great opposition. Because of this they were typically tough and single-minded, characteristics which were necessary to undertake the gruelling life of prayer and active work in these mixed communities - a life which in many ways hardly seemed to be compatible with their missionary endeavours, particularly in the religious and pioneering atmosphere of Australia. These personal traits were also necessary in the early days to enable the women to ignore the attacks made upon them. This was especially so in the case of

CSC in Sydney (and to a lesser extent elsewhere) and the deaconesses of the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL) in Melbourne. The outright hostility of those times and the isolation and dislike which the sisters of CSC suffered for the following 80 years in Sydney, would have convinced weaker mortals to leave the diocese.

The spiritual outlook, which engendered the practical mission work of the deaconesses at MSL, remained a major part of CHN. Working and living in the same conditions with the people in the slums, the early practical outreach involved, like their counterparts in SSA, many aspects of the work that the English prototype community undertook. So apart from mission work, both groups of sisters became involved in rescue and reformatory work and the care of orphans and education. After commission as a religious community, CHN moved into a long Expansionist phase. Aside from the continuing involvement with MSL, the Community ran two hospitals, expanded its outreach to children in Melbourne as well as moving into the dioceses of Newcastle and Goulburn to undertake similar work.

Several years after CHN entered this stage, SSA moved into a rapid age of Expansion in the fields of teaching and hospital work. Even though recruitment continued to increase, the Society was badly affected by the depression of the thirties and by the time of the death of Mother Emma in 1939, growth had ended.

The scope of CSC's outreach was narrowed by the consolidation being consciously undertaken from early in the 20th century. In Australia this period was manifested in concentration almost solely on teaching. The contemplative influence of the Nashdom Benedictines from the twenties swung the balance between prayer and work in the Community towards the inner life. This aided the extension of the era, as did the consequences of the Second World War, particularly in England. After the War, the rebuilding of the countries, the emergence of the Welfare State, the end of Empire and mass migration to Australia were new directions which all had to be handled. Added difficulties for this time of Stabilisation was the increase of secularisation and the move to professionalism in the social and institutional work with which religious

communities were involved.

One of the most important movements to emerge after the Second World War in the wider Church was œumenism. Its institutional expression was found in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948²⁹. In Australia it has been observed that the effect of the Second World War was to dilute many of the religious prejudices that existed between Catholic and Protestant, a position intimately linked with the Irish/English problem³⁰. Ecumenism itself had its origins before the First World War and has been of great influence in the second half of the 20th century. Consequently it has been a feature of the spirituality and outreach of the Breakdown and Transition phases of religious orders. This has resulted in the women's religious orders of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism in Australia becoming closely involved.

Another great movement in the Church in the second half of the century has been that of the ascendancy of the laity. Subsequently this led to the loss of clerical status always associated with an era of lay spiritual ascendancy. In conjunction with Ecumenism, the influence of this movement has been manifested in the changes that have taken place in the eucharistic liturgies of all denominations. Whilst liturgical change began denominationally, it became ecumenical in its development³¹. A new emphasis emerged on the participation of the laity and there has been a movement towards a central liturgical position. The result has been that Catholics place more emphasis on the "Word" and Protestants have taken a new interest in the actual communion and its meaning.

The negative side of the equation for the Church after the Second World War was the emergence of major theological problems that accelerated the growing process of dissatisfaction with religious matters. The result was further de-Christianisation and

²⁹ Davies R.E., The Church in Our Times, London, 1979, p.38

³⁰ MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.331

³¹ Davies, *op.cit.*, p.73

atheism. The outcome of all these trends on top of continuing political upheaval was uncertainty and disillusionment. Nevertheless the 60's were a time of great creativity as well as one of destructive energy. As a communications revolution gathered momentum the description of the world by Marshal McLuhan as a global village was coined. Materialism accelerated in the West and for the first time the underdeveloped countries were described as a Third World. These countries threw off the "yolk" of colonialism and the protest against racism intensified. There were widespread student protests, wars continued and Trade Unions became more and more militant. Counter-culture movements began and for women the contraceptive pill accelerated the Feminist movement, as well as ushering in a more sexually permissive age. This corresponded to an apparent decline in ethical behaviour³². The world had entered what has been called the Information Age. At that stage in the sixties it was estimated that 90% of all scientific knowledge had been discovered in the previous fifty years to 1950³³. Since then it has been calculated that the total expansion of knowledge doubled again by the seventies, then doubled again by the eighties and by the middle nineties was being replicated every three years³⁴.

The Breakdown phase at CSC began in the 1950's in the gathering climate of uncertainty. This was unrecognised in the remote, conservative and increasingly wealthy Australia of the time. Ironically at the end of this decade in Australia, there were more religious in Anglican and Catholic communities than ever and the churches appeared to be prospering. This situation did not last and as the effect of the social upheavals of the sixties was felt, Church attendance began a downward spiral as secularism increased. The pattern of deterioration and doubt of the Breakdown period gathered momentum in CSC over the next twenty years. During the first half of this period the decision was taken to withdraw from most of the large institutions. As these momentous decisions were being implemented, further influences on the Community's

³² *Ibid.*, pp.92-93

³³ Crook et al., *op.cit.*, p.25

³⁴ O'Murchu D., Our World in Transition, Sussex, 1995, p.29

spirituality appeared with the diminution of the Benedictine's power and the more prominent role of the Community of the Resurrection.

It has been seen that the inspiration of Charles de Foucauld's concept of "presence" was instrumental in a change in CSC's outreach and experiments were conducted at Glebe in Sydney and Belfast. By the time of the Transitional phase the outlook of the sisters in Glebe had changed due to new needs in the area and a general aging of the members of the Community. It was realised that to be relevant the Community needed to have a greater interaction with the parish and this outlook was pursued in all the centres. The move into the Solomon Islands in collaboration with the Franciscan brothers in the seventies was another new direction undertaken by the Community towards the end of the Breakdown phase. The outreach in Melanesia was in a way like a return to the 19th century, as the work was similar to that undertaken by the Community in the early days in England. The development of a flourishing branch of CSC and the guidance through its formation in Melanesian society, with all its differences, have brought a deeper insight into the flexibility and openness to change needed for the way ahead.

The Second World War had put the Expansion period of CHN on hold and those years can be seen as a short time of consolidation for the Community. After the War withdrawal from some of the large establishments was necessary because of increased governmental involvement and the need for professionalism in this type of institutional work. Renewed energy to expand emerged with the comparatively large numbers of recruits in the fifties and sixties. This atypical phase saw the move into New Guinea also attract new recruits who were interested in overseas missionary work. In the sixties there seemed to be a return to a more typical Stabilization period and at the same time a contemplative influence became apparent which preceded a period of experimentation in community life. Given that the size of the Community at this time was the largest in its history, the external forces beginning to affect all religious communities can only explain the move into the Breakdown phase of the next decades. One such force, which coincided with the Breakdown and Transition phase in both Australian communities, was the serious feminist push for equality in the Church and the ordination of women to

the priesthood.

The twenty years following the beginning of the Breakdown phase for CHN was a time of great change as the institutional work was further relinquished and recruits began to dry up. By the end of the seventies the Community withdrew from New Guinea. The Transition phase that appears to have begun in the eighties saw the establishment of the two breakaway communities and the involvement in diverse practical ministries of the members as expressions of the prayer life.

Diversification and individualism has also been the expression of the outreach undertaken in recent years by SSA. Unlike CHN the Brisbane sisterhood was badly affected by the Second World War. This, combined with a lack of recruits, eventually convinced SSA to consolidate and centralise its activities by the 1960's. Consequently a Breakdown phase began with the withdrawal over the next twenty years from most of the schools, orphanages and the hospitals. Due to the conservative nature of the Society little change seems to have arisen in the outlook at this time. This stage lasted until the eighties when the aging of the community members and the lack of recruits made it imperative that new directions for survival be found. It was seen earlier that by 1995 the SSA still retained ownership of its two large schools in Brisbane but were not involved in day-to-day management. Instead the sisters established and ran a very popular Spiritual Centre in the grounds of St Margaret's where retreats and conferences were conducted. So by the middle of the nineties, most of the small number of sisters who remained were involved in spiritual ministry, social work, chaplaincy or visiting. All of these activities of the Transitional phase were felt to be fulfilling the original aims of the Society and the spiritual ethos, which had developed over time.

In the last decades of this century, the reorganisation of the outreach of the three communities was brought about by the re-evaluation of the position and function of each community in relation to the original ideals and the spiritual ethos, which had developed. From the 1960's the increasing loss of institutional work opened the way for the communities to adopt a more contemplative approach. The reduction in the times of

communal prayer meant those members who had that inclination could follow a more individual inner life. The alteration in outlook from self-abnegation to responsibility was the fulcrum for this change and arose in all religious orders after the Second World War.

The early community had developed to see the future in institutional work as did its Roman Catholic counterpart; an outlook which was encouraged by various clerical supporters in Australia. Even though great success was achieved, the problem with this scenario was the small number of recruits that the sisterhoods managed to attract. There was never a surge of applicants to run these enterprises on a similar scale to the Roman Church. The Anglican communities managed to cope for many years by using employed help and that of their associate groups, which they all instituted. In the recent decades of falling vocation it is of interest that a trend has emerged in Roman communities to begin a similar associate movement³⁵.

After much introspection in the Breakdown period most of the close involvement with the large institutions, with which the sisterhoods had been successful for many years, was relinquished. By 1995 the sisters chiefly worked in individual ministries, in many ways more challenging work, but conducted in a much more covert way. A few were priests, some deacons and chaplains, but all worked in areas where people were in need. So while these activities were an indication of a new found area of self-expression for the members of religious communities, the effect on individual and group spirituality which these shifts in activity brought about was significant and general.

It appears that the three major Anglican communities found themselves in the Transition phase of the religious life in the last decade of the twentieth century. It was argued in the last chapter that if the specific symbolic mottos were removed such as "the Holy Name", the Advent" or "For the Church of God", as expression of their

³⁵Leavey C. & O'Neill R., Gathered in God's Name, New Horizons in Australian Religious Life, Sydney, 1996, p.121

spiritual ethos, it was difficult for the individual to classify the spirituality of a particular group. Given the movement to the conformity of outreach in these communities, the Mission Statement of CSC for 1995, which one member quoted in answer to the group spirituality question in the survey, seemed to be a good general summary of the spiritual ethos of the three communities,

By our worship, ministry and life in Community, we desire to be channels of the reconciling love and acceptance of Christ, to acknowledge the dignity of every person and to enable others to encounter the living God whom we seek.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Future*Free to be prophetic*

In Australia at the end of the twentieth century, in an era of increasing secularism and religious pluralism that has been called the post-Christian age, the viability of the religious communal life is in danger. Indeed, all religious orders in the Western world are suffering from a dearth of aspirants at the end of the twentieth century. The life as it has been traditionally organised is for many people an incomprehensible challenge, almost an affront, to the values of the world. This challenge has always been the case and the mission of the religious life, even if it has often been sublimated by other considerations. The tendency to the creation of any sort of alternative community or sect has always been a paramount cause of animosity from the general society¹. Hill has argued that the religious order is a form of sect within the Church and there is certainly a long history of acrimony and tension between religious orders and the Church hierarchy². This argument is reinforced by Wilson's definition of a sect as "a separated body of believers which arise in protest against existing clerical and perhaps also secular authority"³. Its prime features are voluntarism and exclusivity in which religion is the most important aspect of the life⁴. Discipline is rigorous and to counteract the effects of secularism, separateness is practised. If the effects of secularism become too strong, as some would argue has lately occurred, then the criteria which distinguish the community from the general society become obscure and the community must lose its reason for being and cannot find potential recruits. In the active religious life this has been witnessed by a continual decline in membership over the last decades. In contrast, Roman contemplative groups are not suffering to the same extent. The continuity of structure and discipline are two essential ingredients for the successful viability of a sect and the reason for the apparent lack of dissension in the contemplative orders appears to

¹ Wilson B.R., The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism, Oxford, 1990, p.18, 68

² Hill M., The Religious Order, London, 1973, p.12

³ Wilson *op.cit.*, p.106

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3

be due to the stringency of this ascetic, disciplined lifestyle in which the essentials of the life have not changed.

Problems for the classical religious life were in evidence before Vatican II's much heralded calls for renewal and reform. The Anglican sisterhoods in England had been in decline since much earlier in the century. This trend accelerated from the sixties so that by 1988 the number of female Anglican religious in England had fallen by over half from about 2,000 in 1963 to under 1,000⁵. At the same time, the three major Anglican communities in Australia encountered the same problem like their Roman Catholic counterparts, which had reached their zenith in numbers by the mid sixties⁶. The Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) had always managed to maintain their worldwide numbers at about 150 but by the end of the century there had been about a 40% reduction. On the other hand, the Community of the Holy Name (CHN) and the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) had decreased by between one half and three-quarters from their optimum numbers⁷.

A case has been argued that the issues faced by the religious life were internal⁸. So while the initial strain felt in communities was seen to be due to the paradox that arose between the call for self-fulfilment on the one hand, and the authority structure and call to obedience in community life on the other, this movement was also affected by trends and events in society which brought about enormous change⁹. The rise of lay influence, combined with the spirituality of presence, feminism and environmentalism, led to a new accent on the earthly aspect of the Kingdom of God and its ideals of justice, love and peace. It is evident that this outlook has dramatically changed the quest for

⁵ Wilkinson A., The Community of the Resurrection, London, 1992, p.342

⁶ MacGinley M.R., A Dynamic of Hope, Sydney, 1996, p.331

⁷ CHN, SSA, Archives - List of Professed sisters

⁸ Harrison A., Bound for Life, Oxford, 1983, p.xiv

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13

perfection of the individual in the religious life to the modern ideal of wholeness. A further outcome has seen changes in the outreach of communities and a resultant uncertainty about their function.

Much soul-searching has been undertaken on the state of religious orders and the reasons for their decline in membership. Since Vatican II, recurrent themes run through the work of inquirers into the nature of the religious life. First, it has been pointed out that the formation of religious communities has always been a radical call to follow Jesus in the search for God, with the resultant lifestyle a prophetic example of the Christian way; secondly, in this day and age many of the old ways of going about this call are seen to be no longer relevant and new ways have to be found if the life is to survive.

Alan Harrison, a former secretary of the English Advisory Council of Religious Communities, and at one stage a chaplain to CSC in England, was one who interpreted this for Anglicans. He was a liberating influence on the Australian communities through his writings and visit to this country¹⁰. Harrison based his advice on the premise that Anglican religious, like their counterparts in Roman Catholicism, are prophetic people living on the fringes of the Church and therefore need to “travel light” and not be encumbered by inflexible regulations¹¹. He warned against the dangers of institutionalisation that humans seem to love, and emphasised that it is the job of the prophet to break this down. Whilst he acknowledged that the religious life in the Anglican Communion had suffered since its inception from the added problem of being seen in most quarters as peripheral to the life of the Church, or even an aberration, he believed that no longer do communities have to justify their existence by the active work undertaken. They are therefore free to be prophetic as their founders meant them to be¹².

¹⁰ Sr Patricia SI, Telephone Interview, 15/2/96

¹¹ Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.47-48

¹² *Ibid.*, p.93; Penhale F., The Anglican Church Today: Catholics in Crisis, London, 1986, p.99; Sr Marianne Whyte SSA, The Impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Theology of the Religious

Just as Anglican communities have always needed to justify their existence through their practical outreach, Roman Catholic researchers argue that this too has become the problem for the active orders in their Church - because the question for too long has been, what do communities do, not what do they stand for in society¹³? As Rausch argues, all religious communities begin as radical counter-culture movements, which, once successful, lose the vision of the reason for their formation. He points out that while this has always been so, only some communities are successfully able to renew themselves¹⁴. This argument is repeatedly found in the literature, so that on the one hand, a reappraisal of the original vision for communities in trouble is urged, but on the other, cautions that this cannot be too rigorously followed. Others, like Murphy, argue that it should not even be attempted. He believes that it is a contributory factor in the disintegration of a community¹⁵. While this may be so, it is estimated that ten percent of communities survive with a renewed concept of the original charism. Although this is not a huge number, at least it is not total eclipse as was predicted by large numbers in an Australian survey of Roman Catholic religious and clergy¹⁶. Therefore it appears that two options are open to the members of religious communities; either the continuing dilemma of which new path should be followed or to continue with trust that God will direct them in due course.

In the last chapter it was proposed that the life span of a religious community goes through a cyclical series of phases (after Fitz & Cada) in the growth, deterioration and

Life, Unpub. Ms, 1996, p.43

¹³ Chittister J., The Fire in these Ashes, Sydney, 1995, p.3

¹⁴ Rausch T.P., Radical Christian Communities, Minnesota, 1990, p.13

¹⁵ Murphy D., The Death and Rebirth of Religious Life, Sydney, 1995, p.ix

¹⁶ Goldsmith M., 'Change versus Control - Will seeds be free to grow?' McLay A. (ed), Men and Women in Religious Life, Melbourne, 1990, pp.2-3

the death or rebirth of a religious community¹⁷. The Transition phase (which is the last of the proposed hypothetical phases) is the one in which most communities find themselves today. It is an era of wide disillusionment with organised religion and the three possibilities for the religious life in this phase are seen to be extinction, minimal survival or revitalisation¹⁸. It was seen in the preceding phase of Breakdown, that the three major Anglican communities all spent a great deal of effort in trying to redefine the original vision of their communities. At the same time much emotional trauma was expended in making large changes to the practical outreach. Except in the case of CSC and their flourishing centres in the developing area of the Solomons, little effect has been seen on stemming the exodus of personnel or the recruitment of new members. This does not necessarily mean that the reforms that have been undertaken are wrong for this age, or that recruitment will not pick up in the near future.

