Transnationalism and Faith Communities: Case Studies of Serbian Orthodox Parishes in Australia and their Links across the World

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledgement; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Zvjezdana Peuraca

2\textsuperscript{nd} December 2011
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Aims</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Research methods</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Ethical issues</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER TWO: MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND SERBIAN ORTHODOXY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Transnationalism and diaspora</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Transnationalism and religious networks</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Orthodox Christianity</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The Serbian Orthodox Church</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 The Serbian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox churches in a global context</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 The Serbian Orthodox Church and its ecumenical relations</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER THREE: THE AUSTRALIAN DIOCESE: NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The Australian Diocese and its administration</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Four parish case studies</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Liturgical practices within the church calendar and life in the parishes</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Links and contacts across the world</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 The Serbian Orthodox and its integration into Australian society</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Religion, identity and Serbian Orthodoxy</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 The Serbian Orthodox community and its relationship with other religious communities</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Relations with other Orthodox churches in Australia</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 The Serbian Orthodox community: its historical legacy and its future</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: THE WEBSITES OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
4.1 Content analysis of the Serbian Orthodox websites 118

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Conclusions 130
5.2 Recommendations 138

LIST OF REFERENCES 141

LIST OF APPENDICES
Appendix 1: List of books on the Serbian community 154
Appendix 2: The Serbian Orthodox Church dioceses across the world 156
Appendix 3: Parishes in Australia and New Zealand 158
Appendix 4: The Serbian Orthodox websites 161
Appendix 5: Orthodox churches and their websites 162
Appendix 6: Parish websites in the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand 163
Appendix 7: Other important Orthodox websites 164
LIST OF TABLES

Section 1 – Australia Overview, 2006 census

Section 2 – Victoria Overview, Orthodox population in Australia, census 2006

Table 3.1: Listing of Serbian Orthodox churches by country, p.61
Source: Serbian Orthodox Church – Listing of Serbian Orthodox churches by country (www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com)

Table 3.2: Quality of church personnel, p.82

Table 3.3: Image of the church, p.89

Table 3.4: Knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy, p.89

Table 3.5: Involvement in church activities, p.91
LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEC – Conference of European Churches
IOCC – International Orthodox Christian Charities
NCCA – National Council of Churches in Australia
ROCOR – Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
SCCOCA – Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Churches in Australia
SOC – Serbian Orthodox Church
SOYA – Serbian Orthodox Youth Association
USCRP – United States Conference of Religions for Peace
WCC – World Council of Churches
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examined the current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church both in its Australian and transnational contexts since the Serbian Orthodox Church functions as transnational network with churches linked globally. Facilitated by transportation and telecommunications, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia is able to maintain ‘multiple ties’ with homeland and with the rest of the Serbian diaspora.

The research strategy was a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This included a case study approach which focused in four parishes in Australia, including interviews which involved forty six participants affiliated to Serbian Orthodoxy and four Serbian Orthodox priests who were individually interviewed. Data was collected from websites from across the Serbian Orthodox world, and a content analysis was made of their contents.

The study consists of six chapters beginning with the aims and methodology, followed by a chapter on transnationalism and Serbian Orthodoxy. The literature review is positioned around the themes of transnationalism and diaspora, transnationalism and religious networks, Orthodox Christianity, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian community in Australia. The Australian diocese and its administration were described from national and transnational perspectives as well as life in parishes, liturgical practices and ministry to young people. The Diocese consists of two dioceses that are administratively divided but under the jurisdiction of Bishop Irinej. There are forty three parishes in Australia and four monasteries, with three parishes in New Zealand. Links and contacts across the world are explored in order to trace the transnational character of the church. The bishop and his pastoral visits are described both in Australia and in Serbia as he travels twice a year to Serbia and also to other appointments around the world. The bishop regularly visits parishes in Australia, priests are in regular contact with their bishop and one another, and they have joint liturgies. The strengthening of transnational links has enabled the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia to regularly send money and donations overseas. There is also a flow both of religious personnel as
priests upon completion of their theological studies usually in Belgrade are sent to Australia, and of religious products such as written materials, icons, crosses etc. Pilgrimages as a part of transnational activity to Serbia and former Yugoslav countries are common both for priests and believers. Regular contacts with the church in Belgrade are maintained through the bishop. Transnational nature of Episcopal appointments can be seen as there is a pattern of changing bishops in the diocese every few years.

Priests who were sent to Australia previously did not possess English language skills and training on how to work in a multicultural Australia was provided for them. Nowadays priests from Australia upon completion of theological college in Belgrade are appointed to Australian dioceses because they have the necessary knowledge of the English language and also an understanding of Australian society.

Parishioners’ opinions of Serbian priests were also explored and they were divided between those with positive and those with negative opinions. The behavior of some priests was the main reason for negative responses. That church committees lack young people was an overall opinion. It was also highlighted by participants that the Serbian Orthodox priests should possess proficiency in the English language. Also, for the majority of the participants, the image of the Serbian Orthodox Church was positive. Participants/believers’ knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy was assessed as ‘fair’ for the majority, and church attendance was generally high.

Regarding the Serbian Orthodox and its integration into Australian society it can be said that even though it was integrated it is still an immigrant church with a strongly manifested ethnic character and highly connected with and dependent on the church in Serbia. However, there are limited contacts with other religious communities and the church is still not a member of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Introduction of the English language into the liturgy was seen as a step forward in integration and also as a method in attracting young people to the church. It is also necessary for successful communication with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} generations of Serbs in Australia who are not fluent in Serbian or do not even speak Serbian at all.
The Serbian Orthodox Church was the main factor that helped preserve the language, culture, tradition and, above all, religion in Australia. Priests in a multicultural Australia, their contact with others and their involvement in the wider community were explored. The study revealed that the Serbian Orthodox priests and believers and their relationships with other religious communities were limited. The research draws attention to a limited involvement of the Serbian Orthodox Church clergy in Australia with other faith leaders as well as limited participation in the interfaith network. As anticipated, the priests did not show much initiative in forming relationships with other religious communities. There are notable barriers in communicating with others such as language, the ethnocentric character of the church and unpreparedness of the clergy to work in a multicultural Australia.

Unlike with other religious communities, relations with other Orthodox churches in Australia were well developed with joint liturgies and membership in SCCOCA (Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Churches in Australia). Serbian Orthodox priests have joint liturgies, regular contacts and good relationships with Orthodox priests.

The Balkans war had a contrasting impact on the church’s image according to participants and priests. The negative aspect was that Serbs were blamed for all that happened in the Balkans War. The positive impact was that the Serbs returned to the practice of their religion.

The church has assisted many Serbian migrants and refugees during their settlement in Australia. The help was mainly spiritual, but also the church’s assistance was in finding accommodation and jobs.

The future of the church as seen by participants and priests was assessed as mainly positive and Orthodoxy will continue to exist in Australia. The future of Orthodoxy is to be secured by attracting young people to the church and also by introducing English into the language of the liturgy.
Dissemination of news and information via the websites facilitated the Serbian Orthodox Church in maintaining global linkages between churches in Serbia and with the diaspora to facilitate religious connectedness. The content analysis of the Serbian Orthodox Church websites showed that those maintained by Serbian Orthodox Church did not contain xenophobic messages or hatred. The websites were usually good and informative and the majority of them are written in English.

This research documented that the transnational links have been strengthened and facilitated by the revolution in information technology and travel. The bishop’s transnational travels and the frequent change of bishops in charge of the Australian diocese, the flow of religious personnel, the conduct of pilgrimages, the maintenance of links and contacts with priests and parishes in Serbia and around the world show the functioning of the Serbian Orthodox church as a transnational network.
CHAPTER ONE
AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Aims
This study taking into consideration all the changes since the end of the Cold War aims to explore the Serbian Orthodox Church from a new perspective. Till now, the Serbian Orthodox church in Australia has been documented mainly in regard to its history and development and the studies are of varying quality. They are listed in Appendix One. This study focuses on the Church from a transnational and global perspective, which represents a new dimension, and accordingly contributes to knowledge about this religious institution. With the resurgence and global rise of religion, this research aims to contribute to the general knowledge concerning religion and religious institutions in Australia and across the world, specifically the Serbian Orthodox Church. Moreover, the researcher wishes to contribute to knowledge about the phenomenon of transnationalism, in particular, transnational religious networks.

Working within the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, using the Serbian Orthodox Church as a case study, this research aims to explore the question: what is the current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia both in its Australian and its transnational contexts?

The Serbian Orthodox Church with Patriarch Irinej as its religious leader in Belgrade functions as a transnational religious network, with the mother church in Serbia operating globally and linking the Serbian Orthodox Churches across the world. Due to recent changes in air transportation and communication technologies, diasporic bonds and transnational networks with the home country have been strengthened. Therefore, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia, the mother church in Serbia, and Serbian Orthodox churches across the world in areas such as in Europe, Oceania, North and South America and Africa operate globally with developed transnational links. As Ebaugh and Saltzman Chafetz have written, “the transnational religious networks in which the new
immigrant participates, therefore, play the central role in the global, transnational world of the twenty first century” (2002, p.190).

All Serbian Orthodox Churches develop and maintain ties that span international borders. There is a flow of religious personnel as Serbian priests and bishops are appointed from Serbia or from other parts of the world and transferred across the diaspora, with churches being highly dependent on communication and transportation technologies in order to maintain their linkages.

During and in the aftermath of the Balkans war the Serbian Orthodox Church had a somewhat negative image both in Australia and worldwide, reinforced again at the time of the arrest of Ratko Mladic. A rise in ethno-nationalism followed the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism in the former Yugoslavia and the church was accused of ethno-nationalism and involvement in the Balkans War. However, the church itself suffered many casualties as a number of churches in Bosnia and Croatia were destroyed (Ramet, 2002).

In Australia, the life and activities of the Serbian community revolve around the Serbian Orthodox Church. Serbs have come to Australia in four major waves of migration, and created the Serbian community which is relatively large with 95,364 saying they had Serbian ancestry, according to the 2006 Census. Many of these are part Serbian. The census form allows four ancestries but only the first two written are coded. The Serbs have established churches in each state and territory, especially in the capital cities in Australia due to the post World War II migration when Serbian migrants began to arrive in large numbers. The first Serbian church in Australia was founded in Sydney in 1948 (Stefanovic, 2001). According to the 2006 census, those who spoke the Serbian language at home were 49, 203, and the Serbian language is ranked 14th among the top 30 language groups in Australia. There were 39, 970 persons who said they were Serbian Orthodox which suggests a significant shift away from the home religion (see Table 1). Also it is to be noted that not all Serbian-born people are Serbian Orthodox as 1,200 are Catholics, 850 said they had no religion and about 420 did not state anything.
Religion is deeply embedded in the Serbian community in Australia. Even though the majority of Serbs have integrated into Australian society, “certain specific elements of Serbian Orthodoxy persist” (Stefanovic, 2001, p.676). The role of the Serbian Orthodox Church is also very important within the Serbian diaspora as it provides a spiritual base for the Serbs, as well as a link with their history, culture, homeland and, above all, identity. Therefore, “the role of religion in diaspora is important in emphasizing the spread of religious practices from home to religious communities around the world” (Ebaugh & Saltzman Chafez, 2002, p.4). The Serbian diaspora has features of a transnational community, as Serbs have developed networks and activities that link them to both countries at the same time. To write about the Serbian community in Australia one must write about the Serbian Orthodox Church at the same time as the life of the Serbian community revolves around, and is influenced by the church. Therefore, how religious practice is adapted in Australia and how the relationship with the mother church evolves are the key issues.

