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Aspects of secularized religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism since 1930

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University of Wollongong

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ASPECTS OF SECULARIZED RELIGION

WITHIN THE TRADITION

OF NEW SOUTH WALES METHODISM

SINCE 1930
All things are intertwined, the one with the other, and sacred is the bond: there is practically nothing alien the one to the other, for all things have been marshalled in order and constitute the one Cosmos. For there is both one Cosmos of all things, and one God through all, and one Substance, and one Law, and one common Reason of intelligent beings, and one Truth.

Marcus Aurelius
ASPECTS OF SECULARIZED RELIGION
WITHIN THE TRADITION
OF NEW SOUTH WALES METHODISM
SINCE 1930

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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by

WINIFRED LILY WARD, B.A., (Hons., Wollongong)

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1988
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.
ABSTRACT.

Secularized religion within the Christian tradition is a response to an holistic theological interpretation and to a perceived need to be socially significant. Although it tends to reflect social progress rather than promote social change, there have been instances of social responses and social change which were actually initiated by ministers within the New South Wales Methodist tradition who were committed to the presentation of secularized religion.

There is an increasing tendency to differentiate secularization from secularism. Historically, secularism denies belief in God and spiritual values, especially in relation to the Christian faith. Secularization, however, is a process which derives its meaning from the Latin, saecularis, meaning belonging to the particular time or age. It has come to denote involvement with 'this present age' or 'this world', as opposed to the emphasis on a supernatural 'other world'. Although Warren Wagar acknowledged the potential of secularization to threaten religion, he also claimed that logically it can signify bringing religion itself into the world.

Religion which is intrinsically involved with the world qualifies as authentic secularized religion. Belief in the intrinsic involvement of religion with the world has its basis in an holistic theological interpretation which views God as immanent in the whole
of creation, totally involved in every aspect of the human situation, and supremely incarnate in Jesus who ministered compassionately to the whole person. This interpretation contrasts with a dualist theological interpretation, generally associated with traditional Western theism, which emphasizes belief in a supernatural God, and can, though it need not, separate religion from involvement with the world.

Although most New South Wales Methodist ministries have been committed to the theology of traditional Western theism with a tendency towards dualism, there have been, within the Methodist tradition, examples of ministries which belong to the category of authentic secularized religion. They generally have accepted modern liberal views, and in several instances have been perceived as heretical. The exemplar for their secularized ministries has been the ministry of Jesus, which they interpreted as essentially the love and care for all humanity in its total need within this present world situation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

This thesis owes much to many people from within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism, especially to the principals who were the chief focus of study. I am sincerely grateful for the help given by the Reverend Dudley Hyde, the Reverend William Hobbin, the Reverend Ted Noffs, Emeritus Professor Charles Birch and the late Reverend Norman Webb. They each shared with me the benefits of their insights and experiences, and generously provided access to personal collections of papers and correspondence. Recorded in the thesis are the names of numerous other ministers and church lay persons who also contributed in similar manner.

The staffs of various libraries provided valuable assistance, and I thank particularly the Reverend Eric Clancy of the Uniting Church Historical Society Archives, Mr. Kenneth Smith of The University of Sydney Fisher Library Archives, and the Inter-library Loan staff of The University of Wollongong Michael Birt Library who treated every request with cheerful efficiency beyond the call of duty.

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<tr>
<td>C.M.M.</td>
<td>Central Methodist Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.E.I.D.A.</td>
<td>Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.E.I.S.</td>
<td>Department of Christian Education in Schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.C.</td>
<td>Department of Christian Citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.A.O.</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.F.H.C.</td>
<td>Freedom From Hunger Campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.E.C.</td>
<td>Life Education Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.B.I.</td>
<td>Melbourne Bible Institute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.O.M.</td>
<td>Men's Own Movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.A.C.A.</td>
<td>Synod Aged Care Agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.W.M.</td>
<td>Unemployed Workers' Movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.R.Y.</td>
<td>World Refugee Year.</td>
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INTRODUCTION.
INTRODUCTION.

In his capacity as the first National President in Australia of the United Nations Freedom From Hunger Campaign a Methodist minister addressed a meeting held in 1960 in the New South Wales town of Tamworth. He described evidence he had witnessed of rampant starvation in other countries and he proposed measures for effective assistance which could be given by Australians. Responding to an invitation to submit questions, a listener asked '...I am wondering when, as a minister of religion, you do any of God's work?', to which the minister replied, 'Doing God's work is what I've been talking about for the past hour'. On another occasion, when speaking of his voluntary work with the World Refugee problem, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, the same minister was criticized by well-meaning church members for being occupied with secular work instead of directing his energies to 'saving souls'. He assured his accusers that 'saving souls' was exactly what he was doing, but that he had a vastly different understanding of the meaning of the words 'save' and 'soul' from their interpretation of the words.

Within that exchange is contained the essence of a dichotomy which has developed in the Western world between

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2. Ibid., p.250.
the expression of Christianity in the Christendom
tradition of the institutionalized Church and what may
be understood as secularized religion. Implicit in the
criticism directed against secularized religion is a
denial that it is a valid expression of Christianity.
Those who defend a contrary opinion are equally adamant
that secularized religion is a valid expression of Jesus'
message, particularly applicable to the twentieth century.

There have been ministries exercised within New
South Wales Methodism which, in varying degrees, are
recognizable expressions of secularized religion. It is
the purpose of this thesis to study aspects of secularized
religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism,
particularly since the 1930s. Examination of secularized
ministries will determine their distinguishing features,
identify their rationale and source of motivation, assess
responses to the ministries from within and without the
Church, and gauge the impact of the ministries on the
Church and the community. The assessment of the ministries
will be used to defend two propositions. The first
proposition is that secularized religion finds its
rationale in an holistic theology which rejects dualist
belief that separates God from the world and the body from
the soul. Jesus' ministry to the total need of humanity
is viewed as authentic secularized religion and as an
expression of holistic theology. The second proposition
is that the locus of secularized religion is to be found
chiefly in the needs of society within the present world.
As secularized religion responds to perceived need it either reflects the progress of social change, or on occasions actually initiates change.

Selection of this topic may be justified from an historical standpoint. It provides an historical record of a particular form of ministry within the tradition of a Church which has been one of the prominent Christian denominations in New South Wales. It also provides an historical record of the manner in which secularized ministries responded to the State's social milieu and processes of change.

Diversity of theological interpretation and emphases which existed in ministries within New South Wales Methodism posed a problem for the thesis and dictated the choice of ministries to be studied. The problem was one of differentiating authentic secularized ministries from those which could be described as 'middle of the road'. These latter ministries often contained a strong social gospel emphasis, but firmly adhered to the dualism of traditional Western theism which separated the sacred from the secular and tended to separate God from the world. Christians in this tradition generally believe in the immanence as well as the transcendence of God, but they still allow for a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular which the secular ministers, with their particular understanding of immanence, reject. Many of the more traditional ministries gave such primacy to heavenly concerns and 'saving souls' that their social gospel
activity was relegated to the secondary position of an appendage to their ministry. This contrasted with authentic secularized ministries. In the secularized ministries the practical application of the social gospel was not only the first priority of ministry, but was coextensive with the Christian religion.

In order to record aspects of the nature and extent of authentic secularized religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism, the 'middle of the road' ministries, which in the time period studied constituted the majority of ministries, have been largely by-passed. The study has centred on five ministries, taken as representative of different aspects of unequivocally secularized religion.

The first chapter is contextual in nature. It sets a framework for the body of the thesis by defending the conceptualization of secularized religion employed in this thesis and summarizing seminal influences on the ministries studied. The first section of the chapter, which examines secularization, is a necessary introduction because the interpretation of secularization which is used in the thesis is fundamental to the entire argument of the thesis. The second and third sections of the chapter examine the influence of aspects of the Methodist heritage, and the powerful influence exercised on several of the ministries by the Reverend Samuel Angus.

An example of secularized religion which concentrates
on addressing the plight of socio-economically deprived people is the subject of chapter two. The chapter centres on the ministry of the Reverend William Hobbin who was profoundly influenced by Angus. Chapter three examines the ministry of the Reverend Dudley Hyde who was another product of the Angus influence. His ministry was an example of the response by secularized religion to two particular issues. One issue, which resulted from expanding world knowledge, was the challenge presented to Fundamentalist Christian belief by Biblical and Higher Criticism. Hyde responded to this issue by a life-long commitment to youth education. The second issue concerned the World Peace Movement and the associated Vietnam War protests. Hyde became a committed activist, and through the medium of his secularized ministry addressed the challenge presented by war and its politics.

The Reverend Ted Noff's ministry at The Wayside Chapel in Sydney is the subject of chapter four. His ministry is an example of a social gospel ministry which specifically addresses people outside the traditional institution of the Church. His ministry has been a response to the needs of people in crisis situations, with particular attention given to the drug culture. Noffs also responded to the call for greater understanding among the peoples of the world. This response he made through his Family of Humanity ministry. The Wayside Chapel ministry exemplified the popular appeal which much of secularized religion has for people outside the traditional Church institution.
In chapter five a study is made of secularized religion through the ministry of process theology which Charles Hartshorne preferred to name neo-classical theism. The philosophical content of process theology differentiates it from the secularized religion examined in the previous chapters, but the emphasis which process theology places on the interrelationship of God with the world makes it arguably the most authentic expression of secularized religion. Indeed, process theologians have described the God of process theology as the 'ground of secularity'. The chapter focuses on the expression of process theology by the scientist and Methodist lay preacher, Professor Charles Birch, and on the ministry of the Reverend Norman Webb. Birch was closely associated with the process theologians, Hartshorne and Cobb. Inspired by Whitehead, he was committed to an ecological and holistic spirituality. He described his own theological interpretation as an ecological model. Webb reflected the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin, Bonhoeffer, Whitehead and Hartshorne. He admitted to panentheist belief which is a middle way between pantheism and classical theism. As with the ministries studied in previous chapters the social pressures which motivated Birch and Webb are examined and the theological rationale for their secularized religion is identified. The chapter concludes with an assessment of examples of process

thinking among the ministerial and lay membership of New South Wales Methodism.

This thesis is weighted towards a history of ideas and the record of the practical application of those ideas, rather than a sociological or theological study. There was a need throughout preparation of the thesis to redress shortcomings associated with the subjective nature of much of the source material used. The content of the body of the thesis is substantially biographical. This, in turn, has leaned heavily on autobiographical material, published and unpublished. Ministers in this study have published many books and papers which are available to the general public. In addition to these sources, access was given to a wide collection of unpublished material which has provided information not previously available from historical records. The material used has included two comprehensive, as yet unpublished, autobiographies, many personal letters, copies of sermons and scripts of unpublished addresses and papers. These sources were supplemented by oral history. At least fifty recorded, and numerous unrecorded, interviews which were willingly and graciously granted, covered a wide spectrum of experience and opinion related to the thesis issues. The value for historical records of the information given personally has been highlighted since the interviews were held. One of the interviewees has recently suffered a serious and debilitating illness. Another died within a fortnight of giving the interview.
Although the value for historical records of material never previously recorded was appreciated, the nature of the material which was used required consistent efforts to balance the subjectivity of the autobiographical content by reference to official church records, conference minutes, and media reports. Verification of events was also sought from contemporaries of the ministers studied in the thesis. These sources have provided a valuable source of verification or correction. In most instances the checks corroborated the autobiographical information.

It became apparent that, for the most part, reliance on a statistical evaluation of the extent and nature of secularized religion within New South Wales Methodism was not suited to the subject matter of the thesis. This was mainly due to the subjective nature of the ideas held by individuals when they answered questions about God and religion. Answers to questions, initially intended for use as a statistical record, showed that views on these subjects were not only highly subjective but also often ambivalent. Due to the nature of the thesis this statistical analysis approach proved to be irrelevant. Several comprehensive statistical studies of the state of religion in New South Wales and Australia have been made by others, and references to them have been made in the

few instances where relevant to the thesis.

The use in the thesis of the term 'theology' is not confined to the analysis or study of religion. In the thesis it is often used to denote the total content or system of religious belief. Use of the term 'religion', where used in the thesis, generally relates to the more specific practical application of theological belief. There are occasions where the distinction between 'theology' and 'religion' is somewhat blurred and the meanings are almost correlative. The term 'liberal' is generally used in the thesis in its modern commonly accepted broad sense in reference to Christian belief. It is understood to refer to beliefs arising from the application of historical Higher Criticism to the assessment of theological beliefs, Biblical records and Christian creeds and dogma. This use of 'liberal' is much broader than the theological understanding of classical liberalism, which was a quite definable school of thought in the German liberal tradition. In that tradition its concern was the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the infinite worth of the human soul. Such terms used in the thesis as 'conservatives', 'traditionalists', 'Fundamentalists' and 'secularists', are in no way to be taken as being used in a pejorative sense. They refer to adherents of well-defined systems

of belief. It is also necessary to note that in order to avoid confusion consistent reference has been made to 'Methodists'. This applies to persons within the Methodist tradition, even when the references relate to the time period after the 22 June 1977 when Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists established The Uniting Church in Australia.

The thesis methodology is primarily thematic, but within each thematic division the approach is generally chronological. Although each ministry studied had its own individual emphasis and theme, there were themes of common interest, such as the Vietnam War and the Peace issue, which were the concern of several ministries examined in different chapters. Such common themes have been detailed in the study of one particular ministry, and briefly acknowledged in the chapters detailing the other ministries.

In assessing the nature and extent of the secularized ministries studied it is not intended that the thesis should endorse or evaluate the validity and worth of the theology expressed. The thesis is directed, as far as is possible, towards an objective historical study to determine the existence, nature, motivation and impact of secularized religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism since the 1930s. The purpose of such a study is to test the theses that secularized religion derives from a liberal, holistic theology, and intrinsic to its nature is its practical response to the social condition of humanity.
CHAPTER 1. - SECULARIZATION AND SEMINAL INFLUENCES.
1.1. SECULARIZATION - THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION.

The first section of this chapter defines the meaning of secularization as it is used in this thesis. A brief examination is also made of the meaning and nature of secularized religion with which the term secularization is associated. The need to define these terms is due to widely acknowledged confusion in relation to the meaning of secularization, and also because the whole thesis is based on the meaning of the terms as accepted for use in this study.

Writers on the subject of secularization are virtually unanimous in their complaint that secularization is a complex historical process with attendant difficulties in respect to definition. Confusion surrounding the understanding of secularization caused Shiner, in 1967, to claim that

in both empirical research and interpretation today there is total lack of agreement as to what secularization is and how to measure it.  

He attributed the problem to

its polemical past, its extremely varied definitions and its frequent use as a blanket term to cover several disparate processes.

In lieu of discarding use of the word because of its


3. Ibid., p.207.
confusing connotations, Shiner suggested

there are two ways of salvaging 'secularization' as a useful concept in empirical research. One, of course, is for everyone who employs it to state carefully his intended meaning and stick to it. The other is for researchers to agree on the term as a general designation or large scale concept covering certain subsumed aspects of religious change.

The present study adopts Shiner's suggestion to carefully state the meaning of the term and then 'stick to it'. In addition to defining the terms secularization and the associated concept of secularized religion, a brief explanation will be made of the nature of secularized religion and its genesis, which made it acceptable to the ministries which form the core of this thesis.

Much of the confusion associated with the term, secularization, inheres in two contradictory viewpoints as to its meaning. On the one hand, secularization is viewed as a process towards annihilation of religion and the establishment of a materialistic, atheistic society. On the other hand, it is perceived as bringing religion into the world and attributing to 'man-come-of-age' responsibilities previously ascribed to God's control. Van Leeuwen endeavoured to reduce confusion by applying one viewpoint to the word, secularization, and the other to the word, secularism. He defined secularization as 'a continuing historical process' with which the Christian Church can have a positive, although possibly threatened, relationship. This process he contrasted with secularism

4. Ibid., p.219.
which he defined as 'a fixed and absolutized ideology with a tendency towards nihilistic totalitarianism'. The concept of secularism, to which Van Leeuwen referred, originated with Bradlaugh in the mid-nineteenth century and was associated with militant atheism.

Wagar also identified these two conflicting concepts. He conceded a legitimate relationship of religion with secularization when he wrote:

Some of the confusion inheres in the word itself. To secularize is to make secular, to bring into the saeculum, or 'world'. By convention this means to repugn or ignore religious considerations and substitute for them the values of 'this world'. It can also, and just as logically, signify the bringing of religion itself into the world.

Wagar's claim, that secularization can logically signify bringing religion into the world, provides the basis for the meaning of secularization, secularized religion, and

6. E.S. Waterhouse, 'Secularism', in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, J. Hastings (ed.), Vol.XI, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1974, p.348. George Holyoake introduced the term 'secularism' in 1851 to describe an agnostic movement as an alternative to atheism, and he claimed it was a movement which rejected not Christian truth, but Christian error. Bradlaugh thwarted Holyoake's more moderate object for the movement by equating secularism with militant atheism. In contrast to secularism, the term 'secularization' was introduced in the seventeenth century by the French representative during negotiations for the Peace of Westphalia. It signified the transfer of certain Church lands and possessions from the jurisdiction of the Church to the State. L. Shiner, 'The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research', op.cit., p.208.
secularized theology, as used in this thesis. The concept of bringing religion into the world entails the relationship of religion with the secular concerns and needs of humanity within this present world. Whereas attention to these concerns may often be given by purely secular organizations, secularized religion addresses them from a religious or theological point of reference. Such a concept requires the differentiation of secularization from secularism.

Writing in 1969, Claude Geffré explained his understanding of the relationship between the Christian religion, secularization, and secularism:

There is a legitimate process of secularization that offers new opportunities to the specifically Christian element. It involves a process of liberation from the sacral forms of the past, a new respect for the world and its proper autonomy, and a thoroughgoing criticism of 'religious' values that really foster alienation from mankind. In the name of this legitimate secularization, however, we often find an imperceptible slide towards another form of secularization that would end up by eliminating Christianity itself...In this case we must talk about 'secularism', an attempt to establish an atheistic, totally profane world.8

Geffré's view of secularization, as 'liberation from the sacral forms of the past', and 'a new respect for the world', pinpointed the basic concept of the meaning of religion which was held by the ministers who are the subject of this thesis. All, to a considerable degree, were indifferent to the sacral forms of the past, and all

were committed to relating religion to world issues and human need in the present world situation.

Owen Chadwick acknowledged the existence of an essential bond between secularization and religion when he said, 'We keep running, suddenly and in unexpected by-ways, into the idea that secularization is a religious process'. In the final analysis, whether or not secularization is accepted as a legitimate process of the Christian religion depends upon what is accepted as a valid definition of the authentic meaning of Christianity. It is not within the bounds of this thesis to analyse the wide spectrum of definitions of religion, nor to document the two thousand years' development of Christian thought. It must suffice to specify which interpretation of Christianity identifies with secularization, and which is its antithesis.

The antithesis of secularized religion is based in the dualism of traditional Western theism. Hellenistic influences on the development of Christian thought fostered the idea of a transcendent, supernatural God, separated from the world. Pauline theology has been associated with the Hellenistic influence in Christian dualism. At the same time, holistic concepts have also been identified in his writings. The dualism was reinforced as Christianity absorbed aspects of Aristotle's

philosophy with his concept of God as the Unmoved-mover. Development of a dualist theology not only separated God from the world; it set a clear demarcation between the material and the spiritual and between the body and the soul. Under its influence religion was encouraged to transfer the priority of its concern from this world to a spatially distant heaven. Additional impetus was given to Christian dualism during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Significant influences during the period included Bacon's dualism between science and theology,\(^{10}\) Newton's world system and mechanical universe,\(^{11}\) and Paley's metaphor of God as the Divine Watchmaker.\(^{12}\) One of the foremost twentieth century influences which supported Christian dualism was Karl Barth's theology, especially his belief that God 'stands above us',\(^{13}\) utterly apart from man. The influence of Barthian neo-orthodoxy consolidated modern dualist theology. It

10. F. Bacon, The New Organon and Related Writings, Fulton Anderson (ed.), Liberal Arts Press Inc., U.S.A., 1960, pp.14-15. Also F.H. Anderson, The Philosophy of Francis Bacon, University of Chicago Press, U.S.A., p.293. Bacon's sixteenth century attitude to science and religion was that religion and the soul, which he defined as 'the irrational part of man', belonged to God, but the 'rational' or physical aspects of man should be considered as separate from the spiritual. His beliefs were influential in separating science from theology.


also influenced numerous theologians and ministers, including many New South Wales Methodists, to shift from a liberal theology to Barthian neo-orthodoxy. Gordon Dicker, a Methodist Theological College lecturer, was typical of those within New South Wales Methodism who made the transition.  

In contrast to the dualism of traditional Western theism the basis of secularized religion is an holistic theology. There is no alienation of God from the world in secularized religion, and no denigration of the world in favour of preoccupation with a distant heaven. Secularized religion rejects the sacred/secular dualism of traditional Western Christianity in favour of a belief that the sacred and secular form an integrated whole.  

Christians committed to secularized religion have drawn support for their holistic theology from various sources. The fundamental source from which secularized religion draws support for its holistic concepts and social gospel emphasis is the Biblical record of the Old and the New Testaments. Ministers, studied in the thesis, freely quoted from these sources to support the holistic and social gospel concepts of secularized religion on which they based their ministries. Evidence of their

14. G. Dicker, Recorded personal interviews with the Reverend Dr. Gordon Dicker, held at the United Theological College, Enmore, 13 May 1986 and 13 February 1987. Dicker said that he was a liberal modernist in his theological views until, under the Barthian influence, he made the transition.
reliance on Biblical sources will be quoted in later chapters of this study. In addition to Biblical support, the infiltration into Christianity of the Platonic idea of the World Soul\textsuperscript{15} was an ancient holistic influence. This was in contrast to the Aristotelian influence on traditional theism of the Unmoved-mover concept.

Modern influences on the development of secularized religion became pronounced during the Romanticist period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Schleiermacher and Hegel were among the theologians of this period who promoted theological views which were powerful influences on the development of secularized religion. Additional influence came from the school of religious thought associated with Ritschl and Harnack. Harnack's theological stance\textsuperscript{16} is particularly relevant to this thesis because his influence is reflected in the theology promoted by Samuel Angus who, in turn, profoundly influenced the thinking of many New South Wales Methodist ministers, including several in this study. A more detailed examination of Angus' influence will be made later in this chapter.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{15} Plato, Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles, with an English translation, R.G. Bury, William Heinemann Ltd., Great Britain, 1966, pp.55-57. Plato's views of 'Being' and 'Becoming' refer also to process theology, which is an aspect of secularized religion examined in the last chapter of this thesis.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} A.von Harnack, What is Christianity?, Trans. T.B. Saunders, New York, 1967, p.51. Harnack wanted to free Christianity from the influence of Hellenization and the accretions of dogma. His interpretation of the basic gospel message was defined as classical liberalism.
\end{flushleft}
During the mid-twentieth century various prominent liberal theologians gave added impetus to the development and expression of secularized religion. In addition, the wide distribution of their published views increased the area of exposure for radical theology and secularized ministries. Several ministers studied in the thesis, particularly Hobbin and Hyde, did not experience the influence of these mid-twentieth century theologians until the last third of their ministry. They had already formulated their liberal views which, through the medium of Angus' teaching, were influenced by Harnack and Schleiermacher. Nevertheless, there still remained a decade or more of their active ministry which was open to the influences and the theological environment created by mid-century liberal and radical theologians. Among the influential liberal theologians were Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, Tillich, Robinson, Cox, Van Buren, Altizer and their contemporaries. Although the ideas of these theologians did not initiate the theological views held by Hobbin and Hyde, they were ideas which were consistent with views expressed by both men throughout their ministries. To this extent, such ideas were an endorsement for the liberal views Hobbin and Hyde held, and also expanded the environment in which secularized religion was acceptable.

The impact of the radical theologians of the period acted more directly as a formative influence on the ministries which began a decade or more after the ordination of Hobbin and Hyde. Evidence will be given in
later chapters of this influence on New South Wales Methodists who included Noffs, Birch, Webb, Dominish and McMahon. Each acknowledged varying degrees of influence exercised by the mid-century theologians on the formulation and development of their own theological beliefs, and on the nature of their secularized ministries. They acknowledged the seminal influence of Tillich's idea of God as 'the ground of life', and his thesis that 'God is being-itself, not a being'. Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers From Prison* and his ideas of religionless Christianity were also ideas which most ministers in this study acknowledged as influential in the development of their own beliefs. The theologian, James Livingston, went so far as to claim that Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*,

more than any other single factor, was the spark that ignited the radical secular movement of the early 1960s.

Issues relevant to secularized religion which were raised by Bonhoeffer's writings were subsequently addressed by other theologians including those who were

17. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology I*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951, p.242. Consistent with process theology was Tillich's idea that 'personal God' does not mean that God is a person, but is the ground of everything personal, pp.244-245.

18. Ibid., p.237.


described as the 'death-of-God' theologians. Robinson, Van Buren, Cox and Altizer were representative of religious writers who contributed to the 'death of God' movement, and to what has been labelled Christian atheism. Bishop John Robinson contributed significantly to the development of secularized theology with the publication in 1963 of *Honest to God*. The book made a strong impact on the public, and the claim was made that 'it sold more quickly than any new book of serious theology in the history of the world'. The book's reputation was somewhat tempered by those who saw it as an important catalyst in the incidence of increasing defections from the traditional institution of the Christian Church.

26. J.A.T. Robinson and D.L. Edwards, *The Honest to God Debate*, Australia, 1963, p. 7. Early in the first year of publication over 350,000 copies were in print in Britain and Australia. It was also published in German, French, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Italian and Japanese.
This was a perception of Honest to God which may be contrasted with that of several of the ministers included in this study. They viewed Honest to God as a blueprint for their expression of Christianity. Due to their modernism these ministers were at times classified as Christian atheists, promoters of radical liberal theology, or even as unchristian. They sought justification for their claim to be exercising a Christian ministry with the argument that their secularized religion was essentially following the example of Jesus' ministry.

Two years after the publication of Honest to God, Harvey Cox's The Secular City met a similar mix of popularity and controversy. Graeme Ferguson, currently the Principal of The United Theological College in New South Wales, identified the book with the secularization process. He recently spoke of its impact on himself and his contemporaries,

what Harvey Cox did for me and people of my generation was that he gave us back the world. We had lived in a sheltered life within the vitality of the Church in the 1950s...It was a vigorous Church but we didn't know much about the world...he gave us back the world. That's what the process of secularization was about.\textsuperscript{28}

Most of the secularized ministries examined in this thesis related religion to the world by giving priority to the practical application of the social gospel, or its more politicized expression in liberation theology

\textsuperscript{28} G. Ferguson, Recorded personal interview with the Reverend Dr. G. Ferguson, Principal of the United Theological College, Enfield, 12 August, 1986.
and Christian socialism. In this way, the ministries identified with secularized religion by addressing, in a practical manner, the needs of humanity, especially those arising from socio-economic deprivation and exploitation.

There is also another aspect of secularized religion which is relevant to this thesis. It is philosophical in nature, and is classified as process theology, sometimes referred to as neo-classical theism, or panentheism. The relationship of process theology to secularized religion will be examined in the last chapter. It is a theology which is overtly philosophical and rational, and bears a relationship to quantum physics.

The social gospel, liberation theology, Christian socialism and process theology are all linked to the varied facets of secularized religion. Secularized religion is essentially holistic. It emphasizes God's immanence in the world and its creatures. Its concerns are the whole person and the challenges presented by the world's total social situation. This is the nature of religion to which secularized ministries are committed. Bill Hobbin, one of the ministers studied in the thesis, expressed this commitment simply and directly,

I personally refuse to accept any approach that wants to deal with just people's souls or their minds. I want to know about the person as a whole person - that's what I'm concerned about.29

Such total commitment to the whole person in the world situation brings religion into the *saeculum*. It supports Wagar's argument that secularization can logically mean bringing religion into the world and into the present time. The process of relating religion to the world situation is the meaning of secularization and secularized religion as used in this thesis. Later chapters will show that those ministers committed to secularized religion use theological interpretations to defend their claim that secularized religion is a valid expression of authentic Christianity as exemplified in Jesus' ministry.
1.2. THE METHODIST LEGACY.

The Methodist legacy, grounded in the teaching of John Wesley, was one of the specific influences which led to the toleration, albeit sometimes with reservations, of New South Wales Methodist ministries which were committed to secularized religion. Wesley balanced commitment to evangelistic enterprise with social involvement. He also preached tolerance of divergent views. Such emphases were not inhospitable to the nurturing of secular theologies.

Rupert Davies, Emeritus Principal of Wesley College, Bristol, expressed a frequently repeated opinion when he wrote, 'it is widely believed that Methodists are short on theology, long on good works'. This opinion, Davies claimed, was a debatable generalization which he countered with the statement that 'there is such a thing as Methodist theology', although he believed that Methodist theology, within the British tradition, lacked metaphysical speculation and complexity. He identified its defining characteristic as 'Christocentric evangelicalism, humanized and partly demythologized'.

It is a theology which always has the potential to


31. Ibid., p.23.

32. Ibid., p.25.
branch into two directions, yet ever maintains the ideal of holding to the middle ground between the two. In one direction is the ministry of evangelical pietism, in the other, a secularized religion which follows the example of a humanized historical Jesus. Davies appears to have located precisely the two basic elements in Methodist theology which, when carried to either extreme, create the basis for tension. The tension becomes apparent when ministries fail to maintain a balance between the two elements, and emphasize, to an extreme, one feature of the theology to the exclusion of the other. Within several of the ministries in the present study this tension became a salient feature, particularly when congregations or members of the ministerial hierarchy became disturbed by what was considered to be an excessive commitment to secularized religion.

The essentials of Methodist theology are expressed in John Wesley's sermons. In the preface of his published Sermons on Several Occasions he anticipated criticism of the lack of theological complexity when he wrote:

I design plain truth for plain people; therefore, of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings.  

John Wesley, who has been described as 'forcefully Arminian', was a product of Moravian pietism. His

experiential style of theology, with strong emphasis on personal holiness and 'warming of the heart', derived its dynamic from a conviction of the reality of the love of God for all humankind, expressed through Jesus. Wesley's Christological emphasis, evident in most of his sermons, was explicitly expressed in his Sermon XXIV, Discourse IX, 'Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount', in which he appealed to his readers for a total commitment to God and His Son Jesus Christ.  

In Wesley's own ministry the pietistic emphasis on personal holiness was balanced by his strong social conscience which he expressed by word in his sermons and by his own practical social involvement. He was involved in the establishment of orphanages, and he supported the abolition of the slave trade. One of the last letters Wesley wrote was to William Wilberforce, urging perseverance in effecting 'abolition of the traffic in the nerves and blood of men'. To offer education where he was able was one of his commitments, and he was involved in reducing smuggling and vagrancy. His sermons abound in references to care for the needy and exploited.


36. D. Wright, *Mantle of Christ*, University of Queensland Press, Australia, 1984, p.5. The first orphanages established by the Wesleys were for Methodists, but were later opened to others.

He declared,

Christianity is essentially a social religion; and...to turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it.38

Wesley was totally opposed to a religion which tried to insulate itself from the world. Apart from the need to allow reasonable time for meditation, he believed that if Christianity is to be practised in the manner revealed to man by Jesus Christ it must involve interaction with the world - 'it cannot subsist at all, without society'.39 He was adamant that, irrespective of merit, the requirements of the needy should be met. 'You are expressly commanded', he said, 'to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked'.40 This was an appeal he repeatedly emphasized in his sermons. It was the study of these sermons which was an essential requirement for Methodist ordinands, including those who are the subject of this thesis.

The emphasis Wesley placed on the responsibility of Christians to care for the needy has remained a prominent characteristic of Methodism, and it has been the linchpin of the secularized ministries examined in this thesis. Most Methodist ministers have confronted the problem of maintaining a balance between the gospel of personal piety and the gospel of social involvement. The commitment by the majority of New South Wales Methodist ministers to

38. J. Wesley, Sermons on Several Occasions, op.cit., p.237.
39. Ibid., p.237.
40. Ibid., p.248.
maintain a balanced ministry was confirmed by Eric Clancy who described his ministry, and that of most of his twentieth century contemporaries, as 'evangelical mixed with the social gospel'.

Wesley was well aware that his theology posed the problem of maintaining a balance, and he explicitly addressed the issue in his Sermon XIX wherein he acknowledged a need for social involvement to be balanced by times of meditation and retirement from the world.

There has been an assumption that prior to union in 1902 the trend, in general terms, was that the Wesleyan Methodists, who were seen to be primarily lower bourgeoisie, were inclined towards following Wesley's teaching 'concerning the way to heaven' via the path of personal piety. This orientation contrasted with attitudes of the Primitive Methodists who generally belonged to the lower socio-economic class. They were more inclined towards compliance with Wesley's precept to be involved in 'a constant zealous performance of all good works', with emphasis on alleviation of need and exploitation in society.

In the years since union, the orientation of church members towards either pietism, or concentration on the social gospel, has increasingly become less related to the

42. J. Wesley, Sermons on Several Occasions, op.cit., p.237.
43. Ibid., p.vi.
44. Ibid., p.322.
members' socio-economic status. There are, in fact, still examples of affluent Methodist congregations which are committed to an insular pursuit of holiness, tempered with nominal, albeit well-meaning, works of charity. There are also examples of somewhat socially deprived congregations concerned almost exclusively with redressing poverty and exploitation. Nevertheless, demarcations such as these, wherein theological orientations relate to economic status, are becoming blurred. This is particularly apparent in politicized areas of the social gospel, particularly in Liberation Theology.\textsuperscript{45} Initially overseas, and now in Australia, there is an increasing acceptance of the demands of Liberation Theology by ministers and some church members, irrespective of socio-economic status.

Davies has drawn attention to the censure of Wesley and his contemporaries for what has been criticized as their naive belief 'that charity on a large scale is the answer to all human material need'.\textsuperscript{46} The naivety of a simplistic benevolent hand-out attitude has been largely acknowledged in the wake of increasing industrialization and the Marxist awareness of the need for fundamental social reconstruction to address economic exploitation.

\textsuperscript{45} Acceptance of Liberation Theology has grown with the perception of its apologists that the Bible is a political book, and with the belief that the Biblical message is essentially a message of deliverance that began with the story of the Exodus which catalogued the deliverance of a people from social and economic exploitation. Later chapters in the thesis will show that the secular ministers have used the Exodus story to support the validity of their ministries as God's work.

\textsuperscript{46} R.E. Davies, \textit{op.cit.}, p.38.
Davies claimed that awareness of the need for social reconstruction received a rebuff when the efforts to increase social consciousness which were made by British Methodist Christian socialists, including Hugh Price Hughes, John Scott Lidgett, and Donald Soper, were 'largely discredited after World War I by the Barthian critique of liberalism'.

A swing back to social conscience awareness has occurred in Methodism in the decade since Davies' views were published as growing numbers of respected theologians see deliverance of the poor and exploited, in all areas of life, to be a Christian imperative. Most ministers try to maintain a balanced ministry between evangelical pietism and the social gospel. There are, however, ministers who give to their ministries such an emphasis on the social gospel that they have been categorized as secularists.

The study, completed in 1979, by Norman Blaikie of the type of ministers who would be regarded, in his terms, as typical theological secularists, has particular relevance for this thesis. His study supported the claim that the social gospel has been accorded acceptance by an increasing number of highly educated clerics. In his investigation Blaikie encountered the problem common to all who would use the term 'secularist'. It was the problem of definition addressed earlier in this chapter. While acknowledging the many different concepts of

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47. Ibid., p.38.
'religion' and 'secular', Blaikie related his understanding of the term 'secularist' to Berger's comments:

Generally traditional affirmations referring to other-worldly entities or events are 'translated' to refer to the concerns of this world, and traditional affirmations about the nature of something 'out there'...are 'translated' to become statements about the nature of man or his temporal situation.\(^{48}\)

Blaikie conducted his study during 1969-1970 with the object of determining the state of religion in Victoria. He admitted to the existence of differing denominational characteristics between Australian states, nevertheless he claimed that these differences need not be regarded as in any way limiting the generalizability of the findings to the Australian situation.\(^{49}\)

1,138 complex questionnaires were mailed to clergymen of six Protestant denominations, from which 943 were returned completed. From these an assessment was made of theological orientations and of the ministers' motivations. One of his assessments concerned the educational standards of the clergy. This showed, according to his analysis, whereas 36 per cent of clergy who have had 'much' university education are secularists, for clergy who are under 40 in this subgroup, 49 per cent are secularists...In other words, those clergy who have had a university education tend to be secularists, but this is even more so for younger clergy.\(^{50}\)


\(^{49}\) Ibid., pp.3-4

\(^{50}\) Ibid., pp.134 and 138.
Blaikie also found that when he graded the extent of secularization in the ministries, the Methodists 'had the highest proportion (16 per cent) in the extreme secularist category'. This finding has particular relevance to the present study which centres on examination of the nature of Methodist ministries which belong to the extreme category. Blaikie's research suggests that such ministries are not singular exceptions, but belong to an existent, if small, category which is recognizable within the Methodist tradition.

The particular significance of Blaikie's findings in relation to this thesis concerns several ministers in the study who would be regarded, in Blaikie's terms, as typical theological secularists, and who were also the products of 'much' university training. In addition to his theological training, Dudley Hyde held a law degree and a diploma of education; Norman Webb obtained a science honours degree from Cambridge prior to completing his master's degree and theological training, also at Cambridge; Ted Noffs majored in sociology and psychology for his M.A. degree, in addition to his theological training; lay preacher, Charles Birch, was Challis Professor of Biological Sciences for many years at the University of Sydney; Gordon Trickett held a master's degree in psychology, in addition to the divinity degree, and lay preacher, Ray Watson, held a law degree.

51. Ibid., p.66.
Existence of the three theological orientations, pietism, the social gospel, and commitment to a balance between the two, was evident for most of the history of Australian Methodism, which began in this land when, in 1812, the first Methodist meetings were conducted by the laymen, Thomas Bowden and John Hosking. Methodism was officially established in Australia as a mission outreach by the British Wesleyan Missionary Society in response to a plea from the Methodist laymen. 'Send a faithful servant of the Lord to us' they pleaded in their letter to the Committee of the Methodist Missionary Society. When the servant of the Lord, Samuel Leigh, arrived in 1815 he proved to be a man of great piety, but also with a keen sense of social concern, and was an exemplary illustration of a Methodist who maintained a balanced ministry between pietism and commitment to the social gospel.

While it was evident that Leigh's passion was in accord with Wesley's injunction to 'show the way to Heaven', it was also evident that he took seriously his founder's directive to be socially involved. Included in his work for the destitute was the establishment of The Sydney Asylum for the Poor, which eventually became the Benevolent Society. The Society's work of caring for Sydney's poor was so highly regarded by the Governor and Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, that when an

Anglican request was made to the Colonial Secretary to transfer control of the Society from the Methodists to members of the Anglican Church. It was decreed by Lord Bathurst and the Governor that management of the Sydney Asylum for the Poor must remain in the hands of those with whom the Institution originated.  

The Reverend W. Wools Rutledge, the first President following union in 1902, was typical of Methodist ministers who endeavoured to emulate the balanced ministry which Leigh introduced to New South Wales. In *The Methodist*, published on 1 March 1902, Rutledge was described in the following terms:

> In his Circuits he is known as an able preacher and successful soul-winner. By the public generally he is recognized as an able, broad-minded, and public spirited citizen.  

Under the impetus of social pressures and modernist theological developments, the number gradually grew of ministers who tipped the balance in favour of the social gospel in ministries which, when eventually carried to greater extremes, became classified as secularized religion. Pressures from which the ministers were not immune included: the frustration and cynicism associated with World War I; the traumatic economic depression of the 1930s; shifts in theological thinking; Biblical and Higher criticism; and scientific and technological developments. These all contributed to changing values.

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and priorities. Added to these pressures was the impact made on many young Methodist ministers by their several years' tour of duty in the Australian outback. Charged with the responsibilities of ministering over vast areas of the inhospitable inland to men and women grappling with loneliness, isolation and a harsh environment, they were faced with assessing life's basic values. There was no room in the outback for ecclesiastical trappings, nor for pedantic adherence to the minutiae of creed and dogma. On patrol, the outback ministers learned the values of mateship, loyalty, and concern for the welfare of others. Sectarianism was submerged and the offices of the Church were administered without denominational distinctions.

On return to urban ministries some young ministers became impatient with stringent applications of 'wowserism', even though this was often based on genuine concern about the devastation caused by excessive drunkenness and immorality. Increasingly a more pragmatic approach to ministry was adopted, not only by some of the ministers who returned to urban life from the outback, but also by others who were sensitive to deprivations suffered by the socially and economically deprived. In an increasingly complex society, the assurances given from the pulpit, that the world would be right when the heart of man was made right, were rejected as naive by those who believed that change was needed not only in the individual, but that society and its economic structures needed to be reshaped. As politics entered the pulpit, secularized religion was nurtured.
It was a development which was, and continues to be, accompanied by considerable controversy. As will be detailed later in this study, letters and articles were published consistently in Methodist publications presenting forceful support for the two extremes of theological belief. Davies has rightly noted that within the ranks of Methodist theologians over the whole world there are to be found great variations in the interpretation of Methodism's basic theology, and articulate exponents of points of view which those who do not hold them would certainly call 'extreme'.

The vehemence with which ministries studied in this thesis were called extreme was proportionate to the extent to which they were regarded as secularized by those who tended to confine religion to the exclusive concerns of the soul and the way to heaven.

It was from their Methodist heritage that the ministers in this study derived a degree of sanction for their controversial ministries which presented theological viewpoints and emphases at variance with those held by many of their contemporaries. It was a sanction based on Wesley's own support for tolerance of divergent views. One may reasonably assume that Wesley's attitude to tolerance was related, to some extent, to his own differences with the Church of England, and to the response he received from the established Church. Wesley consistently maintained his desire not to secede from the Anglicans. In 1758 he wrote and published a small tract

55. R.E. Davies, op.cit., p.27.
in which he gave twelve reasons against separating from
the Church of England,\textsuperscript{56} and during the 1766 Conference,
in response to the question 'Are the Methodists
Dissenters?', the answer was 'No. We are irregular. We
are not seceders'.\textsuperscript{57} His desire to remain within the
Church of England did not prevent his disagreement with
the current ecclesiastical practice of many Anglican
clerics. It is probable that the development of his own
toleration towards those who held beliefs which differed
from his was rooted in his own desire to be accepted by
the Church of England, even though he did not agree with
many of their attitudes to ministry.

At least two of Wesley's sermons were explicitly
addressed to this subject. In his sermon, 'Catholic
Spirit', he upheld the principle that the manner of
worship should be determined by one's 'own conscience',\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{quote}
I know it is commonly supposed...that one,
for instance, who is born in England, ought
to be a member of that which is styled the
Church of England; and consequently, to
worship God in a particular manner which is
prescribed by that Church; I was once a zealous
maintainer of this; but I find many reasons to
abate this zeal...seeing it entirely destroys the
right of private judgement, on which that whole
Reformation stands...I dare not, therefore,
presume to impose my mode of worship on any other.\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

Wesley dismissed as irrelevant any differences in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} G.J. Stevenson, Methodist Worthies, Vol.I, Thomas C.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.21.
\item \textsuperscript{58} J. Wesley, Sermons on Several Occasions, op.cit.,p.447.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p.447.
\end{itemize}
manner of worship and administration of the sacraments.

For Wesley, the man of truly catholic spirit was one who knows how to value and praise God... believe in the Lord Jesus Christ... abstain from evil, and [be] zealous of good works. 60

This attitude caused Alfred Outler, in 1974, to interpret Wesley as an 'ecumenical pioneer'. 61 An essential element in the nature of ecumenical thinking is, in Davies' opinion,

that anyone who takes part in it forgoes any claim to monopoly for his particular version of Christian truth. 62

Davies' claim, that Methodism has seen this truth from the start, finds its support in Wesley's own stated commitment to toleration, which in turn has been a Methodist ideal throughout its history, even if not always practised by its members.

Another of Wesley's sermons, 'A Caution Against Bigotry', warns against 'too strong an attachment to, or fondness for, our own party opinion, church and religion'. 63 When Wesley recalled that even the Apostles and the eminent Church Fathers differed in their opinions, it was no surprise to him 'that infinite varieties of opinion should now be found in the Christian Church'. 64

60. Ibid., pp.454-455.
63. J. Wesley, Sermons on Several Occasions, op.cit.,p.440.
64. Ibid., pp.434-435.
Wesley also warned against making judgements against people of different faiths. No matter whether a person was 'a Papist, an Arian, a Socinian...a Jew, a Deist, or a Turk', Wesley instructed his followers that such people were to be accepted if they were performing God's work. One hears echoes of this in Ted Noffs' credo, 'I am a catholic, I am a protestant, I am a Jew, I am a muslim...' which will be examined later in the thesis.

The tradition in Methodism of tolerance for differing opinions, which was initiated by Wesley, has resulted in toleration within the connexion of a wide divergence in theological emphases. Within Methodism over the years, Biblical literalists have confronted liberal modernists; there have been supporters of other-worldly personal piety and those obsessed with the social gospel; there have been political conservatives and political socialists. Toleration, however, has not always been fully exercised. The New South Wales history of Methodism contains many examples of strongly critical opposition directed at those both within and without the Church by protagonists of opposing theological and moral viewpoints. Evidence of this friction is apparent in the reactions to secularized ministries within New South Wales Methodism. Nevertheless, the legacy of toleration, originating with Wesley, has provided a climate conducive

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65. Ibid., p.441.
to development of individual interpretations of theology, according to conscience, which were hallmarks of the secular ministries.

In addition to the Methodist legacy, and the impact of social and theological influences on the thinking of Methodists, there was another powerful influence exercised on candidates for the New South Wales Methodist ministry during the late 1920s and the 1930s. It was the influence of Professor Samuel Angus which is the subject of the concluding section of this chapter.
1.3. **THE ANGUS INFLUENCE.**

Although the story of Samuel Angus is one of absorbing interest, it is not within the province of this thesis to provide comprehensive details of the long campaign of protest and harassment directed against him. Emilsen, 67 Breward, 68 Dougan, 69 and Parer 70 are among those who have already performed that task. What does concern this thesis is the profound impact which the Angus influence exercised, over several decades, on individual ministers in New South Wales Methodism and on their subsequent ministries. It was an influence which issued from both this theology and his personality. The direct influence which Angus' teaching exercised on his Methodist students is indicated in fervent comments made by them fifty years and more since their contact with him.

The Reverend William Hobbin, who later was appointed President of the New South Wales Methodist Conference, held no doubts about the direct impact Angus made on his

68. I. Breward, 'Christianity Must Be Reinterpreted. Samuel Angus' Response to a Secular Society and a Traditional Church', in Trinity Occasional Papers, IV, 1, Brisbane, April 1985, pp.24-25.
ministry:

Angus really opened my mind to what the Gospel's all about. He completely scrubbed tradition. If you were tangled up with tradition you were really imprisoned...No man reminded me more of the Galilean than Angus. I think he had a bigger influence on my life than any other man in the Church, and his main thesis was that people are out there to be loved irrespective of who they are, what they are, where they are or where they came from. His big emphasis was on agape, unconditioned, unqualified, impossible of definition - the love that Jesus talked about. 'Now', he said, 'if you go out there with that - to love people - you'll have a ministry that's meaningful. If you go out there to pick them according to their theology, their denominational tradition, you may as well stop thinking you have any ministry to offer them. You haven't got anything'.

The Reverend Dudley Hyde attributed to Angus the precipitation of a crisis in his theological outlook, and he 'responded readily to him as a warm, extremely likeable person'. Coming to Angus' lectures in the Theological Hall from a narrow Fundamentalist background, Hyde regarded Angus as 'the agent of my liberation', and as one of two people 'who have influenced my life more than any man I know'. Hyde is among the many people who have recorded their appreciation of the impressive prayers spoken by Angus, and in his autobiography he wrote:

73. Ibid., p. 12.
My outstanding memory of Dr. Angus relates to the prayers with which he commenced each lecture on the New Testament. He prayed in Greek which we found difficult to follow. But we always understood the closing of every prayer, 'In the name of Jesus, my only Lord'.

The Reverend Eric Clancy, who is the present Librarian/Archivist in New South Wales of the Uniting Church in Australia, testified to the influence of Angus' spirituality and his prayers. He attended Angus' lectures for the two years, 1930-1931, and speaking of the Professor, he said:

His prayers were glorious. His spirituality deep, completely honest, but extremely liberal...We were all influenced by Angus...He had taught us to think, and we all appreciated that. We had been too ready to accept accepted belief...We found in Angus a very deep strain of spirituality, but I would think my impression of Angus was that he held to a position of the religion of Jesus, rather than the religion about Jesus...Angus was a person who preferred discussion rather than lecturing, so he welcomed interruptions and comments, but he also put the person who would interrupt very much on his mettle to justify any particular position he had.

