

# The Hand of God: His Story of Australia

Graham McLennan © 2012

## ***European Discovery of Australia and its settlement***

When he set out, he didn't know where he was going. When he got there, he didn't know where he was. When he returned, he didn't know where he had been!

This has been said about [Christopher Columbus](#) though when he set out for the Americas in his four voyages from 1492 to 1502 he recalled:

"...It was the Lord who put into my mind — I could feel His hand upon me — the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies-All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me... There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because he comforted me with rays of marvellous illumination from the Holy Scriptures... For the execution of the journey to the Indies I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics, or maps. It is simply the fulfilment of what Isaiah had prophesied... No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Saviour, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His Holy service... the fact that the Gospel must still be preached to so many lands in such a short time — this is what convinces me". ("Book of Prophecies", Christopher Columbus). South America mainly became Catholic because of the Spanish influence.

Columbus' voyage ultimately led to the first permanent Protestant English settlement in North America at Jamestown. They placed a cross at Cape Henry now Virginia Beach on April 29, 1607, claiming America for God as his vehicle for spreading the gospel to every nation. With the settlement of the Puritans and Pilgrims the rest has become history.

## ***In Search of the Great South Land***

It was Portuguese Catholic, [Magellan](#) who opened up the South Seas to the Europeans. Magellan's main purpose was to convert the barbarous nations to Christ. It was his faith that sustained him through terrible deprivations until a strait was found into the Pacific. Magellan's ship was the first to circumnavigate the world from 1519 to 1521, being the first to enter the Pacific via South America ultimately reaching the Philippines which was to become a Catholic nation. This is how they initially became Christians.

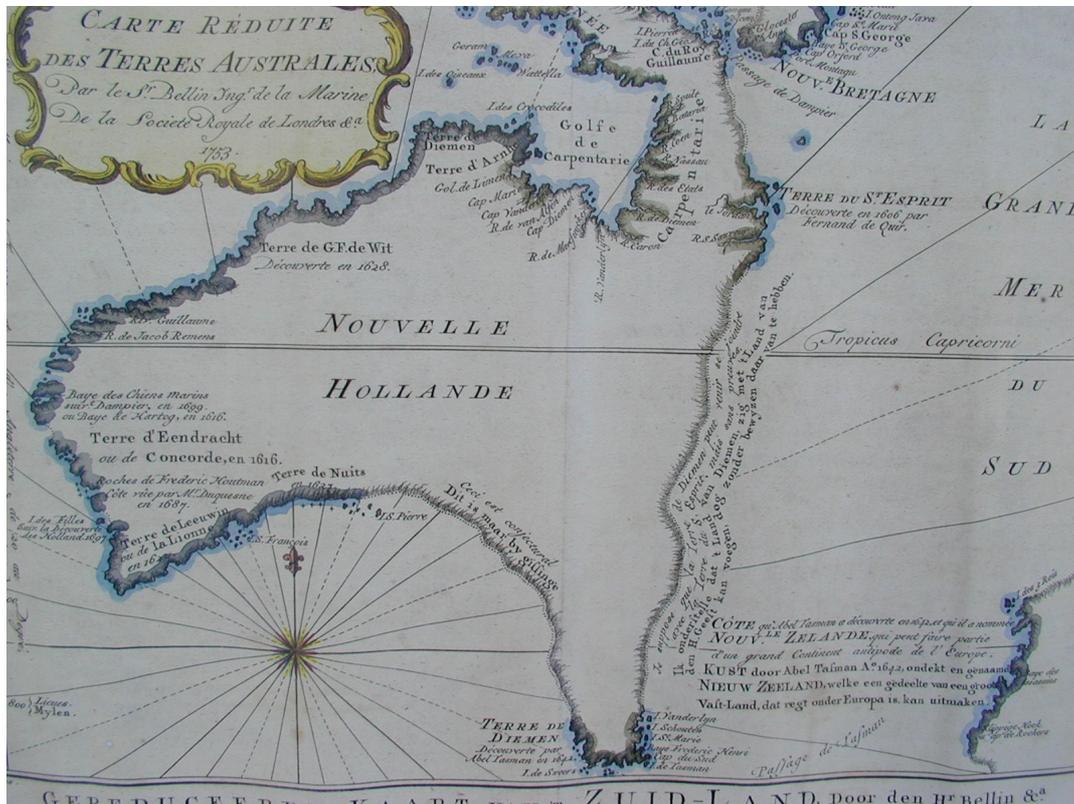
"Magellan having noticed in the Chief's house a sick person in a very wasted condition, asked who he was and from what disease he was suffering. He was told that it was the chief's grandson, and that he had been suffering for two years from a violent fever. Magellan exhorted him to be of good courage, that if he would devote himself to Christ he would immediately recover his former strength. The Indian consented, and adored the cross, and received baptism, and the next day declared that he was well again, rose from his bed and walked about, and took his meals like the others the Chief and over 2200 Indians were baptized and professed the name and faith of Christ." (George Collingridge, *Discovery of Australia*", p 148)

Another sailor [Pedro Fernandez de Quiros](#), another Portuguese Catholic, in 1606 was also seeking to convert the Inhabitants of the south seas to Christianity and

believed he finally had discovered "Austrialia Del Espiritu Santo" in honour of the Spanish King Philip III of the House of Austria (Hapsburg) - a land he dedicated to the Holy Spirit - which he described as being the region of the south as far as the pole. Since he in fact discovered the New Hebrides now known as Vanuatu, the region he described was

Australasia, which includes New Zealand. De Quiros thought he had made it to the shores of Australia but found another country, Vanuatu claiming it for the King of Spain.