### Table 1.1.: Overview of the Serbian community in Australia: 1996-2006

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<th>1996</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbian ancestry</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>97,315</td>
<td>95,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language spoken at home - Serbian</td>
<td>37,237</td>
<td>49,203</td>
<td>52,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion-Serbian Orthodox</td>
<td>31,569</td>
<td>42,404</td>
<td>39,971</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census

### Table 1.2.: Overview of the Serbian community in Victoria: 1996-2006

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<th>1996</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbian ancestry</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>30,368</td>
<td>29,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language spoken at home - Serbian</td>
<td>12,163</td>
<td>16,046</td>
<td>16,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion-Serbian Orthodox</td>
<td>10,017</td>
<td>13,642</td>
<td>12,507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census
“In Australia, the Serbian character of ethnicity amongst migrants tends to revolve around descendancy from Orthodox religious forebears but Australian official figures confuse the status of Serbian migrants because they are based on politico-legal definitions and birthplace”, Radmanovich points out (1990, p.132). Birthplace figures are not adequate and accurate indicators to determine whether a person is Serbian or not. To gain accurate figures for the Serbian community in Australia is difficult because place of birth does not accurately reflect ethnicity. For example, only 13,950 of those who had Serbian ancestry were born in Serbia. Also, there were 6,710 Serbs who were born in Croatia and 6,100 who were born in Bosnia (Census 2006). The Serbs were also born in other former Yugoslav countries as well as in other European countries. There are also 2nd, 3rd or 4th generations of Serbs who were born in Australia. Ancestry was introduced into the census figures as the place of birth was not sufficiently accurate to indicate one’s ethnicity.

Serbs have come to Australia in four major waves of migration. Even though some Serbian migrants arrived in the late 19th century, less than 100 persons of Serbian origin were living in Australia in 1901. After World War II, the first major wave occurred from 1948 to 1954 (Stefanovic, 2001, p.675). With communism as the state ideology in SFR Yugoslavia, many Serbs opposed to the regime migrated to Australia. The majority of these early Serbian migrants were prisoners of war who had belonged to the King’s army. The second wave was during the 1960s to the late 1970s. These were economic migrants as they came from the rural areas of Yugoslavia in search of employment in Australia. During the 1980s, the Serbian migrants who came were mainly professionals and skilled migrants. The most recent wave of Serbian migrants was triggered by the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia in 1991. Many Serbian people from Croatia and Bosnia were displaced and came as refugees under Australia’s refugee and humanitarian program (Stefanovic, 2001, p.675-676).

The Serbian community in Australia has not been well researched. Only a few authors such as Stefanovic, Tkalcevic, Kazich and Radmanovich have written about the Serbian community and the Serbian church in Australia, but most studies have not been based on
Stefanovic writes about the Serbian diaspora in Australia from a historical perspective, and provides an overview of Serbian immigration to Australia. He also describes the characteristics and current status of the Serbian diaspora in Australia. Stefanovic (2001) points out that the main factor that distinguishes the Serbs from the other former Yugoslav communities is their religion as members of their Orthodox Church. The Serbian diaspora and its attitude towards religion explains the life of the community, its activities and also its characteristics. Religion is deeply embedded in the Serbian community. Therefore, the Serbian diaspora is religiously homogenous and religion serves as a ‘marker of identity’. The Serbian language also distinguishes it from other former Yugoslav communities. Due to the use of the Julian calendar, the major religious festivals, Christmas and Easter, and also New Year are celebrated on different dates to the Western church. The churches and community centres are very important to the Serbian community in Australia as they are the drivers that maintain the Serbian language, tradition, culture and religion. Churches and church halls are used for the various gatherings, religious festivals and sometimes for the language school. Within the church there are dance groups that cherish traditional Serbian dances (Stefanovic, 2001).

The cultural role of the church is important and cannot be neglected as a “symbiosis between the religion of the Serbs and their national sentiment developed. Thus, the traditions of the Serbian Orthodox Church are both religious and ethnic in their significance” (Stefanovic, 2001, p.677). Stefanovic describes the Serbian community in Australia as well-established with an organized community life. He points out that there is “a rich community life in Australia” as the Serbs have established churches, social and sports clubs, dance groups and language schools (Stefanovic, 2001, p.676). He adds, “although the process of integration will continue”, Serbian community life will be maintained largely because of most Serbs’ “adherence to the Serbian Orthodox religion” (Stefanovic, 2001, p.681). Stefanovic concludes that even though Serbs adapted and are integrated into the wider Australian community, “certain elements of Serbian Orthodoxy
It is important to note that while Stefanovic’s descriptions are insightful and not inaccurate, they are not based on systematic research.

Tkalcevic in his work “Serbs in the Australian society” writes about the Serbian migration into Australia. As Tkalcevic’s book was written 30 years ago, the two latest waves of Serbian migration are not described. Early Serbian migrants when they arrived in Australia “displayed their determination to organize a Serbian social and cultural life in their new country” and soon after they established Serbian organizations (1980, p.13). Therefore, they “took the approach that their whole social and cultural life in Australia should revolve around the church” and the church “continues to be important in influencing the religious, social and cultural life of the Serbian community in Australia” (p.17). Tkalcevic also writes about intermarriages between Serbian Orthodox and other ethnic and religious groups, and acknowledges the cultural identity of the second generation of Serbs as an important issue. Even though it was written 30 years ago, Tkalcevic’s work still provides information about the history of the church and gives an insight into some issues within the community at that time.

Thomas Kazich (1989) in “Serbs in Australia: History and Development of Free Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese for Australia and New Zealand” describes only parishes that belonged to the Free Serbian Orthodox Church, without any information on other Serbian Orthodox parishes. The publication is written both in Serbian and English with detailed descriptions about the beginnings of Orthodoxy, the history of Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Kazich is very detailed in description and explores in much depth the historical facts of Serbian migration to Australia. Written in 1989, only the first three waves of migration are described. Serbian churches were built as Serbs “acquired blocks of land and transformed them into little pieces of “Serbian land” which, for them, will always remain holy and respected in the eyes of the world” (1989, p.xi).

Both Tkalcevic and Kazich did not include the fourth wave of Serbian migration to Australia. Written decades ago, they do not describe the current state of the Serbian
community and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. However, there are detailed
descriptions of the church and the Serbian community.

Maksim Radmanovich (1990) in “Serbian Migrations to Australia: A Century Passes” is
more focused on the cultural identity and the future generations of Serbs in Australia than
on the history of the Serbs in Australia. Radmanovich argues that the Serbs are not
adequately described in the Census, and “a true census figure of Serbians in Australia is
unknown” (p.133). He suggests that birthplace is not an accurate factor to determine if
one is a Serbian. Radmanovich is concerned about the low participation of the Serbian
community in the wider Australian community and advocates for the higher participation
of Serbs (1990, p.133).

In order to explore the current transnational status of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the
following aims guided this study:

1. to analyze the development of the transnational links between the Serbian
   Orthodox Church in Australia and both the mother church and the other
   Serbian churches in the diaspora

2. to analyze the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Serbian
   community’s adaptation to a multicultural and multifaith Australia

3. to analyze the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the settlement of the
   various waves of Serbian migration to Australia

4. to analyze the part played by culture, identity and memory in the work of the
   Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia

A review of the emerging relevant literature that formed the base for this study is
provided in Chapter Two. In the following chapters, findings about the current
transnational status of the Serbian Orthodox Church are presented and explained as well as the details about the functioning and functions of this religious institution.

As the review of the literature showed, there have been previous studies done on transnationalism, transnational communities and religious networks, but none has explored the Serbian Orthodox Church. Similarly, the studies on the Serbian Orthodox Church have not included a transnational and global perspective.

1.2 Methodology
The current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia both in its Australian and its transnational contexts was used as a case study to explore the larger issues. A combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies was the most suitable and appropriate for the purpose of this inquiry. Qualitative methods were adopted for generating data. However, a quantitative survey was also employed, as the majority of the participants preferred such a method of data gathering. The researcher first anticipated that qualitative methods only would be the most suitable; however, as the research continued, the researcher had to resort to surveys due to the participants’ requests.

Qualitative research according to Berg “refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things”, as opposed to quantitative methods which “refers to counts and measures of things” (Berg, 1989, p.2-3), attempting “to establish general laws or principles” (Burns, 1996, p.3). Denzin and Lincoln point out that “qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world…and interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln in Alvesson, 2002, p.131). Creswell also identified qualitative research as one that is conducted in natural settings where the focus is given to the ‘meaning of participants’ (Creswell, 1998, p.14).

In this sense, the qualitative approach which is naturalistic (with people or phenomena observed in their natural settings) and interpretive enabled the researcher to gain an
understanding of the context in which the Serbian Orthodox Church operates with qualitative data-gathering techniques employed. These qualitative methods, characterized as the most common in social research (Alvesson, 2002, p.107), involve interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Those three methods are seen as “sources of evidence” in a case study (Burns, 1996, p.365).

With qualitative research that “examines various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings” (Berg, 1989, p.6), the researcher was able to explore and examine people who inhabit the Serbian Orthodox Church settings and their interrelationships. Moreover, the observation of participants in their ‘natural settings’ enabled the current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in a transnational context to be assessed.

In the debate about the validity and reliability of qualitative research, Clive Seale (in Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p.176) argues that “a major threat to quality is in fact that research must be carried out under the burden of fulfilling some philosophical or methodological scheme”. Instead, he argues that good research can learn from a variety of examples by employing different methods. Major critiques of qualitative research are that it is time-consuming and not adequately valid and reliable (Burns, 1996). Also there is an issue of objectivity in qualitative research because the researcher is not supposed to “influence the outcome of the inquiry” nor “allow my values to affect the results”, point out Lincoln and Guba (in Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p.224). Therefore, the researcher had to commit to objective data gathering, and later, objective data analysis.

As was found, the employment of qualitative methods was indeed time consuming whereas quantitative data collection proved to be the opposite. Also, it should be pointed out that in data gathering and data analysis the researcher tried to be as objective as she could, despite her own religious background as a baptized member of the Serbian Orthodox Church and as a young refugee from Krajina in Croatia.

