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PROTESTANTS IN POST-CHRISTENDOM AUSTRALIA: THEMES AND MOVEMENTS

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For much of the Western world, the concept of the West becoming "post-Christendom" seemed to dawn (on the churches at least) quite late. In the 1950s, for instance, the Anglican Bishops of Australia (led by the evangelical Primate, the Sydney Archbishop Howard Mowll) sent a stern note to the federal government over the removal of the acronym "FD" (*Fidei Defensor*; "Defender of the Faith") from the monarch's "style" on Australian coins. "The welfare of the nation and the stability of the Crown," the bishops protested, "are linked with the Christian Faith which the Queen has pledged to maintain, and we view with concern any act which tends to minimize the importance of faith in and due to God."[1] They were not yet aware that they were on the wrong end of history—concerns about materialism, the morality of youth, or rising international Communism, did not blunt traditional Protestant-Catholic tensions or fundamentally change the way churches did ministry. Mowll did attempt to energetically plant churches to match the baby boom suburban growth, but that too often left clergy struggling to deal with new world problems with old world solutions. The sort of discourse among non-conformists and independent church traditions—which laid the basis for freedom of religion in Australia and a space for the "secular"—was still fairly foreign to most Anglicans.

Thirty years after the Bishops' protest, however, elements in the Australian government were seriously considering whether they needed the monarch at all, consideration of the Christian

1. *The Age*, 16 November 1953, 6.

God as the over-ruling deity of the Australian nation having long been contested, and functionally not a requirement in political discourse. As Jack Gregory notes, this was a direction which had commenced much earlier, the state having moved between 1788 and 1895 from a more or less Burkean position (the British state without religious establishment is inconceivable) to a more Macaulayan position. ("Religion, however excellent in itself, was not the State's concern, only efficiency in practical matters").[2] The fact that the Anglican Church maintained the essentially Burkean position (which was framed by the French Revolution, during which the colonies themselves were formed) for so long can be explained in part by the intervention of two major depressions (1891 and 1929) and two major wars (1914 and 1939). The church was still trying to be "useful" to the state long after the state had ceased to think of churches as more than (at best) an extension of federal welfare policy.

Determining just *when* a society becomes "post-Christendom," however, is more complex. In part, this is because authors use divergent measures and terminologies. The historian of the Irish in Australia, Patrick O'Farrell, for instance, noted early that the remarkable thing about religion in Australia was its relative weakness.[3] The immediate question this raises, however, is "compared to what?" O'Farrell wrote about and came from intensely religious societies, and he was writing from a Catholic perspective. Coming from an evangelical Anglican position, Stuart Piggin, by way of contrast, has made a career out of demonstrating that, below the formal operations of the state, Australians have been either very Christian or living within a world intensely influenced by Christianity.[4] Here are two very capable historians disagreeing on fundamental interpretations—O'Farrell went on, indeed, to suggest that Australia was the world's first "Post-Christian" country.

2. Gregory, "State Aid to Religion in the Australian Colonies, 1788–1895," 128–29.
3. O'Farrell, "Writing the General History of Australian Religion," 67.
4. Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*.

In part, the differences arise from the different starting points of the authors (i.e., their definitions of what Christendom is in Catholic and Anglican settings), and what they are seeking to demonstrate relative to the status quo of the history discipline at the time of writing. Technically, there was no "Westphalian" state church establishment in Australia after 1836, with the passage of Richard Bourke's Church Acts. Bourke had come to New South Wales (NSW) with Ireland in his mind—the governability of which had driven even the conservative Wellington government to extend Irish Emancipation in 1829.[5] With the bankruptcy and dissolution of the Clergy and Schools Lands Corporation from 1829 (and its subsequent dissolution),[6] the immediate solution for a distant, cash-strapped government dealing with a small population scattered over a vast continent was to effectively "establish" (i.e., fund) all churches and their school systems on a *per capita* basis. This was the "Roman" solution—all religion was good as long as it served the state. The implication, however, was that religion was a social rather than a spiritual good, and the state was no longer picking theological winners or assessing the relative value of ecclesial traditions. Of course, the established church remained in a privileged position whilever most Australian migration came from England, and the local organs of government were directly responsible to a British Parliament and administration which remained caught up in Anglican norms.

