



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong  
Research Online

---

Faculty of Creative Arts - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

---

2008

# Marrying Out - Catholic-Protestant Unions in Australia, 1920s-70s

S. A. McHugh

*University of Wollongong*, [smchugh@uow.edu.au](mailto:smchugh@uow.edu.au)

---

## Publication Details

This paper was originally delivered as McHugh, SA, *Marrying Out - Catholic-Protestant Unions in Australia, 1920s-70s*, *Negotiating the Sacred V: Governing the Family*, Arts Faculty, Monash University, Victoria, 14-15 August 2008.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:  
[research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

**MARRYING OUT**  
**CATHOLIC/PROTESTANT UNIONS FROM THE 1920s TO THE 1970s**

**by Siobhan McHugh, University of Wollongong**

Paper delivered at an International Conference NEGOTIATING THE SACRED V:  
GOVERNING THE FAMILY, Arts Faculty, Monash University, Victoria

Aug 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 2008

This is a (lightly-edited) transcript of the talk and subsequent discussion. The  
podcast can be heard on <http://arts.monash.edu.au/ecps/feeds/events-podcast.php>

or in iTunes:

<http://arts.monash.edu.au/ecps/feeds/events-podcast.xml>

Well my paper is entitled 'Marrying Out: Catholic/Protestant Unions from the 1920s to the 1970s', but it might equally have been called 'Passion, Prejudice and Polarities'. It is about mixed marriage between Catholics and Protestants in a time when Australia was deeply divided along Catholic and Protestant lines, a concept that seems almost laughable in the richly multicultural Australia of today - or is it just that the labels have shifted?

Historians such as John Hirst and Inge Clendinnen have noted similarities between the demonising of Australian Muslims post-9/11 and earlier perceptions of Australian -Irish Catholics as a disloyal and recalcitrant bunch that was a constant irritant to the Anglo-Protestant Establishment. Irish Catholics were the first ethnics in Australia, as Campion and others have noted, and their long struggle to maintain their cultural identity has been well documented; I am not going to go into that here. My purpose today is to illustrate the Us and Them world of Catholics and Protestants that obtained well into the 1970s and the often fraught existence of those who ventured into the middle ground of mixed marriage.

I am actually going to play you excerpts from interviews; I have recorded forty-two oral histories around this topic for a doctoral thesis and so I'm going to play you excerpts from them today. The oldest marriage that I visited was 1924, the most recent was 1983. It is not supposed to be any kind of statistical sample but by some coincidence I managed to end up with about fifty:fifty Catholic-Protestants and, interestingly, the stories of bigotry come down fairly even-handedly on both sides.

Now [Alessandro] Portelli, the great Italian oral historian, talks about 'the audio IS the text', so I'm going to follow his fine example and start by playing you a piece that will just illustrate some of the depth of feeling at the time. This is Gay Wilson, a woman in her mid-sixties who lives in Sydney.

*Gay: My mother came from a strict Methodist family and they were absolutely horrified to think she was marrying a Catholic because of people's perception of Catholicism in those days; yes they weren't very enamoured. In fact so much so, when my mother died, her brother sent me a sympathy card and all he wrote on it was: 'Dear Gay, there is one thing I remember about your mother - she married a Catholic,' and I thought I'll never speak to you again. I ripped up the card and I thought 'how dare you say that to me in my grief.'*

I just rang Gay this morning to check the date of that and that was 1988. Her mother had married in 1941 and for forty-seven years her brother had nurtured that anger and bitterness.

Gay's father was a headmaster in a country school and she was brought up to be Catholic, as stipulated by the Catholic Church in the event of a mixed marriage; that was a sticking point for many Protestants who worried, not unreasonably, that this was a Catholic conspiracy to undermine and even eradicate the Protestant faith.

John Haynes, a young Sydney engineer, discovered the depth of his father's feelings on the matter when he married Helen, a Catholic school teacher, in 1962.