Case study methodology “with interests in individual cases” (Stake, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.435) was chosen to be employed in generating and interpreting data for the study
as “a way of exploring a phenomenon in its context” (Holloway, 1997, p.30). According to Creswell, “a case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’, or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p.61). “As a form of research, case study is defined by the interest in individual cases”, stresses Stake (2000, p.435). In this sense, case study methodology is seen as the most appropriate methodology for conducting this type of research because of its key characteristics: prolonged engagement, detailed knowledge of the particular unit and description of context. A case study also “involves the observation of an individual unit” as one of its major characteristics (Burns, 2000, p.459).

Therefore, by employing case study methodology, in-depth knowledge and understanding of how the Serbian Orthodox Church operates as a transnational religious network was based on case studies of four individual parishes (43 parishes in Australia and 4 parishes in New Zealand). Also, the gathered data was rich and credible for analysis and interpretation.

According to Stake, a case study can be categorized as intrinsic, instrumental and collective (in Berg, 2001, p.229). While an intrinsic case study involves one particular case, the collective or multi-case approach (Burns, 2000) seeks explanations by examining multiple cases. Multiple case studies, stress Miles and Huberman, “offer the researcher an even deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases, the chance to test (not just develop) hypotheses, and a good picture of locally grounded causality” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.26). The multiple case studies approach was employed in conducting this research. Case studies of four parishes in Australia both in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas were used to explore the current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. Burns considers multi-case studies to have more valid and resourceful evidence; however, they require more effort and time from the researcher (Burns, 1996).
The use of multiple sources of information and use of multiple data-gathering techniques that were employed gave a detailed description of the case. Wadsworth points out that “a case study can be generated by using a variety of techniques (interview, questionnaire, observation, self-written account) to assemble a range of information about a single ‘case’-a single individual, incident, event, group or organization” (Wadsworth, 1997, p.56).

1.3 Research Methods

Berg argues that “case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions” (Berg, 2001, p.225). The main techniques used in a case study are observation (both participant and non-participant), interviewing (unstructured and structured), and document analysis (Burns, 1996, p.365). These three main research strategies were employed whilst conducting this study. The methods employed served as “specific concrete ways of seeking data or information about a situation or people’s lives, experiences or activities” (Wadsworth, 1997, p.35).

The multiple methods approach allowed use of triangulation which enables researchers to have more accurate, credible and reliable data. What Denzin defines as a ‘methodological triangulation’ was used in this research because of the three different methods employed to gather and test the data (in Keeves, 1997, p.319). Therefore, by applying multiple research methods, the triangulation method as a way of testing data was employed to give objectivity and deeper understanding.

Denzin stresses the importance and validity of the triangulation method as use of multiple methods in research can “overcome the weaknesses or biases of a single method taken by itself” because each research method captures different meanings and interpretations of the world (Keeves, 1997, p.318-319).
The interview as a data-gathering method was employed with people directly involved in Serbian Orthodox Church activities. Also, people affiliated to Serbian Orthodoxy, but not directly involved in the activities of the church, were interviewed so their perspective could give a deeper understanding of the transnational character. The other reason why the researcher chose them was to find out why they are not involved in church activities. In total, 46 people and four Serbian Orthodox priests from four parishes were individually interviewed.

Berg defines interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose…to gather information”, and sees the interview as “an especially effective method of collecting information for certain types of research questions” (1989, p.13, p.19). Berg identifies three major categories/types of interviews: the standardized (formal) interview, the unstandardized (informal) interview, and the semistandardized or semistructured interview. The standardized interview with “formally structured interview questions” (Berg, 1989, p. 15) was seen as inappropriate as it did not give the necessary flexibility in conducting the interviews. The unstandardized interview also was not to be employed as the researcher possessed knowledge of the area of inquiry.

The semistructured (Bechhofer & Patterson, 2000, p.65) interview that was employed involves ‘formally structured interview questions’ but also gives the interviewer a “freedom to digress” and “go beyond the answers to prepared and standardized questions”(Berg, 1989, p. 17). Semi-structured interviews as such, even though requiring prearranged interview questions, also gave both to participants and researcher the freedom and flexibility in interaction and conversation while conducting an interview.

Like any data-gathering method, interviews have advantages and disadvantages. Burns points out the advantages such as flexibility (both to interviewer and respondent) and face-to-face interaction with the participants (Burns, 1996, p.484). However, the interview can be time-consuming as indeed they were. The majority of the interviewed
were reluctant to participate in the interview due to lack of their time. Furthermore, some people refused to participate in this project for this very reason. However, a solution was found. Instead of audio taped interviews, participants were given options to write down their answers. Some did not permit recording of the interview, but the researcher was able to write down their answers and also to ask them additional questions. Moreover, there were some people who refused to participate as they did not find this project to be useful or important. All the above suggests that the researcher needs to be flexible and to employ various data-gathering techniques as well as to be able to change the original plan in order to employ different research methods.

Interview questions were arranged in such a way that there were a separate set of questions for priests and another set for believers. Priests were asked about their contacts with the church in Serbia, contacts with the bishop in Australia, the organization of the parish and its activities, relationships with other Orthodox churches and other religious communities in Australia and their links and contacts with other Serbian Orthodox churches/parishes around the world. Participants were asked about their knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy and about their involvement in the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. There were also asked about multicultural and multifaith Australia, their attitude toward and their knowledge of other religions, the church’s image after the Balkans war and the future of Orthodoxy.

Participants were recruited through personal contacts and the snowball method. The interviews were conducted within church settings and mainly in the participants’ or researcher’s home. Some of the individual interviews were tape recorded, however some were written. By interviewing people, the researcher had interaction with the participants and face-to-face contact. It was important to establish a rapport, build trust between the researcher and interviewees, and also to treat them in a respectful manner (Burns, 1996).

Participants represented different age groups and migration cohorts, and were aged from 18 to 80 years old. However, there was slightly larger number of females that participated in this study due to their higher church attendance and higher involvement in church
activities. The participants were chosen from all four migration waves; however, the largest number of them were economic migrants followed by those who migrated during or after the Balkans war. The majority of the participants were born in the former Yugoslavia; a small percentage of them were born in Australia.

(b) Participant Observation

Participant observation was chosen as a data gathering technique. It is defined by Wadsworth simply as “observation of a social situation by someone taking part in that social situation” (Wadsworth, 1997, p.54). Therefore, the ‘social situation’ of the Serbian Orthodox parishes by taking part in it was observed. Mason defines participant observation as “methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on, within it” (Mason, 1996, p.60). This particular method was employed as people were observed in their natural settings.

In employing this method, people and their activities within the church’s congregation were observed along with the area where each church is located (its geographical area) and physical facilities (church itself with statues, icons, paintings within the church, the church hall and Sunday school). The liturgy and other rites (baptism, marriage, etc.), church attendance, relationship between priests and churchgoers, and interaction among churchgoers were also observed. The whole congregation was observed as well as other parish functions and the social events that took place within the church.

Clifford argues that “understood literally, participant observation is a paradoxical, misleading formula. But it may be taken seriously if reformulated in hermeneutic terms as a dialectic of experience and interpretation” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p.128). Therefore, the researcher was fully aware that this type of observation can be time-consuming and demanding as it was.

(c) Document Analysis
Content analysis of documented data/written documents that represent “official views of reality” was employed as one of the methods (Wadsworth, 1997, p.56). In using content analysis as a research technique, “researchers examine artifacts of social communication – written documents or transcriptions of recorded verbal communication” (Berg, 1989, p.105-106). In this sense, unobtrusive strategies for collecting data such as public archives and official documentary records were employed as such (Berg, 1989, p.85-91).

Document analysis included a content analysis of the Serbian Orthodox Church websites as well as some of the written material produced locally by each parish. Due to the developments in information technology, especially the Internet, data from websites are easy accessible. As the Serbian Orthodox Church has many websites which are seen as relevant data sources, a part of the inquiry was a content analysis of these websites. Furthermore, the Internet as a source of information enabled the researcher to conduct research that spans Australian borders, and research in other parts of the world where the Serbian Orthodox Church operates. The Serbian Orthodox Church websites are linked together in a network that spans borders and operates globally, therefore highlighting the church’s transnational character.

The Serbian Orthodox Church’s websites as sources of reliable, current and relevant data for this research, are linked with each other, and as such provide the possibility to trace its transnational links. Their content was explored and the researcher was able to determine whether it is religious content only, or political, cultural, welfare or educational.

1.4 Ethical Issues

In conducting any social research, ethical issues need to be considered. In this type of research interviewing human participants, the researcher was fully aware of the ethical issues. Participation was voluntary, and participants were able to withdraw at any time. Plain language statement or informed consent (Burns, 1996, p.17-23) was given where participants were invited to participate in the project, and accordingly, the nature of the
project explained. Confidentiality and privacy were also protected. In turn, those who participated in this research project were asked to sign a participant consent form. The researcher had to demonstrate an awareness of the moral and legal responsibility toward participants (Lincoln & Guba, in Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p.220-222).

The interviews were conducted in professional and respectful manner. There were no incidents reported before, during or after the interviews. It is to be pointed out that of all those who participated in the interviews, no one withdrew.
CHAPTER TWO
MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND SERBIAN ORTHODOXY

The relevant literature that guided the research was positioned around five areas:

1. Transnationalism and diaspora
2. Transnationalism and religious networks/communities
3. Orthodox Christianity
4. The Serbian Orthodox Church
5. The Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian community in Australia

2.1 Transnationalism and Diaspora

With transnationalism as a central point of my investigation, the relevant literature has been used in identifying and defining this phenomenon. Transnationalism (transnational migrants/communities) and diaspora are the terms examined and investigated together because there is some confusion over both terms.

For Basch, Szanton Blanc and Schiller, transnationalism is seen as a “process by which migrants, through their daily life activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries” (1994, p.22). This study, (Basch et al. 1994), one of the first studies dedicated to transnationalism, expanded the notion of transmigrants and transnational communities, focusing their research on Haitian migrants in the USA, and exploring their ties and the nature of their relationship with Haiti. They defined transmigrants as “immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships,…that span borders” (1994, p.22). A crucial element of transnationalism for those authors is “the multiplicity of involvements” of migrants in both host and home countries (p.22).
Vertovec explains transnationalism as “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (1999, p.1). He goes further and describes transnationalism as “a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common-however virtual-arena of activity” (1999, p.1-2).

The ‘old’ notion of diaspora has changed and many authors refer to diaspora as a transnational community because of the recent changes in transport and information technology. It is argued that Serbian migrants cannot be exclusively defined as diaspora, because they exhibit characteristics of a transnational community and therefore, we may refer to them also as transmigrants.

