THE RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF QUEENSLAND:
PIETISM IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE,
CONGREGATIONALISM IN ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

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Abstract

Publication of Rae Wear’s biography of Queensland Premier Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, The Lord’s Premier (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2002) has renewed interest in the influence of religion on Bjelke-Petersen’s political philosophy and public policy. This article probes the religious culture of Queensland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines the origins of the religious culture in Queensland, examines long-asserted views about the influence of sectarianism and fundamentalism, and argues that an over-arching ‘pietism’ in religious practice, and ‘congregationalism’ in ecclesiastical polity have been the key characteristics of the religious culture of Queensland since the beginning of free settlement.

I.

Writing about the character of Australia religion, Richard Campbell inferred that Queensland’s religious culture, as an extension of a Melbourne-Sydney axis, is ‘sectarian-fundamentalist’:

Religious life in Melbourne has always been more urbane, more ecumenical, more catholic in its social vision, more Tory in its conservatism, whereas Sydney has been more assertive, more sectarian-fundamentalist in my special sense, a tendency which become stronger the further north one goes. [1]

The ‘special sense’ in which Campbell uses the term ‘sectarian-fundamentalist’ is one he arrived at after consideration of a wide range of adjectives including ‘positivistic’, ‘assertive, ‘conservative’, ‘dogmatic’ and ‘authoritarian’, "all ...arrows," says Campbell,

each pointing towards an unnamed character which can yet be recognized...not only in those Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, perhaps Presbyterians - who might be expected to manifest it, but also as a strong tendency in the nationally small but locally strong Lutherans, in the conservative style of much
Roman Catholic churchmanship and piety, to say nothing of the remarkable Anglican Diocese of Sydney.\textsuperscript{2}

One of the arrows in Campbell's quiver seems to be missing. It is the arrow marked ‘pietistic’, for pietism in religious practice, along with congregationalism in polity, are the predominant characteristics of the religious culture of Queensland.

Before discussing pietism in the Queensland context, it is useful to review what pietism was originally, and to distinguish it from fundamentalism. Pietism is different from but related to Puritanism, and originated in seventeenth century Germany as a reaction to what was perceived to be the lifeless, dogmatic orthodoxy of Lutheranism at that time. The founders of Pietism instituted small groups meeting in homes for prayer and bible reading. The movement, while not wishing to separate from the established church, also proclaimed the priesthood of all believers. Its subsequent influences have been diverse, and include the Moravianism of von Zinzendorf and the Methodism of John Wesley.

According to Ernst Stoeffler, historian of classical Pietism, “It had no one system of theology, no one integrating doctrine, no one particular type of polity, no one liturgy, no geographical homogeneity”.\textsuperscript{3} It placed “emphasis... upon inner identification with God”, and was a way of expressing the faith, not a faith in itself, recognizing “the centrality of the saving relationship within which exists a considerable degree of intimacy between God and the individual soul”, as well as a strong emphasis on the moral reformation of the individual, which risked descent into legalism.\textsuperscript{4} Finally, according to Stoeffler, “…part of Pietistic preaching has always been the conception of the two ways - the broad way which leads to destruction and the narrow way which leads to life”.\textsuperscript{5} Pietism predates fundamentalism and is regarded, along with revivalism, by historians of fundamentalism such as George Marsden, as the tap roots of fundamentalism.\textsuperscript{6}
Revivalism has been defined as, “a type of religious worship and practice centring in evangelical revivals, or outbursts of mass religious fervour, and stimulated by intensive preaching and prayer meetings”.\[^7\] It has been suggested that Australia lacks a revivalist tradition.\[^8\] Certainly Australia has never experienced a religious revival in the manner of the Wesleyan revival in eighteenth century Britain, or the First and Second Great Awakenings in the United States, but Australia is essentially a derivative society - especially where religion is concerned. That derivative character means that British and American revivalists have visited Australia since European colonization.

In the nineteenth century they included the American Methodist William ‘California’ Taylor, who in the 1860s, “added thousands to the membership of the Wesleyan Methodist churches” in Australia,\[^9\] Dr A. N. Somerville, an independent Free Church evangelist from Scotland who visited Australia, including Brisbane in the late 1870s, \[^10\] Reuben Torrey in 1901, and on two occasions (in 1909 and 1912-13) J. Wilbur Chapman and Charles Alexander. Torrey and Chapman each in turn assumed the mantle of Dwight L. Moody, and both were men of considerable theological knowledge holding doctorates in divinity.\[^11\]

Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey never visited Australia, although they were invited. Sankey's hymns were advertised as a feature of Sunday evening evangelistic services held in a Brisbane theatre in the 1880s, and Moody's sermons were frequently reprinted in the *Queensland Evangelical Standard*.\[^12\] Perhaps the fact that Moody and Sankey did not visit partly accounts for the fact that fundamentalism in Australia remained ‘incipient’, for Sandeen holds that in the United States Moody's evangelistic enterprises laid the foundations for the later emergence of fundamentalism.\[^13\] In addition to revival meetings, the colonial capital witnessed no less than three temperance missions between 1875 and 1885.\[^14\] Furthermore Chapman's preaching was regarding as placing “primary stress on personal morality”.\[^15\] and he was a strong advocate of prohibition.\[^16\]
In the mid nineteen twenties the South African Pentecostal Fredrick Van Eyk came to Australia, and according to Chant, “greatly strengthened the foundations of Pentecostalism” in Australia,

particularly Queensland, where he visited the South Burnett district and preached in “a hall crowded with listeners” in September 1936. The decades following the Second World War, Australia saw Alan Walker's Mission to the Nation, under the auspices of the Methodist Church in the early nineteen fifties, and the American evangelist Billy Graham in 1959 and 1968. With the exception of Walker and other minor evangelists like the Church of Christ leader Jas E. Thomas (both of whom visited the South Burnett) all the revivalists came from overseas. Bollen makes the point that the Christianity imported into Australia was already “revived” and that “revivalism was a less explosive force in Australia”,

...because there was no reaction in Australia against an eighteenth century formalism or indifference to missionary duty. The Christianity which reached Australia had already been warmed by the evangelical revival.

