Commentary

In our Commentary section three pieces reflect further on the question of Fundamentalism raised in REVIEW 5, 1 1992. John Knight offers insights into the present state of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, while two books reviewed present a picture of the New Zealand scene and discuss the plight of those chosing to leave fundamentalist groups. In the second part of this section are two accounts from groups who have decided to do religion their way - Warren Talbot considers gay religious groups, and Paul Hartingdon gives his interpretation of the court cases mounted against The Family in Australia.

Apocalypse When? Purity or Pluralisation in the Great Adventist Movement

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This paper seeks to provide a brief non-theological explanation of the continuing tendency to fission and schism in Seventh-day Adventism and the tensions between independent and officially sponsored ministries and agencies, where the consequence is neither extinction nor mutation.

To avoid any misunderstanding, however, I want to be plain about my own location in relation to this issue. I was reared as a third generation Adventist and I worked in the Adventist system for a number of years. I am currently teaching and working in a secular university where my major focus is sociology, politics and education policy. My honours thesis and my doctoral thesis were on the relationship between religious belief and education in Seventh-day Adventism. For a time, I was involved in the Adventist Forum movement, an association of scholars and graduates who sought to "open up" Adventism to the late twentieth century. I am no longer Adventist. I am, I think, in many ways post-Christian. I have, then, knowledge first from the inside, then from a position of marginality, and lastly from the outside - a long way off. The paper itself began as a response to a request

from an SDA professional's magazine for an article explaining why I left "the church". Perhaps, understandably, it was judged to be inappropriate for its audience.

The Adventist movement which preceded Seventh-day Adventism had confidently predicted the end of the world in 1844. Following that "great disappointment", the first Seventh-day Adventists, while continuing to denounce the "Babylon" of the established churches of the day, had necessarily to maintain a degree of doctrinal consensus and a loose institutional structure for a number of forceful leaders and their followers. Given their rejection of "date-setting", they had also to develop a modus vivendi for continued material survival while they awaited the forthcoming apocalypse. To a large degree, those challenges established the framework in which the SDA problematic has since been played out.

Since that time, Adventism has weathered wave after wave of dissent and schism: witness from its inception to the present day the SDA demonology of such noted schismatics as Canright, Kellogg, Ballenger, Conradi, Nicolici, Fletcher, Grieve, Brinsmead, Ford and the Concerned Brethren (inter alia). Despite substantial losses on each of these occasions, mainstream Adventism has survived periods of dissent for well over a century, and will, I expect, continue on into the foreseeable future. Arguably, however, this combination of institutional survival and generational schism is not so much a consequence of divine guidance as of the structure, belief systems, affective commitments and social processes of Adventism and the dynamic tensions consequent on attempting to assert and retain an Adventist identity while maintaining contact with "outsiders" for a variety of reasons (economic, proselytisation, humanitarian service, etc.). In scriptural terms, this problematic may well be characterised as how to be "in but not of the world".

This has typically led to what might be described as an officially minimalist response to changing internal and external conditions, with braver or more foolhardy individuals testing the limits of officially acceptable views and practices. Sometimes the innovators have been at least partially successful (for example, Sutherland and various "independent" hospitals and Kellogg and the food product industries), more often they have been marginalised and excluded. But whether or not these various developments succeeded or failed, any adequate analysis of the development of Adventism must take account of the creative tensions between the desire to maintain doctrinal truth and purity of practice and presses for change and innovation in these matters.

The problematic for Adventism, then, has been how to modify and adapt to changing circumstances and needs, and how to direct and utilise the various skills and gifts of its members, without giving up the major symbols of its difference: the Sabbath, the Spirit of Prophecy (ie, Ellen White"s writings), the Second Coming, Health Reform, and so on. In speaking of an essentially evolutionary process, it should be clear that while the meanings of these symbols and the practices associated with them have not remained constant since 1844 or indeed in various parts of the world, there is nonetheless a continuity across time and space which continues to constitute Adventism. This can be attributed in part to the development of organisational and administrative structures more centralised than congregational and formal belief systems which are prescribed rather than negoti-

ated. Such a situation would seem to allow the official organisation to direct and control Adventism and its various agencies in a fairly effective top-down fashion.

Any explanation which stops at this point is inadequate. What should also be taken into account are the ways in which Adventism as a community and social movement with a particular worldview is constituted and works. Put another way, three major facets shaping the Adventist identity are its worldview, its community, and the emotional commitment of its members. There are distinctive cognitive, social and affective dimensions, each of which appears to be in some degree contingent upon the others. To be a member of the Adventist community is also by and large to share its belief system and to be emotionally attached to it. Hence the aphorism of an earlier generation of Adventists, "The Adventist Church is a great family to belong to". There is, then, a tacit assumption of criteria which demarcate "insiders" from "outsiders". Of course there are those whose attachment to the SDA community is not matched by any real commitment to its beliefs, just as there are others who remain convinced of the truth of Adventism long after they have left "the church", and so on. Nevertheless, it seems that for many if not most Adventists, there is a strong commitment to their understanding of SDA doctrines, a substantial participation in the activities and life of the local community, and a considerable emotional attachment to Adventism. In short Adventism is not only an institution, it is also groups of people who share a common culture, who fellowship together, and who have an apocalyptic mission to fulfil. That is, they constitute a social and religious movement, the Great Adventist Movement.

It does not follow, though, that all participants in the movement will act in unison or harmony. Nor can the official hierarchy monitor and control every development in the movement. Social movements generate their own momentum, they are always in a sense potentially out of control. This may be less the case for Adventism with its formal centralised conference structure than for congregational assemblies or certain charismatic groups, but it is the case nonetheless.

The issue of Adventist identity is of course officially defined in the Church Manual and the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs. Equally, however, Adventist identity should be seen in terms of ethnic boundaries which indicate who and what according to the members of a group constitutes a member of that group. Thus to the extent that there are differing Adventisms (Concerned Brethren, evangelical Adventists, liberal Adventists...) there is room for dispute over the nature of Adventist identity and indeed for the construction of differing Adventist identities. There is also some space in which independent ministries may be deployed or in which schism may develop. In what follows, I sketch out what I see as some implications.