One outcome in this century of great change has been the diminution of the support system of community living humans seem to require. This has resulted in loneliness and feelings of alienation from society for many people. Disillusionment with the often impersonal, institutional churches was also part of a movement from the fifties onwards that produced the growth of alternative societies with different forms of communal life. This movement was also in part responsible for the stirring of discontent in the religious life. New expressions of a lay religious communal life first emerged in Brazil in the fifties. These Basic Christian or Small Christian Communities have since become interdenominational as well as worldwide¹⁹. They are expressions of the rise of lay spirituality and the re-emergence of the concept of the Church as the people of God. The emphasis of the position of the laity in the Kingdom of God has come to be associated with service to the disadvantaged and the poor, as well as the promotion of social justice and the protection of the environment²⁰.

¹⁷Murphy, *op.cit.*, pp.28ff; Sr Cecilia Cahill R.S.M., 'Woman of the Church', St Mark's Review, Dec.1980, pp.28ff

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.32

¹⁹ O'Halloran J., Signs of Hope, New York, 1991, p.7

²⁰ Britt M., In Search of New Wine Skins, Melbourne, 1988, p. 39

It can be argued that the emergence of monasticism in continental Protestantism, as expressed at Taize and Grandchamp, is also a result of the failure of institutionalised religion to satisfy the spiritual needs of individuals. The members of these communities follow the spirituality of "presence" among the poor, seen in the followers of Foucauld in this century and the practitioners of Liberation Theology²¹. Indeed the success of this type of monasticism, as the communities have developed to be truly interdenominational, has shown what can be achieved through ecumenical spirituality²².

This era also saw the emergence of secular counter-culture communities and new religious movements that tended to have autocratic leaders. By the 1980's the emphasis was on "New Age" religion, a misnomer that covered an enormous spectrum of thought and actions that above all else were not "New". These religious movements, which have been called post-Christian spiritualities, can have single concerns or be mixtures of spiritual, social and political forces. They are often associated with some or all of the phenomena of magic, Eastern religions, pantheism, astrology or various types of meditation techniques. They are usually based on the divinity of humanity and promote a secret path to happiness and health on which nobody ever really dies²³.

Although Australian history has not been characterised in 200 years by the generation of any new religion, overseas sects and movements have been readily absorbed²⁴. Consequently from the seventies, Australia experienced the same sort of communal movements as have occurred overseas. The types of communities that developed can be broadly classified into three groups - counterculture, bourgeois and religious²⁵. The latter range from people who meet to pray together to those with a particular outreach.

²¹ Rausch, *op.cit.*, p.146

²² *Ibid.*, p.127

²³ Tucker R.A., *Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement*, Michigan, 1989, p.319; see also Bromley D.G. & Hammond P.E. (eds), *The Future of new Age Religious Movements*, Georgia, 1987, p.256

²⁴ Carey H., *Believing in Australia*, Sydney, 1996, p.177

²⁵ McKnight J., *Australian Christian Communes*, Sydney, 1990, p.25

They may be residential or not, pool resources, live in family groups or as singles, or be a mixture of all of these²⁶. Most members of the religious groups are conservative, middle class and middle aged²⁷. The largest group, comprising sixty percent of the total, are Roman Catholic while the second largest reflect an Anabaptist legacy²⁸. The outlook is usually one of fundamentalism and authoritarianism, while sexual roles are stereotyped²⁹. To succeed, like the sect, they primarily need to have a fully articulated organisational form³⁰.

At the end of the twentieth century, the trend in the institutional churches has been for the declining congregations to adopt aspects of the Basic or Small Christian Community. The average parish community does not mirror the external society as it once did. To belong to a parish is seen to be special and unusual, rather like belonging to a cult that is inward looking and tends towards fundamentalism. This situation, which emulates in a way the early Christian Church, is as alien to secular life as the religious community was once seen to be. Therefore this movement may be another factor in the decline of aspirants to the communal religious life. Bearing in mind this trend in the parish, the use of the word "community" has obviously become confused. Leavey and O'Neill have attempted to distinguish the new small religious communities in Australia from the parish community groups. They have classified these communities into five groups: -

1. New Religious Communities
2. Small or Basic Christian Communities
3. Communities of Presence
4. Communities of Outreach
5. Charismatic Communities³¹.

²⁶ Britt, *op.cit.*, 1988, p.20

²⁷ McKnight, *op.cit.*, p.8

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.40

²⁹ Leavey C., & O'Neill R., Gathered in God's Name, Sydney, 1996, p.xii

³⁰ Wilson, *op.cit.*, p.3

³¹ Leavey / O'Neill, *op.cit.*, p.36

In the first group are found all the small Anglican religious orders begun since 1970, the majority of which are contemplative groups. The Clare Community, Community of Christ the King (CCK), the Camperdown Benedictines and, the exception to the contemplative trend, the Sisters of the Incarnation (SI). A small breakaway group of Franciscans from the Society of St Francis live as hermits at Tabulum, NSW, while a Third Order Franciscan group has been established in Launceston, Tasmania. The latter group are ecumenical and have a core of three Anglican and Roman Catholic members, one of whom has taken temporary vows. The community is under the protection of the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania but it seems his Roman Catholic counterpart is not very enthused about the group. Nonetheless the community is affiliated with Third Order Franciscans based in Rome and the USA³².

The Small Christian Community groups are all residential and can be divided into those with parish/diocesan affiliation, those that are broader in scope and cross parish boundaries and those which are critical of Church theology. In 1995, the Gungahlin House Church represented Anglicanism in the first of these sub-groupings. An initiative of the diocese, it grew from the concept of a House Church in a newly developed district of Canberra. After some success the membership had seriously declined, although a core group remained³³.

In the Communities of Presence there were several Anglican groups. They were all residential and committed to hospitality, spiritual renewal and healing. In other words, their outreach was similar to the vowed religious communities but most have taken a position critical of the Church in varying degrees³⁴. One such venture that was highly successful for 25 years was the Avalon Community at Lara on Corio Bay near Melbourne. It was founded in 1967 by the Rev. Vernon Cohen with the encouragement

³² *Ibid.*, p.43

³³ *Ibid.*, p.65

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.87

of Archbishop Frank Woods in a property provided by the Brotherhood of St Lawrence³⁵. The aim of this group was to provide a home for varying periods for the mental, physical and spiritual renewal of those in need. This healing community was assisted by donations from parishes and individuals and the guests were expected to share the work and pay reasonable board³⁶.

Members of the Avalon community were men or women under 45, married or single, of different denominations and emotionally and physically strong. Outside employment was not undertaken and everything was shared in common with a small individual weekly allowance allocated. While a communal prayer life was shared, based on the Anglican liturgy, vows were not taken and the community met as a Chapter every week. The Rule was "to live God with one's whole life and to live and care for fellow men"³⁷. By 1979 over 10,000 guests had shared the life for shorter or longer periods and in the silver anniversary year it was reported that there had been 15,000 guests over a three-year period. At that stage there were six community members but the group ceased to exist over the next few years³⁸.

In 1995, the Community of the Celebration of Christ, located near Canberra was the oldest surviving representative of a Community of Presence. It had existed since the seventies but the group of four regulars and associates was by that stage, small, insecure and aging. Although the community was under the protection of the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, it was highly critical of the secularisation it believed had appeared in the Church³⁹. Further south in Wagga, the Emmaus Community consisted of a married couple and four women. It originated in an Anglican parish but after five years, the parish broke the connection in 1992. This was probably because the membership includes non-Christian, "spiritual seekers", whose aim was to promote the concept that there are other spiritual paths apart from religion. The group comprised core members

³⁵ Church Scene, 27/1/77, p.26

³⁶ Church Scene, 9/3/84, p.15; 8/9/89, p.10

³⁷ Church Scene, 27/1/77, *op.cit.*, p.26; 20/10/79, pp.10-11

³⁸ Church Scene, 20/10/79, p.10; 7/2/92, p.13; 12/6/92, p.18; 9/10/92, p.9

³⁹ Leavey & O'Neill, *op.cit.*, pp.80-82

who could belong for life and other associate members. The aim was to provide spiritual and emotional healing, an appreciation of the land and the promotion of social justice⁴⁰. Another group in this category was found at Tumut and was a residential and associational community named the Little Followers of Francis. This had the protection of both the local Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops. The three life professed members and novice aimed to live a simple lifestyle in a democratic fashion with single and married people. It had the encouragement of the Churches to move beyond denominations, laws, secularism and sexism⁴¹.

The residential Communities of Outreach are mainly Roman Catholic in origin. An exception is the Ca-Naan Community in Melbourne with links to the Anglican Church. It is comprised of a married couple with children and several single members. The special dedication of the group is to homeless youth⁴². Of the groups remaining in the Leavey/O'Neill classification, the non-residential Outreach Communities are from different denominations, while most of the Charismatic Covenant groups are Roman Catholic in outlook⁴³.

The conclusion agreed upon by researchers in the field of new religious movements is that they are usually unstable. As a result most collapse usually on the questions of authority, money, and if applicable, children⁴⁴. Rausch has pointed out that an added problem is that the members are often frustrated people looking for some sort of therapeutic support from the community⁴⁵. Despite the problems which the question of authority seems to present to these new religious movements, there is no doubt that authority in some form is necessary for the stability of any communal life, otherwise

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.84-5

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.82-83; p.87

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.97

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.100

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.147; McKnight, *op.cit.*, p.25; Bromley/Hammond, *op.cit.*, p.13; Wilson, *op.cit.*, p.228

⁴⁵ Rausch, *op.cit.*, p.192

chaos develops. The problem is finding the right consistency for different forms of living. In general the contemplative enclosed groups, while they may have changed in some aspects, still have very rigid restrictions imposed from above and yet seem to be surviving. In contrast, many Roman Catholic active orders have dispensed altogether with the concept of an autocratic superior. These communities have dropped the title of "mother" and instead have either a co-ordinator with little personal power or a system of shared responsibility⁴⁶. While none of the Anglican religious communities have gone quite as far as these orders, it has been seen that the authority structures have changed since the sixties in the move to self-responsibility.

A further result of the scrutiny of the life has been the questioning of the false analogy of the religious community as a family. This is because the unreality of the concept has been realised in a group of adults who are usually of the same sex. The outcome has been the removal of unyielding authoritarianism and the accent has changed to the responsibility of each member for one another. The other great change in community life has been the shift from the self-sufficient and world-rejecting community to a more open one in which the members expect to have authentic personal relationships both inside and outside the community⁴⁷.

Therefore on the same agenda as the problem with authority is the need to redefine community life itself. This is to enable those who enter the mixed or active religious life to persevere in the face of the emerging worldview - whatever that may be. The challenge is to put in place flexible structures so that redefinition can be ongoing in the accelerating rate of change that shows no signs of abating.

In 1989 at a conference of the male and female American supervisors of Roman Catholic religious orders, a blueprint for the future was drafted. This document - "Transformative Elements for the Religious Life" - saw that religious would serve a

⁴⁶ MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.330

⁴⁷Smith M.L., 'In Celebration of the Religious Life', Encounter and Exchange, Sept 1993, p.13

prophetic role in Church and society by critically analysing current values. As far as the individual is concerned, the spirituality of the community will be one of wholeness. Apart from this basic outlook, an attempt was made to forecast the makeup of the religious community by 2010. It was seen that this future community could include persons of different ages, cultures, races, and sexual orientation. These possibilities extended as well to a mixture of lay/cleric, single/married, vowed/unvowed members or even interfaith members⁴⁸. Some of these criteria already exist in the Anglican Small Religious Communities in Australia like the Clare Community and the Camperdown Benedictines. In the mixed Anglican communities many of these mixtures are present as well. Older women are now readily accepted, as are those who have been divorced, while considerable numbers of Anglican religious have Roman Catholic nuns as their spiritual advisers. Of the seven communities in Australia, four have a female priest as a member.

The Clare Community has developed the most innovative outlook on the future and seems to fit many of the possibilities forecast by the American conference. This approach is based on ecumenism, feminism and protection of the environment. While a modified Rule of St Clare is followed, a drastic modification has been the introduction of two streams of life, a traditional and an alternate stream. In the latter, vows will be renewed every year even though there is a life intention. This group will not wear habits or be known as nuns. In a more innovative move it is envisaged that the leader of the group could come from either stream. The idea is also being left open that eventually the community may develop into a group with a core of contemplatives whose life is shared for varying times by lay people. The other possibility is of an ecumenical monastic contemplative group open to both men and women and even married people⁴⁹. Despite the forward-looking concept of these proposals, few new members had joined the Community by the end of 1995 even though there was no shortage of temporary aspirants.

⁴⁸Fiand B., Where Two or Three are Gathered Together, New York, 1993, pp.15-16

⁴⁹ Interview with Sr Angela CC, Stroud, 8/2/95; Church Scene, 7/10/88, p.21

In England the growth area in Anglican religious life is the Franciscan arena. In 1993 there were fifteen Franciscan houses that attracted two thousand Tertiaries⁵⁰. This trend to lay adherents has been a feature in Australia as well. CHN, SSA, the Community of Christ the King, the Benedictine group and the Franciscans have formed oblate-type bodies. These members undertake annually to abide by a strict individual Rule based on the evangelical counsels. The Rule brings with it a commitment to service in the world and the Church plus a deeper prayer fellowship with the core membership of the communities. The oblate groups are much more closely linked with the life of the full members than were the earlier associate organisations. It is hoped that this type of community, with a nucleus of fully professed, may be one important way forward in the future. There does seem to be a "lay hunger for half monasticism"⁵¹.

The questions asked in the survey of Australian communities concerning the future and possible makeup of Anglican communities found that three-quarters of the respondents believed the religious life would survive even if it took another form. One-third believed that the latter would be the case. Overall, the Anglican sisters seemed more confident of the survival of the religious life than their Roman Catholic counterparts. In a 1990 survey in Australia, 50% of Roman Catholic priests believed that the religious life could not survive. Seventeen percent of nuns agreed with that outlook and 83% insisted far more change was necessary for survival⁵².

The more positive attitude of the Anglican sisters in the survey is interesting given the different positions the religious life has held in the two denominations. In contrast to the Anglican scene, religious orders have always been an accepted, important part of Roman Catholicism. After the Reformation, the post-Tridentine women's communities were answerable to the diocesan bishop or the head of the equivalent male order. From the middle of the 19th century many applied to be directly answerable to the Pope and

⁵⁰ Graham Y.M., The Church Hesitant, London, 1993, p.184, 191

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.192

⁵² Goldsmith/ McLay, *op.cit.*, p.2

by 1900, Leo XIII granted them internal government⁵³. Although Anglican communities owe much of their basic structure to Roman orders they are an adaptation of these institutions and what the Tractarians perceived medieval English orders to be. The earliest Anglican groups were established by male clergy in concert with a female founder and initially much power was taken by the men. Although there may have been clerical input to the government and ordering of the sisterhoods, the Church did not play an important part in formulating the Rule and constitutions like the situation in Roman orders. Once the Rule was finalised the Anglican group became virtually autonomous in line with the lack of centralised authority in the Church.

It seems logical that the Romans would have been far more positive concerning the survival of the religious life, given their numbers and the cyclical nature of the death and rebirth of the life. It can be postulated that the Anglican confidence is due to several factors, which ironically were negative ones in their institution. Firstly, there is the freedom these communities have always possessed in controlling the direction they take. This is due to disinterest and lack of support from the Church in general; the theological freedom which Anglicans have compared to the Roman Church and as well their community freedom from the restraints of canon law. Secondly, one of the problems for the religious life in this age that is affecting the mixed groups in Anglicanism and the active groups in Roman Catholicism is the disappearance of the traditional institutional outreach. In Roman Catholicism the marked distinction between the active and contemplative life has been quite different to the mixed contemplative/active nature of most Anglican groups. The loss of purpose in the segregated active orders is far greater than in those which always undertook a far more intense prayer life and have moved more towards the interior side of the life. A third consideration is that the modern loss of status of the nun in Roman Catholicism does not affect her Anglican counterpart. This is because here never was any status and in many cases just indifference or disapproval.

The great problem for Roman Catholic women in the Church's life is their lack of

⁵³ MacGinley, *op.cit.*, p.59, 79ff

power or decision-making capability in the patriarchal Church. This is in complete contrast to their expectations in secular society. While the battle for the ordination of women has been fought and won in Anglicanism, it will be a much harder road for Roman Catholic women. Since Vatican II the congregations reformed their constitutions and customary themselves, so that apart from changes which included those to the habit and the return of many to their baptismal names, most nuns have been given the opportunity of academic theological education. Consequently they are often far better educated than the clergy to whom they are subordinate⁵⁴. This situation in which women have no real voice in the Church and no final say in the way the religious life is to be led, must create grave disenchantment for professed religious as well as for those who may feel they have a vocation to the life.