He also observes that revivalism was unnecessary because of state support for church extension. On the other hand pietism, also imported from Britain and Europe, thrived in the isolation of Australia.

II.

While acknowledging that fundamentalism is a term which can be applied to “all profession of strict adherence to (especially Protestant) orthodoxy in the matter of Biblical interpretation”, it is important, certainly in historical terms, to emphasize the distinction between pietism and fundamentalism, because of the loose way the term has been used by a number of political scientists and historians in relation to the political and religious culture of Queensland.

Fundamentalism is a religious movement of North American origin which arose around the turn of the century as a reaction among theologically conservative Protestants concerned about the impact and influence of nineteenth century scientific methodologies and ideas on Biblical
interpretation and Christian theology. Meeting in Niagara on the US-Canadian border one such group issued a statement of belief defining the five basic beliefs of fundamentalism. They are: the verbal inerrancy of Scripture; the divinity of Jesus Christ; the Virgin Birth; the substitutionary theory of the Atonement and finally, the physical resurrection and bodily return of Christ. From 1909 onwards these doctrines were widely propagated through the English speaking world in a series of twelve tracts entitled *The Fundamentals*; hence the name fundamentalist. The division of American Protestantism into fundamentalist and modernist groups followed. Fundamentalism's raison d'être was the battle against modernism, and it is primarily a twentieth century movement, owing as much to the intellectual rigour of Princetonian Calvinism as it does to the affective appeal of Dispensationalism.[24]

David Parker's study of fundamentalism in Australia found little evidence of militant, separatist fundamentalism, observing instead an “incipient fundamentalism”[25] a finding which gives credence to Ian Breward's conclusion about Australian Christianity having, “a rather practical character, often uninterested in the spiritual and intellectual depth of some of our forgotten forebears”. [26] Fundamentalism is a comparatively recent adjunct to the religious culture of Queensland and its political manifestations have been the comparatively short-lived organizations like the Festival of Light, the Community Standards Organization, the Society To Outlaw Pornography and the Campaign Against Regressive Education. Of more lasting influence are the Creation Science movement, and the fundamentalist schools, such as the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) system, exotic transplants from the United States which flourished in the unregulated educational environment that existed in Queensland under the conservative regime from 1957 to 1989. All the Protestant and Pentecostal churches in Queensland contained members with fundamentalist views - the latter more than the former - but fundamentalism as a religious phenomenon in Queensland is fragmented, and indeed much of what has be described,
and even derided, as fundamentalism, has been the assertion of old fashioned evangelical pietism.\(^{[27]}\)

Thus while fundamentalism is a recent accretion to the religious culture of Queensland, pietism on the other hand has deep roots; roots which go back as far as the Presbyterian divine and controversialist John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878), one of the earliest and most ardent advocates of the development of the colonial outpost which became the state of Queensland.

III.

Lang's life and achievements have been thoroughly chronicled,\(^{[28]}\) and some of his activities studied in detail.\(^{[29]}\) Some scholarly attention has been given to his ideas, especially his political ideals,\(^{[30]}\) but insufficient notice has been taken of the contribution of Lang's ideas and activities - especially his ideas on colonization and economic development - to the religious culture of eastern Australia in the nineteenth century, and in particular the religious culture of Port Phillip and Moreton Bay. Lang was more of an ideologue than a theologian, and those who would look at his theological principles in isolation risk ignoring the impact of other wider, more secular influences.

Lang would have argued that the Bible was the fount of all his principles, writing in 1852:

My views on these fundamental principles of government - universal male suffrage, perfect political equality and popular election, generally referred to by political writers as Chartism, communism and socialism - have stemmed from the Word of God which endureth for ever...\(^{[31]}\)

Yet there is ample evidence that Lang's ideas were influenced as much by the geographical and social contexts in which he found himself as much as by the Bible. For example in his introduction to *Cooksland* he wrote that, “The vast territory of New South Wales has evidently been designed by the Great Architect of the universe to form three separate and independent
In fact this idea clearly comes from his observations of the American federal system in operation. On another occasion he wrote, “The spirit of colonial nationality... is no accidental feeling; it is unquestionably of Divine implantation, and designed not for evil, but for good”. Lang’s vision was of a Christian Australia, “one of the most important centres of moral and Christian influence on the face of the globe”. He wrote in 1857:

There is clearly ...no part of the habitable globe on which it is of more importance at this moment to plant a thoroughly Christian people than the shores of Australia. With half a million such people ...Australia would have a moral machinery to bring to bear on the heathenism of the earth... I believe it is destined, in the Councils of Infinite Wisdom, to be the seat of one of the first Christian nations of the earth, and that while the number of its Christian people will yet be as the sand of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Yet it was only Protestant “sons of the living God” for whom Lang was looking. In Cooksland which was directed to the “Christian and philanthropic portion of the British public” to persuade them of the possibility of agriculture, “by means of European free labour”, Lang derided Roman Catholic and Anglican influence in the northern colony:

...the rapid progress and the threatening aspect of Popery and Puseyism - the Beast and the Image of the Beast - in the Australian Colonies, render it indispensably necessary, for the interests of our common Protestantism in the Southern Hemisphere, that a great effort in the way of extensive colonization should be made...and that effort must be made NOW or NEVER.

