For Faith and Ideology

Di Gabb and Roberta Julian

Introduction

Contrary to most thinking about the Dutch as hardy individualists who set out on emigration ventures through choice or post war adversity, two distinct groups of Dutch settlers to Australia separated by a period of forty years illustrate a different phenomenon – one driven by faith and ideology, difficult economic circumstances and determined group organization. The earlier group who came from the Buiksloot district of Amsterdam before World War I sought to establish a self-sufficient farming community based on the left-wing ideology of the time, while the later group arriving in the 1950s was motivated by strong religious principles rooted in the Calvinist faith. This chapter outlines stories of painstaking efforts to overcome adversity in alien environments, spurred by common ideals and supported by community cohesion.

The stories of group migrations can be told in different ways – at the level of personal reminiscence, inherited family anecdotes and the chance discovery of records and memorabilia. Source materials may often be limited to oral history accounts with the addition of sparse family documents like personal letters, immigration permits, shipping lists, bills of sale and fading photographs. Evidence of the migration and settlement experience of the young Dutch immigrants to Southern Queensland prior to

the Great War described in the first part of this paper was gleamed from sources such as these.

On the other hand the community of ‘Little Groningen’, Tasmania described in part two of this paper has been researched in macro-level terms. This sociological focus answers many questions about group change and group processes leading to socio-economic development. While we a re able to conjecture the effects of these patterns on personal lives, the stories of individuals are not the focus.

Both approaches have a part to play in illuminating aspects of the migration story. We rely on the one for glimpses of the fine details of the lives of individuals, and on the other for the broad sociological and historical perspective. Both of the groups described here have in common the fact that the migration experience which profoundly altered their lives was entered into principally for reasons of faith and ideology.

Dutch Pioneers in Queensland[1]

The Circumstances

Around 1910, a group of disaffected young Dutch people born in the second last decade of the nineteenth century met in the outer Amsterdam district of Buiksloot Canal to discuss the possibility of migration to Australia and of farming cooperatively there.

They were of working class background with personal histories of family hardship, meagre diet, premature family death through communicable disease, overcrowded, damp living conditions and minimal education at primary school levels. They had also experienced times of religious conflict between Calvinists and Catholics, and the ensuing political repercussions which divided families and communities.

They had grown up at a time when families in recent memory had moved from rural areas as a result of the Agrarian Depression of 1878- 1895, leaving behind traditional community and religious loyalties. They were caught up by industrial unrest in the cities, high unemployment and the increasing demands on the part of working class men and women to secure minimum standards in their conditions of employment, in terms of safety, hours of work, child labour and insurance against ill health.

There were popular social democrat gatherings which in trade schools in the evenings inspired them to demand greater access to education, female emancipation and universal suffrage. They listened to Pieter Jelles Toelstra, a Frisian lawyer who emerged as the powerful and inspirational leader of the Social Democratic Labour Party (*Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij*) and who reacted to measures by the government of the day to reform labour with cries of "social procrastination". (Lourens, 1944: 194)

With the rise in trade union membership and increasing numbers of declared socialists determined to maintain solidarity with working people, the government attempted to pass anti-strike laws which resulted in a general strike and increased factional divisions between religious based unions and those distinctively anti-religious. Even

the vote for all working men and women was not implemented until 1917 when the Constitution was eventually revised and a public proclamation took place.

'Too little, too late' may well have been the catch cry of that young group of committed idealists who formed what they dubbed *The Company* – in English, in preparation for a new life in British Australia. They had been exposed to migration propaganda, assisted passages were a reality and they were ready to embrace an optimistic set of selective facts and beliefs about how hospitable the new land would be and how well they would be able to meet all challenges.

The Settlers

The Company was led and inspired by Hubert Neering, an ex-merchant seaman, cabinet maker and self educated bachelor. Many of his followers were tradesmen with low levels of formal education but healthy political appetites. A number were natural intellectuals, self taught and interested in the arts. Many of them were under thirty; with the exception of their leader, all were married or betrothed and many had small children. The women reflected an early feminism: politically aware, they had adventurous attitudes toward migration and even favoured loose-flowing garments contrary to the boned silhouettes of the day; many had had worked as domestic servants or seamstresses before marriage. Some marriages had been formed between Catholic and Calvinist partners so the anti-religious stance of socialism eliminated possible grounds for religious conflict within marriage and child-rearing.

They expressed a yearning to farm even though they were largely quite ignorant of farming anywhere let alone in unfamiliar Australian conditions. The only exception to this was Jannetje de Vries who had come from a farming family before marrying and settling in Amsterdam. Frans Lecker had attempted to learn some milking skills from a local farmer near Amsterdam and carried a letter to prove it; he also gave 'farmer' as his occupation when embarking.