It wasn't until [Captain James Cook](#) discovered the East Coast of Australia that people realised De Quiros hadn't reached this Southland of the Holy Spirit for there was a separation by sea of several thousand kilometres.



This is one of the very few pre-Cook maps showing only Australia. Produced in 1753 by Frenchman, Jacques Nicolas Bellin, the imaginary line goes from Tasmania to Espiritu Santo to PNG. The coastal note translates: *I suppose that the land of Dieman can join with the land of the Holy Ghost but this is without proof.*"

[Joseph Banks](#) the naturalist on board records in his Journal dated 14th May, 1769 about bringing the South Pacific Tahiti natives to a service conducted by Cook.

"It being Sunday, Captain Cook proposed that divine service should be celebrated, but before the time most of our Indian friends had gone home to eat. I was resolved, however, that some should be present that they might see our behaviour, and we might if possible explain to them (in some degree at least) the reasons of it. I went, therefore, over the river, and brought back Tubourai and Tamio, and having seated them in the tent, placed myself between them. During the whole service they imitated my motions, standing, sitting, or kneeling as they saw me do; and so much understood that we were about something very serious, that they called to the Indians without the fort to be silent."

Of course the west of Australia had been discovered by sailors such as [William Dampier](#), even though a confirmed rogue, Dampier in his preface to "A Voyage to New Holland", an English Voyage of Discovery to the South Seas in 1699, could state:

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But this Satisfaction I am sure of having, that the Things themselves in the Discovery of which I have been employed, are most worthy of our diligentest Search and Inquiry; being the various and wonderful Works of God in different Parts of the World: And however unfit a Person I may be in other respects to have undertaken this Task, yet at least I have given a faithful Account, and have found some Things undiscovered by any before, and which may at least be some Assistance and Direction to better qualified Persons who shall come after me.

I returned to England in the Canterbury East-India-Ship. For which wonderful Deliverance from so many and great Dangers, I think my self bound to return continual Thanks to Almighty God; whose Divine Providence if it shall please to bring me safe again to my Native Country from my present intended Voyage; I hope to publish a particular Account of all the material Things I observed in the several Places which I have now but barely mentioned.

It was William Dampier who left Alexander Selkirk on Juan Fernandez Island. While in his isolation Selkirk became a Christian. It was this man's story that inspired Daniel Defoe to write "Robinson Crusoe" that in turn inspired Matthew Flinders to become a seafarer, away from the family tradition of Medicine. Matthew Flinders had the honour of naming Australia and was the first to circumnavigate Australia in 1802-3 with the object "to make so accurate an investigation of the shores of Terra Australis that ...with the blessing of God, nothing of importance would be left for future discoverers upon any part of these extensive coasts".

Sailing from Batavia now known as Jakarta in Indonesia, Dutchman [Abel Tasman](#) discovered Tasmania and New Zealand as he set sail in 1642 wrote in his journal;

" May God Almighty vouchsafe His blessing on this work." concluding his journey ten months later in 1643 "God be praised and thanked for this happy voyage."

### **European Settlement**

[Governor Phillip](#) arrived from England with the First Fleet in 1788 to settle Australia with soldiers and criminals who could no longer be transported to the North America because of American Independence.

His instructions were to:

"enforce a due observance of religion and good order among the inhabitants, and take such steps for the due celebration of public worship as circumstances would permit. In the first draft of these instructions he was to grant full liberty of conscience, and the free exercise of all modes of religious worship not prohibited by law, provided his charges were content with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offence or scandal to government; he was to cause the laws against blasphemy, profaneness, adultery, fornication, polygamy, incest, profanation of the Lord's Day, swearing and drunkenness to be rigorously executed. He was not to admit to the office of justice of the peace any person whose ill-fame or conversation might occasion scandal; he was to take care that the Book of Common Prayer as by law established be read each Sunday and Holy Day, and that the Blessed Sacrament be administered according to the rites of the Church of England. Because of the great disproportion of female to male convicts, he was to take on board at any of the islands any women who might be disposed to come,

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taking care not to make use of any compulsive measures or fallacious pretences. He was to emancipate from their servitude any of the convicts who should, from their good conduct and a disposition to industry, be deserving of favour, and to grant them land, victual them for twelve months and equip them with tools, grain, and such cattle, sheep and hogs as might be proper, and could be spared. As the military officers and others might be disposed to cultivate the land, he was to afford them every encouragement."

Other nations could have settled Australia but it was their beliefs that prevented them from doing so. The Hindus prevented sea voyages and contact with foreigners, the Chinese In 1433 the voyages of Cheng Ho were ended by another revolution, besides there was a kingdom of women down there! The Muslim sailors before the 1400's believed the southland was Dedjdal or the kingdom of Antichrist! Furthermore European expansion had begun in the East Indies and Pacific ending the expansion of Islam.

### ***Early Christian Influences***

The first Christian minister came with the First Fleet. He was recommended by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. John Newton and William Wilberforce, two members of the Eclectic Society persuaded England's Prime Minister, William Pitt to accept Richard Johnson's nomination. Johnson an Evangelical churchman, took with him many Bibles, Books of Common Prayer, Psalters and numerous booklets against common sins, and on Sunday 3rd February 1788 he conducted the first Christian Service on Australian soil using as his text Psalm 116:12:

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me."