Some older works on diaspora such as Kotkin’s (1992) do not include the transnational element in the definition of diaspora. Accordingly, Kotkin defines diaspora as “the collective forced dispersion of a religious and/or ethnic group” with emphasis given to the role of “collective memory”. The main feature of diaspora communities is maintenance of their customs and tradition with “a strong feeling of ethnicity and religion” (Kotkin, 1992, p.223). According to Kotkin’s definition, the Serbian people in Australia have the features of a diasporic community with strong feelings of ethnicity, tradition and religion by maintaining their language, customs and culture.

Cohen, employing a different perspective, argues that “diaspora signified a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile”, (Cohen, 1997, p. ix). He emphasizes the common features of diaspora such as “dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions, strong ethnic group consciousness, a common history and the belief in common fate, and a collective memory and myth about the homeland” (Cohen, 1997, p.26). The large majority of the Serbian diaspora were dispersed, sometimes traumatically, from the former Yugoslavia to Australia, and as such were and are maintaining a strong sense of their common history.
and ethnic distinctiveness. According to Cohen’s typology of diaspora, the Serbian diaspora can be classified as victim/refugee diaspora, as the majority of Serbian migrants came to Australia as refugees and political migrants. But still, being linked to both countries at the same time, they exhibit characteristics of being transmigrants.

According to Basch’s definition of diaspora, “to see oneself in a diaspora is to imagine oneself as being outside a territory, part of a population exiled from a homeland. Peoples living in the diaspora are thought to have preserved their spiritual or cultural essence even when they had no state” (Basch, Szanton Blanc & Schiller, 1994, p.296). This definition cannot be applied anymore to Serbian migrants in Australia, because with the fall of communism as an official ideology in the former Yugoslavia and the end of the war in the Balkans which gave Serbs an ambiguous identity around the world, along with the global changes after the Cold War and the revolution in transportation and information technology, the Serbian diaspora has taken on features and characteristics of transmigrants and a transnational community.

Transmigration as applied to the Serbian diaspora as the movement of people across boundaries due to changed global conditions, “cannot be defined exclusively as one-way and definitive” (Hollifield & Brettell, 2000, p.101). Moreover, “the old perception of immigrants has changed as people crossing boundaries”, because they have developed “networks, activities, patterns of living, and ideologies that span their home and the host society” (Basch, Szanton Blanc & Schiller, 1994, p. 4). Defined as such, Serbian people are crossing boundaries of nation states and developing networks and relationships in both Australia and Serbia. Air transportation and information technology make easier the connections of migrants with their country of origin. Facilitated by transportation and telecommunications, Serbian migrants as well as the Serbian Orthodox Church are able to maintain ‘multiple ties’ with homeland and with the rest of the Serbian diaspora.

The most appropriate and relevant definition of diaspora that can be applied to Serbian migrants is that of Vertovec, who argues that “diaspora is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered ‘deterritorialised’ or
‘transnational’ – that is, which has originated in a land other than in which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe” (1999, p.1). A crucial point in Vertovec’s definition of diaspora is that “dispersed diasporas of old have become today’s transnational communities, sustained by a range of modes of social organization, mobility and communication” (p.4).

2.2 Transnationalism and Religious Networks

Since the Serbian Orthodox Church was used as a case study in this project, the following section explores the research on transnationalism and religious networks. Jacqueline Maria Hagan (2002) explores the role played by religion in the migration process of a Maya transnational community. In examining the “network infrastructure (which) religion provides to recent immigrant arrivals” (2002, p.75), she focuses on the development of transnational ties by researching them at the “organizational and household level”, and also on the home community in their religious and economic contexts (p.76). Further, Hagan explores the role of the Maya Evangelical Church in preparing for migration, the role of the church in immigrant settlement, and the development of transnational community relations. She makes conclusions about the “importance of religion at all stages of the migration and settlement experience” as “churches in communities of origin are well aware of the spiritual needs of migrants” (2002, p.89).

Thao Ha (2002) describes the remittances sent by migrants in the USA to family members in Viet Nam as “a part of the larger phenomenon of transnationalism” (2002, p.111). The Vietnamese in USA have formed transnational communities and developed transnational networks for sending remittances. Ha’s main objective is to “document the ways in which micro-level family networks evolve into transnational ties established on the organizational level of religious institutions among Vietnamese Catholics and Buddhists” (p.111). In his study Ha concentrates on home country ties and family connections, organizational attempts to help people back home, and religious connections
in Vietnam and the USA. He concludes “Vietnamese religious bodies have become…transnational linkage that enables Vietnamese migrants in the USA to increase aid to people in Vietnam” (p.127).

Fenggang Yang (2002) highlights diversity as a major feature of the transnational ties of the Chinese immigrants and Chinese churches in the USA (2002, p.129). Those ‘diverse transnational ties’ are due to the “cosmopolitan membership” that includes migrants from “different Chinese provinces, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and ethnic Chinese from various countries in Southeast Asia and elsewhere” (p.129). Yang identifies four types of transnational ties that the church and its members maintain (p.133), and also focuses on the transnational links linking the USA Church with Hong Kong, Taiwan and China (p.130). In conclusion, Yang identifies three important factors that enable the Chinese Christian Church to develop and maintain transnational ties and networks – “cosmopolitan membership, organizational independence, and theological evangelism”, (p.146).

Patricia Fortuny-Loret de Mola (2002) looks at transnationalism and religious networks from a different perspective and therefore gives to the research on transnationalism a new dimension. She recognizes transnationalism at the institutional level - “transnationalism from above”, and “transnationalism from below” or the individual level (2002, p.16). She refers to the Luz del Mundo (Light of the World) as a “transnational church” (p.19) by exploring its “expansion through networks” (p.26) and its institutional framework. In her study, de Mola explores Mexican migration to the USA, closely describes and analyzes the La Luz del Mundo Church, the role of religion in connecting the world, as well as church and family networks. De Mola identifies the “central role played by a religious institution” and religious community in developing transnational ties (p.46).

Peggy Levitt (2001) in her work on transnationalism and religion, stresses the importance of religion “in creating the international connections that engender universal identities” as well as religious movements that are “operating in a broad geographic context, engage in increasingly homogenized forms of worship and organization that give rise to global
communities that locals can join” (p.3). For Levitt, “cultural diasporas, which incorporate religious experiences, are groups that reject the identity categories and social structures that nation states impose on them, opting instead to express identities based on a blurring of origin and destination and associated with loose, multiple connections to various groups, settings and practices” (p.4).

Karsten Paerregaard’s (2001) study on the Peruvian diaspora explores the role of icons. Such “adoration of images outside Peru strengthen migrants’ ties to their home country and re-confirm their sense of belonging to Peru thus transcending the national borders of the home as well as the receiving countries” (p.5). He argues that the definition of transnationalism “lacks sensitivity to the everyday life of transnational migrants and their interaction with the social and cultural environment of the receiving country” (p.6). Paerregaard points out activities of the Peruvian diaspora, such as football matches and folklore and other ‘collective activities’ that “evoke memories of their past lives in Peru and produce a notion of shared cultural identity.” (p.10). He notices that in the diaspora “migrants are forced to adapt to foreign environments and invent new ways to express their religious belief…” (p.23).

Again, even though studies have been done on transnationalism and religious networks (for example Chinese, Vietnamese, Maya and Peruvian religious communities), no similar study has yet been conducted on the Serbian Orthodox Church. The above mentioned studies stress the importance of the religion and the role of the church as a transnational network in the migrant communities by examining transnational ties and ‘cosmopolitan membership’ of the church as an institution. The Serbian Orthodox Church which has been explored exhibits these same characteristics.

2.3 Orthodox Christianity
In order to explain the origins of the Serbian Orthodox Church, its organisation, characteristics, and most importantly its beliefs, it is necessary to be introduced to the history of this religious institution and its position within the Orthodox world. To be able
to determine the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church within the Christian world, it is important to point out and explain basic and crucial differences between belief systems and religious practices of Western and Eastern Christianity.

Even though the Christian world became divided into Eastern and Western Christianity, it was not until 1054 that it became irrevocably divided in the schism between Eastern and Western Christendom followed by the crusades (Ware in McManners, 2002). From the Orthodox perspective, the principal cause of schism was the “Roman Church’s inclusion of the phrase ‘and the Son’ in reference to the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit in the Nicene Creed”. Since then, the Orthodox Churches are defined as Eastern geographically, and also “as an independent and distinctive theological, mystical and cultural tradition” (Godley & Hughes, 1996, p.3).

Orthodox Christianity, an independent theological tradition, possesses a “rich spirituality and oecumenical character” with more than 200 million believers in the world today, of whom the majority are in Russia, Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.128). Eastern Orthodox Christianity is characterized by an “unbroken continuity to the apostolic tradition and a specific religious ethos” as “the Orthodox Church claims to be a depository of the authentic Christian faith” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.126). Orthodox preserve “the faith once delivered to saints without alteration or deviation”, and the word ‘Orthodox’ (ortho-doxia) means “correct teaching or worship” (Godley and Hughes, 1996, p.1).

The hallmark of the Orthodox Church constitutes an “unbroken continuity, along with a specific cultural ethos and a specific theological and liturgical tradition which evolved from the early Greek Fathers and the Oecumenical Councils through Byzantium to the present”. Orthodoxy is therefore perceived as “a fusion of popular and official religion” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.127-134). As the Christian church for the first thousand years was dominated by the Ecumenical Councils, the Eastern Orthodox Churches “look to these councils for an authoritative definition and expressions of the faith” (Godley & Hughes, 1996, p.2).
A central element in Orthodoxy is Theosis (union with God) - “the onus is on the individual on personal responsibility and choice for a way of life which leads to salvation”. Theosis is linked with salvation which in Orthodox doctrine is optimistic. “Theosis cannot be achieved except through free personal participation in the life of the Church. In worship, although the liturgy is central, participation in it is not obligatory nor is Church attendance as such considered as an index of religious commitment”, (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.135). The Orthodox Church in order to relate with the society and the world has seven Holy Mysteries: Baptism, Chrismation or Confirmation, Confession, Communion, Marriage, Priesthood and the Blessing of Oil or “Holy Unction” (Miletitch, 1996, p. 10).

One of the major characteristics is Orthodox theology which “avoided precise and scholastic definitions of faith and practice”, unlike the Catholic Church. “The authority of the Church itself derives from the communion of faith in one undivided Trinitarian God” explains Kokosalakis. Orthodoxy exhibits “flexibility and approaching permissiveness” so divorce is allowed (one can be married up to 3 times) and there are no strict rules on birth control which the church “leaves to the conscience of the individual believer” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 127-134). However, church regulations are strict when it comes to priests as they are not allowed to divorce, nor marry a divorcée or a widow. Also, priests can marry only once (Protopopov, 1996, p.25).