The title to this paper indexes an apparent oxymoron: purity and pluralisation. In its sectarian face, Adventism is vitally concerned about purity and its central purpose is exclusionary: many are not chosen, many are to be cast into outer darkness. The writings of Ellen White, the Bible, and the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs are often used for such ends. Such a perspective has at many times informed Adventist action at the level of particular local churches, conferences and regions. At times it operates at a worldwide level, as in the relatively re-

cent exclusion of the overtly evangelical Fordites and the disciplining of liberal scholars in Adventist colleges and universities. Even more strongly, however, this face is found amongst many of those (whether Concerned Brethren, Reformed Adventists, or whatever) who would "reform" or restore Adventism to what they see as its original purity. What they all share, despite their differences, is a belief in "Truth" with a capital "T". There is therefore no room for compromise in what Ellen White termed "the great controversy between good and evil", and those closest in belief may be the most implacably opposed over the minutiae of health reform, the time of the end, or the nature of the Godhead. Put another way, the ethnic boundaries of such form of Adventism are high, inflexible, impermeable. The space they contain is small. There may well be room for only 144,000 saints after all. You're either in or out, and the distinctions in belief, behaviour and manner of speech are as plain as Ellen White's nose. Schism and fission to the right and the left (and schism within schism) are the natural concomitants.

To the degree that contemporary Adventism presents a modestly denominational face, however, it is somewhat more open and tolerant, accommodating or refusing to cast out a (still limited) range of views and lifestyles. The shibboleths are less rigidly applied. For example, while she was a creature of her time and place, Ellen White's work still has devotional value; the world may well be much more than six or ten thousand years old; makeup, jewellery and going to the movies are acceptable options; some Adventists may fellowship comfortably on Sundays with other Christians, and so on. Such Adventism may even be moving toward the notion of "truth" with a small "t": something which is contested, or on which there is more than one acceptable point of view, a more open-ended approach which can allow that one just possibly could be wrong. The ethnic boundaries are more permeable, less rigid, more inclusive.

There will, of course, be extreme examples, for example, the destabilising effects of the Association of Adventist Forums in the 1970s, the Gay Adventist Youth movement centred on New York, or the various evangelical Adventist Fellowships which flourished for a while, post-Ford. That such forms of Adventism are arguably not yet sufficiently inclusive could be concluded from the number of those on the evangelical or liberal side of Adventism who have moved on to mainstream Christianity, other more evangelical sects or charismatic groups. (I am not persuaded that Seventh Day Baptists are any more liberal than Adventism in general.) There seems also to be a trend for many in Australia at least to move outside of all organised religion, often to agnosticism or atheism, in consequence of what I would describe unsociologically as religious burnout. (My observation is that it also happens to many charismatics.) One might observe that had the mainstream and administration been a open and inclusive, this might largely have been avoided.

There is another aspect to this differentiation between "open" and "closed" forms of Adventism. In any system which asserts absolute Truth in a cognitive (rather than affective) form, the problem of contradictions and inconsistencies is likely to emerge for at least some participants. In the social psychology literature this used to be referred to as "cognitive dissonance". (The notion was first applied to the range of responses and rationalisations developed by the Millerites after the

failure of the apocalypse in 1844.) The point is that people will differ in their responses. Some can compartmentalise their belief systems — science here, religion there, and so on. Or they can suspend disbelief, hoping for an eventual reconciliation of views. Others, however, need greater consistency in their intellectual formulations. Now it is indeed the case that current literary and social formulations such as post-structuralism and post-modernism assume the inescapability of contradiction, tension and inconsistencies in human formulations. I have no argument with this. Nevertheless, I want to point out the intellectual and emotional work demanded of some at least who believe that truth should be a coherent and integrated whole, and the risks of "apostasy" or fanaticism inherent in this enterprise. I would like to suggest also that cognitive dissonance is not a matter of such significance for more open and inclusive forms of Adventism. (It may not be such a problem for essentially affective religious movements either, such as charismatic groupings. That is not to say, however, that they do not have their own problems.)

A comparison of Adventism with Catholicism or Anglicanism is enlightening. Despite their current disputes, mature and established churches of these forms can accommodate a very much greater diversity of views and to a substantial degree their ethos is inclusionary rather than exclusionary. In consequence, extremes of the theological and activist right and left remain within the church (along of course with the great bulk of those in the middle), though they may very likely remain opposed to each other. Think for example of the gulf of difference between supporters of Opus Dei and the Jesuits; the substantial rejection by lay Catholics and many priests of the papal edict on contraception; the differences over the ordination of women in Anglicanism; and the range of views over the nature and processes of divine creation. Similarly a range of religious groups and orders dealing with schools, hospitals, various ethnic groups, welfare and charities, and so on, can co-exist and indeed compete within the overarching aegis of the church.

Arguably, however, the various internal and external tensions of Adventism which have been described thus far contribute to its continuing though changing existence and the varying configurations of cognitive, social and affective commitment to it. It is in the ongoing contrast of purity and pluralisation, the contests over ethnic boundaries, the competing demands of institutional control and independent mission, the desire for respectability and the separatist impulse, the pressures for change and the longing for stability, and the various resolutions of cognitive dissonance, that Adventist institutional and personal identities are constructed and reconstructed. Along the way, of course, individuals and groups leave or are shed from the movement and its institutions, while others are recruited. These, I believe, are in large part the dynamics underlying Adventism as a social phenomenon.

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Books on the Fundamentalist Theme

Leaving the Fold: A Guide for Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving Their Religion

Marlene Winell. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA. 1993

Marlene Winell is a licensed psychologist and this book is based on her personal experience as a child from a fundamentalist home, and clinical practice from her work in religious recovery. The book, in being informative about the nature of Christian fundamentalism, is meant to help people who have directly experienced its effects. For this reason, the chapters include inventories and exercises that help the reader to assess her experience in ways that help the recovery process. It is a self help book and case studies, including the author"s own experience, are used in quite a powerful way to illustrate 'religious recovery issues' (:10).

To begin with, Winell defines 'fundamentalism' historically in its Protestant origins as a response to modernist trends in theology and society, 'in which its rallying cry was for a return to the supposed "timeless truths of old" revealed in the Bible by *God for all time* ' (her italics) (:6). Yet it is the mindset that Winell find interesting and that she characterises and discusses in her book. In relation to this, she makes claims about the nature of 'dogmatic' religion as that which is divisive, altruistic and discriminatory of others. She then goes on to make the broader claim that many patterns of problematic behaviour, such as dualistic thinking about right and wrong, ferocious competitiveness, and our evaluation of people in terms of what they can achieve, the use of force and our exploitation of the earth, 'have many origins in traditional Christian theory and practice' (:7). These broader, more careless claims alert us to Winell's own assumptions about belief structures, and even more interesting, about the nature of psychological health.

Winell begins the book by listing some of the benefits offered by fundamentalism but goes on to portray them as co-dependencies and as 'God addiction'. Recovery involves paradigm adjustments and, like any therapist, Winell cannot avoid slipping into her own view of what the world is really like. Part of this involves accepting that 'you are indeed home, here and now' (:22) and of loving the 'inner child" as a means of self love.