About twenty surnames of families and their occupations have been identified as those migrating during the period 1910-1920 and who were acquainted with each other in Amsterdam or were closely connected with the planning of the chain migration undertaking organized by *The Company* under the auspices of Neering who had visited Australia briefly before. This group represents approximately eighty to ninety individuals

(Table One about here)

Roelofs-Lecker-Smit (an extended family) de Vries, Otterspoor and Friends.

Despite their youth and close family ties, Jacob Roelofs, a cabinet maker and his sisters Cornelia and Marie had taken the decision to leave Amsterdam and their parents and four other sisters with little hope of ever returning. Jacob and his friend Anton Smit, Marie's fiancé, were the first to embark in late 1910 in the expectation that they would be able to establish a farming life in Queensland for their families in co-operation with other migrating friends.

They were followed by Klaas de Vries, a carpenter, his wife Jannetje and baby daughter Aagje aboard the *S.S. Zieten* which left Antwerp on 9th June 1912. Also on board were Neering, Herman Souwer, a bank clerk, his wife Hendrika and their three children, Herman, Max and Eliza, and Atze and Lena Spoor and their four children Rommert, Pieter, Klass and Christina.

Jacob Roelofs wife, Maria Sagel, set off alone with their two young sons Jacob (aged three) and Hendrik (aged two) aboard the *Scharnhorst*, also out of Antwerp. At the last moment her old mother Alida Sagel insisted on making the voyage too. It was to be four years before her husband was able to join her. They were soon joined by Cornelia Roelofs, husband Frans Lecker, ex-Dutch navy seaman, and baby daughter Johanna, and Cornelia's younger sister Marie.

The Leckers, Marie Roelofs and an unaccompanied youth Carel Pohlmeyer aged nineteen embarked from Portsmouth in early 1914 aboard the *S. S. Limerick* while the *S. S. Waipara* left London on the 9th of April of the same year carrying Jacobus and Tietsje van Noort, both tailors, and Arnoldus and Leentje Schuurs and their children Jan, Galina and little Arnoldus.

Like Frans Lecker, a number of the men had anticipated their future calling by recording in ships' lists their occupations as farmer or farm labourer, even though there us no evidence that as city dwellers they had any agricultural knowledge or experience.

The Otterspoor family also undertook the journey about this time only to experience the immeasurable loss of their teenage sons who were killed in fighting for their new country in the Great War soon after arriving. Their grief was so immense that they returned to Holland after only a few years in Australia, but by about 1920 they found themselves migrating again to Queensland, and settling in the vicinity of their old friends the Leckers and Smits in Rocklea, south of Brisbane.

Journeys and Settlement

Each sea voyage took about nine week; men and women were segregated into separate communal cabins. As rumours of impending war circulated, there were incidents of extreme hostility between German and Dutch women forcibly cabined together. Children died of dysentery from contaminated ship's food in alarming numbers; remarkably twenty month old Johanna remained healthy probably due to her mother's foresight in feeding her only the preserved food she had prepared herself.

The threat of war kept all the *Limerick's* passengers on board even when in ports of call. With great joy they savoured first land at Townsville where Frans hiked up the rocky bluff of Castle Hill with his little daughter clinging to his shoulders, to better survey the unfamiliar landfall and take stock of his surroundings.

Little did they know that the *Limerick* and all her hands were to meet death by torpedo on the return voyage.

Other tedious land journeys followed for the settlers: firstly by train and buggy to outlaying districts south of Brisbane where as part of a community of friends and relatives as neighbours they endured the first few years of temporary settlement in huts with dirt floors, the men engaging in transitory work as labourers or on the Brisbane Tramways to earn enough money to purchase small holdings of cleared land or select (rent) larger holdings of undeveloped land. About this time it seems each family had to make a decision based on prevailing perceptions and recent settlement experience: whether to opt for a rural life on the outskirts of Brisbane, or to continue with the original plan of a communal farm in remote and undeveloped country. This would mean leaving the relative safety and services of Brisbane and pressing on further into the interior country, unseen and undeveloped, without any supports or facilities.

For the Lecker family, ill health and the nearness of the Roelofs and Smit relatives who had decided to settle near Brisbane, helped them to decide to settle in Rocklea, south of Brisbane, where Frans along with his brother in law Jacob Roelofs, a cabinet maker, set about building a permanent house.

However the de Vries family took the more intrepid option and set out for Cattle Creek, leaving the train at the Gayndah rail head and walking the thirty miles to a site at the junction of Cattle Creek and O'Bil O'Bil Creek. The Prickly-Pear Land Act of 1910 had made it possible for impoverished migrants to select land in remote areas for agricultural or grazing purposes for as little as five pounds, which held the promise of conversion to freehold tenure after a fixed number of years of residence and after improvement to a set value. They were encouraged by Neering who had visited

Queensland earlier and was quite convinced that clearing and farming the land available in the Burnett area north of Gayndah would be well within their reach. It is unlikely that he had actually seen the land in that earlier visit or had had the opportunity to learn anything about the prevailing conditions in that region.