Writing to his friends in England in a letter about educating the children he wrote:

"It is from a long and ardent wish that the minds of the rising generation of this Colony may be duly thus impressed with such moral and religious sentiment, that the following Plan has been adopted, & Rules & regulations have been made, which I hope every Parent as well as others concerned in bringing up children will see it to be their duty & interest to promote.

Amongst the Rules for the first Christian School in Australia in 1798 are:

1. That this School is to be considered for the Benefit of Children of all Descriptions of Persons, whether Soldiers, Settlers or Convicts, provided they comply with the Rules here laid down.
11. The children to be catechized, & to sing one of Dr Watt's Hymns for Children every Sunday forenoon, & to be catechized at Church at such times as Mr Johnson or the clergyman officiating may find convenient. Such parents as neglect or refuse to send their children to be thus instructed, to be deprived of the Privilege of the School.
12. A Form of Prayer to be read by one of the School Masters, & one of Dr. Watt's Hymns to be sung morning & evening. And it is strongly recommended that Parents will send their Children early to School to pray, as they are able, for a Blessing to attend the Instruction given them.
13. The Church Bell to ring a quarter before Nine in the morning, as a warning for the Children to prepare immediately to School.

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The second clergyman in Australia [Samuel Marsden](#) was instrumental in providing a good food source not only here in Australia but as alternative diet for the New Zealand Maori's who like many Pacific islanders were cannibals! Indeed Marsden talking about another food said:

" I can say this that I do not eat the bread of idleness. It is my opinion that God will ere long visit New South Wales with his heavenly grace. Out of these stones he will raise up children unto Abraham. There has not been any shaking yet among the dry bones, but the Son of Man is commanded to prophecy and I hope by and by the Lord will command the wind to blow. Stir up thy strength O God & come amongst us."

He prophetically stated in 1796:

"By the Admiral Gambier I have sent to England 4,000 to 5,000 pounds of wool. This will be the beginning of the commerce of this new world. Many think nothing of these things now. They cannot see any advantage to be derived to them, their children, or this settlement by improving the fleeces of our Sheep. But I anticipate immense National wealth to spring from this source of Commerce in time. The ant though it is a small creature, yet we see their numbers uniting together raising large Hillocks, particularly here. The Bee can carry but little honey, but in time the Hive is Filled. When I consider we have not much less than 50,000 Sheep in the settlement, and that these 50,000 Sheep will produce while I sleep or wake as many fleeces of wool.- It is a National object to attend to them. Should their fleeces be worth no more than as many dollars, yet the slave condemned to the mines must sweat and toil and dig for a long time before he can drag from the bowels of the earth so much wealth.

I have produced fleeces of very fine wool this year weighing 4 lb. each. What can be done in one instance in this respect may in 10,000. The wars on the Continent of Europe must eventually open New Channels of commerce.

Spain may never recover her former greatness with respect to her wool. She may never be able to replenish her flocks and to bring them into the productive state that they were before the present war. What may be the state of their flocks at the close of the present contest we cannot tell. It is our duty to leave future events to the wisdom of Him who knows all things from the beginning and to act for the present moment. My views may be too extended when they anticipate the greatness and wealth of this Country in future, the civilization of the surrounding savage Nations and the cultivation of their Islands . Everything must have a beginning, the foundation must be laid before the house can be built. I think you will hear of wheat and other kinds of grain being grown in New Zealand before two years are over. My friend one of the chiefs who has lived with me and acquired a knowledge of agriculture will introduce cultivation among his countrymen. This will add greatly to their civilization and comfort and prepare the way for greater blessings. I may be too fond perhaps of the garden, the field and the fleece. These would be the first object of my attention was I placed among a savage nation. The man who introduced the potato into Ireland and England merited more from those nations than any General who may have slain thousands of their enemies."

Certainly the hand of God is evident in the commencement of a Christian nation in the Pacific within reach of the great Asian nations.

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While many Australians look to a convict past with its fear of authority and feeling of inferiority, rejection, isolation and loneliness, there is another history yet to be written, that of our Christian forefathers and their faith and contribution to the kingdom of God - a positive affirmation of a nation with a providential destiny. It is encouraging to look at some of the godly elements in Australians foundations.

### **Law and Parliament**

Our Common Law has been based on the Christian faith, exemplified by the statue of Jesus occupying the central place above the Royal Courts of Justice in London, and by many statements by scholars such as one Chief Justice who declared:

"Christianity is parcel of the Common Law of England and therefore to be protected by it. So whatever strikes at the very root of Christianity tends manifestly to the dissolution of civil government."

Australia's oldest parliament in NSW governed most of Australia and many of the South Pacific islands including New Zealand. It continues to open with this prayer:

"Almighty God we humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe thy blessing upon this parliament, direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of thy glory and the true welfare of the people, our State and Australia. Amen."