Religion and the Colonial State

It was not until 1850 that the various colonies received self-governing powers through elected bicameral government. From there until the 1870s, the implications of the collapse of the Clergy and Schools Lands Corporation in 1829 were worked out by fractious colonial chambers in which nonconformist and the more marginal freethinking and sectarian elements of the colonial population were overrepresented. For the church, this meant a

5. Duffy, Review of *The King and the Catholics*.
6. For which see Grose, "The Educational Experiment of the 1820s."

constant dripping attack on the public presence of religion, from the Bible in schools, to prayers in Parliament, to the public funding of religious education and denominational schools.

As S. A. Chavura, J. Gascoigne, and I. Tregenza point out, bringing British church-state relations to the colonies could head off in unpredictable directions.[7] In 1843, for instance, the Catholic Bishop of Sydney, John Polding, was quoting John Locke (who did not approve of the extension of toleration to Catholics) on the limitations of government in civic society, so as to carve out a proper realm for religion. There were regular protests in Parliament from the representatives of freethinking inner-city constituencies, or non-conformists who were prepared to accept any solution which forestalled a replication of the pre-1829 Anglican monopoly in Britain. And if one was not in Parliament, it was easy enough to drum up a one-person newspaper (the majority of papers before 1840) such as the independent evangelical *Monitor* and the Presbyterian *Colonist* in Sydney, or the Congregationalist *Evening Journal* in Adelaide to express the opinions of the nonestablishment individual, class, or cause.

The majority of these promoters of a "secular" Australia wanted not freedom from religion, but freedom of religion. As the indefatigable Edward Andrews noted of the move to implement Prayers in the South Australian Parliament,

> It is fitting . . . that a member of Parliament who recognises the claims of religion should enter upon his official work with a full sense of his responsibility to his Creator as well as to his constituents. The close alliance of things religious with secular things is a grand truth, which is most fully admitted by most Christians now, and hence the theory embodied in Mr. Caldwell's motion is good in itself.

It was, however, impossible in a plural society to serve the religious interests of all the constituents in any reasonable way by embodying any particular type of religious practice. It risked placing in the hands of those not theologically competent the task of framing obligations for those not theologically inclined: "It might happen that the Speaker was a notorious Freethinker

7. Chavura, et al., *Reason, Religion and the Australian Polity*.

having no faith whatever in the efficacy of prayer. His reading of the formal prayer would be a solemn farce, and would be a recognition of nothing save the will of a former House."[8] Religion for such people in a plural state was essentially a private practice. The same people who opposed the appointment and payment of Anglican chaplains, however, often supported special religious education in schools, and (in Andrews' case) were happy to have their children baptized by the same clergymen that they refused to pay out of the public purse.[9]

Contesting the Secular

The "secular" therefore meant different things to different people, depending on their religious and philosophical starting points. For most, it meant simply the absence of dominance by any particular sect or denomination.[10] It was not until much later, probably the 1960s during the high point of the state aid for religious schools debates fuelled by the massive workforce and infrastructure required to extend welfare state provision to the Baby Boomer generation, that a new generation of publicly-supported Australian historians began to redefine the Australian narrative as a search for an absence of religion. As Brian Dickey as noted, "The secular left liberal accounts of our history which became so dominant from 1950 to 1980 did not want to treat with Christianity, except to scorn it."[11]

On the benign side, this has meant merely the absence in many accounts of the Australian past of religion as a factor. On the more activist side, it has meant a revisionist bending of the light available from the past. As David Hastie has demonstrated with the case of Catherine Byrne's work, the "Whig" tradition in Australia has organized the discussion about Christendom as "part of a secular liberal progress narrative" with its own

8. "Prayers in Parliament," *Evening Journal*, 28 July 1886, 3.
9. Phillips, "Andrews, Edward William (1812–1877)."
10. Chavura, Gascoigne, and Tregenza, *Reason, Religion and the Australian Polity*, 2.
11. Prentis, "Religion in Australian History," 186.