According to dogmatic formulation, the Church is “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”. Also, the Orthodox Church is hierarchical in structure which comprisesdeacons, priests, and bishops. “All bishops are equal among themselves, although some of them have special titles, such as Archbishop, Metropolitan, or Patriarch” (Matejic, 1996, p.36-38). When it comes to the hierarchy in the Orthodox church, the Orthodox religious leaders are equal of whom the Patriarch of Constantinople (Oecumenical Patriarchate) is ‘primus inter pares’ – the first among equals. The Orthodox churches are autonomous but are “under the nominal jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople which carries the primacy of honor among the Orthodox Churches” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.128). The Eastern Orthodox churches consist of the four older patriarchates (Constantinople,
Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem), the newer patriarchates (Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia), the autocephalous churches (Cyprus, Greece, Poland and Albania) and the autonomous churches (the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Finland) (Godley & Hughes, 1996, p.19).

All Orthodox Churches have “identical doctrines, canons, sacraments and liturgical forms”. Concerning the administration, churches fall into two categories – the autocephalous or self-governing and the autonomous, “those which have no higher hierarchy of their own, but derive it from another Orthodox Church” (Matejic, 1996, p.39). The Orthodox Liturgy is divided into three parts: the Office of Preparation, the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful (Radan, 1996, p.149-150).

When talking about the basic features of Orthodoxy, the most important are personal responsibility and choice, and a free personal participation. Therefore, church attendance is not compulsory so it is up to the believer to attend the liturgies and actively participate in the life of the church (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.135). Another interesting feature of Orthodoxy is the “capacity to absorb in its own lifestyle popular religious culture” and “the magical and superstitious practices of peasant communities” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.134).

In regard to the Orthodox clergy, even though the “parish priest and other clergy need not have monastic experience and need not be celibate” unlike their Latin Catholic counterparts, there are some strict rules that apply to bishops and monks. “Bishops in the Orthodox Church must have monastic experience outside the world in a monastery before they take up their duties and must be celibate” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.129).

A specific element is the Orthodox ethos with “ambiguity, flexibility and openness” as its basic features. Often there is highlighted “the mystical ethos and the spiritual values of Orthodoxy” as something unique to Orthodoxy (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.127-134). That ethos is “the ethos of freedom in Orthodox religiosity…reflected in the tenuous and peculiar relationship between the individual and the Church as an institution”. Due to that
specific ethos the Orthodox Church has survived in the Balkans under Islamic rule, because this ethos “allows the privatization of faith without losing its horizontal, social and collective dimensions” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.135-136).

One can truly believe and practise religion but one does not need to fully participate in the church and be Orthodox. This is due to “a spiritual ethos which enables Orthodox believers to exercise their religion in a personal way through the cult of the saints and Virgin” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 138-139).

Due to a “mystical character”, icons and incense are very important in Orthodoxy. Icons “play a central part in the worship of all Orthodox churches” and without their presence “an Orthodox act of liturgical prayer is unthinkable” (Ware, in McManners, 2002, p.150). Icons are not only “religious symbols or religious art but essential physical and spiritual forms of communication and expression of Orthodox faith and practice” (Kokosalakis, 1993. p.130). Matejic describes icons as a feature typical of Orthodoxy, because an icon “is an anticipation of the ideal and heavenly, present in the real here and now. The icon is an attempt to portray spirituality and to give a visible form to religious concepts” (1996, p.35).

Even though being part of the broad Christian movement, there are some fundamental differences between Eastern and Western Christianity. In the controversy between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, there are theological and doctrinal differences concerning the Holy Trinity and claims about the papal primacy as Orthodox Christians do not acknowledge the Pope’s supremacy and jurisdiction (Ware in McManners, 2002, p.152-153).

One of the greatest and still unresolved differences between churches is the dispute over the Catholic Church's attitude about papacy innovation and papal supremacy, according to some Orthodox writers (Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop of Thessalonica, Metropolitan of Ephesus, 1990). What should be mentioned as an important characteristic is Orthodox opposition to union with the Catholic Church because of dogmas concerning
belief, hierarchy and religious practice. However, ecumenical dialogue between churches has taken a step forward.

The majority of the Orthodox churches are following the Old or Julian Calendar which is one of the traditional characteristics and an important difference between Eastern and Western churches. Therefore, for the majority of the Orthodox believers, Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January and Easter is celebrated on different dates from Catholics. Recently, some Orthodox churches such as the Greek Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas on the same date as Western Christians as they have accepted the New calendar. However, all Orthodox churches celebrate Easter at the same time, but it is different every year.

There are also differences in liturgy between Catholic and Orthodox Churches, due to “the different ways of approaching the unique mystery of Christ”, and difference in the “understanding of the word rite” (the rite, the faith and the Church “united in a single living attitude”) (Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop of Thessalonica, Metropolitan of Ephesus, 1990, p.132). Agadjanian and Roudometof also point out “the immutability of Tradition and a critical link with national identities” as two characteristics that define that special ethos of Eastern Orthodoxy (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.11).

Kokosalakis argues that the great movements of modern time “the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment, were foreign to the Orthodox Church” unlike Western Christianity which was affected and influenced by those movements. He further explains that “the Orthodox church remained free from the religious cultural and political divisions and polarities which were created in the Western Church after the Reformation”. “Orthodoxy never became secularized in the cultural, political and economic sense that Western society and religion did” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 127-136).

Due to difficult historical circumstances that Orthodox churches (especially in the Balkans) were going through on their way to freedom and independence, those churches have developed national characters. Therefore, the national character of each Orthodox
church has also been one feature unique to Orthodoxy. Even though the Ecumenical Patriarchate always had primacy in the Orthodox world, with the independence from the Ottoman rule, national/ethnic churches began to exist led by their own religious leaders.

During the Ottoman period, the Oecumenical Patriarchate was responsible for the “preservation of the Orthodox faith as well as for the safeguarding of the identity of peoples under its jurisdiction”. The Patriarchate also carried “civil and political functions for all Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule”. Later, in the 19th century the church “re-emerged as a strong ideological and cultural force in the pursuit of independence” of the various Balkans nations and that is the reason why some of the Orthodox churches have “a strong ethnic character” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.131-132).

Kitromilides explains ”the assumption that Orthodox Christianity and the Orthodox Church played a major role in nation-building, by preserving collective identity under the Ottomans and by preparing the advent to independence” (Hutchinson & Smith, eds, 1996, p.202). As a consequence of the ‘nationalization’ of the Orthodox churches, Kitromilides writes, “the unity of the ‘Orthodox commonwealth’… was irrevocably broken” and replaced by the “new sense of community cultivated by the national states, which, after administratively and linguistically homogenizing their societies, found in religion a powerful additional support for their national unity and external aspirations. Clearly, however, religion came last in the struggle to forge new national identities and did not become a functional element in national definition until the nation-states had nationalized their churches.” (Kitromilides,1996, p.208).

Such were the circumstances in which the Serbian Orthodox Church regained independence that was lost to the Ottoman Empire. Independence was gained with the building of the Serbian nation state that became finally liberated from the Ottoman rulers in 1879.
2.4 The Serbian Orthodox Church

To understand the functioning of the contemporary Serbian Orthodox Church, it is necessary to further explain the characteristics and history both of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people. The history of the Serbian Orthodox Church with all the events that have shaped this institution is important as it is a basis for understanding the role and position of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia, Serbia and across the world today.

Theology, ethos and beliefs are the same for all Orthodox churches; however, there are some characteristics in Serbian Orthodoxy that differ from the rest. These are: the counting of time according to the Julian calendar, the veneration of their family patron saint by Serbian families and the use of the Old Church Slavonic language in the liturgies (liturgical language of Slavic Orthodox Churches).

Serbian Orthodoxy needs to be considered as “a particular type of Orthodoxy”, due to “Svetosavlje” which is Eastern Christianity as interpreted and systematized by St. Sava”, suggests Vrcan. Serbian Orthodoxy believes it has a special role within Eastern Orthodoxy, the role of the “guardian of the Western frontier of Eastern Christianity” (Vrcan, 1993, p. 151-152). Cirkovic also writes about the notion that Serbs were “a chosen people, whose origin was at the very beginning of Genesis” (Cirkovic, 2004, p. xi). This notion of exceptionalism has strongly influenced Serbs throughout its history. For Vrcan, the Orthodox faith is the “constitutive and constituent essence” of the Serbian nation and “Serbian nationality cannot exist without Orthodoxy” (Vrcan, 1993, p.158). Ramet would phrase this differently by pointing out that the church “views itself as identical with the Serbian nation, since it considers that religion is the foundation of nationality” (Ramet, 2002, p.114).

Serbs belong to a group of South Slavs which in the 5th and 6th centuries migrated from Northern Europe to the Balkans. Serbs were pagan animists and believed in many gods as other Slavs did (Poles, Croats, Russians, etc.), until they received Christianity during 867-874 (Ware in McManners, 2002, p.159). The adoption of Christianity is described as
“a long and a complex process, but …unavoidable one”, (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.2). According to Cirkovic, “The first milestone was Christianization (around 870 AD) and the adoption of the religion of the Book, accompanied by the creation of special alphabets adapted to suit the Slav languages (Glagolitic and Cyrillic)” (Cirkovic, 2004, p. xviii).

As the Byzantine Empire was Orthodox, it was also a politically motivated move to choose Eastern Orthodoxy as the official religion in Serbia at that time. The influence of the Byzantine Empire was great, both spiritually and culturally. The church’s hierarchy and clergy were from the Byzantine Empire, mainly of a Greek background. At that time, culture, architecture, literature and philosophy were greatly influenced by Byzantium. Church architecture such as building of churches and monasteries, and also painting of frescoes and icons were almost identical as in the Byzantine Empire. Rulers built churches and monasteries into their legacy. According to Byzantine architecture, “The Eastern Church wants the building to be an ideal setting, an ideal microcosm of the universe. The walls of the Orthodox church, adorned with iconography…The Byzantines liked to feel they were closer to the saints” (Saint Photios the Great et al., 1990, p.133).

Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius whilst on their mission to preach Christianity in the Balkans, created the Cyrillic and Glagolitic script and therefore established and created Slavonic literacy. As a consequence, the church service was conducted in the Slavic language instead of Greek, and the very fact that people were able to understand the ‘words of God’ helped the consolidation of Christianity (Serbian Orthodox Church, www.spc.rs, p.3). Cyril and Methodius are called “spiritual enlighteners of the Serbs” as they created their alphabet/script and established literacy among the Serbian people. Therefore, the beginnings of literacy among Serbs is closely connected with the adoption of Christianity (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.4). Church services and liturgies were delivered in the language that people were able to understand and consequently, it attracted more people to Christianity. Ware highlights that “this greatly encouraged the emergence, among the Slavs, of ‘autocephalous’ or independent churches with a strongly national identity” (2002, p.159).
Upon receiving Christianity, the indigenous pagan gods were replaced by a Patron saint, so every family has its Patron saint who is celebrated every year. Veneration of a Patron Saint, in Serbian Slava or Krsno Ime, is the most important feature of Serbian Orthodoxy. Before they became Christians, according to pagan custom, Serbs believed in “god of the earth”, a domestic god who was their protector from evil. “When the Serbs became Christians, they accepted Christian Saints as their domestic guardians, the Saint of the day on which they were baptized often became witness to the fact”. On that day, the family attends the liturgy, and afterwards there is a celebration at home. The religious concepts of the Slava are bread (Kolach), cooked wheat (Koljivo), candle, icon and incensing which are necessary for the celebration (Serbian Religion and Nation, 1996, p.213-215).