Another Methodist, who became President of the New South Wales Conference, the Reverend Alan Brand, also spoke of the 'tremendous impression' Angus had on him. He emphasized that what was apparent to all who knew Angus was his commitment to the historical Jesus. He said,

There was nothing of the anti Christ about him [reported by] his enemies. Actually, when he gave the benediction in Greek at the end of every lecture there were tears in his eyes...He taught us to love. All my life that's grown on me, the sense that I must not exclude

75. Ibid.
anybody... We also found this tremendous search for truth - that we should accept truth whatever it was, and that truth could do no harm to the Gospel. That was a tremendous discovery for me... To my own children I've said, 'Don't be frightened of truth' - that I learned from Angus. 77

The Reverend Cecil Collard, another Methodist minister, testified that

No man could have given me a greater love for his master, and my master, Jesus Christ... I would think of him as a man of outstanding vital personality, a man who made a very deep impression on his students and has left a mark there that I think we carry right through life. In appearance he was tall, with his lovely Scotch brogue, a happy man, and as a scholar, we thought, really outstanding. His love and devotion to Jesus Christ was the thing that made its greatest impact, I think, on his students and on my life... I think he really wanted to open up the Church in those days. He was a man possibly before his time, who wanted students in particular to seek truth, not to accept blindly what the Church was teaching, necessarily, but to investigate it, to analyse, to understand it and to arrive at what they believed to be the truth concerning Jesus Christ... Sometimes he would... say, 'Don't accept this because I say so. This must become part of you; think and analyse this, and you must not accept this until you believe it is really true'. 78

These testimonies are indicative of the influence Angus exercised on many of Methodism's future ministers, and particularly on several who practised, in later years, a secularized ministry. 'What', it may well be asked, 'were the essentials of Angus' theology which conditioned the thinking of many of his students, and evoked such testimonies yet, at the same time, incited prominent churchmen to spend years striving to mount a successful charge of heresy against him?'. As already indicated,

77. A. Brand, Recorded personal interview with the Reverend Alan Brand, 10 October, 1986.
details of the accusations of heresy, raised over many years by his critics, have been well chronicled. These details are not directly relevant to this thesis. What is of particular concern to this present study are the Methodist attitudes to the Angus issue. Especially relevant is the substance of Angus' teaching which attracted the heresy accusations, and which exercised such a profound influence on many Methodist student ministers. Angus' teaching exercised a modernist influence which Alan Dougan claimed was built on Schleiermacher's philosophy with its emphasis on religious experience. Dougan argued that, based on his own pastoral knowledge and the records of Church affiliation, the modernist movement, such as conveyed through Angus' teaching, seems to have strengthened the Methodist Church, but weakened the Presbyterian Church. This thesis would tend to temper Dougan's statement with

79. A. Dougan, _A Backward Glance At The Angus Affair_, op.cit., p.27. Dougan wrote '...Although modernism appeared to be attractive to the intellectual members of the community, its essential emphasis was on personal religious experience - an attitude built on the philosophy of Schleiermacher. This emphasis, taught in the United Methodist-Presbyterian-Congregational Theological Hall in Sydney and owing much to the Presbyterian teacher, Samuel Angus, was really destructive of Presbyterianism. It was foreign to its real doctrinal basis;...This may be an important factor in the general decline of Presbyterianism in the 1933 and 1947 census and the Methodist increase'. Parer referred to Dougan's claim and commented that what Angus was really saying was 'that one's faith must be built on one's personal experience, not necessarily on documents or creeds...It was not greatly out of line with basic Methodist teaching...Wesley began with the burning, the warming of the heart...it was quite a help to the Methodist Church in the long run'. M. Parer, _Australia's Last Heresy Hunt_, op.cit., p.16.
evidence that although there have been some powerful New South Wales Methodist ministries based on the modernist theology, there have been ministers totally opposed to the modernist movement, and many who gave it only limited approval, preferring to give greater priority to traditional orthodoxy. Dougan's statement may be valid only to the extent that he linked Angus' modernist teaching with experiential religion, in line with Wesley's 'warming of the heart'.

Methodist students came into contact with Angus through the United Course of Training for Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian theological students. The course of lectures opened in 1919, and lectures were held in St. Andrew's Theological Hall within the University of Sydney. By 1929 there were twenty Methodists, twenty-three Presbyterians and one Congregationalist in the Joint Faculty. Prior to the opening of this course, a programme of joint lectures began in 1907, with lectures held one afternoon each week.

Angus was appointed to the staff of the Theological Hall as a replacement for Thomas Clouston. When Clouston, the Hall's Professor of New Testament Exegesis and Theology, died in 1914, the Presbyterian Church sought an eminent New Testament scholar to take the Chair. The decision was made to appoint Angus, an Ulster Scot, who

80. H.J. Hillman, 'Foreword' in M. Parer, Australia's Last Heresy Hunt, op.cit.
at the age of thirty-three already had an impressive academic record. He had graduated Master of Arts with first-class honours in Classics in 1903 at the Royal University of Ireland's Galway College. In 1905 he received a Master of Arts from Princeton University and in 1906, for a thesis on 'The Sources of the First Ten Books of Augustine's Civitate Dei', he was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree summa cum laude. Maintaining a keen interest in Hellenistic Greek, he spent a semester at Marburg in Europe, then from 1910 to 1911 he studied under Deissman, Harnack, Kaftan and Von Soden in Berlin. As a post-graduate student, Angus studied Hellenistic Greek and New Testament criticism. Dougan believed that Angus' 'training in Greek criticism made it difficult to accept the orthodox attitudes to New Testament Texts'. This, in turn, led Angus to reject certain dogma and tenets which the more conservative and traditionalist Christians believed were essentials of the Christian faith.

82. A. Dougan, A Backward Glance At The Angus Affair, op.cit., pp.6-7.
83. Ibid., p.7. Also, in Australia's Last Heresy Hunt, op.cit., Parer recorded comment made by The Reverend Ernest Vines, one of Angus' students, and later the Moderator of the New South Wales Assembly: 'I have here a copy of notes I took of Dr. Angus's lectures in 1933 on Greek religion. He said Greek religion is that of the most cultured people who ever lived on this earth...Religion deals with the ageless quest of the spirit—man's effort to base his life on some enduring foundation. We must approach the religion of the Greek in the spirit of sympathy. God is the God not of the Jews only, but of the Greeks. Clement of Alexandria said, 'There were two revelations of God—one the revelation of Philosophy to the Greeks, and one the revelation of religion among the Hebrews', p.23.
The firm emphasis he gave to relegating traditional dogma and creed to a subordinate position in religion was impressed upon his students. Later chapters will show that this influence remained a strong force throughout the ministries of several Methodist ministers, in particular Hobbin and Hyde. Angus' rejection of sections of theological tradition was facilitated by his deep allegiance to the example and spirit of the Jesus of history, and in particular, his belief that the essential aspect of Jesus' ministry was unqualified humanitarian concern for all people, no matter who or what they were. His concept of the person of Jesus provided one of the main grounds for censure by his critics, and at the same time influenced the future beliefs of many students. Vines succinctly summarized Angus' concept of Jesus:

He believed thoroughly in the divinity of Jesus, but he did not believe in the deity of Jesus.\(^8\)

Repeatedly Angus stressed,

It matters little what we believe about Christ, but it matters supremely for ourselves and for the world how much of Christ is lived in us, or to what extent we are Christ-like.\(^5\)

Although Angus rejected the traditional doctrine of The Trinity, he passionately believed in Jesus as perfect man. It was his belief that the divine Spirit lived on in

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all who lived the Christ-like life. He believed also, however, that the divine Spirit was supremely evident in the Jesus of history whom he saw as the fully realized potential of what man could become as Son of God. He declared,

It is only when the Person of Jesus has been stripped of the later accretions and mythological speculations that the real grandeur of His divine personality stands out challengingly...A man may live the Christ life without believing cosmological Christologies or even after discarding traditional dogmas, but no man can live the Christ life in indifference or hostility to Jesus or without a growing devotion to Him through the verification and re-verification of Jesus's values. 86

For those students whose later ministries concentrated on the social gospel, this belief was not only the essential element of Angus' religion, but it became the core of their own belief and an imprimatur of their ministry. It was nowhere more so expressed than in the secularized ministries of Angus' Methodist students who, influenced by him, considered that the ideal ministry was built on a commitment to walk in the steps of the Galilean by serving, with loving concern, the needs of humanity, no matter where, or in whom, that need may be found. In their various ministries efforts were made to give expression to that commitment in accord with whatever were the current dominant social needs.

There was an experiential element in Angus' theology which, as Dougan had recognized, was a reflection of

86. Ibid., p.23.
Schleiermacher's ideas of the immanence of the Spirit of God. This experiential style of religion had a natural affinity with Wesley's style of Methodism, which helped make it more acceptable to Methodist students. The holistic nature of his thinking also had an affinity with process theology which rejects dualism and is an aspect of secularized religion. He paid tribute to the Christian thinkers who by means of the philosophy of the Divine Immanence have slain the monster of religious dualism.°7

Angus had studied as a post-graduate under Harnack, and his theology was stamped with the Harnack tradition. Indeed, Dougan doubted 'if anything Angus said had not already been said by Harnack and other liberals'.°8 In effect, Angus was really presenting liberal theological views which had been promoted in Germany half a century or more before. They were, however, views which had not previously gained currency with such prominence in Australian Methodist training centres. His liberal modernism reflected the influence of Harnack and Schleiermacher; it was overlaid by the philosophy of Plato; interwoven with Johannine theology; and combined with the Greek emphasis of Pauline writings.°9 These influences distilled in Angus' teaching which featured liberal theology, a passion to search for truth, and

°7. S. Angus, Truth and Tradition, Angus and Robertson Limited, Australia, 1933, p.133.
°8. A. Dougan, A Backward Glance At The Angus Affair, op.cit., p.25
°9. Ibid., pp.24-25.
devotion to the human Jesus. His teaching was made all the more credible to the students by the attractive sincerity of his personal commitment, the appeal of his cheerful personality, and his insistence that all doctrines must be validated by the teaching of Jesus.\(^90\)

One of the strongest influences on the future ministries of his Methodist students was his insistence that they should seek truth and abide by their own perception of it, even at the expense of rejecting creeds and dogma. He expressed confidence in this belief when he wrote:

> There is a quiet confidence in the heart of every Platonist, and in the heart of all who accept the eternal values...that Truth is secure while men have open minds and inquiring hearts...Confident I am that...the ponderous stone will be removed which has so long closed the tomb in which Jesus has been hidden by zealous traditionalism...that stone will be rolled away...by...unlearned and sincere men, and trained philosophers, and fearless critics - who, having seen Jesus...desire that others should see him with their own eyes and not through the dusty spectacles of dead theologians and controversialists.\(^91\)

The independence of thought which this teaching inspired is apparent in the beliefs and actions of several ministers studied in this thesis. They accepted Angus' insistence that they should test the validity of all creeds, dogma and beliefs by subjecting them to their own searching analysis, and by measuring them against the actions and life of Jesus— not by other men's theories about Jesus.

\(^90\) I. Breward, 'Christianity Must Be Reinterpreted. Samuel Angus' Response to a Secular Society and a Traditional Church', op.cit., p.26.

\(^91\) S. Angus, Truth and Tradition, op. cit., pp.143-144.
Angus quoted John Oxenham's words:

Not what, but Whom I do believe,
For Christ is more than all the creeds
And His full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive

and to his students he stressed that the belief implicit in these words was important to their ministries. The evidence of later chapters will show that there were Methodist students who accepted this aspect of Angus' teaching as a fundamental of their ministry. In doing so, they frequently rejected various creeds and dogma as irrelevant. They based their ministry on what they interpreted to be the authentic ministry of Jesus which, in their view, was essentially one of practical ministry to human need. This interpretation was the truth, as they saw it, and in accordance with Angus' dictum, they acted on their perception of truth to structure their ministry. The result of their interpretation was that they expressed their commitment to following the example of the practical ministry of the historical Jesus by an emphasis on the implementation of the social gospel. This, together with their willingness to discard tradition, frequently led to censure or conflict with conservative laypersons and fellow ministers who adhered to traditional dogma and creed. Methodists who gave such high priority to the social gospel were seen in some quarters to be confirming the widely held view, previously mentioned, that 'Methodists are short on theology, long on good works'.

92. Ibid., p.114.
A significant influence on the development of Methodist secularized ministries, and also on the diversity within Methodism of theological interpretations, was the extent to which Angus' teaching changed, or modified, the theological orientation of many Methodist students. Hyde, Hobbin, Brand, Newman and, to some extent, Clancy, are each representative of Methodist ministers who have testified to the transforming impact Angus had upon the Fundamentalist style of religion to which they subscribed prior to becoming his students. Eric Clancy spoke for most of the students who attended lectures in the United Theological Faculty during the 1930s. Although Clancy acknowledged that he had maintained a 'middle of the road' ministry, and could not be categorized as secular, he admitted to Angus' influence when he said,

I think, like most of the other students who came in, I would be pretty much a theological innocent. In other words, although I had a bit of a general theology it was not a very developed sort of thing and it would be inclined to be more along a Fundamental line ...so that when I started receiving lectures from the members of the United Theological Faculty they were introducing a lot of new thought to me, Professor Samuel Angus and Professor Kenneth Edward being two of the persons. None of the others were as liberal as Angus - they were all much more liberal than we were used to.94

Hyde said that before his contact with Angus he had 'developed a radical Fundamentalist line of thinking, with a firm belief in the literal truth of the Bible'.95 It was

94. E. Clancy, Recorded interview, op.cit.
his appreciation of Angus

as a very scholarly representative of liberal theological thinking [with] sheer commitment to Jesus, a Jesus freed from all the limitations that the church over the centuries had imposed on him.\textsuperscript{96}

which caused Hyde to attribute to Angus an 'about-face' in his theological outlook. Alan Brand is another Methodist minister, committed to the social gospel, with a Fundamentalist, Biblical literalist background who acknowledged the profound influence Angus exercised on his beliefs.\textsuperscript{97} Gloster Udy entered the University of Sydney to study for an Arts degree concurrently with his theological studies. Although he has maintained a traditional evangelical style of ministry, he also admitted to the influential impact of Angus' teaching during two years of lectures.\textsuperscript{98} Eben Newman, one of Angus' Methodist students, wrote in an obituary eulogy:

Angus represented the salutary inflow of the modern spirit into the life of the Church, that spirit which is both scientific and historic... the dominant impression he left on many of us whom he greatly influenced, was that of a passionately religious soul,...and the centre of his religion was 'Jesus, our only Lord'.\textsuperscript{99}

Bill Hobbin also acknowledged the profound influence Angus exerted on the whole of his ministry, and he said,

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p.12.
\textsuperscript{97} A. Brand, Recorded interview, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{98} G. Udy, Recorded personal interview with the Reverend Dr. Gloster Udy, 26 June 1986.
As I walked across to the entrance of the College building...little did I realise then just how many of the ideas I held would be made white hot in the fires of controversial lectures.

Hobbin was deeply impressed by the fact that Angus made no alteration to the content of his lectures, despite the hostility of those who held the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds to be infallible. Angus' liberalism contributed significantly to what Hobbin described as the new and revised attitudes I was ultimately to take into the work with people for the rest of my life.

It is not surprising that Angus' liberalism, which made such a powerful impact on his students, should come to the notice of those who held contrary beliefs. Disquiet developed into criticism when, in 1923, Angus gave a talk on the subject, 'The Bible'. The talk was delivered at a Student Christian Movement Conference held at The King's School, Parramatta. Much of what he said was in agreement with Harnack's teaching, and in the talk Angus emphasized the need to subject the Bible to literary and historical criticism in order to sift the gold of rich truths from man-made errors and false impressions.

Public exposure was given to the talk by publication of a summarized version in the Daily Telegraph, and also by

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101. Ibid., p.64.
102. Ibid., p.62.
104. Ibid., p.239. Emilsen referred to Daily Telegraph, January, 1923.
a letter in the *Daily Telegraph* defending Angus, which was written by John Edwards, the 1921 Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.\(^{105}\) James Carruthers, who had held the positions of State and National President of the Methodist Church, acted as spokesman for the Methodist critics of the talk. He publicly censured Angus, and expressed concern that Christian standards were being undermined by the teaching in the college halls. Repeatedly in 1923 he unsuccessfully appealed to have the Methodist students withdrawn from the joint lectures.\(^{106}\)

Angus' chief Presbyterian opponents were R.J. McGowan, J.B. Fulton and A.J. Carter. It was not until 1932 that McGowan made the first official complaints against Angus. These took the form of representations to the Presbyterian New South Wales General Assembly.\(^{107}\) Although the Presbyterian Church never made a formal heresy charge against Angus, repeatedly the Church Assemblies had to deal with serious accusations of heresy raised by his critics. Attempts to have the accusations formalized into a heresy charge dragged on from the initial official complaint in 1932 until, in 1942, the Australian General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

\(^{105}\) *Ibid.*, p.239.


Angus died the following year, on 17 November 1943. His death followed a severely incapacitating illness he had suffered since 1935.

As previously stated, the details of the Angus case from the standpoint of the Presbyterian Church have been well documented by others, and they will not be covered in this thesis. In this section of the chapter, however, brief reference will be made to Angus' defence because this further illustrates his own theological position which, in turn, is reflected in the ministries of many of his Methodist students. A summary will also be given of the New South Wales Methodist Church's reaction to the Angus issue.

Angus gave his own explicit listing of the total area of controversy as,

the Virgin Birth; the Physical Resurrection of Jesus and the Empty Tomb; the Death of Christ as a 'propitiation' and 'all-sufficient sacrifice' for the sins of the world; the Deity of Christ; the Trinity, not of the New Testament, but of the fourth century speculation; the authority of Scripture; and whatever the Westminster Divines excogitated and systematized during the years of codification of their statements of Christianity.

In the absence of a formal charge of heresy by the Presbyterian Church, the accusations levelled against

108. Ibid., pp.22-23.
Angus at the Presbyterian and Assembly meetings were mainly initiated by McGowan, who has been described as 'a militantly evangelical fundamentalist'. The accusations centred on charges that Angus failed to subscribe to the Church's formal beliefs which were formulated in the Supreme Standard, the Subordinate Standard and the Declaratory Act. The Supreme Standard was regarded as sacrosanct:

The Supreme Standard of the Church is the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and which this Church regards as the only rule of faith and practice.

Some latitude of interpretation was allowed for the Subordinate Standard, which stated:

the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterian Church Government, the Directory for the Public Worship of God and Second Book of Discipline, are the Subordinate Standards of this Church.

The Declaratory Act was the basis of Union in 1901, and in addition to incorporating the Supreme and Subordinate Standards, included a provision to which Angus drew particular attention:

That in adopting these Standards the Church is not to be held as countenancing intolerant or persecuting principles, or any denial or invasion of the right of private judgment.

A committee of seven was appointed by the Presbytery of Sydney to confer with Angus regarding his subscription.

113. Ibid., pp.71-72.
Alan Dougan has published an extract from the committee's report which records Angus' defence with respect to these Standards, in which he declared,

My conscience does not accuse me of any violation of my vows. I appeal to the Supreme Standard as of greater importance than the Subordinate Standard. There is none of my teaching which is not found in Scripture, and there is none of it which is not in accord with the teaching of Jesus. I give the supreme place to the teaching of Jesus.\textsuperscript{114}

He left no room for doubt about his objections to the doctrinal Standards when he stated,

I may say summarily that we cannot to-day believe in or commend the God of the Confession and of the Declaratory Statement, the God who works by decrees and covenant, who chooses his favourites and arranges that even those chosen ones should be saved only through propitiation or expiation. We cannot commend a God who 'extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth'...Such a God is not only inhuman but sub-human...I can make no truce with the vindictive and arbitrary God of our historic Confession.\textsuperscript{115}

Angus also drew attention to the fact that there would not have been a Declaratory Statement unless some minds had differed from the then existent Church Standards.\textsuperscript{116}

His supporters, including Vines, also cited the Declaratory Statement, claiming that it allowed the Presbyterian Church to be wide enough in outlook to hold men of differing views.\textsuperscript{117}

Controversy continued, and in 1934 Ronald Macintyrre,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} A. Dougan, A Backward Glance At The Angus Affair, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.11-12.
\item \textsuperscript{115} S. Angus, \textit{Truth and Tradition}, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.99-100.
\item \textsuperscript{116} A. Dougan, A Backward Glance At the Angus Affair, \textit{op.cit.}, p.13.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p.18. Also M. Parer, \textit{Australia's Last Heresy Hunt}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.30.
\end{itemize}
the Emeritus Professor of Theology, published a critical review entitled, *The Theology of Dr. Angus*, which comprised texts of two speeches Macintyre prepared for the Presbytery of Sydney on the subject of Angus' theological views. Macintyre made the focus of his review those areas in which he believed Angus departed 'most seriously from the Standards of our Church, both supreme and subordinate'.\textsuperscript{118} The areas, which in the opinion of Macintyre and Angus' other critics were cardinal articles of faith, were spelt out by Macintyre who claimed,

that Dr. Angus's doctrine is not Trinitarian ...that he does not hold the doctrine of this Church on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, that his doctrine of salvation is not the evangelical doctrine set forth in our Confession of Faith.\textsuperscript{119}

During the height of controversy Angus published three small books in explanation and defence of his theological stance. *Jesus in the Lives of Men* was published in 1933, and in the same year he published *Christianity and Dogma* which was the text of his address delivered before the Presbyterian New South Wales General Assembly on 18 May. The following year he published the controversial *Truth and Tradition*, which attracted widespread publicity. Angus used his knowledge of Greek in the arguments he presented in defence of his doctrinal and credal objections. Particularly in *Truth and Tradition* he analyzed the Greek texts, their various translations,

\textsuperscript{118} R.G. Macintyre, *The Theology of Dr. Angus*, Angus and Robertson, Australia, 1934, p.7.

and differing interpretations.

Angus supplemented his arguments defending his departure from orthodoxy by quoting supporting comments made by prominent theologians. They were statements which not only supported his defensive plea, but his accord with the views expressed provided additional insights into Angus' own beliefs. Included in his quotations was Professor Sabatier's statement,

The error of that form of religious knowledge called orthodoxy is that of forgetting the historically and psychologically conditioned character of all doctrines and of desiring to raise into the absolute that which is born in time.120

Angus also agreed with Professor Raven's comment,

It is as absurd to suggest that the spiritual message of God must be delivered in the ancient forms and methods as it would be to suggest that the modern export trade of Liverpool should be carried to sea in the vessels of Drake or of Nelson,121

and he claimed that Dean Inge's statement was a warning to the Church:

If Christianity is ever regarded as obsolete, it will be because the conscience of humanity has advanced while Christian teachers have refused to move an inch, and prefer the tradition of the elders to the living voice of the Holy Spirit of truth.122

These liberal and modern views permeated Angus' teaching. They not only set the sails for the direction of belief

120. S. Angus, Christianity and Dogma, op.cit., p.25. Similar thoughts have been expressed more recently in J. Hick, God And The Universe Of Faiths, Collins, Fount Paperbacks, Glasgow, 1977, p.119.
121. S. Angus, Truth and Tradition, op.cit., p.70
122. Ibid., p.70.
held by many of his students, but also brought him into conflict with conservatives and traditionalists within the Methodist Church.

Within New South Wales Methodism the attitude to Angus' teaching highlighted the diversity of theological belief, not only within the ministry, but also among the Church members. Church papers reflected the divergent opinions which were expressed in editorials, articles and letters to the editor. Methodist opposition was officially raised at the 1930 New South Wales Methodist Conference. Once again, the matter was raised by Carruthers who had publicly criticized Angus' 1923 Student Christian Movement address. He requested the 1930 Conference to authorize withdrawal of the Methodist students from the Joint Course.

Carruthers did not adopt this position lightly; he had always taken his own way in thought, and...neither the threats of the fundamentalists nor the tolerant smiles of the modernists affected his outlook.123

A.E. Walker, minister of the Newtown Methodist Church and father of Alan Walker, supported Carruthers. Additional support came from J. Ward Harrison, a high-principled Methodist minister who used the 'Holiness' Magazine, Glad Tidings, which he edited, as a vehicle for a

sustained criticism of Angus' teaching.¹²⁴

There was sufficient support given to Angus for the Conference to reject the appeal. Support for Angus came from ex-students and friends, including an influential defence from the Leigh College Principal and United Faculty colleague, W.E. Bennett, who was also one of Angus' fellow members of the Heretics' Club, which Angus founded. Conference was reminded that Angus was held in high regard by many of The University of Sydney staff, and by influential members of the community. A Methodist committee was commissioned to report to the Conference to be held at the beginning of 1931.¹²⁵ When members of the 1931 Conference discussed their concern at the exposure of Methodist students to the modern, liberal theories promoted by Angus, once again Bennett defended Angus, while opposition continued to be voiced by Harrison, Carruthers and Walker.¹²⁶

During 1931 Harrison intensified his censure of Angus through the pages of *Glad Tidings* and in pamphlets issued to New South Wales Ministers. Over a period of

¹²⁴. N. Barrett, Personal interview with N. Barrett, Ward Harrison's daughter, 30 April 1986. Ward Harrison was prepared to uphold his conservative beliefs even at cost to himself. 'He rejected a lucrative financial offer to mount a liquor advertisement on a strategically located block of land he owned on the north coast of the State'.


several months he published a series of critiques of the views Angus had expressed in his highly acclaimed book, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World.\textsuperscript{127} In the June 1 issue of Glad Tidings Harrison announced his intention to publish the critiques in an

\begin{quote}
endeavour to show that the writer of this book holds views which are in opposition to those held by the Evangelical Churches...(and) not in accordance with the law or the genesis of Methodism.\textsuperscript{128}
\end{quote}

His attacks continued the following year, and in Glad Tidings he exclaimed,

\begin{quote}
and to think that to this teacher is committed the task of sending forth those who are to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

The Daily Record of the 1932 Conference Proceedings contained the stark statement,

\begin{quote}
D.Hyde and D.M. Stewart suspended by the Examination Committee in accord Section C, Minutes of Conference p.83. \textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

This record of the suspension of students during the previous year will be examined more fully in the study of Dudley Hyde's ministry, but for the critics of Angus it was the tangible evidence that Angus' unorthodox views had been absorbed by Methodist students. Apprehension increased with the realisation that the cause of the students' suspension was their expression of unorthodox


\textsuperscript{128} J. Ward Harrison, 'The Teaching of Professor Angus', in Glad Tidings, June 1, 1931, p.3.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., February 1, 1932, p.3.

\textsuperscript{130} Methodist Church of Australasia. Minutes of New South Wales Conference, 1932, Daily Record Proceedings, pp.6-7.
views which were unacceptable to the Methodist faith.

Heightened concern by members of the 1932 February Conference about Angus' teaching resulted in fifty-six voting to support Carruthers' motion for withdrawal of the students from the New Testament lectures, and one hundred and four voting for continuance of the class. The matter, however, was not resolved by this majority vote and Conference directed that once again a committee examine the issue and report to the 1933 Conference.

In the wake of the Conference resolutions, the controversy was continued in the pages of The Methodist, indicating the polarization of opinions on the issue. On 27 February, under the nom de plume, 'Methodist Special', a balanced article was written reporting the Conference discussion of the Angus issue in relation to the Methodist students. It emphasized that although the session was tense and long-drawn, it was not a heresy hunt. The writer reported that the one concern of all, even the conservative men

was to grant a reasonable measure of freedom to every man, however young, while securing the all-round preaching of the Gospel in integrity and fulness.\textsuperscript{131}

There was, the writer affirmed, the necessity for men of the ministry to be

given some sea-room, or at least some individuality in their religious thinking ...else gramaphones would do.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{131} 'Methodist Special', 'Does He Believe... ?', in The Methodist, 27 February 1932, p.14.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p.14.
'Methodist Special' followed up his article the following week with a more detailed explanation of the issues involved, stating that discussion revealed that the point at issue was not one of theology or theory, but one of simple facts; and the question was whether our students should have the facts known to them or be kept in ignorance of their existence. Many speakers shrank from the ugly situation involved in the latter course, while others felt a knowledge of the facts was dangerous. The writer believed that it was impressively reassuring to receive Principal Bennett's assurance that, during the fourteen years of the United Faculty's existence, one hundred and thirteen students had pursued these studies without injury. It was also reassuring to hear from several young ministers personal testimonies to the spiritual benefit they had received from the course. This article was sufficient goad for Ward Harrison to write a prompt rejoinder in which he took special exception to the suggestion that some Conference members preferred that the students be kept in ignorance. A. Graham wrote in similar vein, concerned that the fifty-six who voted for change would be made to look ridiculous because a mistaken impression was given by the article which, he claimed, suggested the students be kept in

133. 'Methodist Special', 'Conference From Within', in The Methodist, 5 March 1932, p.1.
134. Ibid., p.1.
ignorance. In Graham's opinion the objection 'was not due to the teaching of facts, but to failure to teach certain facts regarded by our Church as vital and supreme'. 136 'One of the Fifty-six' also wrote defensively on behalf of those who voted for withdrawal of the students. He objected to the implication that the fifty-six who voted against continuing the course were 'belated obscurantists', preferring 'to hide their heads in the proverbial sand'. 137

At the 1933 Conference the critics of Angus' teaching achieved their objective. The decision was made to withdraw Methodist students from Angus' classes. The minutes of Conference recorded the decision in the following terms:

In view of a certain inquiry to be made by the Presbyterian Church, special temporary provision outside the United Course shall be made for the instruction of the Methodist Students in the New Testament. Subject to this provision, the United Course of Theological training shall be continued for 1934. 138

Angus had anticipated the loss of his Methodist students. His comment, which Alan Brand recalled had been made to them by Angus during the controversy, had become fact. 'You holy boys won't be with me next year', 139

137. 'One of the Fifty-six', Letter to Editor, The Methodist, 12 March, 1932, p.18.
138. The Methodist Church of Australasia, Minutes of New South Wales Conference, 1933, pp.74-75.
139. A. Brand, Recorded Interview, op.cit.
he predicted. Indeed, they were not with him, but for many of them his teaching remained a powerful influence throughout their ministries.

Breward commented that with Angus' death his emphases became 'muted and secularised'.\textsuperscript{140} It will be argued in this thesis that evidence shows that in the ministries of at least several Methodists, Angus' emphases were certainly secularized; they were, however, demonstrably not muted.

\textsuperscript{140} I. Breward, 'Christianity Must Be Reinterpreted. Samuel Angus' Response to a Secular Society and a Traditional Church', \textit{op.cit.}, p.30.
CHAPTER 2. - THE REVEREND W.J. HOBBIN.
SECULARIZED RELIGION AND
THE SOCIAL GOSPEL.
2.1. **INTRODUCTION.**

The ministry of the Reverend William Hobbin is representative of most aspects of secularized religion as defined in this thesis. His ministry was essentially an expression of the social gospel at its most basic level, as the answer to human need, and may be taken as a stereotype of what is generally understood to be secularized religion. At the same time it was a ministry which was distinguished by the manner in which secular need was addressed not only at the personal level, but nationally and internationally at the organizational level.

Examination of Hobbin's ministry will identify characteristics of secularized religion at these levels. This study will also define the motivations for his ministry, and the underlying theological rationale which justified its classification as a Christian ministry. In addition, the study will indicate the response his ministry elicited, its effectiveness, and its impact on society. Finally, its continuing influence on subsequent ministries in the New South Wales Methodist Church will be assessed.¹

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¹ In this chapter considerable use has been made of Hobbin's autobiographical material, supplemented by oral history from various sources. Problems associated with the subjective nature of the material have been recognized, and this shortcoming has been addressed wherever possible by checking independent sources for corroborating evidence. Sources used have included official Church records, Church and secular newspapers, and recollections of contemporaries who had contact with Hobbin during his ministry. Overall, these sources have indicated that Hobbin's autobiographical material has provided a credible source of information.
2.2 EARLY YEARS.

An understanding of Hobbin's ministry requires recognition of several incidents which occurred, and attitudes he developed, in his early life that were significant in determining the pattern of his future ministry. They were influences that led to his ready acceptance of the basis of secularized religion, which is an holistic theology that refuses to separate the sacred from the secular.

One of the most seminal influences on his ministry was his natural tendency towards a questioning and analytical approach to information and events. This resulted in his persistent questioning of statements presented to him as absolutes. During his youth this tendency was apparent in his rebellious attitude towards various aspects of conventional Christian belief. Later in this chapter it will be shown that during his theological training, particularly under Angus' tuition, his enquiring attitude not only received approval, but was nurtured and developed. The approval given his questioning attitude by his professors had the secondary effect of strengthening his confidence in his personal interpretation of the authentic Christian message. This development of confidence in his own interpretations was particularly significant because his interpretation of Christian truth was a powerful determinant of the nature of his ministry.
Hobbin's first questioning of theological issues occurred while he was still at school. He was confronted with the theological conflict between Science and Biblical literalism which was still a live issue when he first encountered its challenge, and which remains an issue with which secularized ministries have to contend. A Sydney press cutting, located among Carruther's papers, held in the Church archives, entitled 'The Higher Criticism', was arguing the subject in 1905, the year of Hobbin's birth. Debate was continuing in 1923 when The Methodist published 'Where the Higher Criticism Fails: A Review'. Articles penned by the esteemed Carruthers appeared in The Methodist, in which he appealed for faith in 'the old confession' as a counter to the 'hyperbolical exaggeration' of Biblical criticism.

As an intelligent high school student, Hobbin puzzled over the apparent conflict between the ideas about an evolving world, promoted by his admired science teacher, and the authoritative presentation of Biblical creation stories given by his friendly Sunday School teacher. This raised the question of Biblical literalism.

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4. J.E. Carruthers, 'No Cause for Panic but Great Need for Caution'; 'Faith or Doubt. Two Attitudes'; in The Methodist, Held among Carruther's Papers at 'Eskdale'.

for the young student. His science master encouraged the students to have an open mind and to reject the suggestion that they had the full and final answer on any matter. In contrast to the science master's attitude, his Sunday School teacher's answer to his queries was 'Bill, you ask far too many questions. You must learn to accept things far more readily. Have faith'.

Hobbin was then unaware that his attitude to the search for truth, inspired by his science master, would be endorsed and forcefully elaborated twelve years later by Angus, but his affinity with Angus' attitude towards the search for truth was already taking shape. It was particularly evident in his first significant rejection of conventional Christian belief. During his youth he witnessed his father's protracted suffering from cancer. Well-meaning religious friends tried to comfort the family with assurances that the father's agony was the will of God. This belief Hobbin totally rejected. He retained throughout his ministry a personal conviction that human tragedy was not the will of God, but was more like a maniacal miscarriage of justice than the activity of some supposedly loving and all powerful Being.

Another prominent feature of Hobbin's ministry was his deep commitment to providing practical assistance to all who were economically or socially deprived. In retrospect he readily acknowledged that this was, on the

social level, a response to the shattering effects he witnessed of the economic depression of the early 1930s. On the theological level it was the secularized religion response of belief that a Christian ministry should be involved essentially with total care to all people, according to their need in all situations.

Even before he witnessed the effects of the Great Depression his empathy with economically deprived people originated in his own experience of the social disruption caused by the development of mechanization and technology. It was the introduction of bus and motor transport in the 1920s which made his father's well-respected Glen Innes blacksmith's business obsolete. Prior to the closure of the blacksmith's shop his own ambitions were thwarted by the need for him to assist at the blacksmith's forge. The young Bill Hobbin's ambition was to graduate from university as an analytical chemist which, on the basis of his scholastic ability, was an ambition his teachers encouraged. The premature curtailment of his schooling remained a lifelong regret. It also helped him to empathize with young people who were economically and socially deprived. Reference later in the chapter to his ministry for youth, and his work with the Child Welfare Department, will indicate the depth of his concern in this area of need.

In addition to his empathy with deprived youth he related readily to people in the wider community, beyond the confines of the Church. This also had a basis in his
early experience and owed something to his adolescent association with a cross-section of the community when he worked in the blacksmith's shop.

Enrolment in an Evening Continuation School provided some consolation following the curtailment of his schooling. He supplemented the Evening School studies with a Biblical and theology course which was a prerequisite for accreditation as a lay preacher in the Methodist Church. His questioning attitude was obvious to Church members who asked him how, as a lay preacher, he could conduct Church services when he questioned so much of the Church's teaching. His response was that he would persist in searching for a satisfactory understanding of the Biblical message, while holding to his belief that Jesus' central message was unqualified love for everyone. This early interpretation which he made of Jesus' essential message became the core of the theological rationale for the whole of his ministry.

Early in his career Hobbin became aware of another controversial issue which remained a matter of concern to him throughout his ministry. It was the issue of Christian dualism which he first confronted in the Newcastle district of New South Wales. He had found it necessary to seek another occupation when the increasing automation of transport made the blacksmith's shop less economically viable. Sensing Hobbin's potential, the

7. Ibid., p.27.
minister of the Glen Innes Methodist Church urged his questioning young lay preacher to devote his life to the ministry of the Church. Hobbin took the first step towards this vocation in 1925 with acceptance of a position as a pre-ministerial assistant in the Newcastle circuit of the Church. Within 24 hours of his arrival in the circuit he became involved in an argument which centred on the dualist sacred-secular controversy.

During an open-air meeting which he addressed Hobbin was asked by a person in the crowd whether he believed it was the will of God that a miner, with wife and three children, had been killed in an underground accident three days previously. Hobbin rejected the suggestion and supplemented his remarks with the comment that it would be more helpful if the authorities made certain that all safety precautions were strictly enforced in an effort to eliminate the real cause of such tragedies. A well-dressed critic in the crowd sharply rebuked him, accusing him of being a radical, and insisting that if he wished to remain in the Church he should use scripture to answer such questions and not meddle in matters that were not spiritual. Such matters as safety in the mines should be left to the authorities. His critic insisted that Hobbin should have told the questioner that God sends suffering to discipline or punish people. When Hobbin was informed that his critic was the manager of one of the largest collieries in the district, and also an officer

8. Ibid., pp.33-34.
in the local Methodist Church, he realized that a major issue in the Church was Christian dualism which divided life by placing a barrier between the sacred and the secular.

During Hobbin's twelve months' appointment in the Newcastle district he realised that the confrontation he had with the colliery manager was not an isolated instance of the sacred-secular dualism in the Church. He had established rapport with the district's working class people, irrespective of whether or not they held Church affiliation. Regularly he accepted invitations to talk with steelworkers during lunch-hour breaks, on subjects of the Church, theology, human relationships and family life. Hobbin soon became aware of the alienation from the Church of a large proportion of the blue collar working class. He identified business men, colliery managers, school teachers and a few politicians, but very few who worked down the mines or on the shop floors of the steelworks. In the five Churches of the circuit there was scant evidence of membership in the Tolpuddle Martyrs' tradition. In an effort to redress the absenteeism of blue collar workers from the Church Hobbin suggested to the Church Quarterly Circuit Meeting that the Church should establish its own study group to examine ideas submitted by the workers, and invite participation by some of the men's leaders. Although the superintendent minister seconded the proposal, the members of the Quarterly Meeting not only rejected it, but censured Hobbin for bringing to the meeting a proposition which
would allow 'the evil world into the Church'. The meeting closed with a laymen's request for prayer for the young assistant who seemed urgently 'in need of spiritual guidance'.

After a brief period as an assistant in the Parramatta circuit during 1927, and prior to entering theological college, he was appointed in 1928 to the Manly circuit as an assistant to the eloquent preacher, Frank Rayward. During both appointments he encountered attitudes which he considered were inconsistent with his understanding of the Christian message. In Parramatta he again witnessed the sacred-secular dualism, and recorded in his autobiography the example of a businessman who separated business from religion when he refused to allow his religion to interfere with the excessive profit margin he made on his merchandise. He assured Hobbin that he never permitted religion to interfere with his business.

During his term at Manly he was confronted with another controversial issue. It was an example of the Fundamentalist-modernist controversy which has been a perennial area of contention in the Methodist Church. The occasion was a meeting of the Sydney branch of the businessmen's Methodist Men's Federation. Members, drawn from several areas of Sydney, openly espoused Fundamentalism, and committed themselves explicitly to stopping the spread of 'modernism' in the Churches.

10. Ibid., pp.51-52.
To what extent they were aware of the 'modernist' content in the United Theological Course lectures at that time is not recorded. They did, however, offer specific prayers that Hobbin 'would not be contaminated by the evil of radical and modernist thought'.

Their Fundamentalist attitude was further emphasized when they attributed a member's serious car accident injuries to the will of God. Hobbin objected when they prayed,

> Lord, Thou hast seen fit to lay our brother aside in this manner; we now ask you to heal him speedily and restore him to our fellowship.

He claimed that the prayer made God sound like some puppet on a string who didn't know what he was doing but was there to be manipulated by anyone courageous enough to inform him he had made a blunder.

Although Hobbin was convinced that such beliefs were not consistent with the concept of a loving God, nor with the concern for the whole person shown by Jesus, his experiences while an assistant raised doubts as to whether he should question the beliefs held by experienced churchmen. This was Hobbin's somewhat tentative state of mind when, at the conclusion of his term as Rayward's assistant, he was accepted as a ministerial candidate. During his theological training the influence of several of his professors sufficiently encouraged him to expand, and formulate into a firm policy for his future ministry,

11. Ibid., p.52.
12. Ibid., pp.60-61.
many of the unconventional beliefs and attitudes he
developed during his youth and pre-ministerial experience.
The result was a ministry which was an exemplar of
secularized religion.

2.3. THEOLOGICAL TRAINING DAYS.

Hobbin commenced his formal theological training in
1929 as a student at Methodism's Leigh Theological College.
He has acknowledged the impact made on his future ministry
by two powerful influences which he experienced during his
training period. One was the influence of theological
concepts taught by the professors, in particular, Samuel
Angus, 'George' Thatcher and Kenneth Edward. The other
influence was the social issue arising from his
involvement, while a student, with the victims of the
economic depression of the 1930s, and his sensitivity to
the depression's destructive effect on people's lives.

The extent of Samuel Angus' profound influence on
Hobbin's ministry was indicated in previous chapters. It
was an influence mirrored in three separate viewpoints
held by Hobbin which, in combination, determined the
nature of his ministry as a prototype of secularized
religion. One influence was the advice to seek truth for
oneself, while subjecting the views of others to searching
analysis. Another profound influence was Angus'
commitment to the concept of Jesus as the supreme example
1 Griffiths Wheeler Thatcher, sometimes known as 'George' Thatcher.
of the incarnation of God's Spirit of loving concern for all people. The third influence was Angus' disregard for the traditions of man-made dogma and creeds. It was an influence which resulted in Hobbin's commitment to teach what he interpreted as the religion 'of Jesus', in contrast to the religion 'about Jesus'. This was a distinction emphasized by Harnack, taught by Angus, and given practical expression by Hobbin in a ministry which interpreted the religion 'of Jesus' as essentially a practical caring ministry for the whole person in every life situation.

Hobbin's life-long impatience with bigotry and intolerance owed much to the influence of Professor Kenneth Edward who lectured in theology at the Joint Faculty. Hobbin's recollection of Edward's teaching was that

theology was never final. It was always developing. Anyone who thought they had the final truth had stopped thinking.13

This was not the only view expressed by Edward which influenced Hobbin's theology. In his autobiography Hobbin recalled,

the lasting impression made upon me by the lectures of the learned Professor was that Jesus, stripped of the mystery language that had been wrapped around him over the centuries, was the living image of what man essentially is. That means that human beings are not bad but good.14

Hobbin was aware of the significant impact this teaching

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had on his ministry when he acknowledged that Edward's teaching gave him a healthy and positive approach to all people no matter where he found them, or under whatever conditions they existed. For Hobbin, this positive approach to the worth of all people in all situations required the ministry of a wholly relevant and holistic religion which consistently became involved in social, political, material and spiritual issues as need was perceived.

Apart from the influence of the Joint Faculty lecturers, his ministry was profoundly influenced by his experiences, while still a student, with the predicament of the victims of the economic depression during the 1930s. It was customary for the Church to assist students financially during their theological training by appointing them as part-time assistants in metropolitan circuits. Hobbin's appointment was to Newtown, an inner metropolitan suburb, which was severely affected by the depression. Evictions of families who were unable to pay rents from the meagre dole payments deeply concerned him, and he found that it was not uncommon to find families of up to seven people 'with nothing more than a loaf of bread for a day's food'.

15. Ibid., p.56.
16. Ibid., p.67.
When he learned of the threatened eviction of ten families from one row of dwellings, he interviewed the agent in the hope of appealing to the owner to cancel the eviction notices. Surprised to learn that the landlord who ordered the evictions was a retired clergyman, the student minister was even more surprised to hear the landlord's response to his telephoned request to consider cancellation of the eviction notices. It was a response which, throughout his ministry, Hobbin found was the essence of repeated replies given to his request for assistance to materially help those who were socially or economically deprived. Repeatedly he was told that his job was 'to save souls of people, not to be concerned about housing them'. Hobbin's threat to take the story to the newspapers resulted in immediate withdrawal of the eviction notices. Such willingness to initiate extreme action to achieve a practical solution to relieve need was typical of his future ministry.

The Newtown landlord incident, and similar experiences, reinforced Hobbin's belief that separation of 'the so called spiritual' from the 'so called secular' was the most tragic divorce ever to take place. His reasoned view was that it was illogical to be asked to believe in a God who is everywhere, and at the same time not concern oneself with housing the poor.

17. Ibid., p.68.
18. Ibid., pp.68-69.
accept the proposition that there are certain areas of life where he is not to be found or even concerned.\textsuperscript{19}

Human tragedies created by the depression, viewed from the perspective of the teaching given by his professors, convinced Hobbin of the need for a relevant religion in order to express the love which the Galilean epitomised and expected his followers to make the only measuring stick for their own lives and their relationships with other human beings.\textsuperscript{20}

This was the measuring stick which Angus and Edward taught Hobbin was essential for an authentic Christian ministry. Hobbin used it over a period of forty years, and in doing so provided the basis for the claim that his secularized religion warrants classification as a Christian ministry.

2.4. CIRCUIT APPOINTMENTS.

i. Mount Isa. Community Involvement.

At the conclusion of his college training Hobbin was confronted by a pessimistic society in the grip of the Great Depression, and it was commonplace for him to see hundreds of men on roadways, 'humping their swags as they

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.69.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p.69.
\end{itemize}
trudged from town to town looking for some sort of work'. He offered himself for appointment, to be made by the Methodist Inland Mission Board, and he was appointed to the silver and lead mining town of Mount Isa in western Queensland. At the time of his appointment he found that Mount Isa was a magnet drawing hundreds of men who came to the town hoping that elusive employment might be found in the mines.

Hobbin's Mount Isa ministry was characterized by his ability to relate readily to the townspeople and mining fraternity in their everyday living. His attitude while in the district was that

> it was the Company's responsibility to discover whatever wealth there was underground...it was mine to find the human treasures that lived above the ground and make it possible for the whole community to share them.\(^2\)

Hobbin's pastoral work extended well beyond the confines of the Church. While in the town he unearthed previously unrecognized musical talent, including two operatic singers who had been trained to world standard. He organized a very successful semi-classical concert, and formed a town Male Voice Choir which included about 20 Russian immigrant mine-workers.

An example, on a different level, of his ability to relate to the Mount Isa community was the formation of a discussion group which met on a weekly basis for the

\(^{21}\) **Ibid.**, p.76.  
\(^{22}\) **Ibid.**, p.85.
duration of his Mount Isa ministry. Membership of the group consisted of men whose varied beliefs and loyalties ranged from avowed atheism to Fundamentalist Christianity. Hobbin encouraged their frank discussions on subjects which included religion, trade unions, politics, sex and any other topic the men suggested.\(^{23}\) There was, in Hobbin's tolerance of diverse views, a reflection of Wesley's injunction to respect opinions other than one's own.\(^{24}\)

Hobbin's rapport with the working community of Mount Isa crossed boundaries of belief and ideology. This rapport with the community, irrespective of Church affiliation, was repeated in his next appointment which was to the New South Wales south coast mining town of Bulli.


Hobbin's appointment to Bulli commenced in 1936. During the four years he was in the district his ministry was a response to social pressures in the community, and his activism made a significant impact on the outcome of several contentious issues. The strength of his impact was apparent in issues concerning housing problems and the politicized 'Dalfram' dispute. Throughout his

\(^{23}\) Ibid., pp.98-101.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p.102.
high-powered activities in the district he remained true to his commitment to make religion relevant to the total needs of all people, but the nature of his ministry drew criticism from theological and political conservatives. The criticism was particularly directed towards the practical measures, especially those with political overtones, which he initiated to assist people in deprived circumstances.

The first issue in the district to attract his attention was the deplorable housing situation, particularly in the near-by Port Kembla area. It was an issue directly related to both the rapidly expanding steelworks and the impact of the economic depression, which caused a severe imbalance between the excessive influx of job seekers and the availability of adequate housing.

When the Hoskins brothers transferred their steelworks from Lithgow to the more favourable location at Port Kembla there were hopes that unemployment, which had beset the district in the wake of recurrent depressions in the coal and struggling metal industries, would be overcome. Unfortunately, the early influx of job seekers hoping for employment in the new plant coincided with the World Depression which followed the 1929 international stock market crash. As the depressed

economic conditions continued, the population seeking work increased. Population in the district increased by 32%, from 32,381 in 1921 to 42,853 in 1933, compared with an increase of 21% in Australia as a whole.²⁶ Public utilities and the housing industry were inadequate to cope with the influx, and the problem of the population increase was compounded by high unemployment.

Job seekers, itinerant workers and the unemployed squatted on land in improvised humpies situated in the Port Kembla area in close proximity to the steelworks. Most of the land available for these sub-standard dwellings was low lying and marshy. Insanitary conditions prevailed as land became bogged with drainage from residences on higher ground, and with the overflow from inadequate greasetraps.

The merger of the steelworks in 1935 with Broken Hill Proprietary Limited (B.H.P.),²⁷ and expenditure of five million pounds on plant extensions, acted as a magnet to even greater numbers of job seekers.²⁸ As the population increased, the housing situation worsened.

²⁷ The official takeover occurred at the beginning of 1936, and coincided with Hobbin's arrival at Bulli.
Although population in the Port Kembla police patrol area increased by 1,000 in 1936, there was an increase of only 111 dwellings, including temporary structures and camps, many of which were insanitary humpies.29

This was the environment that Hobbin entered when he commenced his Bulli ministry early in 1936. When he assessed the District's housing problem he contrasted the deplorable living conditions existent in the Port Kembla district with the far more civilized conditions at Mount Isa. In the Queensland town the mining company constructed, on company leases, homes for the workers which were serviced with water, electricity and sewer, and which were located on planned streets. He compared this initiative with the inaction of the New South Wales State Government, the Local Government, and the B.H.P. company in their handling of the critical Port Kembla housing shortage.