hagiography and demonology. The original intent of the debate about secular education, for instance, either was primarily ideological (it was not), or *should* have been, an assertive value judgment which imposes an anachronistic interpretation over the past.[12] The key debate by the 1870s was in fact between Protestants and Catholics, the former desiring to exclude Catholic practice from the projected state school systems, the latter attacking such "secular" proposals as undermining the public voice of Christianity and so the whole concept of Australia as an extension of Christendom. There were in fact a few (if very few) who championed an entirely secularized Australia—but such voices faced the bare fact that most welfare and educational provision in Australia was provided by church-related entities, a fact that would vary in proportion but not in substance right through to the present. At the time of writing, despite a century of massive expenditure and professionalization of the health, education and welfare systems of Australia, more than 50 percent of Australian Welfare is delivered by church agencies, and Australians continue to send their children to faith-based schools in internationally remarkable numbers.

So, we might say that the debate about Australia as part of Christendom does not substantially hang upon the public presence or absence of religion. Census self-reporting does indicate that Australians have been decreasingly willing to identify with one or another religious denomination. This does not mean, however, that Christianity has disappeared from Australian public life, or that Australians have ceased to believe. Indeed, religion continues to be a critical contributor to recent political trends in Australia, despite the fact that the secular elites who are well entrenched in the inner-city electorates, the media and the publicly-funded organs of the welfare state, have long predicted its demise.

Indeed, as Hastie notes with regard to schooling, the fundamental difference between the public Christianity of the nineteenth century and that of the twentieth is not the presence of

12. Hastie, "The Latest Instalment in the Whig Interpretation of Australian Education History," 391–92.

Christianity in many parts of the society, but the transition from an established Protestant middle class to a middle class typified by what George Marsden calls (with reference to the American university system) "established non-belief." Without the broad range of alternative, private institutions, a strong Protestant intellectual and cultural tradition, and significant evangelical sub-culture to act as counter-points, elements of the Australian intellectual elites are (often out of ignorance) radicalized to "established anti-belief."

Liberal Christianity was better established and earlier established in Australian universities, which (founded as they were from the 1850s) took the Benthamite path set by the University of London, than was the case in the United States (established as those universities were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) which drew on a combination of medieval and Germanic classicism, Enlightenment Protestantism, and evangelical revivalism. (Marsden goes so far as to say that Harvard's framing questions were those of medieval Christendom: "How could they set medieval Christendom back on its proper course?")[13] Some predecessor attempts, like the Australian College, had a short existence, though others, such as Christ College in Hobart, were absorbed into the later state-established universities. Thereafter it was left to the residential colleges which popped up around the so-called sandstone universities in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart and Perth to attempt to create (depending on the dates of their foundations) small denominational intellectual entrepôts replicating British university faith-cultures. While some of these long performed a significant role for churches in ministry training, and as nodes for transnational Christian thought (often of a modernist type), they had a decreasing influence on the Australian universities as they embraced their national roles through the Depression, world war, and the postwar technocratic society.

13. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, 33.

The Great Divorce

The result has been a significant divorce between formal Australian Christianity and the country's intellectual elites, made the larger by the accelerating effects of mutual incomprehension.[14] This has been further exacerbated by the ambivalent relationship between Catholicism and the Labor Party tradition. As Robert Linder has noted,[15] all three major political party traditions in Australia have roots in Protestant non-conformism of one type or another. The Liberal tradition, Malcolm Prentis notes, was born in amidst "wowsers, free traders, protectionists and others," and then reborn after the expulsion of the Nationalists from the Labor Party over conscription and the binding vote of the Caucus in Robert Menzies' Presbyterian values of "self-sacrifice, frugality and saving . . . for education and progress."[16] The Labor Party itself found many of its earliest organizers among the Scottish Labor tradition of Presbyterian commonweal activists such as W. G. Spence, and radical Methodist preachers such as George Wells Smailes. It was only after the expulsion of William Morris Hughes and the National Labor faction that the informing dynamic in Labor politics shifted to tensions between a conservative Catholic wing and the radical Left. On the conservative side of politics, the populist Country Party emerged among farmers' groups supported by the large squatters among whom Scots Presbyterians were disproportionately represented. They would long hold a significant balance of power role, wielding the iconic representative value of the country, which has acted as a touchstone for Australian national identity.