Even though the Serbs had become Christians by the end of the 9th century, the Serbian Orthodox Church gained its independent/autocephalous status in 1219. St. Sava, the greatest Serbian national saint and religious leader, and one of the most important and prominent figures in Serbian history was a man who established the Serbian church. St. Sava was born as Rastko Nemanyic, a prince from the medieval Serbian royal dynasty of Nemanyic. Instead of a privileged life of a nobleman, he chose the spiritual life and became a monk at a young age on Mount Athos. St. Sava, the first Serbian Archbishop, during his life built churches and spread literacy and faith through Serbian lands (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.8). The Serbian Orthodox Church describes St. Sava as “the illuminator and the teacher of the Serbian nation as a whole, a miracle-worker, and deliverer of the sick, the poor and the destitute” (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.8). St. Sava and his father Simeon Nemanya were both declared as saints. As Cirkovic explains, “the ruling Serbian dynasty included saints, primarily the founder Simeon Nemanja (1166-1196) and later his son Sava (1175-1236), the first Serbian archbishop. Their veneration offered an opportunity for the development of a specific Serbian tradition as a continuation of the general Christian tradition. Serbian historical personalities were depicted in icons and frescoes and were included in the church calendar and liturgical

From 1219 the Serbian church existed as an Archbishopric, and it was more than one hundred years later in 1346, that Serbia became a Patriarchate (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.11). Since its beginnings, the Serbian Orthodox Church has “played a key role in creating, sustaining or resurrecting the various forms of Serbian national identity” (Partos, 1997, p.91).

The Battle of Kosovo (28th June 1389, St. Vitus day) is one of the most important events in Serbian history “deeply engraved in national consciousness” where the Serbs fought against the Ottoman forces (Cirkovic, 2004, p.85). Even today, the Battle of Kosovo has great significance as the Serbs are very proud of this historical moment and celebrate it every year. The battle, that had a religious character and was religiously motivated, is described as “an honorable defeat since their resistance to the invader proved to be a consciously Christian act of martyrdom against militarily far superior forces of the foe” according to the Serbian Orthodox Church (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.15).

Throughout Serbian history and up to now there has always been present and also nurtured the memory of the Battle of Kosovo and Knez Lazar Hrebeljanovic who led the Serbs against the Ottoman Turks. “The Serb church preserved the cult of Prince Lazar following the extinction of his dynasty and the conquest of the Serb lands by the Turks (1389). Poetry and oral tradition were gradually codified in the Kosovo legend. In the religious interpretations of the Kosovo legend, emphasis was placed on Christian martyrdom.” (Roudometof, 2001, p.52-53).

The Serbs had lost the battle. However, it did not symbolise the end of the Serbian state. That actually happened in 1459 after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, but in Serbian history through popular/folk songs and stories this event marked an end of the Serbian state and therefore the end of freedom for the Serbian people. “The idea that the ‘fall of the Serbian Empire’ took place at the Battle of Kosovo is fundamentally wrong, because the state continued to exist for a further seven decades and experienced economic and
cultural revival” (Cirkovic, 2004, p.85). “The battle of Kosovo gave rise to legends… The cult of the fallen prince, quickly elevated to sainthood, was meant to combat a deep feeling of pessimism”, writes Pavlowitch (2002, p.10).

Vrcan also points out that “there exists a very specific notion of Serbian national history” built on two aspects: “the actual martyrology of the Serbian people” and the meaning of Serbian history. This implies that “there is a necessary connection between the presumed dedication of the Serbian people to the heavenly cause and to celestial values and national history as martyrology”. He argues that such notions and the meaning of history “is the result of the political instrumentalization of religion” (Vrcan, 1993, p.159-160).

The “traditionalism” of Serbian Orthodoxy which is reluctant to accept innovation and ecumenism on which it looks with “reservation” is often emphasized. There is also the “inclination towards mythologism” with two crucial myths in Serbian history, about St. Sava and the Battle of Kosovo. Those myths have been “crucial in the very survival of the Serbian people” (Vrcan, 1993, p.162).

The Ottoman Empire rule over the Orthodox population of Serbia that lasted for more than four centuries is seen as “the longest period of enslavement in Serbian history” (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.18). During those years, the Serbian population existed under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Pec (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.6).

“After the fall of the Serbian state in 1459, its borders and name disappeared and its people were dispersed throughout the large region without boundaries until the reestablishment of the Pec patriarchate in 1557, which provided the Serbs with a framework for a religious community” (Cirkovic, 2004, p. xxiv).

As the Serbian state came to an end, the church continued to exist and turned into the force that preserved religion, language and the memory of the past. “With the fall of the Serbian state, the Serbian Orthodox Church was deprived of the protection and support of the Christian ruler and the nobility”. The church became “impoverished” with “limited freedom of action” and “numerous restrictions” that were imposed on Christians. A
number of the churches were transformed into mosques and the construction of new churches was not permitted (Cirkovic, 2004, p. 133).

In the Ottoman period, religion was employed “as a social barrier” and “led to a withdrawal of the Christian religious communities from the public domain” (Roudometof, 2001, p. 21). “Traditionally, the key cultural institution of Ottoman Balkan society, the Orthodox Church, was seen as the depository of the Balkan nations’ national identity during the Ottoman period. But the Orthodox Church was a guardian of faith alone” (Roudometof, 2001, p.52). The role of the church and monasteries in that time was important as they were a substitute for schools and hospitals. The Patriarch had the authority over Christians and “the church assumed jurisdiction over the civil affairs of the Orthodox communities” (Roudometof, 2001, p.53). The Serbs had no legal rights and they had to pay special duties just to live in the Ottoman Empire (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.18-19).

How did the church survive under the Turks for such a long period of time? “The Church had to suffer the same fate as the ordinary Serbian folk” (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.23). People gathered in the churches only on rare occasions, and the heads of families “assumed roles of domestic priests”. Therefore, “the celebration of patron saint day assumed great importance in Serbian tradition – it came as a sort of substitute for all other religious practices” (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.23). The Patriarchate of Pec was renewed in 1557 with Turkish approval after nearly one hundred years. However, in 1776 the Patriarchal status of the Serbian Orthodox Church was again lost due to political reasons, as the sultan abolished the Patriarchate (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.20). However, church authority was reestablished by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as Greek bishops replaced Serbian (Hackel in McManners, 2002).

During the Ottoman period, mass migrations of Serbs into Austrian territory occurred. The migration was really important as the Serbs crossed borders in order to escape Ottoman rule and inhabited territories under other rulers where Catholicism was the predominant, if not only religion. The migrations were led by priests and monks “who
carried with them the most significant national and spiritual treasures in an attempt to have them saved from oblivion”. The largest migration was called “the Great Migration” (1674-1690) when Patriarch Arsenije III Carnojevic led 40,000 Serbs to territories belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vojvodina and Croatia) (Serbian Orthodox Church, p. 19-22).

Things gradually started to change within the Ottoman Empire, and in 1831 the Serbian church was granted autonomy and Greek bishops were replaced with Serbian-speaking bishops which was of crucial importance for the Serbian believers (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.27). Later, as Kokosalakis argues, “the fusion of popular and official religion became closely connected with the ideals of ethnic identity and later of nationalism” and the Orthodox religion was a kind of instrument “in forging the ethnic, cultural identities and later the national aspirations of these people” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 136-140). Kokosalakis points out that the Orthodox faith “re-emerged as a strong ideological and cultural force in the pursuit of the independence” of the Balkan nations, among them the Serbs (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 132). Throughout this whole time of hardship the Serbian Orthodox Church has become the most significant institution of the Serbian people.

The liberation from Ottoman rule was certainly one of the most important moments in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the church and Serbian people had again gained their freedom and independence after a few centuries of foreign rule. After the war with the Turks had ended, in 1878 at the Berlin Congress, Serbia was recognized as an independent and sovereign state. After unification of the Serbs into a state, there followed the unification of the church. Shortly after, in 1879 the Serbian Orthodox Church became autocephalous (independent) again (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.28).

It was only with the creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia with the Serbian royal dynasty of Karadjordjevic that Serbia regained in 1920 its patriarchal status lost in 1776 (Ware, 1993, p.543). During that time, according to Ramet, non-Orthodox believers within the Kingdom complained that “the Serbian Church was manipulating the state to serve its own confessional objectives”. (2002, p. 103). That was also the moment that
Partos describes as “the Orthodox Church’s long-standing goal of gathering all Serbs under one protective umbrella, where they would be masters of their own fate and free to foster their Orthodox religious and cultural traditions” (Partos, 1997, p.92).

The period of World War II and its aftermath, was one of the hardest periods in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people. During World War II, the church “suffered numerous fatalities” at the hand of the occupying Nazis and their allies (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.36). Serbia was under German occupation, and other territories inhabited by Serbs were also occupied or ruled by regimes that were close to the Nazi regime such as the Independent State of Croatia. In Croatia and Bosnia (both under Ustashe’s rule) a large number of Serbian priests were killed, whilst some were taken to concentration camps. The Serbian Orthodox clergy bore the same fate and suffered along with their people, as there was killed more than half a million Serbs (Dyker & Vejvoda, 1996). Forced mass conversions to Catholicism also took place (Ramet, 2002). A great number of churches and monasteries were destroyed.

After World War II and with the establishment of the Communist regime in Yugoslavia, the church was indeed suppressed, but still functioning. Even though church property was badly damaged during the war, the church did not receive war reparations. Moreover, the state confiscated 70,000 hectares of its land and 1180 buildings (Ramet, 2002, p.107). The church was suppressed and her work was almost forbidden in the early period of the communist state. The clergy and the church were considered as a state and a class enemy. Religious people were banned from holding public service positions, as well as juridical and teaching positions and positions in the police or the military. In the later stages of communism, this approach was softened. Kokosalakis explains “after the WWII, the Orthodox churches in the Balkans were either in a condition of persecution or mere toleration under the socialist state. …the Church as an institution was out of favour and religion at large was understood to be obscurantist and anachronistic” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 133). Ramet further explains that, even though the church had many losses both in clergy and buildings, “the Serbian Church had to endure the postwar harassment of its priests and the continued obstruction of church construction” (Ramet, 2002, p.100). Such
a position created for the church “prestige among many Serbs because it had shared their sufferings in full” (Partos, 1997, p.93). Not only did the church suffer numerous casualties both in goods and people, but the church was left without many believers as many Serbs had become communists and/or atheists.

