

3

Empires of faith

The German acquisition of colonial territories provided new opportunities for its profusion of Protestant mission societies. Even before the German New Guinea Company was properly established at Finschhafen in 1886, pastors from three German Protestant mission societies were already seeking access to the new German territory.¹ Lining up for access to New Guinea were the Rhenisch Mission Society based at Barmen, Pastor Martin Doblies from the Breklum Mission Society and Pastor Johann Flierl from the **Neuendettelsau** Mission Society. George Brown had already established a Methodist mission (1877/78)² in the Bismarck Archipelago, a region dominated by Chinese resident merchants from where the German New Guinea Company was importing Malay workers.³ The Catholic Church sought to checkmate these Protestants with the establishment of the vicariate of Micronesia and Melanesia in 1881, devolved to the French **Missionaries of the Sacred Heart** (MSC). The chess pieces of competitive mission building were already lined up on the draught board of an emerging German empire.

1 Susanne Froehlich (ed.), *Als Pioniermissionar in das ferne Neu Guinea: Johann Flierls Lebenserinnerungen*, 2 vols, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2015, Vol. 2, p. 14.

2 Helen Gardner, 'Assuming judicial control: George Brown's narrative defence of the "New Britain raid"', in Diane Kirkby and Catharine Coleborne (eds), *Law, History, Colonialism: The Reach of Empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, pp. 156–70.

3 Richard Parkinson, *Thirty Years in the South Seas: Land and People, Customs and Traditions in the Bismarck Archipelago and on the German Solomon Islands*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2010.

In Australia, too, the various mission societies were wrestling for spheres of influence in the northward drive of the 1880s. The Catholic Church began to populate its huge diocese of Victoria, so the Spanish Benedictines in Western Australia were now joined in north Queensland by French Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, in the Northern Territory by Austrian Jesuits and in the Kimberley by French Trappists. Gaining control over a vicariate or diocese was a major incentive for the Catholic societies that took on the difficult remote mission task, while Irish Catholicism focused on the more settled region, better able to offer school instruction and parish work in English. The northern extension was framed in the expectation of a 'stepping-stone' policy into the more populous territories to the north of Australia.

The Austrian Jesuits were replaced in 1899 by Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur (MSC), including several German speakers, and the French Trappists were replaced the following year by German Pallottines. This meant that at the beginning of World War I, German speakers strongly dominated the northern mission effort: German Pallottines in the Kimberley, German-speaking MSC in the Northern Territory, and at Cape York German Lutherans on the east coast and Moravians on the west coast. While elsewhere in the world the Great War spelled the end of German missions, in Australia the German Pallottines experienced their greatest period of growth after World War I, a phenomenon worth exploring. This chapter explores the German-speaking mission presence in terms of competing territories of faith grafted onto geopolitical opportunities.

The stepping-stones policy

German Lutherans at Cape Bedford (Hopevale, 1886)

With news of the German acquisition of New Guinea, the Neuendettelsau pastor Johann **Flierl** rushed from **Cooper's Creek** in South Australia to Cooktown in north Queensland to try and catch the next available boat to New Guinea. But the Neuguinea Compagnie (German New Guinea Company) sought initially to keep missionaries at arm's length, and discouraged and delayed Flierl. The representatives of the Queensland Government in the far north were more welcoming. The Queensland Government was dealing with an increasing intermingling of Aboriginal and Asian populations and with a rapidly deteriorating international reputation. The latter was a result of the seemingly uncontrollable

importation of indentured and quasi-slave labour from the South Pacific, the Malay archipelago and China for sugar plantations, tin and gold mines and the trepang and pearl-shell fishery. While Flierl was stranded at Cooktown, unable to get a transfer to Finschhafen, the Queensland Government offered him the use of land already reserved near Cooktown, a sailing boat and provisions for missionaries and residents. Flierl must have been aware that the Queensland Government was also in negotiation with the Victorian Moravians over a north Queensland mission. Cooktown seemed poised to become the permanent transfer post to German New Guinea, so Flierl decided to take up the offer of a mission at **Cape Bedford**, six hours walk from Cooktown. The Cape Bedford mission could become a stepping stone to New Guinea and a respite for the future missionaries from tropical New Guinea.⁴

The same 'stepping-stone' policy also drove mission building at the top of the Northern Territory and in the Torres Strait region in the 1880s. As the settler empire was pushing northwards, missions followed in its wake.

French MSC at Thursday Island (1884)

While Flierl and the South Australian Lutherans were focused on the new German territory, the French MSC began to populate their Melanesia vicariate with a focus on British-dominated regions, like the Torres Strait. Thursday Island was becoming the gateway for the British protectorate of Papua, and in 1884 the MSC also shifted its staging point from Sydney to Thursday Island for the conduct of its operations in Papua. Thursday Island served as the point of departure for all Catholic missionaries to British New Guinea and New Britain for nearly a decade (1884–89).⁵

The MSC purchased land at the first land sales on Thursday Island and established the township's first welfare institutions – a school, a hospital, an orphanage and, of course, a convent and a church. These Catholic institutions became an important presence in the polyethnic Thursday Island community, where the Catholic congregation consisted mostly of Filipinos participating in the pearling industry. An MSC priest was stationed at Thursday Island to train catechists for the Papuan mission.⁶

4 Froehlich, *Pioniermissionar*, Vol. 2, p. 371.

5 Queensland Heritage Register, 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church'.

6 The musically talented Fr Joseph Guis was born at Auriol in 1869, and died in 1913.

The Catholic base on Thursday Island now competed with the London Missionary Society (LMS), which had begun in 1871 to establish stepping stones across the Torres Strait and New Guinea. The LMS had made a promising start with the help of South Pacific evangelists at Mer and Erub (Murray and Darnley Islands in the eastern Torres Strait) in 1871, but was unable to effectively supervise these missions and they became part of the Anglican diocese of Carpentaria erected in 1900.

The MSC mirrored the stepping-stone strategy of the LMS that deployed ethnic intermediaries. In 1885, the Yule Island Catholic mission commenced with the assistance of 14 Filipino catechists who married into the local population with the result that the entire population of Yule Island was baptised in 1891. Yule Island, a geographic outrigger of the Torres Strait (now belonging to Papua New Guinea), became a model of success and the centre of MSC operations in Papua and New Guinea – a veritable Catholic fortress in what the Protestants of the LMS considered to be their ecclesiastical territory.⁷

Lutherans in Australia, too, commented with concern on the Catholic incursions into Protestant territory. They firmed up a presence in the Red Centre with a mission at Finke River (Hermannsburg) ‘lest it should fall into the hands of Catholics’, and Pastor Reuther warned ‘Shouldn’t we be cross about the Catholics, when, as in New Guinea they are moving into others’ land where they should not be’.⁸

Austrian Jesuits at Rapid Creek (1882) and the Daly (1886)

The Jesuit extension to the Northern Territory of South Australia was driven by much the same strategic thinking. The Austrian Jesuits at Sevenhill in South Australia’s Clare Valley had wanted to join the northward drive of missions since 1866, when Fr John Hinteroecker arrived at Sevenhill feeling ‘destined for work among the Aborigines’,

7 James Griffin, ‘**Verjus**, Henri Stanislas (1860–1892)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1976; and **Fabila Family** at Yule Island.