*John: Neither of my parents, none of my family attended the wedding, not my brothers and my sisters, my parents, uncles, aunts, grandfather - and the way I think it was portrayed to me was it didn't so much matter if I had fallen off the rails, but it was a matter of making a commitment to bringing any children up as Catholics rather than as Protestants. I need to add here that my grandfather came from England in the late 1800s as a young man and I think in those days there was a very strongly held view that all the best things came out of England and that if England's formal national religion was Church of England, well that had to be a high point and you were somehow letting the family lineage down and history down, if you changed that through bringing up children as Catholics.*

*Siobhan: But how did your father make his views known to you personally?*

*If I married Helen I would be disinherited.*

*Helen: Because the church took all your money! (laughs)*

*John: And he didn't want any inheritance he might leave being likely to finish up in the Catholic Church.*

He goes on to say that his father had been a great supporter of the Empire, of Menzies, and this comes through as a motif time and again in the interviews. Religion is in fact just a code, everything is framed by the old Irish versus English colonial history. You could go right back to the Reformation, you could go back further to the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169, this comes up as a motif. When I was talking to Catholics religion was code for the Irish as oppressed and English as oppressor, when I was talking to Protestants it came through as the Irish as bog-Irish, inferior, disloyal, not to be trusted and these sorts of references are in the literature as you would know.

Interestingly in all of these histories, the terms 'Irish' and 'Catholic' are seen as interchangeable. Now this was true in the early days of Australia, but actually about twenty per cent of Irish immigrants to Australia [overall] were Protestant, whether of the Anglican or the Presbyterian background. In fact Gay Wilson,

whom we heard earlier, she went on to marry the son of two Irish Presbyterian immigrants and her Catholic father was quite okay about that marriage, but her Protestant in-laws were quite horrified and they maintained an almost childish hostility towards Gay throughout the course of her marriage. I am just going to go to a little story she has which is rather interesting.

*Gay: The tack we took, we just didn't see much of them, because my husband knew it would upset me the things that they would say. Like I remember my mother-in-law, one day when my first child was about to start school, in those days you were either Public or a Catholic and in those days the Catholic kids wore brown shoes to school and the Publics wore black and she asked my son, who was just five, 'Has mummy bought your school shoes yet?' and I knew what she meant; did mummy buy you black shoes or brown shoes, not saying, 'What school are you going to?' I thought that was horrific to ask a young child, a five-year-old, that.*

So the children of mixed marriages were exposed to all kinds of bizarre family situations ranging from the comical to the tragic. Helen, as she wants to be known, and the family sensitivities are such that many of my informants, although this collection is going to end up in the National Library, have requested that their full names not be divulged. Helen was brought up in Ballarat as a closet Catholic. Her mother taught her the Rosary and other aspects of the Catholic faith between the time when she came home from school and her father, a Presbyterian, came home from work. Suspecting what was happening, he used to force his children to eat meat on Fridays, something that in the early 1960s was still considered a sin by Catholics. His mother made her feelings very clear:

*HELEN: They were very Presbyterian, very conservative, and they hated Catholics and so we weren't accepted by my grandmother particularly, she was more vocal about it. As soon as you walked in, on the piano there were photos of all the family and there was a photo of our parents but our mother was cut out, just shredded out of it, and that set the tone for us. We sort of didn't feel very welcome.*

Now Susan Timmins's grandparents, her Catholic grandparents, felt just as strongly about their Protestant son-in-law. Susan's mother came from an unusually wealthy Catholic background, they had a general store in Maitland in New South Wales around the turn of the century and by the 1930s the family employed a mechanic-cum-chauffeur, who fell in love with Susan's mother. Aware of the resistance to their relationship, the pair eloped to Sydney and Susan's mother was cut-off forthwith from her family her name not even allowed to be mentioned. When she returned to see her father on his death-bed, her mother refused to allow her across the threshold; she never saw her father again. Many years on, one of her mother's nine siblings made contact with Susan's father; her mother had long since died in childbirth giving birth to Susan's brother. The father arranged a meeting between Susan's uncle and the family.