The suggestions offered in the 1995 Anglican survey for the possible constitution of future communities all stressed the importance of flexibility and evolution. Many sisters pointed to changes that had already occurred in the religious life and which were expected to further evolve. The modernisation of the life was expressed by one Anglican sister as personal responsibility in dress, work, friendships and prayer life. This, she explained, had all resulted in a new attitude to the outside world and to other communities - men and women. She believed that this humanised the religious life so that people living in the world now have a more realistic understanding of the women in religious life as individuals who are just following a particular vocation.

The sisters expressed different views on the traditional basic principles and composition of community life. Some saw perpetual vows as essential because of the stability they bring. Others did not agree but postulated a core of professed, with a body of oblate-type members, who would mainly live and work in the outside world. One Anglican example of this can be seen in the Confraternity of Divine Love, an associate not an oblate group that always financially supported the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary (OSEH). Although there were only three professed sisters left in OSEH in England by 1992, membership of the Confraternity continued to be healthy with 200 members

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.330

throughout the world, much the same number as had always belonged⁵⁵.

In the survey, sisters pictured future communities composed of men and women of different ages, possibly disabled, married or single, who would take vows for varying times. Whatever changes may occur, the overriding factor was seen to remain the prayer life in common because it is the glue that keeps a community together. It was also pointed out that responsibility to God, not to a Rule, was the basis of the religious life. One long-term member from CHN offered a quotation from Alan Harrison to explain what this meant,

The future is exciting for religious communities. The communities of the future will be smaller but more deeply committed to one another, and they will more effectively be seen to be, not an optional extra, but very much part of the Church...

They must sit loosely to structures and refuse to build protective towers in defence of what is now out of date and irrelevant. They must never forget that they are marginal people looking both outwards and inwards - in short- a prophetic people - whether their life is expressed within the enclosure or in social involvementClinging to old and loved ways will not preserve us⁵⁶

The idea that the survival and make up of the religious community in the future was in God's hands was a popular one with CHN members. This attitude is one also proposed by some of the leading Roman Catholics inquirers in the field. This approach emphasises that the members of religious orders are sick of looking back at the past or speculating about the future. As the present is the only time that exists, the path to follow is seen to be one of doing the best possible now, remembering the basic aim of the religious life is the search for God⁵⁷.

For some time there has been a trend in community religious life in the wider Church to a more contemplative life. It has been seen that all except one of the Australian

⁵⁵ Bignell M., Little Grey Sparrows, Nedlands, 1992, p.190

⁵⁶ Sr Aileen CHN, quoting Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.107-108

⁵⁷ Chittister, *op.cit.*, p.42, 45

Anglican religious communities formed since 1970 was enclosed in varying degrees and contemplative. This life is seen by those who enter and remain to be a life of enormous privilege, not, as it is so often viewed by outsiders, as a waste of a life. As one contemplative Anglican nun wrote this is because they can "get on with the work that matters - filling the world with the spirit of God"⁵⁸.

A considerable proportion of the members of the contemplative groups in the survey questioned the continuing viability of the active or mixed religious life. They felt that those expressions of the religious life had outlived their original commission and the conflict, which had arisen between professionalism and the basic religious life, was too great for survival - a situation they believed did not exist with the contemplative whose ethos was not to serve humanity but just to be. Despite this attitude the contemplatives were realistic about their chances of survival given their small numbers. This is evident in one reply from a nun at CCK, who wrote that,

The traditional understanding of the religious life as one lived, as a life-long commitment under the threefold vows seems to be fundamental. It has waned many times and been revived. I hope that will continue to be the case.

Wilkinson believes one reason for the loss of members in Anglican women's religious orders in England is due to the decline of Anglo-Catholicism, particularly among the young, and the emergence of a more liberal Catholic outlook that seems to be not very interested in the religious life⁵⁹. It has also been argued that interest seems to have been lost in religious orders in England and there is never much discussion about them as there was in the past⁶⁰. This latter situation has always existed in Australia.

⁵⁸Sister of CC, 'The Heart of the Church', St Mark's Review, Dec.1980, p.37

⁵⁹Wilkinson *op.cit.*, p.344

⁶⁰Penhale, *op.cit.*, p.101

In the 1930's Cary believed that the test of the value of the forms of the religious life which had become established in the Church of England and which may be established in the future,

will lie in their ability to claim the allegiance, or at any rate to command the respect and sympathy, of the great body of the faithful and the best minds among their leaders⁶¹.

If Cary was right, and it seems likely that he was, the problem for the religious life is that the laity has never been won over even though some of the hierarchy have. A good example being Archbishop Carey of Canterbury, an Evangelical, who in this ecumenical age has become very interested in the religious life. The problem then remains of persuading the laity of the relevance of the new forms of the life which will emerge in the new age.

Many problems have arisen for attracting and maintaining personnel in the traditional way of the religious life. A feeling exists that this communal way of life is dead and to regenerate it, the charism of the founders must be redefined and new paths determined. On the other hand, a strong body of opinion holds that such attempted reanimation is pointless and all that can be done is to trust in God who is in control anyway. Consequently much effort has been expended in examining what "community" should mean in the religious life at the end of the 20th century. In this process flexibility and evolution are seen as the corner stones of the future community in line with a change in the former authoritarian structures to an accent on responsibility for self and others. What has arisen is the reclaiming of the original vision of such a community as being a radical call to follow Jesus as prophetic people.

Out of all the intense scrutiny of the life and the soul-searching of the last decades, the one enduring belief which all seem to agree upon is that it must be recognised that the vocation to the religious life remains a call from God to God and not to a particular field

⁶¹ Cary H.L.M., 'Revival of the Religious Life', Williams N.P. & Harris C. (ed), Northern Catholicism, London, 1933, p.339

of work, however righteous that may appear to be.

Sister Elisabeth SSA (1887-1971) wrote many years ago,

In an age when men sit lightly to their word, to live under the threefold vows is to emphasise the sacredness of the pledged word. In an age when material possession and ownership have taken over the lives of so many, when sexuality has been exalted into a thing divorced from all love and true affection and when so many are finding not freedom but slavery through the erection of the individual will - in such an age, the Religious Life is a sign, a symbol, a pointer to other standards of value.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of the religious life into the Church of England in the nineteenth century and its subsequent transplantation to Australia has been examined. Emanating from this has been first, the construction of a composite overview of the history and outreach of religious communities for women in Australian Anglicanism. Secondly, an analysis of the inner life of these groups has been made, as well as a comparison of the three major sisterhoods.

After the initial phase of institution, the development of sisterhoods in Victorian England gave promise of a movement, which would assume real importance in the Church. Instead, the rapid expansion of the numbers of women assuming the life in England came to a halt by the beginning of the First World War. Since then numbers have slowly dwindled until, at the end of the twentieth century, the total of professed has dropped by two-thirds from its peak at the beginning of the century. Through a different combination of circumstances and the lag in the establishment of the sisterhoods in Australia, the most successful time overall for the communities in the continent was the interwar period. The Community of the Holy Name was alone in expanding to its maximum numbers in the 1960's but since then, like the other communities, its numbers have decreased in a similar way to the English experience.

In the century since their introduction into Australia, the sisterhoods managed to attract about 250 fully professed members. Additionally there have been at least another 100 nuns who have worked in the country because of the overseas membership of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, SSA, the Order of St Elizabeth of Hungary and some of the smaller communities. Similar numbers of Australian deaconesses have been commissioned as women entering the religious life in this country. This presents a quite different picture to the English scene where sisterhoods were overwhelmingly more popular than the Deaconess Movement. Nevertheless it is fair to say that Australian Anglicanism has not been productive of either calling.

The surprising introduction of sisterhoods in the nineteenth century was into a Church far removed from that which existed in England before the Reformation. It was therefore not a "revival" of the religious life into the Established Church of England. The Tractarian originators of the first Anglican orders adopted the paradigm of community life and the prescribed liturgy of monasticism in combination with social work among the poor and distressed. The mission work undertaken by the early communities expanded into institutional social work similar to the outreach of many active Roman Catholic women's orders on which they were modelled in many ways. In contrast to these congregations, the difficult task was undertaken of trying to combine two distinct, and almost incompatible, ways of life in the combination of prayer and work of a mixed community. This model was necessary because the Victorian Church would not have tolerated contemplative monasticism by itself at the time. To gain support for the sisterhoods, the accent was publicly placed on the social work while the spiritual life and the aim of personal holiness was underplayed. To enable the rigorous program of prayer and work to be undertaken by the sisterhoods, the creation of various forms of associate membership occurred. All communities introduced this type of component without which most could not have coped either physically or financially. These associates, men and women, outnumbered by far the professed and it can be argued this was one avenue of expansion that could have been developed and possibly moulded into a new form of the religious life. This could have been particularly relevant to the Australian scene.

Twenty years after the introduction of sisterhoods the Protestant answer to the religious orders was the Deaconess Movement. While these women undertook similar active work to the sisters, corporate spirituality was not intended to be a feature. The trend initially was for English deaconesses to live in community but this tended to bring about a progression to the religious life with a common prayer life and rules of behaviour. Although other factors were involved, this was seen in Australia in the development of the deaconesses who ran the Mission to the Streets and Lanes to form the Community of the Holy Name. In Sydney the communal model for deaconesses was not followed for long and the women lived and worked quite independently of each

other.

For many years it seems that the Deaconess Movement was the poor relative of religious communities in status and in attracting personnel. One of the chief reasons for this was said to be the independence of the religious communities from the Church and the parish priest - a situation that has been seen by some as the emergence of incipient feminism and one example for the future emancipation of women. From a later perspective it can be seen that the struggle for emancipation was not undertaken by religious communities, nor was the later fight for female ordination to the priesthood. Deaconesses were among the primary movers in this latter campaign and ironically success meant the end of their form of work in the Church. It can be argued that the lack of involvement by the sisterhoods in the struggle for political enfranchisement was attributable to the nature of the vows, which were taken, and the encouragement of self-negation and humility.

The patterns of work undertaken by the sisterhoods and deaconesses were similar, particularly in the early days, but the two groups were quite different. While both were formed to work within the Church, deaconesses were never intended to lead the vowed religious life. Although in a parochial situation these women may have been under the direction of the parish priest, this was really only to the extent of any other secular job that women of the time undertook. Thus in this context, the Deaconess Movement, like the development of the nursing profession, can be seen as an extension of the incipient progress towards emancipation that the early sisterhoods were supposed to represent.

While autonomy from the parochial clergy was seen as one of the major reasons for the success of sisterhoods, it may actually have been a basic cause for their ultimate lack of growth and influence. This is because of the position of the parish priest in Anglicanism. It has been claimed that because of the absence of central authority in the Anglican Church and the spiritual freedom of its members, the focal point of the faith is the parish priest in his pastoral mission¹. Therefore it can be argued that as the parish is

¹ Lloyd R., The Church of England, London, 1966,p.21

the centre of Church life, the independence of sisterhoods so that they are “in but not of” the Church, automatically shifts them to its margins.

In England the religious life was introduced primarily because of the spirituality of the Tractarian Movement. In Australia the reasons were more utilitarian and social needs, particularly in education, were the catalyst. Consequently the emphasis on the practical outreach of the dedicated life style continued and intensified. There is no doubt that this attitude was detrimental to the understanding and the encouragement of the concept of vocation. Moreover it was damaging to sympathy with the communality of the spirituality of the religious order, which is at the core of the life. It further contributed to the late arrival in Australia in the twentieth century of purely contemplative orders.

Notwithstanding the accent on the outreach, the lack of diocesan financial support and even an end to moral support for the sisterhoods in later times in previously supportive dioceses, the ultimate success of the religious communities and the Deaconess Movement depended on the dominant churchmanship and its active co-operation in the powerful and usually homogeneous dioceses. The major exception to this monochrome hue was in Melbourne where a more open, heterogeneous diocese than most had developed. Despite the High Church outlook shown by many dioceses, Anglo-Catholicism remained very much a clerical attitude as it did in the Mother Church. In contrast the laity leaned far more towards a common Protestant outlook with its intense dislike of all manifestations of Roman Catholicism, particularly Irish. Much of this attitude was attributable to the circumstances of the settlement, the resultant population mix of the vast continent and the distinct way in which the Church developed.

When both forms of dedicated work for women were introduced in the colonies, similar arguments in support of each group were proposed as had eventuated in England. The Roman-like Anglican nuns epitomised the fear of Rome nurtured amongst the Protestant denominations. Moreover the dread of ritualism and its close association with the religious communities deepened the dislike of many Anglicans for these groups of women. Apart from any theological misgivings concerning Anglican nuns, they were

vilified for their independence from clerical control and the fear of their capacity to undermine the life of the family. The outcome was that alienation usually developed between the two fields of women's work, which became polarised along religious party lines.

In the late nineteenth century an important role attributed to religious communities and deaconesses was their evangelising capabilities in the mission of the Church to the heathen and the indifferent. As far as the former were concerned, part of their traditional missionary role was as an example of the way the Christian life should be led. In Australia the prototype of an urban religious community was transferred into a totally different environment, socially, geographically and religiously. This model was expected to be as successful as it had been in the southern English cities. In conjunction with the disproportionate accent on their outreach and scant acknowledgement of their spiritual aims or life led under vow, much of their missionary role was impaired. However the resolve of the pioneering communities, through demanding initiation periods, led to expansion in line with the newly created country. Accordingly they all controlled large institutions throughout the continent well before World War II. Notwithstanding the continual problems, often associated with a lack of numbers, they seemed to be flourishing. For example, Archbishop Wand of Brisbane could describe the Society of the Sacred Advent in the early forties as, "the most important institution in the Anglican Church in Queensland"². Nevertheless despite the achievements of Anglican women's religious orders, there remains a general lack of acknowledgment of their contribution to the Church or the country. This situation is attributable in part to the general invisibility of women in Australian history until late in the twentieth century. The eventual recognition of the unparalleled contribution made by Roman Catholic nuns to education and social work in this country is a reflection of this situation. It has only been since their numbers have been depleted and they have been forced to withdraw from much of their outreach that their contribution has been realised and acknowledged. On a very much smaller scale, Anglican sisters made a similar contribution but in a Church which was often ignorant of their existence or indifferent

² SSA, A Short History of the Society of the Sacred Advent (1892-1942), Brisbane, [1943], p.3

to their spiritual life and aims.

Despite the institutional success of sisterhoods, and the formation and introduction of other smaller communities, their relevance to the missionary needs of the Australian Church was always hindered by the lack of recruitment. In combination with the consequence of low visibility this was a factor in the Australian religious orders being less popular than their counterparts in the Mother Church. While the sisters performed admirably in urban situations and even in many rural towns, the lack of numbers in the latter often led to isolation, loneliness and loss of personnel. They had no place in the outback, as did the bush brotherhoods and the Bush Church Aid Society.

The overview of the history of the religious life traces the shift that the communities underwent during the period of accelerating change, after the Second World War. Difficulties had to be addressed from disruption caused by the war, the unresolved problems from the depression years and the trend to governmental acceptance of its social institutional responsibilities. The latter led to an accent on increasing professionalism and regulation in the care and education of children and in the field of health. The outcome was an inability of the communities to compete with the state-funded secular and Church-run institutions. Ironically this was at a time when the Churches were flourishing and Anglo-Catholicism was at its peak in Australia. From the 1960's, the changing world and an overall slump in Church membership led to a general exploration in a search for identity and direction by the Church. The religious order participated in this general questioning and examined the function and structure of the religious life. This coincided with the beginning of the withdrawal from the institutions run by the communities. The result saw new forms of ministry considered in line with a move to re-evaluate the mission to the world. A further outcome, which was part of a move in the increasingly lay-oriented Church, was a trend to a more contemplative approach to God. The result was a deeper prayer life in some communities and the formation in Australia of purely contemplative orders. Although innovative moves were made in new directions, by the end of the century the future remains unclear. All that is certain is that change will continue. The result has been a

loss of members and a dearth of recruits so that the sisterhoods have undertaken a more hidden existence usually in individual ministries.

An analysis of the attitude of individual sisters to aspects of the religious life related to the past, present and future in all the existing communities was undertaken. This study was directed to an insight into the inner life of the orders as well as the spiritual ethos and specific characteristics of the three major sisterhoods. As individual spirituality has a unique and inexplicable nature, the spirituality of each community was difficult to elucidate except in general terms. Sisterhoods are products of the spiritual reformation of Tractarianism, which accented Incarnational theology and mission. Accordingly, given the similar background and the realisation that it usually takes centuries for major differences to appear in the spiritual ethos of religious communities, the results were not surprising.

The definition conveyed by the symbolism used in the name of each community still remains the most potent general distinction between the communities. What was seen across the spectrum was a commonality of purpose in the spiritual ethos, so that the aim of the outreach was to bring the reconciling love of God to others. Notwithstanding this common theme each community maintains distinct combinations of characteristics and attitudes. They remain different organisations with unique patterns and rhythms of life that reflect their origins, the vision of their founders, their outreach and the geographical and diocesan situation of each group.