While all of these attached themselves to transnational movements, their emergence as fragments from the Christian Protestant middle class hegemony of the nineteenth century was largely driven by *local* factors, albeit responding to broader imperial and globalizing forces. The vigorousness with which later fights about public policy were held was a marker of movements from common origins having to both hold the political center and yet

14. See Williams, *Post-God Nation*, 2015.
15. See Linder, *The Long Tragedy.*
16. Quoted in Prentis, "Religion in Australian History," 202.

distinguish themselves from one another. In the elections of the 1990s and 2000s, the fringes, which fundamentally rejected these common Protestant origins, made hay from precisely these divisions, and leveraged themselves into positions of power.

There have been three distinct ecclesial responses to this hardening of the Australian public square to the Christian voice. First, liberal Protestantism has been well connected to the great centers of thought in Germany and the USA. The charismatic Irish Presbyterian New Testament scholar Samuel Angus firmly cemented himself into the religious imagination of Australia by becoming the centre of a string of debates and eventually heresy trials in the 1930s. Angus had spent a great deal of time in the great centers of the transatlantic world, moving from Queen's College, Galway, to Princeton (both the Seminary and the University), Hartford, Marburg, and Berlin. Not surprisingly, he found Australia a small and constricted world, its universities pragmatic, and its churches conservative. While no formal charge of heresy was ever laid, his debts to Harnack and Schleiermacher put him at odds with even those centrist churchmen, such as R. G. Macintyre, who were driven by rising evangelical protests to do something about the disruption which Angus's position was causing as a leading former of the younger generation of ministers. Support for him divided the Presbyterian church in particular, a division which continued to inform the debates in the church through the 1950s and 1960s as the broader Protestant traditions (including the Anglicans) were considering various proposals for church union.

The structural issue was not at base theological—it was the pressure for these churches to respond to the collapse of the implicit social contract between the Protestant churches and the Australian state. The desire to retain a national presence for the church (often phrased as "the scandal of the disunity of the church," or concerns about deflating membership numbers) lay underneath these discussions. There was international precedent (in nearby India and places such as the Philippines, of course, but also in rural Australia where population size and the vast distances of the island continent made united church action during the Depression and war not just a desideratum but a necessity),

and influence from the linked church traditions in the United Kingdom. Union had been strongly argued in the 1920s, around the same time as the Canadian churches were voting, but was defeated on the lines of theology and church order in Australia even as it succeeded in Canada. Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians already ran common classes for ministry formation from the 1950s, and so the broad, largely liberalized, Protestant clerical tradition was largely in favour of Union as a logical extension of the missional moment and existing practices. The disciples of Angus and Andrew Harper—both of whom struggled with Christian orthodoxy—had a good sense of their intellectual superiority, and good reasons for thinking they were on the right side of history.

The issue, however, was one of plausibility structures—broader post-war mass education of Australia's rising generation did not lead to greater enlightenment, but to an industrial strength materialism, individualism, and an emphasis on technique. The assumed connection between the rationality of the university and the advance of a rationalized, modernized Christianity proved to be ill founded. What worked in the theological hall proved to be less successful in the local church once the welfare state and its attendant ideologies redirected the identities of the rising generation. By the 2010s, many older Protestant traditions were struggling to staff their very significant social welfare activities, due to the fact that their congregations were ageing and shrinking. As Keith Suter notes of the Uniting Church, "This was a reflection of a larger problem: the Uniting Church was running out of members generally. Who will serve on future boards?"[17]

The second response was a formal reaction to the dominance, and then the decline of the liberal engagement with postwar forms—reformed (i.e., neo-Calvinist) evangelicals worked their way out of student movements such as InterVarsity, out of conservative institutions such as the NSW Council of Churches, and through institutions such as Moore College and the Bible college movement, to take over mainline institutions. They were buoyed

17. Suter, "The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia," 5.

by the success of Billy Graham's Southern Cross Crusades of 1959, which pushed large numbers of candidates into these institutions, lengthened the staying power of the Bible college movement, and provided a generational unity to the leadership of some mainstream church traditions which endured to the end of the first decade of the new century. Despite the fact that many American and Australian institutions had progressively pushed out an orthodox Christian presence, the global connections of these Australian reformed evangelicals could draw on the rise of a supportive international "reformed intellectual revival" in British regional universities, led by figures such as James Packer and F. F. Bruce. The spread of this influence through publications, media, revivalism, and missionary movements, created in Canada, the USA, and elsewhere (including, to some degree, among those elements of the Dutch diaspora influenced by Kuyperian thought) a global "home" for the evangelical Protestant mind.