In Queensland, Lang's vision found concrete expression in the promotion of large scale emigration to Moreton Bay which resulted in three shiploads of emigrants landing in the colonies in 1849. As the first ship, the Fortitude left Gravesend for Moreton Bay in September 1848, Lang commissioned the emigrants with a rousing sermon on deck:

Divine Providence, ...is now saying to many of the very best men in our country...: 'Get ye up from out of your country and your kindred and from your father's house into a land that I will show you; and I will make of you there a great nation'. I trust that he will make of you a great nation, there to reproduce and transmit to posterity at the uttermost parts of the earth all that is really valuable in the institutions of your fatherland. The land wither you go is a good land, a land which the Lord hath blessed, a land in which there is abundance of everything that is needful for the sustenance of man, for the advancement
of civilization and for Christianity. Honour the Lord with your substance; so shall your barns be filled with plenty. May the angel of the covenant watch over and guide you.\(^{[38]}\)

Three elements of Lang's sermon which deserve attention: the chosen people motif, the 'promised land' imagery and the idea that righteousness brings earthly riches. While the principles in this address can be traced to Lang's Scottish Calvinism, and were reinforced by his exposure to Christianity in the United States, echoes of this sermon have been heard among Protestants and Catholics in Queensland ever since.

Calvinism, more than Lutheranism, saw the Old and New Testaments as a totality. Lutheranism tended to opt for the view that the Law of the Old Testament was superseded by the Gospel of the New. Thus Lang's Calvinism saw in the Old Testament stories of God's covenantal relationship with his people and his promise to them of a land of their own. A reading of Lang shows his propensity for quoting the Old Testament. The frontispiece of *Freedom and Independence* carries a quotation from Hosea\(^{[39]}\) and the reverse of the title page of the 1852 edition of *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales* carries quotations from the Book of Judges: “We have seen the land, and behold it is very good - (xviii.9)”\(^{[40]}\) and from Genesis: “And the gold of that land is good - (ii.12)”\(^{[40]}\) In conversation with the influential Free Churchman Thomas Chalmers in Scotland, Lang said he was “accustomed to take as my maxim in political economy the divine commandment recorded in the first chapter of Genesis”\(^{[41]}\).

Lang's enduring legacy lies not only in the immigrants landed from the *Fortitude*, the *Chasley* and the *Lima* in 1849, but also in the party of German missionaries he brought to establish a mission to Aborigines at Moreton Bay in 1838.\(^{[42]}\) Indeed, one of the German missionaries, the Rev Christopher Eipper, urged Lang to recruit, “a great number of pious families from the heart of Germany [for] …this land, which providence seems to have preserved as the receptacle of the overgrown population of Europe”\(^{[43]}\).
Eipper did not see those pious families as engaging in missionary activity, but coming as they
would from the heart of Germany, becoming at the very least the backbone of their adopted
country. For as McPheat observed of the German Mission at Moreton Bay, that, “...while it failed
in its primary, evangelical purpose, nevertheless contributed to the growth and development of
the northern state”.[44] Eipper's plea to Lang did not fall on deaf ears. Lang wrote of the Fortitude
emigrants who were despatched a decade later, that they were selected, “…on much the same
principle as that on which Cromwell selected his first troop; they were all, or nearly all, Christian
people, members of evangelical churches, and exemplary in their character and conduct”.[45] To
which McPheat adds: “What evidence is available on this point would indicate this was no
extravagant claim”. [46]

The character of the emigrants may well have been unimpeachable, but the character of their
sponsor was not. In his attempts to secure land for his charges, Lang perpetuated what biographer
Baker has described caustically as, “an attempt to defraud the Colonial Government to the extent
of some 3500 pounds”. [47] There were complaints from emigrants and a great deal of official
correspondence was generated. The combination of pious rhetoric with misrepresentation and less
than honest dealing, all in the cause of developing the colony, may be as much as part of Lang's
legacy to Queensland as the character of his immigrants.

Lang's emigrants were pious, God-fearing people, assured of the blessing of God on their new
land and their labours in it, and charged with the responsibility of being part of a developing
Christian commonwealth. In these terms their contribution to the formation of the religious
culture of Queensland was substantial. But what of their political sympathies? Whereas in
twentieth century Queensland, pietistic Protestantism became a pocket borough of conservative
politics, in the mid-nineteenth century, evangelical Protestants tended to be urban liberals ranged
against the power of large rural landholders. A. A. Morrison describes Fortitude Valley where
many of the emigrants settled as “a centre of radicalism”[48] from whence the Queensland Liberal
Association was formed in 1859. In Morrison's estimate, Lang's emigrants formed the nucleus of a grouping of urban liberals in Queensland, who owed at least a little to the non-conformist traditions of English Dissent,⁴⁹ a tradition which lasted until liberalism was washed out of Queensland political life by the rising tide of organized labour. Yet, in Queensland it was also a political tradition marked by a certain illiberal sectarianism, in contrast to the support given to Catholic emancipation by English nonconformists.

IV.

Unlike New South Wales, Roman Catholicism in Queensland knew no spring flowering of English Benedictine influence. In Queensland, Roman Catholic priests and people were predominantly Irish, an influence determinative of the Catholic contribution to the religious culture of Queensland. Polding made his first visit to Moreton Bay in 1843, mainly to establish four Passionists in a short-lived mission to Aborigines at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island.⁵⁰ Like Lang, Rome was initially interested in the evangelisation of the Aboriginal people of north-eastern Australia. Almost as an afterthought Polding despatched two priests to the Moreton Bay settlement after his return to Sydney. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Vicariate of Cooktown (which became the diocese of Cairns in 1941) was established in 1877 primarily as a mission to Aborigines.