The most important trend to emerge in the concept of the religious life is the attitude to change. Until the late twentieth century the changelessness of the life was always held to be its great strength. Now change is seen as essential for development and growth. The basis of change in the religious community has come to rest on the fulcrum of self-knowledge and responsibility, which replaces the traditional belief in total self-abnegation and dependency. Although this conceptual change has affected every aspect of the religious life, no new insight could really be discerned in the spiritual ethos of each community except in the movement from the vocational ethos of corporate-run

institutions to a singular independent outreach.

The growth of Modernism in the Western world since the Enlightenment and its erroneous belief in unending scientific progress, plus the emphasis on individualism, has resulted in the diminution of the support system of community living humans seem to require. This has resulted in loneliness and feelings of alienation from society for many people. Disillusionment with the often impersonal, institutional churches, was also part of a movement from the fifties onwards that resulted in the growth of alternative societies with different forms of communal life. This movement was also in part responsible for the stirring of discontent in the religious life. Consequently given the overall dearth of recruits to the religious life and the fear of its demise, much effort has been expended in reviewing the meaning of community, the viability of the religious life and how it may develop.

The challenge for the future is the maintenance of flexible structures. This development has enabled the redefinition undertaken by the Anglican communities and will be necessary for further evolutionary change. Suggestions for the future community include people of other faiths as well as of different cultures, races, gender, and sexual orientation. The survey of the Anglican sisters saw the possibilities of a mixture of those vowed or unwowed, single or married, men or women, who could enter for specified times or for life. As the growth area at the end of the century is in half-monasticism, in the form of oblate-type bodies, proposals were made for this type of membership around a core of fully professed. Whatever the future composition, it was felt that the emphasis must remain on the necessity of the prayer life in common. This was seen as necessary to maintain the stability of communal life. It was further stressed that the priority of the religious life must remain as a responsibility to God and not to a Rule of life.

In the analysis of the development of the religious life it is apparent that it has not been embraced by Anglicanism as a whole. Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury acknowledged this several years ago when he described the religious life as "the best

kept secret in the Church³. This secret has been so well kept that even many church members are unaware that such a thing exists in Anglicanism. Even amongst those who have some inkling of the existence of religious communities many are either ignorant of, or indifferent to, their function and achievements. It appears that the strength of the Protestant Reformation and its aftermath on the mindset of Anglicans has militated against general support for religious communities. Exceptions have been in some High Church dioceses but even this backing has been spasmodic particularly among the laity.

Although survival of the life is threatened by the lack of numbers, the sisters were generally confident that the religious life would evolve and endure. It has to be remembered that religious orders have waxed and waned over the centuries in the broader Church and possibly the present trend is just another cog in the cyclical wheel. On the one hand, time alone will tell whether their institution in the nineteenth century was only due to a combination of social and spiritual circumstances which have ceased to exist; or whether on the other hand, as new forms of the life emerge in the leaner Church that has developed, Anglicanism may as a whole finally come to welcome the life as a legitimate, basic and integral part of their brand of Christianity.

Despite the lack of support from the Church there is no question that the Anglican sisterhoods in Australia through the many schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions in which they were involved, as well as the other more mundane and hidden aspects of their apostolic mission, have exerted an influence far out of proportion to their numbers. Apart from the social work which most assumed, they contributed to an elevation in knowledge amongst those with whom they came in contact of an earlier form of Christian spirituality which was reclaimed and developed by the Oxford Movement and its progeny.

³ CSC Newsletter, Vol 29 No 2 1996, p.3

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Sister Margaret Anne CHN, Melbourne, 10/10/95

An Oblate CHN, Nancy Cole, Melbourne, 9/10/95

Father Prior Michael King OSB, by Stephen Godley, ABC
Encounter Program, 30/4/95

Father Prior Michael King OSB, Camperdown, 12/10/95

Mother Rita Mary CCK and the Sisters of the Community of Christ the King,
Wangaratta, 13/10/95

Brother William SSF, Brisbane, 28/2/95

Dorothy Bott, Townsville, 8/11/95 (telephone)

Nell Williams (formerly Sister Isabel CSN) Strathfield, NSW, 23/11/95

Rev. David Williams (telephone), 17/8/94

APPENDIX 1

PROFESSED SISTERS OF THE CURRENT COMMUNITIES, 1995

AUSTRALIAN SISTERS OF CSC 1892-1995

(CSC Register)

	<u>Date of Profession</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>
Sr Dorothy	24.4.1897	8.4.1934
Sr Freda	2.7.1898	27.2.1936
Sr Mary Catherine	1906	1946
Sr Alice	19.4.06	21.9.16
Sr Carlotta	29.5.06	5.2.61
Sr Lucia	28.9.07	6.11.58
Sr Dora Beatrice	24.6.08	18.4.50
Sr Jean	17.4.09	1.8.57
Sr Mary Agnes	23.4.10	26.3.46
Sr Ruth	7.1.12	11.12.46
Sr Florence Mary	11.7.14	13.2.68
Sr Persis	7.9.16	7.10.59
Sr Zoe	18.5.16	23.11.48
Sr Laura	5.10.18	8.3.60
Sr Garnette	1.1.20	7.11.63
Sr Lioba	17.6.24	5.11.26
Sr Euphemia	25.3.24	13.9.75
Sr Elma	1925	1959 (left)
Sr Noel	23.4.27	22.6.81
Sr Patricia	8.9.28	6.6.82

Sr Adrienne	8.9.28	6.4.72
Sr Helena	8.12.28	12.10.64
Sr Denise	7 .2.31	4.6.86
Sr Aletta	17.2.31	29.11.82
Sr Karina	8.12.33	3.2.88
Sr Nola	11.12.37	29.2.92
Sr Scholastica	21.1.37	
Sr Ray	24.9.38	5.9.65
Sr Marina	22.5.41	
Sr Clare	22.5.41	28.5.76
Sr Ethelwyn	22.5.41	14.11.59
Sr Inez	22.5.41	2.8.88
Sr Ruth Mary	4.1.42	29.1.81
Sr Lila(Lillah)	16.11.43	
Sr Faith	5.1.45	14.12.94
Sr Ella Mary	5.2.45	
Sr Justine	1947	(left)
Sr Shirley	5.1.47	15.8.65
Sr Marguerite	5.2.49	
Sr Elizabeth May	3.5.52	
Sr Judith	10.10.53	
Sr Osyth	9.7.54	7.3.59
Sr Rosamund	10.12.55	
Sr Mary Catherine	1957	1960's (left)
Sr Audrey	19.1.63	
Sr Jennifer	14.9.63	
Sr Frances	8.2.64	
Sr Helen	18.4.64	
Sr Alison	6.8.76	17.12.81
Sr Linda Mary	15.2.81	

**ENGLISH, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADIAN CSC SISTERS TO HAVE
WORKED IN AUSTRALIA**

(CSC Register)

Sr Ada	1923-1925
Sr Adele	1901-1912
Sr Aldyth	1892-1894
Sr Anastasia	1949-1954
Sr Anice	1909-1916;1932-1975
Sr Ann	1960-1974
Sr Annie	1915-1932
Sr Audrey	1907-1941
Sr Beryl	1970;1995
Sr Blanche	1915-1916
Sr Bride	1954-1960
Sr Bridget	1892-1905;1907-1937
Sr Catherine	1902-1910;1930-1947
Sr Cecilia	1930-1994
Sr Christina	1937-1944
Sr Clara	1946-1952
Sr Clarice	1903-1919
Sr Dorothea	1952-56;1978-1979
Sr Eliza(NZ)	1921
Sr Elspeth(NZ)	1911-1913(left)
Sr Elspeth	1964-1968;1979-1995
Sr Emma	1893-1904
Sr Erima(NZ)	1951-1955;1957-1968
Sr Eudora(NZ)	1940-1944
Sr Eunice	1915-1931

Sr Evangeline	1920-1921
Sr Fiona	1979-1995
Sr Francesca	1893-1923 (Australia and New Zealand)
Sr Francina	1914-1924
Sr Frideswide(NZ)	1930-1937;1946-1952;1956-1966
Sr Gabrielle	1950-1959;1959-1975
Sr Gillian	1957-1961;1964-1966
Sr Hannah	1892-1903
Sr Henrietta	1915-1917(left)
Sr Hilda	1911-1915;1917-1923;1924-1928; 1929-1930
Sr Hildegarde	1932-1939
Sr Irene	1892-1910;1912-1917
Sr Iris	1929-1937
Sr Jane	1902-1908;1909-1921
Sr Janet	1925-1942
Sr Janetta(NZ)	1936-1967
Sr Jessica	1938-1954;1956-1990
Sr Joy	1947-1956;1957-1969
Sr Julia	1926-1929;1947-1955
Sr Kate	1901-1908;1909-1933 (left)
Sr Lisa(NZ)	1908-1917(left)
Sr Lucina	1937-1948;1952-1960
Sr Lucy	1892-1903
Sr Madeleine	1913-1927;1928-1933
Sr Madeleine	1964-1987(left)
Sr Magdalene	1949-1952
Sr Margaret Richeldis	1962-1972
Sr Marguerite Mae(CAN)	1989-1990
Sr Marietta	1920-1923
Sr Mary	1934-1946

Sr Mary Frances	1954-1957(left)
Sr Mary Grace	1959-1961
Sr Mary Mildred	1957-1963
Sr May	1892-1894?
Sr Meta	1924-1926(left)
Sr Michael	1912-1919
Sr Mildred	1912-1925;1934-1948
Sr Millicent	1894-1904
Sr Muriel	1926-1927
Sr Nora	1900-1915
Sr Phyllis	1892-1908;1909-1940
Sr Prisca(NZ)	1951-1959
Sr Rachael	1938-1946
Sr Rachel	1894-1902
Sr Rosalie	1901-1958
Sr Rose	1892-1902
Sr Rosemary	1930-1934;1947-1948
Sr Ruth	1973-1976
Sr Sarah	1901-1930
Sr Stella	1907-1918
Sr Susan	1894-1924
Sr Susannah	1901-1943
Sr Vera	1901-1928
Sr Vivien	1977

MOTHER SUPERIORS

Mother Emily	1870-1900
Mother May	1900-1919
Mother Adele	1920-1943
Mother Rosemary	1943-1962

Mother Dorothea	1962-1977
Mother Frances	1978-1988
Mother Judith	1988-

AUSTRALIAN (PACIFIC) PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

Sr Lucy	1892
Sr Millicent	1894
	no record
Sr Blanche	1915-1916
Sr Phylis	1916-1928 (Organising Sister)
Sr Rosemary	1929-1930 (Educational Supervisor)
Sr Rosemary	1932-1934 (Provincial)
Sr Mary	1934-1946
Sr Frideswide	1946-1952
Sr Lucina	1952-1960
vacant	1960-1963
Sr Scholastica	1963-1972
Sr Audrey	1972-1978
Sr Helen	1981-1990
Sr Frances	1990-

VISITOR GENERAL 1995

Bishop Peter Selby (University of Durham)

CHAPLAIN GENERAL 1995

The Rev. Eric Simmons

PROVINCIAL VISITOR - AUSTRALIA 1995

Bishop Richard Appleby (Darwin)

SISTERS OF SSA 1893-1995

(Archival Material)

	<u>Date of Profession</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u>
Sr Caroline Amy	31.3.1876 (England)	1905 (Clewer)
Sr Mary	Easter 1895	1912 (left)
Sr Maude	Easter 1895	1923 (left)
Sr Cecil	Easter 1895	1899 (left)
Sr Margaret	Sept. 1896	1901 (left)
Sr Emma	Dec. 1897	1939
Sr Beatrice	1899	1905 (left)
Sr Monica	1901	1904?(left)
Sr Evelyn	28.4.1905	1941
Sr Alice	28.4.1905	1946
Sr Winifred	30.11.1911	1938
Sr Dora	1.11.1913	1944
Sr Katharine Domini	1.11.1913	1965
Sr Anna	12.3.1914	1951
Sr Helena	25.3.1915	1924
Sr Vernon	25.3.1915	1962
Sr Frances	29.9.1916	1973
Sr Hiliary	29.9.1916	1921 (left)
Sr Margaret	10.4.1917	1986
Sr Bertha	1.12.1919	1935 (left)
Sr Hope	1.12.1919	1973
Sr Teresa	1.12.1919	1926 (left)
Sr Elisabeth	1.12.1919	1971
Sr Monica	1.12.1919	1926 (left)
Sr Ursula	6.10.1920	1990
Sr Agnes	6.10.1920	1989
Sr Agatha	1.3.1921	1975

Sr Faith	21.5.1921	1939
Sr Ruth	21.5.1921	1929 (left)
Sr Una Mary	5.8.1922	1974
Sr Eleanor Christian	5.8.1922	1932
Sr Mary	21.12.1922	1970'
Sr Barbara Mary	29.5.1924	1982
Sr Dorothea Amy	26.3.1925	1962
Sr Constance Mary	21.12.1925	1965
Sr Edith Mary	21.12.1925	1967
Sr Rosa	21.12.1925	1928
Sr Mary Michael	24.6.1927	1944
Sr Joan Michael	1.10.1929	
Sr Dominica Mary	22.4.1930	1951 (left)
Sr Irene Elizabeth	22.4.1930	1984
Sr Rhoda	1.10.1931	(left)
Sr Moira	1.10.1931	1987
Sr Bernadine	1.10.1931	1975
Sr Rosemary	29.6.1933	(left)
Sr Kathleen	26.12.1934	1973 (left)
Sr Cecile	26.12.1934	1939 (left)
Sr Christine Mary	25.3.1936	1963
Sr Isobel Katharine	21.12.1937	1951(left)
Sr Freda Mary	1.11.1938	1966
Sr Lois	1.11.1938	1986
Sr Helen Marie	30.5.1939	1986
Sr Miriam	21.12.1943	1984
Sr Dorothy	24.2.1945	
Sr Jean Marie	21.1.1946	1971 Left)
Sr Rachel	30.3.1948	1974
Sr Mary Katherine	29.12.1930	1956*
Sr Ruth	27.12.1935	1954*

Sr Clare Elizabeth	27.12.1935	1985*
Sr Rowena	6.1.1953	1969 (left)
Sr Angela	24.8.1956	1970 (left)
Sr Gloria	24.8.1956	1961 (left)
Sr Julian	26.12.1956	1988 (left)
Sr Norma	8.4.1958	1973 (left)
Sr Joyce Mary	22.12.1958	?
Sr Chaseley Anne	22.12.1958	1990
Sr Pamela	24.8.1962	1966 (left)
Sr Phillipa	24.6.1963	(left)
Sr Eunice	21.8.1967	
Sr Anne	27.12.1967	(transferred to CC Stroud)
Sr Gabrielle	27.12.1967	1971 (left)
Sr Bridget	Easter 1968	1975 (left)
Sr Veronica Wendy	24.8.1968	1972 (left)
Sr Marguerite	4.4.1972	1982 (left)
Sr Eleanor	22.12.1976	1988)left)
Sr Marianne Helene	15.8.1978	
Sr Melinda Jayne	19.3.1981	(transferred to Benedictine Malling Abbey, UK)
Sr June Ruth	16.8.1987	
Sr Leanne Michelle	21.12.1989	(left)
Sr Vera	15.11.1995	
Sr Beverley	(Triennial vows)	
Sr Sandra	(Triennial vows)	
Sr Gillian	(Triennial vows)	
Sr Gladys May	(Novitiate)	

* Joined SSA in 1948 from the Daughters of St Clare

MOTHER SUPERIORS

Sister Caroline Amy	1893-1905
Mother Emma	1906-1939
Mother Elisabeth	1939-1948
Mother Frances	1948-1958
Mother Kathleen	1958-1967
Mother Lois	1967-1976
Mother Joan	1976-1982
Mother Eunice	1982-

VISITOR 1995

Bishop Adrian Charles

WARDEN 1995

Bishop Adrian Charles

CHAPLAIN 1995

The Rev.J.Clarkson

SISTERS OF CHN to 1995

(CHN Register)

	<u>Date of Profession</u>	<u>Date of Departure</u> ⁴
Mother Esther	19.6.1894	11.9.31
Sr Ellen	18.4.1890*	11.7.02
Sr Christina	18.4.1890*	13.4.50
Sr Anna	14.2.1896	7.12.07
Sr Agnes	14.2.1896	6.3.30
Sr Alice	19.7.1900	17.1.55
Sr Kathleen	28.10.04	28.11.52
Sr Elspeth	30.11.05	19.10.67
Sr Eleanor	30.11.05	28.1.44
Sr Frances	25.8.08	18.9.73
Sr Ida	6.9.11	3.10.72
Sr Minna	14.9.12	15.9.64
Sr Bertha	7.8.15	18.8.76
Sr Winifred	21.12.18	11.12.33
Sr Pleasance	29.9.19	14.11.59
Sr Irene	8.6.21	13.4.68
Sr Gertrude	29.9.23	11.6.78
Sr Blanche	22.10.24	7.6.79
Sr Dorothea	22.10.24	21.1.59
Sr Margaret	4.11.25	12.6.78
Sr Agnes Winifred	29.6.25	4.1.75 #
Sr Mary	9.7.29	7.2.83
Sr Elizabeth	21.12.29	1.9.73

⁴* Some of these early dates are for commissioning as deaconess.