*SUSAN: My father arranged that we all went out to dinner together, wouldn't this be a lovely bonding thing. Well you can't take somebody who has had no contact with their mother's family for thirty or forty years and then take you all out to dinner, as my father did, and expect that we would all be hunky-dory. It was hunky-dory enough until I'd had a few drinks and I suppose I then had to ask the question, just why. I said: 'You have to forgive me but I am antagonistic towards my mother's family. I don't remember any of*

*you. It is all right for you to swan in from overseas and say hi to my father, but did you ever care about what happened to us children? Did you ever care about what happened us as kids? Did you ever care that my father was in such a dire situation that he had to put his children into an orphanage?'*

*[Weeps] It is just ridiculous. I'm 64!*

*He always described that as being the most terrible, terrible time of his life. He said it was bad enough that his wife died, but to have to put his two children in an orphanage because he couldn't support them. It was after the war and widows were getting war widow pensions and things, but he got nothing.*

You can see the depth of the emotion there for Susan today. Notwithstanding, she is adamant that she wants her interview archived in the National Library because she wants people to understand [the depth of feeling around what happened]. She is not at all embarrassed about having become so upset; she wants people to understand that this was what happened and obviously how much she suffered as a result.

The uncompromising attitude of the Catholic Church to mixed marriage prompted some Catholics to reject a Catholic wedding and even to renounce their faith. The Catholics who had the temerity to marry in a Protestant church were required to legitimise the union in Catholic eyes by declaring themselves 'repentant, willing to repair any scandal,' I am quoting here from the Convalidation Application which a priest has passed on to me, name the 'heretical minister' who had performed the ceremony and explain whether they had acted out of 'ignorance or malice in going through with the attempted wedding.' So, absolutely uncompromising language there from the Catholic Church. This is long before *Vatican II*, we are talking here about the 1950s. But this sort of attitude, and of course it wasn't all like that, there were priests who actually disobeyed the Church's own edict of not performing mixed marriages in front of the main altar, and I have recordings here but I won't have time to play them, but there were also very hard-line bullying priests.

I have encountered people who basically gave away their Catholic faith as a result of the way that their intended wives were treated. One was Gwen, from the Central Coast of New South Wales. Her husband was outraged that they could not be married on the main altar and had to be relegated to the side altar and they went ahead instead and got married in the Methodist church and he never went near a Catholic church again. Their wedding in Sydney in 1947 was boycotted by his parents, although a brother and a cousin watched the proceedings through the window. They were not allowed to enter the Protestant church by the Catholic Church regulations and indeed they were also forbidden to do so by their wives. They were told if they went into that church, they need not come home. More dramatically I have one story of a Catholic who was so outraged when the priest told him to drop the relationship with his Protestant girlfriend that he indicated his disgust with the Church by firing his Rosary beads through a pistol down the main street of Braidwood. (laughter)

Nora Dunne of Newcastle was upset when she and her Protestant husband had to be wed in the Presbytery, also in 1947. What rankled even more was that two of her school friends were married on the same day in full splendour before the altar - and both of them, she knew, were pregnant.

Some couples got around the issue of raising children Catholic by divvying them up: the girls would follow the mother's religion and the boys the father. One

Sydney woman, Louise, recalls that she and her brother lived in separate worlds, he at the state or public school, she at the convent. Her father, a Protestant, never attended any of her school functions and refused to even drop her at the school gate. Harry Griffith's sister was brought up Catholic following her mother, but her resolve was sorely tested on Fridays when he and his father ate chops and she got a tin of cold salmon. Harry was a famous broadcaster in his day appearing on the Roy Rene Mo Show as the sidekick to whom Roy directed the immortal words, 'Cop this young Harry.' Harry's dad had a pragmatic attitude to religion, while his mother came from a traditional Irish-Catholic background.

*HARRY: My mother was Florence Eileen Duffy and his family were not very happy about him marrying a Catholic. Old man Duffy didn't seem to mind, so long as they got married in a Catholic church. But the first surprise came when my mother told him that because he was a Protestant, she couldn't be married in front of the altar, had to be married around the side of the altar. So before the church ceremony my father went round and saw the priest, gave him five quid and said, 'Make this as fast as possible. Get it over and done with quick.' So that's what he did. They said it was the fastest wedding they'd ever seen!*

*Siobhan: What was your father's religion?*

*Well that's interesting because I said to my father, 'What church are you?' and he said, 'Church of Christ.' I said, 'That's a very small church, how did you come to pick that??' He said: 'When I was a kid they had the best picnics - so I just went to the church that had the best picnics!' He said: 'If the Church of England had wanted to put on better picnics, I would have been Church of England.' He said: 'When I joined the army I was Church of England, because it's better in the army to be Church of England, because that's what most of them are.' He said: 'You don't tell them you're Methodist or Presbyterian or any of that quirky stuff - just Church of England, straight in and straight out. The church doesn't worry about it and I don't worry about it.' He said: 'You just pick what suits you,' - because he was advising me. Because the arrangement that my mother and father came to was that all the girls would be brought up Catholics and my father would decide what we were going to be. So the old man said, 'Well you can be what you want to be.'*

A welcome bit of humour there from Harry, but in rural New South Wales things weren't quite as relaxed. Heather Shepherd, near Goulburn, met her future husband at an agricultural dance. Her father warned her he would disinherit her if she married Cliff, a Catholic, but worse was to come.