8 Immanuel Synod, Mission Committee Minutes, 14 August 1894, Lutheran Archives Australia (LAA); and Reuther to Kaibel, 26 November 1901, Reuther Boxes, Correspondence Reuther and Kaibel 1900, LAA.

quite against the intentions of his superiors.⁹ That year four new missions were formed in Australia, by Lutherans at **Kilallpaninna**, by Moravians at **Kopperamanna**, by the Church Mission Society (CMS) at **Lake Condah** and by a local citizen initiative at **Point Pearce** (aka Point Pierce) on Yorke Peninsula. The first Aboriginal baptisms at Corranderk, **Ramahyuck** and Sevenhill in 1865 and 1866 lent renewed impetus to the mission idea. The Sevenhill superior Fr Anton **Strele** thought that from a base in Darwin the Jesuits could eventually also care for ‘the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands who are much more numerous’ (presumably a reference to Timor) and that ‘we can extend into British New Guinea from there’.¹⁰ Timor was a trade centre and also a point of convergence of different religions on the trepang route to the north Australian coast. Like Yule Island between Australia and New Guinea, it had potential as a fortress of Catholicism. The Jesuit General Superior in Vienna, however, did not want to interfere in any of the ‘islands subject to the King of Holland or the King of Portugal’.¹¹

The Scottish Fr Duncan **McNab**, a secular priest (i.e. not a member of a Catholic order) with a strong conviction for the need of Catholic mission extension to the far north, softened the ground for a change of heart in the Vatican by explaining the rapid economic development of the Australian north on his visit to Rome in 1878. After negotiations between the South Australian and the Indian governments over the importation of Indian coolies failed in 1881, the South Australian Government was ready to make a financial contribution to a mission that would help train a much-needed labour force. Bishop Dom Rosendo **Salvado** OSB from New Norcia warned Strele that ‘all they [the government] really wanted was that the Aborigines should be kept quiet’.¹² Still, in the face of the rapid development of Port Darwin, the Sevenhill Jesuits sought to anticipate ‘the ministers of error’ (Protestants) and wanted to move quickly lest ‘we may be forestalled by Protestant missionaries’.¹³ These arguments carried

9 G.J. O’Kelly, ‘The Jesuit Mission Stations in the Northern Territory 1882–1899’, Honours thesis, Monash University, 1967, p. 2.

10 Anthony Strele, ‘History of the Mission to the Aborigines in the part of Australia which is called Northern Territory’, translated from Latin by F.J. Dennett SJ, ca 1895, Archives of the Society of Jesus, Hawthorn. Presumably Strele as apostolic administrator wrote this history in response to a request, recorded in the Daly River mission diary on 28 October 1895, by the Cardinal in Sydney for a history of the Jesuit mission to be submitted to the Plenary Synod. It is possible that the ‘New Guinea’ consideration was retrospective, because at the time of writing the Lutherans had already extended into German New Guinea from north Queensland.

11 Strele, ‘History of the Mission’.

12 Rosendo to Strele, 21 May 1881, in Strele, ‘History of the Mission’.

13 Strele, ‘History of the Mission’.

the day. The Darwin bishopric was carved out of the vast and dormant ecclesiastic territory of Benedictine Bishop Salvado for the Austrian Jesuits, who commenced a mission at **Rapid Creek** just outside Port Darwin in 1882 and on the **Daly River** further south in 1886.

On the Daly River, the Jesuits struggled with hunger, hardship, tropical conditions and temptation. Three mission girls were pregnant in 1895 before the Fathers and Brothers were locked up at night behind a clausura fence (see Chapter 6 and **Jesuits in the Northern Territory**). They became so focused on the mission work on the Daly, a region in turmoil after the Coppermine killings, that they neglected the Catholic communities in the townships. As a result, the bishopric was lost to the Jesuits and their superiors lost interest in the northern mission and allowed two successive terrifying floods to wash the Jesuits from the north in 1899.

The MSC in Darwin (1906) and Bathurst Island (1911)

Seven years after the withdrawal of the Austrian Jesuits, the MSC stepped into the Catholic void left in the Northern Territory. The redoubtable Alsatian Fr F.X. **Gsell** arrived in Darwin in 1906 and he, too, considered an island mission as a strategic stepping stone into further territories and hence established **Bathurst Island** mission on the Tiwi Islands in 1911. In this choice of an island location he took his cue from the comments of his Jesuit predecessors, and he also continued their policy of paying compensation to the parents or promised spouses for the marriage rights of their mission girls, for which he became known as ‘The Bishop with the 150 wives’.

Carving up the north

The northward thrust of Catholic missions with stepping stones at Thursday Island and Bathurst Island actually represented a bulwark against both Protestant and Muslim influence. In the seventh century, as Continental Europe was peacefully conquered by the small fortified dynamos of agriculture, manufacture, meditation and learning called monasteries, Islam was carried by trade into the East to take root across the Malay peninsula and the Philippines. Centuries of contact with Malay seafarers had exposed the Indigenous people of the far-north Australian coast to Muslim influences. The year that Gsell arrived in Darwin was also the year when the Macassan maritime trade to Australia was prohibited.

With the arrival of missionaries shortly afterwards, much of the cultural repertoire emerging from this long Muslim contact was ‘turned in’¹⁴ and only resurfaced decades later under the probing of anthropologists. Perhaps unbeknown to the Christian missionaries, and certainly unacknowledged, a familiarisation with monotheistic beliefs had already been accomplished by this other Abrahamic religion.

The Christians were perhaps too busy competing with each other to pay attention to Muslim influences. Not only did Catholics try to defend the territory of the far north against Protestant influences, they also vied with each other for spheres of influence. When Bishop Salvado was asked for permission for a Jesuit mission in his northern diocese in 1882, he first ascertained that the Jesuits meant Darwin, rather than a location closer to New Norcia. Duncan McNab had recommended Darwin, which was also at a good distance from his own mission attempt in Queensland (at Durundur from 1877). The northward drive of missions in the 1880s into far-north Queensland and the top of the Northern Territory was mirrored a few years later in Western Australia as the Kimberley became subject to a land rush (1882–88) and a revival of the pearling industry (1885/86) brought a surge of Asian workers into the north-west coast.

Carving further into the vast ecclesiastical territory administered by the Benedictines, Fr Duncan McNab gave up his mission in Queensland and instead attempted a mission at Goodenough Bay (**Disaster Bay**) on Dampier Peninsula (1884–86). In January 1887, Matthew Gibney was consecrated as Bishop of Perth and also lent active support to a northern mission in West Australia. Concern over racial mixing was expressed in the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act,¹⁵ which extended the reach of Aboriginal protection legislation over mixed descendants. A few years later, Western Australia’s *Constitution Act 1889*¹⁶ required that a minimum of £5,000 be spent each year on Aboriginal people. Here was the promise of some solid government support for a north-western mission for Aboriginal people

14 Ian S. McIntosh, ‘Missing the revolution! Negotiating disclosure on the pre-Macassans (Bayini) in north-east Arnhem Land’, in Martin Thomas and Margo Neale (eds), *Exploring the Legacy of the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2011, Chapter 17.

15 *An Act to provide for the better protection and management of the Aboriginal Natives of Western Australia, and to amend the Law relating to certain Contracts with such Aboriginal Natives 1886* (WA).

16 *An Act to confer a Constitution on Western Australia, and to grant a Civil list to Her Majesty 1889* (WA).

of full and mixed descent. In 1889, Propaganda Fide directed the leader of a French Trappist mission that was failing in New Caledonia to Western Australia, where New Norcia was the only mission operating at the time.

The French Trappists in the Kimberley (1892–1900)

The detailed history of the Trappist mission at Beagle Bay has only recently become accessible through Sister Brigida Nailon's translation and publication of much of the correspondence.¹⁷ Bishop Gibney and two Trappists from Sept Fons spent four months scouting Dampier Peninsula for a suitable site, proceeding from Derby to the mission site abandoned by McNab four years earlier, and to Hadley and Hunter's Lombadina station. Young men of the Dampier Peninsula were already working for settlers and maritime entrepreneurs and spoke English, and a tussle emerged between the people of the east and west coast of the peninsula over who should have claim to the mission party and their endless supplies of goods (see Chapter 5 or **Beagle Bay**).

The idea was to build up a monastery with a minimum of 12 monks with a semblance of a monastic lifestyle. The monks offered food for work and were able to attract sufficient interest to build up vegetable and fruit gardens, substantial cattle and sheep flocks and a monastery with three long buildings and several outhouses and workshops. It appears that their annual budget was met to 20 per cent by state government funding, to 10 per cent from donations and the remainder came from the Propaganda Fide and the Trappist Order. The Trappists laid the foundation for language work in the Kimberley with a grammar, a vocabulary and a catechism. Alphonse Tachon recorded the Nyul-Nyul language,¹⁸ while the Spanish Fr Nicholas **Emo** compiled a Yawuru–Spanish dictionary.

Despite all this success, the mission fell apart in 1900. Their first superior already wanted to resign in 1895, but stayed until 1897 and was succeeded by the elderly and reluctant Fr Tachon. Two priests returned to Sept Fons in mid-1899 in protest over the situation at Beagle Bay, and Emo, who became interim caretaker, also commented on the 'confused' and 'uncomfortable' condition at the mission. In particular, the relationship between the two monks stationed at the Disaster Bay outstation, Fr Jean-

17 Brigida Nailon, *Emo and San Salvador*, 2 vols, Brigidine Sisters, Echuca, 2005.

18 Fr Marie Bernard to Limburg, 10 December 1900, Australien 1900–1907 B7 d.I. (3), Zentralarchiv der Pallottinerprovinz (ZAPP).