Sisters from OGS Auckland who were professed into CHN on 10.1.58

Sr Edith	7.4.31	24.9.77
Sr Constance Mary	5.4.32	16.7.83
Sr Ella Mary	21.12.32	10.7.77 #
Sr Louisa	30.11.33	16.12.91
Sr Catherine	30.11.33	30.12.79
Sr Miriam	8.12.34	13.11.88
Sr Rosemary	8.12.34	1.2.81
Sr Muriel	23.4.36	4.5.87
Sr Aileen	23.4.36	
Sr Emily	11.6.36	13.9.84 #
Sr Fanny Faith	29.6.36	19.8.94 #
Sr Julian	6.8.36	15.8.64
Sr Milfred	30.11.37	30.11.83
Sr Sara	21.1.39	18.6.73
Sr Lydia	23.4.40	18.7.74
Sr Gracemary	31.8.40	
Sr Marian	31.8.40	18.4.48
Sr Flora	31.8.40	6.11.60
Sr Caroline	8.9.42	
Sr Constance Agnes	2.7.43	8.4.88
Sr Winifred Muriel	25.3.44	
Sr Agnes Mary	14.8.45	5.11.85
Sr Florence	22.11.46	22.1.72
Sr Philippa	30.4.47	
Sr Penelope	20.7.48	
Sr Clare CCK	21.4.49	
Sr Lucy CCK	21.4.49	9.7.94
Sr Joyce Anne	26.5.49	
Sr Lisa	29.6.50	31.8.88 #
Sr Faith	1.5.51	4.8.85
Sr Noni	28.8.51	24.6.74

Sr Margery CCK	18.3.53	
Sr Elizabeth Gwen	11.6.53	
Sr Lois	3.12.53	
Sr Rachel	21.12.53	27.1.81 #
Sr Helena	21.12.53	24.2.94 #
Sr Katherine Mary	21.12.53	2.2.73 #
Sr Margaret Anne	25.3.54	
Sr Susan	19.4.55	29.4.66
Sr Maree	2.2.56	
Sr Rae	22.7.57	
Sr Betty	28.10.57	
Sr Rita Mary CCK	9.6.58	
Sr Hiliary	21.12.59	
Sr Patience CCK	26.9.60	
Sr Ruth	11.2.61	
Sr Valmai	26.10.61	
Sr Gwendoline	25.3.66	
Sr Jennifer	16.9.67	
Sr Hilda	16.9.67	
Sr Avrill	22.11.68	
Sr Veronica	19.11.69	10.2.73
Sr Sheila	24.3.71	
Sr Pamela	14.9.71	
Sr Felicity	18.10.72	
Sr Josephine Margaret	18.10.72	
Sr Francine	5.12.73	
Sr Margot	7.4.87	
Sr Faye	1.5.88	
Sr Jean	25.4.93	
Sr Lyn	23.2.95	
Sr Shirley	20.9.95	

MOTHER SUPERIORS

Mother Esther	1889-1931
Mother Alice	1931-1934
Mother Ida	1934-1958
Mother Flora	1958-1960
Mother Faith	1960-1981
Mother Elizabeth Gwen	1981-1994
Mother Valmai	1994

VISITOR 1995

Archbishop Keith Raynor

WARDEN 1995

The Rev.Dr Evan Burge

CHAPLAIN 1995

The Rev.Peter Wellock

THE COMMUNITY OF ST CLARE
Sisters Professed in Australia

	<u>DOP</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Sr Marilyn Ann Small	4.10.78	withdrew
Sr June Ashton	16.10.80	withdrew(blindness)
Sr Jocelyn Ann	21.2.81 (renewal of vows)	withdrew
Sr Irene Davis	4.5.81	transferred to Freeland.
Sr Joanne	14.12.94	
Sr Andrea Sutherland	24.3.95	

MOTHER SUPERIOR 1995

Sister Angela

VISITOR 1995

Bishop Richard Appleby (Darwin)

SISTERS OF THE INCARNATION(Inaugurated 1992)

DOP

Sr Patricia October 1988

Sr Juliana October 1988

VISITOR 1995

Archbishop I. George (Adelaide)

THE COMMUNITY OF CHRIST THE KING (Inaugurated 1994)

	<u>DOP</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Mother Rita Mary	10.2.94	
Sr Patience	10.2.94	
Sr Margery	10.2.94	
Sr Lucy	10.2.94	9.7.94
Sr Clare	10.2.94	
Sr Frances	(Triennial vows)	
Beryl Downes	19.4.94 (novice)	
Sr Betty CHN		

VISITOR 1995

Bishop P.Richardson (Wangaratta)

BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY - Camperdown

Inaugurated as Male Community 1979 - Mixed Community in 1991

MEMBERS in 1979

Dom Michael

Dom Placid

Dom William

Dom Philip

MEMBERS in 1995

Dom Michael

Dom Placid

Sr Mary Philip

Sr Magdalene

Sr Gabriel(n)

Sr Judith Ann

SUPERIOR 1995

Dom Michael

VISITOR 1995

Bishop R.D.Silk(Ballarat)

SISTERS OF FORMER COMMUNITIES

THE COMMUNITY OF THE SERVANTS OF THE HOLY CROSS

[1905-1944]

Mother Mary Gloriana (died 1912)

Sr Grace Mary

Sr Vera Mary

Sr Muriel Mary

Mother Monica Mary (died 1942)

Sr Elizabeth Mary

Sr Ruth Mary

Sr Janet Mary

Sr Clare Mary

Sr Eleanor Mary

ORDER OF ST ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

Australia 1928-1956

Mother Margaret

Sr Barbara

Mother Elizabeth

Sr Dorothy

Mother Teresa

Sr Irene

Sr Avis

Sr Majory

Sr Marian

Sr Catherine

Sr Ann

Sr Ellen

BUSH CHURCH AID SOCIETY DEACONESSES

Miss Bazett	Croajingalong	1930 * ⁵
Miss Ella Cheers	Van mission & Hostel Matron	1928-9,1930,1950*
Miss B.Clarke	Van Mission, Wilcannia- Ivanhoe	1949-1951
Sr P.Clements(parish sister)	Nightcliff (NT)	1980
Sr A.Crabb	Van Mission	1927*
Ms Maureen Cripps	Ashford –Delungra	1973
Ms Pam Eagleton	Nightcliff	1971
Sr C.Grantham(parish sister)	South Hedland	1972-3*
Miss D. Harris	Van Mission,NSW,Hostel	1933-4,1935-6
Miss A. Howland	Wilcannia, Menindee,Minnipa	1952-6
Miss B. Hyett	Broken Hill	1958-61, 1964,1966-70*
Miss M. Labilliere	Mission Van	1926*
Miss A.McGregor	Menindee, Wilcannia	1926-33
Mrs C. McPhie (nurse)	Rawlinna	1962*
Miss E. Mathews(Hallahan)	Willochra	1926-7, 1931*
Miss K. Northcott	Croajingolong	1928ff
Sr W. Potiphar	Mission Van, Hostel	1931-2,1932-4*
Miss C. Reece	Croajingalong, Mission van	1925-9, 1931-3*
Miss D. Robey	Zeehan	1986-7
Sr C. Ross	Mission Van,Wilcannia, Cedura	1933-6, 1941-2*
Miss W. Shoobridge	East Gippsland	1920-4
Miss P. Spry	Mission Van, Menindee ,Wilcannia	1949-52
Miss G. Syms	Mission Van	1926-29
Miss L. Staughton	Mission Van	1929-3

⁵ A list of the deaconesses to work for BCA has not previously been published.

* These deaconesses were not listed in Tress N., Caught for Life, NSW, 1993

APPENDIX 3

INSTITUTIONAL OUTREACH OF THE COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH

St Michael's Collegiate School, Hobart
 Holy Trinity Primary School, Hobart
 St David's (Synod Hall) Primary School, Hobart
 St Michael's Grammar School, Melbourne
 St Paul's Primary School, Flinders St, Adelaide
 St James' Primary School, Mile End, Adelaide
 St Augustine's Primary School, Unley, Adelaide
 St Oswald's Primary School, Parkside, Adelaide
 St Michael's Primary School, Adelaide
 St Cyprian's Primary School, Adelaide
 Glenelg Convalescent Children's Hospital, Adelaide
 St Peter's Collegiate Girl's School, Adelaide
 All Saints Foundling Home and Orphanage, Woollahra, Sydney
 All Saints Primary School, Woollahra, Sydney
 St Stephen's Primary School, Edgecliff, Sydney
 Chatswood Orphanage of Mercy, Sydney
 Chatswood Church of England Primary Day School, Sydney
 Burwood Orphanage - Bishop Stone-Wigg Memorial Children's Home, Burwood, Sydney
 Collegiate High School - St Gabriel's School, Waverley, Sydney
 Dubbo Hostel, NSW
 Deniliquin Primary School, NSW
 St Hilda's Day and Boarding School, Gilgandra, NSW
 St Saviour's Primary School, Redfern, Sydney
 St Gabriel's School, ACT (CEGGS, Canberra)
 Parkerville Orphanage, Perth
 Perth College, Perth
 St Alban's Preparatory School, Perth
 St George's Cathedral Girl's High School, Perth
 Lady Margaret Preparatory School, Guildford, Perth
 Kalgoorlie Primary School, WA
 House of Prayer, Dondingalong, NSW

SOCIETY OF THE SACRED ADVENT

Home of the Good Shepherd Orphanage (later Tufnell Home), Brisbane
 Eton High School (later St Margaret's, Albion), Brisbane
 St John's Cathedral Primary School, Brisbane

St Mary's Rescue Home, West End, Brisbane
 Sandeman Nursery, Wynnum, Brisbane
 St Michael's Industrial School, Clayfield, Brisbane (later St Michael's Primary boarding school)
 St Catharine's School, Stanthorpe (later transferred to Warwick), Queensland
 St John's Mission Centre, Brisbane
 Pyrmont Hospital (rebuilt as) St Martin's War Memorial Hospital, Brisbane
 Mary Sumner Maternity Hospital, Brisbane
 St Anne's School, Townsville
 St. Mary's School, Herberton
 St. Gabriel's School, Charters Towers
 All Saints Hostel and Children's Hospital, Charleville
 St Augustine's School, Hamilton, Brisbane
 St. Aidan's School, Corinda, Brisbane
 St. Faith's School, Yeppoon, Queensland
 Parkerville Orphanage, Perth, WA
 Retreat House, St Margaret's School, Albion

COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME

Mission House, Little Lonsdale St, Melbourne
 Mission House, Fitzroy, Melbourne
 House of Mercy, Cheltenham, Melbourne
 Brighton Children and Babies' Homes, Melbourne
 Darling Babies' Home, Melbourne
 Brighton Working Girl's Hostel, Melbourne
 St George's Primary School, Lonsdale St, Melbourne
 St John's Primary School, Latrobe St, Melbourne
 St George's Intermediate Hospital, Melbourne
 St Ives Private Hospital, Melbourne
 St Alban's Boys' Home, Morpeth, NSW
 St Elizabeth's Girls' Home, Mayfield, NSW
 Children's Orphanage and Hospital, Young, NSW
 St Christopher's Babies' Home, Lochinvar, NSW
 St Saviour's Children's Home, Goulburn, NSW
 St Anne's Hostel for Girls, Goulburn, NSW
 Adelaide Mission House
 Adelaide Hostel for Girls
 Diocesan Retreat House, Belair, Adelaide
 Ellerslie Retirement Home, Auburn, Melbourne
 Diocesan Retreat House, Cheltenham, Melbourne
 Remuera Girl's Hostel, Auckland, NZ
 Holy Name High School, PNG

APPENDIX 4

THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

- (1) Age on entering the Community?
 - (a) Under 30 (b)30- 45 (c)Over 45 years

- (2) Did you enter the Community before or after 1970?

- (3) Did the sense of a vocation to the Religious Life grow slowly or suddenly emerge - was it welcome?

- (4) What was the reaction of family, friends or clergy to your vocation?
- (5) Did you come from a Protestant, Anglo-Catholic or non-religious background?

- (6) Did you know of the existence of Anglican Religious Sisterhoods (as compared with Roman Catholic Sisterhoods)?

- (7) If you came from an Anglo-Catholic background and attended an Anglo-Catholic Church or school, was there any encouragement or publicity given to the concept of vocation to the Religious Life?

- (8) Realising no human institution is perfect, why did you choose the particular Community of which you are a member?
For Example:-
 - (a) Locality
 - (b) Spiritual feeling of the Community
 - (c) Particular spiritual emphases of the Community?
 - (d) The Rule/Constitution/Customary
 - (e) A conservative or liberal outlook to, eg. change ?
 - (f) Amount of time for prayer and retreats?
 - (g) Feeling of the Community life?
 - (h) Age of the other Sisters?
 - (i) Type of work undertaken by the Community?
 - (j) Personal contact in the Community e.g. a friend?
 - (k) Other reasons?

- (9) When you entered the Community of which you are now a member did you ever consider leaving ?

- (10) Have you tested your vocation in more than one Community?

- (11) Is there a particular spiritual mentor to whom you felt close in the past or feel close to now, whose emphasis appeals to you (or are there several - this would include another Sister, member of the clergy, saint or theologian)?
- (12) Is the spirituality or teaching of the foundress emphasised in the Community?
- (13) Is the spirituality/ethos foreseen by the foundress in evidence today or has the emphasis changed?
- (14) If it has changed is this only because of the great changes in Society or the Church?
- (15) Is there a particular doctrine of the Church or aspect of the life of Jesus which your Community focuses much of its attention upon?
- (16) Is there a particular doctrine or aspect of the life of Jesus which is the centre of your individual spirituality?
- (17) Do you think the expanded opportunities for women in the Church as seen in the ordination to the priesthood is a further blow to the hope for vocations to Sisterhoods?
- (18) Given the dearth of new aspirants to the Religious Life, do you think that (a) your Community will survive or (b) Anglican Communities in general will survive - or have they outlived their time? If you can see the possibility of the latter is this because of their present makeup, or another reason, perhaps because of the concept of a life long commitment.
- (19) If you believe that Anglican Sisterhoods will not survive in their present form, do you think that they could survive in another shape?

APPENDIX 5

A Selection of edited Interviews

Sister Frances CSC, Provincial Superior and formerly Mother Superior of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, 2/8/93, Glebe.

Question (Q): What Anglican religious communities are there in Australia?

Sister Frances (SF): The male communities are the Franciscan Brothers (SSF) in Queensland and Stroud, the Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) in Melbourne and the Benedictine Community at Camperdown in Victoria, which is a mixed sex community. The women's communities are Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) in Sydney, Melbourne and Dondingalong; the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) in Queensland; the Community of Clares (CC) at Stroud, who have a novice training with us at Dondingalong; the Community of the Holy Name in Melbourne (CHN), which has an enclosed section; and the Sisters of the Incarnation (SI), a small group in Adelaide. There are also a few incipient groups in various stages of formation and growth, which will probably not survive as the great difficulty is actually living together in a group.

Q: How many CSC sisters are there in Australia?

SF: All the centres are small with usually not more than six members. Sydney has six, Melbourne five, with one sister, Audrey, living alone and working as a university chaplain. At Dondingalong the numbers vary but not more than five or six.

Q: What sort of work are the sisters involved in?

SF: Initially it was in education or foundling homes and orphanages. There are no longer any sisters involved in education and all the schools have been handed over to councils. I am the visitor to the Melbourne School, St Michael's, and see them regularly without the burden of administration.

Q: Why was St Gabriel's in Sydney the only school to close? I wondered if this was related to the theological climate in Sydney.

SF: St Gabriel's at Waverley was a small school with mainly borders; in fact it was by far the smallest of our Australian schools. When the Wyndham education scheme was introduced in the early sixties it was felt the necessity of streaming for the Higher School Certificate would have been very difficult and the sisters' talents could be better used in other fields. The pupils were encouraged to go to St Catherine's also at Waverley, a diocesan school. Regarding the answer to the second part of your question - the main reason for the school's closure had nothing to do with the differing theological outlook in Sydney in comparison to other dioceses in Australia. It was much more to do with the school's size. An added problem was that the sisters today do not have the qualifications needed for the higher education.

Q: What is the difference between a sister and a nun? Do you think of yourselves as nuns?

SF: The difference is that nun is to monk as brother is to sister. Nuns live in a convent under monastic vows and are enclosed in varying degrees. It has become common for all women leading the religious life under vows to be called nuns, which strictly speaking is not correct. The Sisters of the Church have never called themselves nuns – it is just not Anglican really.

Q: Are there any Anglican nuns in Australia?

SF: Sister Angela at Stroud is more like a nun as the order she comes from in England is an enclosed one. Angela is a dynamic woman who is writing a book on St Clare, no longer seen as a submissive, quiet little woman. Angela is adopting her ideas to Australian spirituality. The Franciscan brothers live next door to the Community at Stroud.