*HEATHER: We got married on 22 April 1961 and it was in a Catholic church in Marulan and it was quite a good occasion. But there was one thing happened after the wedding we never know to this day who did it, but somebody took the nuts off one of the ute that we were going on our honeymoon in and the wheel came off. My girlfriend was following me and the wheel just came off and Cliff just gently guided it until it stopped. We weren't hurt, but we still don't know who that was.*

*SIOBHAN So tell me then about your mother after you got married, did she soften her attitude?*

*No never. When we had children she used to tell me what ugly children they were [laughs], she was so bitter. When she was ill,*

*when our youngest one was less than twelve months old, she got very sick, dad used to ring me up and ask me to go out and help and I did. She would sit there at the table and say, 'That's the ugliest child I've ever seen.' But anyway she just didn't get any better and she never forgave me.*

She goes on to say, quite touchingly, how her father as she nursed him as he was dying, wanted to change his will back to reinstate her, having disinherited her, and she refused to let him do it because she felt that he wasn't in his right mind potentially and she didn't want to take advantage of him. They were very poor people, they had to go out fencing, they had a farm but they had to go out labouring on other farms as well to raise their four children.

So how did all this antipathy survive its colonial origins? One reason was that old enmities had produced a *de facto* separation, two parallel worlds. Catholics and Protestants were likely to go to separate schools, socialise and play sport in separate circles, marry a fellow traveller and repeat the cycle. School kids gave each other stick. 'State, state, lick the plate, on a Monday morning,' jeered the Catholics. 'Catholic dog sitting on a log, eating maggots out of a frog,' taunted the Protestants. In Sydney, David Jones department store stocked only Protestant school uniform, while Mark Foy backed the Catholics.

But the separation also spawned discrimination in the workplace and this was the serious reality that underlay the Catholic perception of being a discriminated - against underclass. Advertisements specified, 'No Catholics need apply,' until the 1940s, both in Victoria and New South Wales and I also have records of 'No Irish need apply' in ads in Northern New South Wales until the 1950s. Trade union organiser Johnno Johnson, later a Labor parliamentarian, recalls that certain companies blatantly would not employ Catholics. In Western Australia Boans Emporium was one that did not employ Catholics. Government authorities were less overt in their preferences. The New South Wales Egg Marketing Board where John Haynes, whom we heard earlier, his father was deputy manager, allowed Catholics into lowly positions but promotion did not follow easily. There is ample evidence of this happening across the board. I like [the poet] Vincent Buckley's take on it, he is speaking as an Irish-Australian Catholic, about 'his quiet gratification that a new bank clerk or teacher or postmaster or policeman was a Catholic, especially if his name being non-Irish, had led the others to think him or her one of *theirs*.' So they sort of managed to slip in beneath the screen that was there.

Society was so divided that a former curator of the National Museum of Australia has actually located a brochure set in Rockhampton in the 1930s and it is called 'The Protestants' Guide to Shopping in Rockhampton' (laughter). So you could actually conduct your entire shop without having to transact with a Catholic.

Alma Douglas reiterates this. Her father was a Catholic in the New South Wales Fire Brigade and he had to battle for decades to be able to rise up the ranks.

*ALMA: Oh yes, being a Catholic in the Fire Brigade, the chance of promotion wouldn't have been great. Even going through, my father retired in 1960, he started in 1925 and retired in 1960, even going through those later years, being a Catholic in the Force wasn't a benefit. Being a Mason was.*

She goes on to talk about how her father was blackballed, where they would put black balls or white balls in to announce promotion and the Masonic Lodge, her belief was, had the control and so he was constantly being blackballed for promotion.