In a local newspaper report, written in 1937, Hobbin recalled the resentment he experienced when he became aware of the local inadequate housing situation compared with the achievements at Mount Isa. He wrote:

The more the authorities poured their fulsome appreciation and praise upon belching chimney stacks and rolling mills to turn out miles of steel the more angry I became at so little attention being paid to the dehumanising conditions in which manpower...were forced to exist.30


By the time Hobbin arrived in Bulli, organized agitation for housing reform had already commenced. The movement for reform had its origin in the anti-eviction campaign which became very active in 1934, and was spearheaded by the Unemployed Workers' Movement (U.W.M.). This was primarily a Communist organization, formed under a 1926 Comintern direction that Communist Parties should set up organizations which would have a public appeal.  

Although the housing reform movement developed separately from the U.W.M., membership of the reform movement included ex-U.W.M. officers. Unfortunately, the Communist element in the movement invited criticism from political conservatives. Nevertheless, when Hobbin arrived in the district the situation was so bad that unionists and militants were joined by a few concerned middle-class landowners. In the eyes of the more conservative members of the community their membership endowed the movement with greater respectability. The membership of S. Musgrave, the editor of the Illawarra Mercury, and Hobbin who was regarded as the movement's most outspoken member, increased the movement's effectiveness as a pressure group. Strong support also came from the Trade Unions and the Miners' Federation.

By the end of 1936 a South Coast Housing Committee

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31. L.L. Sharkey, An Outline of The Australian Communist Party, Australian Communist Party, Sydney, 1944, p.31. The U.W.M. was part of the 'united front from below' plan.
was formed, and sub-committees were commissioned to investigate and report details of the living conditions of the workers. The committee criticized the State Government's inactivity in failing to address the problem and also B.H.P.'s irresponsible attitude of attracting a large reserve of labour while ignoring the associated problem of housing.

Hobbin's frustration with the housing debacle in both Illawarra and Sydney's slum areas caused him to take up membership with the Legion of Christian Youth which consisted of a group of concerned church people inspired by the leadership of E.H. Burgmann, an Anglican cleric committed to the social gospel. Burgmann was the first president of the Legion which was formed in 1935 by merging the Christian Youth Committee for Peace with the Combined Churches Debating Federation. Its main aims were to fight for slum clearance, child welfare, including better handling of juvenile delinquents, and preservation of world peace.

The Legion members supported the South Coast Housing Committee, speaking at meetings and assisting in research. In response to an invitation from Hobbin, Alan Dalziel, a secretary of the Legion, addressed a meeting at the Woonona Methodist Church in February, 1937. He described the Legion's methods of research, and the housing

situation in Sydney where the Legion had discovered two thousand acres of overcrowded squalid slums. On 17 September 1937 Hobbin arranged a meeting in the Wollongong Methodist Church and a resolution was passed to form a South Coast Branch of the Legion. The branch was supported by young people and churchmen, particularly from the Salvation Army. Hobbin agreed to act as secretary. He stated that the reason for joining the Legion was because he believed

its trinity of objectives were not only relevant but a plain expression of the spirit of the Galilean.

Not everyone viewed the Legion in this way because, as Hobbin acknowledged, its activities were immediately branded by many as 'communist'. Inevitably such movements have tended to attract a representation of militant activists, often including communists or communist sympathizers. Due to the communist participation, only too readily all members have been labelled 'red', or at least 'pink'. Hobbin was never a communist. In fact, he said that 'he never regarded communism as anything other than a dictatorship', and he believed that no age or party 'had defined the final meaning of democracy'. An ideal democracy was, however, the system which appealed to him.

33. Illawarra Mercury, 19 February 1937. In one district, of the 1,552 occupied dwellings which were inspected by members of the Legion, 882 had neither bathrooms or laundry.
35. Ibid., p.123.
Hobbin could not understand why so many people attributed to the teaching of Marx every suggestion for the reconstruction of society for the betterment of humanity. He believed that there were democratic schools of thought quite capable of proposing such changes. In his judgement, the greatest force for change in society was the call by the Carpenter of Nazareth to love one another.

The practical application of this belief led to his active participation in movements for welfare reform and improved living conditions, which included the Port Kembla housing situation. It also increased the incidence of conservative members of the Church and community labelling him as a 'communist' or 'the pink parson'. He was criticized for his attacks on the conditions under which workers were existing on the South Coast. The response which he gave to his critics emphasized his determination not to separate religion from the needs of everyday life. His reply was a definite rejection of the dualist concept of Christianity:

The religious folk told me I should only be concerned about the people's need to be right with God, and thus be assured of an eternal dwelling place in the next world. The non-church critics told me I had no business having anything to do with politics because religion and politics didn't mix. I told the first bunch of opponents that I believed in a God who was as much concerned with the condition and quality of people's lives in this world as they imagined He was about the next one. The supporters of the departmentalised approach were informed that I utterly rejected every notion that life could be split into watertight divisions.36

36. Ibid., p.119.
Hobbin was responsible for bringing the agitation for housing reform in the Illawarra to a climax in September 1937 when he published a scathing attack on B.H.P. which also implied criticism of the New South Wales Government. On the top of a hill overlooking the steelworks the company had recently completed construction of two large homes for the use of its managing director and company officials. The well-fitted home for the managing director, with its landscaped grounds, was named 'Greenhills'. Hobbin wrote an article entitled 'Humanity Crucified'. He sent a copy to his friend, the Reverend Stuart Watts, another Angus disciple, who was editor of the highly acclaimed Anglican paper, The Church Standard. As part of his attack on B.H.P. Hobbin wrote:

The company...has been interested in homes - that is, their own homes, with chromium-plated kitchens and liquor bars. These are situated on a hill which has been given the very significant name of GREEN HILL. From this hill one is able to look down on the camps where dwell the toilers. Long ago humanity, in the Person of Christ, was hung on a hill. Today he is certainly crucified over and over again in the awful conditions in which hundreds of human beings were forced to live on the South Coast of New South Wales.

Stuart Watts published the article on the front page of The Church Standard, and it immediately came to the

37. The Church Standard was edited by G. Stuart Watts, who occasionally assisted at St. James's Church, King Street, Sydney. The English Church newspaper, Church Times, praised Watts' editorial work, and Watts was appointed Australian correspondent of the Church Times.

notice of B.S. Stevens, the Premier of New South Wales. Stevens was a prominent member of the Methodist Church, as also were his cabinet ministers, H.M. Hawkins, Minister of Social Services and D.H. Drummond, Minister for Education. Stevens, as Premier and 'a good Methodist', was deeply affronted by the critical article in which a Methodist parson claimed that the Government, which included himself and Methodist cabinet ministers, had ignored the deplorable housing conditions in which many South Coast residents lived. Hawkins had previously refused invitations to inspect the conditions, and when the article written by Hobbin was published Stevens denounced its contents as exaggerated lies.

The next day Stevens, accompanied by cabinet ministers in a fleet of official cars, made a hurried trip to Port Kembla in anticipation that they would prove that Hobbin's claims were false. The parliamentary party was met by the chief Shire Health Inspector, accompanied by Hobbin. The Health Inspector handed the Premier his official report on the conditions, and informed him that he had given Hobbin a copy, with permission to use the facts in the report as a basis for the article which was published in The Church Standard. Before the big black cars carrying the Premier and his cabinet ministers left for Sydney, an assurance was given

that funds would be made available to build adequate housing.

Although Hobbin's article stirred the Government into action, the immediate practical support fell short of expectations. The Minister for Local Government, E.S. Spooner, proposed construction of temporary barracks for single men and three-roomed cottages for families. The settlement, close to the steelworks, was named 'Spoonerville', and became the focus for sustained attack because of its inadequacies. It consisted of makeshift cottages with walls which were half timber and half canvas, canvas blinds in lieu of windows, and no bathrooms. Criticism by Hobbin and other Legion members, councillors, and the community generally, enforced the addition of bathrooms to the buildings, and improvements were made to the primitive barracks for single men.

The South Coast incident was not Hobbin's only confrontation with Premier Stevens in the 1930s, during his Bulli ministry. In company with other Legion of Christian Youth members, including Alan Dalziel, who later became H.V. Evatt's private secretary, Hobbin worked for the clearance of Sydney's slums, particularly those in Erskineville and Surry Hills. Their tactic was to target the slums' landlords, many of whom were resident in the affluent suburb of Bellevue Hill. Hobbin and others would set up loud speakers in the streets of Bellevue Hill and inform residents of the slum situation. While they were speaking, other members went to a local telephone booth
and asked police to move the speakers. In this way they were assured of publicity, then all members would promptly return to the city office, where Alan Dalziel prepared a report for publication in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The newspapers reported the disturbances, including the names of the agitators.

Premier Stevens expressed his annoyance with the Legion's activities by publicly stating that every member was a 'red'. He amplified his comment with the assertion that the excellent quality of the publicity stationery distributed by the Legion members was so expensive that it must be financed by Moscow.

Hobbin and fellow Legion members became impatient with Steven's' invective. They arranged to meet the Premier in his office and to introduce him to the man who paid their expenses. When Stevens cynically remarked that they would not be able to get him from Russia in time for the meeting, Hobbin and his fellow members brought into the room Sir Frederick Stewart who was the President of Stevens' own political party. Stewart assured the astonished Stevens that he not only believed in what the Legion was doing, but supported the members fully and paid all their accounts. Hobbin recorded that after that incident Premier Stevens never again labelled him as a communist.

International peace was another secular issue to

which Hobbin was committed. During his Bulli ministry his support for the Peace Movement bonded him closer to the workers, while at the same time it brought him into further disfavour with sections of the conservative establishment. His South Coast activity in the Peace Movement climaxed in the 'Dalfram' incident when, in November 1938, the waterside workers refused to load pig iron onto the 'Dalfram' which was a ship bound for Japan.

The waterside workers opposed involvement in imperialistic wars and were critical of Japan's attack on the Chinese workers. They promoted their belief that in a future world war Germany, Italy and Japan would act as the Fascist aggressors against Soviet Russia. Their protests increased as fears grew that Japanese interests extended to the whole Pacific region and could involve Australia. Although in May 1938 the Australian Government banned the export of iron ore to Japan, the Government's continued sanction of the export of pig iron caused the waterside workers to strike in protest.

R.G. Menzies, who at the time was Attorney General, criticized the union action, and in an effort to break

42. L. Richardson, The Bitter Years, op.cit., p.205. 'The official reason given for the ban was that Australia had to conserve supplies of iron ore for her own blast-furnaces'. Geoffrey Blainey suggested other motives and presented evidence that Prime Minister Lyons informed B.H.P. 'that the Japanese base at Yampi Sound would be very awkward in the event of war...a ban on the export of iron ore was the simplest way to expel politely the Japanese from Yampi Sound. Continued export of pig iron would probably make it easier for Japan to accept the major prohibition'.
the strike introduced licensing at the port. This unpopular move angered South Coast workers, and in defiance the waterside workers refused to take out licences. They continued the strike until 21 January 1939 and only capitulated when B.H.P. intensified the conflict by closing sections of the plant and dismissing 4,000 workers.

Hobbin's sympathies lay with the waterside workers and the Trades and Labour Council. His reading of Robert Brady's *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*,

Japanese proposals for expansion in the South East Asian area,

convinced him that in a future war it was probable that Japan would enter on Germany's side. The proposed plan was to expand through Manchuria, and then come down to Australia.

The same apprehension was expressed by Hobbin's friend, S.R. Musgrave, who was editor of the *Illawarra Mercury*. In September 1937 Musgrave published comments made by Seigo Nankano, a Japanese national leader. When elected, Nankano stated,

> We Japanese do not believe there can be peace in the Pacific until we have established there our glorious civilisation. It is our divine mission to do this, and there is no country strong enough to resist us. We must go forward to victory.

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44. W. Hobbin, *Autobiography*, *op.cit.*, p.123. Hobbin read Baron Tanak's 'Seven Point Expansion Policy for South East Asia', which he interpreted as 'the drums of war'.
Nazism, Fascism and Communism were all, in Hobbin's view, denials of democracy. He committed himself to support international peace and the establishment of a true democracy. Based on his reading of the Japanese seven point plan, he warned of an imminent war in which Japan would side with Germany. Although many disagreed with his prediction, and denied the imminence of war, Hobbin used every opportunity he could to promote his concern. He accepted 'invitations from church groups, community organisations, miners, waterside workers and steel workers', and as his ideas were publicized, the number and size of the meetings increased.

It was at one of these meetings that he used the phrase, 'Pig Iron Bob'. This epithet, associated with Robert Menzies, has become part of Australia's folk history. The meeting was organized by the waterside workers to protest against the Government's support for the export of pig iron to Japan. Hobbin accepted an invitation to be chief speaker. The public meeting, which was held in Wollongong's main thoroughfare, was scheduled to be broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. During Hobbin's criticism of the Federal

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48. Ibid., p.130. The coining of the epithet, 'Pig Iron Bob', has been attributed to various people, including Stan Moran, Bill Hobbin and several watersiders, ref. E.Roach, personal interview, 22 September 1988. Also interview with R. Lockwood, 20 September 1988. Lockwood knew Hobbin, and regarded as credible the claim that the epithet publicly originated with Hobbin.
Government for its actions he referred to Menzies as 'Pig Iron Bob'. From that moment the Australian Broadcasting Corporation cut the transmission. The broadcast was terminated, but to this day the epithet remains. Commenting on the pig iron incident, Sir Isaac Isaacs, who retired as the Governor General of Australia in 1936, claimed that the incident would find a place in our history besides the Eureka Stockade...as a noble stand against executive dictatorship and against an attack on Australian democracy.

Apart from criticism by a few theological and political conservatives, Hobbin was generally popular with members of the Bulli circuit. There was, however, ready acknowledgment of the unorthodox nature of his ministry. Nell Rummery, Rene and Harold Rallings, are representative of long-time members of the Bulli circuit who have confirmed the impact Hobbin made in the Bulli Church and district. Nell Rummery's comment best summarized the most general recollection of Hobbin's Bulli ministry, which was held by those who were his parishioners:

He was a remarkable man who came down into a mining community and stood beside his people.

Her comment was a succinct assessment of a secularized ministry which related religion to the needs of people at a pragmatic grassroots level.

50. Ibid., p.130.
During his fourth year at Bulli, Hobbin received an invitation to be superintendent of the Rozelle Mission in the Sydney District. Realising that the Mission's environment was an area where he could exercise an effective, relevant ministry he accepted the invitation, subject to the approval of the Church Stationing Committee. The members of the Stationing Committee had other ideas. Colleagues informed Hobbin that the Stationing Committee decided that removal from an industrial or city environment would, in his own interests, 'keep him quiet'.\(^{53}\) The Stationing Committee sent him to the country town of Junee.

There was a common element in Hobbin's appointment to Junee, and the experience of Burgmann, his Legion of Christian Youth co-worker. Mansfield has suggested that Burgmann's elevation to the episcopate moved him into the country, away from industrial areas, and diminished his opportunity of 'response to...championing of the social gospel'.\(^{54}\) Hobbin's appointment to Junee certainly removed him from the turmoil of industrial and political disputation for a period of five years.

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Hobbin commenced his Junee ministry at the beginning of 1940 and, characteristically, he rapidly became involved in community affairs. Within six months of his arrival he was invited to nominate for election as an alderman for the Municipal Council. Not only was he elected, but he topped the poll with 89.5% of the votes, and at the first council meeting was unanimously elected as Mayor. Hobbin had the rare distinction of being Mayor at the same time as being a practising clergyman and he held the office throughout his Junee ministry. He also accepted a position on the Board of the Junee District Hospital. Consistent with previous experience, there were the customary critical comments made by those who objected to his involvement in what they defined as secular concerns, in addition to his church work. Once again, Hobbin informed his critics that he was there to serve the whole community, and he did not subscribe to the division they sought to impose.

The mayoral position opened many opportunities to share the concerns of the whole community, and gave him access to a wide cross-section of residents, many of whom were suffering the trauma of family casualties in the Second World War. Irrespective of their Church, or lack of Church, affiliation, his mayoral status increased the opportunity to empathize with them in their sorrow.

56. Ibid., p.137.
Hobbin's pastoral duties were not limited to cursory visits, nor confined to the immediate concerns of the Church institution. With husbands and sons away at the war, many parishioners were hard pressed to cope with their farm work. On many occasions during his pastoral visits he was occupied by relieving someone on a tractor, or riding a horse to help muster sheep. Such activities among the Junee people were consistent with Hobbin's concept of a ministry which related to the needs of the community.


At the conclusion of his Junee ministry Hobbin was appointed as superintendent of the Balmain mission. The challenges of the Balmain inner-city mission suited his innovative style of ministry and presented further opportunities to involve religion in community problems. He commenced his ministry at Balmain in 1945.

On arrival at the mission he realized the potential of the large mission hall which was being used for only three hours on Sunday. He initiated moves to make alterations which would make the hall more useful to people living in the district, and then formed a dramatic society which performed plays in the hall, including several major public performances each year.
The lack of a pre-school kindergarten in the area concerned Hobbin, and under his guidance the mission pioneered the establishment of pre-schools in the district. These were also conducted in the mission hall. It was not until two years later that the Education Department opened two pre-school establishments in the district. 57

An additional use for the mission hall resulted from Hobbin's concern to provide organized healthy activity for young people living in the economically depressed environment surrounding the mission. He organized two physical culture classes which were conducted by competent instructors who succeeded in raising the young people's performances to competition honours standard.58 Each initiative undertaken at the mission was an additional attempt to make the ministry relevant to the community's need.

The success of Hobbin's work with youth and younger children was recognized by the Child Welfare Department. He accepted an invitation to become a member of the Child Welfare Advisory Council, and retained the position for 23 years. As he co-operated with the judicial authorities, often accepting responsibility for young people committed to his oversight, he found that his Child Welfare work

57. Ibid., p.155.
58. Ibid., p.157.
proved to be an area in which he had ample opportunity to exercise a ministry directly related to practical alleviation of human problems. The practical value of the Advisory Council's work was consistently acknowledged in the Department's Annual Reports.\(^5^9\)

While at Balmain Hobbin became increasingly involved with social work as a member of The Public Questions and Social Service Committee which the Church had established at its Sydney headquarters. The 1945 Methodist Conference endorsed the committee's recommendation that Hobbin be appointed Director of the Committee.\(^6^0\) His duties at that stage, however, were to be carried out in conjunction with his Balmain ministry.

The more meetings of the Department Hobbin attended the more convinced he became that the Church should adopt practical measures to cope with issues arising from gambling, drunkenness, divorce and many problems in marriage relationships, instead of the less effective practice of merely passing resolutions deploring them. He found support for a more positive approach from the Reverend William Coughlan of the Anglican Church. They were both impressed by the need for effective counselling both before and after marriage. It was apparent to


\(^{60}\) The Methodist Church of Australasia, Minutes of the New South Wales Conference, 1945, Question XXIV, p.194.
Hobbin and Coughlan that changes in society were exercising a profound effect on marriage relationships. For a minister concerned with the total welfare of people, this was an important issue.

Coughlan and Hobbin decided to establish a Marriage Guidance Council in Australia. They were impressed by the work done in marriage guidance by Dr. D. Mace in England, and by Dr. K. Roger's 'Non Directive' counselling in America. For a couple of years prior to establishment of the Council Coughlan and Hobbin researched, studied and discussed available information to develop their understanding of the problems they hoped to alleviate. The first meeting, which pioneered Marriage Guidance in Australia, was held in the Family Welfare centre in Martin Place. Coughlan was elected as chairman and Hobbin accepted the position of secretary.

At the conclusion of Hobbin's ministry in Balmain he accepted appointment as full-time Director of the Methodist Social Service Department. In doing so, he commenced the major work of his ministry which continued until his retirement at the end of 1970.
2.5. **HOBBIN'S DIRECTORSHIP OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT.**

i. **Comparison of approaches to social gospel ministry within the tradition of New South Methodism.**

Hobbin commenced duty as the full-time Director of the Methodist Social Service Department in March 1949. Conference that year gave the Department the status of a full Department in its own right, and the name was changed from the Public Questions and Social Service Department to the Social Service Department. The name was again changed in 1965 to the Department of Christian Citizenship (D.C.C.). As Hobbin remarked of the Department, 'the Church never knew quite what to call it'. Since Church Union in 1977 the name has been changed again to the Board for Social Responsibility. The name, Department of Christian Citizenship, was Hobbin's own suggestion because he believed that church people should be led to realise that religion should be involved with every aspect of people's citizenship in everyday life.

This section of the chapter will review Hobbin's ministry as Director of the Department, and in doing so will further define the nature of secularized religion.

61. Methodist Church of Australasia, Minutes of the New South Wales Conference. 1949, p.198.
Prior to examining details of his ministry in the Department, the first part of this section will briefly review the nature of social work carried out by the Church before Hobbin's appointment as full-time Director. This review will show that throughout the history of New South Wales Methodism its ministries have been characterized by the expression of two different styles of social work. Of these two different forms of social ministry one, which was formalized in the 1920s, was in many respects a precursor of Hobbin's secularized ministry.

The precursor of Hobbin's style of ministry operated from within the structure of the Men's Own Movement (M.O.M.) which was launched with Methodist Conference approval on 16 April 1916 and was absorbed into Hobbin's Department in 1949. The Reverend F.T. Walker, who initiated the Movement, was given Conference approval to work specifically with workmen in the context of their workshops and industrial establishments. In justifying establishment of the Movement, Walker said that Jesus went not only into the Church, but outside, and because the Church had failed in this phase of its duty, the M.O.M. was necessary. It was also necessary, he claimed, to show the workman 'a Christ and Christianity apart altogether from the Church and Churchianity'. Although the M.O.M. ministers carried out much of their work outside the precincts of the Church, they nevertheless

64. The Methodist, 22 April, 1916, p.2.
65. Ibid., p.2.
emphasized the Christian basis of their social work, which differentiated it from atheistic, or agnostic, ethical humanism. Speaking at the M.O.M.'s inauguration, Meredith Atkinson said it was

high time Christian men raised voices against that false cleavage between Christianity and what was known as Socialism.66

There was a readiness by M.O.M. supporters to become political activists in their efforts to initiate social reconstruction to redress social exploitation. Officially the Church had supported social reconstruction since 1920 when it adopted a detailed pronouncement on Industrial and Social Relations submitted by Walker under the name of the M.O.M.67 The submission was accepted by the New South Wales Conference, and adopted by the Australian General Conference as the Church's official pronouncement.

Despite official sanction which the Church gave to the pronouncement, there has been, among many New South Wales Methodists, a history of reservation against involvement with political issues. It was a view consistent with Bromilow's declaration at the beginning of the century that the Church must not be political.68 Such an aversion was the outcome of a view of the social ministry as being primarily a means to effect spiritually

66. Ibid., p.2.
68. Methodist Church of Australasia. New South Wales Conference. Minutes. 1912. p.2. Bromilow was President in 1911.
redemptive work. Don Wright identified this style of social work, which was in contrast to the M.O.M. ministry, when he described the nature of the social ministry of Sydney's Central Methodist Mission (C.M.M.) under the superintendency of the Reverend S.J. Hoban. Wright referred to the incompatibility between the two styles of social ministry which became apparent during a year's unsuccessful trial to link the M.O.M. with the C.M.M. Wright's explanation of the incompatibility was that the C.M.M. was at this stage clinging too closely to Protestantism's cherished individualistic heritage and was inclined to see its social work as 'rescue' or 'ambulance' work rather than as the remodelling of society. 69

Social work ministries of a similar pattern to Hoban's C.M.M. ministry have been widely practised in New South Wales Methodism. Although the social work content in their ministries has often been quite significant, their theological emphasis on separating the concerns of the material world from those of the spiritual world tended to reduce the nature of their social ministrations to an appendage of their mission to save souls. Even Alan Walker's strongly prophetic ministry, despite its deep

69. D. Wright, 'The Methodist Men's Own Movement', in Church Heritage, Church Records and Historical Society, Uniting Church in Australia, New South Wales Synod, 4,1, March 1985, p.6. Wright was reviewing the period of C.M.M.'s history under the superintendency, from 1915 to 1921, of S.J. Hoban, an orthodox evangelist. Wright also noted that the same emphasis existed during the superintendency of W.G. Taylor who founded C.M.M. in 1884. See also D. Wright, Mantle of Christ, University of Queensland Press, Queensland, 1984, p.99
involvement in political issues and agitation for social reconstruction, still retained commitment to the dualism of conventional Western Christianity. Indeed, the basic difference in the two styles of social ministry in the Church originates in the contrast between an holistic and a dualist theology. The contrast in the two theologies forms the basis of the difference between a religion of traditional, evangelical theism in the Western tradition, and secularized religion; between Alan Walker's ministry and Bill Hobbin's ministry; and in many respects, between the present day Wesley Central Mission ministry, and the Uniting Church Board of Social Responsibility.

Whereas the rejection of dualist theology by secular ministers had an ideological correspondence with John MacMurray's belief that dualism 'transformed Christianity into something very unlike itself', there were many Methodist ministers firmly committed to the contrary view. These different theological convictions led to a diversity of attitudes towards the social gospel, and to two quite distinct approaches to its ministry.

It was in this climate of diverse attitudes towards the social gospel ministry, and the extent to which the Church should be actively involved in the secular issues of social reconstruction, that Hobbin commenced duty in 1949 as full-time Director of the Methodist Social Service

Department. Initially, Conference added to his departmental duties the superintendency of the William Street, Paddington and South Sydney Missions. He was soon relieved of these superintendencies as the Department grew, and its office was transferred from William Street to the Church headquarters at Castlereagh Street in the centre of the city.

Aware of the many complicated issues with which he would have to deal, Hobbin immediately sought the guidance and assistance of people who were competent in their various spheres of interest and occupation. These people included medical doctors, lawyers, business men, teachers and secretaries. For over twenty years they willingly shared insights and ideas with him, and with many of them he formed lasting friendships. His helpful consultants were not all committed Christians. They included agnostics and avowed atheists. When the identities of those with whom he consulted became known, Hobbin was criticized by some church members because he sought assistance from people who were not committed Christians. Needless to say, these criticisms of his volunteer advisers did not impress the minister who believed in the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being. He dismissed the criticisms as bigoted attacks on genuine and conscientious volunteer assistants.71

During his long period as Director of the Department

Hobbin became involved with human need at both national and international levels, yet he maintained a compassionate interest in meeting local individual needs in a practical manner. Perhaps an incident early in his work with the Department best illustrates his Christian compassion, at the most elementary level, for the individual. It was a compassion which he so often expressed in a secular manner. The incident was recounted by the Honourable Mr. Justice Ray Watson who was a prominent Methodist layman, and one of Hobbin's volunteer co-workers in human welfare. He worked closely with Hobbin on child delinquency and youth rehabilitation problems. They became close friends and theologically were in close agreement.  

Early in the 1950s Watson and Hobbin were sitting in the basement of the Williams Street Church, which at that time was the location of the Social Service Department. They were discussing the organization of the Department when a young woman, who gave her name as Betty, walked into the Church. Watson described her as a classic product of the post-war decade. She was a country girl who had been exiled by her family because of an unwanted pregnancy. The child was adopted, then spasmodic

72. R. Watson, Recorded personal interview with the Honourable Mr. Justice Ray Watson, 23 September 1986. Watson remarked that if it were not that he believed in God as a universal creative love force, incarnate in all men, but supremely so in the historical Jesus, he probably would be an 'all-out humanist'. His Methodist involvement included Youth work, 15 years circuit steward, and lay-preacher of over 3,500 sermons.
employment was followed by a disastrous marriage. After a second child was placed for adoption she became one of the city's street girls and was charged with vagrancy. As Watson, the lawyer, and Hobbin, the pastor, listened to her and pieced together her story,

Bill Hobbin suddenly said, 'Betty, we'll have to do something about those teeth of yours'. She paused, glared, then her face softened and she said very quietly, 'Jesus, Rev., you really want me to be somebody'. Watson said he believed that 'Jesus would have agreed with "the Rev."'. It was the high priority given to such practical attention to ordinary physical need, without overt evangelism, which helped to mark Hobbin's ministry as secularized religion, based on an holistic theology.

ii. Ministry to Mentally Retarded Youth.

Hobbin's work with mentally retarded young people began in response to a need presented to him while the Department was still located at William Street. He was approached by a Kings Cross businessman and his friend who each had a sub-normal child in the family. The men had heard of Hobbin's work with children at Balmain and

73. R. Watson, 'Jesus and Justice', 'unpublished address delivered by the Hon. Mr. Justice Ray Watson at the Hamilton Uniting Church on Sunday, 23 November 1985', p.8. Also recounted in recorded interview, 23 September 1986, op.cit.
asked if he would be prepared to establish a school for children who were mentally handicapped. Hobbin enlisted the help of a qualified teacher, skilled in handling such children, and the school commenced in the William Street hall with an enrolment of fourteen children.

This response to a community need drew criticism from the Conference President because Hobbin had organized the school on his own initiative and had not sought permission from the church establishment to attempt what was a new area of ministry. Hobbin's action was indicative of a tendency, apparent throughout his ministry, to act directly on an issue, by-passing bureaucratic regulations with which he was always impatient. The criticism was formally recorded in a resolution presented by the West Sydney District to the 1951 New South Wales Conference, and was expressed in the following terms:

This Synod congratulates the Director of the Social Service Department on the splendid work the department is doing, but views with disquiet its venture in starting a school for sub-normal children without first obtaining the approval of Conference. 74

The school was only the beginning of his work to assist mentally retarded young people. Although the State Government had given some attention to the problems associated with mildly and severely mentally handicapped young people, no definitive research had determined the

extent of the problem. The Child Welfare Advisory Council commissioned Hobbin, Dr. Alan Jennings and Mary Tennison Woods to investigate the extent of the problem throughout New South Wales. In 1963, after two years' research, the team submitted a report which exposed severe inadequacies in both accommodation facilities and the understanding required to develop the limited capacities of the victims.75

Hobbin responded to the extent of the problem with a proposal that a residential school for some of the mildly mentally handicapped girls he had encountered during his research be established by the Church and administered by the Social Service Department. A few months after submission of the Child Welfare Report the establishment of the school he proposed was facilitated by the closure, at the end of 1963, of Annesley, a Methodist residential girls' college at Bowral on the southern highlands. Hobbin submitted a proposal to the church authorities that the property be used as a school for mentally handicapped girls.76 After considerable debate the proposal was accepted, although Hobbin's department was saddled with the impediment of taking over the financial debt which the college had incurred.

Dr. Jennings assisted in selecting suitable young women, and the school, named Westwood, opened in 1965.

76. Minutes of Council of Methodist Social Service Department, 1 April 1964.
By December 1967 there were in residence 84 girls who came from country and metropolitan areas. There was soon ample evidence of the success of the project. Latent abilities possessed by the girls were fostered. Many girls became proficient cooks, and as a result of their competence a small tea shop was opened in the business section of the town. It was staffed by girls from the school who soon became popular with local residents and tourists because of their pleasant manner in the tea-room.

In various ways the local community supported the Westwood project, and the Matron of the District Hospital agreed to employ as nursing aids girls who expressed interest in nursing. The whole project was another expression of Hobbin's secularized ministry which was based on his 'firm conviction that it is the role of the Church to lead the way in tackling social problems' instead of being content to pass resolutions which filled minute books but did not resolve the problems.

### iii. Iandra and Civil Rehabilitation

Another of Hobbin's ministries to young people resulted from his concern at the plight of some of the young boys given into his custody by magistrates of Children's Courts at Albion Street in Sydney and at

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77. Minutes of Department of Christian Citizenship, Methodist Church of Australasia, 9 December, 1976.
Ashfield. He felt frustrated by the non-existence of a suitable home where attempts could be made to rehabilitate delinquent young boys. What was available was, in his opinion, too institutionalized.

In 1955 Hobbin was invited by a property owner in mid-western New South Wales to request the Methodist Church to consider the purchase of a large home and 800 acres of land at Greenethorpe. The proposal was made by Alf I'Anson who owned the property, and who had heard of Hobbin's desire to establish a suitable home and training centre for delinquent boys. Located close to the Iandra railway siding, the property was centred in the district bounded by Cowra, Grenfell and Young. The property offered was portion of an area of 32,000 acres purchased by George Greene in 1878, and included outhouses, stables, and a 57 room mansion described as a showpiece with

its beautifully finished interior, superb panelling, solidarity...old-world grandeur and its new-world purpose.

The capacity of the large mansion to accommodate twenty boys and necessary staff in the one building would facilitate creation of a homely family atmosphere for the boys. This feature held particular appeal for Hobbin who wanted to 'always keep Iandra a home and stop it being an institution'. It was his belief that 'a home deals in

80. Ibid.,
depth with the people in it. An institution deals in
statistics'. His insistence on creating a family
atmosphere resulted from work with the Children's Courts
when his talks with the young delinquents revealed how
adversely they were affected by the breakdown in family
life.

A Meeting, chaired by Hobbin, which was held at
Greenethorpe on 11 November 1955, unanimously resolved
that the Management Committee be asked to
authorise the purchase of the Home and 800
acres and the Standing Committee be asked to
authorise an appeal for £45,000.

It also resolved

that the name of the property be 'Iandra
Methodist Rural Centre'.

Following the Conference's approval to purchase the
property and to place the centre under the control of the
Social Service Department, an Iandra Council was formed.
The Department's representatives on the Management Council
were Hobbin, R. Watson, R. Walker, N. Hood and
A. Thomas.

Hobbin's aim was that Iandra should meet the needs
of boys between the ages of 15 and 18 who had come from
the courts or from broken homes. The intake would be
limited to 28 boys in order to maintain the original

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82. The Iandra Story. A Romance of Pioneering, op.cit.
83. Minutes of Meeting Held at Iandra, 11 November 1955.
84. Minutes of Council of Methodist Social Service
Department, 1 May 1956.
intention, that Iandra should be a home, not an institution. By September 1956 the first boys were in residence, and the home was officially opened on 27 October 1956 by Sir Frank Kitto.

From the first occupancy the boys treated the home with pride. No complaint was ever received from the community about the conduct of the boys who were encouraged to mix freely with the local youth and attend social functions. The effectiveness of the work at Iandra was enhanced by community support, including material donations towards stocking the property.

Success of the Iandra scheme was ultimately measured by whether the delinquent boys were successfully rehabilitated. Iandra had its percentage of failures, but by 1962 the Department's report to Synod was able to claim a 52% successful rehabilitation rate. There were numerous stories of boys who had made good following their residency at Iandra, and many of the boys completed courses at Young Technical College. Hobbin was convinced that repeated evidence of similar rehabilitations justified Iandra's existence.

85. Methodist Church of Australasia, New South Wales Conference Agenda Reports. 1959, p.136.
86. Ibid., 1957, p.146.
89. Conference Agenda Reports, op.cit., 1958, p.128.
90. Minutes of Department of Christian Citizenship, 3 June, 1975.
Iandra continued to function in its country location for just on twenty years. In June 1975, several years after Hobbin's retirement, Iandra activities were transferred to the Burwood suburb of Sydney where it operated as Iandra Lodge in what was considered to be a more accessible location.91

The need for a home, similar to Iandra, to rehabilitate delinquent girls was obvious to Hobbin, and in the Department's report submitted to the 1955 Conference he expressed his concern at the lack of a hostel for vagrant girls.92 Hobbin's initiative in establishing a home for these girls was also a response to the pressure of a social need which had become apparent to him through his contact with girls brought before the courts.93

Funds were raised by The Women's Citizenship Council, which was associated with the Social Service Department work, and by 1959 enough money had been raised to purchase a home in Drummoyne.94 The home, named Heighway House,95 was opened in 1960. Continuing need resulted in the purchase of a larger home at Thornleigh in 1964 with increased capacity to accommodate sixteen girls.

91. Minutes of Department of Christian Citizenship, 3 June 1975.
95. Ibid., 1958, p.127.
Hobbin did not confine the Department's rehabilitation ministry to the juveniles from the courts. He was also deeply involved in civil rehabilitation of adults. His 1953 Conference Agenda Report recorded that over 30 men had been assisted to overcome difficulties confronting their re-entry into society. Practical assistance included provision of finance, clothing, accommodation, legal advice and employment.\(^\text{96}\) While chairman of the Civil Rehabilitation Committee in 1955, Hobbin acknowledged that there were difficulties in changing offenders into law-abiding citizens, however, less than 20% drifted back into crime.\(^\text{97}\) The Civil Rehabilitation Committee was, in the perception of those who criticized the secular nature of Hobbin's ministry, another secular institution which infringed upon the attention they believed he should be devoting to more spiritual pursuits.

iv. **Industrial Relations.**

As already indicated in this chapter, industrial relations have been a continuing concern in the history of New South Wales Methodism, and responsibility for dealing with industrial issues has been one of the tasks of the Social Service Department. The attitude of the

\(^{96}\) Ibid., 1953, p. 118.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 1956, p. 127.
Department has been, and continues to be, that industrial relations have a theological dimension. The theological basis which Hobbin and his Department accepted, and which the present Board still accepts, was recently clearly articulated by Harvey Perkins, one of Hobbin's successors. He wrote of the Church's responsibility under the Gospel, to hear the cry of the oppressed...and to proclaim good news to them by deed as well as word so that the fetters of injustice are broken (Is.68) and until there are no more poor among us...Theologically I understand this to be the centre of the Gospel, and can develop that as a matter of Biblical interpretation, through Old and New Testaments. Whether that theological core leads one to positions that seem to be politically right or politically left does not concern me. What does concern me is Biblical faithfulness. Because the Biblical critique of wealth and power is so penetrating - and so central to the ministry of Jesus - it is likely, though not always necessarily, to lean toward what is usually labelled in society as the political left.98

In the history of the Church's association with industrial relations a leaning to the left frequently occurred. It was an orientation that developed on occasions when efforts to redress industrial exploitation involved confrontation with supporters of the political right. This generally resulted in accusations of Marxist affiliation being directed against Hobbin and the work of his Department, and was a repetition of the criticism levelled in 1926 against F.T. Walker and the M.O.M.

Reference has already been made to attempts made by many ministers to avoid political alignment with either

the right or the left, which was a continuing consensus with Bromilow's plea in 1912 for the Church to be saved from aiding or opposing a political party because of its name being Liberal or Labour.99

The pronouncements made by the Conferences of 1919, 100 1920, 101 and 1921, 102 each sustained the same emphasis.

Whereas there were ministers who limited their support to agreement with the pronouncements, others took a more active stand and were often considered to be leftist extremists. They were not content only to make pronouncements, but publicly aligned themselves with the ideology and activities of the political left. They believed that implementation of the Christian concept of justice required social reconstruction which entailed a changed attitude by the political right.

One of the avenues for protest for those ministers sympathetic to this ideology was through the publications of the Christian Distributors' Association. Among Methodist ministers who supported the Association were Bill Hobbin, Dudley Hyde, Alan Walker and Ralph Sutton. All were labelled radical thinkers. The Christian Distributors' Association was a non-profit organization,

101. Ibid., 1920, p.227. Conference called for industrial democracy which is 'the expression of Christianity'.
102. Ibid., 1921, p.134.
based in the Sydney suburb of Glebe, which was established to publish and distribute Christian literature. It operated during the 1940s and produced a new pamphlet each month, which sold for fourpence a copy. Titles of pamphlets included *Capitalism, Socialism and The Church*, *The Church and The Working Class*, *Christian Peace*, and *His Revolution and Ours*.

Whereas Sutton, one of Hobbin's friends, emphasized a radical commitment to the extreme political left, it is evident from Hobbin's attitudes that he would tend to differ from Sutton to the extent that he would not align himself unilaterally on a permanent basis with either the political right or the political left. He was more inclined to align himself with anyone or any movement committed to practical action in the cause of social justice and wholeness of life, irrespective of political classification.

Hobbin and his Department were actively involved in the Inter-Church Industry Commission. This was established in Sydney, and in 1963 plans were made to set up similar groups in Newcastle and Wollongong. Contact was made by an Operational Panel with Trade Unions,

workers, owners and managers. One of the Commission's objectives was to assist Churches to understand more fully the aims and problems of all engaged in industry.  

Hobbin began his practical association with industrial relations in the mid 1920s when he endeavoured to establish contact with the steelworkers at B.H.P.'s Newcastle works. He continued his efforts to bridge the gulf between unionists and the Church at E.M.A.I.L. and the I.C.I. plant in Sydney.

with his weekly contact as a chaplain. These industrial chaplaincy experiences were utilized in helping to establish the Inter-Church Industry Commission.

It was probably respect for the sincerity of Hobbin's interest in issues rather than in Parties, and his willingness to implement practical measures to establish a peaceful democratic life style, which caused both the Miners' Federation and the mine owners to seek his services as a mediator with the Government in the 1949 industrial disputation. In 1949 demands from the miners confronted the Chifley Government with an ugly situation. At the height of the conflict both the mine owners and the Miners' Federation jointly requested Hobbin to go to Canberra and present to Prime Minister Chifley and Dr. Evatt, the Attorney General, a proposal for ending the strike. They selected Hobbin because they wanted a neutral person, and they were also aware of his South Coast

activities during his Bulli ministry. 110

Hobbin believed that his lack of success in having the proposal accepted was primarily due to two factors. One factor was Evatt's refusal to accept a settlement proposal drawn up by the owners and miners, in preference to the use of his own method of enforcing the rule of law. The second factor, he said, was

Evatt's deep antipathy to clerics involving themselves in matters outside their supposed religious domain. 111

Such a view would not be in accord with Hobbin's maxim that, in the exercise of his secularized ministry as a servant of the Galilean, any area of human need was his domain, including issues involving industrial relations.

[...]

v. United Nations Ministry.

Hobbin's sympathies with human need, wherever it existed, ensured his accord with the United Nations and the varied activities of its agencies. His active participation in United Nations' affairs for almost twenty years extended the impact of his secularized ministry nationally and internationally and involved New South Wales Methodism in international issues.

From the outset of his association with the United

110. Ibid., pp.165-166.
111. Ibid., p.166. The encounter provided Hobbin with what he believed were clues as to why Alan Dalziel entitled a biography, Evatt the Enigma.
Nations, Hobbin was alert to defects which tended to restrict its full effectiveness. He particularly objected to the power of veto and the inhibiting effect of nationalism. In Albert Einstein's words Hobbin saw a serious warning:

A new branch of mythic thought had already grown strong; one not religious in nature but no less perilous to mankind, - Nationalism. 112

Despite his concern with the defects, he maintained faith in the potential of the United Nations to create a better world, and he defended its existence:

I regarded the new world body as another opportunity for the human family to make democracy work everywhere...The nations were challenged to make the new organisation work. 113

Hobbin's personal response, through his ministry, to this challenge resulted from several pressures which included the tragedy of world hunger, the refugee problem, the hope for a peaceful world, and his own concept of the theological rationale for his secularised ministry.

His initial association with the United Nations was in helping to establish the Australian Association for the United Nations which had membership of the World Federation of United Nations' Associations, and in which the Methodist Church held corporate membership. 114 The Association formed a National Committee which conferred with the Federal Government through the Department of External Affairs. Hobbin held office in the National

113. Ibid., p.228.
114. Conference Agenda Reports, op.cit., 1956; p.127,
Committee, first as secretary and then for several years as president. While holding this office he led the Australian Delegation to the Tenth Plenary Assembly of the World Federation of United Nations held at Bangkok in September 1955, then attended a seminar on the work of the United Nations in South East Asia, held at Bang Saen on the Gulf of Siam. After attending these two conferences he travelled through Malaya and made contacts with Governments and Churches as he inspected actual work in the field, carried out by the specialized agencies of the United Nations. Concurrently, he also held the positions of Federal Chairman of both the National Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.) Gift Coupon Scheme and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (U.N.I.C.E.F.).

U.N.I.C.E.F. held particular appeal for Hobbin because he believed that the needs of deprived children were being addressed by the three declared missions spelt out by U.N.I.C.E.F. The first and greatest mission was to protect children against disease, the second was to teach and train mothers, and the third was to provide the basic means to develop self help. By 1956 U.N.I.C.E.F. aid was reaching more than thirty million children a year.


The U.N.I.C.E.F. estimation that six hundred million children at that period were still living in want\(^{117}\) was a powerful social pressure to which Hobbin responded with years of high level participation in the organization. He accepted an invitation from Brigadier Frank Field to organize and conduct appeals across Australia for U.N.I.C.E.F. In addition to helping needy children, Hobbin believed that there was in this activity a way to open the minds of Australians to the possibilities written into the United Charter and Declaration of Human Rights.\(^{118}\)

The additional responsibility of chairmanship of the U.N.E.S.C.O. Gift Coupon Scheme involved Hobbin in organizing groups and individuals to adopt the scheme.\(^{119}\)

In 1956 Hugh Williams, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Sydney, announced that Hobbin had been awarded a six weeks' Study Fellowship by the United Nations.\(^{120}\) The study tour coincided with the Suez crisis, and as Hobbin had been appointed by the Department of External Affairs as Special Adviser to the Australian Delegation, he was able to listen to debates


\(^{120}\) Minutes of Council of Methodist Social Service Department, 23 August, 1956. Also W. Hobbin, Autobiography, op.cit., pp.258-259.
and speeches on the critical situation. Issues of national sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction which were repeatedly raised in debate confirmed his earlier impressions that these were undesirable aspects of the United Nations' structure. They were, in his opinion, serious hindrances to the establishment of an ideal world democracy. 121

World Refugee Problem.

One of the most serious social issues confronting United Nations agencies was the plight of the Second World War refugees. A United Nations' statement claimed,

At the beginning of 1955 there were estimated to be more than three hundred thousand unassimilated refugees within the High Commissioner's mandate, 122 and the numbers of refugees seeking refuge from their own countries continued at the rate of several hundreds a month. As the result of a General Assembly decision taken on 21 October 1954, the United Nations Refugee Fund was established, and a four year programme was set to finance assistance for refugees. The 1959 United Nations Assembly designated 1959-1960 as World Refugee Year (W.R.Y.) with the object of 'clearing all the camps and resettling the victims in countries willing to receive them'. 123

In 1959 Lord Casey, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, returned from the Assembly and requested Hobbin to organize the Australian response to World Refugee Year. To facilitate establishment of an effective and efficient organization, Hobbin set up State committees which each elected a representative to sit on a National Committee. As chairman of the National Committee he convened regular meetings of its executive. The first meeting was held on 10 August 1959, and the World Refugee Year in Australia was officially opened on 27 September 1959 by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Launching of the Appeal took place next day at a dinner in Sydney's Trocadero.

Hobbin's deep concern for the refugees was reinforced during a seven weeks' fact-finding tour of the world's refugee camps which he undertook after the launching of W.R.Y. During the tour he represented the Australian National Committee for W.R.Y. at the Conference of National Committees held in Geneva from 12-14 January.

An incident in Hong Kong not only became for Hobbin

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124. Minutes of the Executive of the Australian National Committee for World Refugee Year, 10 August 1959.
125. Ibid., 28 August 1959.
one of his life's most meaningful experiences, but one may assess from his reaction to the incident something of his sensitivity to human deprivation which was characteristic of the whole of his ministry. He recorded the incident in his autobiography:

In Hong Kong I spent many days visiting Refugees. ...Many hundreds remained in squalid camps along the ridges north of the city...One man stands out clearly in my recollections of those hours with the victims of a political situation. It was mid-morning when I called on this particular man and he politely invited me to enter the one small room where he ate and slept. After telling me of the death of all the other members of his family and how he managed to escape the killers, I learned that I was talking with a very well educated person who had held a top position in the community where he had lived...When I did indicate it was time for me to go, he immediately asked me to remain and share a cup with him. I accepted his invitation and he moved outside and stirred the ashes of a small fire and then placed an old blackened billy of water on the coals. When he came back inside he said 'I'm sorry but the cup will have to be plain boiling water because I haven't any tea'. When the water had boiled he poured it into two battered tin mugs and we sat and drank together. There was something very deep and meaningful about that cup. Those moments of sharing stand out in my memory as one of the great moments in my long and varied experience. He had so little but he willingly shared the only thing he had with someone who, up till a few hours earlier, was unknown to him.127

It was Hobbin's sensitivity to need, and the direct manner in which he customarily responded in a practical manner to address the need he perceived, which drew censure on his return. The censure came from an inter-church relief group. While he was inspecting a tumble-down shack which served as a tuberculosis hospital in the Indonesian village of Harapan, it was obvious that the

doctor and staff urgently required several items of equipment. Although the patients were not refugees, they were people in need, and that was sufficient to draw a response from Hobbin. He promised to raise funds to secure the equipment. On his return to Australia he enlisted the help of a women's committee led by his wife, and the necessary money was quickly raised. He was then informed by the secretary of an inter-church body that he had no right to undertake such a project without approval from the group. As far as Hobbin was concerned, Harapan needed the equipment in a hurry, and for him that was a justification for immediate action.