The main value of the book is that it documents genuine experience. A particularly interesting chapter is the one entitled

'Family Background' where Winell claims that some of the dynamics of fundamentalist families are similar to those of other dysfunctional families, such as families of alcoholics. Addressing the reader who is an ACOF (adult child of fundamentalists), she reminds them that denial is strong in both systems and 'the same prohibitions occur against perceiving, feeling, and expressing'. Recovery consists in 'understanding the attributes of both healthy and unhealthy family functioning' : 129. So she charts traits of healthy and dysfunctional families to help to heighten the reader's awareness.

In this chapter, Winell quotes Christian psychologist, Donald Sloat, author of *The Dangers of Growing Up in a Christian Home* (1986) in which he describes the way families and churches can unknowingly hinder emotional and spiritual growth by practices such as ' instilling a fear of God rather than a love for him, refusal to listen to questions and doubts, forcing a list of do's and don'ts that cloud a true understanding of God an sinfulness'. :114 Winell agrees with Sloat that these families dysfunctions are found within Christian families, but she wants to go further and claim that the fundamentalist mindset is fundamentally unhealthy. This is because it is one in which religion is used as an emotional crutch and in which certain of its core beliefs are essentially harmful. The prime culprit is the doctrine of original sin because it creates shame and prevents fundamentalist parents from recognising the significance of child development and developmental stages, such as egocentrism, sexuality and teenage rebellion . Within the fundamentalist mindset, therefore, the behaviour of children is always linked to a flawed nature. This is an interesting claim which raises the question about how believers in original sin negotiate between what is 'natural' and what is 'sinful'.

Winell also says that fundamentalist parents, by virtue of being fundamentalists, also believe that they have the truth. This absolutism has many harmful effects because it results in rigidly hierarchical families where the parenting is bolstered by scriptural authority. In such families, there is little negotiation because issues are seen in black and white terms. Children from such homes are also, not surprisingly, not taught to think critically, nor are they given the opportunity to experience the complexity of situations , to negotiate complex decisions and to listen to their feelings or intuitions. Winell does not say this, but it is because the nature of Protestant fundamentalist faith is rigid and cognitive that feelings, as well as natural impulses, are looked upon with suspicion, as chaotic, messy, undesirable and sinful.

I think that many Christians would agree with Winell about the presence of these dysfunctions in rigidly Christian families. However, I am not sure if many would agree with her claim that "the biblical attitude towards human feelings is one of great suspicion." (:120) for many would want to claim that through biblical faith, they have found a source of emotional liberation.

Indeed, claims as well as implicit assumptions within the book bear further examination. For example, Christian readers would generally be uncomfortable with Winell's use of Biblical quotes to account for the origins of fundamentalism, as she relies on a literal, wooden interpretation of these passages rather than the more nuanced interpretation within traditional orthodoxy. In that sense, Winell relies on a fundamentalist reading of biblical texts to prove her point.

Another major assumption within Winell's thesis is her view about the means of recovery through access to and 'reparenting' of the 'inner child'. This has now become a widely accepted model of the self and presents a challenge to philosophical examination. Indeed, the individualism within Winell's view of the self is a feature that is also found within Protestant fundamentalist thinking.

Leaving the Fold could be read with profit, not only for practical purposes as the author primarily intends, but for theoretical interest as well as it raises important questions for philosophical theology.

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"Be Ye Separate" Fundamentalism and the New Zealand Experience (Waikato Studies in Religion Volume 3)
Bryan Gilling (ed.), Hamilton: University of Waikato and Colcom Press, 1992, 162pp ISBN 0-908815-19-0

Be Ye Separate is another valuable study of the New Zealand religious scene - part of the Waikato Studies in Religion series under the general editorship of Douglas Pratt - this time focusing on fundamentalism. After a brief introduction by the editor, Bryan Gilling, who has carried out PhD research in revivalism, the opening chapter focuses on 'Fundamentalism and New Zealand Culture'. In this chapter, John Stenhouse of the University of Otago, seeks to restore the reputation of fundamentalism by showing that certain prominent figures on the New Zealand scene did not fit the stereo-type of 'ignorance, prejudice and bigotry' so often attributed to the movement. In an essay which he concedes is 'suggestive and speculative, and makes no attempt at being definitive', Stenhouse sets out to show that fundamentalists have 'at least sometimes, adopted significant countercultural positions' which have resulted in them witnessing to 'Uncomfortable Christian truths' which the dominant culture would rather forget or ignore.

His first example relates to Presbyterian clergyman James Copland and Anglican Lorenzo Moore who both adopted anti-evolutionist positions. However, they also held conservative moral views which, contrary to prevailing opinion, led them to oppose proposed prostitution laws which would have penalised the women involved while at the same time allowing their male customers to satisfy their desires unhindered. Stenhouse points out that this policy of opposition to double standards, which also received support from the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), derived not from 'the dominant male culture, nor from contemporary science or medicine' but from the biblical and Christians sources defended by fundamentalism.

Stenhouse follows much the same line of approach in his second example - that of William M Maskell, a Roman Catholic entomologist who opposed the scientific racism of contemporary scientists on the grounds of the unity of the human race as derived from a straight-forward reading of the Book of Genesis. A final example is particularly relevant in modern times - the condemnation of nationalistic jingoism during the Great War by conservative Protestants (even to the point of support for pacifism) in the name of biblical teaching about the universal lordship of Christ and the unity of the human race.

This short opening chapter, despite its lack of comprehensive detail, highlights the importance of reassessing fundamentalism on its own terms and in relation to its own context, since there are some fea-

tures of it which do not square well with the 'received historiography of fundamentalism-as benighted-obscurantism'. By means of some simple examples (which are readily accessible despite being regularly overlooked), Stenhouse argues that what may be referred to as the 'benighted biblicism' of this movement may in fact be quite significant not only for understanding the movement itself but also for providing useful ways of dealing with powerful cultural, intellectual and political forces operating at the present time which are not necessarily beneficial for society.

In the second chapter, James Veitch of Victoria University turns to 'Fundamentalism and the Presbyterian Experience'. Almost all of the first half of the chapter is devoted to a none too satisfactory discussion of the history and definition of fundamentalism, in which the author seems to think of the movement as one 'spawned by American Presbyterians'; furthermore, he defines it primarily in terms of literalistic and dogmatic beliefs about the Bible and the need for a sense of security in the face of change and rejection by society. With modernism 'long since disappeared' and believing that 'liberalism is currently fading away' and ecumenism 'struggling', Veitch thinks that fundamentalism (as the right wing of conservative Christianity in contrast with evangelicalism and the charismatic movement) is 'well placed' to be a dominant force in Christianity, and one that will likely move to the 'centre of evangelicalism to give it its cutting apologetic edge'.