Moreton Bay was served by two priests until the arrival of the first Catholic bishop of Brisbane, James Quinn, after Separation in 1859. With Quinn landed five priests and six Sisters of Mercy. During Quinn's episcopate, which lasted until his death in 1881, his major preoccupations were immigration, education and land,⁵¹ concerns which - along with sectarian anxiety at the growth of Catholic influence in Queensland - considerably exercised the mind of Lang.
Sectarianism is an enduring feature of Queensland's religious and political culture. Its influence in the Queensland politics, especially the police force, was deemed worthy of comment by Commissioner Fitzgerald in his Report in 1989. Of sectarianism's pervasive influence in colonial Queensland, Neil Byrne wrote that, “the cleavage between Catholicism and Nonconformity remained the colony's widest and most bitter division”. Suttor made the observation that the pressures on Quinn's infant diocese, “were not so distinctly Protestant, they were rather secular-liberal”. Suttor perhaps misconstrues the character, and thus the political influence, of Protestant Nonconformity in Brisbane at this time, for as Morrison showed, as urban liberals the Nonconformists pursued policies which were secularist. Suttor himself acknowledges that Quinn was confronted with, “an anti-Catholic social and political ascendancy and its trenchant press”. In the eighteen sixties Non-conformists controlled Brisbane's two newspapers, the Queensland Guardian and the Moreton Bay Courier.

The sectarian battle raged strongest and longest over state aid for denominational schools. Before Quinn's arrival in Queensland, the infant colony's fledgling parliament had moved to eliminate future denominational aid. With Bishop Tufnell, newly consecrated as the first Anglican Bishop of Queensland as an ally, Quinn sought redress. Unsuccessful, Quinn then responded by promoting Catholic immigration and the establishment his own schools.

The churches of Queensland paid a high price for their sectarianism. In essence, sectarianism led to secularism, the near-exclusion of religion from the school curriculum and the impoverishment of denominational schools for want of state aid. Nearly a century was to pass before the needs of denominational schools, especially Catholic parochial schools, compelled government support once again. This renewed provision of state aid for religious schools also expedited the development of schools by neo-pietist groups in the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties.
Furthermore, did the exclusion of religion from the state education system, legitimise the exclusion of religion from the entire public domain, and thus promote the notion of religious belief and practice as a private matter in colonial Queensland? Did such privatisation of religion became part of the religious culture of Queensland, surfacing in the Bjelke-Petersen years as the argument that religion and politics should not be mixed; that there was a difference between the political (public) and spiritual (private) concerns of the Christian believer, and that for the church the latter were of legitimate concern, while the former were not?

V.

Quinn preached the virtues of hard work and personal piety. Quinn's successor, Dunne, encouraged his people to “remain true to the doctrine of Rome and the devotional practice of Ireland”. Dunne arrived in Queensland with Quinn in 1861, having served under Quinn on the staff of St Laurence O'Toole Seminary in Dublin. In 1868 he moved to Toowoomba, and in 1882 was consecrated bishop of Brisbane, becoming archbishop in 1887. He remained archbishop for the next thirty years.

One of Dunne's primary concerns was the improvement of the social conditions and the social position of the Catholic laity. While Quinn had used the Queensland Government's land grant system as an inducement for Irish immigration, as a means to an end, Dunne believed that life on the land promoted the strong family life which led to both piety and prosperity. He believed that next to the Sacraments, “a virtuous home was the chief channel of God's grace to man”, and that, “such homes are plenty where men settle on farms”. In 1874, Dunne wrote home to his brother in Ireland, “I have striven to turn the whole energy of my people into ‘settling the land’, making homes and independence for themselves and their children”. Duhig recalled how Dunne, when parish priest of Toowoomba, “After reading the Sunday's Gospel... generally read from the
Government Gazette particulars of land on the Darling Downs thrown open for selection and
dilated on his favourite theme”. [64]

Shortly after his consecration, Dunne addressed farmers in the Logan district saying,

The only barrier against socialism and anarchy was the broadening out amongst the
people of the proprietorship of the nation's land. Nihilism is dominant in Russia,
socialism is spreading throughout the British Empire simply because people are excluded
in the former, and are daily being excluded in the latter from all right except to labour for
the capitalist...[65]

So strong was Dunne's commitment to ruralising his people, that he was wary of the emerging
alliance between Catholics and the Labor Party, which he saw as a proletarianising influence on
the Catholic labouring class. [66] Dunne and Quinn had both witnessed poverty and suffering in
Ireland, troubles whose basic cause was the land tenure system, and to Dunne especially, the
agitation of the Land League was no solution.

It was not only the metropolitans who were attracted to the rural ideal. Bishop Byrne, the first
bishop of Toowoomba promoted a “Catholicism close to the soil” and Bishop McGuire, the first
bishop of Townsville, was “an enthusiastic promoter of land settlement”. [67] Dunne's view of the
land as “the chief abode of faith and the choicest dwelling place of virtue” was shared by his
priests: Quinn's nephews, James Horan at Warwick and his brothers Andrew at Ipswich and
Matthew at Gympie; and the Italian priests Capra at Roma and Scortachini in the Logan
Valley. [68] To some extent Duhig shared what Byrne called Dunne's “romantic fascination” with
the land. [69] Duhig wrote in his autobiography that “...the bush had, and still has, its fascination.
Out there one seems closer to nature and to God”. [70]

This idealization of life on the land runs as a constant stream through Catholic social thought
in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dunne, for example, anticipated Leo XIII's
1891 encyclical Rerum Novarum with its emphases on the family as the locus of society, its
proclamation of private property as a natural right and its condemnation of socialism; principles
restated by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931. From such sources grew the Catholic Social Studies Movement,[71] whose activities precipitated the ALP split in 1955, and led to the establishment of the Queensland Labor Party, which later became the Democratic Labor Party.