In Hobbin's view this criticism was symptomatic of bureaucratic red-tape which tended to bedevil organizations, whether large or small. He saw evidence of it in the Geneva structure of the Commission for Refugees. This was one of the reasons for his rejection of a responsible position at Geneva offered to him by Dr. Lindt, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Another issue which concerned Hobbin during his attendance at the Geneva conference was the reluctance to discuss political issues. In his report to the National Committee Executive he emphasized that, in his opinion, no realistic approach could be made to the problem of refugees unless political issues were faced. He stated

128. Ibid., p.234.
in his report that the needs of the refugees were so urgent that he wished

something could have come from this Conference to burn the problem into the world's conscience in a manner, which in spite of all that has been said and done, that the people of the world would really be roused to clean up this scandal of homeless people.\footnote{Minutes of Executive Council for World Refugee Year, op.cit., 25 February 1960.}

Hobbin's concern for a more streamlined approach at the international organizational level did not inhibit the concentration of effort, including wide public exposure, which he applied to oversight of Australia's response to the W.R.Y. Wide support was given by business and individuals. There were, however, instances of criticism levelled at both the project and at Hobbin personally. Racist attitudes surfaced in criticism of his proposal that the Federal Government consider bringing more of the refugees into Australia. Religious Fundamentalist critics informed him that his work for the refugees was 'interfering with God's plan for them because he had led them there and would take care of them'.\footnote{W. Hobbin, Autobiography, op.cit., p.235.}

Hobbin's assessment of many of the critics was that they were 'escapists from obvious responsibility'.\footnote{Ibid., p.235.}
believed that if they would listen,

their own consciences would tell them to
open their eyes and get busy doing something
themselves about matters they unload onto
God in their prayers.132

Criticism, both implied and explicit, also came from
within the Methodist Church, and within a few months of
assuming the duties of chairman of the National W.R.Y.
Committee, questions were asked concerning the extent of
his involvement with this secular activity. Support for
his activities came from the executive of the Social
Service Department, and in the executive meeting held on
14 March 1960

It was resolved that the Executive, after
investigating staff and all relative matters
including the Director and his activities in the
United Nations Association, is satisfied that he
has not neglected the work of the Department but
has in his own way borne a Christian witness in
that Association...It was further recommended that
the Department and the Church continue the closest
association with the United Nations Association.133

A significant phrase in the resolution was that the
Director 'has in his own way borne a Christian witness'.
Consistently Hobbin departed from conservative paths of
ministry and expressed his interpretation of Christianity
in his own way, with a confidence which, to a significant
extent, had developed from Angus' teaching. Hobbin's way
was a secularized ministry, criticized by some people
within the Church, but applauded by many, including
significant numbers outside the Church.

132. Ibid., p.235.
133. Minutes of Executive Meeting of Methodist Social
Service Department, 14 March 1960.
When the W.R.Y. Appeal closed on 31 December 1960 Hobbin reported that the response made by Australia to clearing the refugee camps created by the Second World War ranked among the highest contributions which were made. The first distribution of Australian funds, amounting to £501,000 was allocated to at least ten Refugee Centres, including those in Europe, the Far East and the Middle East. In 1960 additional funds were allocated to receiving countries assisting resettlement, including Australia and Brazil. A final amount allocated in 1962 provided scholarships for training fitter-machinists in Jordan. In all, the amount collected throughout Australia approximated one million pounds.

With the winding up of the W.R.Y. Australian appeal Dag Hammarskjold warned that the problem would continue 'unless the world turns more peaceful', and Felix Schnyder, writing from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, stressed that tremendous continuing effort would be required to finish the job. Hobbin remained

137. Ibid., 16 November 1960.
138. Ibid., 5 April 1962.
139. W. Hobbin, Autobiography, op.cit., p.239.
convincing that bigoted nationalism was one of the roots of the problem. He also expressed concern at the effect of what he had described in a paper delivered to the Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science as

...the cancerous growth caused by those frightened people who brand every new notion as being communist or communist inspired. 142

Australia's successful response to the World Refugee Year was recognized with appreciative resolutions recorded at the United Nations. Hobbin was awarded the Order of the British Empire, which was also a recognition of his previous United Nations work and his social ministry in the Church. His active work with the United Nations did not cease with the conclusion of the W.R.Y. Appeal. It continued for at least another twelve years, both during his active ministry and for several years after retirement.

Freedom From Hunger Campaign.

In June 1960, as Hobbin was conducting meetings in Perth to close the W.R.Y. Appeal, he received a telephone request from Lord Casey asking him to return via Melbourne to meet for a discussion. The discussion was to seek a response from Hobbin to another human need situation.

142. W. Hobbin, 'Australian Policy For The Future', in Australian Institute of Political Science Asia and Australia, Papers read at the 27th Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science, held at Canberra, A.C.T., 28th to 30th January 1961, pp.81-86.
Casey had just returned from a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly which had debated a request from Dr. B.J. Sen, the Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization (F.A.O.), for endorsement of a proposed world-wide Freedom From Hunger Campaign. Sen did not want temporary relief in the nature of emergency food parcels. Instead he wanted a campaign to eradicate causes of food shortages and to establish processes which would enable people adequately to feed themselves on a long term basis. The immediate response from Casey was to pledge full support from the Australian Government for the Campaign, but in addition to providing Government support he wanted the Australian people to be involved. The purpose of his meeting with Hobbin was to request him to organize the Australian people's participation.  

International concern for the need to raise the living standards of the under-nourished two-thirds of the world's population had been acknowledged as early as 1943 at a United Nations Conference on food and agriculture. Thinking at the Conference had been influenced by a paper entitled Agriculture and Health Problems which was written by an Australian-by-adoption, Frank Ligett McDougall, Concern which the paper generated resulted in the formation of F.A.O. in 1945.  

143. W. Hobbin, Autobiography, op.cit., p.240  
The Freedom From Hunger Campaign (F.F.H.C.) was launched internationally on 1 July 1960 by F.A.O. Initially planned to run for a period of five years, member nations of the United Nations were invited to join in a world-wide effort to conserve and develop the resources of the world and to remove the great deficiencies in food production which cause two-thirds of the world's present population to suffer from malnutrition and hunger.\textsuperscript{146}

Casey called a meeting of representatives from organizations across Australia. A National Committee of ten people was elected, and Casey's nomination of Hobbin as National President was unanimously approved.\textsuperscript{147} Hobbin acknowledged the motivation for his active participation in the campaign in words which were really a summary of the basic tenet of his secularized religion. His words were in the Foreword of the F.F.H.C. \textit{Speakers' Compendium},

\begin{quote}
...this is a world-wide Campaign based on the greatest of all moral precepts, that is, the task given to man to help his less fortunate brethren and so give meaning and character to our acknowledged faiths and beliefs.\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

Australia was one of forty-six nations which pledged support for the campaign, and the Australian Committee was specifically directed by the Government to three basic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} The Australian National Committee, Freedom From Hunger Campaign, \textit{Speakers' Compendium}, op.cit., p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{147} W. Hobbin, \textit{Autobiography}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.241.
\item \textsuperscript{148} W. Hobbin, Foreword, F.F.H.C. \textit{Speakers' Compendium}, \textit{op.cit.}
\end{itemize}
commitments:

(a) bring to the notice of the nation through an Australia-wide education campaign the desperate situation faced by two-thirds of mankind.

(b) convey to the people of Australia what can be done at the international, national and individual level to alleviate this situation.

(c) conduct an appeal for funds to help in this work.149

In addition to these three commitments, the National Committee itself added one more specific objective:

To give special consideration to practical projects submitted to it by F.A.O. in which Australian experience and achievement can contribute to the advancement of these less developed areas.150

The raising of one million pounds by the end of June 1963 was set as a minimum Australian target and each State was allocated a fund-raising quota, based on population. The F.F.H.C. in Australia was designed to assist the underdeveloped countries of East Asia by devising ways and providing means whereby the underdeveloped countries could increase their own agricultural production. It was planned not to duplicate but to complement the Colombo Plan.151

Prior to setting up State Committees, Hobbin spent three weeks in Rome, London and New York, conferring with the Director of F.A.O. and sectional heads on matters concerning the campaign. During his meeting in Rome with

149. Ibid., p.6.
Dr. Sen, the F.A.O. Director General explained the long term objectives of the campaign and he was emphatic that the people must achieve food self-sufficiency themselves if hunger, malnutrition and their attendant evils are to be eradicated.\textsuperscript{152}

On his return Hobbin visited all Australian States to establish committees and to emphasize that the intention was not to provide band-aid solutions, but to implement permanent measures to sustain food production. Hobbin said that within a few months he was deeply concerned to learn of the short-sighted perspective of some committee members who were talking about food parcels and use of money for temporary relief. In order to rectify the damage to the Appeal caused by such superficial thinking, he replaced the committee members who held such mistaken concepts of the campaign's objectives. He also undertook numerous speaking engagements to inform the public correctly about the extent of need and the F.F.H.C. aim.\textsuperscript{153}

Hobbin's awareness of the urgency of the world's food problem was heightened during his participation in the first World Food Congress which was organized by Sen and held in Washington in June 1962. During the Congress, Hobbin's chairmanship of the Commission on 'People's Involvement and Group Action' provided him with one of his

\textsuperscript{152} W. Hobbin, Autobiography, \textit{op.cit.}, p.254.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., pp.243-244.
memorable insights. He had been asked to organize a gathering, including representatives from developing countries, at which the only item on the agenda would be an opportunity for anyone present to state just what were the needs of the speaker's country. The State Department made available a large assembly hall, and for four hours speakers from many nations rose from that packed hall to present their country's need to the assembly.

What most impressed Hobbin was the unanimity of the needs expressed by so many different speakers:

Every voice told the same story. They wanted proper and enough food. They wanted better health. They wanted better education. They wanted proper housing.

There was no talk of armaments. Those four fundamental needs were identified at that meeting, by representatives of almost every nation, as the universal requirements of ordinary men and women of the world. Hobbin left the meeting with a lasting conviction that within every nation there were vast masses of people who were weary of the glorification of armaments and military might. They were, he was convinced, seeking a peaceful world wherein those four basic needs, unanimously expressed at the Washington Congress, could be met. It was a cause to which, Hobbin believed, Dag Hammarskjold was entirely dedicated.

156. Ibid., p.262.
The conviction Hobbin gained from the First World Food Congress, that the ordinary people wanted a true democracy committed to supplying fundamental need, strengthened his belief that there was a need for a way to be found to release democracy from being tied to Nationalism. He said it was his firm belief that Bergson was right on target when he said that Democracy breathes the very spirit of the Galilean and that its sole motive force is love for all people, but for centuries it has been harnessed to what was once called the 'sport of kings'.

As Hobbin witnessed support given by developed nations to multi-nationals in the cause of trade extension, it seemed to him that markets and national interest were often given priority over any attack on undesirable entrenched economic systems. In addition, planned F.A.O. projects, many designed for improved land usage, were often thwarted or hindered by racism and petty dictatorship within the under-developed countries sorely in need of help. Hobbin's awareness of the racist problem prompted him to take every opportunity to promote non-racist attitudes and his concept of true democracy. His views were apparent in the paper he delivered to the Australian Institute of Political Science Summer School in which he listed five proposals for Australia's future relations with Asia. The proposals were based on an appreciation of Asia in world affairs, and the need to affirm attitudes which would advance developing concepts of democracy.

158. Ibid., p.249.
Similar to the way in which Hobbin's work for U.N.I.C.E.F. and the W.R.Y. Appeal attracted criticism so, in like manner, recognition of the value of his work with the F.F.H.C. was tempered by criticism. The main area of criticism from outside the Church centred on the argument that, due to the world population explosion, the best way to treat the hunger problem was to concentrate on extension of methods of contraception. Although he was alert to the world population crisis, Hobbin believed that to hide behind the contraceptive pill was to disregard the great benefits which would accrue from projects which could enable scientific and economic development of vastly increased areas of arable land. Another criticism was the complaint that he should be satisfied to relieve the situation by distribution of more food grown in the developed countries. Hobbin agreed with Sen's policy, that people must achieve food self-sufficiency themselves if malnutrition and attendant evils were to be eradicated. 160

From within the Church the criticism was directed not so much at the campaign as at Hobbin personally. It centred on the claim that the United Nations' work was secular, and Hobbin's involvement prevented him from applying all his 'time and energies to the saving of souls'. 161 To this criticism he gave his standard reply

160. Ibid., pp.253-254.
161. Ibid., p.250.
that he had a 'vastly different understanding of the meaning of the words save and soul'. At a meeting in the New South Wales town of Tamworth he encountered criticism typical of that directed against him by some of the more conservative church people. After describing rampant starvation he had witnessed in under-developed countries, a woman from the audience commented, 'I am wondering when, as a minister of religion, you do any of God's work'. It was a comment which highlighted the concept of a dualist theology. The woman rejected Hobbin's assurance that alleviation of the problem of starvation was God's work.

Although the Methodist Church had officially affirmed its association with the United Nations as a corporate member of the United Nations Association of Australia, this did not overcome the dualist attitude of those church people who categorized the work of the Church as spiritual, and the work of the United Nations as secular. This attitude was implied in a question put to Hobbin when, at the General Conference of the Methodist Church, he requested Church support for the F.F.H.C. million dollar project in Asia. One of the first questions asked was

will you assure this conference that the money will be spent only amongst the Christians in the region?

162. Ibid., p.250.
163. Ibid., p.247.
Hobbin made a reply, consistent with his ministry, that the money would not be spent in such a disastrous manner because he 'had sound medical evidence that hunger and malnutrition knew nothing about denominational tags'.

In addition to handling the criticisms of those who limited God's work to 'other-worldly' pursuits, Hobbin was deeply concerned about an embezzlement which occurred in the latter years of his association with the campaign. The crime was actually committed by a Bank Officer and was facilitated by the Bank's laxity in cashing the cheque, totalling over $200,000, when the cheque had been signed by only three instead of five signatories as required by F.A.O. regulations. Hobbin wanted a public statement issued presenting the true facts. This was never issued, and he believed that the Public's uncorrected false perception that the organization was to blame damaged the appeal.

By the end of the first phase of the campaign, with Hobbin leading the Government-sponsored National Committee, the sum of $2,856,000.00 had been collected and allocated to projects established by F.A.O., U.N.I.C.E.F., the Australian Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Archbishops. The Australian National Committee decided to continue its activities with the twofold object of continuing to educate the Australian public about the

166. Ibid., p.246.
167. Ibid., pp.254-255.
problems of hunger, and the financing of an annual project to develop agriculture in a needy country. It was Hobbin's intention that this continuing activity would be

a peace-producing programme...dedicated to the full and effective use of all human and natural resources - to bring dignity and security to human beings everywhere.168

Prior to Hobbin's retirement as National President of the F.F.H.C. and from active ministry in the Church, his Department, which by then was named the Department of Christian Citizenship, approved his leave of absence from 29 May to 2 August 1970 to attend the Second World Food Congress held at the Hague.169 While at the Congress he found that the problems of parochial nationalism were still apparent. Although aware of the imperfections and fallibility of the United Nations, and the need to reverse nationalistic trends,170 he returned from the Congress still believing that despite its faults it offered mankind the opportunity to build 'a warless world in which all people could live in dignity and freedom'.171

Hobbin's retirement as National Director of the F.F.H.C. at the end of 1970 coincided with his retirement

171. Ibid., p.256.
from active ministry. On the occasion of his retirement Dr. Sen wrote to Hobbin, expressing his appreciation that 'Australia has moved ahead, and taken such an outstanding position of leadership in the Campaign'. Hobbin's retirement, however, was not the end of his association with the United Nations. By the late 1970s the F.F.H.C.'s public image was damaged by opposing factions. One faction wanted to function solely as an educational body to the public, while the second faction believed the sole function should be to raise money. Hobbin was called from retirement back into office, and from 1978 to 1981 he once again accepted the duties of National Director and worked to re-establish the correct priorities which were the original objects of the campaign. His work towards this objective was the final episode of twenty years active service with the United Nations.

2.6. THE INFLUENCE OF HOBBIN'S SECULARIZED MINISTRY ON NEW SOUTH WALES METHODISM.

The Methodist Conference duly recognized Hobbin's 39 years of active ministry in the Church. He had been elected to the position of President of the New South Wales Conference in 1967, and tribute was paid to

'his prominence and recognition in national and international fields of social welfare'. Perhaps the most significant tribute came from the lay secretary of Hobbin's Department of Christian Citizenship. During the Department's Executive Council meeting the secretary, in seconding acceptance of the Conference's resolution, pointed to the uniqueness of the occasion as the Department had started without any precedent and developed under the control of the present Director over 24 years, with very limited financial backing. The main resources being the personality of the Director, expressed in his enthusiasm, vision and dedication.174

The extent to which the Department's coverage of human need had developed under Hobbin's directorship was evident in the Department's Report to Conference in the year of his retirement. Areas of Departmental activities listed in the report included the broad areas of International Affairs, Public Questions, Industrial Relations, Community and Mental Health, Homes and Schools for the Mentally Retarded, Child Delinquents and the Aged, Gaol Chaplaincy, Aboriginal Affairs and Healing Ministry.175

After Church union in 1977 the Department was named the Board for Social Responsibility. Although since Hobbin's retirement the work of the Department has

continued to expand, much of its activity retains the stamp of his secularized ministry. The practical policies of one of the Board's agencies, the massive Synod Aged Care Agency (S.A.C.A.), are indicative of the Board's attitudes which reflect the spirit of Hobbin's practical compassion. His unconditional concern for the worth of the individual is expressed in S.A.C.A.'s policy:

seeing people as made in the image of God means giving special recognition to human creativity, to the human potential for and need for fellowship, and to human worth. 176

The continuing influence of Hobbin's approach to ministry was also apparent in the text of the answers to a questionnaire concerning the Department, which included the statement,

...The institutions offer a specialised ministry to those who are in the greatest need in the community, effectively mediating the compassion of Christ.

The D.C.C. has a different impact in terms of mission in that it penetrates secular organisations, is more directly involved with working class people and those with special needs such as poverty areas. Social concern is shared with other professional people, the judiciary, the courts, the medical profession, local government. 177

The recognition in the statement that the D.C.C. has a different impact in terms of mission in that it penetrates secular organisations 178 is the most significant admission in the statement of the


178. Ibid., p.3.
continuing pattern of Hobbin's secularized ministry. S.A.C.A. also freely admits to fundamental differences between its ministry and that exercised by some of the other branches of the ministry of the Church, such as the Central Wesley Mission, previously the Central Methodist Mission (C.M.M.).

The difference in the ministries has been addressed earlier in this chapter, and to a significant extent is related to the difference between the dualist and the holistic concepts of theology. The basic terms of reference under which Hobbin's Department operated were formulated in the Department's 1941 Charter. They were,

(a) To evangelise
(b) The study of social issues
(c) Social reconstruction

A Departmental commitment to evangelize was restated in the 'Answers to Questionnaire for Plan of Advance Committee' submitted in 1973. This thesis contends that it is in the Charter's term of reference, 'to evangelise', that the secularized ministry is differentiated from many other social ministries within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism. The focal difference is in the concept of evangelization. If one accepts the standard definition of evangelize as meaning 'preach the Gospel' then, as previously argued in the thesis, the ministry of the message of the Gospel becomes one of interpretation, or

179. W. Townley, Director of Synod Aged Care Agency, and M. Kerry, Associate Director Assessments and Standards of Synod Aged Care Agency, Personal interviews, 24 July 1987.
definition. With the legacy of the Angus influence, Hobbin allowed no room for doubt as to his interpretation of the message of the Gospel. For him there was no dualism in the evangel. It was a message to the whole person in every aspect of life. This was an interpretation that was the basis of his secularized ministry and which stamped the character of the Department which he nurtured and developed for 22 years.

If there were to be an epilogue to this chapter it would centre on the apparent evidence that the difference is fading, in various areas of the Church, between Hobbin's secularized ministry and the dualist more conservative ministries that had been the base from which explicit criticism of Hobbin's approach had often been directed. In many ministries one now encounters a trend towards a more holistic concept of life; of a melding of the spiritual with the material, and of an equal concern for the needs of the body as for the soul. It was apparent in the ministries of Gordon Trickett, Doug Trathearn and their soulmates. It is now obvious in Clyde Dominish's compassion for the needy, and his commitment to Liberation theology and the peace issues. It is seen in Dorothy McMahon's combination of liberal thinking, her appreciation of the intrinsic worth of all human beings, her rejection of racism, her compassion for the problems of homosexuals, and in her deeply spiritual

180. C. Dominish, Recorded personal interview, 13 November 1987; also sermons, personal interviews and discussions over a period of fourteen years, 1975-1988.
sense of the immanence of God in all life. It is seen in her empathy with the broken in spirit and body. It is also seen in the dispensation the Church has granted her to conduct 'secular' funerals, using her own secularized format of service when ministering to those outside the membership of the Church. The melding is obvious in the thinking of many young ministers now entering their first parishes. It is manifest in the Church's official alignment with the issues of Liberation Theology. In endorsing Liberation Theology's call for social reconstruction in areas of deprivation both overseas and in Australia, the Church can no longer echo declarations made in earlier years that it is not a political Church. The melding has inspired the increasing sensitivity to the challenge of urban mission and to the unique needs of other particular areas of social and human concern.

In each instance the melding agent appears to be an increasingly holistic view of life, which includes acceptance of a concept of the Spirit of God, incarnate in Jesus and immanent in the total human situation. It is a concept in harmony with Hobbin's theological interpretation, and is one which requires a ministry

faithful to the example of the practical ministry of Jesus to the whole person. Wherever this development is evident in the Church, as Methodism adjusts to the changed state of Uniting, its ministry is becoming increasingly coincident with Hobbin's secularized religion.
CHAPTER 3. - THE REVEREND D. HYDE. SECULARIZED RELIGION - THEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISSENT. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.
3.1. INTRODUCTION.

The Reverend Dudley Hyde's ministry is an example of secularized religion which differed from what is generally understood to be its typical exemplar, as demonstrated by Hobbin's ministry. The aim of this chapter is to determine the extent to which Hyde's ministry conformed to the criteria of secularized religion set by this thesis and to examine its particular characteristics.

Examination of Hyde's ministry indicates that several factors contributed to the pronounced singularity of his ministry contrasted with the more stereotyped style of Hobbin's secularized religion. One factor was the difference in their major spheres of ministry. Another factor which differentiated their style of ministry was the different manner in which they reacted to their shift from a Fundamentalist to an extremely liberal theological interpretation. A third factor which contributed to the contrast in their ministries was the pervasive influence of their different personalities and personal backgrounds. The men differed in temperament, and in this chapter there is considerable use of autobiographical material to give some idea of the psychological influences which contributed significantly to the singularity of much of Hyde's ministry.
3.2. DEPARTURE FROM THE SECULARIZED STEREOTYPE, AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR.

In a comparison of the ministries conducted by Hobbin and Hyde it was apparent that the marked contrast in the spheres of their ministries would, to some extent, account for differences in emphases and presentation. Hobbin's ministry, as shown in the previous chapter, was an enthusiastic commitment to respond to the pressures of economic and social exploitation at personal, national and international levels. Hyde's ministry, which led him into considerable controversy, concentrated on Christian education and the Peace issue.

Although Hobbin also encountered controversy, his ministry was characterized by a straightforward uncomplicated acceptance of Angus' liberal beliefs and an emphasis on a caring practical ministry. His ready acceptance was a happy resolution to years of personal questioning of Fundamentalist beliefs, and he rejected, without inhibition, theological dualism which separated religion from worldly concerns. Hyde, however, was still a rigid Fundamentalist when he encountered Angus' modernism at College, and his adoption of radical liberal theology was in the nature of a personal revolution. In addition, Hyde experienced an element of frustration during more than 20 years of his ministry when his desire to present a rational religion, consistent with unfolding secular knowledge, was inhibited. The inhibition resulted in a self-imposed restraint on the full expression of his
modern liberalism during the twenty years in which the Church entrusted him with the somewhat prestigious position of Director of Christian Education.

The basis of the self-imposed restraint on expression of the radical modernism of his theological views during this appointment was the high value he gave to the opportunities offered by the position to lead young people into a search for truth and a rational religion. This objective was consistent with the precept instilled by his mentor, Samuel Angus. At the same time, he was sensitive to the trust placed in him by the Church to lead its young people into conformity with its traditional teaching. He was well aware that failure to meet this obligation, by an extreme departure from orthodoxy, could lead to termination of his directorship. The result was a somewhat psychologically unhealthy inhibition, over a period of several decades, of his more extreme modernist theological views as he tempered such views with a more acceptable traditionally conservative presentation. In a recent recollection of the period, Hyde said that for the most part, he was not consciously bothered by the tension.

When he retired from his position with the Church Education Department, his release from this long-standing inhibition, allied to his life-long inclination towards the extreme statement and dramatic gesture, together with resentment against criticism of his Vietnam War protests,
found expression in abrasive censure of Church practices which he viewed as unacceptable. In 1974 he wrote,

We ministers have seen through the absurdities and lies and contradictions and fallacies of Methodist theology for forty years, but we have never been game to tell our congregations. We have known for forty years that half the stories in the Old Testament and the miracle stories of Jesus and the Virgin Birth and the Physical Resurrection were simply not 'true' in any sense in which the ordinary man understands.¹

Hyde was not content to limit his rejection of Biblical literalism to this statement. He accused the Church of dishonesty, and entitled his article 'Church Guilty of Watergate Coverup'. This statement was but one of many bitter denunciations.

Various psychological determinants may be advanced as influencing Hyde's actions. These could include his youthful experiences associated with an alcoholic, often absent, father, and a strong-willed, strictly moralist, yet sometimes expedient, mother. These experiences led H.G. Cummins, General Secretary of the Board of Education in the New South Wales Uniting Church² to suggest that Hyde's actions were consistent with what he defined as the Phaeton Complex. His assumption was reinforced by the fact that Hyde's extremism, including his dramatic statements as a student and his denunciations against the Church at the close of his career, were suicidal in


². H.G. Cummins, Recorded personal interview with the Reverend Dr. H.G. Cummins, General Secretary, Board of Education, Uniting Church in Australia, New South Wales, 15 October 1987.
nature insofar as they were detrimental to his career and alienated him from considerable ministerial and lay support.

Cummins' assumption was based on results of his own research for a thesis which centred on the Methodist missionary, J. Moulton, and led to a study of Shirley Waldemar Baker, a Wesleyan missionary who became Prime Minister of Tonga. Further research led Cummins to Lucille Iremonger's study of 24 English Prime Ministers, entitled *The Fiery Chariot. The Fruitless Search For Love,* and her reference to the work of Maryse Choisy, a French psychiatrist, who developed the concept of the Phaeton complex. The thesis of the Phaeton complex is that a boy's childhood deprivation of a parent, particularly the death or absence of a father, has a serious impact on the child, and predisposes that person to act in a certain way for the rest of life.

Iremonger and Choisy listed the characteristics of a Phaeton. The absentee father creates in the deprived person the restless search for recognition and love. Always there is a compelling desire to succeed, to make

a mark by rising to the heights of achievement, to be praised and acclaimed as successful, yet often at the height of success Phaetons take reckless, perhaps suicidal, risks. In lieu of the father figure they form strong associations with mentors who exercise life-long influences on the deprived ones.

Without wishing to express an opinion on the unqualified applicability of the Phaeton complex to Hyde, this thesis would argue that there were several apparent features which contributed to the singular nature of Hyde's ministry. Reference has already been made to the nature of the family's influence on his development. He was also troubled by those who did not agree with what was, in his perception, rational Christian truth. Although numerous ministerial contemporaries may have shared some of his modern liberal views, the extreme nature of the criticism which he made of the Church in the later years of his ministry alienated many colleagues. Numerous Methodist ministers supported the Vietnam War protests but, consistent with the intense and dramatic aspects of Hyde's nature, the manner in which he expressed his consistent support for peace issues, particularly the Vietnam protest, gave to his critics the impression of an obsession. In addition
as previously stated, a distinctive and somewhat singular feature of his ministry for many years was its focus on education, which was in contrast to Hobbin's ministry and the more general social gospel emphasis of many secularized ministries.

Overall, Hyde's ministry became a complex study. This chapter will show that for many years his ministry presented a fairly general appearance of conformity to conventional Christian practice consistent with traditional Western theism, and to that extent was atypical of other secularized ministries within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism. During that period his expression of modern liberal theology, generally a feature of secularized religion, was muted. In later years, when freed from inhibiting factors, Hyde's ministry became an explicit and extreme promotion of secularized religion in the specific areas of education, modern liberal theological interpretation, and the Peace issue.
3.3. EARLY LIFE AND FIRST YEARS OF MINISTRY.

Hyde was the second youngest of ten children and in 1908 was born into a family which was dominated by a strong-willed mother who combined in her actions a complex mixture of rigid moralism interspersed with lapses into expediency. Although Hyde made reference to his mother's lovable characteristics, he acknowledged that she found refuge in a rigid set of prohibitions and negatives. Her authoritarian attitude restricted the family's social contacts to the point of being anti-social, and their social activity was limited to attendance at Church and Sunday School.

The strict moralism of the mother contrasted with the attitude of her husband who, at the age of fifteen, rebelled against an authoritarian father by running away to sea. He became a mostly-absentee husband who drifted into alcoholism. This was a failing which Hyde attributed mainly to his father's 'non-role' in a household dominated by his wife's authority.

Hyde believed that the ambivalence of his parental influences was a strong determinant of his own actions. He said

At every crisis point in life I found myself wanting to emulate my father's 15 year old enthusiastic adventuring and break out of the strictures and inhibitions that imprisoned me. But I generally found myself restrained by the influences of my mother's training. 6

These two conflicting influences not only generated a recurrent tension in his life, but also contributed to an underlying sense of guilt whenever his decisions were at variance with his mother's conservative moralism and theological Fundamentalism.

Until his Leigh College rebellion and adoption of radical liberalism, the recollection of his mother's few acts of expediency were more than outweighed by the influences of her strict moralism. This influence was compounded by his own conversion experience and his commitment to rigid Christian Fundamentalism. He was convinced that he had been called by God to denounce mortal sins in himself and the world. Chief among these sins were, in his opinion, alcoholic drink, dancing and dishonesty. As a lay preacher at the age of seventeen he 'would proclaim the gospel to the sons of darkness outside the hotel in Lawson Square in Redfern'. An elder sister, who was a mission sister in the Sydney suburb of Redfern, and later in China, profoundly influenced Hyde's early theological position. Her strict Fundamentalism and firm belief in the literal truth of the Bible established the pattern of her young brother's early beliefs.

Hyde's scholastic ability enabled him to win a scholarship to Fort Street High School where he eventually became Dux of the school. His academic achievements ensured a tertiary scholarship and entry into the Faculty

7. Ibid., p.11.
of Law at the University of Sydney which he entered with the intention of becoming a barrister. By the time he graduated with a law degree he had already experienced what he described as the mystic experience of 'the call of God' to enter the ministry.

At this stage of the young Hyde's career there was no way in which his religion could be defined as secularized. His concern was not to bring religion into the saeculum; rather it was to take the world into the different dimension of 'other-worldliness'. In conformity with his Fundamentalist religious training he described his vocation as the response to a call to save the world from its ignorance and damnation...dying through lack of knowledge of the 'shed blood of Christ'.

Acceptance of the Phaeton complex would see his sense of being called to 'save the world' as the Phaeton urge to rise to the heights of achievement.

This was his theological position in March 1930 when he gave up the opportunity of a potentially promising legal career, to enter Leigh College, the Methodist Theological Training College. Leigh College, at that period, had acquired a reputation for promoting relatively modernist theological thought. In an effort to save her young brother from such an influence, Hyde's missionary sister tried to persuade him to train instead at the

8. Ibid., p.9.
Melbourne Bible Institute (M.B.I.). It was, however, with an ambivalent attitude of supreme confidence mixed with apprehension that he chose to enrol at Leigh College. His diary entry of 18 March 1930 captured the mood of most of that year's first-year ministerial candidates at Leigh:

It is 11.30...we have just finished a prayer meeting - We are frightened of the prospects of Leigh - others have been frightened and have gone under - will we? Started yesterday -very nice Chapel Services - hearty welcome Social at Parsonage but something is lacking - ...Today Wilbur and I decided to have a little study camp at Easter - if possible. We need it - won't feel safe without some such thing... Alan has suggested we have prayer meetings of first year. We have just had a little meeting here now to discuss - 'God is with us - who can be against us?'. I am beginning to see now why I was led to come to Leigh this year - the wiser plan seemed to be to go to M.B.I. for a year to strengthen my faith - I think God has a job for me to do in Leigh this year. I must do it. 10

Within the year not only was Hyde's Fundamentalist faith replaced with modernist views, but the Church authorities regarded his beliefs as being extreme to the point of heresy, and he was suspended from College. In addition, the heretical views he expressed, in conjunction with those declared by his fellow-student, Don Stewart, provided the catalyst for the removal of Methodist students from Angus' course of New Testament Studies in the United Theological Course.

Methodist Church officials had become increasingly nervous about the alleged heretical views taught by Angus. When the Leigh College examiners read Hyde's

answers to the end of year 1930 examination questions, they were sufficiently disturbed to request that he submit to the Committee a written statement of his beliefs. In his statement Hyde endeavoured to dissociate Angus from the change in his theological orientation. He declared that Angus should not be blamed for the beliefs he expressed because 'there had been subconscious preparation for some time'. He did, however, admit that it was only after his arrival in College that he came to the conclusion that 'ultimately every doctrine must have a basis in reason or experience'. This initial denial of Angus' influence was contrary to Hyde's ready acknowledgement in later years that Angus was one of two people who influenced his life more than any other man. Despite his attempt to exonerate Angus, his statement to the Examination Committee was essentially a simple summary of many of Angus' views which were contained in a book Angus later published, in 1934, entitled Truth and Tradition. As previously indicated, this book formed part of Angus' public defence against the heresy accusations raised by Presbyterian churchmen, and reflected many of the views promoted by Harnack and Schleiermacher.

In Hyde's written statement the Methodist Examination Committee was confronted with Hyde's brusque
denial of traditional Christian creed and dogma:

My whole credal position rests largely on one doctrine i.e. that while the Bible may be the revealed will of God, it cannot be accepted as verbally inspired or infallible...The miraculous events surrounding the birth of Christ such as the appearance of Angels to the Shepherds and the idea of the Virgin Birth of Christ I cannot accept... Miracles generally I cannot accept. I do not mean healings by faith...I mean an intervention of God overruling the laws of Nature...Prophecies in the sense of 'predictions' are contrary to the facts of life. God has given man a free-will. I do not understand how God can foretell what events are going to happen as this is to suggest He knows how man will use his free will. I cannot accept the dogma of the Church that Christ's death was an atonement to satisfy the Justice of God. Christ seemed to be ignorant of this idea...I cannot understand the necessity for a physical resurrection...for a spirit to need mortal flesh is difficult to understand. The idea of a Trinity carries with it the idea of the Deity of Jesus. In my present position I cannot accept either...I believe in one God revealed to me in all His work, and all His creatures; but, above all, revealed to me in Jesus. But I cannot say Jesus is God...The gospel I believe and preach is that of a God of love who will go to any extreme to win men to Him - a God revealed in Jesus Christ. And this gospel is definitely evangelical...I feel that Christian Experience is the supreme test of fitness. That, beside this, creeds and theology are very insignificant...I have not a closed mind...I may change those beliefs as time progresses. I must stand true to my convictions...I cannot forbear preaching the gospel of Jesus...I know I have been called by God. 13

In this declaration supporters of the Phaeton complex may see evidence of a statement damaging to his career.

Following submission of this statement, the Examination Committee suspended Hyde from Leigh College in accordance with 'Section C. Minutes of Conference p.83'. 14

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13. Ibid., pp.1-4.
Hyde's fellow student, D.M. Stewart, was also cited to appear before the Examination Committee, but resigned.
The suspension of Hyde and the resignation of Hyde's fellow-student, D.M. Stewart, brought to a climax the long-standing controversy between the liberal ministers who supported Angus' teaching and the more conservative ministers who were opposed to his lectures. Serious efforts were made to resolve the matter in a reasonable manner. A special closed session of Conference was held to enable free discussion of the issue. In a report published in *The Methodist* on 27 February 1932 the writer claimed that he was not betraying a confidence when he reported that

the three hours' evening session...was taken up by the search for wise and right adjustments. It was no 'heresy hunt'. We have our conservative men but...the one concern of all during that tense and long-drawn session was to grant a reasonable measure of freedom...while securing the all-round preaching of the Gospel in integrity and fulness. 15

Hyde was suspended, but the issue of removing the remaining students from Angus' classes was not resolved until the 1933 Conference. Although Bennett, Principal of Leigh College, favoured continuing the lectures, Conference resolved in February 1933 to withdraw the students from Angus' course in New Testament studies. The resolution 16 was made in terms previously quoted in the chapter of this thesis which studied the Angus influence.

Following his suspension, Hyde accepted a position

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the Church offered him as an assistant to the minister at Glebe. He later commented:

    a Church which thought my theology was so bad that I had to be excluded from College where I might presumably have learned better... sent me to practise my theology on the souls of the down-trodden population of Glebe. 17

Several months after his suspension Hyde was still convinced that God was calling him to a vocation in the ministry. He sought advice from one of the College lecturers, an ex-President of Conference, as to how he could get back into College. The advice he received was to write another statement of his beliefs, not to use negatives, but to include quotations from the Bible and from John Wesley's sermons. Hyde accepted the advice. He stated that he could not afford to be dogmatic and that his mind was far from closed. The revised statement he submitted included the positive statements:

    I accept as a fact the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, understanding by this that the 'Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. I recognize in the death of Jesus the greatest and most unique fact in the world's history, and I know that, because of it, barriers of sin between God and man have been removed, and that the redemption of man has been achieved. I agree with all the statements of Scripture which are used to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity. My difficulty with the doctrine is the mode of the Trinity which the Church deduces from the statements. My present attitude is very largely that of John Wesley as indicated in his Sermon No. 55. The idea of some form of plurality in the Godhead would seem to be quite conceivable and necessary...Jesus means more to me than ever and I feel more and more the urge to point men to Him as their Saviour. 18

18. D. Hyde, Original Statement to Examination Committee, 1931, leading to re-acceptance into Leigh College in 1932. Subsequently rewritten in more detail.
The Examination Committee expressed pleasure at the progress in Hyde's thinking. He re-entered College in 1932 and likened the welcome back he received from fellow-students to the return of the prodigal son. Although Hyde was delighted to be back in College, the mode of his re-admission raised a problem for him. His ideas had not really changed. He believed that the statements he made to the examiners were sufficiently non-committal to allow for his own underlying interpretation, even when that differed from what conservatives accepted at face value.

In later years he denounced the re-admission statement as an exercise in expediency, and he criticized the Church for teaching him his 'first positive lesson in dishonesty'. He claimed that his 'commitment to the Church never regained its original flavour'. A sense of his own guilt and his frustration with the Church for involvement in his expediency remained submerged for many years as a festering sore and, combined with his inclination towards the dramatic, eventually erupted, particularly in the 1970s. He then denounced the Church establishment, its creed and its dogma. Yet, at the same time, he maintained a loyal devotion to Jesus and to what

he interpreted to be the authentic message and teaching of Jesus. This course of action was reminiscent of Angus' experience.

The secularized nature of Hyde's ministry is evident in his response to four areas of challenge: theological Fundamentalism; social exploitation; increasing 'secular' knowledge; war and all issues that were potentially militaristic. It was not until the 1970s that Hyde's explicit use of the phrase 'secular religion' is apparent in his writings. By 1976 he was publicly expressing commitment to the modern expression of secular religion. Speaking on an Australian Broadcasting Corporation programme he said,

The religion of the future must be secular. We must abandon the false dichotomy between sacred and secular, between godliness and humanity. 21

He also quoted the comment of the Christian theologian, John Oman, who said 'The test of a true faith is the extent to which its religion is secular'. 22

Although in his early ministry Hyde did not explicitly identify his religion as secularized, his orientation in those early years towards a secularized ministry is apparent. Its expression during his first two ministerial appointments was confined to promotion of Biblical and Higher criticism and to the theological

22. Ibid., p.1.
concept of God's immanence. He viewed these emphases in his religion as a rational response to the challenge of secular knowledge, and the outcome of the search for truth.

As he commenced his ministry, Angus' strong influence on his thinking was obvious. Details of Angus' theological views have been detailed in an earlier chapter. Hyde responded readily both to Angus' theology and also to Angus as a warm, extremely likeable person who, in Hyde's own words, transformed him from an arrogant self-righteous Fundamentalist, to a rational Christian committed to the discovery of Truth and the service of Jesus as my only Lord. 23

Apart from Angus' attractive personality, several factors contributed to Hyde's enthusiastic acceptance of Angus' teaching. The emphasis Angus placed upon the need for the individual to search for truth held special appeal for Hyde who, during four years of legal work and study, had been trained to sift through information for facts. Angus' endorsement of a more liberal interpretation of the Biblical record than Hyde had previously encountered gave him a faith which was more compatible with his legal mind's desire for a rational belief, and provided him with new perspectives which extended far beyond his previously espoused Biblical literalism. The new teaching provided him with a rational response to the pressures, still active in his community, imposed by increasing knowledge.

In addition, Angus' facility, readily acknowledged by his students, to stimulate thought, appealed to Hyde who wrote in his statement to the Examination Committee, 'my lectures in College have made me think'.

Following his appointment for two years as a probationer to the south western country district of Quandialla, Hyde was appointed for the next two years, commencing 1935, to the poultry-farming area of Castle Hill. His theological modernism soon brought him into confrontation with conservatives and Biblical literalists. The church officials at Castle Hill criticized him for denial of 'the doctrine that the Bible is verbally inspired and infallible'. They also criticized certain of his beliefs and practices on the ground that they disturbed the 'peace of the Church'. Even his attendance at a Scout dance, in his capacity as Scoutmaster, was censured. Although Hyde did not dance, his attendance was censured because in 1936 dancing was declared by the Methodist Church to be a proscribed activity. Hyde submitted a written seven page defence against the various criticisms. He maintained that he was entitled to his convictions until they were proved false, and that every man is entitled to his own opinions as long as he loves God and his neighbours.

24. D. Hyde, Statement to Examination Committee, December, 1930, op.cit., p.3.


26. Ibid.
During his next appointment to the depressed wheat area of Ardlethan, where he ministered from 1937 to 1939, his theology caused several church officials to request the chairman of the district to convene a special session of the Church Quarterly Meeting to enquire into his beliefs. In a letter dated 28 July 1939, signed by nine officials, he was requested to attend a meeting 'to consider various aspects of your teaching in the Ardlethan circuit'. A motion of confidence, engineered by one of Hyde's supporters, quelled the censure.

Hyde's next appointment, from 1940 to 1943, was to an area which covered the large pastoral and grazing properties at Rylstone, and the cement production area of Kandos. This was followed by his appointment, from 1944 to 1945, to the mining community of Cessnock. During this period criticism from conservatives shifted from his theology to his socialist sympathies. His commitment to the politics of the socialist doctrine was consistent with most secularized ministries of that period, particularly with their emphasis on the practical implementation of the social gospel. He linked his socialist politics to Christianity through his interpretation of Christ's ministry which, consistent with Hobbin's belief, Hyde believed emphasized relationships with one's neighbours. He consistently proclaimed that the ultimate question

was 'Did you feed the hungry?', together with all its implications for neighbourly concern.

Hyde's commitment to socialist ideas had the historical precedent of pronouncements made under the umbrella of New South Wales Methodism, especially those made by F.T. Walker during his M.O.M. ministry. The initial precedent for a ministry of social reform, to be exercised by Methodist ministers, was actually established, as previously indicated, by John Wesley himself. Writing of Wesley's ministry to coal miners, 'cruelly victimized by industrialization', Howard Snyder summarized features of Wesley's practical social ministry:

Wesley worked tirelessly for their spiritual and material welfare. Among other things, he opened free dispensaries, set up a kind of credit union, and established schools and orphanages. His ministry branched out to include lead miners, iron smelters, brass and copper workers, quarrymen, shipyard workers, farm laborers, prisoners and women industrial workers. To all these people—the victims of society—Wesley offered the Good News of Jesus Christ. But he did more. He formed them into close-knit fellowships where they could be shepherded and where leaders could be developed, and he worked to reform the conditions under which they lived. His efforts went beyond welfare to economic alternatives.

Reference was made earlier to a calling, in the name of New South Wales Methodism, for an end to social and economic exploitation. L.E. Bennett's Pastoral Address,


delivered at the 1933 New South Wales Conference, which called for church people 'to become pioneers in the work of social reform', was typical of the calls Methodist people were accustomed to hear from their leaders. An investigation into unemployment, housing and kindred matters, made by a Public Questions sub-committee at the direction of the 1941 Church Conference was also indicative of continuing official Church concern for the deprived in the community. Consistent with this concern, Hyde demonstrated in his early ministries, prior to commencing his educational work, a commitment to social reconstruction.

Following the Great Depression, concern about the social order was a topical subject and the social gospel became a dominant issue, particularly in mining and industrial environments. This coincided with a limited but increased degree of tolerance for the Communist ideology. It was a tolerance which resulted from the excesses of Fascism and from Russian opposition to Hitler. There was renewed interest in the Dean of Canterbury's 'Socialist Sixth of the World', and various Christian Socialist Movements were established. While in Kandos, Hyde helped launch a Christian Socialist Movement, which held meetings on Sunday evenings. The meetings attracted large audiences, including middle class citizens and many.

church people.

Although the Church made its official pronouncements in support of social justice, Hyde and several of his contemporaries, including the Methodist ministers, Ralph Sutton, Bill Hobbin, Allan Brand and Alan Walker, were, nevertheless, labelled as radicals by conservatives. The critics considered that the extent of support given to social reconstruction was politically extreme. Each of the so-called radicals publicly expressed opposition to capitalist exploitation and, in varying degrees of intensity, espoused some form of socialism which they believed to be compatible with the teaching of Jesus. They were among those who gave support to the Anglican minister, W.G. Coughlan, and to the Christian Social Order Movement which he founded. Although not specifically socialist, the Movement was both anti-establishment and anti-capitalist. They also either supported or supplied written copy to the Christian Distributors' Association.

Hyde was among those who wrote for the Association. One of his tracts published by the Distributors was entitled *His Revolution and Ours*. Hyde used the Distributors as a vehicle to attack the existing social order. His main target was capitalism. He claimed that capitalism's driving force was greed, and he criticized its support for the role of multi-nationals. In *His Revolution and Ours* he appealed to Christians to follow

the example of Jesus who, he claimed, preached essentially a revolutionary social message which challenged the existing social order. He wrote,

Jesus found Himself in violent revolt against the injustices of the social system of His day. It will likewise be the discovery of the Church that it must openly and unashamedly pit itself against our social system. 32

Hyde warned that the moment the Church attacked the root causes of inequalities and injustices which lie in the socio-economic system it would be in peril from conservatives from both the community and within the Church itself. In expressing this warning Hyde was drawing on his own experience. Conservatives repeatedly labelled him 'Communist', 'red', or the 'pink parson'. It was an experience he shared with Hobbin and other ministers of the Church who held similar political leanings. Hyde acknowledged his appreciation of many of Communism's objectives, but denied giving full allegiance to the movement. He never contemplated joining the Communist Party although, while in the Rylston-Kandos circuit, his various expressions of appreciation of Communism's more idealistic tenets were sufficient to cause members of the Party to approach him with a request to join their branch. 33

The socialist views Hyde held were common to those

33. D. Hyde, Recorded personal interview, 26 September 1986. In the thirties and forties Marxism was 'the most serious contender for intellectual allegiance (and) dominated intellectual debate', Arena, September 1963, Vol.1, p.3.
of his Christian Socialist contemporaries who all grappled with an ideology which repelled them by its atheism, but strongly appealed to them through its social idealism. Most of the ideas they endeavoured to express were summarized by Alan Walker some years later when he wrote that

There are some goals which a Communist strives [to attain] which should also be the concern of an awakened, authentic Christianity. 34

At the same time Walker expressed a concern held by Hyde and his fellow ministers, that Communism was in theory materialistic and atheistic. Ralph Sutton, prominent in the Christian Distributors' Association, was less critical of the atheistic component in Communism, as quotations in this study have already indicated. The vision he promoted in his publication, The Church and the Working Class, was one in which Russia, the world-wide working class, and the world-wide Church would work together 'to withstand the forces of reaction in to-morrow's world'. 35 He wrote that he could

imagine Jesus, if he were to return to this earth to-day, saying to the Russians, 'Ye are the light of the world', and to the English, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. 36


36. Ibid., p.9.
Although Hyde retained a lifelong respect for idealistic aspects of Marxism, his approval of its ideology never equalled Sutton's extremism. Hyde did, however, develop close rapport with the Marxist Union Secretary at Cessnock. He said that he established in Cessnock 'a real dialogue between Church and union, and between Christianity and Marxism'.\(^{37}\) His religion at that stage was very politically oriented as he sought to relate it to the existent socio-economic system. In September 1945, as he joined in celebrating the end of the Second World War, his friendly association with the district's Communist leaders encouraged him to contemplate

> the dawn of a new era of unity, in the common purpose of building a new world, call it Christian, or Marxist, or what you will.\(^ {38}\)

It was at this stage that he received a telephone call which changed the direction of his ministry and determined its future pattern for more than twenty years. The telephone call was to inform him that the Methodist Church intended inviting him to accept the position of Superintendent of Religious Instruction in State Schools. During the first two years of his new appointment, the Director of the Church's Young People's Department, the Reverend George Wheen, was on leave in America, and the Conference appointed Hyde as Acting Director of the Department in addition to his superintendency of

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38. Ibid., p.17.
Religious Education in Schools. Each of these appointments was the direct result of his effective work with young people in The Methodist Crusader Movement in which he had been deeply involved since his College days.

3.4. HYDE AND THE METHODIST CRUSADER MOVEMENT.

As a young law student Hyde attended several camps organized for young people by the Presbyterian Church. The Methodist Church recognized the appeal such camps held for young people, and on 17 June 1929 the Council of the Methodist Young People's Department approved a motion that a Study Camp be held at Camden in October of that year.39 Dudley Hyde attended that first camp and began his lifelong close association with the Crusader Movement.