A similar prayer is said in our Federal Parliament by the President, on taking the chair each day, shall read the following prayer:

"Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy special blessing upon this Parliament, and that Thou wouldst be pleased to direct and prosper the work of Thy servants to the advancement of Thy glory, and to the true welfare of the people of Australia.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Our Australian Constitution was prayed over continually by the man mainly responsible for its passage through the House of Commons. Alfred Deakin was the man mainly responsible for the passage of the Australian Constitution through the English House of Commons. He became Australia's second Prime Minister, after Edmund Barton who himself was inspired to enter politics by his Presbyterian Minister, Dr Robert Steele. The fourth Prime Minister, Sir George Reid, was also inspired to enter politics through Dr Steele's influence. Deakin, a native born Australian was nurtured in his faith by his mother. It was Deakin who seconded the motion of "Father of Federation." Sir Henry Parkes for the proposed Federation of the Australian States

Deakin kept a Spiritual Diary and from 1884 to 1913 wrote a "Boke of Praer and Praes" containing nearly four hundred prayers, many relating directly to major decisions in his public life, revealing his utter dependence on God. (For a brief time he joined the Theosophy Society but resigned in 1896.)

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Deakin prayed over the proposed Australian Constitution continually and was delighted when the Constitutional Convention unanimously carried the preamble inclusion "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God"

In the concluding words of his book "The Federal Story" Deakin remarks that Federation and the Australian Constitution were 'providential' and were secured only 'by a series of miracles'

In his notes in 1905 Deakin remarks:

"sufficient to say that the religion of Jesus Christ is the life of the present, the light of the future and the hope of the world."

Many years later he stated:

"A life, the life of Christ, that is the one thing needful - the only revelation required is there... we have but to live it."

A Christian statesman, he was the first Attorney General of the Commonwealth, and as such, founder of the High Court of Australia. He served three times as Prime Minister when a considerable amount of the Commonwealth's initial legislation was commenced. As Prime Minister he founded the Arbitration Court, the Australian Navy, as well as choosing Canberra as the nation's capital. Polling day for Federation in N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania was Friday 3rd June 1898. By midnight Deakin knew that Victoria had approved the bill by an overwhelming majority, that Tasmania had done likewise, and that the majority in New South Wales had not reached the minimum number required for the adoption of the Bill. Hence, Deakin prays here:

"Father of Nations, receive our psalm of thanksgiving. Enable us to pursue the cause of unity in spite of the obstacles which at present appear to beset our path elsewhere. Guide us to appeal to that which is best and purest so as to make its development and mastery sure under our forms of government. Aid us to purify ourselves by our labours for the general weal and to invoke spiritual and moral principles so as to link us with our brethren on the highest plane to which we can at present attain. God preserve this people and grant its leaders unselfish fidelity and courage to face all trials for the sake of brotherhood. Thy blessing has rested upon us here yesterday and we pray that it may be the means of creating and fostering throughout all Australia a Christlike citizenship."

The Constitution Preamble states:

"Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland; and Tasmania humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established..."

This preamble was in response to numerous signed petitions from people from every colony represented in the Federal Convention. This acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God was approved unanimously.

Our Constitutional Christian Monarchy likewise expresses the Lordship of Christ when the Queen is presented with the Bible:

"to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole of life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this

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Book, the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively oracles of God."

When the Orb is delivered to the Queen the coronation service states:

"Receive this Orb set under the cross, and remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer."

Our Australian flag has four Christian crosses. In the Southern Hemisphere God has placed the Southern Cross which is specially incorporated into our national flag, along with the crosses of St Andrew, St Patrick and St George.

The Evangelical Awakening in England also had its effect in Australia and the South Pacific. People such as William Carey were awakened to the need for evangelism of heathen lands through reading "Captain Cooks Voyages" Many Englishmen became aware for the first time of lands in the Pacific and Asian regions. Commencing In 1784, as part of the Evangelical Awakening, first Baptists, then other nonconformists throughout the Midlands began meeting for one hour on the first Monday in each month to pray for revival which would spread the gospel to the most distant parts of the globe.

This marked the beginning of the greatest period of expansion of the Christian faith since apostolic times. Many missionary organisations were formed, one being the London Missionary Society. By 1826 Carey was responsible for the translation of the Bible into 30 languages in the Pacific and Asian region.

A missionary ship called the "Duff" sailed from England In 1796 to Tahiti with [Rowland Hassall](#) and his family. In 1798 the Hassall family arrived in Australia after endangering their lives in Tahiti. Within a short time Rowland Hassall had preached the gospel in all the districts of the colony.

### ***Governor Macquarie and the Evangelical Witness***

Most of the colonies early leadership came from the evangelical Christian community, many being chaplains. Governors such as Hunter, Macquarie and Brisbane, and a number of officials such as the Judge Advocates, Wylde and Ellis Bent, the editor of Australia's first newspaper were strongly committed to Christian views, as were the school teachers.

Governor Macquarie was always trying to improve the moral and religious well-being of the colony, hoping that those in his care would become good Christians. He personally promoted the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Sunday School Movement. He also encouraged other Christian groups such as the Auxiliary Bible Society, and spoke at the Inaugural meeting. Macquarie particularly encouraged Christian Education commencing a number of schools under the supervision of the government chaplains so that by 1817 the most common discussion in the pages of the Sydney Gazette was on the merits of Bible reading.

James Stephen, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Colonial Office believed God was going to sovereignly use Australia as a Christian Nation and he was influential in the choice of many Christian leaders to the colony. Amongst them was George Arthur who shared with James Stephen the vision of Australia as a base in South East Asia and the Pacific to reach the Chinese, Hindu and Muslim nations to the North.

## ***South Australia's Godly beginnings and the aspirations of its founders***

For many years South Australia's capital was known as the Holy City but today it is known as the City of Churches. Adelaide in its formative years couldn't contain all the parishioners in its churches.