The de Vries and Souwer families together with Neering settled on the north side of the Mundubberra, while the Spoor and Schuurs families were joined by five others, by name of Fros, Kammerling, van der Hove, Boes and Mour and established themselves on the southern side of the Burnett River which become known as Glenrae.

Bark huts were built and remained the only housing for the next two decades; Klaas de Vries and his friends felled the tree themselves for all building including the permanent house that took him three years to build and which the family moved into in 1937.

Wells were dug and water was pumped by hand, cattle yards and sheds were built, and the settlers struggled against the erratic seasons bring drought, bushfire and floods.

At the same time they were under threat of losing the battle against the hardy prickly-pear, the elimination of which would determine the improved value of the property and its conversion to freehold. Letters dating from 1926 between the land authorities and Klaas de Vries and his old friend Hermann Souwer attest to their failure to eradicate the prickly-pear infestation, which had detrimental effects on the valuation of the land which Souwer described as “ridiculous low” *[sic]*.

The settler's lack of knowledge of farming techniques and soils added to the problems they experienced in establishing a dairy herd which was sometimes decimated by tick fever and the weakening effects of drought when all feeding and watering had to be done by hand. When times were especially lean, the resourceful young Dutchmen turned to other bush staples: cutting scrub, ringbarking trees, possum and wallaby snaring for skins and shooting wild turkeys for meat.

Looking Back

Aagje de Vries recalls her primary schools days in a school held in a tent for many years, and the privations of the young solo teachers forced by necessity to board with local families in their cramped huts. Despite the distance separating them the de Vries and Lecker families kept in close contact by letter. Cornelia made the long journey with five year old Johanna by train and dray to stay with the de Vries family when Frans had to seek labouring work in far off Cloncurry. Later Aagje came to board with the Leckers at Rocklea for the duration of her high school education at the Brisbane State High School. She and Johanna were the first of the group's children to complete secondary school, and later teacher's college. Johanna became the first university graduate of the group.

The sense of community and common purpose was sustained throughout those difficult settlement years among this Dutch group in the southern outskirts of Brisbane and the Cattle Creek area. The help they gave each other in the face of adversity was the only resource they had. The original socialist co-operative work

venture was translated into a sense of neighbourly community with families eventually working independently of each other, but offering help in times of adversity. Family anecdotes ascribe the failure of the original communal farm to the problems the women had in sharing kitchen facilities!

However, other real pressures remained. During World War I some of these Dutch wives and children were vilified as Germans in schools and shops. People with halting English were conspicuous in Anglo-Celtic Queensland. There were periods when there was talking of returning to the homeland. Letters dating from 1918 – 1920 from the Roelofs parents in Holland reflect this possibility, and the ensuing tension between longing to see their children and grandchildren again and giving dire warnings of the extreme privations of life in contemporary Holland should the young emigrants somehow find their way back. In Brisbane times were particularly hard during the Great Depression when families like the Leckers relied on what they could grow and sell. Johanna recalls having to sell boxes of strawberries early in the morning before attending university lectures.

The Brisbane group seemed to maintain a closeness with Dutch culture despite the fact that almost all the child migrants and those born in Australia married outside the Dutch community. They sang Dutch songs and passed on anecdotes about life in the old country. Somehow some of them managed to maintain the use of the Dutch language for some fifty years: even today some Dutch words are used in family contexts by grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Touches of blue and white Delft china and polished brass are still cherished icons form a long time ago.

Continuity

Both the Brisbane and the Cattle Creek groups maintained links with Holland through personal correspondence over a period of eighty-seven years, and the present day meetings, friendships and recent business links between Dutch and Australian third cousins are frequent. None of the migrating adults ever returned to Holland; their children fared better. Johanna revisited Holland for the first time when she was sixty four, and Jeanette Otterspoor did so at eighty three. For their grandchildren and great grandchildren returning to Holland is an achievable reality.

The Cattle Creek group have descendents still living in the Burnett area and other nearby central Queensland districts. Farming remains the occupation for at least two Australian born generations. Dan de Vries farmed his father Klaas' hard won dairy land until 1963, before moving to another farm. In 1996 there were twenty six descendents of Klaas and Jannetje, many of whom are engaged in the professions. Jacobus and Greetje Roelofs who fare welled their son, two daughter and families all those years ago in Amsterdam are now the forebears of seventy nine Australians whose middle class background reflect a variety of trades, businesses and professions. Similarly the thirty two descendents of Servanus and Hendrika Otterspoor are represented in a range of skilled occupations.