By the mid-1960s, things were changing. In 1966 Pope Paul VI revoked the much-loathed rule that a mixed marriage couple could not marry on the main altar at the Catholic Church, the non-Catholic party was no longer required to commit in writing to having the children brought up Catholic and the clergyman of the other faith was permitted to participate in the wedding service.

The recent World Youth Day tells us that Catholicism is still a major force in Australia - at around twenty-five per cent, making it the biggest single faith in the country. But as recently as 1988 it is noteworthy that Murray Gleeson became the first Catholic [Chief Justice] ever to be appointed to the New South Wales Supreme Court in its one hundred and sixty-four year history.

Yet only a few years later, Irish-Australian Catholics would occupy the highest positions in the land: Gerard Brennan as Chief Justice of the High Court, Sir William Deane as Governor-General and Paul Keating as Prime Minister. The Establishment, long the preserve of the English Protestant Ascendancy, had been well and truly breached. And with our current Prime Minister an Anglican convert from Catholicism the days of tribalism and sectarianism seem well and truly over. Ask anyone under fifty what a mixed marriage in Australia is today and they'll talk about Greeks marrying Italians, or a Christian marrying a Muslim. What remains to be seen is whether we have learnt anything from the bitterness and prejudice of earlier days.

Thank you.

## DISCUSSION

SIOBHAN You might be interested to know the statistics. There was an interesting article by Hans Mols, a sociologist, in 1970, based on data from the 1961 Census and he worked out that if in Australia marriage partners had been elected without any consideration of religious affiliation, you would expect intra-marriage to be at around twenty-two per cent. Instead it was seventy-nine per cent, so religion was a formidable factor in terms of the choice of marriage partner in 1961. In fact he goes back to 1891 and you can see the same sorts of rates going on.

### Questions from the floor

**Veronica Brady: Is there any distinction between Sydney and Melbourne - because I think it is perfectly clear that the Mannix influence in Melbourne added a great deal of fuel to the fire, where the Irish were all totally disloyal, would undermine King and Country. Growing up as a Melbourne Catholic we had a sense that the Catholics of Sydney weren't really the full bit, they seemed to be a bit more slack. Now is there any evidence that there is a greater tolerance in Sydney from Melbourne?**

I haven't been able, just for logistical reasons, to gather enough information from Melbourne. Just what I have got does certainly suggest that attitudes were more entrenched in Melbourne, it was much more an 'us' and 'them' world, take-no-prisoners kind of attitude, as witnessed by the huge St Patrick's Day procession through the city.

**Stephen Crittenden: I think possibly one reason for that is Kelly, who was the Archbishop of Sydney at the outbreak of World War I, was a formidable supporter of the war and conscription early on. It was a very different thing with Mannix in Melbourne. There may have been a more entrenched thing in Melbourne as a result of that, because that opposition to going to war or**



**to the conscription was certainly at the root of the hatred in the 1920s I think. I also think it might even have been stronger in Queensland even than in Melbourne, you mentioned Rockhampton and the 'Protestants' Guide'. Jack Carmody, my friend, who grew up in Brisbane tells me that it was deeply entrenched in Brisbane and a very similar thing, you shopped if you were a Catholic in one department store and another if you were a Protestant. I think that was quite common in Queensland.**

I think people aren't aware of the degree that there was a virtual low-level kind of apartheid in some cases.

**John Bradley: I grew up in a small country town where sport was huge and the main football team was divided between Protestants and Catholics called [????]. Everyone was there, like the Marist and the priests on one side. Does sport come out in this at all, because I went to school with kids who were of mixed marriage and you will play for the Catholics or you will play for the Protestants, it was always a topic of conversation? I was just wondering whether sport or recreation comes into the conversations as well.**

Even in the mid-1970s, I have one Protestant in Toowoomba who registered as he tackled the opposing Catholic that this was the first time that he'd ever touched a Roman Catholic, that was the thought that was foremost in his mind. So certainly it was a much bigger picture and that was played out again when you had people like Scots College playing Joey's, the old vestiges of Drogheda and Wexford, as I remember [the historian] Niall Brennan saying, were on the field when those two played. [Reference to massacres of Irish Catholics by Cromwell in 1640s] It was just a code for these tribal battles and they were reinforced constantly as the new waves of migrants came out and the famine was absolute foremost in the minds of Irish Catholics, that the English had let the Irish starve while they exported grain from the country and they were the enemy.