Marie Janny and Br Narcisse Janne, was considered 'special' and 'too natural a mutual attachment'.¹⁹ These descriptions may refer to an actual family relationship between the two, since Jean-Marie Janny was the younger brother of Dom Ambrose Janny, the mission's first superior, and of the prior at Sept Fons, Felix Janny. It is possible that Narcisse Janne was also a brother in the same family. Lending weight to family relations was discouraged among the brethren of a Catholic order, and the spelling of names, read from handwritten sources and across several languages, is often unreliable. On the other hand, it is equally possible that a sexual relationship formed between the two. The resignation of Superior Ambrose Janny at Beagle Bay and of Prior Felix Janny at Sept Fons may express shame about their younger brother Jean-Marie. Emo felt that Jean-Marie was 'accustomed to be free and independent in his nest' at Disaster Bay.²⁰ Some years later, Jean-Marie Janny moved the Disaster Bay colony to Lombadina and became the last of the Trappists to leave the Kimberley in 1905.

But more than that was amiss on the Beagle Bay Trappist mission. One of the monks took to chasing adults and children with a gun charged with flour or gunpowder, a habit that Emo feared would cause an uproar if it leaked to the press. 'He compromised the good name of the mission' and 'we can say nobody liked him and all complained of him'.²¹ Other monks gave away the mission stores and were altogether too friendly with Aboriginal people. Emo as caretaker dismissed the children, stopped the women going into the rooms and locked away the wine and other provisions. With regard to two other monks, Emo wrote, in an 80-page letter defending his actions, that they were 'in imminent danger of losing their vocation' and that 'some scandal may compromise the honour of our holy Order' if they were not sent away immediately. Any more detail 'would be indiscreet to put to paper',²² but one of these two:

was always surrounded by young girls and little girls who used to go into his room for tobacco (which is very dear here) because they brought him little lizards for his birds, and he was always going with them in a way that

19 Emo to General, 4 July 1899: 'un attachement trop naturel de ces deux pères mutuellement (et ce n'est pas mon seul qui croit le remarquer)'. Nailon, *Emo and San Salvador*, Vol. 1, p. 55. Nailon gives the surname of Br Narcisee as Janne, and later Narcissus Jen, apparently a Latin rendition of the name.

20 Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, p. 91.

21 Emo to Sept Fons, September 1900 and 2 March 1900, in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, pp. 142, 91.

22 Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, p. 212.

made me anxious. (Sometimes I would see him coming alone in the dark from the garden.) I was afraid in case he was assailed also by some great temptation.²³

The monks at Beagle Bay responded with anger to Emo's intervention. Jean-Marie 'would rather die than return to Sept Fons', and one of the Australians who had joined the mission as a Brother, and erupted in venereal disease, went into rage at the prospect of being sent to the Trappist mission in Palestine and threatened to go public about the affairs at Beagle Bay.²⁴ Just weeks before, eight staff were sent to Palestine in April 1900, in March the mission residence and school burned down. Emo claimed that the fire was due to the 'imprudence of a woman who was smoking a pipe too close to the dry bark',²⁵ but John Harris thinks the Trappists burned down the buildings in anger²⁶ as Emo was winding down the mission without a clear directive from Sept Fons.

Bishop Gibney was greatly embarrassed by the sudden departure of the Trappist monks. While Emo was sending them away without informing the bishop, Gibney and Fr Tachon in Perth were trying to raise funds for an extension of the mission and to secure the title over the 10,000 acres of mission land. They also commissioned three boats for the mission. According to letters written afterwards in an attempt to explain the tumultuous events at Beagle Bay, the abbot at Sept Fons had instructed Emo in Broome in December 1899 to prepare for a partial withdrawal to turn the Beagle Bay monastery into a grange (without an abbot), but to keep this secret so as not to disadvantage any sale of property. Emo began selling cattle and other property to raise money for the fares of the monks to be sent to El Athroun in Palestine and to Sept Fons in France. When Bishop Gibney finally heard of these repatriation plans, he placed an injunction on the sale of mission cattle and initiated negotiations with the German Pallottines to replace the Trappists.²⁷ The prior at Sept Fons on his part felt presented with a *fait accompli*. The whole episode was a colossal debacle.

23 Emo to Sept Fons, 13 June 1900, in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, p. 86ff.

24 Emo to Sept Fons, 6 January 1901, in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1.

25 Emo to Sept Fons, 2 March 1900 (received 19 April), in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, p. 86.

26 John Harris, *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope*, Albatross Books, Sutherland, NSW, 1990, p. 444.

27 Emo to Sept Fons, 25 November 1900, 36pp. continued in January 1901 in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 1, pp. 148–81.

The handover of Beagle Bay (1900)

Most of the Trappists had left in April 1900, and in August 1900 Bishop Gibney arrived in the north with a rescue party, to get the mission properties ready for inspection by a government surveyor. Gibney described Beagle Bay as being in disrepair and 'abandoned', although it was still inhabited by 147 Christians.²⁸ Emo in Broome welcomed the bishop's party, including travel writer Daisy Bates, and accompanied them to Beagle Bay and Disaster Bay for a three-month rebuilding program (see Beagle Bay – **The Handover to the Pallottines**). Gibney wanted to secure freehold for 10,000 acres of the 100,000-acre lease to prepare for a handover to the Pallottines.

By this time, the tide of policy had turned against the mission. In 1897, the Western Australian Government over-rode the constitutional requirements of the 1889 Constitution Act by forming its own Aboriginal Department under a Chief Protector of Aborigines, Harry **Prinsep**, and public funding for Beagle Bay mission ceased. The Trappists had spent £11,000 in 10 years and estimated their improvements to be worth £10,000, which was double what was required under the lease conditions.²⁹ The government surveyor estimated the value of improvements on the lease at £6,000 (still more than was required under the lease conditions). With the shortfall in funding since 1897, the Trappists had run up a debit of £1,471 and wanted to recoup some of their own investment of £3,250. Their asking price was £2,640 for Beagle Bay, and a total of £3,740 including the Broome properties. However, there was a balance of opinion, shared by Gibney, Emo and the government officials, that the value to the mission and its herds had mostly been added by Aboriginal work and was not for the Trappists to sell. The Royal Commissioner of Inquiry into the Condition of Natives in Western Australia, Dr Walter Roth, recapitulated in 1905 that mission land was intended for Aborigines, not for mission societies:

Your Commissioner recommends that the Lands Department, when issuing the title to the lands in question, will protect the interests of the aborigines, and take care that the property held in trust for them [at Beagle Bay] is not handed over to the Mission.³⁰

28 'Trappist mission at Beagle Bay', *Western Mail* (Perth), 15 December 1900, p. 71, National Library of Australia, Trove.

29 'Trappist mission at Beagle Bay', *Western Mail* (Perth), p. 71.

30 Western Australia, Royal Commission, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Condition of the Natives*, Government Printer, Perth, 1905, p. 30.

It was a risky business for the churches to invest in buildings and improvements on insecure land. State governments were willing to defend the ‘interests of the Aborigines’ against the churches, but not to fund the actual costs of missions, and neither did they hand over secure title to land, either to the missions or to their Aboriginal residents.

The German Pallottines in the Kimberley (1901)

The German Pallottines welcomed the extension to Australia that was offered to them in consequence of the Trappist withdrawal. The German province of the Pallottines had been erected in 1892 to take advantage of the German acquisition of Cameroon, and most of their effort had been directed there. One of the Cameroon pioneers, the difficult Fr Georg **Walter**, was sent to the Kimberley in 1901 together with two Brothers from Limburg and an English-speaking Pallottine priest, Fr Patrick White. The purchase price negotiated with the Trappists meant that the Pallottine mission at Beagle Bay commenced with a massive debt and became focused on production and income earning. The Pallottines were spending around £900 per year and sent mostly Brothers who could generate income to make up the apostolic twelve demanded by Bishop Gibney, and initially welcomed Jean-Marie Janny at Disaster Bay and Emo in Broome among their numbers.