During Adelaide's first eight years there were more preachers and places of worship than in the first decade in New England, U.S.A. From the time of South Australia's settlement in 1836 to 1915 more children attended Sunday School than attended school. In one of the first schools opened by Richard Angas the sole textbook was the bible. Angas had distributed millions of gospel tracts in his lifetime.

Many of South Australia's Founders were Christians. Such people as Robert Torrens who stated in a House of Commons speech in 1827 that "We are co-operating in the scheme of Providence and are the favoured Instrument in causing Christian civilization to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

The person who opened up the southern portion of Australia for free settlement was Captain Charles Sturt, one of Australia's greatest and most heroic inland explorers.

He was a man of courage and when faced with major decisions would commit them confidently to God in prayer and thanksgiving. Sturt loved the majesty of the Australian bush and on a number of occasions his life was only spared due to what he acknowledged as divine Intervention. Throughout the pages of his journals Sturt shares his faith constantly, especially when writing to his wife. He used to pray continually for guidance, committing each day's journey to God.

Charles Sturt loved the majesty of the bush and often praised God for his creation. It was Sturt who in Feb. 1834 wrote to the Colonial Office and believed that the men of South Australia would emulate America in pioneering the inland. He urged them to convince the Aborigine that the white man was coming as a brother. He urged them to protect the Aborigine against aggression, to care for them as children of God.

Sturt like Marsden was prophetic about the new nation of Australia.

"If indeed, I have been an instrument, in the hands of Providence, in bringing about the speedier establishment of the province of South Australia, I am thankful that I have been permitted to witness the happiness of thousands whose prosperity I have unconsciously promoted. Wherever I may go, to whatever part of the world my destinies may lead me, I shall yet hope one day to return to my adopted home, and make it my resting-place between this world and the next. When I went into the interior I left the province with storm-clouds overhanging it, and sunk in adversity. When I returned the sun of prosperity was shining on it, and every heart was glad. Providence had rewarded a people who had borne their reverses with singular firmness and magnanimity. Their harvest fields were bowed down by the weight of grain; their pastoral pursuits were prosperous; the hills were yielding forth their mineral wealth, and peace and prosperity prevailed over the land. May the inhabitants of South Australia continue to deserve and to receive the protection of that Almighty power, on whose will the existence of nations as well as that of individuals depends!"

Then there were men who believed God had a special purpose in the Christian settlement

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of Australia. Men such as the Permanent Under Secretary of the Colonial Office, James Stephen, who believed the government should be governed by biblical principles and encouraged Christian families to settle here and Stephens was influential in the choice of Christian leaders in the colonising of the country.

### ***Co-operating with Providence***

Stephen's desire was to establish Australia as a Christian progressive and wise nation within reach of the Chinese, Hindu and Muslim nations.

Certainly we are seeing the continuing fulfilment of this great prophetic statement given to the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's land George Arthur, in 1824 as we see China opening up to the Word of God, and as we see missionaries continuing to be sent out from this nation.

Many Christians were instrumental in the formation of South Australia, amongst them was a man named Robert Torrens who stated in a speech in the House of Commons in 1827 that:

"we are co-operating in the scheme of Providence and are the favoured instruments in causing Christian civilisation to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea".

George Fife Angas, who resigned as a Colonisation Commissioner to take up a position of the board of directors of the South Australia Company, was also a committed Christian and the real father of South Australia's religious liberties. 'My great object was, in the first instance, to provide a place of refuge for pious dissenters of Great Britain, who could in their new home discharge their consciences before God in civil and religious duties without any disabilities.'<sup>8</sup> It was the hope of Angas

"that South Australia will become the headquarters for the diffusion of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere."<sup>9</sup>

It was claimed that in fifty years he circulated over one million copies of scripture, many millions of tracts and two million copies of devotional books such as Spurgeon's 'Morning by Morning' and 'Evening by Evening'.<sup>10</sup> Angas also provided a voluntary non-denominational elementary education for sixpence a week. The schools' sole textbook was the Bible!

Within eight years of Adelaide being established there were more preachers and places of worship than, by comparison, the number in the first decade of New England, USA and within ten years, over half the population of 9,000 were attending two of the denominational churches, Episcopal and Congregational, and further church buildings were necessary. From its settlement in 1836 to 1915 Sunday school enrolments far exceeded those of day schools!

Many Christians settled in this colony, the first in the British Empire not to be officially aligned to the Church of England. A group of German Christians, who had been persecuted in Prussia for refusing to allow a secular sovereign to dictate to them about their faith, settled at Klemzig on the Torrens and at Hahndorf. One of their leaders, Pastor Kavel declared "May South Australia prosper; and all its inhabitants, its immigrants, and all the natives grow together as one blessed nation labouring unanimously for the advancement of those great objectives."

## ***Prayer and meditation***

A South Australian Governor Sir George Grey later to be instrumental in the founding of New Zealand shared with James Stephen the view that 'prayer and meditation on God's Holy Word ... were the inexhaustible, unfathomable source of all pure consolation and spiritual strength.'

## ***ANZACs and Israel***

The Australian and New Zealand armed forces commonly known as ANZAC's have served in both WW1 and WW2 as well as other theatres of war. Amongst the major achievements has been the Australian Light Horse charge at Beersheba with 800 men on horseback on October 31st, 1917, when God used one of the most recent nations in the world to take Jerusalem from the Turks and Germans, liberating Jerusalem from four hundred years of rule by the Turkish Ottoman Empire, - eleven Crusades throughout history had been unable to achieve, the military genius of Napoleon and the British Army with 50,000 British Infantry had fought bravely but were driven back, was accomplished by 800 fresh-faced Australian Light Horsemen at Beersheba. On 31st October 1917, the day of the Beersheba charge, the British Government drafted the Balfour Declaration, which was the foundation for the recognition of the State of Israel.