From this standpoint, he outlines some developments of New Zealand Presbyterianism, showing how the earlier conservative beliefs were replaced by liberal reinterpretations of key doctrines such as the atonement, especially under the influence of clergymen and theologians such as John Gibson Smith and John Dickie. Although these changes sometimes led to controversy and even heresy trials, Veitch shows that the church typically did not deal with them as theological issues, but 'shifted the debate into the area of polity, and settled it pastorally'. This was, he notes, 'a shrewd piece of church politics' which neatly avoided the acrimonious tensions which occurred in Scotland and the Unites States over the same issues. The doctrinal differences, however, continued into more recent times with the formation of the evangelical Westminster Fellowship and the charges and heresy trial brought against Lloyd Geering. While the church at that time did not pronounce against Geering and some left the church over the matter, in due course the climate changed and in 1970 the church did disassociate itself from Geering. From that time, Veitch notes somewhat wistfully, liberalism declined and evangelicalism (a less doctrinaire variety of fundamentalism) and the charismatic movement, gained ground. Veitch concludes that after all, New Zealand Presbyterians 'find it increasingly preferable to affirm their evangelical heritage, and conserve their traditional, cultural values along with the belief that the best form of religion to have is one that attracts people into the church and onto the pews: success is a sign of God's approval and a result of God's blessing'.

However, there is a change of focus in Veitch's discussion from the typically abrasive fundamentalism to the more popular evangelicalism, which suggests that in the end he is not talking about the same phenomenon as other essayists in this volume. This is particularly the case for the next chapter in which the editor pays attention to the militant fundamental-

ism as expressed in the New Zealand branch of the International Council of Christian Churches. It is a pity that he traces the development of this body virtually exclusively through its publication, *Contender*, over its 19 year existence and has not been able to supplement this with other sources of information about the organisation and its leading figures.

Nevertheless, it is a useful study of the organisation's rather brief life, which like its American parent and sister bodies elsewhere (including Australia), has been probably the most strident (albeit almost completely ineffectual) opponent of the World Council of Churches in the name of strict separation between what is regarded as orthodox biblical faith and deviations there-from. By making some comparisons with other bodies such as the New Zealand Bible Training Institute (now Bible College of New Zealand) which were not so separatist, Gilling raises (but does not go very far in answering) important questions about why some conservative groups are more extreme than others in their views even though they share many of the key fundamentalist beliefs, such as the place of the Bible and adherence to traditional Christian doctrine. It is this kind of difference which distinguishes militant fundamentalism from evangelicalism and constitutes them as discrete religious phenomena; however to attribute such a distinction to personal or social factors or to infer that it was merely a matter of emphasis is quite inadequate. More substantial answers are needed and may be found, for example, in analysing the beliefs of the respective groups about the nature of revelation, Scripture and religious authority.

John Evans' chapter on 'The New Christian Right in New Zealand' is much more substantial than the previous ones in this volume; it has the advantage of dealing with a large and tangible body of material, including matters of a public moral and political nature, such as media censorship, abortion law, sex education, homosexual law reform and discrimination. With one eye on similar movements in the United States, such as the Moral Majority, Evans examines the emergence of the 'Christian Right' in New Zealand both in its informal and organised manifestations, especially with a view to explaining why conservative Christians who previously focused on personal piety came to be so politically involved in the 1980s. He points to the realignment of religious life along a liberal/conservative axis and the identification of moral permissiveness, secular humanism and the consequent destruction of the nation's 'Christian heritage' as important factors in the process.

Discussion covers the reaction of conservatives to increasing permissiveness in the society as evidenced in popular protests and the formation of various organisations. The ground swell of opinion gained considerable focus, according to Evans, in the Jesus marches of 1972 which demonstrated that there was a organised conservative religious voice being heard in society as well (or perhaps replacing) the earlier liberal tradition. This success led, quite naturally, to a more overt political involvement by the right, being re-enforced by a growth in conservative religious strength in the country, due in large part to a burgeoning and highly active Pentecostal movement. The process was capped off with the broadening of the focus beyond single issues to the conviction that, due to the encroachment of liberal forces and secular humanism,'the whole fabric of society was in need of reform and change'. While

action along these lines included definite political measures, Evans points out that the 'Christian's task was seen in wide theological terms'. Although the new Christian right never did gain the upper hand in national life and was distinct from similar American movements in many important ways, the result is that on political matters there are now two distinct church voices and agendas; just as importantly, conservative Christianity has been permanently changed from being a quiescent movement to one that is much more professional in its political activism.

Evans has therefore portrayed the transformation of conservative Christianity into a more socio-politically conscious movement, but has pointed mainly to external factors which stimulated reaction on the part of the evangelicals. However, during this time profound theological changes were taking place in evangelical thinking on these issues elsewhere in the world (see for example the Lausanne Covenant of 1974) and the sociology of evangelicalism was also changing, opening the movement to higher levels of education, status and political involvement. If New Zealand conservatives did not exploit these factors very much, as Evans account seems to imply then perhaps it is not surprising that the right did not fulfil its political potential in the 1987 and 1990 elections.

Brett Knowles adopts a similar approach to Evans in his history of Pentecostalism, explaining how a movement which has often been identified as arising out of social deprivation came to grow and to achieve the much higher degree of social acceptance which it now enjoys. The study is limited to one denomination, the New Life Churches Of New Zealand in the 1960s. Rejecting several prominent sociological theories which seek to account for Pentecostalism, Knowles offers a detailed discussion of its nature, background and history, pointing to several reasons for its success. As an evangelical and revivalist movement, it shared in the renaissance of evangelicalism in the period following the Second World War, a development which drew upon much earlier traditional roots in the religious life of the nation. He argues that, although the mainstream Protestant churches were all at least nominally evangelical, they did not take advantage of the religious awareness created by the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade, leaving an opportunity for zealous groups such as the Pentecostals to exploit.

According to Knowles, the traditional Pentecostal practice of faith healing and its focus on the divine power also proved to be a welcome antidote to social disruption and uncertainty, offering the comfort of the revival of 'old-time religion'. Interest in faith healing was also stimulated by traditional beliefs of Maori religion and in later times by trends towards non-traditional medicine.

A final feature in the acceptance of Pentecostalism was the emergence from the mid-1960s of various cultural movements which favoured personal experience, internalised forms of authority and spiritual values. Youth counter-culture groups, rebellion against traditional authority structures and various non-Christian religious and philosophies were all facets of this process. Pentecostalism with its heavy emphasis on the Spirit, its non-institutionalised forms and its lower class background was well placed to take advantage of these developments. Knowles does not extend his study to the present time but it is obvious that his explanations go a long way to explaining the current situation, although the fact

that this movement has become so acceptable socially in recent times means that much of what Knowles describes will no longer be relevant and the movement will need to look to other factors to give it continuing relevance.