The tradition of somewhat liberal theology which was characteristic of the Student Christian Movement was carried over to the Methodist Crusader Movement. It was a feature which had particular appeal for Hyde and which he endeavoured to foster. One of his primary objectives was to make the Crusader Camp a place where young people were encouraged to think for themselves, to develop an environment conducive to the development of a rational

faith. Hyde commented in later years:

the Crusader Movement was the only place in the life of the Church where kids were encouraged to think for themselves. 40

Various testimonies confirm his assessment. One testimony was given by the grand-daughter of a past President of the New South Wales Methodist Conference:

At camp my horizons were widened, and I realised that however unorthodox my thinking it does not affect the nucleus of my faith. So many 'heretical' issues were raised, so many philosophical theories were thrown into discussion that the whole of the grounds on which my faith was built were cut away from under me. My Fundamentalist viewpoint based on a literal translation of the Bible was challenged by logical theories that appealed to the intellect...The most important thing I learned is that I can still remain a Christian and question and think through questions, irrespective of the conclusion I come to. And one of the things I can't help thinking is that the Bible should only be one of a number of references on any theological issue. 41

The impact made by Hyde on the young Crusaders was also indicated by the father of several children who were University undergraduates and who attended the camps. The father of the young people was a church officer in the Turramurra Church. In conversation with Hyde he said he supported a move made in 1943 to invite Hyde to become minister of the Turramurra Church because he had heard his children discussing what Hyde had said to them at camp.

41. B. Gadsden, 'A Young Adult Reports', in The Record, Wesley Methodist Church, Wollongong, circa 1965.
He commented,

although I don't believe a word of what you say - I want my children to keep on hearing it. 42

Inevitably some conservatives directed criticism against the Crusader Movement and its leaders. Camps with a Fundamentalist orientation were even held in an endeavour to counteract the Crusader influence. Dr. J.W. Burton, who became President General of the Methodist Church of Australasia, was a target of the criticism. He was a frequent Chief Speaker at the Crusader Camps and had an immense impact on the movement. Burton's encouragement for campers to find truth for themselves led to accusations that he was encouraging heresy and ruining the campers' faith. 43

The nature of the Crusader Movement was influenced not only by Hyde, but also by other Leigh College students who were products of the controversial United Theological Course in the 1930s when Methodism's traditional leaning towards Fundamentalist theology was confronted with modernist views. From out of the confusion of conflicting theological orientations Hyde, Varcoe Cocks, and the other leaders in the Crusader Movement, developed the characteristic Crusader spirit of free enquiry,

42. D. Hyde, Recorded personal interview, 26 September 1986.

honesty and tolerance. Burton defined the objective of the camps when he said,

We fondly hoped we were helping people to find a rational faith and to mature as Christians. 44

The Reverend Winston O'Reilly, President of Conference and Master of Wesley College, also testified that the movement contributed to 'a better grasp of the gospel and its relevance to current issues'. 45 It was an achievement in which Hyde's role was particularly significant.

In addition to his direct involvement with the movement, Hyde used the experience he gained with the Crusaders to good effect during his years in charge of Christian Education in Schools. He used the camps as a model for the establishment of successful school camps and built into them similar objectives to those held by the Crusader Movement.

3.5. HYDE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

Hyde's appointment in 1946 as Superintendent of Religious Instruction in Schools was initiated by Roy Scotter, who was lay-secretary of the Young People's Department of the Church, and a keen Crusader. The offer

44. Ibid., Chapter 6, Section 3.
45. B. Stevens, Foreword, in Lo! Here is Fellowship, op.cit. The Foreword included comments made by ex-Crusaders, including Winston O'Reilly.
delighted Hyde and he accepted it readily. He was confident that education had the potential to help people in their search for truth. Inspired by Angus, and with his motivation compounded by his legal training to search for truth, Hyde made his primary crusade the promotion, through education, of a rational religion.

From the time of his appointment, however, there was an undercurrent of personal conflict in his ministry, although he claimed that it was a conflict which was largely submerged until he retired from the position. The basis of the conflict was his awareness of the Church's expectations in respect to his new ministerial responsibilities which conflicted with aspects of his radical theological beliefs. On the one hand, he had accepted a theological interpretation which was the essence of secularized religion. It encompassed the concept of the immanence of the Spirit of God within the world; emphasis on the social gospel; rejection of much dogma and creed; and also rejection of the divinity of Jesus as traditionally interpreted. In addition, he was convinced that one of his primary obligations was to encourage young people to think for themselves. On the other hand he saw his position, from which he gained much joy and personal satisfaction, as being one of trust in which the Church relied on him to train young people in its accepted doctrines.

Hyde resolved the problem for two decades. He subdued his radicalism, while at the same time he prepared
curricula which did not violate the main stream of theology but did offer, wherever applicable, a modified liberal or modernist interpretation. In his instruction to young people he gave particular emphasis to the person of Jesus as the supreme leader to be followed, which was very much in the tradition of Angus' teaching. In his writings and sermons Hyde also inspired the young people to a commitment of dedicated Christian service. During this period his theology was generally acceptable to the main body of the Church, and there was scant apparent evidence in it of any untoward leaning towards presentation of a radical secularized ministry.

The Department of Religious Instruction in Public Schools, which was the Department offered to Hyde, was a sub-Department of the Young People's Department until it was raised to the status of a full Department in 1949. Its name was changed to the Department of Christian Education in Schools (D.C.E.T.S.) and its function was nominated to include

all matters relating to Christian Education in the following fields:

(a) Public Schools - including provision of syllabus material, assistance in school work to ministers and theological students, provision of staff for religious instruction classes in schools and co-operation with other churches.

(b) Collaboration with principals and staffs of Church Schools.

(c) Educational Institutions such as Universities, Teachers' Colleges and Technical Colleges.

(d) Adult education as it affects Christian education in schools and colleges.
(e) Post-College Training of ministers in co-operation with Leigh College. 46

During his nine years work within the Department in New South Wales it was largely due to Hyde's efforts that the inter-denominational Council for Christian Education in Schools was established and new possibilities provided for co-operation between the Church and the Education Department.

In 1955 the Church in Victoria offered Hyde the position of Director of the Council for Christian Education in Schools. When he transferred from New South Wales to Victoria the New South Wales Conference recorded gratitude for the inspiration he had provided, the developments he made possible, and for the vision, ability and enthusiasm he brought to the task. 47

The new position was interdenominational and involved six other leading Protestant Churches. Hyde was responsible for authorizing every person who gave religious training in schools, for providing training for them and for arranging an 'agreed syllabus' which they were compelled to teach.

He acknowledged the satisfaction he gained from the creativity in preparing syllabus material for approximately half a million students and recruiting and

47. Methodist Church of Australasia, New South Wales Conference Minutes. 1955, p.97.
training thousands of voluntary instructors. In addition, he pioneered a programme never previously adopted in Australia. It was the appointment of full-time chaplains to selected 'secular' High Schools and Technical Schools in Victoria. As an active participant in the scheme Hyde went to Collingwood Technical College as the first fulltime chaplain. This position he held for almost twelve months while awaiting the retirement of the Director he was to replace at the Council for Christian Education in Schools.

In Victoria the restrictions on his expression of radical beliefs was even more stringent than when he was in New South Wales. Whereas he had been subject only to the Methodist Church, he now had to conform to the core of theological belief acceptable to seven denominations. It was necessary to do no violence to the 'main stream' of thinking within the Churches, and it was his experience that the wider the base of his authority, the less freedom he had. In later years his retrospective assessment was that those restrictions imposed 'an effective enslavement to the lowest common denominator of theology'.


The expression of any radical tendencies was further inhibited by the prestige which the position carried. He was listed in Who's Who; he was a confidant of Victorian business leaders who helped finance the work; he had
afternoon teas at Government House; preached to the Vice-regal family on special occasions; had access to the Press; and was accounted an ally of the Director of Education. Reviewing those years, Hyde commented, 'what price any revolutionary tendencies?' 49

3.6 POLITICAL DISSENT. VIETNAM AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT.

i. The Vietnam War.

In 1964 Hyde resigned his Victorian position and from 1964 to 1966 he worked as a minister of education at a Church in Pasadena, California. While there he became involved in the environment of dissent which erupted on two fronts - one the Vietnam issue, the other the Negro rights problem. His experiences there had a profound effect on his ministry and beliefs when he returned to New South Wales in 1967.

The Pasadena Church was less than twenty miles from the Watts area of Los Angeles, and the bitterness between Negroes and whites engendered by the 1965 Watts riots was still evident in the area. Hyde witnessed its effects repeatedly. In an effort to demonstrate concern and friendship, Hyde brought a group of young Negroes from

49. Ibid., p.18.
Watts to Pasadena to watch the famous Rose Parade. Their visit coincided with a house party being held for the young people of the Church, and Hyde suggested that the Negroes be invited to join the party. He was deeply disturbed when the young church people refused to associate with the Negroes. Public baths which the Government decreed were to be accessible to both races were left unused and were so bone-dry that the concrete had cracked. In 1966 a Methodist Church displayed a notice declaring it was open for all. One Negro attended the service - in the capacity of janitor. Hyde attended a Martin Luther King rally and was inspired by one of King's 'I had a dream' speeches. Sixteen thousand Negroes were present. Hyde said that the only white people in attendance were himself, his wife and son.

Hyde did not see the American Negro situation in isolation. What he interpreted as white inhumanity to the Negro he related to the Australian aboriginal situation. He attributed the racism, which was evident in both situations, as being in part the product of a capitalist, competitive society. It was his opinion that greed was essentially the driving force in the capitalist social and economic system, and that it was completely anti-Christian. His socialist sympathies, repressed for almost two decades during his prestigious Christian education appointments, rapidly resurfaced under the influence of the American environment.

The issue Hyde confronted in America which had the
most impact on his actions when he returned to Australia was the Vietnam controversy. It was while he was in Pasadena that the western world became conscious of the real nature of the war. University students demonstrated in the streets. The numbers of draft resisters and conscientious objectors increased. Hyde was concerned that while he was at Pasadena the Churches, as a body, stood aloof, leaving protests to be made by individual ministers. He again denounced the capitalist system and accused it of being the basic cause of the bombing of the Vietnamese.

War in Vietnam was Hyde's major concern when he returned to New South Wales in 1967 and accepted appointment as minister of the Wollongong circuit. Once again, the appointment was engineered by one of Hyde's past Crusader admirers. Within a year, however, the conservative church official responsible for the invitation, together with several other influential parishioners, disassociated themselves from the extremism of Hyde's anti-Vietnam War stance.

Hyde had first expressed his commitment to the pacifist cause as a school student in the 1920s. The Australian established system of military training for young people at that period consisted of a three tier system. At twelve years of age the boys became junior cadets; at fourteen they became senior cadets with a military uniform and rifle, and at eighteen they were conscripted into the 'militia' for two years, and were
required to attend week-long training camps. Hyde
developed a hatred of the system and was tremendously
relieved when, for some unexplained reason, he failed a
medical examination and was declared unfit for military
service.

He has admitted that pacifism became for him a
passionate ideal, and he linked his pacifist activities
to religion through his interpretation that Jesus' ministry was one of peace and love for all people. For
a period in the late 1920s and early 1930s there was an
upsurge of support for the pacifist cause in England and
Australia. Support for the cause weakened with the increasing threat of war as Hitler rose to power. Hyde found that with the onset of the Second World War his commitment to pacifism was strained and involved him in compromises when, as a minister, he was requested to address Anzac Day and Armistice Day celebrations. Even when many of his pacifist contemporaries capitulated, he maintained his stance until, eventually, he compromised to the extent of offering himself for chaplaincy service. To his relief he was once again rejected by the military.

When he arrived in Wollongong his pacifism was linked to positive opposition to the established social order. His religion again became overtly secularized as it was interwoven with his radical protests against the Vietnam war and the Western capitalist economy.

Beneath his high public profile as a radical protestor there still flowed the undercurrent of his liberal theological views. He recently stated that he was still not sure whether it was his anti-Vietnam activity or his liberal theology which most disturbed his Wollongong congregation. One church official, recently reflecting on Hyde's ministry, said that what most upset the Wollongong church members was the unrelieved emphasis, in his weekly sermons, of virulent political protest against both the war and the established social order.51 The application by Hyde of the Christian message to reinforce protest against the establishment was not acceptable to many of Wollongong's largely middle-class, somewhat conservative congregation. Acceptance of his views was further minimized by his natural dramatic inclinations which resulted in extreme, often acerbic, presentation of his views.

An influential proportion of the congregation believed that the Church should not be involved in politics. They were not impressed with the public exposure of their minister walking abreast of radical wharf labourers and Communists in protest marches, or standing outside the Church in the city's main street on a Saturday morning holding a banner in silent protest against the Vietnam war. Criticisms against his political stand were extreme. The most objectionable included

anonymous obscene messages sent through the post, written on paper stained with faecal matter. This evidence of vilification Hyde still retains.  

During the Representative Session of the 1967 Conference, while Hyde was still stationed at Wollongong, a discussion on the Vietnam issue was held in 'an atmosphere of genuine emotion and unparalleled concern'. Representatives called for an immediate cease-fire. The Methodist reported that during the debate the Reverend Dudley Hyde made an impassioned speech in support of the motion. He called upon the Church to do more than pass resolutions and to do everything that is possible within its power to make its voice heard in the community so that we will know where Christians stand on this crucial matter.  

At the conclusion of his ministry in Wollongong Hyde returned to Victoria in 1970 as editor of the Joint Board of Christian Education publications, and while there his anti-Vietnam protest escalated. He became involved in the actual organization of protest to which he gave unreserved commitment. Using letterheads inscribed 'Christians for Peace', Hyde corresponded with members of Parliament, clergymen of all denominations, and Melbourne's civic officials. He helped organize distribution of pamphlets and banners, joined marches,  

52. Original messages sighted.  
54. Ibid., p.4.
sat down in Melbourne's Bourke Street with an estimated number of eighty thousand citizens during the Moratorium Protest in May 1970, and was convicted in the Magistrate's Court for violating the Crimes Act by inciting people not to register for National Service. Hyde refused to pay the fine, but was saved from gaol when it was paid by an anonymous person.

In an effort to involve the Churches more actively in protest he launched a 'Christians For Peace' Movement and organized a Christmas March for Peace. He and his committee published ten thousand leaflets in support of the protest movement. The Roman Catholic and Anglican Archbishops objected to bringing politics into religion and declined support for the march. Finally, under two thousand marchers attended. Wesley Methodist Church offered use of its building for a service to launch the march, but Hyde was unable to obtain the use of one other church building for a prayer meeting prior to the march. He resented what he regarded as inadequate support from the church establishments which, he said, forfeited their claim to moral leadership.

It was, he believed, a strange irony that the atheist left-wing secretary of the Trades and Labour Council requested him to conduct an Easter Dawn service in 1971 outside the gates of the Fairlea Women's Gaol. The service was designed as a form of protest against the imprisonment of five Melbourne women for inciting people not to register. A congregation of five hundred,
including atheist protestors, carried 'Christians For Peace' banners, worded 'For God's Sake Stop the War'. They then marched back to the city for an Easter vigil.

There was an element of reticence in the established Churches' official attitude to protest. From individual ministers within New South Wales Methodism, however, as well as from individual ministers of other denominations, there was evidence of considerable support for the anti-Vietnam War cause. Support for the cause given by individuals was practical, usually expressed in political activism. Support from the institution of the Church mainly took the form of pronouncements and resolutions. A letter Hyde wrote to the Methodist Spectator after the 1970 Moratorium protest, headed 'My Church Was Not There', was criticized for ignoring the extent of protest support given by many Christians. Actually, the critics of the anti-Vietnam War protestors appeared to come more from conservative lay people than from the ranks of the clergy. Hyde's criticism was really aimed at the institution of the Church for the policy of leaving the practical expression of protest to individuals as a matter of conscience.

The following brief review which is made of the official position adopted by the New South Wales Methodist Church to the Vietnam War, and of the attitude of individual ministers and lay-people to the issues, serves several purposes. It clarifies the cause of Hyde's objection to the official stance of the Church, and it
places his activism in the context of protest by his contemporary ministers. In addition, it underlines the official Methodist tradition of tolerance for varying viewpoints, according to conscience. This was a factor in the degree of official toleration given to Hyde and to other ministers with radical beliefs. The dilemma for the Church as it endeavoured to practise toleration at an official level was that whereas it strongly supported in principle the Peace Movement and the Vietnam War protest, at the same time it endeavoured to accommodate within its membership the wide diversity of opinion which was expressed by both lay people and ministers.

There have been, however, many Methodist official proclamations in support of peace and in protest against the Vietnam War. Particularly since the Second World War the Methodist Church leaned towards the Peace Movement.

In 1950 the Conference resolved

That the Social Service Department extend its activities in the field of international affairs by organizing throughout this State a Methodist Peace Fellowship. 55


Conference resolved,
The aims and objects of the Peace Movement to be:
(1) The collecting and distributing of factual information regarding international affairs
(2) The educating of people against the propaganda which play upon fear and prejudice
(3) The spreading of information on the activities of the United Nations Specialised Agencies to show how nations are co-operating for the good of all.
Although the following year Conference warned against linking with peace movements which are only a cover for subversive and anti-Christian doctrine, support for peace was stimulated by the growing threat of nuclear weapons.

As early as 1964, E. Collocott, the Methodist minister at Epping, publicly protested against the Vietnam War. Protest escalated with despatch of the first Australian troops to Vietnam in April 1965, and in October 1965 the New South Wales Conference recorded anxiety and dismay at the trend of events in that country. It requested that the Federal Government

(a) Use its good offices to the fullest extent to influence America to explore every possible way of ending hostilities by negotiation, and not to cease doing so because of failures and rebuffs
(b) Use its good offices to the fullest extent in an endeavour to have the Vietnam situation dealt with by the United Nations
(c) Increase progressively Australian expenditure on economic aid to developing countries, especially in Asia.

57. Methodist Church of Australasia. New South Wales Conference Minutes. 1958, p.178. It was resolved that 'Conference urge the Government through the United Nations to negotiate an agreement for discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests'. This stand was further emphasized in 1963 by the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia.
58. The Methodist, Sydney, 20 June 1964, p.14. Collocott protested against the infliction of enormous suffering on peasants who had 'the ill fortune to be born in lands which governments of other countries decide are strategically important'.
The following year the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia issued a comprehensive statement concerning the Vietnam War and passed resolutions on the issues involved. The Conference called upon the Federal Government to press for discussion with the parties concerned 'in an endeavour to discover a peaceful solution of Vietnam's problems'. The Conference Statement declared that no mandate had been given by Australians to send conscripts to Vietnam, and it resolved that the Government discontinue the policy of conscripting troops for Vietnam. In addition, it affirmed the right of citizens to dissent from this government policy.

Opposition against the Vietnam War centred on two areas. One was the particular nature of the war itself. The other focus of opposition was the manner in which The National Service Act of 1951 was implemented in respect to the Vietnam War, especially in regard to the ballot method of selecting recruits. Opposition was further intensified when the Government used Section 7A (1) (a) of the Commonwealth Crimes Act to prosecute those who were accused of inciting, urging, aiding or encouraging young men to resist their draft call up.

The New South Wales Conference welcomed the Statement and Resolutions of the General Conference.

61. Ibid.
Copies were widely distributed in New South Wales Methodist Churches and published in church papers.\(^6^3\) Both the General and the New South Wales Conferences supported the view that the Vietnam War protest was a matter for individual conscience, but the official pronouncements, made by both Conferences, against the war gave at least some encouragement to the protesters. It will be shown, however, that there were individual ministers, including Hyde, who were not content with mere pronouncements. They wanted activism at the official level.

Perhaps more than any other social issue this century, the Vietnam War was a political and moral cause to which many Methodist ministers believed they should relate their religion. Hyde was certainly not alone as a protester.

Allan Loy, Vice-Principal of Leigh Theological College, prepared a history in February 1966 of the origin and development of the war and argued that Western participation could not be justified. Extracts were read in Federal Parliament, debated for several days, and information in the report recorded in Hansard.\(^6^4\)

\(^6^3\) *The Methodist*, Sydney, 19 November 1966, p.5.

\(^6^4\) A. Loy, Unpublished transcript of Address, February 1966. Also refer Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, 8 March 1966 to 13 May 1966, House of Representatives, Vols. H of R 50 and 51, pp.690-699. Loy's information was used in debate by Allan Fraser, Member for Eden-Monaro.
What was perceived as the injustice of the conscription provision arising from the 1951 National Service Act increased the bitterness of the Vietnam controversy. At one of several anti-conscription rallies arranged by Alan Walker, then minister at the Central Methodist Mission, Allan Loy drew prolonged applause when he detailed objections to conscription for Vietnam. Loy maintained his sustained public protest throughout the Vietnam controversy, both verbally and in numerous published papers and articles. In July 1970 he preached sermons at Willoughby South and Northbridge Methodist Churches. In the sermons he argued that scripture indicated that church people should commit themselves to active campaigning in contentious social issues such as the campaign against the manner in which the National Service Act was being applied to the Vietnam War conscripts.

The impact of his sermons indicated the divisions within the laity on the issue. As a result of his sermon the Northbridge Quarterly Meeting resolved that he was never to preach there again. In contrast to the Northbridge action, the Lindfield Quarterly Meeting

65. A. Loy, 'Conscription', unpublished transcript of address given at Rally in Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, 14 August 1966. A summary of his objections to conscription was printed in Impact, September 1966, p.5.

resolved that the church people

take seriously the pronouncements of the General Conference and begin to campaign against the National Service Act.67

During 1968 and 1969 the Vietnam War and the conscription issue were the main topics of publications in The Methodist. Week by week the subject dominated the pages as protests were expressed, or countered, in letters, editorials and articles.

In October 1969 two Methodist ministers were among 38 who signed a Statement of Defiance of The National Service Act which was published in the press. The Reverend R.M. Page and a fellow minister were fined 50 dollars or 25 days in gaol. Their protest was based on the conviction that the Vietnam War was morally wrong. They were charged not for defying the National Service Act, but for defying Section 7A (1) (a) of the Commonwealth Crimes Act. Specifically, they were accused of inciting, urging, aiding or encouraging young men to break the Law.68

67. Ibid., p.6. Failure to register for conscription was seen to be a more effective way to combat the National Service Act than conscientious objection. Theological students, sons of Church ministers and sons of prominent officials, including the son of Australia's Chairman of Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Committee, defied registration, many publicly burning their draft cards.

The gaoling of the Mowbray triplets, sons of a prominent Methodist family, was an additional incentive to Methodist protest. Robert, one of the triplets, was sentenced in March 1969 to seven days gaol for failure to attend a medical examination and for refusing to agree to future attendance at medical examinations. By then, five young men were serving gaol sentences. Gordon Trickett, who later became Director of the Department of Christian Citizenship, was the Methodist minister at Armidale at the time and, together with University students in his congregation, actively supported Robert during his imprisonment at Armidale.

As imprisonments continued, support for the draft-resisting conscientious objectors caused the Reverend Douglas Trathen to lose his position as principal of Methodism's prestigious Newington College. Exemption from conscription was offered to theological students by the Government. When one of the Methodist students refused on principle to avail himself of the exemption, Trathen and the Reverend Norman Webb, Master of Wesley College within the University of Sydney, joined in a silent prayer vigil outside Long Bay Gaol as a gesture of protest. Trathen also wrote to The Sydney Morning Herald in support of the resisters and criticized the questionable nature of the National Service Act. He

declared,

...as an ex-Serviceman, a private citizen and a man of law and LAW, I publicly encourage 20-year-olds, in good conscience and loyalty to God, rather than Caesar, to defy the National Service Act

and he concluded his letter with the appeal,

Mr. Gorton and members of Cabinet, for Christ's sake, stop.70

The Church sympathized with Trathen's stand, but conservative lay members of the College Council objected strongly to the College principal's public support for the draft-resisters. They made Trathen's position as principal so untenable that he had no option but to resign. He submitted his resignation to Conference on 15 September 1970, and the College Council accepted the resignation on 8 October. Trathen left the active ministry of the Church and accepted a position in curriculum development with the Education Department.71

Legally, the Church had the power to dismiss the College Council for its action, which would have been a public stand in support of their minister for being faithful to his conscience. Because it failed to do so, the neutrality of the Church on the issue was criticized by many ministers and lay members as being irresponsible.


During the era of protest the New South Wales Methodist Church did not officially direct people into protest. It did, however, emphasize in a General Conference resolution that participation, or not, in armed conflict must be a matter of conscience and that the Church must offer its fellowship and pastoral care in full measure both to those who conscientiously serve and those who conscientiously object to involvement in or training for armed conflict.\(^{72}\)

The ambivalent attitude was sustained when the Reverend W.D. O'Reilly, the current President of Conference, published in 1970 a statement in *The Methodist* in which he defined the aim of The Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, and detailed the dates of the proposed Moratorium protests planned to take place on 8, 9, and 10 May 1970. His statement reiterated the General Conference 1969 resolutions calling for an early end to the war, and for members of the Church to take such responsible action as is available to them in working for an early review of the Act.

At the same time O'Reilly emphasized that the information is presented without comment for...guidance...to any who are seeking to determine...what...actions their judgment and conscience may require of them.\(^{73}\)

\(^{72}\) The Methodist, Sydney, 14 June 1969, p.6.  
\(^{73}\) W.D. O'Reilly, 'Statement By The President of Conference', in *The Methodist*, 2 May 1970, p.2. Additional action by the 1969 General Conference was a request for Federal Government to delete the exemption from The National Service Act for ministers of religion and theological students. Conference considered it unfair to impose the Act with such discrimination in favour of the ministers and theological students.
There were ministers who were satisfied with the official pronouncements made by the Church, but others, including Hyde, Trickett and Trathen, believed a firmer and more practical expression of official protest should have been made. Hyde expressed impatience with the Church's policy of passing responsibility for action to individuals by its decree that Vietnam War protest by Church members was to be a matter of individual conscience. He wanted more radical action from the Church, and he criticized what he regarded as the usual facade of passing pious resolutions and deploring 'violence' at demonstrations whilst ignoring police violence and the supreme violence of war itself. It compromised by recognising conscientious objectors and ignoring draft resisters. It was a dramatic revelation of the bankruptcy of the church as a moral leader in the life of Australia.74

As far as individual ministers were concerned, however, there was no lack of deep commitment to the protest movement. On 7 May 1970 more than eight hundred names were listed as Vietnam War protesters and supporters of the Moratorium in an advertisement, published in The Sydney Morning Herald, which called for people to support the Moratorium. The names were listed in occupational categories which covered a wide spectrum of the community. Names of twenty-one clergy were included, and of these, eight were ordained New South Wales Methodist ministers.75

ii. The Peace Movement and Nuclear Weapons Protest.

After the withdrawal by the end of 1971 of all Australian troops from Vietnam, the concentrated protests by the Peace Movement supporters were directed against nuclear armaments. Hyde's commitment to the anti-nuclear movement was just as fervent as his Vietnam protest, and he has continued into his retirement a dedicated participation in the protests, including activity at the organizational level.

As recently as 1986 he was appointed Chairman for the Shire of Flinders of the International Year of Peace. The appointment involved co-ordinating activities of four hundred and fifty organizations in the Shire in the cause of peace.76 Subsequently he organized the planting of a Time Capsule at a Shrine of Peace in the grounds of the Shire Council by representatives of every school in the Shire of Flinders. In an explanatory speech which he delivered to various organizations he described the activity as 'An Adventure in Secular Religion'.77 The capsule contained records of the thinking of the community on the meaning and significance of the Year of Peace. The aim of the activities associated with the project was
to give the school a unique opportunity to lead the community in a grand quest for peace in all human relationships. 78

78. Ibid., p.5.
Hyde acknowledged the influence on his thinking of Julian Huxley's *Religion Without Revelation*, published in 1967. This influence was apparent in the stated aim of the Peace activities which Hyde organized. People would, he hoped, see their most sacred duty as the fullest realization of their own inherent possibilities, and the building of a society where every individual has the maximum opportunity to realise his own potential.79

As far as Hyde was concerned, the celebrations were to be seen as religious in the sense that they were an attempt to link the people with spiritual forces in the world and in themselves. He planned the activities as a community project in preference to inviting official participation by the Church establishment, or by political organizations. Problems would arise, he claimed, if such organizations were involved in the great cause of the International Year of Peace because they would inevitably give most importance to their own priorities. If the political parties were involved he claimed that they would give priority to the gaining and retention of power, and if the Church participated it would give priority to its beliefs and ritual practices.

Hyde's response to the pressures exerted by the nuclear armaments and Peace Movement issues was to involve his religion directly in the world's dilemma arising from the nuclear threat. His religion at this

79. Ibid., p.3.
stage, as will be shown later, did not conform to traditional Western Christianity.

Just as Hyde was not alone in his Vietnam War protests, so he found that many of his fellow ministers also supported the nuclear armaments protest. Among them were New South Wales ministers who became prominent activists.

Included among the protesters was the Reverend Gordon Trickett who was a member of the Nuclear Disarmament Co-ordinating Committee. He helped organize the first Nuclear Disarmament March in Sydney and was responsible for the peace marches on Palm Sunday. Trickett rejected a literalist interpretation of the Bible. He related his interpretation of the New Testament message to his assessment of the futility of war and the suffering it caused. His experiences in the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War, and his University Master's Degree in Psychology, influenced his views. The secularized nature of his religion caused his fellow minister, Alan Walker, to label him as a 'radical Christian humanist'.

Trickett received strong support from the Reverend Clyde Dominish, later to become Moderator of the Church,

80. G. Trickett, Recorded personal interview, 10 October 1986. Walker was also a life-long committed pacifist, but he retained a stronger attachment to traditional conservative Christian beliefs and practice.
who also joined the peace marches held in the Wollongong district. Dominish's peace activities drew strong criticism from conservative members of his Wollongong circuit, many of whom had criticized Hyde for similar activities ten years earlier. They once again claimed that religion should not be concerned with the political issues of the world.

The Reverend Allan Brand was another deeply committed peace activist who had no hesitation in relating his religion to political issues.\textsuperscript{81} His basic theology was more conventional than that which characterized many secularized ministries, but he developed an appreciation of spirituality in other faiths and in people outside the Church establishment. A close acquaintance with two Buddhist monks, who were peace activists, caused him to claim that they were far more basically Christian than many members of the Christian Churches. After his active involvement for almost forty years with dedicated members of the Peace Movement he said he had come to a realization that it was not necessary 'to make a man a member of the Church to serve the Master, Jesus'.\textsuperscript{82} This was a view which Hyde also consistently promoted.

For three years Brand was chairman of the New South

\textsuperscript{81} A. Brand, Recorded personal interview, 10 October 1986. Also in addresses written in Brand's personal scrapbook.

\textsuperscript{82} A. Brand, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
Wales Peace Movement and was presented with one of the 200 gold Peace Medals distributed in the world by the International Peace Committee. For ten years at least he was labelled the 'pink parson', was investigated by A.S.I.O., and was criticized by conservatives. There were, however, sufficient members of the Church who had enough confidence in his sincerity to vote him into the position of President of the Conference in 1974.

Brand had no hesitation in acknowledging the powerful influence which Angus exercised on his thinking and ministry. The influence was apparent in more than forty years of his activity in the Peace Movement and it was demonstrated particularly in the priority he gave to addressing human need in the context of potential world conflict. The influence was also evident in his willingness to disregard the restrictions which traditional Christian dogma and creed placed on acceptance that the concerns and labours of agnostics and atheists in the Peace Movement were essentially Christian in spirit. This attitude towards dogma and creed was a characteristic of ministry which Brand shared with both Hobbin and Hyde and which, to a large extent, all three derived from the Angus legacy. It was a characteristic which, in his last years of ministry, Hyde carried beyond his peace activism into other areas of activity.

83. Ibid., Only two medals were forwarded to New South Wales, to be presented to prominent Peace Movement workers. Brand was selected as one recipient.
3.7. **HYDE AND NEW DIRECTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS.**

Hyde's disillusionment with the Church establishment deepened at the conclusion of his Wollongong appointment. The bitterness he felt when his protest against the Vietnam War was not given general endorsement by his congregation was intensified when Church officials voted against renewing his invitation to remain as minister of the Wollongong Church. What was becoming a tense situation was resolved when a deterioration in his health caused his medical advisers to insist that he terminate his preaching ministry from the pulpit. This disqualified him from appointment to a normal circuit ministry. His disillusionment increased when the Stationing Committee and the current President of the Conference, who was Alan Walker, his fellow college student, were unable to satisfy him with the offer of an acceptable position within the Church establishment in New South Wales. He returned to Victoria in 1970 as Editor with the Joint Board of Christian Education, responsible for providing Sunday School and Youth and Adult study material for four co-operating denominations throughout Australia and New Zealand.⁸⁴

Hyde was conscious of his desire to use his new position for what he described as 'a glorious opportunity

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for adventurous thinking'. 85 This, in his understanding, meant the presentation of an interpretation of religion which could be reconciled with secular knowledge. His frustration mounted during the few years that he remained in the position when he found it necessary to conform to the common denominator of the theology of four denominations.

Indicative of the diversity of restrictions he experienced was the censorship of a study he wrote on 'race' because the material being produced was about to be sold on the South African market. 86 Hyde once more compromised between expediency and what he believed to be truth. He used terms such as 'progressive revelation', 'form criticism', and played with concepts of incarnation, and the 'two-nature' theory, and the Greek and Hebrew meanings of the word 'virgin'. 87 He tried to promote in an acceptable form what was rationally justified in his own mind, knowing well that his audience was putting a different, usually literal, interpretation on what he said.

Prior to Hyde's retirement from the ministry he took leave of absence in 1973 to teach full-time in a Victorian State High School. He taught English, History and Legal Studies. This experience served to reinforce

85. Ibid., p.18.
86. Ibid., p.18.
87. Ibid., p.39.
his commitment to what he regarded as secularized religion. During his teaching he established considerable rapport with his pupils. He was determined not to indoctrinate them but to introduce, through the normal curriculum, an appreciation of basic values. Although most of his pupils rejected 'religious teaching', Hyde believed that they were free to come to an understanding of the deep spiritual truths and moral values inherent in any study of history or literature or law. 88

When he concluded his teaching he was convinced that he had achieved far more for 'Christian Education' by teaching English than he had ever achieved by teaching 'religion'.

This experience reinforced a radical attitude to religious education in schools that had been germinating in Hyde's thinking for some time and which he now began publicly to promote. His ideas had much in common with the Report of the Russell Committee which was submitted in Victoria in 1974. The 340 page report, which was prepared by religious and educational leaders, recommended a new religious instruction approach in State schools. It was proposed that the Religious Instructors be replaced by members of the school teaching staff. Religion was to be studied objectively and integrated with other subjects. 89

Proposals in the Russell report were not implemented.

88. Ibid., p.20.
Ideally, Hyde envisaged the study of religion in schools as a normal part of the curriculum in sociology or social studies. He believed that the importation from outside of a minister or specialist religious teacher who was not a regular member of the staff, and the isolation of religious studies as a subject apart from the normal curriculum, violated 'the concept of religion as an integral part of human life'.

Hyde was particularly concerned about the divisive potential in the existing system. This, he claimed, occurred because of the opportunity, generally utilized, for indoctrination of the pupils by the various denominations. Concern with this divisiveness caused him to object strongly to the existence of Church schools. Such schools, in his opinion, not only perpetuated division in the community through denominational indoctrination but, in many instances, catered to elitism and diverted State aid from poorer government schools. In an Australian Broadcasting Corporation talk he claimed that

between 1976 and 1983 government aid to independent schools increased by over 106% in real terms. In the same period the grants to government schools decreased by 2%.

90. D. Hyde, 'Liberation From God', op.cit., p.20
Eventually Hyde slightly modified his proposals for change in the system with the suggestion that religious studies be taught as a separate subject as well as being incorporated in the teaching of all other subjects. The subject would be primarily concerned with imparting an understanding of 'beliefs and values which, in most cultures, have their origin in religion'. In all instances the subject would be taught by teaching staff, professionally trained under the normal teacher training procedure.

Hyde's proposals were formally submitted, through a branch of the Labor Party, to the Victorian Education Department Curriculum Assessment Board. Once again, in these proposals, the Angus influence appears to surface, insofar as Hyde envisaged that the new proposals would encourage students in the educational process of questioning values and their basis. Such a process, Hyde said, would encourage the individual search for truth instead of 'an authoritative imposition of beliefs'.


93. Ibid., p.4.
3.8. THE WHEEL TURNS FULL CIRCLE. HYDE'S PUBLIC
RESTATEMENT OF RADICAL THEOLOGY.

During the period of Hyde's semi-retirement the
wheel turned full circle back to the public declaration
of radical theology which he first expressed in the 1930s.
The catalyst for what amounted to his renewed attack on
the established Church and its dogma was twofold. One
influence was his passionate commitment to the Peace
Movement generally, and the Vietnam War protest in
particular. The other was his freedom from the restraints
on expression of his theological interpretations which
had been imposed by the position of authority which he
held in the Church establishment for almost twenty years.
The opposition and criticism which his new public profile
attracted from people within the Church were to lead him
into a period of deep personal disillusionment with the
Church establishment, and into his forthright public
criticism of its dogma and creeds. His penchant towards
the dramatic and extreme expression of bitter criticisms
of the Church institution tended to alienate him from
many ministerial and lay members of the Church.

In the latter years of his ministry, and continuing
into retirement, he was a frequent speaker on the
Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Religious Talks
programmes. As he experienced the new sense of freedom
from restrictions on his public pronouncements it was as
though floodgates were opened facilitating expression of long repressed theological interpretations which satisfied his longing for a rational religion. He combined the expression of his theological interpretation with denunciation, and on occasions outright rejection, of the Church establishment, including its traditional creed and dogma. The bitterness engendered by his Vietnam protest experiences was compounded by his inability in 1975 to effect what he considered would be reform of the Church's policies. His efforts in this direction were made through a series of resolutions he proposed at Synod and Conference which were rejected.

Hyde's objection to the exclusive beliefs of traditional Western Christianity, and to its dualism, was heightened by a visit in 1974 to the People's Republic of China and to Arnhem Land in 1976. In the China of 1974 he was so impressed by the achievement of feeding, housing and employing its 850,000,000 people, and by the people's apparent moral integrity at that time, that on his return to Australia he began preaching on the subject, 'I saw a Man casting out Devils'. 94 His reference was to a complaint made to Jesus that a man was casting out devils who was not a 'follower', to which Jesus replied, 'Forbid him not. He that is not against me is for me'. Hyde's China experience increased his questioning as to whether the work Jesus commissioned, to care for the needy, was no

longer dependent on the Christian Church, but that 'God might be devising some other means of getting his work done in the world'. This was, of course, a suggestion promoted by theological modernists in the 1960s and was not exclusive to Hyde.

In Arnhem Land he was disillusioned by the exclusiveness of the traditional teaching about the Christian God, and by what he considered to be the bigotry of the Christian Church. The Church had labelled the aborigines as irreligious heathens, but Hyde's assessment was

they were so 'religious', that life was so filled with spirit, so essentially sacred, that it did violence to their whole idea of the 'spiritual' to isolate one 'spirit' and and call him by the name of God.  

In addition to his China and Arnhem Land impressions there were other factors which shaped his thinking at this period. They were: his rejection of a literalist interpretation of the Bible; a commitment to search for a rational religion which would be an intelligent response to the pressure of 'secular' knowledge; his espousal of socialism, and rejection of capitalism as un-Christlike; his legal training, allied to the Angus heritage, which carried an obligation to search for truth; and, not insignificantly, his inclination to brusqueness and drama.

95. Ibid., p.31.
96. Ibid., p.33.
In this setting he gave free expression to his religious views. Titles of papers he wrote, and of talks he gave for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, indicated the trend of his thinking.

As early as 1970 he wrote 'No Church in the Year 2000'. There was much in the paper which echoed the thinking of Rudolph Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Harvey Cox and John Robinson. His thoughts reflected the 'Death of God' theology of the 1960s. He emphasized that he did not contemplate the end of Christianity,

but rather a radical re-structuring or, perhaps, de-structuring of the forms and institutions through which Christianity communicates with the world.97

The thesis of his paper was that the necessity for restructuring was due primarily to two crises in the Church. One was the crisis of identity. This first crisis, he claimed, was confusion within the Church about its role. This had caused failure in its relationship to society. He gave two examples of what he assessed as its failures. Each was related to his particular areas of interest. One was the Christian Church's attitude to the Vietnam War protest, and the other was its identification, mainly in relation to Protestant Churches, with a social elite in education. In both cases he regarded the Church as being subservient to duly constituted authority.

The second crisis which he claimed existed in the Church was in theology. He referred to Gerhard Ebeling's assessment that there was chaos in Christian teaching. Hyde claimed that this situation would remain in both Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches until churchmen 'have the courage to trust the authority of rational thought'. 98 It was his belief that the crisis challenged the Church to a new honesty and a new recognition of the place of human reason in the search for divine truth. 99

By 1976, when the Australian Broadcasting Corporation invited him to present a series of broadcast talks, the views he expressed had become more radical. They were given in the aftermath of the frustration he experienced when trying to conform to a common core of inter-denominational religious belief which he regarded as the lowest common denominator of theology. The three basic emphases arising from his views and experience were apparent in the broadcasts. They were, as previously stated, his commitment to the personal search for truth as the basis of authority, the inclination of his theological orientation towards Liberation Theology and the social gospel, and finally his desire to promote his views by utilizing his area of expertise which was religious education.

98. Ibid., p.4.
99. Ibid., p.4.
The series of the 1976 broadcast talks was entitled 'Religion of The Future', and was delivered under the five sub-titles of 'Religion Today', 'Religion Without God', 'Religion Without Church', 'Secular Religion' and 'A Religion of Rational Faith'. As a background to his first talk he referred to the apparent overall decline in traditional adherence to the forms of the established Church. In subsequent talks he blamed much of this defection on the dualism of the Church's separation from the world, and on its relative failure to reconcile its theological interpretations to scientific discoveries. He consistently called for 'a rational approach to the religion of the future', and repeatedly indicated that in his opinion this was a necessary response to the challenge presented by expanding knowledge. He declared that if religion is to survive it must be both 'secular and a religion of rational faith'.

It is evident from the text of Hyde's talks that his difficulty in formulating a rational interpretation of the Christian religion as the exclusive true faith was complicated by his deep appreciation of the obvious

102. Ibid., p.2; also Talk No.5, 'A Rational Faith', p.4.
103. Ibid., Talk No.1, 'Religion Today', p.3.
spirituality he had observed in people who were not connected with the Christian Church establishment. These observations fuelled his questioning of the truth of the exclusive nature of the traditional concept held by Western Christianity of God and salvation. In his talks he endeavoured to come to terms with what he had perceived as the spirituality of 'the aborigine [who] has no word for "god"'.\textsuperscript{104} He also spoke of what he interpreted as 'the paradox of morality without God which China presented'.\textsuperscript{105} In China he was aware of...the hungry being fed, of the homeless being housed, of the naked being clothed, of the captives being set free... of people with new and exciting moral values and ethical standards, motivated by a real faith in and deep concern for the other man.\textsuperscript{106}

His long held belief that implementation of the social gospel was the essential Christianity was evident in his comment, 'surely any Christian ought to believe that wherever the poor are being fed you find Jesus'.\textsuperscript{107}

In his broadcast talks he developed this view into a proposition which was consistent with the 'Death of God' theologies, and with the 'Work Done' thesis written by New South Wales Methodism's Norman Webb.\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{align*}
\text{104. D. Hyde, 'Liberation From God', op.cit., p.33.} \\
\text{105. Ibid., p.30.} \\
\text{107. D. Hyde, 'Liberation From God', op.cit., p.30.} \\
\text{108. N. Webb, Work Done, Epworth Press, Redfern, 1977. This work will be examined in a later chapter.}
\end{align*}
proposition was that the work of the institutionalized Christian Church has been completed. He supported the opinion that while the Church was increasingly tending to ally itself with the state and the establishment, as a bureaucratic power group, the work of the Holy Spirit in the world was increasingly being carried out through other channels.¹⁰⁹

Hyde then made what appeared to be an inevitable progression in thought which resulted from this proposition. It was that the compassionate work of Jesus was being carried out in the world by agencies other than the Church establishment, and by people other than baptized Christians. The inevitable step was to question the traditional Christian concept of God and the exclusive authority assumed by the institution of the Christian Church. This step led him to promote the view of God as immanent Spirit in the world, which he said was 'truer to the Christian belief'.¹¹⁰ He emphasized that St. John did not say "God is a spirit" but "God is spirit".¹¹¹ He also joined with those contemporary theologians who called for a moratorium on the use of the word 'God' until it was stripped of man-made misleading concepts and 'Till we can use the word with understanding and integrity'.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Talk No. 2, 'Religion Without God', p.3.
¹¹¹ Ibid., p.5.
¹¹² Ibid., p.5.
The endorsement Hyde gave in 1976 to ideas expressed by H.G. Wells in *Outline of History* and by Julian Huxley in *Religion Without Revelation* confirmed his near identification with Humanism. Indeed, he concluded his autobiography, 'Liberation From God', with the sentence 'Call me not atheist. Call me, rather, humanist.' The Angus influence, however, persisted, and Hyde retained a deep commitment to the person and humanitarian teaching of 'Jesus, his only Lord'. It is the contention of this thesis that this commitment placed him in the category of those ministers who either classified themselves, or were classified by others, as 'Christian Humanists'.

This classification has been readily accepted by most of those ministers studied in this thesis who practised ministries identified as secularized religion. During personal interviews, Hobbin, Trickett, Webb, Noffs and Hyde all classified themselves as Christian Humanists. Similar acknowledgement was made by Judge Ray Watson who, as already noted, has preached over three thousand sermons from Methodist pulpits.

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ministers involved in this study and examination of their ministries suggest that this classification is consistent with the nature of secularized religion as it is defined in this thesis, and that it may be expected to prove valid when categorizing most Christian ministers who identify their ministries with secularized religion.

Hyde has recently acknowledged an increasing interest in Process Theology, which is a theological interpretation examined in the final chapter of this thesis. This shift in his thinking, together with his acknowledged continuing commitment to 'Jesus, his only Lord', provide grounds to now disregard the validity of his earlier claim to be a Humanist, when Humanism is understood in its materialistic, or atheistic, sense. It is far more defensible to place him in the category of 'Christian Humanist'.

His broadcast talks continued into the 1980s, and in 1983 the theme of his talk, entitled 'Guide-Lines To The Discovery of Truth', was a reiteration of his past appeals to 'the individual to find truth for himself'\textsuperscript{117} and to adopt the practice of questioning given information. He continued his crusade to persuade people to seek a rational faith when, in 1985, he gave a series of eleven talks which were grouped into 'Questions About the Bible', 'Questions About God' and 'Questions About Jesus'.

'Questions About the Bible' was presented in May 1985. The talk combined criticism of the acceptance of Biblical literalism with a summarized history of the compilation of the Bible, and appeal to use it as the supreme resource book of religion on which people of all ages can draw, to find for themselves, the truth that makes men free. 118

The series, 'Questions About God', was given under the titles of 'We Grow By Asking Questions', 'Why God?', 'Who is God?', 'Goodness and God', and 'The Spectrum of Belief'. The whole series was structured to stimulate questioning. Hyde admitted in the first broadcast that the talks were 'designed, not to provide answers, but to encourage questioning'. 119 His conclusion at the end of the last talk reflected Angus' teaching and confirmed his own commitment to relate his ministry to the needs of people in their worldly situation. He said,

The ultimate question Jesus asks of me is not, 'What do you believe about God?' but, 'Do you feed the hungry?'. 120

It was a concept of Christianity which Hyde was able to relate to his idealistic socialism.

Concentration on the humanity of Jesus characterized

the last series, 'Questions About Jesus'. The titles of this series were, 'Asking Questions', 'Who Was Jesus?', 'Why Was Jesus Killed?', 'What Did Jesus Teach?' and 'What Does Jesus Mean To Me?'. In the series he grappled with the same questions which he had confronted fifty years earlier when he was a student of New Testament Theology in Angus' class. The wheel had turned its full circle, through his public appearance of conformity, back to his public declarations of radical modernist views. The answers he suggested in the talks were substantially the same answers which had led to his temporary suspension from College in 1931.

He concluded the series of talks by referring to the two men who, he said, most influenced his life. One was the Reverend Dr. J. Burton, one-time President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia. He quoted Burton's testimony. It was a testimony which had influenced Hyde's own ministry, and from which he had gained encouragement,

While I cannot pronounce all the beliefs that come easily to the lips of other men... Christ is all the God I need for my daily life... he gives me the moral leadership I need... and gives me all the strength I require to overcome my temptations. 121.

It may be seen to be a fitting conclusion to Hyde's ministry that he concluded the last talk of the series by

posing the question, What Does Jesus mean to me to-day?', and by quoting in reply the words, 'Jesus is my only Lord'. They were the words used by his revered mentor and teacher, Samuel Angus, who was the other great influence on his life.122

This answer also gives a different perspective to the apparently radical pronouncements which he made during the late 1970s in 'Liberation From God'. An objective assessment offered by this thesis as the result of studying Hyde's ministry, writings and thinking is that Hyde is not liberated from God; he is liberated from a particular concept of God. His liberation is from the traditional dualist concept of God as a Being located in an 'other world'. It was a liberation he first experienced as a student when he accepted theological modernism.

In November 1985 Hyde paid a special tribute to Angus. He broadcast for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation readings of five brief extracts from Angus' Christianity and Dogma, and prefaced each reading with a brief comment. In one of his comments, which referred to Angus' persecution by traditionalist ministers from

122. Ibid., p.10.
within the Church, he said,

In the late 1920s there began for him 11 years of continual persecution as a heretic. But to us, privileged to be his students he remains for ever as the man, who, in an unforgettable way, introduced us to Jesus as our only Lord. 123

It was in Angus that Hyde found not only a mentor, but a model for the theology he presented in his ministry of secularized religion.

The contrast between Hyde's ministry and Hobbin's ministry provides an example of the varied areas covered by secularized religion. Hobbin's ministry concentrated on responding to economically and socially deprived humanity. Hyde's ministry concentrated on two quite different areas. In one area, he responded to the political issues of Peace and the Vietnam War. The other area of his ministry was his response, through religious education and theological interpretation, to the world's increasing knowledge. He strove to reconcile his religion and theological interpretations to the world's secular knowledge, and to the achievements of agnostic and atheistic socialism, while at the same time he maintained a commitment to the humanitarian teaching of Jesus. In doing so he developed a ministry which, in the terms of this thesis, may be classified legitimately as secularized religion.