Clearly the migrant children and their subsequent families benefited from the hard work and personal sacrifice of the founding adult settlers who never reaped any real monetary reward for their labours during their lifetimes. Their satisfaction was realised in the relatively comfortable lives of their children and grandchildren. Their

source of support through the long years of loneliness and homesickness in an alien environment come from the strong sense of community that friends and relatives with shared political ideals established long ago near the cold grey Buiksloot Canal – where the sea rushes out making a strange gurgling noise.

The Lifecycle of a Post-War Dutch Community

The Dutch constitute the largest category of non-English speaking background immigrants in Tasmania. While many fit the stereotypical pattern of the individualistic Dutch immigrant who has assimilated and become indistinguishable from Anglo-Australians, others have established ethnic communities, most notably at Kingston in the south, Launceston in the north, and Penguin and Ulverstone on the north-west coast. (Watt, 1988)

The post-war Dutch immigrants referred to in this section constructed a highly visible ethnic community in southern Tasmania. This was despite the fact that, in line with the dominant orientation of the time, their goal was to assimilate. Their desire to 'become Australian' is illustrated by their high rate of naturalization and was made explicit in the forward to the 1961 Yearbook of the Reformed Churches of Australia written by a Reformed Church minister who was a prominent member of the community:

> We are warned against making overhasted *[sic]* statement. Immigration is a process, and its results are not to be judged after ten years, but rather after generations. …. Nevertheless …. Compared with Canada we surely have the favourite *[sic]* conditions of smaller congregations, with the advantage of getting integrated sooner.
> (VanderBom, 1961: 7. Italics added)

These Dutch migrants were distinguished from others in the wider society including Anglo-Australians and other Dutch migrants by a number of factors. These included chain migration, common national and regional origin, geographical isolation, common occupation, urban background in a predominantly rural environment, a unique dialect and previous membership in a minority religion. The members of this community identify religion as the most important of these differentiating characteristics; they define themselves as a *religious* community. Anglo-Australians, however, perceive the community as an *ethnic* community. These conflicting views are evident in the same Reformed Church publication, in which VanderBom surveys the history of the church from 1959-1961:

> It is true that some Australians have become interested in our cause, but there are only a very few that have joined hands with us to serve the common cause, and make our churches more fit to fulfil their earnest desire to become Reformed Churches *of Australia. Our name is clear enough*. At every suitable occasion it is advertised that we have our Australian and New Zealand born ministers. …. *However, the stigma that we are so Dutch, so foreign still torments us.*
> (VanderBom, 1961: 5-6. Italics added)

The following section provides a descriptive analysis of the lifecycle of an ethno-religious community among some post-war Dutch immigrants in Tasmania. Their integration into Australian society occurred via the development of a community whose identity shifted from 'ethnic' to religious over a thirty year period. The material for this discussion is drawn from ethnographic research, including in depth interviews, conducted in southern Tasmania between 1983 and 1987.[2]

Stage 1: The Establishment of an Ethno-religious Community

The Kingborough municipality in southern Tasmania, which is centred on Kingston, covers a geographical area of 358 square kilometres and included the rural-urban fringe suburbs of Kingston Beach and Blackman's Bay. Almost half (41.3 per cent) of the Netherlands born population of greater Hobart resides in Kingborough (Hugo, 1999: 58). The majority emigrated from Groningen, an isolated northern province of the Netherlands. It has a distinct regional culture which differentiates its residents from those raised in other provinces. They speak a dialect which is incomprehensible to those from other provinces and formally learn the Dutch national language at school. Unlike the southern provinces, the population of Groningen is predominantly Protestant with strong support for the orthodox Calvinist religion known as the *Gereformeerde Kerken* (Re-Reformed Churches). The members of these church, while comprising a minority group in the Netherlands as a whole, are over-represented in the northern provinces.[3]

In 1950 seven businessmen from Groningen, five of whom were Re-Reformed Church members, established a building company at Kingston. The land they chose, which later became known as 'Little Groningen', was sited on the outskirts of Kingston, approximately fifteen kilometres from Hobart, the state's capital city, along a narrow winding coastal road.

The construction company was registered as the Australian Building Corporation (ABC).[4] During the period 1952-1953 the ABC sponsored skilled tradesmen from Britain and the Netherlands as a means of ensuring that it developed a reputation for

quality workmanship. The majority were recruited from Groningen and were members of the Re-Reformed Church. Once they were settled in Tasmania these employees sponsored friends and relatives from diverse occupational backgrounds. Many were subsequently employed by the ABC providing a steady source of unskilled labour.