The Recessional was an ode written by the English poet Rudyard Kipling in 1897. It was originally published in the Times of London for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. The poem struck a chord and speedily became an imperial hymn opening with the words God of our fathers, known of old and set to the tune Melita. It was composed just in time for use in the commemoration of the dead from the South African War and has since become even more famous as the source of the often quoted words Lest we forget in ANZAC Day ceremonies held annually on the 25<sup>th</sup> April to commemorate the dead especially of the two world wars.

## ***Australian Days of Prayer***

On the 11th June 1738, John Wesley blew the first trumpet call of the great evangelical revival which was to have a deep and lasting effect on Britain and on those in succeeding generations, some immigrating to Australian shores.

Fifty years after the arrival of the first fleet, the Governor of N.S.W., George Gipps, a Christian, proclaimed Sunday, November 2, 1838 a national day of fasting and humiliation because of the severe drought. Within two days heavy rains began to fall causing many to come down with the flu!

Fifty seven years later on the 11th September, 1895 a day of prayer was again called in similar circumstances. Three weeks later a day of thanksgiving was proclaimed to thank God for the breaking of the drought.

During this time Christians were coming together to discuss the Federation Movement and many were desiring to see God acknowledged as the ruler of the nations and so it was acknowledged in the preamble to our Constitution "...humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God..."

Even the Sydney Morning Herald's Editorial dated 14th April, 1897 stated "no Christian could in conscience vote for a Federation Bill that did not recognise God"!

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Churches also campaigned:

"that there also be embodied in the said Constitution, or in the Standing Orders of the Federal Parliament, a provision that each daily session of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Federal Parliament be opened with a prayer by the President and Speaker or by a Chaplain" .



[ 5903 ]

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

NEW SOUTH WALES

Government Gazette.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

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No. 612.]

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER.

[1895.

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DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

NEW SOUTH WALES, } Proclamation by His Excellency The Honorable Sir FREDERICK MATTHEW  
to wit. } DARLEY, Knight, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of New South Wales and  
(L.S.) } its Dependencies.  
FREDK. M. DARLEY,  
Lieutenant-Governor.

WHEREAS in consideration of the very serious calamities from which the Colony is now suffering, by reason of the protracted Drought, it is proper that a day should be set apart on which all persons may unite in Humiliation and Prayer to Almighty God to obtain, through His Divine Mercy, a mitigation or removal of these calamities: And whereas it is right and expedient that an opportunity should be given to the Clergy and Ministers of Religion of all Denominations, and all others, Her Majesty's subjects in the Colony of New South Wales, to observe such a day of Humiliation and Prayer: Now, therefore, I, the Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, with the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby direct that Sunday, the fifteenth day of September instant, be appointed for the purpose aforesaid, and express the earnest hope that all classes of the community will join with reverence and humility in this solemn appeal to the Divine Mercy.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House, Sydney, this eleventh day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, and in the fifty-ninth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

By His Excellency's Command,  
JAMES N. BRUNKER.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

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SYDNEY:

Printed and Published by CHARLES POTTER, Government Printer, Phillip-street, 11th September, 1895.