Although Hyde's ministry conforms to the criteria required of a secularized ministry, it may also appear to be atypical of secularized ministries. Such an impression is due to a widely held perception that secularized ministries are mainly confined to giving practical humanitarian aid to alleviate physical need. Hyde's ministry may be classified as atypical only insofar as it did not conform to such a pattern. His ministry was, nevertheless, secularized as it responded to pressures imposed by politics and secular knowledge.

As a sequel to his ministry, Hyde has recently engaged in a personal crusade. His aim is to encourage members belonging to the tradition of New South Wales Methodism to engage in an 'historical assessment of the past so that they could fashion the future'. As he visits various Churches, particularly those in which he has ministered, he explains to congregations the nature of his mission. It is apparent from his talks that Hyde has rekindled his hope of educating people to seek truth in the interests of finding a rational faith and building 'a more purposeful future on the foundation of yesterday'. He is still the secular minister, wanting to relate religion to the world.


CHAPTER 4. - THE REVEREND TED NOFFS AND THE WAYSIDE CHAPEL MINISTRY. A PHENOMENON OF POPULAR SECULARIZED RELIGION.
4.1. **INTRODUCTION.**

In 1966 Ivan Southall described the Wayside Chapel as 'something of a phenomenon'.¹ Three years later, in his book *The Wayside Chapel*, Ted Noffs referred to a Sydney magazine article which included the sentence,

> If you want to raise the blood pressure of conservative church people in New South Wales, just mention the name of Ted Noffs or The Wayside Chapel.²

The relevance to this thesis of a study of Ted Noffs' ministry at The Wayside Chapel, situated in Sydney's Kings Cross, lies in the reasons which prompted these comments. In summary, Noffs' secularized ministry has been arguably the most extreme and most public expression within New South Wales Methodism of a ministry which rejected significant areas of Christian traditional dogma and doctrine. At the same time, its wide popular approval from people outside the established Church institution warranted Southall's description of the ministry as a phenomenon. This chapter will explore the nature of Noffs' ministry which gave rise to these two features, and will review the secularized nature of the ministry as it related religion to the daily life needs of the people it served.

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Noffs' ministry attracted a wide spectrum of support. His ministry has been supported by academics and illiterates, medical researchers and drug addicts, psychologists and psychiatric patients, socialites and community drop-outs, businessmen and hippies. Commercial consortiums and businessmen have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to his work; he has conversed with society's rejects in sleezy pads in Kings Cross, and he has addressed The House of Lords in England. His voluntary helpers include pensioners and released prisoners, and he has received personal support from the Prince and Princess of Wales. The 24,000 couples who have been married by Noffs, between 1964 and 1986, have ranged from film stars to a derelict couple who brought along their five children to the ceremony. 11,000 children have been named in his Naming Ceremonies. Among its many activities The Wayside Chapel has set up a Coffee House, a Crisis Centre, an Aboriginal Affairs Programme, the Errol Flynn Refuge, Outreach, the Shepherd of the Streets team, a Theatre, and has been active in Vietnam War and anti-nuclear protests. The Life Education drug prevention programme, initiated by Noffs, has been praised by the Government and adopted in overseas countries.

In contrast to the popularity of his ministry in the general community, many people from within his own denomination and from other Churches have disparaged his
work and denigrated his theology. Opposition culminated in several attempts to lay heresy charges against him, and one unsuccessful official charge of unfaithfulness to the doctrines of the Church was made.

It is necessary to examine his theological orientation to understand why he developed his radical ministry. His theology provided the rationale for his ministry which, in turn, responded to social need. Commitment to society's outcasts, and alleviation of their needs, arose from his theological conviction that the Spirit of God is incarnate in every human being. He believed that all people were children of God, irrespective of who or what they were. Failure to address unrelieved human need was incompatible with his theology. For this reason, Noffs believed it was imperative to address human need wherever he found it. Consistently his theology and his perception of human need provided the motivations of his ministry. There was no conflict between these two motivations. One was the outcome of the other. A logical extension of his theology was his response to the existence of human need. The two motivations were correlative.

A study of Noffs' ministry also indicates that the style of his ministry was influenced by two contrasting traits in his character. Noffs was trained as an engineer, and he also admitted to a passionate devotion to poetry.
There is apparent in his ministry the pragmatism of the engineer, entwined with the idealism of the poet.

An examination will be made in the chapter of his Wayside Chapel ministry, including the development of the Life Education Centres. The Life Education Centres are too recent for anything approaching objective assessment. It is important, however, to record something of the enthusiastic endorsement received by the project during the six years of its development to demonstrate the acceptability of Noffs' secularized ministry to secular authorities. In fact, the obvious affection and esteem in which Noffs is held by so many non-church-going Australians is evidence that many Australians are not anti-religious so much as unimpressed by the traditional church institutions. The study of Noffs and his ministry, then, is one way of exploring the definite, if elusive, nature of Australian spirituality and the appeal of aspects of secularized religion to many Australians outside the church institution.
Ted Noffs was born in the New South Wales town of Mudgee on 14 August 1926. His pioneering forbears established the Craigmoor vineyards in the district in 1848.

It was the custom to appoint most newly ordained Methodist ministers to outback districts of the State. Noffs' first appointment was to the far western circuit of Wilcannia, which encompassed an area of 65,000 square miles. His experience there was to influence his future radical theology. He claimed that it was at Wilcannia that he discovered the real meaning of religion, its essential truth, its intrinsic and natural spirituality.

In the remote outback he was involved with elemental harshness of life, and in that environment he observed Australian people with an intrinsic spirituality combined with a deep sense of mateship. Most of these people, he said, had a 'healthy scepticism of religious authority and little affection for the churches'.

3. W. Noffs, Recorded personal interview with Wesley Noffs, Ted Noffs' son, and currently National Director and Chief Executive of Life Education Centres, 1 August, 1988.
5. Ibid., p.vi.
His pastoral care for the outback people, of whom many acknowledged no commitment to Church, sect or creed, led to his belief that all religions should acknowledge existence of 'an over-riding spirituality which knows no barriers of race, creed or colour'.

This was the nucleus of a belief at the basis of many of The Wayside Chapel's most significant activities, especially the Naming Ceremonies and the Family of Humanity, which will be reviewed later in the chapter.

After his Wilcannia appointment, Noffs' experience of the human situation widened when he was appointed as a minister for two years, 1957-1959, in the American city of Chicago. While in America he attended the Garrett Theological College and majored in sociology and psychology for a Master's degree from Northwestern University.

He experienced further contact with human need during his next appointment, which was as associate minister in Australia's largest Methodist Church, the Central Methodist Mission, located in downtown Sydney. During his appointment, from 1959 to the end of 1963, he assisted the Superintendent of the Mission, Alan Walker, with the establishment of the first Life Line Centre which was opened in March 1963. The Life Line experience provided him with more evidence of human deprivation and suffering.

which existed in the city.

In the closing months of 1963 one of the concerns of the New South Wales Methodist Church was what should be done about the inner city eastern area of Sydney. It was an area devoid of Churches, and included the Kings Cross area, which Southall described as

a 'Bohemian' square mile that has acquired the curious title of 'the antipodes version of Hell'.

The Methodist Church owned a property consisting of four apartments situated in Hughes Street, a narrow short street, which adjoined the prestigious Macleay Street. A committee, chaired by B.R. Wyllie, was commissioned to investigate possible action which Methodists could initiate in the area. The committee's recommendation was to support an experimental mission with its base located in the Hughes Street property. Ted Noffs was asked to establish the mission. The Church's formal decision to establish what eventually became The Wayside Chapel was recorded in the Daily Record Minutes of the 1963 New South Wales Methodist Conference. The decision read, in part:

Kings Cross Mission

1. That the East Sydney Mission be divided and that a new circuit mission be established embracing Kings Cross and Double Bay areas.

2. That the Conference be asked to designate this new circuit mission a 'developmental area'.

3. That the matter of circuit name be referred back to the commission for consideration.

4. That in view of the character of the Mission, Conference give special consideration to the committee of management to be appointed.

5. That the committee of the Inner City Development Fund be requested to make an equitable distribution of the available grant at present being paid to the East Sydney Mission.

6. That the Rev. T.D. Noffs be appointed superintendent and the C.M.M. be thanked for their co-operation in releasing Mr. Noffs for the invitation.

It was with some reluctance and apprehension that Noffs considered the request. Acceptance required him to leave the safety and security of the Church's well-respected Central Methodist Mission, and to pioneer the work in a difficult area which contained no Church and no congregation.

Aware of the dense and diverse population in the area, Noffs began his work in Kings Cross convinced that his task was not to minister to Methodists, but to minister to people; not to those within the Church, but to people outside.

Resources for establishment of the Mission were meagre. Available property consisted of four units which could be adapted to the needs of the Mission but apart from a piano, an old filing cabinet and a few odd pieces of furniture, there was no plant and no equipment. The only income was about three thousand dollars a year which was interest derived from the investment of partial proceeds obtained from the sale of a church building in the area, which had been closed in 1956. Noffs believed that the Mission should 'stand on its own feet', and he rejected the suggestion that it be an adjunct of one of the church departments or other Missions which would provide financial backing. He later viewed this decision as being one of the strengths of the Mission. It certainly increased his freedom to develop his own radical style of ministry.

At the beginning of the work in 1964 a benefactor, interested in the Kings Cross experiment, paid for Noffs to spend a few weeks overseas where he inspected similar experimental Missions in the American cities of Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and in England's London, Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol. The Churches he defined as experimental were those which were addressing the same kinds of problems existent in Kings Cross. While overseas he compared these experimental

Churches, or Missions, with conventional institutionalized Churches, and he concluded that in the area of evangelism, the institutional Church was Synonymous almost with expanding church membership among nice people. Closed to the world whereas the experimental Church was Open to the world. Reaching the unloved and unlovely who are in the immediate community. In addition, his observations led him to believe that the experimental Church demonstrated flexibility of organization, compared with the institutional Church's maintenance of unchangeable organizational structures. He claimed that in the experimental Church the world determined the programme, which developed in the light of felt needs of all people. By comparison, the institutional Church programme was determined not by the needs in the world, but by the religious institution, and was built around traditional programmes of a static organization. In his opinion, the social witness of the experimental Church was a real involvement in human need, compared with 'a proxy interest in human suffering' by the institutional Church. There was an emphasis in the experimental Church on 'going from the Church to serve', whereas the institutional Church emphasized 'coming to the Church' for fellowship. During Noffs' absence overseas, the fledgling
Wayside Chapel work was under the control of his wife, Margaret, who prior to marriage had been an inner-city deaconess. By the time he arrived home on 1 March 1964 the attendance of people at the services Margaret had organized had grown, until people were sitting on the staircase as they tried to crowd into the small rooms. With this nucleus of support, and with his ideas for ministry reinforced by his overseas observations, Noffs began The Wayside Chapel experiment. Many of Noffs' beliefs did not conform to traditional dogma and creed, and as he responded to existent social need in a manner consistent with his theological interpretations, his radical ministry paralleled his radical theology.
4.3. TED NOFFS AND RADICAL THEOLOGY.

It is not within the province of this thesis to evaluate the validity of Noffs' theology. As already stated, however, it is necessary to study its content because it was the rationale for the unique manner in which he responded in his ministry to the shortcomings and challenges he perceived in the social situation.

Throughout his ministry at Wayside Chapel Noffs was well aware that his theological beliefs did not conform to the Western tradition of Christian beliefs. Inevitably this resulted in tension between himself and sectors of the Church establishment. He quoted a comment made by Ivan Illich which mirrored his experience of that tension:

Should I, a man totally at the service of the Church, stay in the structure to subvert it, or leave in order to live the model of the future? The Church needs men seeking this kind of conscious and critical awareness - men deeply faithful to the Church, living a life of insecurity and risk, free from hierarchical control, working for the eventual 'disestablishment' of the Church from within. The very few such groups in existence today are branded as disloyal and dangerous by the clerical mentality. 13

Noffs firmly believed that The Wayside Chapel style of ministry, with its singular response to human need, and the theological interpretations on which it was based, provided the model for the future. True to his

conviction, he structured the Wayside Chapel activities to sustain and develop that model.

It was a conviction not shared by many of his fellow ministers. The many criticisms levelled against his theology varied in intensity from mild disdain to sincere anger. In discussions and interviews over many years it has been commonplace to hear ministers and laymen claim that Ted Noffs has no theology. This probably has been an accurate observation insofar as conformity to traditional Western Christian theology is concerned. This thesis, however, examines the viewpoint that Noffs holds theological beliefs which arise from a particular theological interpretation that has within it some elements common to Process theology. His theology embraces an inclusive religion that emphasizes universal spirituality and the action of God as immanent Spirit of Love throughout creation. In many respects his theology differed from conventional Christian belief.

Serious attempts were made to sustain a charge against him for heresy. The first significant complaint was made on doctrinal grounds in August 1968. Bill Hobbin, who was President of Conference that year, was advised that Noffs had denied Christ's divinity. Hobbin recently recalled the incident, and said,

The episode related to Ted Noffs is very clear in my mind. When the matter came before Conference the discussion was fairly brief. The members readily accepted my proposal that the ex-President, the Reverend Guy Walker, and I, discuss the issue with Ted. The three of us met at my home in Chatswood
and the more we talked the more Guy and I were convinced there was nothing for Ted to answer. I can still see the amazed expression on the faces of some people when they heard my report which Conference accepted, and that closed the matter. 14

In a recent article, published by *Time* magazine, Alan Gill wrote,

> The complainant was not identified, though there were rumors that he was the superintendent of the Methodist Central Mission, the Rev. Sir Alan Walker. 15

The complaint against Noffs was based on a sermon given at Wayside Chapel, in which he referred to his interpretation of Christ's divinity. It was an interpretation to which Noffs has remained committed throughout his Wayside Chapel ministry, and which he has consistently promoted in sermons and publications. He explained that he did not deny the divinity of Jesus, but he did deny the way the creeds interpreted that divinity.

Noffs' interpretation was that Jesus was so much part of the spiritual 'atmosphere' of life that he was able to do things that we cannot yet do. Jesus' identification with the spiritual atmosphere of life, combined with his commitment to humanity and truth, enabled him 'to make the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear'. 16 Because he believed that Jesus achieved

divinity by being completely open to the realization of 'the goodness of God within himself', and drew upon God for his spiritual resources, Noffs published the radical statement,

I don't believe that Jesus was God ready made. I believe that he was an ordinary human being who reached a peak of spirituality.

At the same time he admitted to being 'irresistibly drawn to Jesus when it comes to the critical word for the living moment'. He readily acknowledged his belief that his interpretation enabled him to accept that 'Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life' through whom people reach a complete understanding of life.

It is evident from the following statement, published fifteen years after Noffs commenced his Wayside Chapel ministry, that he consistently maintained his radical religious beliefs:

The difference between Jesus and ourselves is not one of kind, but rather of degree. Jesus had achieved a degree of spiritual illumination that enabled him to perform what we would describe today as 'miracles'. For him, they were ordinary events in his life, because he had fully developed his potential and found, in spiritual fulfilment and illumination, the quality of life that has been described as 'divine'.

17. Ibid., p.128.
18. Ibid., p.128.
19. Ibid., p.52.
Noffs repeatedly quoted words from verse twelve of the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel:

He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do. 22

He used these words as the basis of his argument that Jesus identified himself with God only in the sense that all men and women are capable of identifying themselves with God. 23 Noffs interpreted the text to mean that Jesus was telling people that, provided they followed his example of opening themselves fully to divine power, they would be able to perform works similar to those Jesus carried out as he served the needs of humanity and worked to establish a world based on love.

This interpretation had profound implications for Noffs' ministry. It was the basis of his emphasis on the worth of each individual person whom he regarded as a son or daughter of God, with the potential to develop an ultimate degree of divinity. In effect, it was a belief that God is incarnate in all people. This interpretation motivated all his efforts to reclaim derelicts, and to improve the quality of life for all people who belonged to what he described as The Family of Man, a title later amended to The Family of Humanity.

Noffs' interpretation of the nature of Jesus also

conditioned his attitude to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. He did not regard the phenomenon as impossible, but did believe the doctrine was unnecessary. He saw it as limiting the effectiveness of Jesus' actions as the model for people to follow. Views Noffs expressed concerning the divinity of Jesus and the Virgin Birth were the basis of the first official complaint against his theology. As previously stated, they were the views which were the subject of the interrogation of Noffs by Hobbin and Guy Walker. Hobbin said that although no written complaint was submitted to him, as President, or to Conference, he was aware of verbal criticism. On his recommendation Conference took no action.

The next serious complaint was made in a more formal manner. In the Minutes of the 1975 New South Wales Conference the matter was briefly recorded:

A charge was brought by Rev. John A.D. Hall against Rev. T.D. Noffs, of 'unfaithfulness to the doctrines of the Church'. After careful consideration the Committee of Discipline reported to the Standing Committee that the charge had been dismissed. Standing Committee received the report and expressed thanks to the President, Connexional Secretary and Legal Officer (Mr. H.N. Julian) for the work they did in the matter. It was resolved that the sum of $300 be paid to Rev. J.A.D. Hall for legal expenses.

Use of the words, 'unfaithfulness to the doctrines of the Church', is significant, because the church authorities remain adamant that a formal complaint of heresy has never been made against Noffs. Allan Brand, the 1975 President of Conference and now in retirement, has nevertheless admitted that such a phrase was 'playing with words'.

Hall's complaint was that Noffs denied the Christian doctrine of Atonement. Traditionally, this doctrine has remained cardinal to the Christian faith, and the complaint could not be summarily dismissed. Brand convened a meeting of the Committee of Discipline which met for five hours with Hall and Noffs to inquire into the charge. When recently reviewing the event, Brand explained that the enquiry into Noffs' 'unfaithfulness to the church doctrines' was based on part of John Wesley's explanation of the meaning of atonement. Brand said that there are several parts of Wesley's explanation which the church (Methodist) does not think an important part of doctrine. The centuries past put that logic in a different setting. Ted was not acquitted in the sense of being charged and found innocent. The issue was not deemed important to rule on.

The charge brought by Hall was based on the subject matter of two pamphlets which Noffs distributed in 1964. One was an allegorical poem entitled 'Prodigal in the Pigsty' and the other was an article entitled 'What is

27. A. Gill, 'Ted Noffs, Heretic or Hero?', op. cit., p.66.
the Nature of the Death of Christ?" In his book, *By What Authority?*, Noffs explained the context in which the articles were written and distributed. He said that when he began establishing The Wayside Chapel in 1964 he found that there was a very negative attitude in Kings Cross towards any Christian presence in the area. The popularity of Jesus as a modern folk-hero did not develop until the late 1960s. Noffs learned, from discussions with the young people of Kings Cross, that much of the antagonism they displayed towards the Church was an expression of revolt against what they believed to be obvious manipulation associated with the Billy Graham Crusade, and particularly 'against Graham's blood-oriented language'.

In an effort to correct what he believed was the false image of the real Jesus which the young people of Kings Cross held, and to present the essentials of Jesus' teaching, Noffs found that the distribution of pamphlets was the most effective way to present his views. People would take them away to read, then return to the Wayside Chapel Coffee Room Forum to discuss what they had read. According to Noffs, both the pamphlets, which were the subject of Hall's charge, were written to help people

29. T. Noffs, *By What Authority?*, op.cit., p.101. Methodist people had been warned against excessive emotionalism when the Reverend R.B. Lew, President of the New South Wales Conference in 1949 warned that the Church 'must be on guard against emotionalism in Crusades'. His specific reference was to the 'Crusade for Christ'. *Methodist Church of Australasia. New South Wales Conference Minutes. 1949*, pp.89-91.
understand Christianity.

Noffs' defence of 'The Prodigal in the Pigsty' was that he wrote it as a specific attempt to correct the false impressions about Christianity held by the Kings Cross young people. It was an attempt to present Jesus in a meaningful way, freed from association with liturgies and ecclesiastical structures of organized religion. He decided that the best method of overcoming the false images was to use Jesus' own simple, powerful parable of the Prodigal Son, but to present it in terms which Australian young people, living in 1964, could understand.

The following excerpts are from the script used by Hall as partial evidence to support the charge against Noffs:

The Prodigal in the Pigsty

Look at the inventory for this conversion story:

NO preacher
NO liturgy
NO church
NO offering
NO music
Nothing like that was present
Nothing like that was there
Nothing but the wanderer's lostness
Nothing but silent despair
A man
A pigsty.

These were the ingredients for the greatest conversion story Jesus ever told.

A man, wandering the world in search of peace-of mind, in search of meaning-for-life.

He (this man) was not converted (the word has become sick through religious abuse) in an evangelistic crusade in a church

But
In a pigsty.
Nor did he (this man) come down the aisle to a preacher. He didn't even come to Jesus. He came to himself. 30

The second piece of evidence against Noffs which Hall used was in greater conflict with accepted Christian tradition than 'The Prodigal in the Pigsty'. It was, in effect, Noffs' apologetic for his beliefs concerning the doctrine of the Atonement. He rejected what he described as a negative sin-oriented dogma, and said that the pamphlet, 'What is the True Nature of the Death of Christ?', was written to redress false impressions held by people who discussed with him the meaning of the death of Jesus. Their thinking was dominated by sin-oriented teaching, which Noffs claimed stemmed from the influence of Saint Paul and those theologians who had fallen into a quagmire of doom-dominated theology.31

In 'What is the True Nature of the Death of Christ?' Noffs gave explicit expression to two of his cardinal beliefs. One was that the basis of redemption was love, expressed in the manner of Jesus' parable about the Prodigal Son. The other belief was that the meaning of the Cross is that it is the exemplar for all who, by their commitment to truth and humanity, follow the supreme example of Jesus, and daily take up their own crosses. Extracts taken from 'What is the True Nature of the Death of Christ?', which were used as evidence against Noffs, included the statements:

31. Ibid., p.102.
I find no evidence whatsoever in the teaching of Jesus in the gospels for any single doctrine of the atonement...

Most of the theories of the atonement come out of the teachings of the Apostle Paul. The danger which has persisted from earliest times, of setting the words of Paul alongside the words of Christ, has been ignored. I hereby renounce any attitude of mine, which makes the Cross of Jesus anything other than that He intended it to be, as unchristian...

When he wanted to talk about how a man's sins were forgiven he told the story of the Prodigal Son. There is no Cross in that story. That man was saved, you will note, not because they told him he was a sinner and needed to kneel at the foot of the Cross to be washed in the blood; he was saved - not when he came to the Cross but when he came to himself...He was saved when he discovered that his Father's love was unconditional...the world will never be saved by the single Cross of Jesus...The world will only be saved by the countless crosses which are endured by the Followers of Christ in every age as, in obedience to Him, we follow where His feet have trod...

What will save the world is not Christ's suffering and death but ours. It is not His blood which counts but ours. It is not His broken body which matters but ours. In fact, this is what Christianity is all about. It concerns followers of Christ no less than it concerned Christ Himself. They must be radically obedient to God, Truth and Humanity. 32

Alan Gill's article in Time drew attention to the difficulty which faced the Committee of Discipline which investigated Hall's charges. 'An immediate problem was that the Methodist Church had no formal canon law'. 33

One of Methodism's primary requirements for its ministers was faithfulness to the Laws of the Church in terms of Division II, Part III, 50 (a) of the Laws, which stated,

32. Ibid., pp.102-104.
33. A. Gill, 'Ted Noffs, Heretic or Hero?', op.cit., p.66.
Before being received into full connexion a probationer shall be required to pass, at the synod, a satisfactory oral examination in theology, and shall declare to the synod that he has read Wesley’s Notes on the New Testament and his first forty-four published sermons, and that he subscribes to the teaching therein set forth. 34

As previously stated, Brand acknowledged that changes in understanding and developments in knowledge had occurred in the intervening centuries since Wesley made his pronouncements and explanations. Brand said that it was for this reason that there are several parts of Wesley’s explanation which ‘the church does not think an important part of doctrine’. 35 When Methodist ministers were required each year to reaffirm faithfulness to the Law requiring subscription to Wesley’s teaching in his first forty-four sermons, Noffs was not alone in regarding this requirement to be, in part, a matter of some contention. In the absence of a more specific Law than Division II, Part III, 50 (a), the charge brought by Hall against Noffs was, in terms of the Conference minute, ‘dismissed’. 36

The third official investigation occurred in 1983 after the Methodist Church had become part of The Uniting Church in Australia. The Sydney Presbytery of the Church


required Noffs to write a paper detailing his Naming Ceremony and its theological basis. The detail and history of the Naming Ceremony will be reviewed in the next section of this chapter. It was initiated by Noffs as a response to the concern of people who wanted their children christened or baptized, but who were rejected by various Churches because they failed to regularly attend Sunday services, or did not qualify for admission to church membership.

Noffs based his theological rationale for the ceremony on the report that

Jesus reached into a crowd which he had never seen before (and which he probably never saw again) and took a child in his arms and bestowed a blessing. No questions were asked by Jesus about such items as dogmas, beliefs or churchgoing...He did not utter a word about original sin...It is unthinkable that he would humiliate the child or his family in such a way. In all simplicity he said (Mark 10:14): 'For of such is the kingdom of God'. 37

In his booklet, 'On The Naming (Or Baptism) Of Children', Noffs quoted Mark 10: 13-16 as the theological basis for his refusal to debar any child from the baptismal blessing:

They brought children for him to touch. The disciples rebuked them, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant, and said to them 'Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these ...And he put his arms round them, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them'. 38

Under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. James Udy, the committee examined the paper which Noffs submitted. No further action was taken. Udy commented, 'Ted's naming ceremony is a lovely service of blessing, but it is not Christian baptism'.

Udy's opinion was typical of the opinion held by many churchmen and members of the community who appreciated the practical value of Noffs' ministry at The Wayside Chapel, but disagreed with his theology. Gill reported that the Anglican Bishop, Bruce Wilson, commented:

> In my view the reason for Ted Noffs' popularity is that he puts the Christian faith into action. People see the Christ figure in him. On the other hand I don't agree with his theology and I wish that good theology and good action went together.

In the opinion of Graeme Ferguson, Principal of the Uniting Theological College, any concern about Noffs' departure from the traditional theology of the Church was more than outweighed by the value of his practical ministry. In a recent interview he said,

> With Ted, the question is whether you are prepared to do the Truth, and you actually live as you believe, which is what Ted is prepared to do. If you ask Ted, he will tell you, 'if eighty per cent of the Australian community lives outside the institutional structure of the Church, and you are the Church at mission, where should you be? And the answer is with the eighty per cent. There isn't any question about it'...I say to Ted, 'you do the job and I'll do the theologizing for you'.

40. Ibid., p.66.
41. G. Ferguson, Recorded personal interview, 12 August 1986.
On another occasion Ferguson expressed his high regard for Noffs' practical ministry. In discussion with a group of ministers and lay representatives, he claimed that Ted was 'praxis' absolutely, in the sense that religious 'praxis' was not preaching, but living out the truth in actual practice. Responding to one of the group who criticized Noffs' Naming Ceremonies, the Reverend Marilyn Stacey recalled that Ferguson claimed

Ted Noffs was 'the greatest frontiersman we have in the church, and perhaps in the world'.

The Reverend Dr. Robert Withycombe, Warden of St. Marks, Canberra, also made a somewhat positive assessment of the worth of Noffs' theological views when he said,

Noffs helps people recognize the transcendent - or existence of God - with an imperative to recognize God in a whole range of experience.

Graham Williams, a journalist on The Sydney Morning Herald editorial staff, commented,

His basic conflict is that he believes a new 'radical Christianity' must emerge to meet the needs of the weak and powerless and helpless, a religion based on acceptance of all.

Noffs' departure from traditional doctrinal beliefs influenced his views on wider religious and spiritual issues. He disregarded much of traditional dogma and creed, and also refused to identify himself with particular

44. G. Williams, 'Noffs: he doesn't fall by the wayside', in The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 March 1987, p.4.
theological categories. During discussion on his beliefs, he said,

immanence, transcendence, liberal theology, process thinking, these are only terms, they mean nothing to me - I'm only interested in people and their needs. 45

and in one of his poems, he wrote,

What we don't have any time for now is
New books on theology, or philosophy....
That's the stuff that's got us all mixed up. 46

At the same time, Noffs had a very definite commitment to his perception of spiritual truth. This centred basically on an holistic view of life, wherein the spirit or presence of God permeates all life. He rejected any dualism between sacred and secular, and he wrote, 'distinctions between sacred and secular fall away'. 47

The experience of listening to hundreds of people recount details of their unique spiritual experiences which occurred outside a traditional Church setting reinforced his belief in a transcendental influence. Testimonies of the harmonious influences of such experiences, often linked to a resultant motivation towards creativity, convinced Noffs of the reality of a creative spiritual force permeating all life. He speculated that these spiritual experiences may indicate the dawning of a new consciousness, with the potential to unite the people of the world in harmony. 48

45. T. Noffs, Recorded personal interview, 13 September 1986
There was much in this line of Noffs' thinking which was in accord with process theology and panentheism, a subject to be examined in the next chapter. Marilyn Stacey, who assisted Noffs at The Wayside Chapel, said that although he would never want to be labelled with any theological system, she believed that if she were to give him a label, she would say that basically he was 'a social gospel person' who believed that the immanent Spirit of God was continually in process in all humanity. Stacey also affirmed that Noffs was convinced Jesus was a human being who became the 'Word Incarnate' as he evolved to the peak of spirituality. She said that Noffs claimed this was a concept of Jesus he had to believe, 'otherwise he couldn't give humanity any hope for their own evolving spirit'.

In his concept of the development of global spiritual awareness there was also some resemblance to Teilhard de Chardin's 'noosphere'. Noffs did, in fact, admit to the desire to recast Teilhard's 'noosphere' concept. Stacey described one of Noffs' Wayside Chapel addresses in which he referred to the 'spiritsphere', which was a vision he based on Teilhard's ideas.

49. M. Stacey, Personal interview, op.cit.
51. M. Stacey, Personal interview, op.cit.
Noffs' conviction, that all people had this spiritual potential to evolve to a peak of divine spirituality, was reinforced by the words he repeatedly quoted from John 14:12. The impact of this belief on the nature of his ministry was profound. He regarded all people as having infinite worth as children of God, and he structured his ministry in accordance with the responsibility such a belief imposed. A brochure which outlined the work of the Chapel described the effect on Noffs' ministry of his commitment to his vision of a universal spiritual faith,

\[
\text{all his thought and work radiate from his belief in the creative potential of every human being and in each person's capacity to love and care for their neighbour, near and far.}  
\]

The extent and nature of his ministry at The Wayside Chapel will be examined in the next section of this chapter. The Family of Man concept, the Naming Ceremonies, the Crisis Centre, the Life Education Centres, his commitment to world unity and his respect for other religions were among the significant areas of his ministry which were all motivated by his theology and his perception of human need.

Noffs' rejection of so much Christian traditional dogma and creed resulted in his negative attitude to much

52. T. Noffs, The Summit of Daring, op.cit., p.128, and By What Authority?, op.cit., p.109. The words were Jesus' affirmation that his followers could do his works, and even greater works.

of the religion practised by many of the established Christian Churches. In his book, The Wayside Chapel, he did, however, acknowledge an obligation to the Church when he wrote,

From the very outset my quarrel with the church has been a lover's quarrel. I dare to quarrel with the church only because I love it. Over the years of my life it has nurtured and nourished me. It has provided me with a vehicle by which I might express the truth as I see it in today's world. 54

Even in later years his attitude to the Church was somewhat in the nature of an aggrieved person critical of parental shortcomings. When discussing the Church's attitude to the popularity of his ministry, he claimed that the Church gained some of the benefit of the public esteem which resulted from the popular success of The Wayside Chapel ministry, but that it really did not deserve to do so. 55

Noffs believed that much of what he regarded as error in the religion of the Church stemmed from the Church's literal interpretation of the Biblical record, and its adoption of dogma and creed formulated by the early Church Fathers. The result, he said, was that the religion of the Church put spirituality into some kind of strait-jacket called a creed, or a dogma, or a ritual. 56

56. T. Noffs, By What Authority?, op.cit., p.18.
He agreed with Nicolas Berdyaev's comment in *Religion and Society* that such religion can prove to be 'an obstacle to man's communication with God'.

One of the Church's cardinal errors, in Noffs' opinion, was the exclusive nature of its beliefs. He blamed much of the divisiveness among the peoples of the world on this error. The effort he made to counter its effect was in his promotion of his concept of The Family of Man.

Noffs also found evidence of dualism in the religion of the Church. He saw the Church being nominally involved in social work, but keeping apart from the world as it neglected to identify directly with the mass of needy humanity. He argued that failure to become unconditionally involved with the people of the world created a heresy. The premise of his proposition was that authentically 'to be orthodox is to be as involved as Christ was in his own day'. Noffs' perception of the Church was that it was not as involved with the world as Christ had been. He claimed that this deficiency made the Church and its religion heretical, whereas he classified ministries which were totally involved with the world as being orthodox. The obvious implication was that, in his view, the religion, or spirituality of The Wayside Chapel was orthodox Christianity because of its

faithfulness to the example of Christ's ministry to the needs of people in their everyday life. Noffs believed that the enclosed Church ministry was, in contrast, heretical because of its exclusiveness.

As his innovative programmes alienated Noffs from traditional Christian religious practice and the church establishment, he took comfort in the knowledge that Jesus had more trouble with organised religion than most...There was a constant state of tension between religious authorities and himself. 59

He consistently maintained his conviction that the authentic Christian religion must be involved with the world. During an Australian Broadcasting Corporation Forum he publicly urged church people to 'get up out of pews and look for human needs'. 60 This became an essential criterion for the ministry he developed at The Wayside Chapel.

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60. T. Noffs, in 'Focal Point', an Australian Broadcasting Corporation Forum compered by David Milliken, 22 April 1986.
4.4. THE WAYSIDE CHAPEL IN ACTION.

Noffs' belief that the religion Jesus taught was inclusive, excluding no-one, was a conviction he carried into every aspect of the practical ministry at The Wayside Chapel. His radical development of this belief found its most publicized expression in his often repeated credo:

I am a Catholic,
I am a Protestant,
I am a Jew,
I am a Muslim,
I am a Sikh,
I am a Buddhist,
I am a Hindu,
I am a part of all religions, past, present and future, because
I am a human being, and nothing in the world can ever be alien to me. 61

Conformity to this credo by Noffs and his helpers has contributed significantly to the unique nature of The Wayside Chapel ministry.

i. The Upper Room Coffee House and Associated Activities.

From his first assessment of the human situation in Kings Cross Noffs realized something of the depths of loneliness, the sense of alienation from the mainstream of society and the feeling of personal deprivation which existed in the district. He found inspiration from his 1964 overseas investigation for the type of ministry

61. 'Wayside Chapel. The Biggest Little Church in the World', op.cit., p.1. Also T. Noffs, On The Naming (Or Baptism) of Children, Published at the Wayside Chapel of the Cross For the Uniting Church in Australia, 1982, p.13.
which would help address this need. The first step was establishment at the Chapel of a Coffee Shop. It was not, however, to be a Coffee Shop structured on a static and formal conventional pattern, but one which was dynamic, informal and open to all.

Noffs was somewhat apprehensive as to whether such an undertaking would be accepted by the beatniks, the irreligious and the lonely inhabitants of the Cross. A reporter friend, who had recently completed a story about the Cross, arranged a meeting between Noffs and some of the Cross beatniks. The rapport Noffs established as he talked with them in one of their Woolloomooloo pads was sufficient to gain their attendance at the Upper Room Coffee House which he set up in an upstairs flat at the Chapel site.

Those first young people to attend the Coffee House set the pattern for its future character. They rejected the suggestion to refurnish, preferring to 'feel at home' with old furniture and an old carpet on which they could sit and talk and feel accepted. They publicized the Coffee House with innovative posters which they designed and made, stamping red-painted feet onto pasteboard which carried the message, 'Follow these feet to The Wayside Chapel'. Noffs did not oppose them when they told him of the notorious coffee houses, hotels, dives and joints where they intended displaying the posters. He said that
he realized

the places that they were mentioning were
the precise places it was necessary for us
to reach in the kind of work we were doing.62

The Upper Room Coffee Shop opened on 23 March 1964. Eventually it was transferred downstairs, but it continued to be a meeting place for a great diversity of people who regard it as a place where they will find acceptance. A sense of community has been fostered, and it became a venue for free discussion. It has been apparent to Noffs and his staff that many who attended the Coffee House gradually developed a different sense of values and an awareness of their own worth.

In an effort to relate the young people to the wider community, Noffs somewhat tentatively accepted the help of a number of elderly women who volunteered to serve in the Coffee House. The experiment proved successful. The older people were willing to listen, and the young people enjoyed being able to spend time talking to an understanding listener.

Traditional style evangelists criticized Noffs. When they wanted to know how many people he had converted, he insisted that his task was not to proselytize; he was committed to the practical expression of the truth as it was expressed by Christ. One of Noff's cardinal rules was his refusal to proselytise. He claimed that his task was

'to be engaged in encounter with people'. Noffs answered his critics with the statement that his ministry was patterned on the record of Jesus' ministry which was involvement at the point of need with all people in natural situations such as the market place and out by the wayside. Noffs maintained that conversion to a changed life-style by people who were influenced by his ministry was the prerogative of God. A study of Noffs' ministry and attitudes confirms the view that Noffs would not have intended this statement to diminish the sincerity of his obvious joy when people did adopt a more wholesome life style as a result of their association with The Wayside Chapel ministry.

The Coffee Shop did not escape physical abuse by disaffected groups. Noffs attributed such disturbances to gangs of society's misfits who were unaware of the nature of The Wayside Chapel ministry. They held a grudge against society, and associated the Chapel with the conventional established Church which they despised. During the first two years of the Chapel's operation there were fights, windows were broken and there were even occasional riots. Glynn Curran, who became Director of The Wayside Chapel Little Theatre, spoke about the gradual acceptance by the Kings Cross beatniks of the

63. Ibid., p.38
64. Ibid., pp.38-40.
ministry which the Chapel offered. Curran said that initially they criticized the Wayside for everything said by the Pope, Billy Graham and the Archbishop of Canterbury, but they began art exhibitions, 'Youth Speaks Out', 'Crossbeat'. Some stayed and joined the team. Others left - but perhaps with a slightly different scale of values. 65

From his study of the operation of coffee houses in Old Town in Chicago, Noffs was convinced they were not slick entertainment gimmicks....On the contrary ....the coffee houses were fulfilling a deep social need among people who live in the impersonal heart of a great city....The coffee houses were going a long way....to ministering to people's loneliness while church buildings nearby were shut. 66

It was on these coffee houses that the Chapel Coffee House was modelled.

Noffs and his helpers provided an opportunity for self-expression by the widely diverse numbers of people who came to the Coffee House. They erected a notice board and invited anyone who wished to pin on it any items expressing beliefs and viewpoints. It became known as Poets' Corner, and was not only popular with the Coffee House patrons, but enabled Noffs and his staff to gain deeper insights into their needs and viewpoints.

65. G. Curran, 'Ten Years At The Cross', in The Methodist, 28 September 1974, p.12. The observation that The Wayside Chapel was blamed for anything said by the Pope, Billy Graham or the Archbishop of Canterbury, was first made by Noffs in The Wayside Chapel, op.cit., p.36.
The establishment in 1965 of 'Question Time' proved to be another popular innovation to facilitate interchange of opinions. From its establishment it was an unstructured time of dialogue which began in the Chapel's Little Theatre at 8.30 p.m. on Sunday evenings, and lasted for two to three hours. Those who attended were a widely diverse group of people who felt free to debate their views. All shades of political opinion were represented, as well as advocates for the varied religions, and for none. Psychiatrists came to study the operation of the Programme. Australian film producers filmed its activities, and the Polish National Film Unit made a television film to show to audiences living behind the Iron Curtain. Noffs usually led the Question Time, but when he was away his place was filled by Charles Birch who at the time was Challis Professor of Biology at the University of Sydney. During the turbulent 1960s Noffs considered Birch to be the only person in Australia who was capable of handling the incisive 'cut and thrust' of debate which was generated by the large crowd who attended Question Time.

Out of the diversity of viewpoints debated, Noffs said that there emerged a concept of community, and a perception of the need for people to develop mutual understanding. An awareness developed that people could

67. Ibid., p.147.
68. Ibid., pp.145-146.
be reconciled, even while holding opposing viewpoints. This awareness, in Noffs' view, was a contribution towards establishment of world harmony. When Eddie Joffe produced a film in the 1960s about The Wayside Chapel he said of Question Time that he

had never seen an audience as enthusiastic about sitting down for two and a half hours of philosophy and treating it as entertainment. 69

Various practical programmes which evolved from the Question Time debates included programmes to aid orphans in Vietnam, establishment of an Australian kibbutz movement, and the development of an increased level of mutual understanding between adults and youth.

When The Little Theatre complex was established in The Wayside Chapel's backyard area in 1967 it provided the forum for the continuing Question Time Programme. Designed by the architect, John James, the complex had seating capacity for three hundred and fifty people, and has been used for performances by children, youth groups and professionals. Since its establishment it provided a further opportunity for creative expression by the Kings Cross inhabitants. The lower level of the building is named the Mayne Nickless Theatre, and is used as a Life Education Centre, which is a Wayside Chapel activity examined later in this chapter.

69. Ibid., p.147.
A Crisis Centre was established by Noffs in 1968, and by 1986 it was considered to be the largest single agency of its kind in Australia. Open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, calls for help have come not only from within Australia but from overseas countries, including New Zealand, Great Britain and America. The Centre helps three to four thousand people each month, and although contacts may be made either by telephone or in person, Noffs preferred personal face-to-face counselling. Volunteers who staff the Centre undertake a six weeks counselling course before joining the team. Noffs established extensions to the Crisis Centre ministry in 1978.

One of the extensions of the Crisis Centre ministry was The Errol Flynn Refuge. It was a Wayside Foundation commitment to help children under the age of fifteen who are at risk in the inner city district of Sydney. Temporary accommodation is provided, and three professional workers aided by volunteers give care on a twenty-four hourly basis. The team has developed expertise in assisting young people with the problem of drug addiction, and in helping those who undertake the traumatic withdrawal process.

The other 1978 community outreach development was The Shepherd of the Streets programme. This was initiated by The Wayside Chapel and supported by the New South Wales Government which sponsored a team of Wayside Chapel young
people to give support to the many runaway children who make their way to the Cross. The programme works under the guidance of Virginia Foster who was appointed Director of Social Work at the Chapel. About six hundred families a year are involved in the programme. The staff members search the Kings Cross streets, its bars, discoes, amusement centres and prostitution haunts as they seek runaway children. If they are located, sympathetic counselling is offered with the hope that this may lead to family reconciliation.

Early in his Kings Cross ministry Noffs became concerned about the human problems existent within the Woolloomooloo-East Sydney area. He was aware of the high incidence of vice rackets, poverty, prostitution and community despair, but one of his deepest concerns was the problem of immigrants, particularly the wives of Italian fishermen. Failure to master the English language often resulted in isolation, loneliness and increased social problems. In an effort to relate directly to these people in their situation of need, Noffs purchased a terraced house in 1965 which was part of the surrounding slum scenery. He appointed Kay Edwards, a young deaconess, to take charge of the programme which essentially was intended simply to co-exist beside everybody else in the community, and to be available where need existed.70

70. Ibid., pp.117-126.
Miss Kay, as she became known, rapidly gained acceptance in the community. Her name became a household word as she communicated her humanitarian concern to both adults and children. When construction of the Eastern Suburbs Railway resulted in demolition of the terrace, Noffs purchased a twenty-five feet long caravan which was specially constructed as a Mobile Wayside Chapel. Kay Edwards moved the Mobile Chapel on a roster basis between Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst and Paddington, and parked in streets outside the homes of inhabitants of the area. Her mission was to be involved in a caring, healing way with broken humanity. The Wayside Chapel records contain many testimonies to the success of her mission.

ii. The Family of Man.

The Family of Man concept developed from Noffs' theological beliefs and from his social awareness of increasing demands for world peace and for greater unity among the people of the world. His commitment to the idea of The Family of Man provided him with a defence for his unorthodox celebrations of marriages and infant christenings, or Naming Ceremonies. Until the early 1980s Noffs used the title, The Family of Man, however, the title now frequently used is The Family of Humanity. Within the context of this thesis the title most generally used will be The Family of Man, unless quoting from a textual reference.
The Wilcannia ministry laid the foundations for the idea of The Family of Man. In the vastness of the outback district Noffs became aware of what he described as the 'intrinsic and natural spirituality' of religion common to all people, irrespective of whether they were affiliated with particular churches, or none at all. It was a view of spirituality akin to what Abraham Heschel defined as the sense 'of the mystery that animates all beings'. In a poem included in The Naming Ceremony Order of Service Noffs expressed his view of intrinsic spirituality existent in Australia:

I believe there is a distinctive Australian spirituality
That has no relationship to churches, creeds, doctrines or dogmas....
It can absorb all religions of the world
And find harmony among them.
What is distinctively Australian is distinctively Practical, humanitarian and reconciling.
Australian spirituality is therefore one that embraces all humanity;
It is the religion of the Family of Humankind.

In various publications he referred to the nature of The Family of Man. He defined the concept in detail in a seventeen page booklet, first published in 1974, entitled What Is The Family of Man? Noffs stressed that it was not an organization, a structure or an institution, nor was it

an attempt to achieve a religious synthesis by reducing all religions and philosophies to one common denominator. 74

Instead, he envisaged The Family of Man as

a stream of spiritual pattern which has as its objective the harmonising of the religious and philosophical movements in the world. 75

A logotype Noffs used on Chapel stationery included the wording 'Towards a Global Spirituality'.

He frequently described The Family of Man as analogous to the rainbow, in which each colour retained its identity while harmonizing to create something beautiful. In like manner his aim was to help The Family of Man create a world of harmony and beauty. At the same time, he held that it was necessary to respect, and to accept as good, differences in religion and individual identities.76

The rainbow analogy was consistent with Noffs' deep appreciation of poetry. He composed many poems, and said that poetry was one of the most significant influences and interests in his life.77 It was in poetic terms that he proclaimed the creed of The Family of Man, although he preferred to define it not as a creed,

74. T. Noffs, What is the Family of Man?, Wayside Chapel, Sydney, 1974, p.3.
75. Ibid., p.3.
76. Ibid., p.11.
but rather an affirmation on the part of all people who are aware of the Family of Man, in which they seek to identify themselves with all religions and philosophical movements in the interests of world harmony. 78

The Family of Man affirmation, or creed, was repeated in all Naming Ceremonies and usually in Marriage Ceremonies.

iii. Marriage Ceremonies.

Noffs' tolerance of differences in others, and his respect for the beliefs of other religions, were based on his belief that Jesus' ministry was an example of acceptance, without qualification, of all people. This belief led him to accept, without discrimination, all people who asked him to perform marriage ceremonies, or christen children. He claimed that in all cultures these were significant events which people wanted to celebrate according to their traditions. His refusal to deny the celebration to anyone was the result of his conviction that such celebrations, held with the blessing of The Wayside Chapel, enhanced the spiritual significance of such events. He welcomed all members of the human race to celebrate their ceremonies in this manner.

By the end of 1986, twenty-four thousand couples from one hundred and thirty two different nations had been married at The Wayside Chapel. 79 The popularity of The

78. T. Noffs, What is the Family of Man?, op.cit., p.5.
Wayside Chapel as a venue for the weddings of film stars, television personalities and show-business people increased following the wedding at the Chapel in June 1965 of the film star, Jane Powell. Some observers suggested that the many weddings performed at the Chapel appeared to contradict the emphasis of the Chapel's ministry to the dispossessed. Noffs responded by affirming that

the strength of The Wayside Chapel lies in its ability to minister on several levels of life simultaneously. 80

It was also his experience that many of the married couples retained an association with the Chapel in later years.

What was important in Noffs' opinion was that his policy of acceptance of all people enabled The Wayside Chapel to provide a neutral ground where people of different backgrounds and diverse faiths could have a marriage ceremony with spiritual significance. Wedding ceremonies were conducted between Jew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, Buddhist and Christian, Humanist and Theist. His policy of providing a spiritual environment for these ceremonies was consistent with his ministry of helping people at their point of need. It was also consistent with one of the basic objectives of The Family of Man, which was to help build a world of harmonious relationships.

iv. Naming Ceremonies.

One of the most popularized areas of Noffs' ministry has been The Wayside Chapel Naming (or Baptismal) Ceremony. Noffs described this celebration as 'uniquely the soul of The Wayside Chapel'. He planned it as essentially a simple thanksgiving ceremony for the gift of a life, whether child or adult. Noffs' affirmation at the Naming Ceremonies was consistent with his ideas of fostering universal interrelationships:

God's blessing is given in the name of all faiths....in the name of the Family of Humanity. 82

At each ceremony Noffs affirmed the Family of Man creed. He also invited a commitment from the families of those named, and by all people present, 'to build a better world for their children, all children, and all people'. By 1986, eleven thousand children had been named, and in Noffs' perception, each child named represented the whole of humanity.

The ceremonies were celebrated in various locations. Sometimes they took place in the Chapel, and often in gardens or parks. Many who came to Noffs had been rejected by other churchmen who insisted on rigid compliance to doctrine and dogma. He believed he was following the

81. 'Wayside Chapel. The Biggest Little Church in the World', op.cit., p.5.
82. Ibid., p.5.
83. Ibid., p.5.
example of Jesus, who blessed little children and rebuked those who tried to send them away. Noffs was firmly convinced that Jesus would never deny blessing to a little child.