Relations soon soured between Walter and Emo, who was protective of ‘his’ properties and influence in Broome. Worse, the 1904 Roth royal commission was much more favourable about Emo’s efforts in Broome than about the Pallottine mission at Beagle Bay. In 1906, Emo began working with Bishop Kelly of Geraldton and with the Benedictines, who wanted to extend their efforts northwards, trespassing on the Pallottine territory. The need for a Catholic extension into the east Kimberley was becoming urgent because both Anglicans and Presbyterians were proposing to move into the area.³¹ Emo purchased the lugger *San Salvador* with funding from Bishop Kelly and a Broome Filipino entrepreneur, and masterminded the scouting for a new Benedictine mission site. He visited the Cygnet Bay pearling station and Syd Hadley at Sunday Island. Hadley

31 Diary of Abbot Fulgentius Torres, 14 June 1906, in Nailon, *Emo*, Vol. 2, p. 25ff. The Anglican Forrest River mission near Wyndham commenced in 1913, and a Presbyterian mission started at Kunmunya in 1912. The diary in 1906 refers only to the Anglican aspirations.

had previously been involved in a mission effort at Forrest River (in which the Anglicans were becoming interested) and his **Sunday Island** station became an officially recognised 'private mission'.

By now Emo was a local protector of Aborigines and legally able to move Aboriginal people. He evacuated 'The Point' in Broome to Cygnet Bay in 1906 to gain some elbow room from Walter in Broome and to await the outcome of the Benedictine deliberations. He then joined the Benedictine Drysdale River mission, which became a fiasco. Emo recorded the Aboriginal deaths resulting from a three-month attempt to choose a mission site, burned his bridges with the Benedictines over the control of the *San Salvador* and towards the end of his life felt implicated in the Aboriginal attack on that mission in 1914. (For more on the debacle at that mission, see Emo – **Drysdale River Benedictine Mission.**)

A separate Geraldton diocese had been erected under Bishop William Bernard Kelly, in 1898, but the Pallottines were seeking an independent Kimberley vicariate. Once the Beagle Bay mission was fortified with Irish nuns and an increased government subsidy for the children removed by police to the mission, Superior Fr Georg Walter left for Europe in 1908 in order to gain the Kimberley vicariate and, failing this, never returned. Walter had been so obstinate that he had come to blows with one of the Brothers (see Chapter 6) and his departure filled the Brothers at Beagle Bay with relief and facilitated a rapprochement between Emo and the Pallottines. In 1910, with a new chief protector and trouble with Hadley and Hunter at Lombadina, the Pallottines were offered **Lombadina** as a second mission station, and invited Emo to take charge.

MSC aspirations

By this time, another German speaker had arrived in the north, the Alsatian Francis Xavier Gsell. Within months of arrival in Darwin in 1906, Gsell was looking for ways of extending his sphere of influence into the 'Pallottine territory' of the Kimberley. The Austrian Jesuits before him had lost the Darwin diocese because they were too focused on Aboriginal mission, and Gsell thought that the same could be said about the German Pallottines, who were just at that time seeking to gain control of the Kimberley vicariate:

The Pallottines of Beagle Bay, who are better off than us, cry mercy because they get less than £2,000 a year ... The Pallottine Fathers have a mission at Beagle Bay, but according to the parishioners of Broome south of Beagle Bay they only care for the blacks, and at that only the blacks who are in the neighbourhood of their monastery. In the regions close to the Northern Territory [around Wyndham] there are hundreds of Catholics, of whom several are very good people and very wealthy. One of those good people came here [to Darwin] and asked me if I couldn't take that province under my wing and send them a preacher occasionally. What do you think, my Reverend Father, if one were to ask Rome to give me the Kimberley, Monsignor Kelly [of the Geraldton diocese] wouldn't be upset and for me it could have several advantages among others that of furnishing me with a bit more work and a few more resources. There is a steamer going there [Wyndham] every six weeks and one could visit them from here two or three times a year, moreover the telegraph covers the whole country and one can correspond rapidly and at a low price. In practice there is a neat solution, one asks for a reunion of the Kimberley with my diocese, or one simply asks Mgr. Kelly for a visiting preacher.³²

Geraldton was three times further from Wyndham than Darwin, so Gsell did not seriously expect Bishop Kelly to send a visiting preacher from Geraldton to Wyndham. However, Kelly was already making plans for a Benedictine reach into the east Kimberley to forestall Anglican aspirations. Emo's search on the *San Salvador* for a Benedictine mission site began in May 1906, so Gsell's proposal in November 1906 to 'give me the Kimberley' was a timely intervention and quite possibly the reason why Walter's bid for a Pallottine Kimberley vicariate failed.

Gsell resumed his lobbying in March 1908 for an extension of his sphere of influence beyond Darwin. He had heard that the Commonwealth Government was preparing to take over the Northern Territory, and would surely make special provisions for Aboriginal people. 'One has to get ready for this possibility, because it will be a unique occasion which will never again offer itself.' At the same time, Gsell rejected out of hand the proposal of the MSC superior in Kensington to send Sisters to Darwin on the condition that any surplus revenue generated by the Sisters would

32 Gsell in Darwin to the General at Issoudun, 12 November 1906 (in French), Correspondance de Mgr. F.-X. Gsell à son cousin éloigné Albin Gsell à Benfeld (1948–1954) conservée chez M et Mme Jean Baumann, private collection.

be directed to Kensington. ‘This would not accord with religious life, it would be a farce’. Gsell would rather have no Sisters at all than share power with a mother superior in Sydney.³³

With a Benedictine mission at Drysdale River, the east Kimberley was now out of reach for the MSC and for the Pallottines. The Benedictine Abbott Torres of New Norcia became Bishop of the Kimberley vicariate in May 1910. The Pallottine superior Georg Walter refused to return to Australia and established himself instead in semi-retirement at his family property of Vogelsburg, a castle and vineyard estate overlooking Würzburg, where he wrote a general history of Australia from the viewpoint of Catholic mission.³⁴ Gsell turned his attention northward, to the Tiwi Islands, paying heed to the suggestion of his Jesuit predecessors.³⁵ There he met with another source of resistance – commercial interests. Gsell initially targeted Melville Island and contacted Joe Cooper, manager of the buffalo camp on that island. The unpublished draft of his autobiography is more candid than the published book:

To make sure, I wrote to the man [Joe Cooper], explaining to him my ideas. He could not legally prevent the establishment of the mission station, but he made no bones about his opinion. There is no suitable place on the island he said, for such a station, and besides, he would rather be without it. That made it clear, and to avoid any trouble, I decided to look somewhere else.³⁶

The South Australian Government was also uncooperative and released Bathurst Island for selection as agricultural blocks. Gsell felt ‘blackballed by junior officials’ and it took some strong-arming from the federal government to reverse this decision and reserve some mission land for Gsell.³⁷ Gsell finally became Bishop of Darwin in 1938, the second German-speaking bishop in the north after Otto Raible in 1935, despite the anti-German sentiments arising from World War I.

33 Gsell in Darwin to the General at Issoudun, 9 March 1908, Chevalier Resource Centre, Kensington (MSC archives).

34 Georg Walter, *Australien: Land, Leute, Mission*, Limburg, 1928.

35 Paddy J. Dalton, ‘History of the Jesuits in South Australia 1848–1948’, unpublished MS, 1948, p. 52, Archives of the Society of Jesus, Hawthorn.

36 Cited from Gsell’s book manuscript by Anthony Caruana, ‘Reflections on Hundred Years of MSC Mission Work in the Northern Territory 1904–2004’, unpublished MS, 2004, p. 14, MSC archives.

37 F.X. Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives: Fifty Years as a Missionary*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1956: 42–43.

The decline and rise of the German mission empire

During World War I, anti-German sentiment became so virulent that over 100 townships and scores of families anglicised their names. Many Germans, including German pastors, were interned. On a visit to Australia, the founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Fr Hubert Linckens, was denounced for his ‘Germanic way of acting’. In the lead-up to the war, about half of all Australian missions had German speakers spread over 12 mission stations, and these were now faced with the need for major reorganisation.³⁸ The Moravian missions were devolved to English-speaking Presbyterian staff, while Lutherans began to post locally trained, Australian-born staff. The few remaining active German missionaries were not interned but they were suspected of ‘instilling German sentiment’ and the mission superiors came under close surveillance. **Strehlow’s** management of Hermannsburg came under repeated investigation, but specially targeted were **Bischofs** at Beagle Bay, **Hey** at Mapoon and **Schwarz** at Cape Bedford, all three naturalised British subjects. Schwarz was the only German-born Protestant missionary who held out until World War II.