The majority of those who migrated to Kingston in the 1950s were young ambitious men. They were in a common economic situation, working for the same company, at similar stages of the lifecycle and living within walking distance of each other. A strong camaraderie among them was reinforced by common recreational activity: Saturdays and 'free' times after work were typically spent assisting each other in the construction of their own homes. This shared activity provided an opportunity to adhere to one of the important norms of the Reformed faith, that which urged members to utilize their time productively. Nevertheless, indicative of the 'social' nature of this past-time was the fact that 'there was always a beer available'[5] and many long-lasting friendships were established. Between Monday and Saturday these migrants spent all their time in each other's company. Opportunities to interact with Anglo-Australians were extremely limited.

Initially the majority attended St John's Presbyterian Church in Hobart where the official doctrine was similar to that of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. However, they soon reached the conclusion that the 'modernist' or 'liberalist' trend in the Presbyterian Church opposed their own orthodox belief system. They decided that in order to maintain the purity of their faith it would be necessary to establish their own independent congregation. The decision to establish a Reformed Church

coincided with similar developments occurring among former members of the Gereformeerde Kerken residing in Penguin in northern Tasmania, Melbourne and Sydney. (den Brave, 1976 cited in Overberg, 1981: 28) In explaining this development VanderBom stated that:

> The reason for the establishment of the Reformed Churches was not a matter of nationality but of CONFESSIONAL IDENTITY.
> (VanderBom, undated)

The Reformed Church of Australia is a conservative Calvinist denomination in that the creeds to which it adheres are Calvinist in origin. These are the Westminster Confession, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort. Bouma (1984: 5) explains that:

> More strictly, conservative Calvinism can usefully be defined as continued adherence to the Canons of Dort. This statement of faith was formulated by a Synod (including representatives of all the Calvinist groups at the time) which met in the Netherlands town of Dordrecht from 1618-19 in the early days of the Thirty Years War. …. Here are stated that the core beliefs which …. separate classical Calvinism from other systems of reformation theology and, more particularly the conservative Calvinist form the 'softened' Calvinist.

The Canons of Dort essentially denigrate human potential and the value of human action in order to exalt divine act. This theological position is an unpopular one which runs against the grain of many features of western culture. It is not surprising therefore that the *Gereformeerde* stream of Dutch migrants who settled in southern Tasmania found no organization to cater to their religious requirements.

The first Reformed Church was established on 24th February 1952. It was built using the voluntary labour of Reformed Dutch migrants and located close to the centre of

Kingston where these migrants were residentially concentrated.[6] Fund-raising activities were community based and served to further strengthen the friendships developing among these Dutch migrants.

Apart from the confessional identity and doctrinal differences, the Reformed Church of Australia differed from the Presbyterian Church and other more 'liberal' Calvinist denominations in the stringency of church discipline. Sunday was defined as 'a day of rest' and strict adherence to religious norms was expected. Members were expected to attend two services each Sunday. The rest of the day would be spent in 'quiet' activities such as reading, visiting friends for coffee, going on family walks, Bible discussion and prayer. Members of the 'typical' Dutch family at Kingston during the 1950s were dressed in the 'Sunday best' all day. They were unable to join in the activities of local Anglo-Australians such as swimming at the beach, golf and informal games of football, tennis and cricket. Opportunities to interact with Anglo-Australians were even more limited on Sundays than they were throughout the rest of the week.

Stage Two: Growth and Development

Once the reformed Church had been established at Kingston, the demographic characteristics of the area gradually began to change. Many of the Dutch who had arrived as single men had completed their houses and were in a position to marry. To ensure they married a person of 'positive background' many returned temporarily to the Netherlands. This period often lasted up to two years after which they returned to Tasmania with their new wives. Despite having to leave their family and friends,

these women would recall that they were happy to emigrate knowing that awaiting them in Tasmania was a house, other Dutch people of the Reformed faith and an established Reformed Church.

Close social relationships developed between the Reformed Dutch women. The large construction work undertaken by the ABC was located at sites throughout the state so that husbands were frequently absent from home for a week at a time. Wives recall their feelings of loneliness, depression and isolation which were enhanced by the limited availability and expense of transport into the city. The minister of the Kingston Reformed Church during the 1960s considered the isolation of the women to be one of the church's major social problems at that time. In attempting to solve this problem he encourages the women to develop their own associations such as the Ladies Guild.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s Dutch migration to Tasmania continued to increase. The growth of the Reformed Church was largely due to continued Dutch immigration and a high birth rate among members.[7]

(Table Two about here)

This rapid growth was enhanced by the fact that responsibility for sponsoring migrants was largely taken over by the Reformed Church as the Australian Building Corporation approached its optimum size. The Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands co-operated by distributing to its members pamphlets advertising the opportunities available in Tasmania and encouraging them to migrate.