Duhig’s understanding and expression of Christian spirituality were influenced during his student days in Rome by the Irish Redemptorist John Magnier, and by John Bosco, founder of the Salesians and who, according to Boland, was called the forerunner of Catholic Action by Pius XI.[72] Boland also records that one of Bosco’s mottos which James Duhig would have found to his taste was, “Be good Christians and good citizens”.[73] Coupled with a spirituality, “deeply rooted in traditional theology and devotion”, Bosco had an optimism based on “the goodness of God and his providence”.[74] Duhig was schooled into religious practices which, while their origins were different, nonetheless paralleled those of Protestant pietism.

Two other characteristics of Queensland Catholicism are worthy of comment. Quinn, Dunne and Duhig all supported the Catholic temperance movement.[75] During Quinn’s episcopate the diocese was visited by Fr Hennebery described by McLay as, “an American missionary in the strongly revivalist style”. [76] Under Quinn missions were conducted in the diocese by Hennebery, Tennison Woods and Duncan McNab.[77]

Authoritarianism was one of the defining characteristics of the political culture of Queensland in the Bjelke-Petersen years. Such authoritarianism within the political culture may derive, in part, from episcopal authoritarianism. Quinn had founded his diocese on the Cullenite model, described as “monolithic in structure and highly efficient in operation” by McLay, “monarchical” by MacGinley, and as “authoritarian” by Byrne. [78] “The bishop decided, the priests implemented and the people obeyed”, Byrne wrote, a system ratified by the 1869-70 Vatican Council.[79] While Dunne eschewed Cullenism, he and his successor Duhig, nevertheless maintained the model as ordained by the Council without some of the more “choleric”, “tyrannical” and “unbending”
qualities of Quinn's regime. For Duhig, trained in Rome in the early eighteen nineties, “his ecclesiology was an extension of his Christology”.

Thus, the picture to emerge from this brief survey is one in which the Catholic faithful were encouraged to better themselves through settlement on the land and to adopt the habits of personal piety and temperance; a pattern one would expect to find more readily on the Protestant side of the sectarian divide. Just as colonial South Australia was a ‘paradise of dissent’, so Queensland, it appears, was a ‘paradise of pietism’ with a rural-based trans-sectarian pietism as the formative influence on the religious culture of the colony. In colonial Queensland, distance and a lack of trained clergy among all denominations meant infrequent ministrations by clergy, with settlers either developing a greater reliance on their own spiritual resources or drifting into irreligion. Under such conditions levels of theological illiteracy were undoubtedly high, coupled with a tendency towards individualism in belief and practice. Absent from the Australian frontier was the revivalism of the camp meeting which restoked the fires of fervour otherwise dampened by isolation and distance on the American frontier, so how was pietism mediated through Protestantism after John Dunmore Lang?

VI.

On the Queensland frontier, Methodism's structures may have retarded the impact of isolation, and among Irish Catholics and Lutherans - both German and Scandinavian - the cohesion provided by ethnicity may have reduced attrition also. Of all the religious denominations in colonial Queensland, Methodism held pietism as part of the evangelical inheritance it brought from Britain. Methodism grew most strongly of any denomination in colonial Queensland after Separation in 1859, increasing from 4.77% of the population in 1861 to 9.25% in 1901.

Despite the influence of Lang's English dissenters, Congregationalism as a proportion of the population in Queensland was in continual decline from the earliest days of free settlement, but
the prominent Queensland Congregationalist Edward Griffith was part of the evangelical establishment in Brisbane. In his biography of Edward's illustrious son, Roger Joyce writes of Samuel's Griffith's “fundamentalist father”. Edward Griffith was hailed in the sectarian Queensland Evangelical Standard, a weekly news-magazine for which he also wrote, as “one of the foremost champions” of temperance and “in the highest rank of office bearers”, of Orangemen, and seemed to spend as much time in the early eighteen eighties in Baptist pulpits as his own. In the eighteen seventies and eighteen eighties, Brisbane Congregationalists supported all the evangelical causes: temperance, ‘social purity’, the Lord's Day Observance Association, the Town and Country Mission, The British and Foreign Bible Society, the Sunday School Union, and the Orange Lodges. Politically this evangelical establishment endorsed the liberals. Joyce observed that Griffith, “partly through his father...tended to be associated with the Protestant Churches, while McIlwraith won Catholic votes”. In 1884 the Standard editorialised endorsement of Samuel Griffith's Government in words and phrases echoed a century later in the self-deluding, neo-pietist endorsements of the Bjelke-Petersen Government:

We emphatically repudiate the position of a party journal, and although our political principles have been most nearly represented by the present Government, we shall not fail to condemn them if we find them trampling underfoot those laws of righteousness which ought to govern nations as well as individuals.

The writers of the Standard epitomized evangelical pietism in colonial Queensland. With the breaking of the drought in the summer of 1877-78, the Standard's editorial covered its lack of exegesis with exhortation:

...when the land languished, the watercourses were dry, the cattle were perishing by the hundreds, and our hearts were sad with fear, we called upon the Lord with one consent, and He heard our prayer. He has turned the barrenness of our land into plenty, and has changed our mourning into joy. Let us not, when prosperous days return, forget God, or withhold from his cause the just tribute of our gratitude. Let us be brave and turn the abundance of the coming harvest into a reparation of the recent adversity. Let us be self-reliant and struggle through our present financial difficulties, for God helps those who help themselves.
In 1885, when drought again threatened and worship services to offer prayers for rain were being organized, the Standard spelled out the relationship between piety and prosperity, or more specifically between poverty and impiety, “The springs of wealth are professedly under His control, and if they be dried up, we must seek the cause not in a capricious and arbitrary will, but in the misuse of our blessings when they flowed freely”. [88]

Even though it was relatively short-lived, commencing publication in July 1876 and ceasing in December 1886, the Queensland Evangelical Standard appeared at a critical time and served through its inter-denominational character to maintain the ascendancy of evangelical pietism in Queensland. Joining Edward Griffith as promoters of the Standard were his fellow Congregationalist minister T. J. Pepper; Methodist ministers F. T. Brentnall and W. Osborne Lilley; D. F. Mitchell, minister of Park Presbyterian Church, South Brisbane (1876 – 1908) and Presbyterian layman Gilbert Lang.