It seemed absurd to him to invoke the authority of a particular church, sect, or religion in a ceremony which emphasized acceptance of the child into the world family. Noffs reasoned that allegiance to a particular creed, doctrine or dogma implied the assertion, 'I am right, and other people are wrong'. He was concerned that to divide people religiously this way was to be open to the danger of sowing the seeds of war. History had shown that whereas religion was meant to reconcile, to heal and to sow love, so often it had divided, wounded and sown hatred. 84

In 1982 Noffs prepared a Statement in explanation and defence of his Naming Ceremony, which was presented to the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Presbytery of Sydney of the Uniting Church of Australia. It included the text of the Naming Ceremony and a statement which detailed his reasons for instituting the Ceremony, and for developing the idea of The Family of Humanity, or The Family of Man. The Presbytery resolved that the Statement should be published. It was published in the

form of a thirty-three page booklet entitled *On The Naming (or Baptism) of Children*. 85

v. World Care.

Noffs celebrated the thirtieth Anniversary of his ministry by extending the practical expression of The Family of Man with the establishment, in March 1982, of World Care. The object of the project was to gain commitment across the world of ordinary people 'to be a good neighbour to someone in need'. 86 Headquarters, under control of The Wayside Foundation, were established in a two-storey house near St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The building served a dual purpose. Units were provided at a nominal rental for relatives of patients undergoing heart surgery at the hospital. World Care also provided a venue for gatherings such as Narcotics Anonymous, and for lectures and discussions on the work and objectives of the Family of Man.

The global outreach objective of World Care appeared to be a natural development of The Wayside Chapel programmes in general, and The Family of Man objectives in particular.

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85. Ibid.
86. 'Wayside Chapel. The Biggest Little Church in the World', *op.cit.*, p.6.
vi. **Life Education Centres.**

The reason for reviewing The Wayside Chapel's Life Education work was explained at the beginning of this chapter. Although the project has been actually operative for only six years, the idea developed over a period of twenty years as Noffs grappled with the drug problem among the young people of Kings Cross. The project has gained considerable national and international support. It is specifically a drug prevention programme, not a drug treatment programme.

Noffs' serious concern about drug abuse began in July 1964 when a young woman, suffering from a heroin overdose, was dropped by a motorist on The Wayside Chapel steps. At that time Noffs found that there were no medical or social facilities in Sydney geared to handle the problem. From that date he and his staff became increasingly involved with helping in the treatment and rehabilitation of the victims of the drug trade.

During the 1960s and 1970s Noffs buried over a hundred young drug addicted victims, and as the deaths continued, his concern deepened. In May 1967 The Wayside Chapel established Australia's first Drug Referral Centre, which was staffed by social workers and an experienced medical team. A list of services offered to the three hundred and fifty seven patients who attended the centre in the first six months included:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Offered</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Therapy</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Psychiatrist</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Medical</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics Anonymous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Doctors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Guidance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Agencies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Patient Visits</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport to Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help not accepted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(after initial contact)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

After ten years of counselling drug abuse victims, Noffs decided in 1974 that the answer to the drug problem was to be found in a programme of prevention. Treatment programmes were only picking up the pieces after a catastrophe. For the next five years he and his team researched and planned an effective preventative programme. The result of their research was the establishment of the Life Education Centre project.

From its inception the basic aim of the Life Education Centre has been to give children an appreciation of the complexity and function of the human body, and 'of how and why it is affected by substances that upset its delicate equilibrium'.

as one which was concerned with 'the ecology of the body'.

He insisted that the programme should present a positive message, and he refused to allow it to become moralistic or threatening. Noffs hoped that eventually a generation of children would emerge 'for whom it will be unthinkable to take any abusable substance into their bodies'. This message was emphasized in the spoken and printed introductory words of the programme:

In the whole world there will never be another you. You are unique. Life is so beautiful and wonderful, that you should never abuse your bodies. Your bodies are so marvellous: look at them here, watch and listen, and you will find out how true that is.

The programme was structured on various levels to suit different age groups from four and a half to twelve years of age, in schools from kindergarten to primary year six. Programmes for secondary students to year twelve have been in preparation for some years and are about to be introduced. Instructors are qualified teachers who are given an additional three months training, then follow-up training, in the programme's objectives and operation.

Interest and attention of young children have been

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92. 'Wayside Chapel. The Biggest Little Church in the World', op.cit., p.2.
facilitated by the use of a seven feet high singing
giraffe puppet, named Harold, which was made and donated
by the Sydney businessman philanthropist, Dick Smith.
Another effective visual aid is a transparent anatomical
mannikin, named TAM, which was donated by Mayne Nickless
Corporation. Made of crystal clear epoxy plastic by an
American model maker, the prototype was planned as a
transparent model for medical education. All internal
body structures are apparent, and are illuminated by the
instructor during discussion. Additional teaching aids
include electronic modules of the circulatory, digestive
and nervous systems.

In 1979 the first Life Education Centre was opened
at The Wayside Chapel. It was financially supported by
the Drug and Alcohol Authority of New South Wales and by
the Mayne Nickless Foundation. On 29 May 1987 a two
million dollar Life Education Centre was opened at Colyton
to serve as the National Headquarters of Life Education
Centres, and to provide ready access to the programmes
for children in western and outlying suburbs of Sydney.
It was financed with support from the New South Wales
Government which gave land and money grants, and with a
matching donation of $750,000.00 from Dick Smith.
Additional support was given by Rotary and Lions Clubs,
the schools and the local community.

Another centre was opened in 1987 at Terrey Hills.
This centre was 'fully funded by Dick Smith as his contribution to assist the future of young people in Australia'. Noffs has claimed that the Terrey Hills Centre brings to perfection all the features of Life Education Centres, and it will be a design model for other centres throughout Australia and the world. It has been accommodated initially in Dick Smith's business premises until other permanent arrangements are made. A centre was also established in 1987 at Broadbeach on Queensland's Gold Coast.

Increasing demand was made by schools for access to the Centres, and in 1982 the first Mobile Life Education Centre was launched. The Mobile Units are caravans specially designed to replicate the programmes and technology of the static Centres. The first Mobile, for use in the Tweed-Heads-Ballina district of New South Wales, was provided by the Lend Lease Corporation. A second unit, for use mainly in Sydney's western suburbs, was donated in 1983 by Dick Smith.

During the launching of the unit on 7 November 1983, parliamentarian Laurie Brereton paid public tribute, on

93. 'The Wayside Chapel. The Biggest Little Church in the World', _op.cit._, p.3.
behalf of the government, to Ted Noffs:

Life Education Centres are now recognised right throughout the world as being the very leaders in preventative health education in this area of drug abuse, particularly with children....in all of this the greatest praise of all should go to the Rev. Ted Noffs who inspired the whole approach and it is a great pleasure....on behalf of the government to publicly pay tribute to Ted Noffs. 94

By the end of 1987 twenty-two mobile vans were operating in New South Wales and Victoria. An additional eleven units were planned to be operational by 1988, including units in Queensland and Western Australia. Fund-raising was proceeding to establish a further twelve units in Australia.95

Authorities from overseas countries have called on The Wayside Chapel for help in establishing Life Education Centres in their countries, and Noffs made frequent trips in 1986 to help implement programmes. He addressed the House of Lords in England. The Prince and Princess of Wales actively supported establishment of the programme96 and several planning meetings were held in Kensington Palace. Two Mobile Units were exported to the United Kingdom during 1986 and 1987. One was sponsored by the Variety Club, and the rock singers, 'Dire Straits' gave their services to establish and sponsor a unit at a cost of $120,000.00. Forty large firms in Britain pledged the equivalent of two million dollars to equip twenty Mobile

94. L. Brereton, Text of Speech at Launching of Mobile Unit, Monday 7 November 1983.
95. Life Education Centre File Records.
Life Education Centres. Jill Pearman, a Wayside Chapel staff member, was seconded to recruit and train British staff for the Centres.

Prior to his illness, Ted Noffs established rapport with the Health Department officials in Thailand, and establishment of a static centre in Thailand is planned for completion in 1989, in conjunction with the Thai and Australian Governments. David Lange, Prime Minister of New Zealand, has negotiated with Wesley Noffs, the Chief Executive of Life Education Centres, for supply of two Mobile Classrooms in Christchurch and Auckland, also for the establishment of a four classroom Static Centre in each city. During negotiations Lange acknowledged that he had attended Wayside Chapel during the early days of its operations, and had been influenced by Ted Noffs' ministry. Mobile classrooms are operating in the United States, initially located in Chicago and Kansas. Several South East Asian countries have expressed interest in establishing Life Education Centres, and Centres have been visited by delegations from Russia and China.

Progressively graded programmes have been structured on the principle that each school class, from Kindergarten to year six, visits the Life Education Centre once a year, and visits are supplemented by

98. W. Noffs, Recorded interview, 1 August 1988, op.cit.
99. Life Education Centre, Information Letter.
appropriate follow-up material. Popularity of the programmes has caused Public, Catholic and Private schools to block-book their schools for visits three years in advance. The Life Education Centre keeps a computer record of the visits made by each school.

In a recent interview Wesley Noffs claimed that the momentum of growth in the last four years has been astonishing. Computer listings of attendances indicate that in 1988 approximately 684,000 children will attend Life Education Centres in Australia during a forty week school year. Such phenomenal growth has necessitated establishment of an administrative structure to cope efficiently with maintenance and development of the Life Education Centre activities. A separate Board has been established, although some members, including Ted and Margaret Noffs, are common to both the Life Education Centre Board and the Wayside Foundation Board. The Life Education Centre operates with a National Board of Directors, a National Secretariat and State Boards. The various States and Overseas Boards have a high degree of autonomy, but are legally bound to the Central Board by Licence Agreement. This ensures compliance with the

100. Life Education Centre. Approximate breakdown of number of classes and children per year at present level of mobile units and static centres.

101. W. Noffs, Recorded interview, 1 August 1988, op.cit. The Wayside Foundation Management Board operates the Mission activities except the Chapel itself. Its connection with Life Education Centres is as Licensor of all L.E.C.s. It now operates the Crisis Centre, the Rehabilitation Programmes, World Care, the Tracker Programme, and links all these with the spiritual concept of The Family of Humanity.
original aims set by Ted Noffs. The Licence Agreement stipulates that all programme materials, including the teaching manuals, are those supplied from the National Board. It is mandatory for all Centres, including those overseas, to send quarterly returns to the National Board detailing particulars concerning the schools and numbers of children who have visited the Centres. Quarterly financial returns are also required from all the Centres.102

Rigid rules have been established to maintain standards in regard to qualifications for the Centres' teachers. Teachers are required to have at least a qualification in Education or Health. Ninety percent are qualified teachers and others are qualified nurses. All staff members are given additional intensive training courses. Gwen Eve is currently Curriculum Director, and is constantly updating teaching material. In the course of curriculum presentation she liaises with experts in specific areas.103

There is close co-operation with the Education Department which is supportive of Life Education Centres. All curriculum material in its formative stage is viewed

102. 'State Agreement Between Life Education Centre and Licensee'. Also Recorded interview with Gwen Eve, Curriculum Director, Life Education Centres, 22 July 1988.
103. G. Eve, Recorded interview, op.cit. Eve is currently discussing with Dr. Julian Gold, a Drugs and Aids authority, the procedure of using computer graphics in respect to T Cells.
by the Department and approved for teaching in schools. A priority aim of the Life Education Centre is to fit into the existing educational framework by integrating with the education system, while retaining its own integrity.

During the past four years, research and developmental work has been proceeding to extend Life Education Centres beyond the primary school stage into the secondary school area. An integrated curriculum has been planned, broadly concerned with physical, mental and spiritual health, issues of sexuality, personal awareness and self esteem. Wesley Noffs is to approve the team selected to liaise and work with school counsellors to implement this programme. The Life Education Centre staff members believe that through the Centre's pioneering developments with the Department of Education they have become, in this area, initiators of change. It is the Centre's objective to remain flexible to accommodate changing perspectives and new situations.

Increasing support received from individual Churches has been a source of encouragement to the Life Education Centre staff. Following talks given by Ted Noffs, the Uniting Church Missions in Adelaide and Perth hold licences to conduct Life Education Centres. In New South Wales support is given by Roman Catholic and Uniting

104. Ibid.
Churches. Wesley Noffs believes that any existent minority opposition is not very visible.

Ted Noffs' Life Education Centre has received wide acclaim for its programme, and its files hold testimonials which have been received from teachers, Parents and Citizens Associations, and parents, indicating the effective impact on young children of the programme's message.\textsuperscript{105} There was, however, a recently publicized criticism of the Life Education Centre Programme which was made by Stephen Wallace, a teacher in the Department of Psychology at Victoria College.\textsuperscript{106} The criticism was based on a study conducted by Wallace's students. The credibility of this study was questioned by the Life Education Centre, primarily because of flaws in its methodology. The study evaluated two units only in Victoria. Wallace's main criticism was that the Programme was outside the national guidelines on drug education. An anomaly in his criticism was that his students' study was done on secondary school students, but the Life Education Programmes to which he related were specifically programmed for primary school children. His criticism that the Programme did not fit in to what was happening in schools did not address the increasing liaison between

\textsuperscript{105} Life Education Centre. 'Extracts of comments in letters received from School Principals, Teacher and Parents and Citizens Organisations'.

the Department of Education and the Life Education Centre and, indeed, stated in error that the Programme did not involve co-ordination with any outside organizations and agencies.

Actually, evaluations of the Programmes are being continually carried out, either by the Life Education Centre itself, or by outside agencies. Wallace's criticism was in direct conflict with an evaluation carried out in 1985 by Kerry Gould, Research Officer of the Health Education Unit in the Sydney Institute of Education. The research was specifically an evaluation of the extent to which the programs offered at the Life Education Centre (L.E.C.) augment classroom based health studies activities. 107

Gould's research was the third stage of an evaluation of the Life Education Centre by an evaluation committee established in 1983 by the Wayside Chapel and the New South Wales Drug and Alcohol Authority. The committee's brief was to advise on the overall quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of services provided by the Life Education Centre. 108

Represented on the Committee were the Drug and Alcohol Authority, the Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol (C.E.I.D.A.), the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office, the Health Education Unit

108. Ibid., p.iv.
Gould's research showed that ninety-three percent of teachers surveyed considered that the L.E.C. programs complement existing school programs. Most teachers consider the L.E.C. programs to be helpful in the planning. 109

In 1985 funds were made available from the Commonwealth Department of Health to carry out a Pilot Evaluation of children's responses to the Life Education Programme. Dr. John Pearce from the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Sydney, representatives from the N.S.W. Drug and Alcohol Authority and from the Life Education Centre compiled the survey during 1986. The pilot study was, overall, favourable and complimentary. It did suggest that greater emphasis could be placed on alcohol awareness, but the study suggested the L.E.C. programme is effective in making children aware of drugs. Also, overall, children in the L.E.C. group are less likely to smoke. 110

In a letter written to Wesley Noffs, Pierce noted that there was 'a significantly lower smoking level in schools that have attended the Centres than in others....which did not attend'. 111

109. Ibid., p.41.
A letter was also received from the Professor of Community and Geriatric Medicine, University of Sydney, Stephen Leeder, who wrote 'in admiration and support of the excellent program', and 'was impressed with the comprehensive, biological and behavioural approach'.

Further approval of the programme was given in a letter from Michael Field, Senior Lecturer in Medicine at The University of Sydney. In his letter he stated:

> There is no doubt that the medical community regards the activities of the Life Education Programme in combating drug abuse in the community through education of young children as the only long term solution to this problem...I think it is also true to say that programmes such as yours have started to influence general community attitudes to substance abuse in our society.

An in-house report was compiled using the evaluations made by class teachers from 1979-1987. Ninety-seven percent of teachers responded that they were willing to bring their class to view the Programme each year, which indicated the level of teacher approval. Another evaluation of the Programme is planned to be made in 1989 which will also evaluate the latest curriculum and Programme revision.

Financial cost of the Programme needs to be related to the cost to the community of drug addiction problems.

112. S. Leeder, Professor of Community and Geriatric Medicine, The University of Sydney, Letter to Wesley Noffs, 7 August 1987.

113. M. Field, Senior Lecturer in Medicine, The University of Sydney, Letter to Wesley Noffs, 12 November 1987.
It has been estimated that the Life Education Centre programme is the least expensive long-term effective programme available for drug prevention. Including Government costs, the cost is about $6.50 per child per year to go through the programme. Parents pay from $2.00 to $2.50 per child. These costs are balanced against the direct cost to the community of approximately $750,000.00 for one heroin addict for a life period. That does not include incidental costs to the community, such as theft. 114

Graham Williams, a Sydney journalist, reported Noffs' account of a telephone call he received which indicated the type of impact the programme made on young children and parents:

A university professor rang me last week after his young son had seen the program and came home and told him excitedly all about the dangers of drugs. The professor said, 'I am amazed that this has made such impact. It's fantastic. I want to help in any way I can'. 115

The parent is now a consultant to the Life Education Board. 116

The whole extensive programme has developed from Ted Noffs' conviction that religion should involve

114. W. Noffs, Recorded personal interview, 1 August 1988.
115. T. Noffs, In interview with G. Williams ten days prior to Noffs' stroke, reported in 'Noffs: he doesn't fall by the Wayside', in The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 March 1987, opcit., p.4.
the world's people at their point of need. His objective in such a ministry has always been the building of a unified, peaceful Family of Humanity wherein all have the opportunity to develop physically and spiritually to full potential. In practice, the Life Education Centre ministry has inspired governments and authorities to support it as a practical measure to help combat a universal problem.
4.5. POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF NOFFS' MINISTRY.

The extent of popular approval given to Noffs' ministry contrasts with evidence suggesting widespread indifference or disaffection towards traditional conservative Church institutions. Writing recently in Zadok Perspectives, Editor John Harris commented,

Research data on the worldwide Christian church, no matter how we play around with them, continue to tell us in no uncertain terms that...in areas dominated by the Western way of life, whether capitalist, or socialist, the Christian church is either growing more slowly than the population - the most hopeful interpretation of Australian data - or it is actually shrinking in real terms, as in parts of Western Europe. 117

In 1986 Bouma and Dixon published results and an analysis of the Australian Values Systems Study which was undertaken in 1983. The surveys revealed that 85% of Australians believe in some concept of God,118 and 57.9% claim to be religious persons.119 Although 85.6%


118. G. Bouma and B. Dixon, The Religious Factor In Australian Life, Monash University, 1986, p.14. 'The Australian Values Study has been designed in such a way as to provide the largest feasible set of questions that are comparable with the findings of International Values Studies. Substantial cross-comparisons with overseas and Australian studies, undertaken by the Program in Public Policy Studies Research Directorate, indicate a high level of confidence in the data base developed by the Australian Values Study Survey', pp.191 and 192.

119. Ibid., p.11.
identified with some religious group, only 27.1% claimed to go to church once a month, and 20.6% attended on a weekly basis. Peter Kaldor published a study in 1987, *Who Goes Where?...Who Doesn't Care?*, in which he correlated various surveys, including the Australian Values Systems Study and the McNair-Anderson surveys of 1983-1984. The surveys showed that by 1984 the number of regular church attenders at Anglican, Uniting and Presbyterian Churches had declined to less than half of the 1960 attendance figures.

These figures support numerous studies which emphasize that the existence of a spirituality in many Australians is not dependent on commitment to established church practice, dogma and creed. The extent of the popularity and community acceptance of Noffs' ministry needs to be assessed against this background.

Support for Ted Noffs and The Wayside Chapel ministry extended far beyond the conduct of twenty-four thousand marriage ceremonies and eleven thousand Naming ceremonies. His ministry attracted financial support from large business concerns, the Lend Lease Corporation, the Mayne Nickless Foundation, and businessman Dick Smith.

Rotary, Lions and Apex Clubs organized fund-raising for his outreach programmes, especially for the Life Education work. His work has attracted approval and interest from the media, from the entertainment world, from governments and their agencies, and from people occupying the highest to the lowliest places in society.

A list of speaking engagements which he fulfilled in the one year of 1986 provided an indication of the varied societies and associations from which interest in his work was expressed. They included the Trades and Labour Council, Parents and Citizens Associations, the New South Wales Mental Health Association, Macquarie University, U.N.I.C.E.F., the Australian Christian Movement at the University of Sydney, S.W.A.P. branches, the Business Council of Australia, Sai Baba Group, Southport R.S.L. Club, Brunswick Health Area, and various Service Clubs, Colleges and Schools. His speaking engagements during 1986 were supplemented in that year by forty-eight Radio and Television interviews held in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand. Community approval was also reflected in various awards he was given, which included


the 1985 Australian Salesman of the Year Award. This award was a recognition of the stimulus given to overseas trade income which was derived from payment of royalties for the installation of patented equipment used in Static and Mobile Life Education Centres. Awards given to Noffs in 1985-1986 included Australian Humanitarian of the Year 1985 (National Bank of Australia), Australian Salesman of the Year 1985, Advance Australia Award 1986, Australian Humanitarian Award of the Year 1986 (Variety Club of Australia).126

The enthusiastic approval given to Noffs' Life Education Programme, both nationally and internationally, was readily apparent. In addition, many in the unchurched community appreciated the nature of his ministry with its disregard for the qualifications and restrictions imposed by traditional Christian dogma. They approved his single-minded concentration on implementing practical measures to help the members of the Family of Humanity to attain fullness of life.

Comments made in the staff room of a Sydney high school appear to typify the response given at community 'grassroots' level to his ministry. During a staff room discussion on the subject of religion in Australia, there was almost unanimous criticism of established church practice and dogma. One member of staff who expressed

appreciation of Noffs' style of ministry reported later that her comment had an almost electrifying effect in the staff room. One staff member after another enthusiastically supported a teacher who commented, 'Well, of course, that's different; that's what Christianity is really all about'. 127

Although popular approval for Noffs' ministry has been widespread in the community, there has always been an element of disapproval from within the Churches. Criticism expressed following his visit during the late 1970s to a Wollongong Church was typical of opposition from conservative church members. Clyde Dominish, minister of the Wesley Mission Church in Wollongong, invited Noffs to speak to a Sunday night congregation about the work of The Wayside Chapel. There was present at the service a conservative youth group led by a churchman with firmly held Fundamentalist theological beliefs. After the service, members of the group verbally attacked Dominish and bitterly criticized him for daring to bring Noffs into the church building. 128

From among many of his ministerial colleagues and some other lay-people, less vehement criticisms have been made by those who, while not agreeing with his theology, nevertheless endorsed the value of his social ministry.

127. E. Facer, Verbal report of Staff Room Discussion, Killara High School, 1986.
128. Personal reminiscences, by members of Wesley Mission, Crown Street, Wollongong.
Even among those ministers and lay-people who had some sympathy with his beliefs, one reason for their reluctance to endorse his theology may be explained, if for no other reason, by their perception that acceptance of his interpretation could be seen to imply rejection of much of the authority base of the institution of the Christian Church.

There were some ministerial colleagues who gave varying degrees of endorsement to his ministry. Jack Brand, the 1976 President of Conference, admired the practical aspect of Noffs' ministry, and he claimed that The Wayside Chapel deserved support.\textsuperscript{129} There were other ministers who approved of his vision, in terms similar to Ferguson's assessment, previously quoted, that Noffs was a 'frontiersman'. Clyde Dominish, the 1988 Moderator, also expressed approval of Noffs' ministry when he said that he believed that what was happening at The Wayside Chapel was 'the most significant experiment in terms of spirituality that Australia has seen.'\textsuperscript{130} Doris Gillies, for many years employed in church administration, commented that her assessment of Noffs, and of others who held similar beliefs, was that

\textsuperscript{129} J. Brand, President's Message, in \textit{The Methodist}, 17 May, 1975, p.16.

\textsuperscript{130} C. Dominish, Recorded personal interview with the Reverend Clyde Dominish, 13 November, 1987. Dominish said 'The community knows it is right, but not why - they haven't the theology and the philosophy to deal with it.'
they were men ahead of their time; they had a vision which many in the church could not see. 131

Gillies' assessment was consistent with a similar view of Noffs' ministry which was expressed by the Hon. R.J. Ellicott, Minister for Home Affairs, when he opened extensions to The Wayside Chapel in 1978. His comments appeared to encapsulate, albeit in eloquent form, what many who admire Noffs' ministry have tried to express:

I want to try and say what this place stands for, so far as I've been able to discover.

When you come to the Wayside Chapel, you are taking a journey to the very edge of life, to the margin of existence.

You are journeying to the wayside - the edge of the road - the littoral of life, for that is what the Wayside is.

You are not journeying with a Woolley or a Toynbee into the past, but with a Columbus, a Cook or a Burke and Wills into the future. You are engaging in a dangerous act of faith.

You will see through a glass darkly; but you will see.

You will harbour thoughts which are years before their time. You will be accused of abysmal heresies;

You will put your arm around an outcast; you will look into the eyes of a lost and broken youth; you will touch the hand of a happy old lady eking out her last few years in an upstairs flat.

You will 'stand before the demagogue in church and state and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking'.

You will dare to believe in the spiritual value of every man and woman and what's more to practise it as well.

You will proclaim that every true faith, including your own great faith, is in search of a common truth, binding people everywhere in one great family of man.

You will be suddenly young and invigorated again, for you will be at the frontier, at the cutting edge of life.

That, as I understand it, is what the Wayside Chapel is all about. 132

Noffs suffered a massive cerebral haemorrhage on 15 March 1987, and remained in a coma for five weeks. Although since that date he has slowly improved, he remains gravely incapacitated. The spontaneous outpouring of concern from all strata of society has been perhaps the most dramatic and genuine evidence of the extent of the popularity of his ministry.

Literally thousands of cards, letters and telegrams have been received at The Wayside Chapel. Among good wishes for his recovery were messages from Prince Charles, the Australian Governor General, the Prime Minister and many politicians, the media, school children, show business personalities, and from all strata of society. Hand-made cards bearing good wishes were received from more than 200 schools. Letters were received from nuns in various Orders, from Buddhists, and from Hare Krishnas. The expressions of goodwill from all cultures and faiths included holy ashes from the Sai Baba Group. People paid for novenas, and protestants prayed. Soon after Noffs became ill, two women who were strangers to each other, entered an empty, open Rose Bay Church within minutes of each other. Each prayed, and although one was a protestant, they each lit a candle for his recovery. As they left the Church, they engaged in conversation and found that they had both been praying for Noffs' recovery. \[133\]

\[133\] M. Noffs, Television interview with Ray Martin on The Willesee Programme, Channel 9, 17 April 1987.
Trainee priests, Knox Grammar schoolboys and Technical College students were among volunteers who offered help with the Chapel's outreach programme. Wesley Noffs said:

On the second day after the stroke, when the messages started pouring in, it felt like the whole of Australia was pouring in through the window with love. 134

For months, reports on his progress appeared in daily newspapers. In New South Wales, commercial and national television stations presented reports on his illness and reviewed the history of his Wayside Chapel ministry. Radio announcers praised his achievements. A typical comment was that made by Ray Taylor, an Australian Broadcasting Commission announcer, who claimed that whatever improvement had been made to the life-style of Kings Cross was 'due mainly to Ted Noffs' pragmatic, no-nonsense ministry'. Taylor concluded his comments with the words, 'On your feet, Ted— the world needs you'. 135

During her radio session on 18 March, Margaret Throsby commented, 'Sydney can't afford to lose Ted Noffs'. 136

It was a sentiment which, since his illness, has been frequently expressed in similar words by announcers and interviewers on national and commercial networks.

The Wayside Chapel ministry has continued during Noffs' illness. His wife, Margaret, and their three sons

are actively involved in the activities of The Wayside Chapel and its various agencies. They are assisted by well-trained staff, aided by Clyde Dominish, who are all committed to Noffs' ideals of ministry.

There was much in Noffs' ministry which was consistent with John MacMurray's belief that 'religion is concerned in reality with two things - with action and with community'. In his book, *Mark of God*, Noffs acknowledged his affinity with MacMurray's theology when he likened his concept of The Family of Humanity to a model which MacMurray had proposed,

This is, perhaps, the centre of mature religion in our time. It is the task of creating forms of personal community, not of a purely spiritual or ideal kind, but of a concrete and material kind, of creating in fact new religious institutions.

Whatever may be the future of The Wayside Ministry, it will stand as an historical example of a ministry which became deeply involved with community and people at the level of their daily need. Through this ministry, both Ted Noffs and the work of The Wayside Chapel achieved an exceptional degree of popularity and approval from many people outside the traditional institution of the Church.

CHAPTER 5. - THE EXPRESSION OF PROCESS THEOLOGY WITHIN THE TRADITION OF NEW SOUTH WALES METHODISM. CHARLES BIRCH AND NORMAN WEBB.
5.1 INTRODUCTION.

The subject of this chapter is the expression, within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism, of process theology, or panentheism. Panentheism is basic to process theology. It is the belief that God is in all things and beyond all things. Process theology emphasizes the mutability of the God of panentheism. Charles Hartshorne eventually used the term 'neo-classical theism' in preference to 'process theology'. In the manner in which these three terms have been generally used, and as they will be used in this chapter, they are almost synonymous.

Process theology differs significantly from aspects of secularized religion examined in preceding chapters. The ministries examined in those chapters were involved primarily with responses to social needs which were readily identifiable with what is popularly understood to be the concern of the social gospel. In contrast to that

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social gospel emphasis, process theology is basically a philosophical theology which Charles Hartshorne and William Reese described as a 'rational reflection about God'.

Philosophically, however, process theology is thoroughly compatible with the social gospel emphasis of involvement in the world. The concept of God's continuous active involvement and immanence in every aspect of creation is fundamental to process theology. Because of the extent of this ever-active identification of God with the world, it is reasonable to argue that, at least from a philosophical and theological standpoint, process theology is the most authentic of all expressions of secularized religion.

Process theology conforms to the three criteria which this thesis has set to identify secularized religion. One is the relationship of religion to the world. In process theology God is so interrelated with every entity in creation, and so essentially immanent in the world, that Schubert Ogden claimed the God of process theology to be the very 'ground of secularity'.

The second criterion this thesis requires of secularized religion is that it reflects and responds to social pressures. The social pressure which process theology addresses is not the pressure of physical need, which is the concern of most secularized ministries, but the challenge to relate the concept of God to scientific insights of the modern world, particularly those derived from quantum physics, ecology and biology. The Scottish theologian, Thomas Torrance, is not committed to process theology, but he did draw attention to the pressure imposed on theology by a scientifically literate society when, in 1968, he

made a plea for a scientific theology which can really help modern men refer their thoughts properly beyond themselves to the living God... to a world that will always be dominated by empirical and theoretical science. 4

George Lucas identified the Whiteheadian school of thought, with which the New South Wales Methodist, Charles Birch, has been closely associated, as 'highly rationalist', and which represented

a form of cosmology influenced principally by mathematical physics (primarily relativity theory, and to a lesser degree, quantum mechanics) and only to a minor degree by evolutionary biology. 5


Lucas also described the philosophy of both Whitehead and Hartshorne as being 'self-consciously rationalistic in the Spinozist mathematical-deductive sense'. Charles Cobb and David Griffin, prominent modern process theologians, viewed the Whiteheadian school of process thought as a way of integrating science and religion.

The third criterion is that secularized religion derives its rationale from its singular theological interpretation. Cobb and Griffin stated that Whitehead's philosophy 'opens to the theologian fresh possibilities for reflecting on the divine incarnation'. Birch used Biblical quotations to support his claim that process theology interprets a theology found in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Total public commitment to modern process theology has been made within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism by only two men, Charles Birch and Norman Webb. Interviews conducted in relation to this thesis have, however, provided evidence that there are both ministers and laypersons, representative of a cross-section of the Methodist tradition, who either accept, or are sympathetic

6. Ibid., p.11.
8. Ibid., p.98.
to, basic aspects of process theology. In most cases, however, they are unaware of the connection between their thought and process theology.

The first section of this chapter will outline the principal features of process theology. It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive analysis or evaluation of process theology and its development. This outline will provide a context for examination of the expression of process theology by Birch and Webb and those persons within the Methodist tradition who espouse, often unwittingly, its basic beliefs. Process ideas held by Birch and Webb will be examined in detail. Birch emphasized the ecological model of process theology, and he achieved some degree of syncretism between mysticism and rational pragmatic science. Webb combined a panentheist emphasis with the Bonhoeffer-Robinson-Cox concepts of 'man-come-of-age'. The chapter will conclude with reference to those Methodists who, during interviews, expressed ideas which were oriented towards process theology.
5.2 AN OUTLINE OF PROCESS THEOLOGY - ITS HISTORY AND BELIEFS.

On 21 July 1979 an article was published in the Los Angeles Times in which its religion writer, John Dart, stated, 'process theology's greatest period may have arrived'. Dart was reporting on a thirteen-day World Conference on 'Faith, Science and the Future' which was held that month and sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The writer reported that a number of process theologians had presented background papers; the deputy moderator of the conference, Australian biologist, Charles Birch, had been actively planning the conference for nine years; and the conference chairman, Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios of the Syrian Orthodox Church, India, was sympathetic to process viewpoints. Dart's report included comments made by Protestant and Catholic theologians and philosophers, including John Cobb and Norman Pittenger, who accepted the beliefs of process theology.

Dart's report did not include the information that instead of an anticipated three hundred and fifty participants at the conference, more than nine hundred attended from fifty-six countries. Approximately half

11. Ibid.
the participants were physical scientists and technologists. The remainder consisted of church leaders, social scientists, theologians and representatives of government and industry.¹²

Four years later an English article in The Times reported favourably on process theology. The writer, John Pearman, said that process theology deserved access to British culture without Christians believing process theology posed a threat to their faith, thereby requiring them to shore up their doctrinal fortifications. Pearman wrote:

'God as process' is an attractive notion and can be pressed further into our received theological orthodoxy without sustaining serious bruising.¹³

He described process theology as 'an aggressive idea when first let loose in the United States 50 years ago'.¹⁴

By locating process theology within the time context of '50 years ago' Pearman identified process theology with the Whiteheadian school which originated 'primarily in response to the novel developments in relativity and quantum physics'¹⁵ during the early twentieth century.

¹⁴ Ibid.
Alfred North Whitehead, a philosopher-mathematician, communicated his ideas in his 1929 publication, *Process and Reality*, which Cobb and Griffin described as his 'magnum opus', and in his subsequent lectures and writings. Developments and modifications of Whitehead's philosophy were made by his assistant, Charles Hartshorne, by Hartshorne's pupil, John Cobb Jr., and by other theologians and philosophers.

There is wide acknowledgement that Whitehead's philosophy created a dividing line which separated modern process thinking from its ancient tradition. Lucas, however, has argued at length that this customary definition is problematic. In *Modern Process Thought* he explored the varied historical traditions and developments of process thought. Because the resultant ambiguity arising from the varied antecedents tends towards confusion in discussion of process philosophy, Lucas concluded that 'one must resort to historical analysis to sort out these concerns'.

Whitehead, Hartshorne, Cobb and Birch were among the process philosophers, theologians and scientists who acknowledged various historical antecedents which influenced the development of process theology. In the *Timaeus* Plato's ideas concerning the World Soul and Being

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16. J.B. Cobb Jr., and D.R. Griffin, *op.cit.*, p.163
and Becoming were similar to aspects of process theology. Plotinus blended pantheism with concepts of classical theism. John Scotus Eringa's philosophy had some affinity with Whitehead's primordial and consequent natures of God, and John Duns Scotus leaned towards panentheism. Meister Eckhart, the German philosopher born in 1260, wrote in process terms about 'God, suffering with man', and held ideas approaching process theology's dipolar nature of God.

Process theologians also drew support for their views from the Hebraic ideas of God which were revealed in the Old Testament, and from the Gospels and the Pauline epistles. Hartshorne wrote of Jesus as the historical empirical example of panentheism, and claimed, Jesus appears to be the supreme symbol furnished to us by history of the notion of a God..., receiving into his experience the sufferings as well as the joys of the world.

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Whitehead compared the philosophical abstraction of Plato's panentheist ideas with the empirical historical example of God in Jesus. Writing in *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead attributed the power of Christianity to 'its revelation in act of that which Plato divined in theory'.

The significance of the influence of Socinian ideas in the development of process thinking was acknowledged by Hartshorne who described the Socinians as the real forerunners of process theology and indeed almost of process philosophy generally.

Their influence in the tradition of process theology was due to their rejection of the idea that God-in-process, or God-becoming, was an inferior form of being. They believed that it was unsound to regard such an idea as inferior.

Modern development of process theology is associated with the advent of the theory of relativity and with the intuitions gained from quantum physics. Theologians and philosophers grappled with the implications for theology of these new scientific insights. In doing so they formulated the modern form of process theology. Although different schools of thought vary in some details of


emphasis there are basic tenets which are common to all branches of the philosophy.

Charles Myer drew attention to the etymology of panentheism which is correlative with process theology. The word panentheism comes from the three Greek words, *pan en theoi*. These words are contained in the Pauline corpus, and mean 'everything exists in God'.\(^{24}\) Whereas the God of classical western theism transcends and is separate from the world, and the God of pantheism is limited to containment within the world, the God of process theology or panentheism is a synthesis of these two polarities. The panentheist God is in the world, but also transcends the world, not spatially, but in 'the inexhaustibility of the cosmic Love'.\(^{25}\) Norman Pittenger summarized this concept of God's transcendence when he said that the process model of God

> is not to deny divine transcendence, once this is understood as meaning not remoteness nor unaffectedness but rather inexhaustibility, enduring faithfulness, and the capacity to absorb the sting of evil and turn what seemed (and indeed was) wrong into an occasion for further and perhaps even greater good.\(^{26}\)

The panentheist concept of transcendence is a significant

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characteristic which differentiates process theology, or panentheism, from pantheism and classical theism.

The result of the synthesis of polarities in the nature of God means that the process God is perceived as one Being with a nature containing two aspects. This nature Whitehead described as the dipolar nature of God. He defined one aspect of God's nature as primordial. The other aspect he defined as consequent. God's primordial nature is the realm of potentiality and provides subjective aim for the evolving creation. It is in the primordial nature 'which is the lure of unrealized possibility....that God lures the world to completeness'.

The reality of God's subjective aim is never coercive. Process theology's concept of God's activity is always the persuasive lure of love, always luring the universe to ever greater aesthetic perfection. Whitehead emphasized that the primordial nature is conceptual. It

is, he said,

the unlimited conceptual realization of
the absolute wealth of potentiality. 28

It is in the consequent aspect of God's nature that God is in process. In his consequent nature God prehends, or experiences, the total experiences of the world - its struggles, sorrows and joys. Whitehead described the function of God's consequent nature as the sharing by God 'with every new creation its actual world'. 29 God is affected by the world because he is so related to it that at every point the occasions in the world make their contribution to the divine life, whether for a fuller divine satisfaction or for an anguished divine reception. 30

28. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, An Essay in Cosmology, Gifford Lectures. Delivered in the University of Edinburgh during the Session 1927-28. Corrected Edition, Edited by D.R. Griffin and D.W. Sherburne, The Free Press, A Division of MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc., United States of America, 1979, p.343. Whitehead also described the primordial nature as 'the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality... But as primordial, so far is he from 'eminent reality' that in this abstraction he is 'deficiently actual'....His feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fulness of actuality. Secondly, conceptual feelings, apart from complex integration with physical feelings, are devoid of consciousness in their subjective forms...Thus, when we... consider God in the abstraction of primordial actuality, we must ascribe to him neither fulness of feeling, nor consciousness. He is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things ... His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things. It is deflected neither by love, nor by hatred, for what in fact comes to pass', pp.343-344. 'He is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire' p.344.

29. Ibid., p.345.

30. N. Pittenger, Picturing God, op.cit., p.36.
In this sharing of experience the self-determining acts of the world's creatures change the consequent nature of God. Whitehead claimed that, to this extent, God changes in relation to 'the creative advance of the world'.\textsuperscript{31} God not only gives to the world, but receives from the world. The belief that an experiencing God evolves with creation and is in process is in contrast to traditional Western theism which supports the idea of a static God separated from the world.

The process theologians have presented detailed arguments to support the logical validity of the dipolar concept of God's nature. Hartshorne argued at length in the 1976 Aquinas Lecture\textsuperscript{32} that God only can be uniquely excellent if his nature encompasses the two polarities. According to the process argument, any idea of God is deficient unless God's nature can be expressed 'in pairs of contrasting terms'.\textsuperscript{33} This thesis was expressed by Schelling, elaborated by other process thinkers, including Whitehead and Hartshorne, and accepted as a basic tenet of process theology. Hartshorne drew on Morris Cohen's Preface to Logic to support this panentheist, or surrelative, concept of God. It is a concept which

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requires that the relative or mutable nature of God includes within it the contrary characteristic of the immutable or the non-relative. Hartshorne's main thesis was

that the 'relative or changeable'...includes within itself and in value exceeds the nonrelative, immutable, independent, or 'absolute', as the concrete includes and exceeds the abstract. 34

If it were accepted that this surrelativist, or panentheist, principle is intrinsic to God's nature, Hartshorne believed that theistic religion would be reformulated and would provide some evidence that 'theism can avoid logical absurdities and still be a religious doctrine'. 35 It would, in his view, make theistic religion 'true as well as conceivable'.

Among late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century philosophers who held ideas which were consistent with the concept that God is immanently involved in the processes of change and development in the world were Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Fechner and Hegel. They were followed by Berdyaev, Teilhard de Chardin and Tillich. Their writings contributed in various ways to the development of modern process theology. Hartshorne and Reese described Berdyaev, the Russian religious metaphysician, as a thoroughgoing dipolist, one of the most thoroughgoing who have yet appeared. 36

35. Ibid., ix.
This assessment was justified by ideas which Berdyaev expressed, including:

in God, absolute rest is inseparably connected with absolute motion, 37

and the Kingdom of God is that of God-humanity, in which God is finally in man and man in God. 38

Reference to the process ideas expressed by Teilhard de Chardin and Tillich will be made later in this chapter when examining Charles Birch's assessment of their process ideas.

The foremost names associated with the development of modern process thinking are Whitehead and Hartshorne. Meyer referred to Whitehead as the expert mathematician and scientist to whom modern theology looks for leadership in the development of the concept of 'a God who can change' and 'who interacts with his creatures'. 39

Lucas agreed with this perception when he wrote:

From the perspective of the interested outsider, the term 'process philosophy' customarily intends the metaphysical approach initiated by Whitehead in Science and the Modern World (1925), brought to maturity in Process and Reality (1929) and seen throughout his Harvard writings until his death in 1947. Charles Hartshorne is recognized as the subsequent standard-bearer of this tradition. 40

38. Ibid., p.197.
Whitehead's philosophy was rationalist in a mathematical deductive sense and expressed in a manner which was widely acknowledged as being difficult to comprehend. Charles Hartshorne, who for a time was Whitehead's assistant, adapted Whitehead's philosophy and expressed it in terms which were more readily understood.

Hartshorne increased the understanding of process theology internationally. He worked to develop and fund the Center for Process Studies which sponsored, or co-sponsored, more than fifteen major conferences, including those held in Claremont, Italy, Hawaii and Canada. In a letter to Charles Birch, written in 1982, he also described the development of the world's only complete library of process thought and wrote of the Center's inspiration for the formation of process societies in Europe, Belgium and Japan. Both Hartshorne and his outstanding pupil, John Cobb Jr., have introduced into Whitehead's philosophy a greater theological content.

Cobb became Ingraham Professor of Theology at the School of Theology at Claremont, Avery Professor in the Claremont Graduate School, and Director of the Center for Process Studies at Claremont. He and his colleague, David Griffin, Associate Professor, Philosophy of Religion, at Claremont's School of Theology, attempted to introduce

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process theology in terms acceptable at seminary level. The introductory book was published in five languages. Griffin indicated the complexity of the subject when he commented: 'Now we're asked when it's going to be translated into English'. 42

Whiteheadian philosophy and modern process theology have, to a considerable degree, been responses to developments arising from what has been described as post-modern science. As previously stated, these developments relate particularly to discoveries and intuitions concerning space-time relativity and quantum physics. Benjamin Reist itemized what he considered to be four post-modern scientific developments of major significance for contemporary theological reflection. They were:

1) Evolution: Darwin
2) Relativity: Einstein
3) Uncertainty: Heisenberg
4) Incompleteness: Godel. 43

What has become particularly relevant for process theology from these developments is the changing perception of the nature of the universe. The relativity theory and quantum physics have demonstrated the limitations of the Newtonian-Cartesian mechanistic model of the universe.

The perception of a mechanical universe of independent

42. J. Dart, 'Process Theologians See a Joyful, Human God', op.cit.

substances has been replaced by the concept of an intrinsically dynamic universe of interrelationships in which all matter, in varying degrees, experiences or is sentient. The idea of an isolated static God in such a universe is logically unacceptable to process theologians.

This thesis does not allow for an analysis of the revolutionary revelations which have been inferred from what has been termed the new physics, other than a passing reference to their consequences for theological concepts. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Bohr's notion of complementarity, and Bohm's implicate order have underlined the interrelatedness of entities within the universe, and also the principle of contingency, both of which are basic components of process theology.

44. F. Capra, *The Turning Point*, Bantam Books, Simon and Schuster, United States of America, 1983, pp.78-79. The 'uncertainty principle' demonstrates the interrelatedness of all entities in the universe. It resulted from the realization that instead of a sub-atomic unit of matter being either a particle or a wave, independent of its environment, the unit instead undergoes continual transformation, dependent upon the environment with which it interacts.

45. Ibid., pp.79-80. Niels Bohr's notion of complementarity was developed in relation to the 'uncertainty principle'. Bohr's notion emphasized interrelationships and also the principle of contingency, each of which is a principle basic to process theology's understanding of nature.

theory now supports the idea of a world of complicated webs of interrelationships between entities, of which humankind is an integral part. Reputable scientists, including Heisenberg, Bohr and Oppenheimer, have conceded that modern discoveries in atomic physics indicate a harmony and relationship with spiritual aims and religious beliefs. When Reist studied the implications of post-modern science he concluded that they necessitated radical new theological reflection, leading theology into new modes of thought and onto new ground with a new horizon.

Paul Davies succinctly summarized the challenge which post-modern science posed for theology with his comment:

47. F. Capra, The Tao of Physics, Fontana/Collins, Great Britain, 1975, pp.16-17. Capra quoted the following comments:
'The general notions about human understanding.... illustrated by discoveries in atomic physics are not ....new. Even in our own culture they have a history, and in Buddhist and Hindu thought a more considerable and central place. What we shall find is....a refinement of old wisdom'. (Julius Robert Oppenheimer).

'For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory.... (we must turn) to those kinds of epistemological problems with which....thinkers....have been confronted when trying to harmonize our position....in the great drama of existence'. (Niels Bohr).

'The great scientific contribution in theoretical physics....may be an indication of a certain relationship between philosophical ideas....and the philosophical substance of quantum theory'. (Werner Heisenberg).

full account must be taken of the quantum revolution in the search for an understanding of God and existence....whatever one's religious persuasions, the quantum factor cannot be ignored. 49

Process theologians acknowledged that theology should not be subservient to science. They did, however, appeal for science and theology to work together. Birch appealed for such a relationship when he quoted Tillich's comment,

Of course, theology cannot rest on scientific theory. But it must relate its understanding of man to an understanding of universal nature, for man is part of nature....Even if the questions about the relation of man to nature and the universe could be avoided by theologians ....the lack of an answer can be a stumbling block for a man's whole religious life. 50

In an endeavour to establish such a relationship, Charles Birch, Norman Webb and other like-minded New South Wales Methodists joined with the process theologians as they sought a credible theology in the light of insights derived from post-modern science.


5.3 CHARLES BIRCH AND THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL.

As previously indicated, Charles Birch's commitment to process theology was his response to changed perspectives of the nature of the universe which resulted from discoveries and insights derived from modern science, particularly in the areas of quantum physics and evolution. From the standpoint of a Christian biologist he sought to reconcile his religious faith with scientific knowledge. His biological training gave him an appreciation of the interrelated nature of the universe and its creatures. This awareness resulted in his consistent emphasis on the ecological component in process theology. Birch defined his process theology as an ecological model.

Writing in the introduction to his latest book, presently being prepared for publication, Birch stated:

I am not a materialist for a number of reasons. The prime reason is that I have had experiences which materialism cannot explain. Secondly, I now know too much about matter from modern physics to be a materialist....Because I find materialism incredible I look for an alternative view that will be true to my profoundest feelings and to the understanding I find from modern science. 51

The alternative theology Birch accepted involved a concept of God, not outside the universe, but immanently involved

with all creation. 'In this view', he said, 'there is no
distinction between sacred and secular'. The theology
he accepted was basically the Whiteheadian presentation of
process theology. As stated in this chapter's
introduction, it is a theology in which God's involvement
with the world is so fundamental that, in terms of this
thesis, it is valid to classify it as secularized religion.

Birch's association with the Methodist Church began
in the early 1940s. He had been reared in Melbourne as
an Anglican and had been instructed in a somewhat
Fundamentalist, conservative Christian faith. Following
graduation from the University of Melbourne he moved in
1939 to Adelaide University as a post-graduate research
student at the University's Waite Agricultural Institute.

By this time Birch 'became interested in an
alternative to the rather narrow sort of religion' in
which he had been reared. He was aware of the existence
of a continuing conflict between science and traditional
Western theism. He said that his conviction grew that
'no reconciliation is possible between religious
Fundamentalism and modern science'. He also publicly
expressed his belief that the traditional thinking of

52. L.C. Birch, 'Purpose in the Universe', Synopsis of
address at Symposium of Australian Frontier, 'Is there
sense in human existence?', November 30th, 1968,
University of Sydney, p.2.
53. L.C. Birch, Recorded personal interview, 14 October
1986.
mechanistic science in the Newtonian-Cartesian model could not be reconciled with the supernaturalist tradition of Western theism. This belief led him to state that 'the supernaturalist tradition in theology and traditional science are being driven further and further apart'.

At the time he promoted these views in 1965 his hope lay in evidence of radical changes taking place in theology, philosophy and science which were opening up ways of reconciling theology and science. It was a hope he maintained in later years as he viewed the relationship between process theology and post-modern science.