German-speaking missionaries during World War I

The Herrnhut Moravians had gained an excellent reputation with missions at **Lake Boga** (1850–56), **Ebenezer** (1859–1904), Ramahyuck (1863–1908) and Lake Condah (1867–1913), aided by their collaboration with the Presbyterian Church and the prominent position of Friedrich **Hagenauer** as chief protector.³⁹ They withdrew from their last Victorian mission in 1913 with the retirement of 73-year-old Heinrich and Marie **Stähle**, whose sons died in Australian military service along with 18 young men from the Lake Condah mission.

The Moravians still had four missions in north Queensland, which they devolved to Presbyterian supervision – **Mapoon** (1891–1919), **Weipa**, (1898–1919), **Aurukun** (1904–13) and Mornington Island (1914–18). Mornington Island and Weipa already had Anglo-Saxon staff. Arthur and Elisabeth Richter from Aurukun were on furlough in 1913 and did not

38 In this instance, the propitious number 12 derives from counting in Kramer’s itinerant mission and the Kopperamanna outstation.

39 Hagenauer became Chief Inspector for the Board of Protection in 1889.

return from Germany. The last German-speaking Moravian left in the north was Rev. Nicholas **Hey** at Mapoon. He was naturalised and married to an Irish woman, but suffered house searches and harassment. He was forced to retire in 1919 after 28 years of mission service. Embittered by the anti-German sentiments festering during the war, Hey still feared in 1920 that his mail was being intercepted:

The mail seems to work again but the effects of this terrible war will be felt for years to come. The time has not yet come where I can relate my experiences of the last four years in letters. This is not because of a fear to honour the truth, but because I do not wish to do anything which could damage the purpose of the mission. I have always tried to take as much as possible a neutral position, mindful towards the positive. In that spirit I have upheld and honoured my oath of loyalty as an Australian citizen because only that permitted me to put the lie to those who maintained that a German could not be trusted and believed ...

Most German pastors were arrested and interned, many have already been extradited. They will not tolerate German missionaries in the future. I regret not being able to stay in the tropics, but the Presbyterians should continue the mission. They will learn a lot from it. At the moment Mapoon is the only NQ mission without debts.⁴⁰

On the east coast of Cape York Peninsula, Pastor G.H. Schwarz from Neuendettelsau also remained doggedly at his post at Cape Bedford (Hopevale). He also suffered from the anti-German sentiments considered patriotic in wartime Australia. In 1916, he was accused by a neighbour of being an 'educated Hun' and an 'enemy subject' who had an 'intense hatred of the British and everything British', and that he was teaching the Cape Bedford people 'German sentiment and German language'. Schwarz, too, was naturalised and his Australian wife conducted the mission school in English. He had already spent almost 30 years as a missionary, and he stayed on until forced to retire with his internment in 1942, at age 74.

Neuendettelsau financial support for Cape Bedford ended with World War I, and all organisational responsibilities were devolved to second-generation German immigrants. Brisbane Lutherans set up a mission board for north Queensland and New Guinea and obtained some funding from the Iowa Synod. First-generation German speakers rapidly lost their predominance in the Queensland mission effort.

40 Hey to Herrnhut, 19 January 1920, Missionsdirektion, Personalakten, Nicolaus Hey, MD825, Archiv der Brüderunität (Herrnhut Archives).

The South Australian mission history was almost entirely German until World War I when three of the five mission stations in that state were Lutheran. **Killalpannina** (Bethesda mission) was officially closed in 1914 and became a privately owned cattle station managed by former missionaries. The Vogelsang family left the Kopperamanna outstation in 1916 (see **Heinrich Vogelsang**, **Theodor Vogelsang**, **Hermann Vogelsang**). Koonibba became staffed with Australian-born personnel (except Gottlieb Blaccs from 1916–18 and T.F. Strelan from Berlin, 1935–47).

All Lutheran schools in South Australia were closed and the government subsidy was withdrawn in 1917 (until 1923).⁴¹ In the Northern Territory, Oskar **Liebler** and his wife returned to Germany in November 1913, but Carl and Frieda Strehlow stayed on at **Hermannsburg** until 1922. There was strong public agitation to close the 'Teuton mission'. Since Germans had become so unpopular during World War I, an Hermannsburg Missionsgesellschaft (HMG) candidate of Polish nationality succeeded Strehlow. Friedrich Wilhelm Albrecht and his wife Minna (née Gevers) arrived in 1926 and stayed for 35 years. At Alice Springs, Ernst Eugen **Kramer** and his wife conducted an itinerant mission until the mid-1930s, and at **Bathurst Island** Fr F.X. Gsell was assisted by Br Lambert Fehrmann while Fr François-Régis Courbon responded to the French military call-up and was replaced with the Australian-born William M. Henschke in 1915.

In Western Australia, the mission effort had by now intensified with the addition of the Drysdale River mission in 1908, a secular government reserve at Moola Bulla in 1911, the Presbyterian Kunmunya mission in 1912 and the Anglican Forrest River mission in 1913. The 'private mission' at **Sunday Island** was taken over by the Australian Inland Mission around this time. At Lombadina and Beagle Bay the German Pallottines came under close surveillance during World War I, and their superior, Fr Joseph Bischofs, was accused of espionage. Bischofs had answered one of the many questionnaires that missionaries often dealt with, and which purported to be from a German migration agency but contained some dubious and apparently unnecessary questions. The government censor intercepted the mission mail, interrogated Bischofs and cleared him of the charge, but nevertheless Bischofs was not permitted to resume his

41 M. Lohe, 'A mission is established at Hermannsburg', in Everard Leske, *Hermannsburg: A Vision and a Mission*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1977, p. 31.

position in the sensitive north. To accommodate the concerns of military intelligence, a Redemptorist was placed in charge for the duration of the war, though local intelligence officers did not trust the Irish Fr John Creagh either and regarded him as a ‘disloyalist’.⁴² (Read more about the military surveillance at **Beagle Bay**.) The remaining German Pallottines were all mature and experienced mission men, and used their home-arrest on the mission to galvanise the whole mission community into building a lasting memorial of their efforts, the now heritage-listed Beagle Bay church with its famous shell-decked altar.

Interwar reorganisation

The loss of the German overseas territories during World War I struck a massive blow to German missions that had taken advantage of the German empire. The Pallottines had lost the Cameroon missions during the war, so the Kimberley missions became all the more important. Rome was willing to sacrifice the Pallottine aspirations for the Kimberley, but the Pallottines in Limburg and in the Kimberley were determined to hold on. After the war, Italian Salesians under Bishop Coppo were posted to take over the Kimberley vicariate. Collaboration with the Pallottine staff on the ground proved difficult. The ageing Fr Wilhelm **Droste**, by now the only remaining Pallottine priest among the Brothers, commented about the Salesians:

It is simpler to settle in a well-made nest than to found a new station, which is extremely difficult and costly. It is true that the members of the [Salesian] Society were treated [by us] as changelings when one considered all the efforts from the suffering, sacrifice and sweat, which our Brothers have contributed and has turned their hair white. The thought of the material loss to the [Pallottine] Society was devastating.⁴³

There was no love lost between the Pallottine Droste and the Salesian Coppo. Coppo objected to Fr Droste’s appointment as vicar apostolic. However, Coppo achieved the first two visas for German Pallottines after the war, in 1924. The Salesians ‘arrived with a flourish’ of reorganisation⁴⁴ and, when they withdrew after less than two years, Droste wrote him

42 File note 24 June 1918, in Father Bischoff – German Mission Station at Beagle Bay, A367, 1917/50, Barcode 61882, National Archives of Australia (NAA).

43 **Droste diary**, 4 November 1923, in Droste, Wilhelm (Pater), P1 Nr 17, ZAPP; trans. RG.

44 Nailon, *Emo and San Salvador*.

a wonderful but possibly insincere letter of appreciation. Once the restrictions on immigration of Germans were lifted, more Pallottine staff arrived in Australia.