During the 1960s some of the original employees of the Australian Building Corporation established their own small businesses in Kingston. These included construction companies, plumbing and electrical forms and a bakery. The first shopping centre in the area was built by two Reformed Dutch entrepreneurs within walking distance of Maranoa Road and the Reformed Church. The shop leases were predominantly owned by Reformed Dutch migrants and the two original corner stores were bought by Dutch migrants. Having reached a comfortable level of economic security, some of the early Reformed Dutch migrants began to establish firms in the central business district while others accepted managerial positions in large Hobart companies.

The subsequent decline in the residential concentration of Reformed Dutch migrants is reflected in the establishment of the Hobart Reformed Church on 9th May 1960 for which services were initially held at the Protestant Hall in the city. Many of its members had formerly attended the Kingston Reformed Church which accounts for the latter's slight decline in membership over the years 1960 and 1961. The central location of the Hobart Reformed Church further assisted the process of geographical dispersion which had already begun. Nevertheless, connections between the two churches were extremely strong and the development of a second Reformed Church did not indicate a split in the church. Rather it indicated its rapid expansion.

The process of community development which began with the establishment of the Kingston Reformed Church was accelerated in the early 1960s by the opening of the Calvin Christian School in Kingston. From the time of its establishment the schools was officially non-denominational and non-ethnic. (Watt, 1988)

> The Calvin Christian School is independent of either State or Church, and it is stressed that admission of children can be at any age and is not restricted by church affiliation.
> (Calvin Christian School, undated: 8)

Nevertheless, since it was based on a unique educational creed, almost all its students and staff were Reformed Church members of Dutch origin.[8] In addition members of the Reformed Church were encouraged to joins its organizing body, the Association of Christian Parent-Controlled Schools, whether or not their children were enrolled.

Fund raising activities were undertaken in the 1950s and included regular contributions and donations from Reformed Church members. In 1961 a five-acre block of land was purchased in Maranoa Road near the Reformed Church. The school took twenty six weeks to build and, as with the church, it was built using voluntary labour and was paid for before it was completed. The Calvin Christian school, named after the 16th Century reformer, was officially opened on 15th January 1962. The original building had three classrooms which accommodated seventy seven pupils. By 1968, increasing enrolments made extensions of a second unit necessary and a classroom and activity room were added. The second unit was completed in 1970 with the construction of two more classrooms.

Once the school was established it provided a basis for the development of numerous youth organizations such as sporting clubs, debating societies and musical groups. These reinforced social ties between community members, further limiting the opportunities for interaction with other members of the wider society, not only among the first generation but also among the second. Together with the Reformed Church,

the school served as an agent for socialization of the young into the norms and values of the community.

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that the Reformed Dutch migrants who settled in southern Tasmania during the 1950s and 1960s belonged to a variety of organizations established by church members. Most of their time was spent in each other's company and there were limited opportunities for interaction with either non-Reformed Dutch migrants or the Anglo-Australian population. Customs and traditions with which these migrants had been familiar in the Netherlands became part of their way of life in Tasmania. For example elaborate celebrations were held on Saint Nicolaas Day (6th December) rather than Christmas Day; the annual school fair became known as the *Oliebollen Festival* after the doughnut-like fare, traditionally eaten on New Year's Eve in the Netherlands, which was sold in large quantities; and it was not unusual to hear the Dutch language, and more particularly the Groningen dialect being spoken. (Watt, 1980)

While the social environment of the Kingston-Blackman's Bay area began to take on a Dutch atmosphere during the 1950s and 1960s, so did the physical environment. Houses were built following the traditional Dutch style of brightly coloured exteriors with steep gabled roofs. This was particularly evident in the immediate vicinity of the Reformed Church and Maranoa Road where there was a concentration of residents of Dutch origin.

Prior to the 1950s Anglo-Australians in southern Tasmania had had extremely limited experiences of European migrants. They had no knowledge or understanding of the

Reformed Church and tended to regard its members with suspicion. This attitude hindered the development of social relationships between them. Anglo-Australians perceived the community as an ethnic community; they interpreted Dutch national origin to be the basis for membership. Indicative of this perception was their common reference to the 'Dutch Reformed Church' and the 'Dutch School'. As a consequence of this perception it was assumed, incorrectly that all Dutch migrants, regardless of specific background characteristics, were members of the community.

Stage Three: Ethno-religious Community decline and Societal Integration

By the 1970s the ethno-religious community in southern Tasmania had reached the peak of its development. Paradoxically, it was at this time that its members began to achieve their original goal of integration: social relationships began to include Anglo-Australians and the ethno-religious organizations become incorporated into the institutional structures of the wider society. Thus, the boundaries of the community became less clearly defined. Importantly, this coincided with a shift in identity of the community and its members away from an emphasis on ethnicity to an emphasis on religion.