Birch found that far more liberal theological views were held by a number of Methodists he befriended in Adelaide than those which were part of the Anglican theology he had previously experienced. Many of his Methodist friends were also members of the Student Christian Movement (S.C.M.) which at that time was a strong institution in Australian universities and, in accordance with its tradition, encouraged modern liberal theological views. He joined the S.C.M., and also became a lay preacher in the Adelaide Methodist Church.

It was during the period of the early 1940s that Kenneth Newman of the S.C.M. in the University of Adelaide introduced him to process theology. Birch studied Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*, and he and his

55. Ibid., p.7.
S.C.M. Methodist friends studied the links between the philosophy of Plato's dialogues and the fundamentals of Whitehead's process philosophy.

An additional important influence in the development of Birch's interest in process thinking was a book written by W.E. Agar who had been his zoology professor at the University of Melbourne. The book, entitled *A Contribution to the Theory of the Living Organism*, was a study of process philosophy from a biologist's viewpoint. Agar advised Birch to read Charles Hartshorne's *Psychology of Sensation*. This advice proved to be highly significant. Subsequent to reading the book Birch contacted Hartshorne. The contact resulted in a life-long personal association with Hartshorne and also with other eminent process theologians, including Charles Cobb Jr., with whom Birch later co-authored *The Liberation of Life*. Birch's frequent visits to the American centres of process studies, and his personal contacts with leading process philosophers and theologians, began in the 1940s and have continued throughout the intervening years.

In 1948 Birch accepted an appointment to the University of Sydney, and at the same time continued his association with Methodism by accepting the position of Vice-Master of Wesley College which was the Methodist residential college within the University. During the ten years that Birch remained as Vice-Master he was a member of the College Council and was closely associated
with the Master of the College, the Reverend Bert Wyllie. Wyllie had been one of Angus' pupils and, in Birch's estimation, held modern liberal theological views. Birch's influence on the students extended beyond Wesley College due to his prominent active participation in the Student Christian Movement.

Many of Birch's publications were specifically written in easily comprehended non-technical language to inform laypersons and students about the insights of process theology. The writings on the relationship of science and theology were in addition to the numerous technical papers he produced relating to his biological research. In 1954 he wrote a paper for Christian Scholar entitled 'Interpreting the lower in terms of the higher', and in 1957 he contributed 'Creation and the Creator' to the Journal of Religion. From early in the 1960s his published books and an increasing number of his papers were concerned with the interrelationship of process theology with science and with perceptions of mankind's ecological responsibilities.

Notification on 3 August 1960 of Birch's appointment to the Challis Chair of Zoology at the University of Sydney did not restrict his continuing efforts to inform

56. L.C. Birch, Recorded interview, 14 October 1986, op.cit.
58. Ibid., p.5.
and enthuse students and the general public about the relationships between science and religion which were perceived in the context of modern insights. He was convinced that dissemination of such information was necessary if the frontiers of understanding and meaning were to be 'pushed a little further forward'. His awareness that his views had found 'a real point of contact with the modern questioning student mind' encouraged him to expand into a book for publication his 1964 Centenary Livingstone Lectures which he had delivered that year at Camden Congregational Theological College.

The book, entitled *Nature and God*, was published in 1965 and was written in terms which could be understood by students and the general public. In the book he provided a broad summary of the main features of process theology and of its history. He not only identified its origins with Plato and early church fathers, including Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, but emphasized that it was consistent with Biblical theology. Writing more than twenty years after publication in 1965 of *Nature and God*, he said,

> Process theology is not a new theology. Its central affirmations can be found in biblical thought and in the meeting of biblical with Greek thought. 63

61. Ibid., p.9.
62. Ibid., pp.78-79 and passim.
He equated process theology with the Judaic-Christian concepts of God being continuously involved not only in human history, but in all creation. Biblical sources from which he drew support for the process concept of God's ongoing activity within creation included Psalms, Isaiah, Romans, Colossians and the Acts of the Apostles.  

Birch agreed with the view that a static God was contradictory to the idea of God as creator. Science had shown that the creation of the universe and its creatures is continually evolving, and the process theologians argued that, in such an evolving universe, the creator God cannot be a static entity apart from the world, but must be continuously involved within the ongoing creation. 

The view that God is active within the evolutionary processes of the universe presupposed that matter is not static, but is sentient and contains some aspect of mind. The idea of mind in matter has been given credence increasingly in science, especially with the advent of quantum theory insights. Birch said that the idea was given added support by W.M. Stanley's achievement in 1935 when he isolated, for the first time, a virus in crystalline form which demonstrated living and non-living properties in the one entity. It was a discovery

consistent with what Birch described as modern biology's demonstration of

the continuity of the evolutionary process in the sense that what has evolved constitutes a continuum without any sharp dividing lines, even between non-living and living. 67

From this scientific standpoint Birch moved to acceptance of the view that 'mind is no longer just in a corner of nature. It is part of all nature'. 68 In Nature and God he emphasized his belief in sentient matter when he stated,

all organized entities in the universe, be they electrons, or atoms, or amoeba, or men, are sentient and experiencing creations. 69

The idea of a feeling universe, comprised of experiencing entities, was basic to process theology. It was not only fundamental to Whitehead's philosophy, but was a view held by philosophers, poets and theologians who were sympathetic to process thought.

Birch believed that the concept had much in common with Teilhard de Chardin's idea of the 'within of things'. 70

There was much in Teilhard's ideas which was consistent


70. Ibid., p.49.
with post-modern physics, and it was this area of Teilhard's thinking which Birch accepted as being in accord with his own views and with his ecological model. Birch's close friend, Theodosius Dobzhansky of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, did not agree with Birch regarding this aspect of Teilhard's thinking. Birch acknowledged that Dobzhansky had been one of the most profound influences on his thinking, but on the subject of an experiencing universe they differed because Dobzhansky would not accept that all matter was sentient. Dobzhansky considered himself to be a member of the process school of philosophy, but he rejected Whitehead's belief of mind in matter. It seemed to Birch that Teilhard's 'within' logically implied a sentient universe. Because Dobzhansky accepted so much of Teilhard's thinking, but rejected the logical extension of Teilhard's 'within of things', Birch believed that on this matter Dobzhansky was inconsistent.

On this subject the friends agreed to differ.

Writing to Birch in 1966, Dobzhansky remarked that the

71. C. Birch to Th. Dobzhansky, personal letter, 3 January 1969. In the preface to Nature and God Birch paid tribute to Professor Theodosius Dobzhansky for the understanding he had given of evolutionary biology and the interest he had stimulated in the philosophical problems of evolution, p.10.

only major issue which divided them was the 'mental attribute in all matter'.\textsuperscript{73} In subsequent letters he repeated his disagreement with Whitehead's ideas\textsuperscript{74} and Whitehead's 'thinking atoms'.\textsuperscript{75}

After Dobzhansky's death Birch received a request from an American research student for information regarding Teilhard's influence on Dobzhansky. In reply, Birch explained Dobzhansky's disagreement with Whitehead's ideas which Dobzhansky caricatured as 'brains in atoms'.\textsuperscript{76} It was Birch's assessment that because Dobzhansky rejected the concept of sentient matter, he misunderstood panentheism.\textsuperscript{77} Birch said that Dobzhansky 'did not like intellectualising too much about God', and instead of analysing some of Teilhard's ideas, he preferred to 'accept them as mystical concepts'.\textsuperscript{78} This was an approach unacceptable to Birch who believed that some of Teilhard's ideas were too mystical and incomprehensible. He said that 'Whitehead did it rationally and better'.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{73} Th. Dobzhansky to C. Birch, Personal letter, 3 February 1966.

\textsuperscript{74} Th. Dobzhansky to C. Birch, Personal letter, 6 June 1968.

\textsuperscript{75} Th. Dobzhansky to C. Birch, Personal letter, 6 November 1967.

\textsuperscript{76} C. Birch to Steigman (initial illegible), Personal letter, 17 December 1980.

\textsuperscript{77} C. Birch to Th. Dobzhansky, Personal letter, 17 December 1965.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
Whitehead's rationalistic approach appealed to Birch's scientific mind. At the same time, Birch's appreciation of Whitehead's rationalism did not totally eliminate the appreciation Birch had of the mystical element in the panentheist viewpoint. In his various publications he freely acknowledged his accord with much of Teilhard's and Tillich's thinking. Graeme Ferguson, Principal of the Uniting Theological College, detected a mystical element in Birch's theology, and he said he regarded Birch as one of the few people in New South Wales who had achieved a synthesis of pragmatic rationalism and mysticism in his theology.  

There was one important feature of Teilhard's extension of the principle of evolution which was unacceptable to Birch who rejected it because it was incompatible with modern quantum physics. It was the idea of evolution developing along a straight line to the Omega point. Birch parted company with Teilhard at the point of depicting evolution as 'a single process without interruption' because it conflicted with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, and with randomness, chaos, waste, disaster and struggle.... shortlived failures and longlived successes which continue to be part of the evolutionary process.

80. G. Ferguson, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
Paul Tillich also exercised a profound influence on Birch's views, and Birch acknowledged him as a process philosopher who influenced his thoughts more than he could tell. He established personal contact with Tillich and personally introduced Dobzhansky to Tillich. Birch's process thinking found much common ground with Tillich, including Tillich's 'mystical ontology', in which Tillich developed concepts of 'God beyond the God of theism' and God as not 'a Being', but 'Being, itself'. Birch also appreciated Tillich's creation of a synthesis of the scientific view of nature and the search for reality of God and man.

Although Birch quoted Tillich's views with approval, Kenneth Hamilton interpreted an element in Tillich's theology which would be unacceptable to Birch's ecological model and to the principles of quantum physics. Hamilton defined this element as Tillich's idea of 'Being-itself', and described it as a static concept of the Absolute.

A static concept of God was the antithesis of the concept of God to be found in Whitehead's process rationalism to which Birch subscribed. The idea of God as a static Being

84. Ibid., p.9.
was quite unacceptable to Birch.

In contrast to Hamilton's static interpretation, Charles Meyer's perception of Tillich's God, as the ground of all being, was consistent with Birch's process ideas. Meyer regarded Tillich's God as being intricately involved in all creation. As far as Meyer was concerned, the God intimately connected to what is happening in the world must be a process God. Accordingly, he saw that

something new and exciting...emerges from the modern concept of God as the ground of being. It is the notion of a God who, like his creation, is in process. 89

This was, in effect, a reiteration of the basic tenet of process theology accepted by Birch and all process theologians.

Throughout Birch's writings, particularly in Nature and God and in 'Religion and Nature', Birch emphasized the immanent activity of God in all creation. 'The world', he said, 'is sustained by incarnation of God in every entity and every creative advance'. 90 It was an idea expressed earlier by Whitehead who said, 'the world lives by its incarnation of God in itself'. 91

Birch explained that acceptance of this idea requires rejection of traditional Christian teaching which

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defined God 'as substance, independent and unrelated to anything else'.\textsuperscript{92} Process theology requires that substance-thinking, which is independent of internal relationships, be substituted by event-thinking which involves internal relations. Rejection of substance-thinking was urged by the quantum physicist, David Bohm, who stressed the reality of internal relationships. Birch drew attention to Bohm's request 'to give up altogether the notion that the world is constituted of basic objects or "building blocks"'.\textsuperscript{93}

The implications for process theology of this idea of universal interrelationships have led to a view of God as 'the source of the internal relations which creatively transform us'.\textsuperscript{94} From this view of God, Birch proceeded to explain the various aspects of God's nature which were perceived by Hartshorne, Cobb and others from what they had developed from Whitehead's principles. He spoke of the ever-active God 'ever-pressing upon the world as the persuasive lure of life, only blocked by us'.\textsuperscript{95} Birch also defined, in Whitehead's terms, the idea of the dipolar aspect of God's primordial and consequent nature, and he


\textsuperscript{93} D. Bohm, Wholeness And The Implicate Order, \textit{op.cit.}, p.9. Also cited by C. Birch in 'Religion and Nature', \textit{op.cit.}, p.10.

\textsuperscript{94} C. Birch, 'Religion and Nature', \textit{op.cit.}, p.6.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p.6.
related God's consequent nature to his own ecological model.\textsuperscript{96} He described God as 'the supreme and perfect exemplification of the ecological model of life'.\textsuperscript{97}

Although Birch readily acknowledged that his beliefs about God and Christ did not conform to the doctrines and creeds of traditional Western theism, he affirmed his position as a Christian scientist. He accepted Christ both in life and on the cross, as the supreme concrete expression of God's persuasive lure of love. In the personal life of Jesus he saw the concrete presentation of God's purpose for human life which, from the Christian point of view, he said was

to attain the fulness of the stature of man, which is to be Christ-like. From the Godward view, it is the concrete realization of divine possibilities in human life, the making real of God in the world. \textsuperscript{98}

The sense of Birch's devotion to Christ as the supreme incarnate expression of God's love and as the exemplar of the way life should be lived in the world, was in close accord with the interpretations of the life of Christ which were generally held by the secularized ministries already examined in previous chapters of this thesis. The paths they each traversed to arrive at this interpretation may have differed, but the end result was

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p.14.


\textsuperscript{98} C. Birch, Nature and God, \textit{op.cit.}, p.74.
that each one, including Birch, saw in Christ the supreme example of the way to relate religion to the world.

Christians who reject process theology question three areas in particular. In his writings Birch addressed each of these controversial areas. One controversial subject is the extent to which the process God could be regarded as personal. In reply to the question as to whether the ecological God is personal, Birch replied that in the sense that God is involved in one's personal being, and all are involved in God's being, 'then God is personal, very much so'. 99 The second question concerns the nature of salvation. Birch noted that the word 'salvation' is an ecological word, meaning restoration of broken relationships. Salvation was not, he believed, a one-time event, but was 'an internal relationship involving every moment of every day'. 100 He said that we would understand what salvation meant when life's passions of feeling and cognition combined in a programme of action to change the world that it better reflect the God who is constantly luring it to a higher and richer life. 101 Birch suggested that a Christian could find that in Jesus the spirit of the higher and richer life 'is manifest without limit'. 102

100. Ibid., p.15.
101. Ibid., p.15.
102. Ibid., p.15.
theology is that it denies God's transcendence. Birch has argued in his writings and discussions that it is a false assumption to claim that process theology denies transcendence. He differentiated the transcendence of God in process theology from the transcendence imputed to God by traditional Western Christianity which separates God from the world. This latter concept of transcendence Birch defined as supernaturalism. The concept of transcendence in process theology, as already indicated, was not spatial supernaturalism but, in Pittenger's words, 'the inexhaustibility of cosmic love'.

The attitude of the eminent Methodist preacher, Alan Walker, reflected the concern of classical theists regarding the question of transcendence in process theology. Walker spent three months during the 1970s with Cobb at Claremont as a guest lecturer in evangelism, and later sent his son to study at Claremont. On return to Australia he told Birch that he believed the two most important current developments in religion were Liberation theology and process theology, and he invited Birch to speak at the Central Methodist Mission on the subject of process theology. Birch had gained the impression that Walker was somewhat sympathetic towards process theology. During an interview in 1986, however, in connection with

104. C.L. Birch, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
106. L.C. Birch, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
research for this thesis, Walker was asked for his opinion of process theology. His expressed objection to process theology centred on the subject of transcendence, and he commented:

I think process theology has limited significance. It hasn't gripped the Christian Church, it has nothing like the influence to-day that Liberation theology has, and I think it is somewhat of a passing fad, with all apologies to Charles Birch and John Cobb. But I think now it has been around for quite a while and is not making any headway. I think it loses to some degree the strong transcendence of God, and again it has over-emphasized the immanence of God in creation. In response to the new physics, and claim God is wholly personal - they stop short of Christ's teaching of God as personal. 107

This was a response typical of those who reject process theology. Birch is convinced that such responses confuse transcendence with supernaturalism and indicate a lack of understanding of the true nature of process theology. 108

Always Birch's process ideas were expressed within the framework of establishing a relationship between science and religion. He believed that the responsibility for achieving this was based not only in the need for a reformulation of theological belief, but also in the need for a change in the teaching of science. Science teaching

107. A. Walker, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
108. L.C. Birch, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
which failed 'to invest its facts with values'\textsuperscript{109} drew criticism from Birch. Much of the failure he attributed to the mechanistic paradigm of science and to Western Christianity's substantialist concept of God. Birch believed that the mechanistic paradigm of science was a substance model which led to a perception of the universe and its organisms, including humans, as machines or independent substances. He called for the teaching of 'an ecological model of existence as opposed to the substance model'.\textsuperscript{110} In his view, such teaching would invest science with values and develop an appreciation of the interrelationship of all entities. He claimed that to teach science in this way would provide the opportunity to relate science to faith and religion. In 1975 Birch appealed for the development of a global perspective concerned with the internal relationship of every entity, and for the realization that the 'sustainable society is dependent upon an ecologically ordered world'.\textsuperscript{111}

In addition to his appeal to science teachers to develop such a perspective, he also issued an explicit challenge to the Church to promote the ecological model for both social and theological reasons. In his address


\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.20-26.

as guest speaker at the 1980 Annual Synod of the Uniting Church of New South Wales he argued that adherence to the ecological model was not only necessary, but was a Christian responsibility, in order to ensure a sustainable society able to meet the needs of the world's population.\(^{112}\)

Such a venture, he said, required the Churches to develop a more vital and intellectually substantial understanding of the task of the Church in the modern world. \(^{113}\)

The challenge to overcome what he described as 'bad sense and bad theology'\(^ {114}\) required the churches to look more critically at their philosophical and theological foundations. \(^ {115}\)

It was not the first time that Birch had publicly criticized aspects of conventional Christian belief. In an article in *The Methodist*, written in 1974, he was critical of the expectation by Christian colleagues 'to believe in all the outmoded and false concepts of God that man ever invented'. \(^ {116}\)

Membership of The Club of Rome enhanced Birch's awareness of the world's ecological problems, while his close association with the World Council of Churches over many years kept him in touch with the world's theologians. He did not, however, always agree with the theological stance of the World Council of Churches. A letter which

\(^{112}\) C. Birch, 'The Agenda is the World. To Love the World', Address to the New South Wales Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, October 10th, 1980, pp.9-11.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., p.16

\(^{114}\) Ibid., p.17.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., p.16.

he wrote to John Cobb not only expressed his objection to certain theological concerns which occupied the attention of the World Council; it also highlighted what were Birch's overriding concerns throughout his life. The World Council of Churches had invited Birch to join a core group concerned with Church and Society. Birch wrote to Cobb about his expectations concerning the invitation:

If I am to spend time with the W.C.C. I feel I want to make more of an impact on their theology since it is so deficient....Theology to the W.C.C. seems to be Eucharist, ministry and baptism. This is peripheral alongside a theology of God and a rewriting of the creeds in something beyond a third century concept of theology! How can we get the W.C.C. to work on what God is and does and the meaning of Jesus, the sort of topics you deal with in Christ in a Pluralistic Age....I want to say that baptism, eucharist and ministry don't mean a damn for the people I have to do with, but they are concerned with meaning in life and whether God has any meaning in the modern world and what he does — and what are you doing about that. 117

The cross-section of people Birch 'had to do with' and from whom he received opinions included students and the conglomerate of persons who visited the Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross. Ted Noffs testified to Birch's popularity and capability in leading the Chapel's Question Time. Noffs said that Birch was completely accepted by the crowds at the Chapel. He was, Noffs said, 'regarded as Australia's most formidable lay theologian'118 and was 'at his best in the cut and thrust of incisive debate'. Such contacts increased Birch's awareness of the views

Birch's rejection of traditional dogma and creed was consistent with the attitude of secularized ministries already examined in the thesis. Responses to pressures exerted by the world situation, whether in the social, educational or theological areas, were given precedence over attention to traditional dogma and creed by secularized ministries. As with other secularized ministries there was also within Birch's writings evidence of the prophetic voice, irrespective of whether his writing was directed towards theologians, scientists, the general public, or students. His desire to inform people of the significance for theology and science of the post-scientific insights became a crusade. He participated frequently in public forums, both within and outside the Church. Graeme Ferguson, of the United Theological College, sufficiently respected Birch's theological synthesis to refer, on several occasions, visiting theologians to him for theological and philosophical discussion. 119

A study of Birch's books and papers provides confirmation that Manning Clark's accolade accurately perceived the sincerity of Birch's passion to inform people of the new scientific and theological insights. In Meanjin and in Occasional Writings and Speeches

119. L.C. Birch, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
Manning Clark referred to Birch's book, *Confronting the Future*, and he wrote,

> There was nothing startling or novel in what he had to say. The great distinction of the author, indeed his great gift, was that he combined within himself the mind of the scientist, the soul of the poet, and the gift of prophecy, by which I mean that power to see into the heart of what is wrong in any generation, and denounce that great evil with true moral passion. It was and is a magnificent book, a tract for the times and a human appeal to us all to 'gird our loins'. Birch has both commonsense and a perception of the mystery at the heart of things. 120

In the introduction to 'On Purpose' Birch explicitly declared his passion to make known the insights derived from process theology and quantum physics. He referred to Cobb's recent comment that many of the formulations of the Christian faith were not worthy of credence and that millions of people had rejected the Christian faith because of its incredibility. Birch quoted Cobb's remark,

> process theology has taken as its situation the decline of credibility of Christian belief in the modern world. 121

Although the traditional formulations were 'challenged by modern physics, modern biology and by frontier thinking in theology and philosophy', 122 Birch was concerned that the news of the new thinking had not reached the headlines.


121. 'On Purpose', *op.cit.*, p.5.

One objective of 'On Purpose', he said, was to help put the news there, and he hoped that his new book would contribute to finding new meanings for life. He remained convinced that process theology could provide the key to unlock the new meanings,

process theology takes seriously the insights of the modern world, particularly from science. It seeks to relate these insights to the central insights of Christianity. In doing that, much of the traditional formulations of Christianity fall aside....to reveal the living core. 123

For Birch, a major purpose of his life was to find for himself, and to impart to others,

a coherent faith that can meet our deepest need for integrity of mind, spirit and body and that relates deeply to the new meanings being discovered by science and other aspects of culture. 124.

Birch's contribution to secularized religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism was the extent to which he achieved this purpose by relating religion to the science of the world, and by emphasizing the immanence of God in every aspect of the world's evolutionary processes.

123. Ibid., p.5.
124. Ibid., p.7.
5.4 NORMAN WEBB - PANENTHEIST.

The Reverend Norman Webb's writings do not appear to contain an explicit acknowledgement of his stand as a panentheist until late in his ministry. Twenty years earlier, however, his book, Work Done, contained ideas consistent with panentheism, or process theology, although at that stage his ideas were more specifically expressed in terms of the 'man-come-of-age' influence.

As with Birch, Webb was influenced by a scientific background. This resulted in his efforts to respond to the pressures of increasing scientific knowledge by promoting a theology which was consistent with intellectual integrity. Webb's desire to present a rational faith was confirmed by one of his close associates, a vice-master of Wesley College, who said Webb 'liked to be up with the front of intellectual thinking'.

In common with most of the ministers studied in this thesis, Webb came from a Fundamentalist background. His mother's faith was rigid Methodism. At the age of seventeen he was admitted to the Methodist Church in England, and although he was destined for the ministry by his mother, his early interest was in science. At Cambridge University he was a College Exhibitioner and

completed a Natural Sciences Tripos in Chemistry with Physics, Mathematics and Geology.

After a brief period as an industrial research chemist he entered Wesley House, Cambridge, for ministerial training, where he gained honours in Part 1A of a Theological Tripos. In 1950 he was awarded a Master of Arts degree, and was ordained in 1951. Following six years pastoral work at Coventry Webb spent the next seven years in the Sheffield circuit. In addition to pastoral duties he accepted the position of University Chaplain at Sheffield, and while there his theological views began to change. He believed that his scientific training proved valuable as he shared with students and staff 'studies of the gulf between faith and unfaith, between Church and the "World"'.

The transition to his modern liberal theological views accelerated following his acceptance of an invitation to join the Student Christian Movement in Great Britain. In 1963 the British Methodist Conference granted permission for his appointment as Senior Staff Secretary of the Student Christian Movement in the University of London. His area of responsibility covered the London student population which he estimated to be 40,000.

126. N. Webb, Curriculum Vitae, submitted with Application for position as Master of Wesley College, within the University of Sydney, 19 August, 1964.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
As he worked in six of the University Colleges and five Training Colleges he aimed to address the current theological conversation as found in London theological colleges, as well as the student world in general. 129

The year of Webb's appointment to the S.C.M. coincided with the year in which the S.C.M. Press published John Robinson's *Honest To God*. Robinson's influence on Webb was apparent from Webb's subsequent writing in which he quoted much of Robinson's radically liberal theology. His writing was also strongly oriented towards ideas expressed by Teilhard de Chardin and Tillich.

Interest in working with the student population caused Webb to apply in 1964 for the position of Master and Principal of Methodism's Wesley College within the University of Sydney and he took up this new appointment in January 1965.

During Webb's twelve years as Master of Wesley College his writings and sermons provide strong evidence of the influence on his theological views of the secularized religion of the 1950s and 1960s. It was from the basis of these ideas, combined with the influence of the new physics, that his theological stance developed into an explicit acceptance of panentheism. In his 'Analysis of Ministry', presented in 1984 during his studies for a Doctorate of Ministry, he stated positively 129. Ibid.
'I am a panentheist'.  

Two objectives were apparent in Webb's work at Wesley College. One was to present a theology which was intellectually credible in relation to modern knowledge, including quantum physics. The other was to encourage development of mental and spiritual maturity in the students. Both objectives led him into serious confrontation with conservatives in New South Wales Methodism.

The focus of objection to his theology during his Wesley College tenure centred on his book, *Work Done*. This was printed in 1967 and bore the sub-title, *A Study in the Finished Task of the Church*. The book was commissioned to provide material for study by ministers of the Church. In the words of more than one minister, the book caused a furore, and by order of the Church it was withdrawn from circulation.

*Work Done* consisted of only sixty-four pages. Webb said that it was

the thesis of this book that with the discarding of an outgrown mode of understanding we may expect that future generations will be better able to know the truth.  

130. N. Webb, 'Analysis of Ministry - Norman Webb', presented to the San Francisco Theological Seminary, 31.10.84, p.1

What Webb regarded as 'the truth' at the time of writing Work Done was that the work of the institution of the Church was coming to an end. This, he argued, was because the ageing process has affected the institution to such an extent that the body of the Church is no longer with efficiency the body of Christ. ....Christ....is in society, in the world, and hope for the future depends on the spiritual forces of Christianity joining him where he is.132

Work Done drew heavily on ideas which were currently advocated by modern liberal theology. These ideas, promoted by prominent theologians and religious writers, were either explicitly acknowledged by Webb, or were implicit in the views he expressed. There was evidence throughout Work Done that influences on his thinking included the writings of Bonhoeffer, Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin, Altizer, Robinson and Cox.133

Webb acknowledged the influence of Teilhard in his own development of the major theme in the book. This was the proposition that an evolutionary process was developing in which 'Christ-in-society will emerge',134 and which will result in the ultimate unification of society in Christ. Although Webb claimed that his indebtedness to Teilhard's The Phenomenon of Man was 'real though unspecific',135 there certainly was a very specific affinity of his ideas with Teilhard's development of evolution to the Omega point. Almost twenty years later,

132. Ibid., pp.8-9.
133. Ibid., pp.4, 14, 23, 34, 60 and passim.
134. Ibid., p.15.
in a paper submitted to the San Francisco Theological Seminary, Webb acknowledged the coincidence of his thinking with *The Phenomenon of Man*. He suggested that consideration be given to the view that we live at a time when the outreach of society has encompassed the globe, and begun to form what Teilhard de Chardin describes in "The Phenomenon of Man" as the 'Noosphere' and that Teilhard's "Omega Point" of Christic development is at hand.136

Two of the views which Webb expressed in *Work Done* coincided with those of the other secularized ministries examined in this thesis. One was the centrality of Jesus as the exemplar of the way life should be lived. Webb described Jesus as the man who discovered and lived the life that would be lived when mankind functioned as unified in Christ. Jesus was 'the way'.137 The second view, common to secularized ministries, was the conviction that 'creeds and dogmas have become increasingly irrelevant'.138 This, in Webb's view, was brought about

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136. N. Webb, Paper submitted to San Francisco Theological Seminary. Doctorate of Ministry's Collegium Group C. Seminary Topic: "Change has become almost an obsession of the contemporary world" (Royal Commision on Human Relationships, Vol.1, p.26). 'Analyse the major social changes that have occurred in post-World War II years and discuss their impact on Australian Society'. pp.9-10.


138. Ibid., p.51.
by the lapse of time during which a great deal of the interpretations, theologies, casuistries and syncretisms had been made meaningless for secular man.

Following the rejection of Work Done, Webb's theology remained suspect among sincere conservatives in New South Wales Methodism. They viewed with concern the ideas he presented to students in sermons and discussions.

In his Curriculum Vitae Webb spelt out what he believed to be a college master's responsibility to promote 'study and academic success within a context of wholeness and maturity'. It was his method of encouraging maturity in the students, undergirded by his modern liberal theology, which brought his ministry at Wesley College into crisis. Michael Horsburgh, Vice-Master of the college from 1966 to 1972, suggested that the problems arose because Webb attributed to the students a maturity which they did not possess. The intellectual approach towards student maturity which Webb adopted was based on an expectation that the students could 'see farther than they could'. He adopted a policy of minimum interference in the lives of the students and believed he had brought the college to a point where it could run itself. The result was that what in Webb's view was a policy of developing student maturity became for a few students an opportunity for licence.

139. N. Webb, Curriculum Vitae, op.cit.
140. M. Horsburgh, Personal interview, op.cit.
By 1970 reports circulated of undisciplined behaviour in the college. Alan Walker, who was then the President of Conference, wanted reform in the college. Information given by a student to his mentor, a conservative stalwart in the ministry, was used by the minister to press a charge against Webb regarding laxity of college discipline. A Church court was convened and the charges were heard in 1971. Ray Watson, a Queen's Counsel and highly acclaimed in Methodism, defended Webb and the charges were dismissed. Watson's version of the affair was that the misdemeanours were minor, Webb's desire to foster student maturity was sincere, and the action brought against Webb was unwarranted.141

There was an aftermath of bitterness. The concern of many ministers regarding the Webb controversy was reflected in the attitude of some members of the College Council which included six ministers appointed by Conference. Efforts which were made to bring Wesley College, which was an autonomous body, under control of the New South Wales Conference142 were thwarted by procedural difficulties. Conference was reminded, however,

141. R. Watson, Recorded personal interview with The Hon. Mr. Justice Ray Watson, 23 September, 1986.

142. Methodist Church of Australasia, New South Wales Conference Minutes, 1971, p.115. The 1971 Conference commissioned a Committee to investigate the procedure needed 'to change the Constitution to bring the appointment of Wesley College and its Master under the control of the New South Wales Conference. Wesley College was an autonomous body acting under its own Act of Incorporation, and there was concern as to the ability of the Conference to play a major role in the appointment or dismissal of the College Principal.
that the Master of the College was subject to the same disciplinary control by Conference as other ministers. 143

By 1976 it was realized that the terms of Webb's appointment had been inadvertently breached. Webb had been appointed for a period of five years, with reappointment to be considered each five years. The reappointment procedure due in 1975 had been overlooked. Webb had not been reappointed within the stipulated time and the Council used the procedural oversight to make a new appointment.

Webb remained out of the ministry until he resumed contact with the Uniting Church in 1983, when he commenced studies towards a Doctorate of Ministry. He served as a Minister in Association for a short time in Glebe, then following a locum ministry in 1984 in the Blue Mountains Parish, he was inducted as Minister of the Parish in 1985. He died suddenly on 11 October 1985 at the age of sixty years.

By the time Webb re-entered the ministry he had

143. Methodist Church of Australasia, New South Wales Conference Minutes, 1972, p.88. The Committee reported on the procedural problems necessary for a change. It drew the attention of the 1972 Conference to Conference's ability to exercise the same type of disciplinary control over the Master of the College as it has over any other minister and that Conference has direct representation on the Council through the six ministers appointed by it. In this regard the ministers have been asked to consult with the Master of the College with respect to matters of Methodist practice and procedure and this has been done. p.88
identified his theological position as panentheism. In a Resource Seminar paper on the subject of 'Personal Theological Reflections' which he submitted in June 1985 Webb stated that, following a mystical experience, he had to rethink his theology at no small cost to himself and his Church. He said that his theological re-thinking occurred in the context of his abandonment of a lot of traditional beliefs and his 'disenchantment with a God who had never really existed'. It was later, he said, he found that the name for his new theological position was panentheism. It was evident from his frequent references to 'man-come-of-age' that the ideas of Bonhoeffer and modern liberal theologians prepared him to accept panentheism.

Ideas which Webb expressed in his last stage of ministry were those belonging to the fundamentals of process theology. He wrote of the whole universe, including himself, being all motion and energy in process, and of God being in transition with creation. Without making specific reference to Whitehead and the dipolar nature of the God of process theology, Webb wrote of the stillness at the centre of the mobile God.

145. Ibid., p.1.
146. Ibid., pp.2-3. Webb acknowledged indebtedness for ideas in this paper, to William Bridges' "Transitions".
Webb's understanding of process theology was in a stage of development and was heavily dependent on Teilhard's evolutionary ideas. He did, however, appear to be aware of the same objection Birch raised. This was the static nature of Teilhard's Omega point, which was inconsistent with process evolution. In one of a series of papers in which he discussed heresies, Webb said that the achievement of world unity in Christ at the Omega point need not imply the end of history because

the end of one stage of the evolutionary process has always been but the precursor of further development.\textsuperscript{147}

With the background of tertiary physics study, Webb's interest was heightened in the challenge presented to the modern world by insights derived from the new physics. As early as 1967, in Work Done, he endeavoured to relate his theological beliefs to the implications of the new knowledge. At the close of his ministry, in a brief synopsis of his proposed doctoral dissertation, which he prepared four days prior to his death, he again acknowledged the challenge posed by the new physics. A summary of one section of his proposed method was

to research the literature on the nature and formulation of global unity, with reference to the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and to 'the New Physics'.\textsuperscript{148}


\textsuperscript{148} N. Webb, 'Doctorate of Ministry/First Topic', San Francisco Theological Seminary, 7 October 1985, p.2.
His accord with Charles Birch's theological position was evident from the information recorded on the resumé requiring details of his study advisor. The entry read,

**Proposed Advisor:** Emeritus Professor L. Charles Birch, D.Sc.
(not yet approached).\(^{149}\)

In an interview three weeks prior to his death Webb was asked why he had re-entered the Church. The action was not consistent with the assertion that he had made in *Work Done*, that much of the church's function was now transferred, and increasingly so, to the world. Webb replied that his experience of endeavouring to promote, outside the Church, belief in the evolving global unity in Christ, convinced him that he needed to work from within a structure. By re-entering the Church, it was his hope that the insights he gained from panentheism, which he believed were a development in theological understanding, would be more effectively assimilated within, and then disseminated beyond, the present structure. As the whole world experienced unity in Christ, he predicted that the traditional institution, as presently existent, eventually would be changed beyond recognition.\(^{150}\) There was much in these ideas which was in agreement with

\(^{149}\) Ibid., p.1. In an interview with the author, *op.cit.*, Birch acknowledged interest in Webb's proposal, of which he had been unaware. Webb's untimely death had intervened before Webb had contacted Birch regarding the proposal.

\(^{150}\) N. Webb, Personal interview, 21 September, 1985.
Cox's statement that Bonhoeffer 'believed that the church lives only in solidarity with the world',\textsuperscript{151} and especially in Bonhoeffer's own statement, addressed to his infant nephew on the occasion of his baptism:

> By the time you are grown up, the form of the Church will have changed beyond recognition. \textsuperscript{152}

Webb's hope, that through his re-entry to the Church he would be an instrument contributing to radical change in theological insights, was thwarted by his sudden and premature death. The extent of the influence of his secularized ministry rests mainly with three groups: those members of the Blue Mountains Parish who, during his brief ministry there, accepted his ideas; with students and discussion group participants to whom he conveyed his belief that Christ, now beyond the Church, 'was abroad in the world';\textsuperscript{153} and to those who pondered the thoughts expressed in \textit{Work Done} and in his various talks and sermons.


\textsuperscript{153} N. Webb, 'The Church is Dead - Long Live Christ!', in Webb's Papers in Fisher Library, The University of Sydney.
5.5 THE FLICKERING FLAME OF PROCESS THEOLOGY
WITHIN THE TRADITION OF NEW SOUTH WALES METHODISM.

When questioned as to the extent of process theology within New South Wales Methodism, Charles Birch replied that he believed 'it hasn't scratched the surface'.

There is, however, evidence that various ideas basic to process theology hold an attraction for a number of New South Wales Methodists, now members of The Uniting Church, although, in most instances, these people have not identified their ideas with process theology, no matter whether it be named process theology, panentheism, or neo-classical theism.

Apart from the available books and papers written by Birch and Webb, there appears to be scant written evidence available of this thinking among members of the New South Wales Methodist tradition. The main source of evidence for the existence of ideas associated with process theology among those who have come from both the Methodist and Presbyterian traditions into the Uniting Church, was obtained in response to the question: 'What do you mean when you use the word 'God' in this present day?'.

As expected, the question elicited a substantial

154. The use of the classifications, 'Methodism' and 'Methodists' in this section of the chapter is intended to include the changed format of Methodism, since June 1977, into The Uniting Church in Australia, New South Wales Synod, and its members.

155. L.C. Birch, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
core of traditional Christian belief. Pittenger commented in *The Word Incarnate*,

the almost spatial transcendence which was implied in much ancient thinking is no longer acceptable to any theologian, although often the 'neo-orthodox' talk in that vein. 156

If Pittenger's observation is correct, many church members within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism belong to the neo-orthodox category. There were, nevertheless, several ministers interviewed, and also lay people from a cross-section of the community, who tentatively defined concepts of God which would slot into a treatise on process theology.

Ideas expressed were often heavily weighted by concepts of God's immanence and mutability and were in contrast to the traditional dualist concept of God's separation from the world. They had much in common with views expressed as far back as 1933 by the Reverend Wallace Deane who was Secretary of the Methodist Conference Examination Committee, and the 1937 President of Conference. In the inaugural address given to the United Theological Faculty Deane's words sounded like a precursor of modern process theology:

156. W. N. Pittenger, *The Word of God Incarnate*, James Nisbet & Co., Great Britain, 1959, p.177. 'As Baron von Hügel said, a "panentheistic" metaphysic is the only really satisfactory one; and Professor Hartshorne has adopted the term.'
the West is objective in its outlook, viewing God as above the world. This is due to the practical nature of the Western world, its lack of mystic sense....there has been a tendency to objectify even the immanent God. We think of Him as here and there in nature. It is hard to realise God is in us, and that the human mind is itself an evidence of the intimate presence of God. God is present more intimately in human life because of its higher complexity. But God, immanent, is not merely quiescent in all things resting from His creative power. He is active, more active than we in carrying out his high purposes....God shows Himself....in the sparkling rivulet, the bloom of the peach....the boom of waves on the coral reef and in the mind of man. 157

Deane's concept of God as immanent and also active, which is so attuned to process theology, was also the most commonly expressed concept of God by people with ideas approximating process theology who were interviewed during preparation of this thesis.

Those interviewed included ministers with concepts of God which indicated some degree of affinity with process theology. Dorothy McMahon defined her idea of God as 'a warm light - a source of energy, between us, in us, but beyond us'. 158 This is a view consistent with process theology's dipolar nature of God, involving both immanence and transcendence - God immanent within, activating creation to his purposes, in his primordial nature, while in his consequent nature God is transcendent in the sense

158. D. McMahon, Recorded personal interview, 1 June 1986.
of superiority in experience to all others, resulting in the perfection of the unexhausted nature of his being. Hobbin was sympathetic to its tenets, and Hyde described process theology as 'the only theology which made sense' for him. Tim Gee has confirmed acceptance of some aspects of process theology by himself and members from one of the Church study groups. Clyde Dominish's sympathetic attitude towards process thinking has been influenced by his accord with the thinking of Meister Eckhart, and the ideas expressed by Nicolas Berdyaev. Eckhart preached that Being is of God and 'to the extent that life is Being, it is of God'. Hartshorne and Reese described Berdyaev as 'a thoroughgoing dipolarist' whose doctrines are 'thoroughly Whiteheadian'.

159. W.N. Pittenger, The Word of God Incarnate, op.cit., p.242. Refer also A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op.cit., pp.32,345-346,350. Whitehead wrote: 'God's immanence in the world in respect to his primordial nature is an urge towards the future based upon an appetite in the present', and 'his consequent nature is everlasting...infinite...the perfection of God's subjective aim, derived from the completeness of his primordial nature, issues into the character of his consequent nature'. Also see Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, op.cit., p.48, 'the responsiveness of God's consequent nature belongs to the very nature of perfection'.

160. W. Hobbin, Recorded personal interview, op.cit.
161. D. Hyde, Recorded personal interviews, op.cit.
Influential Methodist, Ray Watson, a Senior Judge of the Family Court, is indicative of lay people who have, during interviews, expressed ideas of God which are tentatively in tune with process thought. 165 In Tim Gee's Epping Church a Book Study Group of lay people, who meet on a regular monthly basis, have shown interest for some time in process theology. Several years ago they invited Charles Birch to explain and discuss process theology, and they have discussed Reist's taped records, 'The Liberation of Creativity' and 'Theological Imagination'. They have also studied books written by process theologians, including Norman Pittenger's *Picturing God*, Teilhard de Chardin's *Le Milieu Divin*, and *The Liberation of Life*, written by Birch and Cobb. 166 Random instances of process views also surfaced from interviews with representative lay members of the Wollongong circuit and Sydney metropolitan circuits, who were invited to explain their concepts of God.

The results indicated that there exists a significant spectrum of people who reject much of traditional theistic doctrine. In most instances they are unaware of the existence of a formal system of belief named process theology, and they do not formulate a comprehensive set of its tenets, yet their ideas of God

165. R. Watson, Recorded personal interview, op.cit. Watson developed his theological views during his long association with Methodism.
are correlative with the fundamentals of process theology.  

Many of those interviewed who held such views reacted to discussion on process beliefs in a manner similar to that described in America in 1979 by the Reverend Bernard Lee, S.M. Lee admitted that during seminary study in Switzerland his own religious beliefs were crumbling until he was introduced to Whitehead’s writings and regained his faith. Lee said,

"I'm hearing a sigh of relief whenever I present process theology to lay audiences because they're hearing things about God they've always believed and didn't know they could get by with."  

Tim Gee said that he became aware of a similar reaction as he spoke with people about process beliefs. It is the type of reaction which comes from that category of Methodists who believe modern scientific knowledge makes unacceptable many of the traditional beliefs about God they have learned from the Church.

Ideas that are consistent with process theology which these people tried to articulate as they spoke about God are the immanence of God as Spirit in the world, and rejection of a spatially transcendent God separated from the world in a far off heaven; the ongoing creative

167. Information gathered from random discussions held over a period of several years with lay persons within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism.
169. T. Gee, Personal interview, op.cit.
activity of God in the world; and the concept of God as the source of creative love, in contrast to a God who acts by coercive intervention. The ideas varied in detail and were often vaguely and tentatively defined. Yet, when process ideas were explained, they readily identified such ideas about God as being consistent with their own.

For them, as for Birch and Webb, process theology has provided a response to the challenge of the modern world's science. Those who are attracted to philosophy find that process theology is a philosophical religion; those of a pragmatic nature are attracted to Whitehead's logic and rationalism in process ideas; others who look for an element of mysticism find it in the ecological model in which all things are in God, and God is in, and beyond, all things. Likewise, those who want to relate religion to the world find in process theology the world is in God, but also God is in the world. It is this identification with the world which establishes process theology as a secularized religion.
CONCLUSION.
CONCLUSION.

The study of aspects of secularized religion within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism has shown that secularized religion is, by nature, intrinsically involved in the total world situation. As part of this involvement, secularized ministries respond to social needs and are seen to be socially significant. This public profile of secularized religion, as an expression of the social gospel, has led to a commonly held perception that humanitarian social work is the sole criterion of a secularized ministry. The present study, however, has highlighted an even more fundamental criterion of secularized religion which provides not only a motivation for its responses to social need, but also the rationale for its involvement in the total world situation. This criterion is its grounding in an holistic theological interpretation which views God as actively immanent in all creation, and which accepts Jesus' ministry as an exemplar of a ministry which expresses God's loving concern for humanity in every aspect of need, both physical and spiritual.

Within New South Wales Methodism two types of ministry have been practised, one based on the dualist theology of traditional Western theism, the other on an holistic theological interpretation. There have been further divisions within the ministries committed to the
dualist tradition. A minority of dualist ministers exercised a Fundamentalist style of ministry in which they denigrated 'this world' and concentrated on 'other worldly' concerns. In contrast to this minority, the majority of dualist ministers aimed to exercise a 'middle of the road' ministry maintaining, even before the advent of Barth, a neo-Barthian type of emphasis which they endeavoured to balance with a degree of humanitarian commitment to the social gospel. A third division in the dualist tradition was characterized by ministries, such as Alan Walker's ministry, which had a strong political and social gospel emphasis, while maintaining a firm commitment to traditional conservative evangelism and dualist theology.

It could be argued that insofar as these ministries exercised a politicized social gospel they were, to that extent, secularized. In terms of this thesis, however, their dualist theological interpretation would prevent their classification as expressions of authentic secularized religion.

There were significant influences which determined the nature of the secularized ministries which have been exercised within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism. The changed life-style which accompanied industrialization and technological development, new perceptions which revolutionary scientific insights provided about the nature of the universe, the advent of Biblical and Higher Criticism, and the wide dissemination of writings which promoted liberal and radical theology, were among the global influences which contributed to changed theological perceptions and stimulated abandonment
of traditional beliefs. Influences which were peculiar to the Australian life-style also contributed to the encouragement of individuality of thought and interpretation. Among the significant Australian influences were the independence of spirit which was associated with the struggle to survive the harshness of the environment; the self-sufficiency which was a legacy of the isolated life of the pioneers; the sense of mystery and wonder associated with the vast and ancient land; and the hedonism which grew from the popularity of a free-and-easy outdoor life-style.

Two specific influences which contributed to secularized ministries studied in this thesis were the Angus influence and the influence of the Methodist heritage of tolerance and commitment to the social gospel. The Angus influence was primarily relevant to the ministries of men who trained in the United Theological Course during the 1930s. Especially significant was Angus' encouragement individually to seek truth, to attribute relative unimportance to much of the dogma and creed formulated by the Church Fathers, and to give total commitment to the Jesus of history and to implementing his type of caring ministry.

The Methodist heritage of toleration for differing opinions was particularly significant for the expression of liberal or radical views associated with much of secularized religion. As detailed in chapter one of this thesis, John Wesley originated this Methodist tradition
when he preached against bigotry, and demanded that Methodists respect opinions other than their own. That there has been some compliance with Wesley's demand is evident from the wide diversity of opinion accommodated within New South Wales Methodism during its history. Included in that diversity were the ministries examined in this thesis. The principle of tolerance was maintained at the official level. It was not uniformly practised by Methodist people. Sensitivity to social need was also instilled into Methodism by John Wesley through his sermons and his own example. This responsibility was accepted by succeeding generations of Methodists.

Examination of the secularized ministries which are the subject of this thesis has shown that secularized religion relates to a wide spectrum of issues. In Hobbin's ministry it related to economic deprivation and exploitation; Hyde's ministry indicated its relevance to education and to the issues of war, peace and politics; in Ted Noffs' wide-ranging ministry secularized religion was involved in the drug problem, family relationships, international understanding, racial and sectarian tolerance and understanding, and personal crises; and the secularized religion promoted by Birch and Webb had a philosophical emphasis which was expressed through process theology. Secularized religion, then, has been related to the total human situation and, indeed, to every aspect of creation.
Fully authentic secularized ministries which have rejected the dualism of traditional Western theism, and accepted an holistic theology, have always constituted a small minority of ministries in the history of New South Wales Methodism. They have, however, exercised an impact within and without the Church, which relatively exceeds their numerical strength. Examples of their impact include Hobbin's achievements through the Department of Christian Citizenship, the Child Welfare Advisory Council, slum clearance, marriage guidance, civil rehabilitation, Iandra, Westwood and Heighway House, and his long association with United Nations Agencies as President of Australian branches. The impact of Hyde's ministry was made during his many years in charge of Christian education in schools, through his influence in the Crusader Movement, his Vietnam War protest and his work for the Peace Movement, and his acceptance by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as a popular speaker on national radio. The popularity among unchurched people of Ted Noffs' ministry, and the international adoption of his Life Education Programme, appear to have placed his ministry into the category of a living legend. Birch's impact has been acknowledged in the World Council of Churches and in the interest generated by his writings among those seeking a credible religion in the post-scientific age of quantum physics. These are random examples of achievements made since the 1930s in the name of secularized religion within New South Wales Methodism.
Church members within the Methodist tradition have now been absorbed into the Uniting Church in Australia, but it is apparent that examples of authentic secularized ministries continue to operate within the Church. The last chapter of the thesis indicated interest in process theology. The Wayside Chapel ministry continues to expand. The Church has given Dorothy McMahon dispensation to conduct secular funerals with a liberal wording format which appeals to people outside the Church institution, and it supports her compassionate stand on controversial social issues of racism, homosexuality and AIDS. Increasingly, ministers and lay people write in journals, such as *Zadok*, *Eremos* and the *Journal of Religion*, of the need to relate religion to the whole of life in its total world situation. Secularized religion existed in past years within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism. It was limited in numerical strength, but effective in its impact. It lives on in the Uniting Church in Australia. As it responds to the pressures of social need, and seeks its rationale from an holistic theological interpretation, its format is similar to the authentic secularized religion practised within the tradition of New South Wales Methodism which has been the subject of this thesis.
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