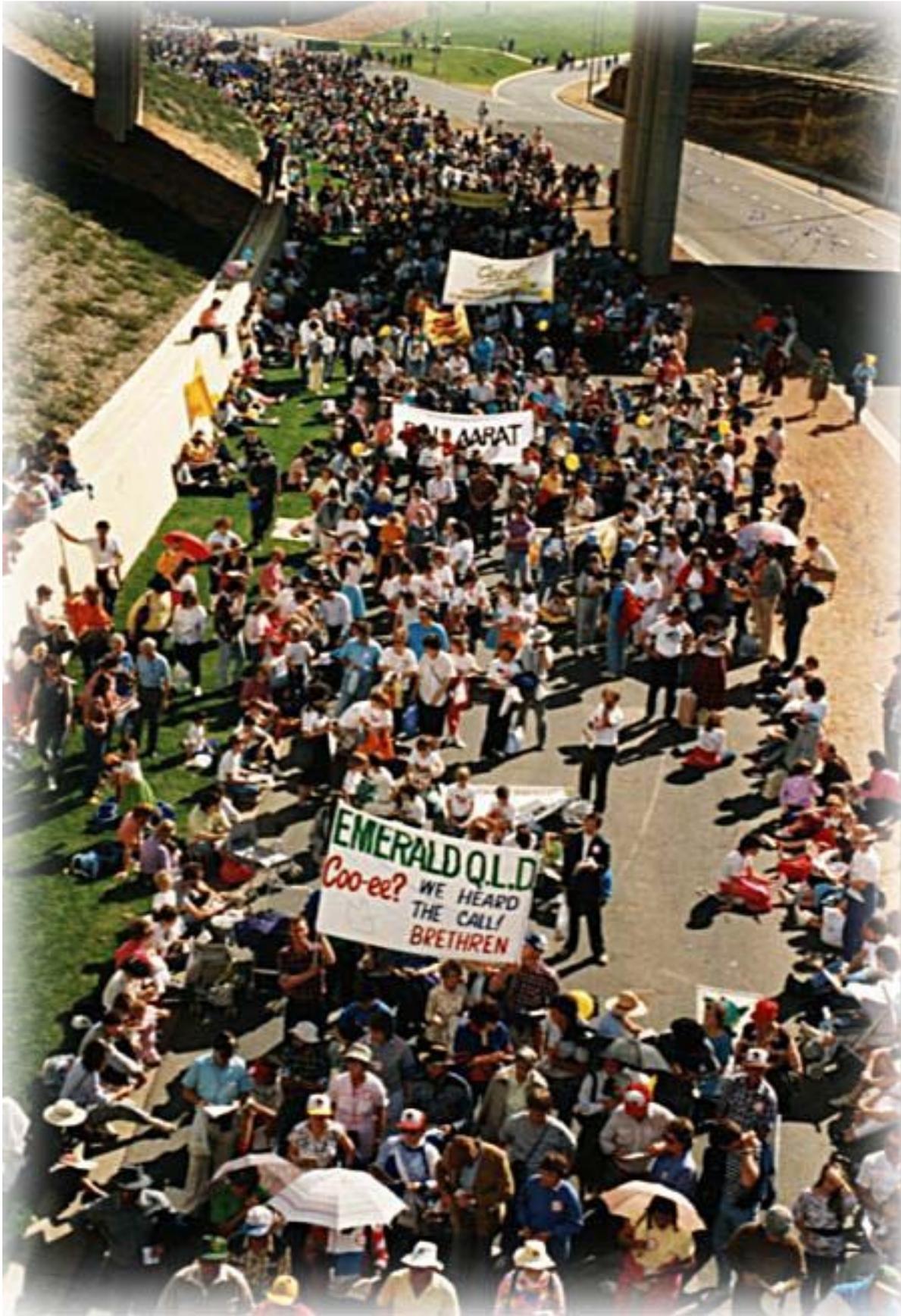
## The Hand of God: His Story of Australia

They also asked for the Governor-General to be empowered to proclaim National Days of Thanksgiving & Repentance. Over a hundred years later in 2004, the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery, has fulfilled the desire of many Christians in Australia in the 1890's, and indeed this new millennium, and launched a National Day of Thanksgiving which was for the first time on the 29 May 2004. In 2011 the inaugural National Day of Prayer and Fasting was held.

The first Sunday in the 20th Century was proclaimed Commonwealth Sunday and Christians were called to pray for the Nation. During the 1940's as the Second World War began to take its horrific toll and Australia was being threatened, particularly after the bombing of Darwin, several days of prayer were held. One of these was called by King George VI throughout the Commonwealth.

Australia's biggest prayer meeting was held in 1988 during the Bicentenary Celebrations when 35, 000 people surrounded the New Parliament House in the Nation's Capital, triple the number who attended the official opening.

A service for employees working on the building was conducted by a chaplain later in the week and a Christian service of Parliament in the Great Hall to mark the beginning of the first session of Parliament in the New Parliament House was attended by over 2,000 people.



*National Gathering 1988, Canberra*

## ***Recognition of God in the Preamble of the Constitution***

It is unlikely Federation of the States would have been approved if the preamble had not included reference to Almighty God, as alluded to by Mr Lyne (NSW) in the debate. Some members of the constitutional convention had reservations, but with the inclusion of section 116, this was resolved and the "recognition insertion" was carried unanimously. Section 116 states:

"The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth."

The concluding remarks by Sir John Downer in the " Recognition" debate are extremely noteworthy, both in relation to the English Constitution and Christianity, and to his determination that "the Commonwealth will be from its first stage a Christian Commonwealth".

" I desire to say just a few words, because I think there is a more serious question involved than the mere insertion of the words of this amendment. I am sure that we all listened with great pleasure to the speech of Mr Higgins on the subject. He reminded us of the decision in America that the Christian religion is a portion of the American Constitution, and of the enactments that were passed in consequence. I do not know whether it has occurred to honorable members that the Christian religion is a portion of the English Constitution without any decision of the subject at all. It is part of the law of England which I should think we undoubtedly brought with us when we settled in these colonies... I feel more strongly than ever that that ought to be done, because I can very well understand the way in which the very persons who are presenting petitions and asking for this recognition would resent the consequences if they found that the religious control was taken away from the state and put into the Commonwealth. For my own part, I think it is of little moment whether the words are inserted or not. The piety in us must be in our hearts rather than on our lips. Whether the words are inserted or not, I think they will have no meaning, and will have no effect in extending the power of the Commonwealth; because the Commonwealth will be from its first stage a Christian Commonwealth, and, unless its powers are expressly limited, may legislate on religious questions in a way that we now little dream of."

## ***Background Note on the United States of America being "A Christian Nation"***

In 1892 the United States Supreme Court determined, in the case of the Church of the Holy Trinity vs. United States (143 United States 457 1892), that America was a Christian nation from its earliest days. The court opinion, delivered by Justice Josiah Brewer, was an exhaustive study of the historical and legal evidence for America's Christian heritage. After examining hundreds of court cases, state constitutions, and other historical documents, the court came to the following conclusion:

"Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and institutions are emphatically

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Christian ... This is a religious people. This is historically true.

From the discovery of this continent to the present hour there is a single voice making this affirmation... We find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth... These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."