During the 1970s the ethno-religious community became less geographically and socially isolated. In the early 1970s a highway was constructed creating a direct link between Hobart and Kingston so that it was no longer necessary to follow the narrow, winding coastal road. Consequently, the area saw a gradual increase in the proportion of Australian born residents. The declining level of social closure among members of the ethno-religious community was not only dependent upon the influx of Anglo-

Australians into the Kingston area but on the outward movement of the Dutch themselves. As the level of economic security among Dutch migrants and their families increased some moved into the more elite suburbs of Taroona and Sandy Bay on the western shore and Lindisfarne, Bellerive and Howrah on the eastern shore. Other Dutch migrants moved out of Kingston in response to the relocation of the Hobart Reformed Church. In the late 1970s this congregation moved into a new building in Howrah. Shortly afterward another Christian Parent Controlled school, the Emmanuel Christian School, was established at nearby Rokeby.

In the 1970s the traditional sources of growth in the Reformed Church disappeared, namely Dutch immigration and high birth rates among members. Dutch immigration had virtually ceased, birth rates among the second generation were dropping to a rate coinciding with Australian norms and the previously low rate of withdrawal from the church was no longer being maintained. As a result of these changing conditions it became clear that the church could only continue to strengthen if alternative sources of growth were tapped.

During this period, the Reformed Church of Australia consciously attempted to alter its image. Characteristics which reinforced the perception of the church as an ethnic organization were downplayed and displays of its ‘openness’ to non-Dutch members were encouraged. Indicative of these changes has been the change in ministers at the Kingston Reformed Church. Until 1977 the ministers had been Dutch migrants but the more recently appointed ministers have been Australian born, though of Dutch origin. The church also embraced the worldwide evangelical, charismatic and ecumenical movements, these have enabled growth by shifting the basis of membership from

socialization and knowledge of doctrine to conversion. These changes, however, invited criticism from orthodox church members who believed that the new recruitment procedures violated the traditional and fundamental beliefs of the Reformed faith.

Membership patterns in one of the other major organizations of the ethno-religious community, the Calvin Christian School, also began to change during the 1970s leading to an increased recruitment of students from the wider society. In 1976, the school's Educational Creed was altered, enabling members from a wider range of Protestant churches to become members of the School Board. This change was a significant factor encouraging enrolments from outside the ethno-religious community. However, it invited criticism from some members of the Reformed Church who interpreted it as a further departure from orthodox doctrine which contributed to the liberalizing trend evident in the church. In addition, it became necessary to alter the school's traditional method of financing. Parents and other Reformed Church members had been totally responsible for the school's financial situation through a method of voluntary funding. This method functioned efficiently while the school educated only the children of Reformed Church members. However, as student numbers grew through enrolments from outside the ethno-religious community the School Board reluctantly made the decision to introduce fees.

The organizations which formed the basis of an ethno-religious community during the 1950s were undergoing significant transformation during the 1970s and 1980s. As their membership characteristics altered so did the role of these organizations in the functioning of the community. The eventual collapse of the Australian Construction

Company was a significant factor in the decline of the ethno-religious community. At the same time, the traditional overlap between ethnicity and religion was slowly declining within the Reformed Church and the Christian Schools. The conflict which developed over the introduction of fees at the Calvin School symbolizes the shift in the school's social location. It was no longer an organization central to the ethno-religious community but became a legitimate organization in the educational structure of the wider society. Similarly, there was a shift in the Reformed Church's position from being a focal point of a relatively segregated ethno-religious community to being one of a range of organizations in the religious structure of the wider society.

The recent changes demonstrate that the ethno-religious community established during the 1950s is adapting to changing conditions in the wider society by becoming less isolated. The level of closure in social relationships has been steadily declining and the traditional way of life of the original members of the ethno-religious community is clearly threatened by the recent changes brought about by increased contact with members of the wider society. This has created tensions and conflicts among members of the ethno-religious organizations as they attempt to mange the changes taking place.

Some members have responded by attempting to strengthen the traditional system. They have attempted to maintain a high degree of closure in social relationships by strengthening traditional methods of social control and supporting the strict adherence to traditional recruitment methods. Others have chosen alternative strategies which urge for, and support , the introduction of modifications to the traditional system so

that it can recruit members from the wider society and remain viable in the current context.

An analysis of current trends suggests that the latter course`of action is typical of the second and third generation. Indeed, it would appear that a process of adaptation is taking place which will lead to the decline of a distinct ethno-religious community. Members of the Reformed Church will thereby come to participate in the wider society in much the same way as other Australians. This has significant implications for the nature and meaning of 'ethnicity' among later generations. While Reformed Church members of Dutch origin remain aware and proud of their Dutch heritage, ethnicity has become less central than religion as an identity construct.