After the withdrawal of the Salesians, the Pallottines could celebrate their Silver Anniversary of the Beagle Bay mission in December 1925, and could finally claim the Kimberley vicariate with the arrival of Fr Otto **Raible** as vicar apostolic in 1928. Raible was naturalised in 1934 and consecrated as Bishop of the Kimberley in 1935. He and a new chief protector, Auber Octavius **Neville**, became embattled like two bulls locking horns. Neville obstructed wherever possible, while Raible extended his sphere of influence with the acquisition of new properties, including Rockhole cattle station practically adjoining the government reserve of Moola Bulla. Raible also broke out of the Kimberley by acquiring a wheat farm at Tardun, and introduced more German staff than ever before, including experts in tropical medicine and languages. Protector Neville greeted Dr Johann **Betz** and Ludwina **Betz-Korte** with reservations about their medical qualifications, and the linguists Fr Ernst **Worms** and Fr Hermann **Nekes** with a curt reminder that photographing and recording Aboriginal people, and entry to reserves, required his permission. (For the Pallottine contribution to science in Australia, see **Nekes** and **Worms**.)

During the 1930s, contact between Aboriginal people of the far north and Japanese pearling crews increased greatly and could lead to violent conflict. The **Caledon Bay massacres** (1932–34) led to competing applications from the CMS and the Methodist Mission Society to establish a mission in east Arnhem Land.⁴⁵ Fr Gsell also applied for permission to establish further missions, fearing the imminent collapse of his Tiwi mission under the pressure of such contact. MSC missions were opened at Port Keats in 1935 after Japanese pearlery had been killed there, and at Alice Springs where Ernst Eugen Kramer had recently left his ‘tabernacle mission’. The **MSC** was already training Australian staff at its Kensington seminary from 1898, and began to form parishes in the Northern Territory townships at the request of their apostolic delegate in 1929. The Pallottines, on the other hand, still focused on remote mission, true to their name as the Pious Society of Missions (PSM), and still recruited from Germany.

45 Gsell in Darwin to NT Administrator and J.A. Carrodus, Acting NT Administrator, 20 September 1935, commenting that the ‘recent experience of mission stations in the territory run by the CMS does not inspire confidence in the ability of that organisation to successfully conduct aboriginal institutions’ in Port Keats Catholic Mission, Northern Territory (1934–55), A452, 1955/98, NAA.

While the MSC had been very much a transnational organisation since its foundation, the Pallottines organised themselves in 'regions' and 'provinces' that had a much more national character.

By the time of the Golden Jubilee at Beagle Bay mission in June 1940, everything was in great shape for the Pallottines. The mission-hostile Chief Protector Neville had been replaced with a commissioner for Native Affairs, Francis Illingworth Bray, who was much more supportive, and a start had been made towards building up an Indigenous church with a 'convent for native women' at Beagle Bay.

The missions in World War II

Four months later, the 13 German Pallottines who were not naturalised were arrested and interned in Broome. They were released after 11 days of intensive lobbying, and a subsequent public inquiry claimed that the Broome residents welcomed these internments. Bishop Raible wrote a counter-narrative to the Minister for Defence on 17 January 1941:

I must confess that the sweeping generalisation of this statement has rendered me almost speechless. It ignores the fact that quite a considerable number of white people of Broome expressed to me their dissatisfaction with this high-handed action of the local authorities ... It does not fit in with the fact that from all sections of the community – white and half-caste alike – all sorts of foodstuffs, cool drinks, tobacco and delicacies were sent to the imprisoned fathers and brothers, who indeed declared that as far as food was concerned, they fared much better in jail than on the mission. Even the blacks kept in the same jail had a good time on what was left over. It is common knowledge that dozens of people went to visit them in jail and that, after the release of the missionaries, their church was packed as if it were Christmas Day, and very large numbers of people went to receive the sacraments in thanksgiving ... The police themselves told us that they felt like criminals when they were obliged by their duty to take the missionaries away from those who regarded them as their real fathers and brothers, to whose labours they owe so much.⁴⁶

46 D.F. Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, Archdiocese of Perth, Perth, 1979.

Bishop Raible went on the offensive. He issued public statements, claimed child endowment benefits from the federal government in September 1941 and proposed to take on La Grange as a Pallottine mission in 1942. The army objected to the placement of Germans on the coast during World War II so La Grange had to wait.⁴⁷

The more recent German arrivals among the Pallottine staff were not allowed to return to the missions, and were placed under the authority of the bishop in Melbourne. The others returned to the north and laboured under travel prohibitions and intensive surveillance, including army chaplains, mostly MSC, stationed at Broome, Lombadina and Beagle Bay. Any firearms and radios on the missions were confiscated and Deputy War Damage Commissioner W.S. Brown visited Beagle Bay mission in 1943 in military company to check 'whether the federal money [child endowment] was well spent'.⁴⁸

The MSC had by now become Australianised and had the confidence of the military authorities. During World War II, many of them served as army chaplains (see **Missionaries of the Sacred Heart**). One of the MSC Fathers at Bathurst Island raised the alarm over the first Darwin bombing and at least three of the 12 siblings in the Flynn family served as army chaplains at Beagle Bay, Alice Springs, Arltunga, Thursday Island and Melville Island. Frank Flynn, chaplain for the army and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) visited all the MSC missions established by Gsell and remained in contact with them from 1942 to 1946, as narrated in his autobiography, without ever mentioning his military affiliation. He also practised ophthalmology at the Darwin hospital and inspired Professor Fred **Hollows**.⁴⁹

World War II brought a much greater disruption to the mission effort than the first war. The whole north was designated a strategically sensitive region. The military bases in north Australia presented direct targets for enemy attacks and National Security Regulations provided for wartime evacuations of civilians. An army garrison of 3,000 mostly US soldiers was stationed at Thursday Island and took over the MSC premises.⁵⁰

47 *West Australian*, 20 July 1938, p. 17; La Grange Mission Chronicle 1/1/55–2/6/63, #14284, Archives of the Pallottine Community, Rossmoyne.

48 Beagle Bay Mission, Broome, Western Australia, A885, B77 PT1, NAA.

49 Frank Flynn, *Distant Horizons: Mission Impressions as Published in the Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington, 1947, pp. 19, 20, 26; Caruana, 'Reflections', p. 126.

50 Caruana, 'Reflections', pp. 43, 49.

Hammond Island became a military base and its Sisters, women and children were evacuated to Cooyar in late January 1942.⁵¹ The Hopevale residents were evacuated to Woorabinda in May 1942 with disastrous consequences, Fr Georg Heinrich Schwarz and his son-in-law Victor Behrendorff were interned and a military airstrip was erected at Cape Bedford.⁵²

Darwin became 'Fortress Australia' and its southern supply lines were secured through military reinforcements and a brand new 'Spirit of Progress' troop-carrying train to Alice Springs, which also became a military town. The children from 'the Bungalow', an Aboriginal children's home at the former telegraph station on the Todd River at Alice Springs, were evacuated south, and the Little Flower mission, already once removed from Alice Springs to Charles Creek in 1937, was evacuated to an isolated police station near Arltunga in February 1943.

Port Keats became an RAAF radar station and the mission was moved further inland to Wadeye. The Port Keats Sisters and the Bathurst Island convent evacuated just before the first bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942, after which the whole Northern Territory came under military control and immediate civilian evacuations were ordered. This caused a scramble towards Katherine, and from there further southwards under continued bombing. Bishop Gsell withdrew to Alice Springs along with many Darwin residents. On 22 September 1943, Kalumburu mission, which was used as a refueling station, came under aerial attack, killing the mission superior Fr Thomas Gill and several children.⁵³ In September 1942, Fr Henschke evacuated Tiwi people to Hawker and Carrieton (near Port Augusta).

Broome, too, became a military station and vehicles and buildings, including the orphanage, were requisitioned.⁵⁴ The Broome convent and Aboriginal residents were evacuated to Beagle Bay in February 1942, stretching the mission to its limits (and ending the experiment of

51 Luke Taylor, Graeme K. Ward, Graham Henderson, Richard Davis and Lynley A. Wallis, *The Power of Knowledge, the Resonance of Tradition*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1997, pp. 70ff.

52 Dean Gibson, 'War of Hope', NITV, 25 April 2015; Jonathan Richards, "'What a howl there would be if some of our folk were so treated by an enemy': The Evacuation of Aboriginal People from Cape Bedford Mission, 1942", *Aboriginal History* 36 (2013): 67–98.

53 Margaret Zucker, *From Patrons to Partners, A History of the Catholic Church in the Kimberley*, University of Notre Dame Press, Broome, 1994, pp. 112–13.