This volume is rounded off with an essay by Colin Brown in which, curiously, he analyses American fundamentalism under the title, 'Where have all the fundamentalists gone?'. He suggests that although some of the most prominent forms of fundamentalism such as high profile political campaigns and tele-evangelism may now be much muted in comparison with earlier times, the movement is still remarkably virile and ought not to be ignored as a religious force or its study neglected. He implies that the same judgement should be made for New Zealand even though in many parts of this book a distinction has been drawn between United States and New Zealand in regard to their religious and social lives. Nevertheless, this collection of essays, more integrated than most of its kind, succeeds in its aim of presenting insights that will help to shed light on a somewhat misunderstood movement in its New Zealand manifestation.

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On the Boundary: Gay religious groups in Australia[1]

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On the boundary of religion and homosexuality

If there is one image which summarises the situation of the gay religious person, it is that of living "on the boundary" [2]. Gay Christians and Jews live "on the boundary" of organised religion and the organised gay community, never entirely at home in either. This is, of course, a very general statement. Individuals often need to make decisions in one direction or the other, or to balance these two aspects of their identity in unique way. In this sense, the boundaries of religion and homosexuality and being defined and re-defined daily, in thousands of different ways. But there is still value in trying to organise these many experiences in certain ways.

This paper is a preliminary attempt at such organisation: using the formation of "groups" within a particular period of time as the framework .

The establishment of gay religious groups in the early to mid 1970s was an attempt to create an environment which allowed for a reconciliation of religion and homosexuality. From the dominant perspective of mainstream religion, gay Christians and Jews were simply sinners seeking approval for their wilful disobedience of God's laws. From the perspective of the gay liberation movement, gay Christians and Jews were simply clinging to a homophobic, patriarchal religion. A common joke among the small number of

gay Christians active in the gay movement was that it was easier to come out as a gay person in the church than to come out as a Christian in the gay movement!

I recall one incident in my own life which illustrates this sense of living on the boundary in the late 1970s. During the week and on Sundays, I was a candidate for the ministry with a conservative evangelical denomination. Although I had staked out a reputation for being an outspoken 'liberal', on the surface I was a fairly typical young student minister. But on Saturdays, I was a gay activist!

A major focus of gay political activity in 1978 was the visit of British 'morals' campaigner Mary Whitehouse. (In the late 1970s, Mr Fred Nile was yet to clearly emerge as our most famous homegrown "morals" campaigner.) Meetings were held at the Society Five[3] building, planning a protest for Whitehouse's public meeting in Melbourne. One morning in September 1978, I escaped from the suburban church where I was working as a student minister as quickly as I could. I had shortly joined the demonstration and was heartily shouting a different type of chant.

You can imagine my horror when on the opposite side of the road, barely 20 metres from the demonstration, was a Deacon from my church and his family going into the public meeting. I quickly ducked behind a placard and stayed there until they were well and truly inside! I endured this absurd double life for another six months until the publication of an article I had written about homosexuality resulted in my forced resignation as a candidate for ministry.[4]

Over time, many individuals have resolved the tension of living on the boundary by either abandoning mainstream religious faith entirely, or retreating to the closet and accepting the strictures of religious fundamentalism. For those who have persisted on the boundary, gay religious groups have played a vital role in supporting individuals and challenging traditional religious views of homosexuality.

The formation of early gay religious groups

1971 saw the establishment of religious or church groups within existing gay organisations, specifically, the branches of the Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP). These were precursors to separate gay religious groups. In Sydney, for example, Cross-Section, the church group within CAMP NSW circulated a response to a homophobic Sydney Anglican diocese report to all clergy, MPs and libraries.[5] Leaflets were regularly distributed at Festival of Light rallies. The Religious and Moral Issues Group of CAMP SA issued a letter to all clergy, and provided a summary of responses. The letter argued that "it is wrong for the church to condemn homosexual people outright. Rather they [sic] should be accepted into the christian community as they are, to be encouraged in personal growth and christian responsibility."[6]

Established in 1971, the Charter of the South Australian Group was "to provide a forum for discussion for both sides - trying to sort out the religious problems of homosexuals and the homosexual hangups of the church".[7]

One of the major concerns of the Religious and Moral Issues Group of CAMP SA was biblical interpretation. The CAMP SA Newsletter of May 1974 reported on a seminar which re-examined the biblical texts on homosexuality. This issue, Scriptural interpretation, has been a

major concern for all gay religious groups. It has also been a source of tension between more evangelical and liberal gay Christians (reflecting wider theological differences in the church).

Unlike the United States, the gay religious movement in Australia has not developed its own high profile leaders. There is no Australian equivalent to the Reverend Troy Perry -founder and Moderator of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).[8] Perry did, however, play a major role in the establishment and growth of gay religious groups in Australia.

Perry's first Australian visit (in July 1974) was at the invitation of the Roman Catholic group Acceptance.[9] This lead to the eventual establishment of MCCs in most capital cities, with Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane eventually employing paid clergy. MCCs were the first gay community organisations in Australia to employ paid staff. In perhaps typical church style, the history of MCC in Australia includes its fair share of splits and divisions. These include breakaway groups and groups not willing to affiliate with Perry's United States church. Some groups became known as the Christ's Community Church. MCC Clergy have (not always successfully) often been recruited from the United States.

The MCC maintains that it is not a "gay church" but a Christian church with a particular ministry to the gay community. It is true, however, that the membership of the MCC (approximately 25 000 worldwide) is overwhelmingly gay. The theology and liturgy is eclectic, leading to tensions and compromises.

An important component of MCC's work has been in support, care and counselling. MCC has provided traditional church support to people in need. MCC members have also been active, in varying degrees over time, in wider gay community activities and groups. Some MCCs have participated in law reform coalitions and other political action groups. In 1978, the Melbourne MCC published a newsletter for the gay community called "Grapevine".

The first MCC Chartering Service, linking the MCC's in Australia to the Universal Fellowship of the MCC, was held on 6 July 1975 in Sydney.[10] Over 100 people met at the Friends' Meeting House in Surry Hills. The service was led by Sydney MCC's Reverend Lee Carlton, but included Acceptance, as well as several sympathetic Methodist and Presbyterian clergy. The Society of Friends (Quakers) form part of small sections of established churches that have encouraged and assisted gay religious groups.