It can be argued that the ethno-religious community established in southern Tasmania has completed its lifecycle. The Reformed Dutch community which was established in the 1950s, then grew and consolidated itself in the 1960s and 1970s, is now disappearing as its members became integrated into the wider society and its organizations become less visibly Dutch. Following the pattern for many ethnic communities throughout Australia, it is likely that future generation will consider a Dutch identity to be one of a set of multiple identities of relevance in a multicultural society.

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Table One: Some of the Dutch Immigrant Families to Brisbane District 1908-1920

Surname	Number in Family	Occupation
Bergweever	4	Dressmaker
Dazilaar	4	Housepainter
Gottstein	3	Engineer
Kerstberger	1	Grandmother
Kohlhoven	2	Tailor, widower
Lecker	3	Ex Netherlands Navy, labourer
Nifterik	3	Insurance salesman
Otterspoor	8	Fitter and turner
Pohlmeyer	4	Diamond cutter
Puyper	4	Builder/plumber
Roelofs	4	Cabinet maker
Sagel	2	Grandparents
Smit	2	Gardener
van der Drift	2	Unknown
van Noort	2	Tailor
de Vries	3	Builder, farmer's daughter
Neering	1	Ex-merchant navy, artist
Souwer	5	Bank clerk
Fros	4	Tradesman, musician
Spoor	6	Unknown
Schuurs	4	Unknown
Kammerling	Unknown	Unknown
van der Hove	Unknown	Unknown
Boes	Unknown	Unknown
Mour	Unknown	Unknown

Table 2: Membership of Reformed Churches – Tasmania 1955-1965

	1/11/55	**1/1/57**	**1/1/59**	**1/7/60**	**1/7/61**	**1/7/63**	**1/7/65**
Kingston	287	328	399	355	361	411	417
Hobart	-	-	-	94	135	186	228
Ulverstone	164	184	149	187	219	222	203
Devonport	-	-	98	91	125	124	130
Launceston	40	156	150	211	211	203	217
Penguin	107	114	146	159	146	162	147

Source: Reformed Churches of Australia, *Yearbooks*, 1961-1966.

[1] Much of the information contained in this part was gained from the three surviving child emigrants, now octogenarian women: Johanna Needham (neé Lecker) Aagje Smith (neé de Vries) and Jeanette Harvey (neé Otterspoor) who provided their composite collection of family correspondence, documents and photographs. Special thanks are also due to Robyn de Vries and Elaine Bourke for their willingness to share family archives and photographs.

[2] Julian (1989) identifies two alternative patterns of adaptation among post-war Dutch immigrants in southern Tasmania, The first is characterized by the development of a visible ethnic community with a wide range of organizational development and relatively closed social networks leading to the maintenance of ethnic traits over time and generations. The second pattern involves the dispersion of migrant individuals within the receiving society, resulting in limited ethnic networks and hence a decline in the salience of ethnicity over time, both as the basis for social relationships and as an identity construct. Among these immigrants, no ethnic community was established. Thus, there are two types of Dutch immigrants in southern Tasmania: those who belong to an ethnic community and those who do not. In fact these two types of Dutch immigrants have very little in common other than their Dutch nationality and do not share a common identity. For a comprehensive analysis of both patterns of adaptation see Julian 1989.

[3] This pattern was strongly institutionalised in the Netherlands during the 1950s. The social structure of the Netherlands at the time consisted of *verzuilingen* or 'pillars' which are social blocs based on differing world views; namely Catholic, Protestant and secular. The Protestant bloc was further divided into the Dutch Reformed and *(Nederlands Hervormde*) and the Re-Reformed *(Gereformeerde Kerken)* (Bryant, 1981) The *Gereformeerde Kerken* were established in the *Afscheiding* of 1832 in which a group of conservative Calvinists broke with the *Hervormde Kerk* which was the state church of the Netherlands at the time (Bouma, 1984: 5)

[4] The Kingborough Council later named the road on which the ABC was sited , Groningen Road.

[5] This suggests that at least some of these early migrants had previously been members of the *Hervormde Kerk,* which was more liberal then the *Gereformeerde Kerken* on issues such as alcohol consumption.

[6] The original building was still being used until mid 1986. It was located at the end of Maranoa Road, the residents of which were largely Reformed Dutch migrants.

[7] A characteristically high birth rate among Dutch migrants in general and Reformed Church members in particular contributed to the growth of the church. During the 1950s and 1960s the Dutch immigrant family in Australia typically included between six and nine children. The Australian norm during the same period was three to four children. (ABS, 1976)

[8] The headmaster of the Calvin Christian School in 1981 estimated that 99 per cent of enrolments during the 1960s were children of Reformed Dutch migrants.