Presbyterianism in Queensland owed much more to the conservative Free Kirk traditions than to the established Church of Scotland. [89] Even though the differences inherited from Scotland after the Disruption of 1843 were put aside with the formation of a single, united Presbyterian synod in 1863, the influence of the Free Church remained strong, with the anti-Establishment Scots churchmen sending out ministers and contributing financially to the Presbyterian Church in colonial Queensland. [90] The Queensland Presbyterian Church also developed a strong relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, for nearly 25% of Presbyterian ministers in Queensland in the nineteenth century were Irish. [91] Prentis observes, “that the colonial churches tended to be conservative in doctrine and liturgy”, and that the Ulster Presbyterians brought with them “a degree of evangelical warmth not generally found in the Scottish denominations”. [92]

Thus, it has been suggested that during the nineteenth century in Queensland that pietistic Protestantism was ascendant. [93] While this ascendancy was short lived - and was replaced by a
Catholic ascendancy during World War I - the Ryan Labor Government came to power in 1915 and Duhig succeeded Dunne in 1917 - it nonetheless was determinative of the character of the religious culture of Queensland. More importantly, however, under Dunne's influence the dual themes of piety and prosperity dominated Catholic religiosity as much as Protestant. So there was both continuity and conformity within the religious culture. Anglicanism – as will seen shortly - was more shaped by the demands of the frontier society of colonial Queensland than a force in shaping the religious culture of that society.

The alliance between Catholicism and the Labor Party saw Catholicism dominant within the religious culture for much of the period from World War I to the Labor split in the nineteen fifties. This period also coincides with Duhig's term in archiepiscopal office. After the split, the death of Duhig and the second Vatican Council, all of which occurred in the space of ten years, neo-Protestantism in the form of the charismatic and Pentecostal movements became ascendant, making a significant impact on Catholic and Protestant churches alike, as well as exerting influence in the political arena. There was a time in the nineteen seventies when it was possible that liberal Protestantism in partnership with post-Vatican II Catholicism could have emerged to dominate the religious culture of Queensland but, for a variety of reasons including timidity by many mainstream ecclesiastical leaders in an intimidating political climate, this was never to be more than an Indian summer. In the meantime it is necessary to continue our analysis of the formation of the religious culture of Queensland with a more detailed examination of the manner in which distance determined the dominant form of ecclesiastical polity in Queensland.

VII.

While isolation and distance reinforced the imported pietism of the settlers, it also rendered difficult the establishment of ecclesiastical structures as they had existed in Europe, and therefore the dominant form of church polity to emerge was
congregationalism. There is almost a certain inevitability that congregationalism will be the dominant form of church polity in any frontier society. Christian denominations in Australia fall under one of the three basic forms of ecclesiastical polity: episcopal, conciliar (synodical, presbyterial or connexional) and congregational. Congregationalism is a form of ecclesiastical polity in which each congregation is self-governing, independent of ecclesiastical direction from beyond its bounds, and free to decide its own relationship with the church catholic.

Shortages of clergy and the huge distances involved made adoption of a conciliar system of church government in colonial Queensland exceptionally difficult for those denominations such as the churches born of the Reformation - the Presbyterians and Lutherans - for whom it was the normal form of church government, and for the Anglicans who adopted a modified form of synodical government in 1868.[94] For it was not until the eighteen sixties that attempts were made to structure denominational Christianity in Queensland. Separation from New South Wales in 1859 provided the cause for the erection of the Roman Catholic and Anglican dioceses and the appointment of bishops.

Anglicanism in nineteenth century Queensland was handicapped by several factors, of which the lack of anticipated state aid was but one. Accustomed to a special relationship with the state in England and anticipating the provision of state aid, the Church of England found itself in a colony seemingly without borders, and a diocese whose boundaries appeared to fade into the haze. The newly arrived Bishop Tufnell was no doubt disturbed by the fact that Anglican laymen in the Queensland Parliament had sided with the non-conformists and secularists in the debate over state aid.[95] Many of the
immigrants who were Anglican came from “those classes with whom the Church in England had least contact”. Those active Anglicans who did emigrate tended to be of either evangelical or Anglo-Catholic inclination; those with Broad Church sympathies were apparently inclined not to emigrate.

Tufnell, was regarded as “a man of High Church conceptions” while Matthew Hale (1811-1895), second Anglican bishop of Brisbane from 1875 to 1885, was regarded as being of evangelical views. For decades, the Anglican diocese of Brisbane swung between evangelicalism and Anglo-Catholicism. When Hale arrived in Brisbane at the comparatively advanced age of sixty-seven to take up his episcopal duties, he nevertheless harboured a vision for evangelising not only the Europeans of the colony, but the Chinese, Melanesians and Aborigines also. However, he was to be frustrated to the point of resignation by the unwillingness or inability of his constituency to provide funds for church extension let alone for mission among the non-Europeans. Unlike Tufnell, who was no horseman, Hale toured his diocese extensively and knew its social conditions well. He was invited to address a meeting of the Town and Country Mission, on the theme of the spiritual destitution of the bush. The Town and Country Mission was a local mission society which employed an itinerant bush missionary in southern Queensland. Its promoters included Gilbert Lang and William Pettigrew, laymen associated with the Queensland Evangelical Standard. Edward Griffith was Treasurer.