Robert Elson, a founding member of Adelaide MCC provides one of the few written rationales for a separate church for gays. The MCC was established "as a result of the disillusionment of a group of gay Christians with the established churches". The group had started meeting in 1971 as a part of CAMP SA, with the hope of reforming the mainstream churches. Three years later, however, the progress was minimal and "members of the group were feeling very alienated from the established churches and the idea of establishing a church which ministered to the needs of gay people seemed very attractive".[11]

This would seem to be a fairly typical account of initial optimism, later turning into disillusionment. Troy Perry's visit to Adelaide in 1974 became the important trigger in the group deciding to form a church and affiliate with the UFMCC. In terms of mainstream church acceptance, Adelaide MCC was the most successful, gaining admission to the South Australian

Council of Churches in the late 1970s. A similar application in Victoria was rejected.

Cross-Section QLD was originally part of CAMP QLD, and as with similar groups in other states, changed from January 1975 to become a part of the UFMCC, but using the name "Christ's Community Church". The aim of the new church was to demonstrate "the right and ability of all to worship together, without distinction as to race... caste... sex... or sexual orientation".[12]

Acceptance, an organisation for gay Roman Catholics, was established in 1973, holding its first national conference in April 1975. The mood among the 80 delegates at the conference reflected a confident challenge to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. An editorial in the national newsletter one month after the conference described Acceptance as "part of the movement toward total human liberation", observing a perceived "need in the camp community for a better lifestyle".[13]

Held several months prior to the First National Homosexual Conference, the Acceptance Conference adopted a "Common Statement". The statement outlined the role of Acceptance to include spiritual development (including the sacraments), education about faith and homosexuality, social concern and social events. Resolutions of the national conference addressing discrimination and other matters, were sent to Roman Catholic bishops, the media and the Australian Government.

Garry Pye explained the rationale for the establishment of Acceptance at the First National Homosexual Conference. He said that the organisation had been established to meet unfulfilled needs. The "spiritual and emotional needs of many homosexual people were not being met" and there was "almost no awareness among homosexual people generally of the existence of discrimination and oppression".[14]

Acceptance evolved from the Catholic Group, originally established in 1973, with some resistance, as part of the Church Group of CAMP NSW. According to Pye, the emerging Catholic Groups were "treated pretty poorly by their sisters and brothers in the liberation movement".[15] This was given as the reason for the group to form an organisation separate to CAMP. Although a Roman Catholic group, acceptance was open to people of all faiths and none. The founding treasurer was Jewish.

The theme of non-acceptance in the wider gay community is a recurrent one. Pye's view was echoed by Graeme Donkin, Editor of the Acceptance National Newsletter. He wrote that "the Socialist/Marxist Left have, in their superior way, ostracised forever their sisters and brothers in the religion-oriented groups".[16]

An example of the criticisms directed at gay religious groups, can be seen in the paper presented at the First National Homosexual Conference by Michael Hurley and Craig Johnston. They wrote that:

> *The question is not primarily one of whether Judeo-Christianity and homosexuality are compatible. Rather, it is one of the place and function of Judeo-Christianity in patriarchal capitalism. And, for us, it is clear that the ideological function of Judeo-Christianity has been, and is, one of maintaining sex roles and the family.*[17]

Dennis Altman"s influential *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation* had briefly outlined the "hostility" of mainstream religion to homosexuality, though also noted a "broad spectrum" of views in the Church.[18] In Sydney, the Socialist Ho-

mosexuals group identified the MCC as a major "tendency" in the homosexual movement (in 1976). The Group's Manifesto acknowledged the "protective role" of MCC for homosexuals, but then condemned all religion as "reactionary and sexist".[19]

A small number of established religious groups played a supportive role to the emerging gay religious organisations. As noted above, one of these was the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). In addition to accommodation assistance to the (then) Christ's Community Church in Sydney, the 1974 Yearly Meeting of the Society adopted a policy supporting law reform "so as to eliminate discrimination against homosexuals and to take the area of personal conduct between adults out of the concern of the law". A media release issue by the Society called upon all people to "affirm the worth of all loving relationships, whether homosexual or heterosexual".[20]

This type of progress was only at the fringes of the church. The continuing attitudes of mainstream religion can be seen in a range of individual cases of discrimination by church authorities. In late 1975, Sydney school teacher Mike Clohesy was sacked by the Catholic Education Office after making a public statement concerning his homosexuality.[21] A protest demonstration was held outside St Mary's Cathedral. Interestingly, the leaflet issued for the demonstration acknowledged the support of Acceptance, Christian Women Concerned, and Commissions of the Australian Council of Churches (ACC). Support from the latter is consistent with a small but significant role that individuals associated with the ACC and the Student Christian Movement have played in supporting gay Christians. A 1973 ACC Conference on Family Life issued a pro-gay statement, causing some embarrassment and assurances that this was not official ACC policy.[22]

The role of gay religious groups

Until the mid-1970s, most comment on homosexuality within the mainstream churches was made by heterosexuals. This was either sympathetic and tolerant (in the Wolfenden tradition) advocating law reform and understanding, or a stern re-statement of traditional teaching. These two approaches of other people talking about homosexuals can be seen in the very different reports of the Melbourne and Sydney Anglican Dioceses (1971 and 1973 respectively).[23]

Gay religious groups provided a voice for gay Christians and Jews. For the first time in Australia, religious institutions were invited to talk to homosexuals.[24]

There are many answers to the question: What were gay Christians and Jews doing in gay religious groups? We were involved for much the same mixture of reasons as people were involved in general gay groups.

Many people were looking for mutual support, but in a context in which we could be open about both our homosexuality and our religious experience. At an individual level, people were looking for support, encouragement, friendship and compatible sexual partners. The latter was an area where gay Christians often (at least at the level of rhetoric) distinguished themselves from the general gay community. This was recognised, for example, in the provision by the Metropolitan Community Church of "holy unions" for couples of the same sex.

A part of this essential support function was the exploration of sexuality. Gay

religious groups attracted people uncertain of their sexuality, including married and bisexual people. In many churches, they were the only vehicle for a more honest discussion of human sexuality. These groups provided a more secure and supportive environment for people to come out, enabling individuals to resolve the guilt they often felt.

Worship and spiritual support has always been a cornerstone for gay religious groups. A regular worship service has been a persistent feature of groups such as Acceptance (holding weekly or monthly masses), the MCC and Christ's Community Church. Many group members retained active membership in their own Parish or Church, in addition to the particular gay religious group.

The practical issue of finding a clergy person willing to conduct the worship service was usually not a problem. Acceptance, for example, quickly developed a large group of gay or gay-sympathetic priests willing to celebrate the Mass. MCC and CCC, however, were new denominations and either imported (from the USA) or appointed their own clergy. MCC developed differently in each state, but usually ended up with an eclectic liturgy, ranging from charismatic handclapping to high church pomp and ceremony - sometimes all in the one service! MCC services also developed gay positive rituals, such as gay and lesbian couples receiving holy communion together.