As Christianity seemed to be declining in the West, consciousness of its rise in the majority world reinforced the opinion that history was on their side. Australian evangelical Protestantism would thus have a not insignificant impact on later and broader events in the old imperial and new American networks, beyond that which the relatively small size of the population might have suggested. The reformational push was particularly successful in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, where control of ministry training and ordination progressively resulted in control of the key trusts and committee structures of the largest and richest mainstream Protestant ecclesial entity in the country. While outside of Sydney they played a long waiting game of training, maintenance, and redirection, the impact of Sydney Anglicans on the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON) was only the latest round in an international push to "reclaim" what the movement's founders considered to be an imperiled but essential part of the Protestant tradition.

Dedicated to fighting a war they inherited from the 1920s and 1930s, those engaged in the "second Protestant response" to Australian modernization have not always been able to manage the transition from being a movement focused on gospel-centered institutional renewal to that of ruling monopoly. Referred

to by some critics as "fundamentalistic" (a debatable term),[18] the shifting demographic of high migration, plural Sydney has meant that attendance even in its heartland did not grow as expected between 2006–2018, while the "non-denominational" emphases of the Ministry Training Scheme and the independent evangelical churches planted outside formal Anglican structures have challenged the specifically Anglican nature of much of what the movement has achieved. In Melbourne, where many Sydney Anglicans found ministry and teaching opportunities at places such as Ridley College, and in the expanding network of church plants, renewals, and overplants which have expanded out of St Hilary's Kew, St Jude's Carlton, and St Mark's Emerald, among others, there is a different story. There the strategy of careful attention to leadership development, strategic planning and resourcing, and proactive growth strategies has provided, within the burgeoning migrant capital city of perhaps Australia's most left-leaning state, a successful strategy for reversing the downward curve being experienced in the more traditional churches.

A key indicator that the "cross-over point" between conservative renewal and liberal decline had been reached was seen in 2019. A contentious motion came before the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne to send a message of support to a new reformed evangelical GAFCON-oriented diocese in New Zealand, "structurally distinct from the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia."[19] At the same time as Melbourne Synod "expressed sorrow" at the Wangaratta diocese's decision to approve a form of blessing for married same-sex couples:

> Synod also welcomed the formation of the Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa/New Zealand for members of 12 congregations who left the Anglican Church of Aotearoa NZ and Polynesia, which is in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican

18. Percy, "Foreword."

19. Powell, "New Anglican diocese created in New Zealand," *Sydney Anglicans*, 17 May 2019.

> Church of Australia, over its decision to allow the blessing of same-sex marriages and civil unions.[20]

The relative balance of evangelical clergy in the previously liberal- and high-church dominated Synod was apparent when a motion was put that the Synod not consider the previous motion: it was lost 201 votes to 226.[21] The question for Melbourne evangelical Anglicans now was whether, having won a long struggle over control of the Synod, they could redeem or rebuild enough of the infrastructure of the Diocese so as to render it viable in the face of larger issues. After all, for most Australians such internal struggles are not a key motivator.

At the same time as struggles continued over the bones of old Christendom in the mainline traditions, there were other (sometimes related, but more often disconnected) responses to Australian modernization. A "third Protestant response" was a grass roots interaction with the commanding transnational facts which defined the Australian form of modernization: particularly globalization, migration, and entrepreneurialism. This was a truly post-Christendom form of faith which emerged on the suburban fringes, distant from the inner-city centers of contestation over the public role of religion. It included higher levels of migration, including the refugees from decades of war in the Middle East, Asia, and, more latterly, Africa. The first of these radically diversified the religious profiles of the "Western suburbs" both in Sydney and Melbourne, while the latter did the same for almost all the capital cities in Australia. It led over the longer run to what would previously have seemed strange alliances between eastern Sydney Jews, south-western Sydney Muslims, and outer suburban middle class pentecostals, whose burgeoning megachurches were the recipients of overflow from the exit of former Anglican and Uniting Church members (and some Catholics), and Christian migrant flows from South America, the Pacific, Africa, and Asia. For a short period, a religiously-informed

20. "Melbourne Synod expresses 'sorrow' at Wangaratta's decision to bless same-sex marriages," *Anglican Ink*, 24 October 2019.