54 Story of Jimmi Chi in Regina Ganter with Julia Martinez and Gary Lee, *Mixed Relations: Asian-Aboriginal Contact in North Australia*. University of Western Australian Publishing, Crawley, 2006.

a native Sisters convent). Soldiers were also stationed at Lombadina.⁵⁵ After the 3 March 1942 air raids, Broome's civilians rushed south whereas the Sisters at the Derby leprosarium, instead of evacuating by Qantas plane as instructed, went bush with their patients and helpers.⁵⁶

The alternative to being evacuated, or going bush, was to join up. Eighty Bathurst Island men joined 56 Port Craft Company, Royal Australian Engineers, and were stationed at the Larrakeyah barracks, headquarters of the Darwin garrison. Twenty men from Little Flower mission joined the armed forces around September 1942. They became part of a Native Labour Unit, totalling about 150 men stationed at 'the Bungalow'. They were deployed in unloading trains and building roads, such as the Stuart Highway to Darwin.⁵⁷

Military service and contact with black US soldiers raised expectations of citizenship.⁵⁸ The postwar period brought an intensified lobbying for citizen rights, federal payments for Aboriginal people and the liberationist inspirations of the postcolonial movement around the world.

German Pallottines in the Cold War

A rethinking of mission also came from inside the Pallottine Society. By the time of World War II, a controversial movement had arisen among the German Pallottines, inspired by Fr Josef **Kentenich** of Schönstatt, the Pallottine training seminary at Vallendar near Koblenz. The Schönstatt movement harked back to the inspiration of the society's founder Vincent **Pallotti**, to focus on the involvement of the lay apostolate. Under the impact of this movement, the society reverted in 1948 to its original name that made explicit reference to the 'apostolate', Society of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC) instead of PSM. Vincent Pallotti was beatified in January 1950 (an achievement still not equalled by the founder of the MSC, Jules **Chevalier**, despite strenuous efforts by MSC staff, since beatification is even more cumbersome than World Heritage listing with UNESCO, and requires miracles). The Schönstatt idea was to outreach

55 Brigida Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted in the Household of God: Vincent Pallotti's Vision in Australia 1901–2001*, Spectrum, Richmond, 2001, p. 153.

56 Zucker, *From Patrons to Partners*, p. 113.

57 Flynn, *Distant Horizons*, p. 77.

58 Robert Hall, *Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989; Kay Saunders, 'Inequalities of sacrifice: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour in northern Australia during the second world war', *Labour History* 69 (1995): 131–48.

to young people and laity. This youthful and forceful movement very nearly split the German Pallottines. It showed certain similarities with the national socialist youth movement, though the Schönstatt leaders were themselves subject to persecution in the Third Reich. Bishop Raible and some other Pallottine veterans were suspicious of the new movement, and Raible was not invited to the general chapter of the Australian Pallottine Society in late 1952, which ‘unanimously’ adopted the Schönstatt idea.⁵⁹ To give physical presence to the new policy, a Marian shrine to Mother Thrice Admirable, similar to the one in Vallendar, was erected at the Kew headquarters in 1952. By now, a number of Schönstatt priests had arrived who had all been conscripted into the German military during their Pallottine training⁶⁰ and most rose to prominence in Australia or Germany.⁶¹ Australian-born candidates were in turn sent to study at Vallendar instead of Rome from 1952.⁶²

The new catch-cry of ‘Catholic Action’ called for the mobilisation of ‘The Younger Set’ as a lay apostolate.⁶³ By 1958, Fr Walter Silvester had 17 youth groups active in Kew and trained lay missionaries in the Ver Sacrum Mariana Institute.⁶⁴ This Youth Apostolate engaged in fundraising and group activities and participated in Catholic Action groups associated with Bob **Santamaria’s** Social Studies Movement. Amidst concerns of communist infiltration in the Australian labour movement, Santamaria’s anti-communist Catholic Action movement split the Australian Labor Party with the formation of the Democratic Labor Party in 1955. The German dimension of this significant historical moment has not been much noticed in Australian historiography.

In the Cold War period, the Catholic Church fostered a worldwide engagement against Communism. The Legionaries of Christ with their lay arm Regnum Christi were establishing themselves in Ireland and

59 Raible to General Hoffmann, 22 February 1946, and Kupke to Hügel, 14 December 1952, in Nailon *Nothing is Wasted*, pp. 159, 188.

60 P. Heinrich Menzel, ‘Zum Goldenen Jubiläum unserer Kimberley-Mission in Australien’, *Pallottis Werk* 1951/1, p. 16.

61 Fr Ludwig Münz became Limburg Provincial (1962–77) and Pallottine General (1977–83), Fr John Jobst became the Bishop of Broome (1958–95), Fr Walter Silvester became the Australian Regional (1958–65), and Fr John Lümme (1919–2014) became the rector of Rossmoyne training institution and a historian of the Australian Pallottines.

62 Australians who studied at Vallendar were Br Anthony Peile, Fr John Hennessey and Br J. Evans. Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, p. 164.

63 Hügel at La Grange to Regional, 25 October 1955, in Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, pp. 161–77.

64 Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, pp. 167–70.

Mexico.⁶⁵ For the Pallottine interest in India, a hotbed of communism, and also within the German Pallottine Province, the Australian Pallottine Region, erected in 1946, was to play a strategic role. Entry to India required a British passport, so the plan was to send Germans to Australia long enough to qualify for naturalisation and to post naturalised or native-born Australians to India.

Communist influence in north Australia also led to the request for Catholic intervention. The new Commissioner for Native Affairs, Stanley G. Middleton, wanted the Catholic Church to commence a mission and school at White Springs sheep and cattle station in 1947 to undermine the Pilbara strikers associated with communist Don **McLeod** who were starting up a school at nearby Yandeyarra. The Port Hedland diocesan parish priest (not a Pallottine) took on the project, which the communist *Workers' Star* described as the 'White Springs Concentration Camp'. There was a firm expectation that the Pallottines would take on White Springs; however, when the lease contract was ready to sign in 1951 at least £9,000 had already been spent, and a debt of £7,000 was outstanding, so the Pallottine Regional refused to sign. Neither the Catholic Church nor the Native Affairs department would ever have contemplated sinking £9,000 into aid for the Aboriginal strikers who strove for self-determination.

The end of the mission era

The forces that ended the mission period were diverse, inexorable and transnational, reflecting a rapidly changing *Zeitgeist*. There was the postcolonial struggle of colonised peoples around the world of fallen empires. There were the citizenship aspirations of an increasingly mixed and educated Indigenous population who no longer fitted into the protective mission paradigm. There was the government policy of assimilation clawing back control over Aboriginal people from the churches. There was the renewal within the churches themselves. The case of the Kimberley missions illustrates all these forces.

Directives for change also came from the Pallottine society itself. The signposts set by apostolic delegates (official visitations from Germany or Rome) in 1946, 1952 and 1955 were to de-emphasise Aboriginal mission and to focus on parish and urban work instead. The Australian

65 *The Legion*, Compass, ABC, June 2014.

Pallottine region therefore placed parish priests in Broome, Derby and Wyndham. Wandering Brook (1944) and La Grange (1955) became the last missions the Pallottines entered into. In the shift of direction towards urban youth, a number of properties outside of the Kimberley were quickly acquired with funding from the German Catholic fundraising organisation **Misereor**: Tardun boarding school (1948), the seminary in Kew (1940), Pallotti House in Strathfield (Sydney, opened as a novitiate in January 1954), premises in Manly (1955), Rivervale (1948–54), the Pallottine mission centre at Riverton including a boys' hostel (1955), Millgrove farm property and apostolic centre in Melbourne (1957), Silverwater (1959) and extensions at Rossmoyne (1959, 1961).⁶⁶

The Western Australian department of education assumed control of Aboriginal education and posted government teachers to the missions, while Catholic education shifted its focus from mission schools on Aboriginal reserves to denominational schools in parishes. Under the banner of assimilation, there was a strong focus on the older boys from the missions, who were generally sent far away from their families if they showed promise. Bishop Raible resisted this change in direction and kept reiterating that not the consent of the department, but the consent of the parents had to be the decisive factor. Raible was as unhappy about separate schools for coloured children as he was about the German direction over the region, and the relationship between his Kimberley vicariate and the Australian Pallottine region was becoming tense.⁶⁷

By the time John Jobst replaced Otto Raible as bishop of the Kimberley in January 1959 there was a general sense that the Kimberley mission was becoming aimless.⁶⁸ The flying doctor service, monthly plane services, telephone lines and serviceable off-road trucks had transformed the physical conditions of the once-shielded missions. The new Pallottine staff from Germany arrived with a radically different mindset from the older missionaries. Two of the new German arrivals later explained that as newcomers they had no notion of alternative Aboriginal futures and fully embraced the assimilationist vision. They themselves had left their

66 Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, passim.