Q: How independent from the Church is your Community?

SF: We have never had any connection with a diocese. If the bishop did not approve of what we were doing, we always went our own way. The Community policy now is not to go to a diocese without the approval of the diocesan bishop. It is felt that there are so many dioceses that do want us that it is better to concentrate on those.

Q: I know that the Community had problems with the diocesan synod in the early days, what is the situation today?

SF: Our relationship with the Sydney diocese has been quite different since the mid-sixties when Archbishop Gough was the incumbent. He had a very tolerant approach. Since then there is now quite a nice relationship with the Archbishop [Robinson] who acknowledges our presence.

Q: What about with the deaconesses?

SF: When St Gabriel's closed, the sisters moved to Glebe and undertook an entirely new ministry¹. One of our aims was to be closely involved with ordinary people, particularly in the work we undertook. One or two sisters remained at the house to answer the phone and say the daily Office but the rest worked in menial jobs. One of the sisters undertook a job as a cook at Deaconess House and built up a wonderful relationship with them at that

¹ The sisters have lived in two houses in Glebe since leaving St Gabriel's. The first was a typical terrace of the inner city area but the second is really rather out of character, being a fairly modern red brick house. This residence was built by a trotting trainer who in a very confined area also constructed a stable for his horses "out the back". This area has been converted by the sisters to house a meeting room, office, accommodation and a chapel. There is a most definite slope to the floor that was necessary to drain water used to sluice out the former stables.

time. Another, Sister Helen, finished her theological training at Moore College.

Q: That would have caused a few raised eyebrows I would imagine. What about the parishes the community was mainly associated with?

SF: From the beginning we were always associated with St James' King Street and initially the Church in Burwood. In that suburb we started a home for children very soon after we arrived. Then there is Christ Church, St Laurence, of course, and St Mary's Waverley because of St Gabriel's. In recent years we have branched out individually and each sister usually goes to a different church every Sunday. For example, Glebe, Mortdale, Ashfield, St James' and Christ Church. During the week we have services every day in our chapel. The rector of Christ Church, Father Austin Day is our chaplain.

Q: What happened to the childrens' home in Burwood?

SF: That home was handed over to a council many years ago. Its centenary year was this year (1893) and we were invited back for the celebrations. The home was originally a foundling home but has now developed into an after school care centre and a place where living skills for difficult teenagers are taught. This is rather similar to the outcome for another similar institution we started in Perth – Parkerville orphanage, which now handles, with great success, former intractable juveniles.

Q: What about the habit? I see that you are wearing ordinary street clothes.

SF: As the wearing of the habit is now optional, except in the Solomons, many of us wear ordinary clothes. It is still compulsory on ceremonial occasions.

Q: Do you still work in outside jobs?

SF: Nowadays we are mainly involved in social and spiritual outreach. As I said earlier, after St Gabriel's closed we worked in menial jobs to get close to working class people. For instance in factories, laundries, hospitals (I worked at the Homeopathic hospital). In our present house we offer limited accommodation for people in various circumstances. The spiritual work we do from Glebe now, apart from counselling is concerned with meditation. So non-religious workshops are conducted and quiet days and retreats are held. These are open to people of any religion or no religion and we have had new-age adherents attending.

We are further involved with our country centre at Kempsey (Dondingalong) as well as with our latest venture in the Solomons. We went there to work in the early 70's and have built up a dynamic branch of the community with Melanesian sisters.

Q: How is the Community governed?

SF: The sisterhood is very democratic and everyone has a say in the way the Community runs and the direction it takes. There is also freedom in work and places of work. Most sisters seem to have stays in the various centres. The sisters are of mixed nationalities and this is seen in the different centres. For instance in the Solomons the sisters are nearly all indigenous with sisters of other nationalities and associated laypersons voluntarily helping out from time to time. For example, a priest from Enmore has just returned from conducting a retreat there.

As far as the mother superior is concerned, she is elected by all the members for a maximum of two five-year periods. She is also the provincial superior of England and there are two other provincials of Canada and the Australian-Pacific province. They are elected for lesser, limited periods. The important thing is that all the provinces are equal as are the various centres and above all the personnel.

Interview at Dondingalong on the NSW north coast near Kempsey with Sisters Helen CSC, Linda Mary CSC, Ella Mary CSC, Catherine CSC and Mary-Ann, 7/9/94

Q: The reason I have come to Dondingalong is to see the house and to specifically ask about the influence of Charles de Foucauld on the Community. I am led to believe that Sister Helen was a prime mover in that regard. Where and when did you first become interested in Foucauld?

Sister Helen (SH): From reading a book about his life in the early sixties when a novice in Perth. I felt it justified and clarified a lot of what I felt was a proper exposition of religious life, which I did not always see displayed because of all the Victoriana that had come into it. Later on I went and lived with the Little Sisters (Roman Catholic community following Foucauld's outlook) for four weeks.

Q: Did the decision of the Community to leave the large institutions it ran come independently from Foucauld's ideas or did they influence it?

SH: I think that decision came as a result of Vatican II which influenced many changes in religious orders everywhere as well as in Anglican orders. It was after that Foucauld's influence entered the order. There were other sisters who were similarly influenced. This came about when the Community began to consider how they were going to express themselves. The leaving of the institutions came about because of a few things, like the government's desire to have many streams in schools. Therefore you needed to have a much larger school than St Gabriel's in Sydney. Most of the schools were too small to permit this type of streaming.

As well two of the headmistresses died of cancer at comparatively young ages and another in a car accident. Then the sisters found they were spending all their time filling out government forms instead of teaching the children, which is what they wanted to do. There were also not enough trained teachers among the sisters to take over running the schools as headmistresses. So therefore there were a number of factors at the time.

That is how I remember it. Do you think that is right Ella Mary?

Sister Ella Mary (SEM): Yes, there were just not enough people left to teach

Sister Linda Mary (SLM): When I joined in 1972 I was the first trained teacher to do so for 15 years.

Q: The closure of the schools seemed to happen very suddenly, particularly St Gabriel's.

SEM: Yes, I agree, it was a shock to many people.

Q: Was Foucauld's influence instrumental in these closures?

SH: No that influence came about afterwards.

Q: So after looking for new paths to follow after the closure, you started the experiment at Glebe. Helen was there?

SH: Yes.

Q: What about in Belfast?

SH: Belfast was a bit different. That was in 1972 and Mother Teresa [of Calcutta] invited us to be the Protestant element there with her Roman Catholic sisters in order to show some sort of unity. That fell through and the Roman sisters had to leave, but we carried on.

Q: There is not much publicity given to Mother Teresa's group in Belfast and in the literature I've read - you were not even mentioned.

SH: I'm not surprised we were not mentioned, that is because she is so high profile. I think there was friction between her group and the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Belfast, which was covered up, and Teresa pulled them out. We were left behind for a while.

Q: I thought you all came out together.

SH: No, no, we moved to another place in Belfast for at least another year.

SEM: No one really knew what the real reason was for Mother Teresa's withdrawal.

Q: Foucauld's thought? Do you see that as a precursor to Liberation theology?

SH: I never thought of it in that sort of way in connection with Liberation theology because that came long afterwards and was in South America. Foucauld's disciples really only got going properly after World War II because a lot of the brothers were called up. After the war they started again in the Sahara with a few men from the French Resistance (the head brother of the Little Brothers had been a part of that too) and connected with Sister Madeleine (superior of the Little Sisters) and started off again.

Q: Is Dondingalong another aspect of Foucauld's thought?

SH: Yes, although it has never been presented in that way, but yes there is an aspect of it here. The identification with the people around us is what the Little Sisters do in the Sahara and France. They grow and sell food and therefore have an affinity with the people around them. We feel that here now, particularly with the drought at the moment.

Q: I would like to try and compare the three major communities, historically and spiritually (which I think is difficult). There must be some common thread or ethos running through the spirituality of these groups in Australia, even though I realise spirituality is a very individual thing?

SH: There is a lot in common. The three of us are mixed groups, that is we have both prayer and action. Others are more contemplative like Stroud and Christ the King - a breakaway from CHN. Christ the King is contemplative and enclosed and has moved to Wangaratta. They used to be in the grounds of CHN but they are now independent.

Q: Earlier I was speaking to Sister Catherine who explained that the spirituality of a group is based on the Rule. Then we spoke about Ignatian spirituality being taught in the novitiate at CSC. Is that a common occurrence?

SLM: Yes, Ignatian spirituality is taught and used by many different orders. It would be common in that some sisters in each community would have it as the basis of their spirituality. Not necessarily because they were taught Ignatian spirituality.

SEM: It is only a foundation for each person and then you build spirituality onto that.

Q: Then individually do your own thing?

SH: The difference between CSC, SSA and CHN is that we were an English community, which has spread to the colonies and in which the sisters move around quite a bit. Whereas SSA and CHN are Australian even though English women began them. This makes things a little bit different.

Q: Is Foucauld's spirituality a common thread in CSC?

SH: The concept of being like Foucauld, a little brother or sister of Jesus in the Holy family is not part of the Community as a whole. Some of the sisters feel that way but a lot would deny any such influence.

SLM: It belongs to the Sydney house really.

SH: That is where its expression was but Mother Dorothea was very keen about it.

SLM: The ethos in the Sydney house has changed and moved on from Foucauld because the needs in the area have developed.

Q: Has it anything to do with the age of the sisters?

SLM: No, one of the reasons things have changed is that the sisters did not think it was a good idea to have a paid job in times of great unemployment,

because that was taking a job from someone else. So therefore we had to look for some other kind of work. I was the last to have a paid job in Sydney in 1977 and after that the ethos changed

SH: The personnel also changed.

SEM: As the sisters got older they were able to live on their pensions. The government is very good; it's wonderful what they pay out.

Q: What sort of work do you do up here?

SH: Up here on the farm we work in the parish and on the farm. We have programs for children and live-in programs for adults.

Q: Why Dondingalong?

SH: We wanted a place outside Sydney on the east coast, which was accessible to Melbourne, Sydney and the Solomons. Often some of the Solomon sisters come to Dondingalong. We looked at Albury/Wodonga, but fortunately that fell through- weather wise. Also wanted to go somewhere without religious, so therefore not Newcastle. The bishop of Grafton suggested Grafton or Kempsey so we looked around the two areas. The sisters voted for Dondingalong [one hill after another]. We came in March 1972.

Q: The topical question is women's ordination and the effect on vocation to sisterhoods. What is your opinion?

SLM: [Sister Linda is a priest] At the moment the women being ordained are older and often married. The 24 year olds are not being picked up as priests.

SH: This is the backlog of women who have been waiting for a long time to be ordained. There should be younger ones coming through the theological colleges.

SLM: There are no women in Brisbane. St Francis has only one woman student and she is an external one from Grafton diocese. I don't know about Victoria. St John's Morpeth have a lot of external women doing theology, but not necessarily to be priests.

Q: You went to Moore Theology College, Helen?

SH: Yes, I did my theology there with a lot of deaconesses.

Q: Do you think ordination of women to priesthood will affect the entry to the religious life?

(A general discussion about the question)

SLM: I feel it could be a possible issue because the vision is not as clear as it was. Now there is a choice whereas there wasn't one before.

SH: There have always been far more women religious than men and one argument has been that this is because of ordination of men to the priesthood who therefore have more options. It may also be because there were always more women than men in congregations.

Q: The question of Lay presidency of the Eucharist. What do you think of the concept? Do you think it is a plot not to ordain women?

SH: At this stage it is a personal question rather than a Community thing. I think in certain circumstances if properly organised it would be a good thing

SEM: Depends where there is a need. It could go haywire.

(A discussion began concerning laypeople in the Roman Catholic Church running the Eucharist and the priest only appearing to consecrate. The lack of priests in that Church was discussed along with the fact that this is a far greater problem than in the Anglican Church. Apparently there are Roman nuns running parishes because of the lack of priests)

SLM: I'd like to make a general comment about Lay presidency. I seem to be getting the message that the bishops are asking the question as to what is Lay ministry and has the Church gone too far, that is with licensing of lay ministers. I understand the Armidale diocese believes in Lay presidency but is not prepared to go ahead alone. The bishop there has different reasons to Sydney, which concern a lack of priests for rural people.

SLM: Could I say something more about the spirituality here at Dondingalong?

When I first came here in 1979 our life was very much centred on the property and we only went into town to shop or go to Church. Things were very quiet and the sisters spent a lot of energy building up the property. When I came back to live in 1984, things had changed. Every sister had a ministry outside and that made a lot of difference to what was happening here. We talked much about spirituality and its relationship to the land and creation. We called it gumboot spirituality.

As far as this area was concerned, we saw ourselves very much as being in the middle or the ham in the sandwich between the alternate drug culture in the area and the people farming. What started to happen was that the two groups began to meet here. We had also developed programs for children and women and consequently we touched women the Church would never reach. This was a development of a ministry of spirituality.

We also had to come to terms with the weather, which has become very dry, rather than flooding every year. Therefore the effects on spirituality of moving out into the community, changes in the land and weather and each new sister who comes to the small community can be seen.

This is really an environmental spirituality.

Sister Angela of the Clare Community, 8/2/95, Stroud, NSW

Sister Angela was first interviewed on 2/12/93. In that meeting we discussed:-

- (i) St Clare and her Rule.
- (ii) The institution of the Freeland Community from which the Clare Community descended and the arrival of the former in Australia.
- (iii) The association of the nuns with the male Society of St Francis who settled originally in Brisbane but then moved to Stroud.
- (iv) The community life at Stroud – prayer, fasting and the flexible attitude.
- (v) Ordination of women (Angela is a priest).
- (vi) Angela's trip to the Divinity School at Cambridge, Boston for six months.
- (vii) The religious order in the future.

Q: After seeing a brochure on your community that stated there were now male members in the Community, I thought this aspect should be explored.

Sister Angela (SA): That is not so at the moment.

Q: Do you see an ecumenical approach in your community like Taize perhaps?

SA: This Community is small and ecumenical. The gospel says we should all be one so therefore we have to jump over all these boundaries. We are leaving open the thought that a monastic contemplative community could be open to anybody. We could even develop our site to cater for couples. There is one such now who has always longed for community life and have asked about sharing the prayer and rhythm of our life. There is no reason really why they could not live in their own little place and share the life. We don't know. We are going to do it very slowly.

Q: You are therefore very open and flexible?

(A discussion ensued about the approach at Taize)

SA: Our future could be like Taize, a place centred in prayer. A place too for young people to drop in and there are kids coming here now. I hope to build something up which will have a meaning for them.

Q: There is much discussion about an Australian spirituality. Do you think there is a spirituality of the Australian Bush?

SA: I am completely sure this exists and is quite specific. The great monasteries in Russia believe that when there is a lot of prayer going on in a place the whole of nature takes on that prayer. I feel something is happening here with our trees. There is a farmer next door who is knocking down as

many trees as he can for new pasture that is only going to cause problems for erosion.

Q: That has been a lot of the problem with this country, hasn't it?

A: It certainly has. We are now going to be a whole greeny place and we are planting hundreds of trees.

Q: Last time I was here you were writing a book on Clare. You also intended to go to the USA. How did that go?

SA: I had a wonderful time in the USA. I am now in the process of re-writing my book on Clare. It is going to be a series of letters between Clare and me. This is because I am trying to do what Clare did – hit patriarchy in the guts as Clare was doing in the 13th century.

Q: What did you actually do in the States?

SA: I went to the Episcopal Divinity School, a very feminist place. I just listened to them. It was totally fascinating. Some of them have been over here to stay at the monastery.

Q: You must have had an impact on them too?

SA: Well I was just myself and although I am not academic really, I was saying there is more heart stuff not head stuff.

Q: You are obviously very concerned with the environment?

SA: Yes I am so concerned with the fragility of our planet and what we are doing to it. The problem is we now have no predators. It is just humans killing one another and destroying the earth. In early March we are going to have a meeting here of all the leaders of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Poor Clares and Franciscans. They all met last year for Clare's 800th birthday and are all concerned with the earth and ecology. I am going to get an Aboriginal elder to come and talk about the earth and their creation stories. The Aborigines believe there is only a short time left for the earth.

Q: You are re-writing the Rule?

SA: We have done it.

Q: I have seen the Rules of other communities and the first Rule of CSC for example was very complicated. What is your Rule like?

SA: The aims of the community are set out and we have tried to embody what Clare was trying to say. In other words we have taken on what her original Rule was trying to say in the 13th century.

Q: So do you still have a concept of two streams of membership in the Community with different vows, and the head of the Community from either stream? Is that the basis of the Constitution?

SA: Yes we intend to have two different forms of membership with the head of the community from either stream.

Q: So in the Rule do you state the aim of the community and then translate Clare's Rule into our time? Is it as flexible as her original, particularly in the concept of enclosure?

SA: Yes we are translating her insight of what the Franciscan ideal was all about.

Q: Therefore individually you are looking for perfection – God?

SA: Not perfection, I think what we are trying to do is to be who God made us to be.

Q: To know yourself?