Although not predominant, some group members saw their involvement in directly political terms - challenging the attitudes of religious bodies to homosexual people and homosexuality. An early newsletter of Acceptance described its readers as "a pilgrim people, fighting the oppression of society and the Church...we believe that homosexuality is a natural variation in the use of sex. We are not 'sinners', we are not 'failures', and we are definitely not 'sick'.[25]

This confident assertion of gay christian militancy has not always been a feature of gay religious groups. Some individuals were extremely uneasy about the rhetoric of "oppression" and criticising the church. A small number of people, epitomised by the Sydney AngGays group, saw themselves as undermining anti-homosexual attitudes from within the main agent of homosexual oppression - organised religion. The tension between a social/support function and a political/educational function existed in most gay religious groups, as it did in many other gay and religious organisations.

Many debates within gay religious groups often mirrored those in the wider gay community. They included language (gay, lesbian, homosexual), the role of women, political tactics (confronting and church or evolutionary change) and structures (elected officers, collectives).

The achievements of gay religious groups

Gay religious groups continue around Australia, though they vary somewhat in composition and approach. Acceptance retains a sound national structure. MCC has lost some of its early energy, but maintains viable congregations in most capital cities. Like the rest of the gay community in the 1980s, gay Christians and Jews have responded with vigour to the AIDS epidemic. Many individuals have been active in AIDS service and education organisations. AIDS is also forcing the churches to extend traditional doctrines of care and compassion to gay men. In several states, notably Queensland, strong

support for AIDS Councils has come from Roman Catholic nuns.

What has been achieved by gay religious groups in Australia? It would be very easy to provide a negative assessment of our achievements. At an official level, the Vatican has hardened its approach to homosexuality. Under Pope John Paul II, gay priests have been disciplined or transfered and gay Catholic groups have been banned from church buildings. Adelaide is the only Roman Catholic diocese in Australia (and one of the remaining few in the world) to officially recognise Acceptance.[26] The Anglican Church is ambivalent, split symbolically between the approaches of the Sydney and Melbourne dioceses. Some progress has been made in the Uniting Church which undertook a four year national study program and sponsors gay support groups within official church structures. But no mainstream denomination or religion in Australia has, or is likely to in the short term, ordain an openly gay person. But to measure success against "official" responses is inadequate.

Bearing in mind the position of gay Christians and Jews living "on the boundary", the past twenty years has been remarkable. The primary achievement, in my view, has been in the lives of individual gay people. Whether now involved in mainstream religion or not, with or without faith, large numbers of individuals have benefited from the activities of gay religious groups. Most have survived the enduring homophobia of church and society.

Gay religious groups are a part of an active gay community enabling both church and society to participate in a reassessment of traditional approaches to homosexuality and homosexual people. Against a backdrop of more than twenty centuries of (mostly) prejudice and intolerance, twenty years has seen important steps in encouraging Christianity and Judaism to be true to their stated ideals.

Notes

1. Throughout this paper, the phrase "gay religious groups" will be used. It should be noted, however, that these were overwhelmingly Christian groups, with one group (Chutzpah) from within Judaism. I have also tended to use the phrase "gay" religious groups, rather than "lesbian and gay", as I think this reflects the terminology and understanding of the time.

2. This phrase was used by Paul Tillich to describe his own life, and theological position.

3. Society Five was the Victorian equivalent of the different CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) groups that sprang up in Australia in the early 1970s.

4. Warren Talbot, "Homosexuality", *On Being*, February 1979.

5. Mike Clohesy and Peter de Waal, *Oppression Upon Reflection 1974*, CAMP NSW, Sydney 1975. Cross-Section (church group within CAMP NSW), *Homosexuals Report Back*, CAMP NSW, Sydney 1974. "CrossSection" is now the name for the support and education group for homosexual and heterosexual people within the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church.

6. Religious and Moral Issues Group, "Letter to Clergy..." in *Homosexuality in South Australia, A Collection of Writings from SA*, SA branch of the Campaign Against Moral Persecution, Adelaide 1972, p 40.

7. *Newsletter*, CAMP SA, May 1974.

8. Perry"s story, including establishment of the Universal Fellowship of MCC (UFMCC) is found in his autobiography *The Lord"s My Shepherd and He Knows I"m Gay.*

9. See "Interview with Troy Perry", *Gay Liberation Press*, July 1974, No 2.

10. "Day of Great Joy: First MCC Chartering Service in Australia", *Outreach*, Vol 2, No 2, August 1975.

11. Robert Elson, "In the beginning", *Gay Credo*, Vol 1, No 1, September 1974.

12. *Homosexuals Report Back: reply to the Report on Homosexuality*, (Syd), by Cross-Section, April 25, 1974, CAMP NSW, Sydney, November 1974.

13. Editorial, *Acceptance National Newsletter*, Vol 2, May 1975. The newsletter described itself as "a publication of the homosexual catholic community".

14. Garry Pye, "Homosexual Liberation" in Australia: Acceptance", *Papers - Proceedings, First National Homosexual Conference*, Melbourne, 16-17 August 1975, p 71.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Graeme Donkin, "Homosexual Liberation in Australia: Towards Developing a Pragmatic Module for Action", *ibid.*, p 72.

17. Michael Hurley and Craig Johnston, "Campfires of the Resistance: Theory and Practice for the liberation of male homosexuals", *ibid* p 54.

18. D. Altman, *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation*, Middlesex, Penguin, 1973, pp 56-57.

19. "Manifesto of the Socialist Homosexuals" in *Alternative News Service*, No 62, August 16, 1976, pp 19-20.

20. Roger Sawkins, Covering letter and Report on "Homosexuality in Australia", unpublished, October 1974.

21. Details of the Clohesy case can be seen in "Oppression: a case history", *CAMP INK*, Vol 5, No 1, March 1976.

22. John Bluck, "Red Hot or Rock Cold", *One World*, May 1978, pp 10,11.

23. *Report on Homosexuality*, Church of England, Diocese of Melbourne, Social Questions Committee, 1971. *Report on Homosexuality*, Report of the Ethics and Social Questions Committee to the Synod of the Church of England Diocese of Sydney, October 1973. A position similar to that of the Melbourne Anglican Diocese is seen in the Methodist Church, which established a commission to study homosexuality in 1967. See Rev K. Smith, "The Methodist Church and Homosexuality" in *Homosexuality in South Australia* op cit.