67 Raible to Kearney, 2 June 1957, and Worms to Regional, 29 July 1953, in Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, pp. 195, 189.

68 Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*.

homes and found it difficult to comprehend the loss and grief experienced by Indigenous youth who were relocated to the south. Full citizenship seemed the self-evident path to liberation and emancipation.⁶⁹

The federal government inserted itself into the force field of Aboriginal management as a third player after it gained powers over Indigenous people in the various states with the 1967 referendum. Instead of funding, the Pallottines were granted a favourable development loan of \$250,000 for their Kimberley ventures from the Commonwealth Bank directed by H.C. **Coombs**.⁷⁰ With the emerging federal emphasis on self-determination, government funding started to be directed to Aboriginal groups and organisations from the mid-1960s and the deinstitutionalisation of missions intensified under the Whitlam Government elected in 1975. A federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was formed in 1975 and, locked into battle with the Aboriginal affairs departments of the most conservative states, Western Australia and Queensland, began to deal with Indigenous communities directly. Financial assistance became available to Aboriginal communities, subject to self-management, and the DAA began to fund housing on the Kimberley missions, with the result that Aboriginal housing was considered better than that of the missionaries, who saw the DAA interventions as a direct attack on their authority.⁷¹

The transition from mission leadership to parish work was slow and painful for those Pallottines who had invested a lifetime and felt that their effort was simply not recognised. A number of community histories have since tried to reclaim something of the joint effort of the former missions, and the Catholic diocese newsletter *Kimberley Community Profile* often publishes positive testimonies of Kimberley Aboriginal people that demonstrate the central role the church and its institutions have played in their intellectual formation. Among the students at the Rossmoyne training centre who later rose to prominence were Western Australian AFL premiership footballer Harold Little, Peter Yu who became chair of the Kimberley Land Council, and Steven Albert, also known as actor and musician Baamba, who himself became a strong proponent of Aboriginal education – but on the new paradigm of self-determination (for more on former students see

69 P. Omasmeier, 'Australien', *Pallottis Werk* 1955/4; John Luemmen and Brigida Nailon, *Led by the Spirit: Autobiography of Father John Luemmen SAC*, Imprinti Potest Provincial of the Pallottines in Australia, Rossmoyne, WA, 1999, Chapter 4.

70 Nailon, *Nothing is Wasted*, p. 234.

71 Helen MacFarlane and John Foley, *Kimberley Mission Review – Analysis and Evaluation of Church and Government involvement in the Catholic Missions of the Kimberley* (n.d., ca 1981), p. 16, State Records of Western Australia (SROWA).

Lümmen). Another well-known Rossmoyne student was Jimmy Chi who produced a cheeky take on the mission era with the award-winning 1990 musical *Bran Nue Dae*. One of its central characters, Father Benedictus, was loosely modelled on Fr John Lümmen, but at Lümmen's funeral in Perth in January 2014, a large delegation from Broome, including Albert and Chi, were present to pay their final respects. The last German Pallottine to leave the Kimberley (though not the last Pallottine) was Fr Wendelin Lorenz in 2004, parish priest at Derby for more than 35 years.⁷²

Conclusions

Within the emerging political empires, the churches competed with each other to spread their mantle of faith.⁷³ In the 1880s, German Protestant mission societies, which had for decades been relying on sometimes tenuous contacts with foreign Protestant empires, quickly lined up for access to German New Guinea. At the same time, Protestants and Catholics shared a stepping-stones policy into the Australian north and beyond, following the inexorable settlers who were expanding the reach of the British Empire into north Australia. The geopolitics of New Guinea and north Australia launched the mission project in northern Australia, and this was again characterised by competition between Catholics and Protestants, between different Protestant churches, and between different Catholic societies, similar to the dynamics observed for previous periods in Chapters 1 and 2. There was little awareness that the Australian northward drive also entered into areas of longstanding Muslim influence, but surely Indigenous people noticed the jealousy among missionaries, as they did elsewhere in the world, and kept some knowledge from them or, in the words of Ian McIntosh, 'turned it in'.⁷⁴

72 P. Brady, 'Forty faithful years – Derby farewells Father Lorenz in style', *KCP Magazine*.

73 Patricia Grimshaw and Elizabeth Nelson, 'Empire, "the civilising mission" and Indigenous Christian women in colonial Victoria', *Australian Feminist Studies* 16.36 (2001): 295–309; Diane Kirkby and Catharine Coleborne (eds), *Law, History, Colonialism: The Reach of Empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001; Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruickshank and Andrew Brown-May (eds), *Evangelists of Empire?: Missionaries in Colonial History*, Melbourne University Conference series Vol. 18, eScholarship Research Centre in collaboration with the School of Historical Studies and with the assistance of Melbourne University Bookshop, Melbourne, 2008; Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005.

74 Peggy Brock, 'Jealous missionaries on the Pacific northwest coast of Canada', *Journal of Religious History*, 2015; Peggy Brock, 'Negotiating colonialism: The life and times of Arthur Wellington Clah', in Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruickshank and Andrew Brown-May (eds), *Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in Colonial History*, 2008, pp. 18, 23; Ian McIntosh, 'Missing the revolution'.

German speakers played a prominent role in the Australian mission landscape. As a result of World War I, their prominence declined, together with the short-lived German empire, not only because of the loss of German territories, but also due to virulent anti-German sentiments, and English became the mission language (see Chapter 7). Several German missionaries repatriated and the remainder was subjected to surveillance, but we detect some denominational differences. The German origin of the MSC staff at Bathurst Island was apparently ignored because of the close alliance of the MSC with the military authorities. German Moravians were able to shelter under the umbrella of their alliance with the Presbyterian Church. Lutherans turned to second-generation Germans to staff the missions, with the exception of Strehlow at Hermannsburg and Schwarz at Hopevale.

That the German missionaries who remained in Australia escaped internment during World War I must be due to the realisation that the orderly conduct of remote missions was of greater strategic importance than the risk of Fifth Column activity emanating from these religious. It was enough to set a warning example with the treatment of the Pallottine mission superior Fr Bischofs (see Chapter 6). World War II, on the other hand, was fought much closer to home, and took place after much more contact with Japanese pearlers. The northern missions were severely disrupted with massive relocations and surveillance, and several missionaries were interned – the Pallottines briefly in 1940 and Pastor Schwarz for much longer in 1942. Much of the wartime relocation of Indigenous communities was driven by military strategic considerations, though the evacuation of Hopevale mission is normally explained with reference to missionary Schwarz being German.

The Third Reich tore at the mission movement with new tensions (see Chapter 7 – ‘Hitler’s men’). For German mission societies, World War II further curtailed the opportunities to place missionaries abroad, particularly in Africa. Herrnhut discontinued mission training in 1941, Basel in 1951, and few mission training institutions (including the HMG at Hermannsburg and the Neuendettelsau Mission Society) were still accepting candidates without a High School Certificate. The trend was towards normal university theology study as the only path to ordination.

Against the worldwide trend of a decline in German mission activity after World War I, the German Pallottines blossomed in Australia.⁷⁵ The Catholic Church, a thoroughly transnational enterprise, was able to shelter them from the forces that militated against a strong German presence by placing them under the supervision of staff from other nationalities. The French MSC had already become Australianised by establishing a local training seminary in 1898, and the Pallottines followed suit under the direction of Bishop Raible who lent the Pallottine mission effort a more professional and strategic character. With the acquisition of a wheat farm at Tardun, the Pallottines broke out of the ‘Kimberley territory’, into which Protestant mission societies had already intruded. Raible’s intellectual formation was shaped by the ‘Pious Society of Missions’, so he resisted the change that was reflected in the society’s new name in 1948 away from remote mission towards an urban lay apostolate. However, the forces against paternalistic mission were inexorable, emanating from international shifts in the *Zeitgeist*, from within the church and also from the aspirations of Indigenous people.

75 Marc Spindler, ‘Les missions allemandes: leur liquidation et résilience, 1914–2014’, Colloque du CREDIC, Neuendettelsau, 2015.

This text is taken from *The Contest for Aboriginal Souls: European missionary agendas in Australia*, by Regina Ganter, published 2018 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.