21. "Melbourne Synod expresses 'sorrow' at Wangaratta's decision to bless same-sex marriages," *Anglican Ink*, 24 October 2019.

confederation of political representatives called "Family First" (founded by pentecostal megachurch pastor, Andrew Evans) had significant sway in the Federal and South Australian Parliaments.

While this did not last, new secular and old ecclesial liberals were concerned as to the degree of opposition to "progressive" agendas such as the same sex marriage debate in 2017, particularly among migrant dominated and often heavily Muslim outer suburban seats which had previously been considered safe Labor Party seats. The demographic shift away from old Christendom to post-Christendom forms of faith could also be seen in the (to many surprising) election of Australia's first pentecostal Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, in August 2018. Later that year, the returns of the National Church Life Survey indicated that attendees in pentecostal churches had exceeded the number of attendees in Anglican Churches.[22]

These pentecostal and charismatic churches were "post-Christendom" in a number of ways. Early pentecostal movements largely emerged from Methodist and Salvation Army origins, local conversions to a more experiential faith in response to life crises (particularly illness, which hit a peak with the 1919 Influenza Pandemic), social crises (world war and the Depression), and perceived apostasy among the intellectual and organizational elites at the peak of the mainstream denominations. Prosopographical studies of the key figures among the early pentecostal movement in Australia (captured convincingly in the online *Australasian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*) demonstrate that all of these factors were contributors to the pentectostalization of people such as J. A. D. Adams, Sarah Jane Lancaster, Don Westbrook and many others. For these people, the charismatic potentials in the scriptures were activated through the spiritual technologies offered by healing movements (the Catholic Apostolic Church, Dowie-ism, and others even further out on the fringe of [post]-colonial societies), Bible prophecy movements (articulated through international publications of Christian authors such as H. G. Guinness, and local millennialist

22. Powell, et al., *Vista*.

preachers such as William Lamb), encounters with indigenous communities through the recirculating missionary movement, and the intense spirituality of international Keswick and revivalist movements.[23]

From the 1960s

These movements remained small in Australia until the 1960s. Then, with the crisis in church-state relations and the slow (and initially largely invisible) beginning of the more significant mainstream Protestant deflation (described more generally in the British world by Callum Brown and Hugh Chilton),[24] the fruits of post-war mass migration, the "opening" of Australia to the emerging global system, and social change (women's rights and work patterns, shifting status patterns, mass post-secondary education, etc.) began to be seen. There are numbers of studies demonstrating that pentecostal churches were powerfully stimulated by the drift of mainstream Christians out of their liberalizing congregations, and in particular the rapid growth and then fragmentation of the organized charismatic renewal in 1980.[25] Singleton, Rocha and Openshaw[26] have also recently shown that pentecostal churches engage effectively with the global people movements (migration, refugee status, and diaspora) to build community, precisely because they provided answers to issues of communicative media, experience, intimacy (individual and corporate), organizational sustainability, and personal mobility in a globalized world. Riding on such waves, Australian Pentecostalism (charismaticized from its early classical pentecostal origins) became a most distinctly transnationalizing collection of

23. For a taxonomy of these movements in Australia compared to the American work of Don Dayton, see Hutchinson, et al., "Introduction," 1–21.

24. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain*; and Chilton, *Evangelicals and the End of Christendom.*

25. These are summarized in Hutchinson, "Australasian Charismatic Movements and the 'New Reformation of the 20th Century?'" 24–53.

26. In Rocha, et al., eds., *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.*

traditions, rather than a merely adapted European Christendom model.