It wasn't always as entrenched as that, I mean Vincent Buckley has an interesting take on it, he actually says that he doesn't remember any religious bigotry where he grew up. Perhaps because in suburbs like where he grew up, I forget where it was was it Richmond, the population was divided into Catholic and others, not so much other as 'not us', so there was a benign divide. There was that spectrum of difference but very much a sense of one side completely baffled and unaware of the other.

I have to say it is interesting because I used oral history as my methodology and I'm going to examine this separately; I actually was very conscious of my own feelings in this. I left Ireland as a self-described refugee from the Catholic Church having been censored as a radio producer for having had a woman on discussing contraception in 1983 on the Irish National Broadcaster [RTE], so I came here to get away to a secular world. For a long time I was quite anti-Catholic, but still of course culturally Catholic, and so when I was interviewing people and one man revealed to me that he was a Mason I had to quell an impulse to bolt. [laughter] I thought but they're The Enemy, They're out to get Us.

In the same way when I was interviewing priests it was difficult to maintain that position of equality. I either felt I was falling back into that 'Yes father,' kind of subservient role, or resentful, 'What would you know.' I found myself battling all of these issues. Now ironically, bizarrely, I have sent my own two children to a Catholic school, so I should declare my position, where I am coming from.

**S Crittenden: I think one of the interesting things about this history of division is the extent to which it is suppressed in our museums and our institutions now, it is not talked about, it is almost as though it didn't happen. It is very interesting if you go to the Museum of Australia in Canberra, for example, it is a strand of Australian history that is not on display, it is not visible in any way.**

Yet when you scratch it, when I talk to anybody about what I am doing, every single person over fifty knows what I am talking about, they know somebody. 'So and so, very sad', or 'so and so who held a candle for somebody all her life and never married.' I've got so many stories that are there, so it obviously affected huge amounts of people. But you're right. I think the National Museum is planning a permanent exhibition on the Irish in Australia, so hopefully this will be a topic that will come up for examination.

**How much was this suppression of religious divide, my grandmother had married a Catholic [????] there was thing all through my childhood as well. That is several generations on, carrying it on to a ridiculous extent, and you sort of sit round and think how much of this suppression because we have now got multiculturalism and we are now open now in celebration of multiculturalism, but how much of this celebration is just suppression, we just won't talk about these religious divides.**

Well it is interesting what you say, just picking up on the thing about bad blood. Terry Radic, another Melbourne identity, has written about being what she calls a 'spiritual half-breed' and that she was considered to be 'tainted' because she was the product of a Catholic and a Presbyterian. Getting off your point a little, the pressure that was put on these children of mixed marriages who were sent home to try, again the nuns were implicated here very often, they would be sent home to try and convert the errant parent. I have letters from people who were terrified at the age of seven because their teacher, the nun at school, had told them, 'Your mother is going to go straight to hell,' and the poor child would be freaking at the thought of what could she do to save her mother from this fate.

But in terms of the suppression, when you get into the actual fact of keeping down the Catholics, the fact that CSR and other firms in Sydney, they did an audit in the 1970s and I think there were two Catholics at any kind of any semi-senior level. Government departments: the old story about the [NSW] Police Department used to alternate a Mason and a Catholic as the head of the department to try and maintain a sort of *de facto* balance.

But that is getting into quite systemic discrimination and so I suppose that is something that would tend to be suppressed and that is why most of the investigation of this has come from Irish-Australians of Catholic background that I can think of in the historical field. It is the minority group that is demanding to be recognised and was always trying to push for this sense of equality that they didn't feel they could have.

That's why there was this enormous vindication with the piercing of the establishment. I mean you could take a lighter view of it, I think of mixed marriage in a way bringing the two sides closer together, it is a kind of reconciliation. Interestingly, there was a situation in the mid-nineteenth century, four thousand orphan girls were sent out from Ireland after the famine between 1848 and 1850 and an astonishing forty-seven per cent married across race and religion, Trevor McClaughlin studied this, because probably they didn't have the constraints of having to bow to family background and sensitivities. But I see them as agents of a third way, a third path.