As a consequence of the post war migration to USA, Canada, Australia and Western Europe, new dioceses were formed worldwide. Important moments in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church were two schisms that occurred within the church in the 1960's. The first schism was in America in 1963 when Bishop Dionisije Milivojevic of the American-Canadian diocese proclaimed the Free Serbian Orthodox Church, a church free from the Communists’ influence. Serbs in Australia followed, and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia was divided into two separate churches, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Free Serbian Orthodox Church. Therefore, some parishes remained under the jurisdiction of the church in Serbia that was called ‘Communist’, and others came under the jurisdiction of and became loyal to the Bishop of America. Partos explains that the church “avoided posing any direct challenge to the authorities. The hierarchy’s acquiescence in communist rule was one of the reasons behind the split in the ranks of the Orthodox Church that occurred in 1963, when the Serbian emigres’ diocese, based in the United States and Canada, declared its autonomy from the mother church”(Partos, 1997, p.96). The schism was overcome in 1992 when those separated dioceses came again under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade after the collapse of communism in Yugoslavia.

For the Serbian Orthodox Church, another formal schism occurred when dioceses in Macedonia proclaimed themselves as the Macedonian Orthodox Church even though they were under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.37). Ramet writes that “on 17 July 1967, the Macedonian clergy, in open defiance to the Serbian patriarchate to which it had taken oaths of loyalty, unilaterally declared itself an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church”. The Macedonian Orthodox Church “was not established on the basis of pan-Orthodox agreement, as prescribed by ecclesiastical tradition” (Ramet, 2002, p.109-110). Partos writes about the
support that the Macedonian Orthodox Church was given by the Communist authorities at that time as “the Yugoslav federal authorities gave vigorous support to the establishment of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. It was a robust demonstration of how an atheist regime would, for reasons of interethnic balance, promote the interests of a religious institution” (Partos, 1997. p.97). The Macedonian Orthodox Church is still not canonically recognised by other Orthodox churches.

The period after the Cold War was marked with the revival of nationalism and religion in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe ignited ethnic and religious tensions in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, those tensions soon emerged as war when Croatia and Slovenia wanted to separate from the Yugoslav federation. Kokosalakis writes “in former Yugoslavia, however, where religious and ethnic boundaries have been polarised and there has been a history of conflict, religion tends to contribute to the absolutisation of these boundaries” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.140). Partos also highlights “a religious revival which had already received a boost before the conflict erupted with the dissolution of the communist federal state and its replacement by mostly nationalist regimes in the individual republics” (1997, p.116).

At the beginning of the Balkans war which began in 1991, as Pavlowitch points out, “the church was the only pan-Serbian institution, and responsible for all the Orthodox faithful in the federation” (2002, p. 205). However, Ramet argues that the Serbian Orthodox Church “prospered under Milosevic” as communist rule ended and the church was given much more freedom. The church started to build many churches and monasteries and it was also a period when it increased its publishing activity (Ramet, 2002, p.257). “The religious establishments all benefited from greater access to the media; they regained at least a foothold in education;… and built up political influence” (Partos, 1997, p.117). The Balkans War was considered not only an ethnic or civil, but also a religious war as all three faith communities from the Former Yugoslav republics were involved. As “religion has been and remains a key component of national identification in the Balkans” it cannot be separated from nationalism, and religion “has been one of the driving forces in building up a sense of ethnic identity” (Partos, 1997, p. 90-91) because
“the ethnic input of religion can harden and absolutise boundaries of ethnic identities, sometimes with disastrous consequences” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p. 127).

After the war, Serbia has been left with hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. Pavlowitch described the situation in Serbia that "Serbia had more refugees than any other country in Europe: 800,000 from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, for whom the help came only from relatives, from the church, channeling aid mostly from Greece, and from Italian Catholic organizations" (Pavlowitch, 2002, p.221).

It can be said that during the war in the Former Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church was going through a serious crisis. Accused of ethno-nationalism and faced with many political problems, those were hard and difficult times for the church. In the Balkans War, the church also had many casualties as a number of churches in Croatia and Bosnia were destroyed. The Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia were displaced from their homes, many lost their lives. The Serbian Orthodox Church "considered that Serbs, far from being aggressors, had been victims, and it condemned atrocities committed by Serbs, but considered them to be exceptions" (Pavlowitch, 2002, p.213). But in the Balkans War, as sentiments re-emerged from a painful past that was dominated by ethnic and religious tensions, the Serbian Orthodox Church found itself in a difficult position.

For Kitromilides, "it was the eventual abandonment of the ecumenicity of Orthodoxy, and the ‘nationalization’ of the churches, that brought intense national conflicts into the life of the Orthodox Church and nurtured the assumption concerning the affinity between Orthodoxy and nationality”(Kitromilides in Hutchinson & Smith, 1996, p.203).

The active role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the conflict between Serbs and Croats in the 1990s in Croatia is described by Partos. “Serbian Church dignitaries objected to the new Croatian constitution, which curbed the cultural and educational rights of that republic’s Serbian community. Although several of the Serbian Church’s objections to the new Croatian government’s policies were justified, the negative way in which the Orthodox hierarchy went about expressing its disapproval only poured oil on the fire. It
refused to recognize the democratically elected Croatian authorities and boycotted ceremonial occasions that not only the newly favored Catholic hierarchy but also its Muslim, Protestant, and Jewish counterparts attended” (Partos, 1997, p.102).

Myths and the past, mixed with the religion, were used as war propaganda as “memories of collective injuries and glories, victories and defeats, were interiorized and turned into all-absorbing myths, interwoven with religious elements. Whenever a crisis occurred, the religious differences were blown up out of all proportion” (Tschuy, 1997, p. 103). Also, the churches and mosques “have rarely taken a critical stance, even when the disastrous and inhuman consequences of the political decisions of their ethnic communities were clear” (Tschuy, 1997, p.113). Serbs also had a tendency to “portray themselves as the most victimized nation in Europe, which their leaders seem to interpret as giving them the right to make exaggerated demands of their neighbours. This view is generally supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church, even though it formally deplored violence”, writes Tschuy (1997, p.112).

As all three nations involved in conflict were of different religions: Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim, religion was often blamed for triggering a civil war in the Balkans. The role of the clergy in the Balkans war cannot be neglected as “in fact, the war was ignited by using rising tempers of ethnic hatreds”, but as time passed, “the war took on ever more religious characteristics. Imams and Christian clergy followed their troops into battle, blessing them and praying for their success in battle” (Ramet, 2002, p.255). The Serbian Orthodox Church, according to Ramet, “played a significant role in weaving the tapestry of hate that eventually covered all of Serbia” becoming more politicized (2002, p. 254-255). Religious bodies benefited from the new governments after the dissolution of the communist state” (Tschuy, 1997, p.116).

Religious institutions, especially the Serbian Orthodox Church, were often accused of warmongering; on the other side, it was religious leaders who initiated antiwar protests and calls for peace and tolerance. During the war, the Serbian Orthodox Church was involved in antiwar protests and reconciliation initiatives after the war as well as the
Catholic Church and Muslim communities in Bosnia. In 1991, Patriarch Pavle met with the cardinal archbishop of Zagreb, and called for an end of war (Ramet, 2002). Thus, “antiwar demonstrations on 14 June 1992, attended by several thousand people were led by the Serbian Patriarch Pavle” (Ramet, 2002, p. 158).

Partos writes about the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the initiatives for peace. "Like the Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church made numerous declarations in favor of peace and reconciliation. However, the practical examples of interchurch cooperation were relatively few and far between, partly because the Orthodox feared that the Catholic desire for ecumenical progress concealed missionary purpose" (1997, p.105). On 17th May 1994 at Sarajevo airport, a meeting took place between the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Alexis II, Serbian Patriarch Pavle and Cardinal Franjo Kuharic, Metropolitan Archbishop of Zagreb (http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/cardinali_biografie/cardinali_bio_puljic_v_en.html). A papal visit to Belgrade was controversial as Patriarch Pavle opposed Pope John Paul’s planned visit to Belgrade in September 1994 “with the purpose of preaching reconciliation among the Orthodox, the Muslims, and the Catholics” (1997, p.110).

The Balkans war was not the only critical moment for the Serbian Orthodox Church at the end of the 20th century. Starting with political unrest in the 1980s, the crisis at Kosovo escalated during the 1990s. Again, the Serbian Orthodox Church faced a crisis as many churches and monasteries were destroyed with a number of monks killed. After the NATO bombing of Serbia and Kosovo in 1999 and recently proclaimed independence of Kosovo, a small number of the Serbian population still lives in Kosovo.

In a letter to Patriarch Pavle in 2002 from the General Secretaries of the World Council of Churches and Conference of European Churches it said “we are writing to express our profound concern at the continued violence facing members of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its cultural and spiritual property in Kosovo and Metohija in the recent period. The deliberate attacks on the churches and holy places of the Serbian Orthodox
Church occurring in Kosovo and Metohija at this time are a painful and scandalous manifestation of the extremism and instability still affecting parts of this region. This situation also reflects the inadequacy of the international protection by the interim authorities in Kosovo to the minority communities, and particularly to the Serbian community” (http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/regional-concerns/europe/yugoslavia-former-appeal-for-religious-tolerance.html).

During the NATO bombing, Patriarch Pavle called for Milosevic to resign. In a Pastoral letter to Patriarch Pavle in June 1999 Konrad Raiser (World Council of Churches) and Keith Clements (Conference of European Churches) expressed “sincere appreciation for the statement of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church on 15th June, which includes a call for the resignation of the president and the government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” (http://www.oikoumene.org/de/dokumentation/documents/oerk-kommissionen/internationale). In October 2000 Milosevic had lost the elections, marking one of the most significant moments in contemporary Serbian history. Milosevic was placed under house arrest where he stayed until he was handed to the International Tribunal for War Crimes in the Hague on 28 June 2001. Milosevic died in prison a few years later in March 2006.