That Hale shared the common evangelical view of the relationship between piety and prosperity is clear from a sermon he preached at a Thanksgiving Service in his pro-cathedral following the breaking of the drought in 1877-78. While his exegesis was more
sound that than of the editorial writers of the *Evangelical Standard* at the time, Hale
nevertheless reads like an exponent of possibility thinking; a nineteenth century Norman
Vincent Peale or an Antipodean Robert Schuller:

> When we pray to God we must do so, not only with submission and humility, but
> in firm faith. Our blessed Lord exemplified this when on earth...by granting
> prayer, when made to Him in faith. "Believe ye that I am able to do all these
> things." "All things are possible to them that believe." "Thy faith hath saved
> thee."[105]

The Church of England's common cause with the evangelicals did not survive Hale's
episcopate. The Anglicans did not join the Queensland Council of Churches when it was
formed in 1896; the Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and three
varieties of Methodists - Wesleyan, Primitive and United Free Methodists - did, giving
the Council the character and status of an evangelical pressure group.[106] Rayner
concluded that by the nineteen twenties, the Anglo-Catholic composition of Queensland
Anglicanism was established, though it appears to have been a predominantly clerical
movement for there was, “a large section of the laity whom the ... clergy had not
succeeded in carrying with them ...in appreciation of the Catholic heritage of the
Anglican church”.[107]

The “essential Catholicism”, of St Clair Donaldson, Bishop of Brisbane from 1904 to
1921 was “always restrained and enriched by an evangelical simplicity and zeal”.[108]
Donaldson's predecessor, William Webber - Bishop of Brisbane from 1885 to 1903 -
fitted well with the materialism of colonial Queensland. A man unconcerned with the fine
points of doctrine and untroubled by intellectual doubts, he saw the spiritual expressed
through the material and laboured in aid of “adequate finance, sufficient clergy and
worthy church buildings” most especially St John's Cathedral.[109]
Webber railed against congregationalism within his own denomination:

You have tried the Congregational principle long enough, and it has failed, as it ever must, as being out of harmony with the organic constitution of the Church, whatever may be the case with other bodies differently constituted. . . It was essentially Congregationalism, or rather at bottom, however unconsciously, a merely self-regarding individualism. . . which has so far hindered placing the affairs of the diocese on a sure foundation. . . So long as people talk Church principles and act Congregational principles, so long will the church fare badly; for Congregationalism is essentially self-regarding and individualist, whereas true Churchmanship is altruistic.[110]

Indeed, Rayner quotes a unknown contemporary observer as saying that after Hale's resignation the diocese, “drifted into a state of formalized congregationalism”,[111] and one wonders to what extent Hale's evangelicalism promoted such a state of affairs.

VIII.

Like the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans, the Presbyterians were motivated by Separation from New South Wales to establish an ecclesiastical structure, but they struggled. Eventually a synod was formed in 1868, uniting members of several Presbyterian traditions in the process.[112] Richard Bardon wrote of the difficulties faced by the Presbyterian Church in colonial Queensland:

...expansion of the Church was retarded by the constitution of the Church. Presbytery [the ruling court of Presbyterianism] might be transplanted to Brisbane with little trouble, but to cause the tree to grow and to flourish in the far west, and in the distant tropics required great care and much time before the tree became accustomed to the climate.[113]

In one sense it was almost too late, for the colonists of all denominations had become accustomed to de facto congregationalism. While the Presbyterians encountered difficulty in establishing the presbytery, Tufnell encountered difficulty in establishing what he
regarded as the proper and appropriate standards of worship. Tufnell had brought with him six clergy to supplement the three Anglican clergy already working in Queensland. Of the six newcomers, five were Tractarians, which caused strains between clergy and people as the newly arrived priests introduced new forms of worship and devotional practice.\[114\]

The autocratic Quinn found that at least one priest, McGinty in Ipswich, resented the closer episcopal oversight the accompanied the creation of the new diocese and the resultant public fracas was most unedifying.\[115\] In the country towns of south-eastern Queensland even those who supported the bishop, such as his nephews the Horans, tended to build basilicas in their own bailiwicks which served as an assertion of localism. With Quinn's full encouragement James Horan in Warwick constructed a substantial suite of Catholic buildings.\[116\]

Smaller Protestant churches, like the Baptists, Churches of Christ and Brethren along with the Congregationalists themselves, had an essentially congregationalist polity with very weak links with the rest of the denomination. Methodism was a mixture of strong local autonomy, through the Leaders' Meeting and the Property Committee, and strong central authority exercised by the State Conference in matters like clergy stationing.

The Methodists, of whom there were four sects in Queensland before their union in 1898,\[117\] sought to erect a tin or timber chapel in every bush hamlet from Cape York to the Channel country. “The Christian principle of taking the Gospel to people wherever they may be gathered, trusting in God alone, was consistently observed”, wrote Dingle.\[118\] One consequence of such trust was the development of a denominational
smorgasbord at which few denominations could serve their adherents with anything more
than an itinerant ministry. On the southern Darling Downs, for example, there developed
a tradition of Wesley-style circuit riding among the Catholic priests who rode out to say
Mass in the smaller settlements and homesteads.\textsuperscript{[119]}

Competition among the denominations was strong. During the eighteen seventies
Frederick Richmond was an Anglican priest based at Copperfield, now a ghost town a
few kilometres south west of Clermont, but then a town of 5000 people supported by the
Peak Downs Copper Mine. As Richmond told it,