24. In Victoria this was taken seriously by the then Secretary of the Victorian Council of Churches, Dr Cliff Wright, who organised a "dialogue" with Society Five members in 1974.

25. Quoted in Alan Gill, "Churches think again on homosexuality; meanwhile, what of Cardinal Newman?", *The National Times*, June 9-14, 1975, p.10.

26. The Archbishop has appointed a chaplain to Adelaide Acceptance since 1982.

The Family

Paul Hartingdon, spokesperson for The Family in Australia reports on Community Services versus the Children of God/ The Family.

There have been three court cases in Australia in the past three years where Children's Courts in Victoria and New South Wales were called upon to test allegations of child abuse in Family communities. In May 1992 scrutiny by Police and Community Services escalated into the phenomenon of joint raids on six communities. A total of 128 children were removed and protection applications taken out on all the children, almost all the children of The Family in those states. The resultant Victorian case finally settled in April 1994. Outlined here are the reasons

for the raids and the outcomes of the cases.

The re-emergence of the Children of God in Australia as The Family began in the late 1980s with the return of many of the Australian members who had been evangelising and establishing communities on the Indian subcontinent, in the Orient and South East Asia. The combination of Evangelical Christianity, an eschatology focused on the immanent return of Jesus Christ, an unorthodox sexual philosophy and communal living was a volatile mix that attracted criticism. Some members who left the group and some families of group members were critical and joined forces with anti-cult networks. Authorities, relying on these sources and media reports for information, became concerned about conditions within the group, however, they had very little, if any, first-hand knowledge of conditions within the communities.

From within The Family concerns that it was becoming an attacked group were confirmed by heavy handed intervention by child welfare agencies involving military-style raids and long involved court proceedings eg Argentina 1987, Barcelona 1990. The result of this was a distrust of the welfare systems and the media as The Family saw little hope of fair representation.

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In April 1991 a member of a Melbourne community moved out and his wife and eight children chose to stay. He threatened to "bring the whole work in Australia down round [your] ears" and went to the police seeking custody. The Blackburn Community Policing Squad responded by taking out protection applications on the children. The case began in April 1991 and the court heard from former members who alleged that some sexual practice involved children or were observed by children and that this behaviour was promoted in the literature. Key evidence from a police psychologist and a noted theologian suggested that The Family environment had not harmed the children.

Mr Greg Levine, Senior Children's Court Magistrate, dismissed the applications in August 1992 saying:

It must be of concern that this form of enquiry may set a precedent for the bringing of protection applications in relation to other sects whose practices and beliefs do not appear to accord with mainstream thinking..... Having considered all the evidence in this case and taking into account my observations of and discussions with the older children I am unable to be satisfied that the children subject of these applications are likely to have their emotional or intellectual development significantly damaged...the applications will be dismissed.

Community Services Victoria appealed to the Supreme Court on a question of law. The Supreme Court upheld the appeal and returned the matter to Mr Levine who reworded his judgement and dismissed the case again in April 1993.

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In NSW, after the May 1992 raids, the Department of Community Services (DOCS) issued 65 protection applications. (No criminal charges were laid.) Five of the children taken were over 16 years and were returned by DOCS after three days in custody. The magistrate, Mr Ian Forsyth of Cobham Children's Court, returned the remaining 65 after six days. The court hearing began in July after affidavit material had been provided by both sides. In its opening the Department claimed that it would prove that "each and every one of the children had been

sexually abused and were likely to continue to be...". The other claim was that the children had been emotionally abused due to strict controls and limited choices in their home based education. In the months that followed the applicant (a manager with DOCS) was the only witness to take the stand for the department as she was cross examined for a record 40 days. On 29 October 1992 a mediation agreement was settled with Sir Laurence Street and confirmed by the Supreme Court. The agreement stated that DOCS would withdraw the protection applications after 12 months if a set of conditions were adhered to. The department agreed that it would not seek any further contact with the families and denied "any and all implications that may have arisen from the statement that all of the children the subject of the proceedings were sexually assaulted or had sexual intercourse." The families agreed to three visits from the Board of Studies and the children would attend three hours of activities a week. Those under 9 would continue to live with their parents.

At the end of 12 months DOCS withdrew the applications. The Children's Court magistrate, however, refused to close the case. The matter was appealed by both parties to the Supreme Court where the judge, Mr David Levine, ordered that the magistrate had both the power and the obligation to permanently stay the proceedings which he did the following day.

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In Victoria, the Supreme Court ruled the return of the children after six days in custody. Interim accommodation orders were laid down which included right of access to Health and Community Services (H&CS) to the properties of the families. Tha Legal Aid Commission representing the children, appealed to the High Court for the separation of the cases so that they could be heard individually or in family groups, instead of hearing all 71 applications concurrently, this would allow a test case to be heard. This appeal was rejected. With the successful mediation in Sydney in November 1992, the families made H&CS an offer of a similar settlement to that of NSW. This was also rejected. The Legal Aid Commission was unable to find adequate representation for the extended hearing. In December 1992 the Children's Court Magistrate, Mr John Myers, ruled that the proceedings should be stayed until adequate representation was provided for both parties. During the next 9 months, police and H&CS documents were being sought by the families under the Freedom of Information Act. One of the revelations of these documents was the participation of an "A Current Affair" reporter in discussions with H&CS officers prior to the raids.

It wasn't until September 1993 that the Legal Aid Commission were in a position to provide adequate representation after the surprise funding assistance given by H&CS. The Department presented a summary of its case known as the "White Book". The hearing was scheduled to resume in January 1994. In the meantime the government had passed an amendment to the Children and Young Person's Act allowing for pre-hearing conferences. This was requested by the families and granted by Mr Myers. The six days of the pre-hearing conference were convened by Mr Kenneth Marks (formerly Supreme Court judge). The conference failed. Counsel for the children sought leave to submit an "abuse of process" application before the highly publicised "opening" by Frank Costigan QC for the H&CS. On the day that the "abuse of process" applica-

tion was to be heard, negotiations which were continuing behind the scenes were sought to be renewed by both parties and developed into a similar agreement to that of NSW. One notable inclusion offered by the families was the provision of visitors to the children, viz. eight respected members of the Melbourne community. This agreement terminates in 15 months when the case will be dropped.

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Controversy continues. The Hon Ted Pickering presented in the NSW Legislative Council evidence which, he claimed, showed that the police had "no evidence [of abuse], circumstantial or otherwise" before the raids. He also added weight to the allegation that the search warrants were unlawfully executed. (See Hansard Nov 1993.) Presently 69 children in NSW have filed civil actions in the Supreme Court against the Government for false imprisonment, psychological harm and nervous shock. In Victoria the Legal Aid Commission is preparing its brief for civil action against the Victorian Government.