### **Opening of the Australian Parliament 9 May 1901- A Christian Service**



Painted by Tom Roberts. Further information is to be found at

<http://www.peo.gov.au/students/cl/first.html>

Opening of Parliament of the Commonwealth included the singing of the Hundredth Psalm accompaniment by an orchestra with His Excellency the Governor-General reading the following prayers:

O Lord, our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from Thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth, most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold our most gracious Sovereign Lord King Edward, and so replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit that he may always incline to Thy will and walk in Thy way.

Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts, grant him in health and wealth long to live, strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies; and finally, after this life he may attain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

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Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, we humbly beseech Thee to bless our gracious Queen Alexandra, George Duke of Cornwall and York, the Duchess of Cornwall and York, and all the Royal Family; endue them with Thy

Holy Spirit; enrich them with Thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to Thine everlasting Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to regard with Thy merciful favour the people of this land, now united in one Commonwealth. We pray for Thy servants the Governor-General, the Governors of the States, and all who are or who shall be associated with them in the administration of their several offices.

We pray Thee at this time to vouchsafe Thy special blessing upon the Federal Parliament now assembling for their first session, and that Thou wouldst be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of Thy glory and to the true welfare of the people of Australia, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has taught us when we pray to say -

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. - Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, evermore. - Amen.

The Australian \$20 note features the Rev John Flynn (1880-1951), who founded the Flying Doctor Service and the Australian Inland Mission, whose Presbyterian Ministers were known as the boundary riders of the bush, and was responsible for establishing communication throughout the inland with the pedal wireless, giving a mantle of support and protection over inland Australia, that was the size of Western Europe.

The bottom right of the picture depicts one of the five camels Flynn purchased in 1913 for his Patrol Padres to complete their Central Australia mission work.



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The work of Pastor David Unaipon is shown on the \$50 note. An aboriginal, he was a writer, inventor and Pastor.

You can see a Church on the bottom left.



Caroline Chisholm (1808-1877) was on the \$5 note for over twenty years up till 1992 when polymer notes were introduced. She first arrived in New South Wales in 1838 then worked to establish better conditions, including suitable employment and accommodation, for young migrant women. Her work expanded to include facilitating the passage to Australia of families. What Australia needed most, in her view, were "good and virtuous women". In six years she settled eleven thousand people as servants and farmers in N.S.W. alone.



## **Swearing on the Bible in Court and Parliament**

In the Christian oath, the words used are "The evidence you shall give to the Court [and jury sworn] shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Say 'I swear'. The witness then says "I Swear"

The experience of a Criminal Defence Lawyer in Adelaide, is that the majority of people still swear on the Bible rather than make an affirmation.

Most parliamentarians, Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers are sworn in using the Bible. The Governor-General invites those to stand in their place and take the Bible in their right hand. The Oath is read with the reply "I do. So help me God!"

## ***Our Charitable Institutions***

Thankfully, today most of the major Australian charitable and welfare agencies continue as Christian Institutions such as the Salvation Army, Anglicare, Wesley Centre in Sydney and St Vincent de Paul Society. Christian churches have been responsible for the development of social services, more so than in England or the USA. Our education system was pioneered by the Chaplains and was overtly Christian up to the 1880's when the Anglicans ganged up with the non conformist churches attempted to push the Roman Catholics out of educating their own children. Fortunately this attempt failed and they continued their own denominational schooling system. When sectarianism commences, secularisation triumphs. Let that be a lesson to us all as we realise the decisions of parents and their organisations affect future generations. Decisions have consequences!

In 2011 the Federal government increased funding for chaplaincy to increase the number by a thousand. Attempts in 2011 to take out BC & AD from the national history curriculum have been defeated.

## ***Conclusion***

Hebrews 11:32 says 'and what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised.

So also we could continue about many of the early pioneers. People such as Matthew Flinders; or Captain John Molloy with his wife Georglana, "The Madonna of the bush". who settled in Western Australia, and were prayed over prophetically by other Charismatic Irvingite Christians before coming to Australia.

There was of course the Moravian Missionary Latrobe family of Victoria and the remarkable Ludwig Leichhardt who explored much of Australia's north.

Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, and another Prime Minister, George Reid, were trained in public speaking and inspired to enter public life through the vision of a Christian minister, Dr Steel. Evangelical Christians have also been responsible for the creation of some of Australia's foremost inventions. John Ridley, a devout Christian, created the labour saving stripper, and the famous "Sunshine" Harvester was invented by H.V. McKay, who named it in honour of the "Son". It was manufactured in what was to be the largest factory in Australia for many years.

In recent times in Australia we find committed Christians involved in every major area of life such as judges, politicians, scientists, educationists, artists, sports and business people. Christians have also been at the very forefront of community social campaigns and public movements active in preserving Australia's Constitutional heritage and democratic freedoms.

Thus we can see that Australia's discovery, settlement and growth can easily be explained in terms of God's intentions for our nation. He has used His men and women to lead in so many areas of development that even the most humanist historian would have difficulty explaining away the mass of evidence at which this article only hints. If the past is misinterpreted then so is the significance of the future.

It is important that we don't continue to be deceived by the secularization process which

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denies the sovereignty of God in history, and be like Esau who sold his birth right for a meal when Psalm 61:56 says: "You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name."

Christians of Australia can rejoice in the contribution of our Christian forebears and confidently step out in faith aware of God's great intentions for our island continent.

For further understanding of Australia's Christian heritage please go to:Ch

[www.chr.org.au](http://www.chr.org.au)