SA: To know yourself and to become what God wants. Since I last saw you my thoughts have consolidated to see that if we believe we were in the mind of God before we were born, then children are a gift to their parents because they come from and belong to God. So if we are to be the person God wants us to be, we are not aiming for perfection because we are human. It is totally impossible to be perfect, but the aim is to be fully me, and open to the energy of God.

If we have God in us, that is God's energy, we are empowered people and we have God's perfection within us. That is God's energy to be totally human.

We are trying to create a place where people can come and find out what God intends them to be, not forming people into any pattern. There is no hierarchy here. Each person comes and brings in their own gifts and discovers here more gifts through the energy and spirit of God. Therefore it is a very exciting adventure. Everyday we see something different if we are open to that energy.

Totally human means being what God intended us to be and loving it. An analogy is an eagle riding a thermal to an enormous height in the sky that I saw once when I was a hermit. It is free to be what God wants it to be – totally eaglish. To be free as the eagle is free, we need to get rid of all the barricades we build up from childhood.

Therefore this spirituality is really a freedom spirituality that allows us to be open to see the energy of God more directly. When this happens there is nothing you can't do. Who cares what people think of you? This energy is not just an individual energy but through prayer we can empower one another through this spiritual energy of God. This is therefore going to change the way people think.

I became a mad artist as a young woman, which is tied in with the spirit - "Art is the Antenna of the Age" – so I was all set to become a crazy nun. I

feel I have much greater freedom being a nun and being totally myself than I had before. This is what I mean about changing one's thinking.

Q: Do you mean energy? You mean spirit equals energy?

SA: It is a spiritual energy, a natural energy. There is an innate energy, which the creator put into nature.

Q: So it is all bound up with the concept of God as "Being", that is a spiritual energy that is in every created thing? Everything works together as well as being independent, like the parts of a living organism?

SA: Yes and the problem is that humans have not understood this. We have looked at the earth as something to be used for our benefit alone. A different outlook to the Aborigines who understand the interrelationship of humans with the inorganic and organic world. The more we understand Aboriginal people, the more we can understand the energy they have. At a feminist conference I attended, one woman spoke to the Aborigines present of how sorry she was at European treatment of indigenous peoples. One Aborigine replied that we had to move on from that state of guilt and rebuild Australia. I felt this same outlook at the theological college in a girl I met from Uganda. She is a priest, as is her husband and they have adopted 10 children whose parents have died of aids. She believes that society has collapsed, it is no longer patriarchal and the men have collapsed. Women are also disorientated but she believed they must rebuild a new Uganda. This spirit, this energy is possessed by these people who are empowered people. We are therefore not impotent; we are people who have power to change everything.

We are talking about spirituality as we live in the middle of the earth at the end of the 20th century. My spirituality is tied in with where every grass roots person is. I'm not sure about upstairs, the hierarchies, because their feet have left the ground. I think perhaps they are not in touch with ordinary people. I'm talking to people who want answers. This is what I am talking about; this is the spirituality for the moment.

I believe evolution is going to become one in which the brain and spirit of humans develop together. It is impossible to separate a discussion of spirituality from ecology because God put us on this planet to care for it and to nurture it. We also have to recognise the brilliance of humans and their capacity as mystics.

Q: Do the members from the Uniting Church who are here testing their vocation have trouble with your Catholicism as far as sacramentalism is concerned?

SA: There is no problem because of the cross-pollination between denominations today. The Uniting Church has a wonderful outlook on social work. In any case we have a feminist liturgy on Saturdays.

Q: I wondered why Bishop Appleby is your visitor as well as being visitor to CSC?

SA: Bishop Richard Appleby is very interested in the religious life and keeping it in front of other people. Most bishops have little idea about the religious life. Just think we are nutty people. But Richard really has got a grasp of what we are trying to do.

Q: He was the bishop in Newcastle, wasn't he?

SA: Yes he was. The main thing we are on about is this energy I was talking about. The Community has no hierarchy and when postulants come they are told it is up to them to be open to the energy, which God gives them to lead the life. If you are not open to the energy there is no point in being here.

Q: Is vocation then, being open to the energy – a call from God?

SA: In a way but people can be open to the energy not necessarily for vocation but ultimately to be what God intends them to be. Therefore these are exciting times.

At the heart of everything in creation is energy, spiritual energy. The world needs prayer and envisioning.

The Community members are Franciscan Clares concerned with the earth, stars, brothers and sisters. The future is very promising because people are going to be drawn into something that is real.

Sister Marianne SSA, 3/3/95, The Community House of the Society of the Sacred Advent, St Margaret's School, Brisbane

Q: When we were speaking the other day you suggested I contact a priest who had a great interest in sisterhoods and gathered information about them. What was his name?

Sister Marianne (SM): That was Father Neville Nixon from the Morningside parish in Brisbane.

Q: I've read the available histories on SSA and been through a lot of the Archival material and so now I'd like to find answers to a few queries that have arisen. For instance, when did changes in the habit start coming in?

SM: It first began to be modified in the 60's and at first there were very slight modifications for informal occasions. When I came as a novice in 1974 we had to wear a formal long habit all the time. In 1978 when I was professed the habit was very much modified for casual occasions. At that stage if you went out with another sister in a formal habit you had to wear one as well. That gradually changed (its all very gradual) but I can't remember when the pale blue came in. At first they were very long and similar to the old habit. It is only in the last two or three years that a navy skirt and white blouse could be worn. The veil not being compulsory was the first thing to go (except in chapel) then a short-sleeved blue habit of varying shades came in.

Q: SSA has not changed the Rule to the same extent as CSC for instance or the habit for that matter. For example in Melbourne on Saturdays all the sisters wear very informal clothes, like slacks. Also each centre is different. CSC also has sisters who are priests, which you don't.

SM: We have not got as far as that yet.

Q: That is my next question. Do you think anybody here is interested in being priested and what does the community think of ordination of women or a sister?

SM: Actually I am, and the community agrees. So the majority in the community anyway, agrees with both aspects of ordination.

Q: Well leading from that do you think ordination will be disruptive for vocations to sisterhoods?

SM: Could be, because more options are opened to lead a life dedicated to God.

Q: I mention that because in general CSC felt that the vocation to the religious life was a completely different one to the priesthood. They have had a woman priest for over ten years and have moved on from any concerns about the question.

SM: I think there are parallels with a woman's vocation to the priesthood and the religious life. So that in my case priesthood would be an extension of the vocation and would deepen the commitment to the life.

Q: You don't want to be out in a parish?

SM: No, no, but I am most interested in celebrating the Eucharist. Mind you it has been a long process as originally I was very much against the ordination of women – for no apparent reason.

Q: When do you think it all might happen?

SM: I don't know but I'm finding out more about it tomorrow.

Q: You have to be a deacon for a while before you are ordained?

SM: Yes for 12 months before priesting. Of course some only want to be a deacon.

Q: Are there any deaconesses anymore in Brisbane?

SM: I have never been in contact with any and as far as I know there are none here. To my knowledge, Sister Minnie was a deaconess who came here originally with Sister Caroline at the beginning of the community. The Church army is here and very strong. I know there are deaconesses in Melbourne.

Q: I interviewed Deaconess Mary Andrews in Sydney who I expected (coming from the Sydney diocese) not to support ordination and found she was a fervent supporter of women priests. She was saying that there are a huge army of women deacons in Sydney waiting for the priesting of women to be approved.

SM: Yes the Sydney diocese is interested in Lay Presidency [of the Eucharist] and I see this as a much greater threat to the Church than women priests, a much bigger issue. Mind you at an ordination here on Friday night someone stood up and objected to women priests, they always do. The archbishop always says the objection is overruled and the ceremony will proceed.

Some of the High Church people who feel strongly enough to leave the Church have formed the Anglican Catholic Church, which is now Australia wide (except in Sydney of course). In Brisbane there are two of these breakaways over women priests.

Q: Coming from Sydney I suppose we don't hear about that very much without any women priests. The sisters in CSC see themselves more as a part of broad, changing Church. Do you feel that here? They are still High Church of course but they also tend to experiment with liturgy.

SM: SSA is definitely still High Church. Even though our ritual practices are changing a little and have become more relaxed, we don't have any sort of innovative liturgy like they have derived. The way to behave in Church was written down in the Customary and strictly adhered to. This has changed to an extent so, for example, everybody does not have to make the sign of the cross at the same time. But altogether we are more conservative.

Q: That is the impression I have.

SM: Even some of the younger ones in the community are very conservative. I am certainly not and see we have to move with change. But how long do you have to wait?

Q: So what do you think of the future?

SM: A very good question. We are very busy in the Retreat house but that is mainly with Anglicans. We don't get many young people like the Brookfield centre which is much more ecumenical and innovative. They have lots of visits from schools for instance.

Q: What is the Brookfield centre?

SM: That is where the Society of St Francis used to be. It is a spiritual centre run by Father David Binns now.

Q: That sounds interesting because something has to be done to attract young people as they are missing from the Church.

SM: Yes they are. There are so many other opportunities and outlets for them.

Q: I suppose the future is uncertain because of the need for young members. CSC has a young age group and an old age group with those in the middle missing. So the leadership group of the middle aged is not there. This is because of the great loss of members in the last decades.

SM: Yes we have lost a lot too. Quite a few left in the changing times, 16 died over the last 20 years and there are no younger sisters to attract those of the same age into the community. That's the problem. The postulants we get are not young – the youngest sister is in her early forties. Another sister has gone to CHN contemplative group.

Q: All communities are in the same situation and I wonder (I don't want to upset you) if the religious life as started by the Oxford Movement has outlived its time? After all the communities have survived for 100 years.

SM: I agree that perhaps they have outlived their time and maybe ecumenical communities are the way to go.

(A discussion developed about the similarities between Eastern and Christian mysticism)

Q: What about authority in the community? The position of the male office holders?

SM: The community always tended to seek help from males- the visitor, warden and chaplain. At present the position of warden and chaplain are combined but they were once always both present in Chapter as advisors.

At the moment the mother superior does not take part in the diocesan synod because we do not come under diocesan authority. It is rather a delicate situation as the visitor to the community is not the archbishop of Brisbane as it was for so long. Instead Bishop Adrian Charles is now the combined warden and visitor.

Q: The recently set up Company of the Society - is that very different to the Fellowship I've read about?

SM: Yes it is a much more intense commitment.

Q: Maybe a way of life like the Company is the way the religious life may develop with a core of religious surrounded by committed people living in the outside world. A lot of people are looking for something.

SM: The Company has 60 members and that may be the way forward.

Q: What about clerical or spiritual influences on the community. Have you been taught a particular way of prayer, like the Ignatian method?

SM: No, I was a novice at CHN for three years and in neither community were we taught any particular method. Instead given a book on meditation and told to follow that for half an hour in chapel – much the same thing in SSA.

As far as clerical influences go Bishop Vockler was the warden and influential at one stage. Brother John Charles of SSF was another. Father Alan Harrison has given great advice and council in person and through his book on the religious life. A lot of the older sisters talk about the influence of Sister Elizabeth and Una Mary on the spiritual life of SSA.

Q: Bishop Le Fanu must have had a great influence on the Society?

SM: Yes, he had a great influence on Mother Emma and their partnership was very important for SSA. His pastoral staff is in our chapel. The sisters gave it to him when he went to Western Australia as archbishop.

Interview with Deaconess Margaret Rodgers, Sydney, 7/9/95

Q: Initially religious orders in England seemed to be more successful in recruiting members than deaconess institutions. Although by the 1980's the number of deaconesses had remained constant for a century and sisterhoods had been decimated. In your thesis on deaconesses in Australia, you argued that the lack of deaconesses was due to loss of prestige, family reasons and the rigidity of the life. Would these reasons apply in contemporary times?

MR: I was particularly writing for the turn of the century. In later times I don't think family pressure would have been relevant except only so far as women moving into any sort of professional life. Later on recruits ran into problems that had arisen over the ordination of women. So if you look at the very beginning, the three places where deaconesses really took off and developed have been Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania. Particularly Sydney and Melbourne. But we also should not overlook Gippsland where the deaconesses, like those in Tasmania, were trained in Sydney or Melbourne.

I think the question of the ordination of women came up from the seventies onward. At the same time the Anglican Catholics were not too sure about deaconesses because they were not ordered. There was a model for sisterhoods but not for deaconesses. They were seen as a sort of bridge to ordained ministry, not ordered in the same way as sisterhoods.

This was a great problem for deaconesses and therefore you really see their initial development with Evangelicals or more conservative people. This happened in Australia from the late 1880's when the conservatives moved the deaconesses into the Church. Archbishop Wright was involved with women's work at the Lambeth conference in 1920's. He and the bishop of Goulburn took this concept to the NSW provincial synods and then the General synod. In 1922 the Women's Work Ordinance passed at the Sydney synod, the first time it had been ordered. So there was a lot of enthusiasm but also a lot of suspicion.

Q: Were they frightened that women would want to be ordained as priests?

MR: No, not at that stage. The bishop of Gippsland was also part of Wright's group and he always considered deaconesses were ordained.

Q: Yes, they were given the title of Reverend Sister.

MR: The bishop of Gippsland read quite an influential paper at a Church congress held when the bishops came back from Lambeth in 1920. Consequently from 1922 women were able to preach in services.

Q: Did Marcus Loane revoke that?

MR: No, deaconesses were always able to preach but this was carefully watched over.

Q: It seems that in Australia because of the polarity of churchmanship, particularly in Sydney, there is more dislike of sisterhoods by Low

churchman and deaconesses by High churchmen than in England – even though in the beginning the Tractarians in England supported sisterhoods and the Broad and Low churchmen deaconesses.

For example, in Melbourne the first nuns were hidden as deaconesses in CHN. Whereas in England quite a few deaconess institutions became religious orders.

MR: The Church is conservative and it is very hard for it to take on new ideas. I don't think the antipathy in Sydney was any greater than anywhere else. Although distance of course has had a great impact on the way the Australian Church has developed. So that the Church here is a more diocesan Church and is a federation of dioceses rather than a national Church.

Q: So each diocese is very powerful, the centre of the Church is the diocese.

MR: Whereas if you compare this with England, there it all comes down from the archbishop of Canterbury and everybody falls into line. Here the great distances between places means that different traditions were able to develop in particular dioceses. It is very important to keep in mind that the Church in Australia is a diocesan Church. People say it has changed but it has not. The Constitution of the Australian Church gives the dioceses strength – anything passed by the General synod has to be approved by the local diocese before it legally becomes part of the diocese. That is, nothing passed by General Synod is binding on a particular diocese. So therefore because the synod in Sydney had not sanctioned the establishment of sisterhoods, they were really illegal, from the point of view of the Sydney hierarchy. The argument for sisters of course was that they were lay workers, not ordained like deaconesses, and free to work wherever they liked without the approval of the diocesan bishop.

Distance has created all sorts of differences in Australia. I maintain that one day someone will write a fascinating thesis on the effect of distance and the influence on the development of different institutions in Australian society. Because if you compare NSW and Victoria in the Catholic Church, you find a more conservative Church in Sydney. In the Labour party, NSW's right is much more conservative, while the Liberals have NSW "dries" and the Victorian "wets" – John Howard is conservative and Andrew Peacock is liberal.

Q: Do you think this may have something to do with the different origins of the two states?

MR: There is certainly a different way of doing things in the two states. Cardinal Clancy does things in a similar way to Archbishop Robinson, whereas in Melbourne they often jump in and then have to rationalise and theologise later.

I also find it fascinating if you look at the development of the two centres from 1880's right up to the 1920's with women's ministry in the Church, Sydney was also much more open to women's work in the Church.

Q: What about the comparison of numbers of deaconesses? There were far more commissioned in Sydney than Melbourne?

MR: Yes. In 1961 there were 60 women enrolled at Deaconess House in Sydney. Towards the end of that decade St Andrew's Hall opened and the ones who were missionary candidates went there and the numbers lessened. Then ordination of deacons came along and virtually stopped deaconess recruits.

Q: Did the deaconess numbers increase in the sixties because women could see the possibility of ordination?

MR: No, because the numbers increased at Moore college at the same time. This is attributable to the Billy Graham campaign at the time.

Q: Billy Graham is what all that is attributable to?

MR: Yes, everybody says so. Until the time of Archbishop Gough, training was done at Deaconess House. The "ordination" was very similar to that used for deacons. But Archbishop Gough didn't like the thought that women were "ordained" as deaconesses and a few years later got married. He had the English model of almost going into a religious order.

Q: Yes, CSC felt it was treated much better by Gough who obviously had a concept that deaconesses should be like professed sisters. Mary Andrews also felt he treated deaconesses badly. Why would it matter if you were ordained and then married?

MR: I don't know, but Gough introduced the idea that a candidate had to be 30 or have worked for five years in a parish before ordination. This changed after Archbishop Loane came in. The free attitude from the sixties became a problem for deaconess recruits. Deaconess House was run as if it was the Croydon Bible College of the forties. Young women wouldn't tolerate this attitude in the sixties when the world was changing with radical youth groups and the anti-Vietnam war protests.

Q: So towards the end of the sixties numbers started to decrease?

MR: Yes.

Q: Is everybody ordained as deacons now? I had the feeling there were no deaconesses ordained anymore?