...there were nine different denominations, each having one more minister and one
or more church buildings. There were three denominations of Methodists. With
difficulty the Presbyterians kept in one fold but were not harmonious, some
wanted to divide to old Scottish lines. There was Church of England,
Congregationalists, Baptists, Roman Catholics and Lutherans. In addition there
were several congregations meeting without a minister. One body numbering only
three, met regularly until two decided the third was heretical. They expelled him.
Of course this "go as you please" competitive business could only be carried on
by the people stinting themselves and starving their clergy and often spending the
little strength left, in jealousy and bitterness with other Christians, not in
nourishing true religion.\textsuperscript{[120]}

While the leaders of the major denominations struggled to assert ecclesiastical
discipline, among the evangelical pietists there was a more positive spirit, which, while it
could not be called ecumenism, was anti-denominational in tone. The Town and Country
Mission claimed to be “established on the broadest unsectarian basis; members of all
Protestant denominations are on the committee”.\textsuperscript{[121]} The irony of claiming to be
unsectarian by virtue of inclusive Protestant representation aside, the Mission forbade its
agents, “to teach any denominational ‘ism’ “, saying their “sole work is to expound the
Gospel and leave all points of sectarian controversy or Church government to one
side”.\textsuperscript{[122]}
The Queensland Evangelical Standard actively encouraged lay initiative in organizing and conducting worship, “in the agricultural districts where no minister of the Gospel travels or where their visits are like angel's, ‘few and far between’”. [123] Noting that such lay leaders “may not be able to pray extempore”, the Standard suggested that,

The beautiful and comprehensive litany of the English Prayer Book, supplemented by a brief supplication uttered by the leader, or some printed composition, would form a fitting and most edifying vehicle for the devotions of the congregation. [124]

As for such printed compositions, the Standard recommended such items as the sermons it published by the British Calvinist Baptist, C.H.Spurgeon (1834-92) with the hope that,

...the minds of the little community would be fed with Christian knowledge, and their hearts would be purified by the sacred influences of Christian truth. The blessing it might prove on many a countryside where now the Sabbath is a day of indolence or sport, is simply incalculable.[125]

From Maren Bjelke-Petersen's recollections we know that the Danish settlers of the South Burnett followed such a model in the late nineteenth century.[126] In the lower Burnett also the Danish settlers were keen to receive devotional literature in their native language. The Town and County Mission colporteur reported, “the Danish residents cleared out our Bibles in their language and wanted more”. [127]

The congregationalist spirit among the Queensland Lutherans was given encouragement by the wide diversity of theological backgrounds among the pastors:

The clergy who in the early days served the German Lutherans in Queensland came from a wide variety of backgrounds, both Lutheran and Reformed, and in some cases had such little actual Lutheran background that they bolstered the ranks of other Protestant denominations. This state of affairs itself is an indication of the lack of training most of the
appointed pastors had and their lack of acceptance of the need for a common basis for teaching and preaching.[128]

Such diversity also inhibited the formation of a synodical structure among the Lutherans of Queensland. So if this is the ecclesiological tradition within which Joh Bjelke-Petersen's father, Carl, worked as a Lutheran pastor in Queensland at the turn of the century, and into which Joh Bjelke-Petersen was inducted from an early age, then it should be no surprise that when faced with ecclesiastical authority in the form of archbishops and church councils during his premiership that he should be dismissive of their counsel.

Thus ethnic diversity, particularly within denominations such as the Lutherans, splits and schisms (some local, some imported such as among the Methodists, Presbyterians and Lutherans), poor standards of clerical training, disestablishment and the legacy of sectarianism ruling out state aid – a shock from which Anglicanism never recovered - and Irish devotionalism in Roman Catholicism all combined to produce pietism in religious practice and congregationalism in polity, as the two defining characteristics of the religious culture of Queensland. Each reinforced the other as distance made it difficult for ecclesiastical authorities form themselves, let alone to structure and resource congregations and their adherents on the patterns inherited from Europe.


McPheat mention that on one trip to England Lang supped with the English radicals Cobden and Bright and made submissions to a House of Commons committee of which they were members. 


[34] Lang, *Freedom* p. 399.

[35] Ibid., pp. 399-400.


[38] J.D.Lang, *Cooksland* p. 484.


[40] Lang, *Cooksland* p. 484.


[44] Ibid., p. 81.


[49] Ibid., p. 459.


[52] Byrne, p. 254.


[56] Byrne, p.25.

[57] "Robert Dunne" *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Byrne, p. 34.

[58] quoted Byrne, p 19.


[63] Byrne p. 38.

[64] Byrne, p. 33.

[65] Duhig, p. 69.
[73] Ibid., p. 66.
[74] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., p. 219.
[81] Boland, James Duhig, p. 66.
[84] Queensland Evangelical Standard 13 February 1885.
[86] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 12 July 1884.
[87] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 30 March 1878.
[88] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 16 October1885.
[92] Ibid., pp. 61, 63. Educational standards of 19th century Presbyterian ministers were lower in Queensland than in Victoria and NSW. Prentis, p. 64.
[93] Suttor suggests that the evangelical ascendancy was short lived and that secularism soon dominated. Such a view underestimates the later links between Samuel Griffith's liberals and the evangelicals. Suttor, pp. 302-3, 314.
[95] Rayner, p. 106.
[96] Ibid., p. 11.
[97] Ibid., p. 133.
[98] Ibid., p. 8.
[99] Ibid., p. 11.
[100] Rayner, p. 165.
[103] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 17 February 1877.
[104] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 3 February 1877.
[105] Queensland Evangelical Standard, 8 December 1877.
Ibid., p. 65.
[114] Richards, p. 18.
[118] Ibid., p. 61.
[121] *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, 11 December 1880.
[122] Ibid.
[123] *Queensland Evangelical Standard*, 1 March 1884.
[124] Ibid.
[125] ibid.