As the megachurch form began to replace the conference form of the organized charismatic movement (OCM) through the 1980s,[27] the globalizing networks which had been imported by the OCM through, for example, Temple Trust conferences, tape ministries, magazines, exchange of staff between cooperating "service committees," and (increasingly) new digital technologies,[28] also became the mechanism for Australian ministries to go out into the world. Hills Christian Life Centre, for example, signed its first record deal in the mid-1980s, and began releasing albums in 1988. Within a decade they had a global footprint, and by the time of writing had become a defining force in global Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Mark Evans draws on Christian Copyright Licensing International's records to conclude that over fifty million people around the world sing Hillsong material every week. This has led to the creation of a virtual global denomination attended by hundreds of thousands of people every week on five continents.

While Hillsong is the best known (and studied) of Australian transnational churches, it is not alone. The C3 (Christian City Church) and INC movements likewise number hundreds of churches around the world, and less well known but vibrant musical, prophetic, and even educational cultures. Smaller church groups, such as Influencers Church (Adelaide) and Planetshakers Church (Melbourne) also support international campuses, and even individual churches of size have created significant transnational networks. Among these are ethnic communities (such as the Africa-based Redeemed Church of God or the Gereja Bethel Indonesia [GBI] movement based in Indonesia) which have followed the flows of their migrants to Australia, while others are migrant church networks which commenced in Australia and then leveraged its relative prosperity to project mission, education, and social work back into the Pacific or Asia.

27. Hutchinson, "'Just up the Windsor Road,'" 39–62.
28. See Maiden, "Renewing the Body of Christ," 1243–66.

Australian Protestantism: Global, Migrant, and Mobile

The importance of migration for Australian Protestantism cannot be overstated. First, many mainstream churches (such as the Presbyterian Church in some states) have become effectively migrant churches, often with a fading European rump. Vibrant migrant congregations are central, for example, to the continued evangelical presence in the Uniting Church, and indeed to that communion's continued existence.[29] They are critical to the revitalization movements identified by Thomas Oden in his book *Turning Around the Mainline*, and which in Australia are organized in such movements as the churchplanting movements Geneva Push and City to City (at the reformed end of evangelicalism), Future Directions and Parish Renewal among centrist Baptists and Anglicans, and Hillsong Leadership Network, the 24/7 Prayer movement, the "Ancient Future Faith" trend, at the more charismatic end. Chinese and Korean churches are particularly important for the Presbyterian tradition, and Indonesian, diasporic Chinese and pasifika churches are an essential part of the charismatic revitalization movements.

The presence of pasifika and Asian constituencies in the large charismatic megachurches has also not been overlooked. As Andrew Singleton notes:

> Many of those who joined the Pentecostal movement in the 1960s and '70s have left. They have been replaced by a younger generation of Pentecostals, many of whom are migrants or the children of migrants. It is now a religious movement characterised by great cultural diversity, perhaps more than any other Christian denomination or movement in Australia.[30]

This has important demographic and transnationalizing effects which help confound the continued dire interpretations of scholars who focus on Australian secularization. "Pentecostalism," notes Singleton,

> remains one of the most popular Christian options among young adults . . . Churches like Riverview in Perth, Influencers Church in

29. Suter, "The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia."
30. Singleton, "Strong Church or Niche Market?" 89.

> Adelaide and Planetshakers in Melbourne draw enormous congregations each weekend. Hillsong in Sydney remains Australia's largest single congregation and now has chapters in other Australian cities and internationally. By contrast, the mainline Protestant denominations for the most part struggle to attract young adults, and have ageing congregations.[31]

Effectively, Pentecostalism has mediated the ageing of the Australian Protestant population, and the impact of a vigorous secularist critique, by escaping the "national bubble." New waves of immigrants continue to support energetic, communitarian forms of Protestantism, despite the decline of the mainstream. As could be noted in the cases of GAFCON, the Assembly of Confessing Churches and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in the Uniting Church of Australia, the majority world and Australia's place as a "space of flows" for global migration trends has been core to revitalization movements.