MR: No, there are still a few deaconesses being ordained. Archbishop Robinson put an age limit on deaconesses as he did with men because it is not economical for the Church with too many older people in the ministry. He has said if you make a person a diocesan candidate it is very expensive to fund them during training and therefore there is a need to be able to get some return. The diocese does not really like ordaining people over 40. In Sydney they have the traditional view that if you are ordained it is to a living and the

Church owes you a job. So they will only ordain those they can employ. In other places they are ordaining right, left and centre and at the last astonishing women's conference, the women were complaining that they could not get a job. This is because of the numbers of ordinations of women. It does seem irresponsible to ordain women without being able to offer them a job.

Q: So in Sydney women are being ordained as deacons expecting to move into a parish as a curate?

MR: In Sydney they are careful and look to the numbers they can employ.

Q: What do women deacons do in Sydney?

MR: They work on the staff of parishes.

Q: Like a deaconess?

MR: Yes, deaconesses have always done this. The only difference between the deaconess and woman deacon is the title with the latter ordained into Holy Orders. The former is a layperson and the latter clergy. But they perform the same work in the parish, the difference is status.

Q: I assume that a lot of the work deaconesses used to undertake has now been taken over by government.

MR: Yes, that is true. Deaconesses pioneered a lot of the interesting work in this country. For example, women went in the Bush Church Aid Society van to Gippsland and travelled through remote country districts- pioneering work. Earlier they ran Girls' Friendly Society hostels; they were the first to work with women in the courts and with migrant women and they ran op shops, worked in the Chesalon Homes and in palliative care.

Q: But very little is known about deaconesses' work or that of the sisters.

MR: Yes, a lot of women's history is hidden

Q: In relation to the relatively few numbers of women becoming deaconesses until the sixties - was one reason because of their unresolved status?

MR: This could have been part of the reason but it was mainly to do with the availability of jobs.

Q: What sort of relationship was and is there between the deaconesses and sisters in Sydney?

MR: Sister Faith was the cook at Deaconess House for a while in their early days at Glebe. In later years there has been quite a good relationship between us.

Q: The sisters have mellowed from their strict Anglo-Catholicism but few Anglicans know about their existence in Sydney.

MR: Yes, but those who do know them, like them very much. They can always be relied upon to turn up at diocesan functions. Archbishop Mowll used to keep an eye on them because his aunt was their mother superior.

Q: Yes, the sisters speak with appreciation about him in their book – *A Valiant Victorian*.

MR: Yes, I think he was a great help in assisting their evacuation from Sydney after the Japanese sub was found in the Harbour.

Q: Once deaconesses and male ordinands started to train together it seemed to inevitably lead to the ordination of women?

MR: Yes and that's probably why there was suspicion about this training initially. Especially when women do better than men in classes.

Q: Which is often the case, like other professions.

MR: There is a very conservative reaction of men to everything in the Sydney diocese. The women's question has been the one on their minds lately and become prominent, but there is the same sort of conservative reaction to homosexuals.

Q: Will women be ordained as priests in Sydney in the foreseeable future?

MR: I think eventually they will. It will probably take a generation. Even though the forces seem to be running against it at the moment, I think it is a last ditch stand, even though they won't believe this. I believe that the sociological forces at work in our society are powerful enough to change the current outlook. It must be remembered of course that the Church is slower to change and more conservative than other institutions.

Q: What about the concept of Lay presidency and women in the priesthood. Has this been introduced to downgrade the importance of the ordination of women?

MR: I don't think that is true. In 1971 there was a National Evangelical conference (NEAC) where papers were produced on women's ordination and Lay presidency. It has been around for a long time. The first motion was passed in the Sydney synod about 1970 approving of Lay presidency

Q: I thought it had just come up in the last ten years or so.

MR: No, people have closed their eyes to it.

Q: Some say this could cause more trouble than women priests.

MR: We do not understand the Church unless distance and the diocesan question is addressed.

Interview with Sister Josephine Margaret CHN, Community House, Cheltenham, Melbourne, 9/10/95

Q: My first question concerns the Constitution. Who are the clerical office bearers at the present time?

Sister Josephine Margaret (SJM): The chaplain is Peter Wellock, the warden is Evan Burge and the visitor is Archbishop Keith Raynor. The visitor is always the archbishop of Melbourne and there is only ever one visitor to the Community even though we may be active in different dioceses. In those other dioceses, the bishop or archbishop has to approve of our arrival and he usually appoints a chaplain for the Community in his diocese.

Q: I know your contemplative group has formed a new community, what about the sisters who have gone to Adelaide?

SJM: Initially a few sisters went to Adelaide after the war. Three sisters who were upset with the closure of St George's Hospital in 1947 also went to Adelaide but did not remain in the Community. The latest pair to go there are a former professed sister and a novice who formed the Sisters of the Incarnation in Adelaide in the mid-seventies – not sure of the date. They had a postulant for a while at one stage, but that was quite a few years ago. While they are not really large enough to constitute a community (need three) they are recognised as such in Adelaide. One of them is now a priest and the other does social work.

Q: Apart from the professed sisters what other groups do you have in the Community?

SJM: There is the associate group who follow a very simple Rule, which any Christian person could keep, for example, a certain amount of Bible reading and weekly communion. It is a mutually supportive membership of men and women in which we pray for one another. They support us in other ways with active involvement and become involved in odd jobs, producing the *Newletter* for instance. They also support one another in the world.

Then there is the Oblate group whose members have a much deeper commitment in a strongly knit group. They are men and women who may be married but make vows of poverty, chastity, of a spiritual kind, and obedience. Each person works out an individual Rule of life. There is usually a sister in charge of oblates and there are two retreats a year which they are expected to attend. They keep in very close contact with one another and renew their promises annually. It is altogether a much deeper commitment and often they lead a more disciplined life than the sisters because they are in the outside world and it is harder to fulfil their obligations.

Q: That is similar to the Comrades of SSA who have associates too.

SJM: Yes, you find most communities have two such groups.

Q: Speaking of the newsletters, when did the *Newletter* start and *In Our Midst* finish?

SJM: I'm not quite sure of the date when the *Newletter* began but I will find out for you. *In Our Midst* is quite separate from the *Newletter* and was put out by the Mission to the Streets and Lanes (MSL).

Q: Who is in charge of the MSL? Are you in charge or is a secular person in charge?

SJM: The Mission is run by a council with a bishop as chairman. There is a chief executive officer who is in charge of all the various works. It is a very large organisation with many centres. They have foster care programs; care for homeless girls train people etc. as well as the sisters running the Mission House in Fitzroy.

Q: I did not realise it was so large.

SJM: You were just thinking of the Mission House, MSL covered orphanages and all the other institutional outreach.

Q: Originally the warden of the Mission was warden of CHN as well. In the Constitution I noticed that the warden to the Mission is crossed out, I wondered why?

SJM: Yes, recently the Community has become no longer as closely tied to MSL as it was. This has come about because of the huge growth of the Mission over the years and the subsequent employment of secular workers.

Q: So obviously the Constitution is in process of change. I also read in the Constitution there was a proposed change with the junior sisters. Has anything altered there?

SJM: We no longer have what is called a junior sister. Vows can be taken by a sister for three years and then can be renewed twice. There are various options after three years - leave, be asked to leave, request life profession or renew three yearly vows. At the end of nine years she can either go or take final vows.

Q: Holidays, retreats?

SJM: We have four weeks holiday a year and one day off a week. At least one yearly retreat, sometimes more. They are of no specified length but we should have one each year.

Q: I realise there are a few of your sisters still in Adelaide. Are they more or less retired?

SJM: There are two sisters retired in Adelaide and one younger sister looks after them. The two older ones had been in Adelaide for a long time and

wanted to stay there and not come back to Melbourne as their ties were in South Australia. This is unusual but only because they had been there so long. I have to stress that we never really retire and the Adelaide sisters are still involved with people who want their help. They are just no longer involved in active work.

Q: Just a point of interest, I was reading Butler's book on the Wantage sisters and it was stated that unlike other communities Wantage did not ever indulge in the practise of "begging" (i.e. going from house to house asking for used goods and clothing to sell). I know CSC and SSA certainly did and in CSC's case relatively recently. Did CHN ever do that?

SJM: I don't think so. I remember sisters were often given things at the markets but they did not ever beg from house to house for goods to sell. We often sold things like that at the Mission.

Q: Sister Margaret Anne is a priest. What does she do?

SJM: She is a part-time assistant priest in a parish at Bentley and is also involved in counselling. She lives in a suburban house where people come to her or she goes out to them.

Q: The Community of the Visitation you instituted in New Guinea seems to have had a very hard time?

SJM: I came back from New Guinea in 1968 (originally a missionary there for six years) and things were not nearly so bad then. The "rascals" were causing a bit of trouble but far, far worse now. The problem is that the young men from the villages have had some education but can't find jobs in the towns, so hard for them to fit in anywhere. In the old world of the villages they become very bored. Even some of the basics of civilization have hardly reached some of the outer villages. Electricity, for example, is only available for so many hours a day and not at night. People feel if they could get enough electricity the young men would have more to do and not cause so much trouble.

Q: Is the Rule of the New Guinea sisterhood based on your own?

SJM: While we advised them, they have formulated their own Rule, which they are now revising.

Q: Do they have a visitor?

SJM: They are near Popandetta and the archbishop feels they need someone beyond the local bishop as visitor. So he has appointed one of the Franciscan brothers from SSF to be a sort of co-ordinator for religious orders of brothers and sisters in New Guinea.

Q: Is that Franciscan from Australia?

SJM: No he's English but from the same order as the Franciscans in Australia.

Q: So do you mean the Rule for the New Guinea sisterhood is not fixed yet?

SJM: Yes it is fixed, but like our Constitution it will continue to change over time.

Interview with the Sisters of the Community of Christ the King, Wangaratta South, 13/10/95

Q: This Community was the enclosed group at CHN?

Mother Rita Mary (MRM): Yes. Sister Marjory and I and Sister Clare, who is in solitude, were part of the original group. We have been enclosed for 20 years since 1975.

Q: Oh, I thought it was a new innovation.

MRM: Sister Clare was a hermit at one stage.

Q: Was the hermit now at CHN part of your group at one time?

MRM: That is Sister Francine; she requested to become part of our enclosed group at CHN but that was refused.

Q: Why did you decide to come here? Did you feel the group was not working properly at CHN?

MRM: The diocese of Wangaratta invited CHN to establish a house here. We actually lived for six years at Community house [Cheltenham] when we first became enclosed. We looked after the kitchen there and the laundry at the retreat house but we felt we were living a double life. This was because we had to attend the Community's offices but soon discovered we needed to add extra for ourselves.

In 1980 the Community decided it was time for us to test our vocation to the contemplative life apart from the Community. So CHN bought the house next door to Cheltenham, which we called the House of Christ the King. There were three of us in that group and we stayed there until the middle of 1984 when we went to the Sisters of the Love of God, Fairacres, in England. We went first to a branch house at Boxmore. Then after three months two of us went to the Mother House and spent 16 months there.

When we returned to CHN we were joined by Sister Patience and Sister Lucy in a house where the infirmary is now. This was found to be not very satisfactory and we had a lot of difficulties with our accommodation. Just at that point the offer came from Wangaratta and the Community accepted in 1988. We spent a year getting the farmhouse ready to occupy and some of us lived in caravans - some still do. In July 1990 we moved to Wangaratta.

Q: When did you decide to form your own community?

MRM: In a way it was hardly our decision. There was a difficulty with our novitiate because we couldn't see how sisters trained with the enclosed group could be fully sisters of CHN. That was really the basis of the split. That was two years ago in November.

Q: What about your Rule?

MRM: We lived by CHN's Rule for a long time but now we are in the process of making a new Rule as it became obvious that was necessary - very exciting. It is one way of discovering what you are all about.

Q: I suppose that is how Rules develop?

MRM: Rules grow out of the life because there is no point in establishing a Rule and then deciding to live by it. One of the basics we have developed and the group live by is making decisions by the "Common Mind", that is by discovering what is the mind of Christ. Into the statutes we are formulating, the emphasis is that all decisions made are those by the Common Mind.

Q: What do you mean by the Common Mind? Everybody has to think in the same way – is that what you mean?

MRM: The basic thing is to discover what God wants. The Common Mind is not a common mind of the Community but the mind of Christ, what he wants - a very difficult process. Now you may not think in that way on some things but if you become convinced it is right you give your consent.

Q: I don't quite understand. In the other communities if there is a meeting concerning an issue, it is usually that two-thirds of a majority have to agree and then everyone else has to accept the decision. What is the difference?

MRM: What in fact it means is that if only two-thirds agree, a decision has not been reached and we have to go on praying.

Q: You have to go on thinking and praying until everybody agrees?

MRM: Not everybody can agree on the same course even though much prayer is given to the question. It has been quite fascinating on the way through (an example was given of the way in which the name of the Community came to be chosen through using the Common Mind rule). The aim is to reach the Common Mind through prayer. You assume that if everyone does not agree there is something more to see, that is, what God wants. So basically you reach decisions through prayer not discussion. The issue is raised, prayed about and each person shares what she has received in prayer. We then discuss what has been seen and go back into prayer. It actually goes back to St Ignatius Loyola (I don't know whether his group still do it). His group would meet together, take away an issue, look at it individually for three days in prayer, then return and share what they had found. If there was no common mind they went back into prayer. This continued until the Common Mind was found.

Other communities like the Community of the Resurrection in South Africa work on this principle, at least in taking some decisions

(A general discussion concerning the Common Mind ensured between the sisters)

MRM: It goes back to the first synod of the Church and I am worried by decisions the Church now takes without using the power of the Common Mind. The new bishop of Ballarat, David Silk, has been extolling this principle too, perhaps for synod.

(Further discussion over the difficulty of finding the Common Mind with large numbers of people)

MRM: This is a Quaker concept and what we usually find is that neither side of an issue turns out to be the correct one. The answer is usually somewhere in between and a combination of all the things the others saw- for example, the problem we had with the program for our inauguration.

(A general discussion of Quaker principles)

MRM: The concept first came to me through the Servants of Christ the King, a Church organisation not a religious order. The founder who was a Canon of Winchester cathedral saw the need for groups of people to get their answers through prayer not through political discussion which so often is what the Church does. The use of the Common Mind requires great humility on everyone's part, to see perhaps that the individual is wrong and surrendering ones own will and ideas. Our life is one of prayer and therefore everything comes through prayer.

The concept of consensus decision making of course can have a drawback because strong, forceful individuals can sway others. Therefore there have to be safeguards and progress taken in steps. Also the practicality of the decision taken has to be assessed, tested and perhaps the realisation accepted in some cases that the decision was wrong.

Q: What about the Constitution of the Community?

MRM: the Constitution is also in the position of being changed. The visitor is the bishop of Wangaratta but at the moment no warden or chaplain. Perhaps we need a warden more than the latter because we are so very well served by the clergy in the diocese who provide a daily Mass in our chapel.

Q: So all in all, a state of flux but working towards a solution? I suppose the times for postulancy and the novitiate are undecided?

MRM: No, they are not. The postulancy is for a minimum of six months, which can be extended. Here we hold the principle that the life is shared before a decision is made to test a vocation. That is how our aspirants have come. The novitiate is a minimum of two years and a maximum of four. After that the individual is eligible for triennial vows, which can be renewed once before the decision is made either to take final vows or leave. We are willing to take divorcees and it might be that such a person is unable to take final vows because of family commitments. Therefore we have to be flexible but I think triennial vows should only be renewed once.

I don't know whether it is often recognised but the taking of the vows give the person the power to live the life. Whereas in the novitiate the life is being

led without the power the vows endow - like the Baptismal vows help us to lead the Christian life.

This power is necessary in this type of life, which is difficult. Living in a small community is more difficult than a larger one because of the close proximity and no escape.

Q: What about holidays?

MRM: We have three weeks holiday a year during which time the habit is still worn.

(General discussion about when habit is not worn on holidays, for example, beach or bush walking)

Q: Times of silence?

MRM: Only really the Greater Silence is laid down but really silence is in force all the time. The life is one of silence, which is a growing process, and is not necessarily non-speaking. We have not got anywhere near where we should be in that sphere but we need a goal to aim for. In the silence one is able to cope with what is going on in the spirit and yet still do practical things

Q: I find contemplative prayer fascinating. Is there someone here who can describe it for me?

MRM: The deepest prayer I have experienced had no thoughts involved but just the experience of being in touch with the source of life. This is empowering. God takes over the relationship and is there just waiting for the individual

Q: You don't say anything?

MRM: No, just wait in the silence

Novice: I find I am not very good yet at silence but find prayer a companionship.

Q: How do you support yourselves?

MRM: The Community has an endowment fund and we are self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables. We do all our own labour.

Q: Do you get a lot of calls from people coming to you to ask for help?

MRM: As we are enclosed, people look to us for our help through prayer. We are called by people to pray for them.

Q: So normally you don't see people. Is that what the enclosure means?

MRM: No, not really but we are not an active group, so that people look to us for help through our prayer. There are more than 1000 names on our altar.