I am reminded of the Oscar Wilde quote, where Oscar Wilde said the relationship of the Irish to the English was that the Irish mission was to save the English from dying of sheer respectability, and perhaps we achieved that through mixed marriage. [laughter]

**John Bradley: My father was a farmer in Heathcote, Victoria and one year he employed one of the first Catholic shearers, the only person he could find. This is in the 1960s and I remember my dad they were trying to find somebody else. I am just wondering is there anything in your study that comes out about a more conservative rural experience?**

I actually found the opposite, that because there weren't enough to sustain separate populations that there was more just *de facto* integration. For instance the fact that Heather Shepherd met Cliff at a dance, in the city there would have a Catholic Youth Organisation dance and a Protestant dance, but there weren't enough young people to go round in rural areas so they tended to mingle more. I have heard of ads for jackeroos, I've got it documented there was an ad in *The Land* in the '60s looking for jackeroos and stating that they had to be Protestant. Why you had to be Protestant to ring a cow or something I don't know but obviously the Protestants were better at it.

**S Crittenden: Interestingly I think there are some respects in which rural Australia is now at the forefront of ecumenical getting-together. Interestingly it is because the clergy has collapsed. My favourite example is the Diocese of Toowoomba, which stretches right across the southern border of Queensland up into central Queensland, which is about the size of Germany. The Bishop of Toowoomba about a year ago put out a pastoral letter saying, 'By 2015 we are going to have fourteen priests in a diocese the size of Germany.' What is happening in outer areas in small towns is they are taking it a week around and the local Lutherans and Anglicans and Uniting and Catholic will go to each other churches now, simply because there aren't enough priests and ministers to go around and no one cares any more. Of course Headquarters cares and doesn't think it is a good thing, but on the ground an incredible social revolution is taking place I believe. It is very early but I think this is going to be a really interesting thing to look at in the next few years because I think places like Toowoomba, for example, are going to be where a lot of theological change takes place.**

But also I think the equation is completely altered by the fact that Catholic no longer means Irish in Australia, it is Vietnamese, Maltese, Italian, and there just isn't the same resonance with a Vietnamese Catholic and an English Protestant - it was that Irish-English thing and we see it still in England. I was only saying last night at the dinner there is still, as we know from your program Stephen, a discriminatory sectarian rule in place in England, whereby a Catholic cannot accede to the throne and the reigning monarch cannot wed a Catholic and remain on the throne. The first of the Queen's grandchildren married only in May and his Catholic-Canadian bride converted to Anglicism in order for him not to fall foul of that rule, even though he is obviously a long way from the throne, eleventh in place. There is no rule in British law that says a Hindu or an atheist or a Buddhist or a Muslim can't go on the throne, only a Catholic specified, and that has its origins in the old Reformation days of course. It is amazing how far back we can go.

**Veronica Brady: It seems to me so long as Catholics were bog-Irish, not well educated, they really were a threat. Now my parents were fairly well**

**educated and we did mix a lot more. I think when people realise that Catholics can read and write, not necessarily have sixty children and all that sort of stuff. I think there is also class which is bound up with it, well particularly in a city like Melbourne, Melbourne is very class conscious. I remember I once had a boyfriend who was from Geelong Grammar and we were at the movies and in those days the National Anthem played when you were told to go home and he suddenly leapt to his feet and said, 'They'll think we are Roman Catholics or something!' There's also the fear of the upper classes of these wicked people, see Catholics do tend to be a bit leftie, particularly in Melbourne, and that was part of it as well.**

Just interestingly on the Mannix question, Mannix having completely hijacked the identity of Irish as Catholic to the extent that John Ireland, who is a solicitor in Melbourne, his father wanted to march in a St Patrick's Day march in Melbourne and was refused. Mannix absolutely barred him because he was a Protestant. Now this was a Protestant whose antecedent, Richard Ireland, had been sent to Australia as a Young Irelander - who fought in the [1848] rebellion against England. His antecedent was the very man who got the Eureka Rebels off - and yet John Ireland's father was not Irish enough for Mannix because he was a Protestant. So the whole situation is very complex indeed, must be very mystifying to our overseas visitors. [laughter]

**I'd like to thank Siobhan for a really interesting presentation and move onto another presentation on this issue of marrying out. So thank you Siobhan very much.**