Finally, the facility with which Australian churches have escaped the Christendom box for transnational realities has protected them from an acidic public culture dominated by oppositional elites. In 2018, Hillsong (before they negotiated a moderated arrangement) announced it was leaving the Australian Christian Churches to establish its own global denomination. The main reason given was that an Australian-based denomination did not cover the major areas of risk and governance for a global network, where there were more members in (say) the USA and the UK than in Australia.[32] It was a development which affected a large part of what is now the majority tradition in Australian Protestantism. The move recognized that "risk" was relative to the national frameworks within which churches operated, and that Hillsong now spanned multiple jurisdictions, and would be working to engage constituencies in places a long way away from the "hurly-burly" of Australian politics and opinion. Most importantly, it recognized that, for the first time in a major

31. Singleton, "Strong Church or Niche Market?" 89.

32. "Statement from Pastor Brian Houston & Wayne Alcorn: Re: Hillsong Church & ACC," 19 September 2018.

element of the Australian Church, the nation-state did not define the Protestant denominational form.

Conclusion

Christendom disappeared from Australian life not with a single act of legislation or public will, but in layers, the acceptance of which varied depending on the partners involved. In 2017, the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was handed down, capping a multi-year process of forensic investigation of Australian churches. It represented, fundamentally, a public statement that religious organizations are in no way different from any other corporate body, or exempt from the law (a significant matter for the Catholic Church, given its traditional position on auricular confession). The consequences are not just financial or operational—though there is no doubt that historically the process may well be seen as the Australian equivalent of the "stripping of the altars," wrapped (as Eamon Duffy demonstrated with regard to the Henrician forerunner) in a sort of whig history noting that this was "a vital stage along the road to modernity, the cleansing of the English psyche from priestcraft, ignorance and superstition."[33] Effectively, it was a witness to the handing of the baton from what had been the majoritarian traditions of Protestantism to less hierarchical, more nimble grass-roots models which can operate "between the cracks" of dominant nation states contesting their relativization by the emergence of global society.

While planted with the assumption of state establishment, the Australian colonies found this not sustainable after the advent of competitive free settlement pluralized the society, progressively limited the power of government, and prioritized individual and group rights (particularly around land policy). The Bourkean shift to state aid for all (significant) religious bodies in the 1830s was not a recognition of the value of religion, so much as a recognition that the state did not have the power or resources to

33. Duffy, "Preface to the Second Edition," xiii.

sustain the services required by rapidly growing colonies, migration to which shifted the demographics in favour of non-conformists who would organize and work hard to ensure that Australia would never return to religious establishment. As the state grew in the Australian colonies, these voices obtained a significant voice not only in industry, commerce, and the professions but also in the bureaucracies which supported the public space. The desideratum of "separation of church and state" became a functional *modus operandi* and watchword, despite the fact that there was no such legal restriction in Australian constitutional law. In time, as the welfare state grew and technical modernization became the operating assumption on which the entire Australian state worked, the reference to the church by the state increasingly related only to the Macaulayan "efficiency in practical matters" (prayers for rain, for the end to war, for help and social assistance during economic downturns, etc.). Since the 1960s, with mass education funded by the state, Protestantism has been progressively excluded from the intellectual and political life of the country. Once scoffing of the protest by Catholic hierarchs that the proposed public schooling system of the 1870s was a proposal for "seedplots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness,"[34] a century later Protestant leaders were wondering whether the Catholics had not in fact been right. Not surprisingly, between the "Goulburn school strike" of 1962 and 2012, Protestant communities of various types built one of the larger (*per capita*) Christian schooling systems in the world.

Inevitably the privatization of Protestantism has left the related movements with significant moral suasion, but little voice in the public arena. The transition—recognized formally only recently—from traditional, national forms to transnational, mobile, and experiential forms of Christianity in Australia has been the result. Australia has become a significant exporter of globally-engaged Protestantism, both on the experiential end (Hillsong, C3, INC, Planetshakers, etc.), and on the reformed end (GAFCON, Ministry Training Scheme, reformed church planting movements, etc.) of the spectrum. The conundrum presented by

34. Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia 1906–1950*, 250.

O'Farrell and Piggin remains. For a remarkably secular country, Australia really does produce an equally remarkable quality and quantity of innovative, transnationalizing Protestant movements.

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