Today, the Serbian Orthodox Church functions as a transnational religious network, with the mother church in Serbia that operates globally and links Serbian Orthodox Churches in diaspora across the world. The Serbian Orthodox Church has patriarchal status and Patriarch Irinej is leader of this religious institution, elected in 2010 after the death of Patriarch Pavle. The organization/hierarchy of the church consists of: the Holy Assembly of Bishops (Patriarch Irinej, 4 Metropolitan and 37 Bishops/Archbishops), the Orthodox Diocese of Ochrid (Pravoslavna Ohridska Arhiepiskopija), the Holy Synod (4 Metropolitan and Patriarch - Sveti Arhijerejski Sinod) and the Patriarchal Steering Committee Patrijarshijski Upravni Odbor (5 bishops + other members). The Holy Synod is the supreme authority of the Serbian Orthodox Church (http://www.spc.yu/Ustrojstvo/ustrojstvo.html, 2007).
2.5 Serbian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox Churches in a Global Context

The current state of Orthodoxy is determined by two factors, its “cultural and historical roots and its recent communist experience”, point out Agadjanian and Roudometof (2005, p.15). After the Cold War and the fall of communism, the revival of religion accompanied with the revival of nationalism is noticeable in the former communist countries as “substantial evidence of religious revival within the popular ethos of Orthodox culture and the monastic tradition” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.140).

Being “fundamentally a universalist religion”, Orthodoxy “is not limited to ethnic or other segmental boundaries” (Kokosalakis, 1993, p.140). However, Orthodox churches nowadays are mainly national with a strong orientation to ethnicity and nationality. The ethno-national character of Orthodox churches is due to the historical circumstances and a struggle for independence.

Once united and non-fragmented, the Orthodox world, after the fall of Constantinople, and later with the Russian dominance, started to fragment. Russian dominance was a “first step toward fragmentation of the Eastern Orthodox cultural universe” (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p. 10-11). The Orthodox world began to fragment further with the creation of nation states, as independent and autocephalous national churches and patriarchates began to exist giving to Orthodox churches an ethnic character and different national and political objectives.

The majority of the Orthodox are situated in Eastern Europe, Russia and Balkans as well as in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon, Ethiopia, Eritrea). However, the Orthodox nowadays are scattered around the world due to migration and the global movement of a people. The global spread of Orthodoxy after WWII and recently after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe facilitated creation of Orthodox diasporas around the world, especially in the USA, Canada and Australia. In the diaspora many Orthodox churches have been built, and Orthodoxy has become increasingly present in the religious profile of those countries.
Facilitated by the revolution in information technologies and transport, religion become “de-territorialized” and “disseminated across the traditional confessional, political, cultural and civilizational borders”. That way “religion becomes increasingly transnational and transethnic” as diasporas across the world establish religious communities but still under the jurisdiction of their mother churches (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.4).

Communism was the factor that divided churches as was the case with the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches. In 2007, after more than eighty years the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia (ROCOR) united. The Russian Orthodox Church split after the communist regime was brought to power in Russia. Russians living in the diaspora decided to break free from the church that was under communist influence. The same happened to the Serbian Orthodox Church, but the church united 15 years earlier than the Russian.

With the breakdown of communism as a state ideology and the end of the Cold War, the mechanisms of state control that were successfully oppressing and marginalizing people in Eastern Europe have come to an end. In the former communist countries, the state has become democratic, guaranteeing the freedom of religion with state control now belonging to the past. Therefore, the Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe after decades of oppression, experienced a revival emerging as a very important factor in the life of those countries. Suddenly, from a marginal position in society, the church has emerged as a very powerful and influential factor in the political, social and cultural life of those countries. Even though suppressed for decades under the atheist regime, after the fall of communism, people turned back to religion instead of turning to materialism as was the case in the West. Belief in God was documented to be higher than in Western Europe (Agadjanian and Roudometof, 2005).

After a long period of political marginalization under communism, the Orthodox clergy and lay people have found themselves unprepared for the changes modernity has brought and the challenges that lie ahead. Hackel points out that “even well-established members
were ill-prepared for the role which their previously marginalized church was now allowed to play in public life. At a time of poverty and disarray, the Orthodox churches of Russia and Eastern Europe were suddenly required to address a wide range of tasks in the field of politics and education, charity and social welfare” (Hackel, 2002, p. 565). Kokosalakis also emphasizes that churches and believers are “deeply caught, like everybody else, in the agonizing tensions and the unpredictable, unique and global transformations of the late twentieth century” (1993, p.142).

Even though the term ‘global religion’ cannot be fully applied to Eastern Orthodoxy as it can to Roman Catholicism, Agadjanian and Roudometof believe it is “unreasonable to infer that Eastern Orthodoxy has been outside the global processes or completely uninvolved in significant negotiation with global discourses”. In their opinion “the dominant mode of Eastern Orthodox responses to globality has been self-protective and communitarian” by “keeping the unbroken Tradition” (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.8-9). When it comes to Orthodox responses to globality, Agadjanian and Roudometof believe that the reasons for the Eastern Orthodox responses are the fundamental spirit and institutional culture of Eastern Christianity combined with the communist legacy (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005 p.9). An important characteristic of the Orthodox transition into the modern world is ”the process of employing religious affiliation for signifying membership into new secular entities” (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.11).

The Patriarchal status of the Serbian Orthodox Church guarantees it an influential position within the Orthodox world. The relationship between the Serbian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox churches is very friendly and cooperative, except in regard to the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

The sense of the Orthodox brotherhood was best displayed during the Balkans war as some of the traditionally Orthodox countries such as Russia and Greece supported the Serbs. “The Russian Orthodox Church has repeatedly demonstrated its moral support for the Serbs”, writes Partos (1997, p.111). However, there were some exceptions as
Bulgaria and Romania showed no sympathy for the Serbs. Similarly Serbia did not show the same sentiment for the Macedonian Orthodox Church (p.113). That is because ” the “Orthodox International” has not been united either on the political or the religious level, partly because of different interests and partly because of the absence of a spiritual unifying force outside the independent national churches” Partos explains (1997, p.112).

Eastern Christianity experienced other difficulties with adapting to a modern, globalised world resulting in its two reactions to modernity: “anti-Western and anti-modern reaction”, (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.12). Klaus Buchenau after a survey of Serbian Orthodoxy also describes “the anti-Western, anti-European, counter-globalist, and anti-modern attitudes that dominated the Serb ecclesiastical landscape over the post-1989 period” (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p. 17).

Eastern Europe was often criticised as backward, with the inability to enter the global arena and adapt to the changes brought by modernity. However, the backwardness of Eastern Europe, as seen by Makrides, is not due to religion but to other factors. Makrides concludes that even though “these churches have maintained their traditional characteristics, they are far from incapable of adjusting their functions and presence to contemporary realities”, (Makrides, 2005, p.19). Due to the communist legacy, Eastern Orthodoxy “has been effectively prevented from consciously adapting itself to the social, cultural, and indeed, global changes”, and after communism it had a “narrow intellectual outlook” and was without the “ability to grasp the new geopolitical realities” (Agadjanian & Roudometof, 2005, p.12).

Cahill also points out some of the challenges that Orthodoxy is facing in the global world, namely, “the development of an ecological consciousness, commitment to the spiritual, the mystical and the sacramental, not being too distracted by welfare and educational initiatives and the doctrinal and inpractice commitment to the equality of male and female” (Cahill, 2004). In conclusion, “The Church pragmatically accepts “the rules of the game” as long as her spiritual dominance is guaranteed over her land and her people”, believe Agadjanian & Roudometof (2005, p.16).
2.6 The Serbian Orthodox Church and its Ecumenical Relations

Being of the same Christian tradition, the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches is important to explore, as for the centuries that followed the Great Schism, the two churches were rivals for land and people. Centuries-long hostilities between Catholic and Orthodox churches have finally been overcome in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, as the ecumenical dialogue had taken place opening possibilities for a union between Christian churches.

Even though ecumenical dialogue was initiated during the 1920’s, it was not until 1965 and the Second Vatican Council that a Christian world witnessed a historic moment when Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch issued mutual pardon and forgiveness regarding the mutual excommunication of the two churches and the removal of anathemas from 1054, the year that marked the Great Schism.

The Serbian Orthodox Church’s attitude toward ecumenism should be observed from two perspectives. The official attitude of the church is pro-ecumenical and in the last few decades, the Serbian Orthodox Church has been involved in ecumenical activity and initiatives with representatives from the Catholic Church. Representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church have attended various meetings organized by the two churches in order to find solutions for further development of ecumenical activity and to foster relationships and better understanding between the churches.

Another attitude toward the ecumenical activity of the church represents individual, but very powerful voices within the church. These are the greatest opponents to ecumenism, and are respected not only in Serbia but throughout the Orthodox world. For some Orthodox, Union with the Catholics is only possible “when they renounce their innovative and unorthodox doctrines. Orthodox ecclesiology has always been established on the dogma that there is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; schismatics, heretics and persons of other religions are not members, but outside Her. How can true unity be realized with those that teach dogmas foreign to Orthodoxy concerning the Holy Trinity, the Mother of God, the hierarchy, icons, fasting, etc.?“ (Saint Photios the Great et
al., 1990, p. viii-ix). Thus, ecumenism is perceived as a heresy by some influential Orthodox thinkers.

Even though the Serbian Orthodox Church has been involved in ecumenical dialogue at the official level, for a significant number of Serbs, ecumenism means loss of the Orthodox identity by becoming Catholic. Such an attitude is due to the propaganda of “hardcore” Orthodox circles strongly opposed to the very idea of the ecumenical “heresy”.

Two very influential Serbian Orthodox thinkers who are anti-ecumenically oriented are Hieromonk Sava Janjic and Father Justin Popovic. Father Justin Popovic in his book “The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism” (published in 1974) talks against ecumenical activity and the World Council of Churches. For him, ecumenism is a “pan-heresy”, and “a collective name for pseudo-Christians, for the pseudo-Churches of Western Europe. Their common evangelical name is pan-heresy”. (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/artemije_thess.aspx). In September 2004, a conference was organized in Greece with the theme “Ecumenism: Origins, Expectations, Disenchantment”. At the conference, there were anti-ecumenical talks and some churches and clergy men were openly criticized such as Father Thomas Hopko, a theologian, well known for his ecumenical activities (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/hopko_ecum.aspx).

The Serbian Orthodox Church with Patriarch German decided to join the WCC in 1965, and “as a result of this cooperation, the Serbian Orthodox Church from time to time received material assistance from the WCC, such as medicines, scholarships, trips to Switzerland, and financial subsidies (e.g., for constructing a new building for the theological faculty in Belgrade). For these crumbs of help, we have lost, in the spiritual plane, the purity of the Faith, the canonical heritage of the Church, and faithfulness to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church”. (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/soc_wcc.aspx). In the World Council of Churches, Archpriest Vladan Perisic from the Serbian Orthodox Church is a Central
Committee member as well as a member of the Conference of European Churches (http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/governing-bodies/central). Even though many of the Orthodox churches are members of the World Council of Churches, the WCC was criticized as an organisation that “compromises the foundational principles of the Orthodox Church”. The ecumenical movement and the WCC have also been blamed as the factors that separated the Orthodox world. (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/hopko_ecum.aspx).

Some members of the Orthodox churches went so far as to excommunicate other churches that were involved in the ecumenical activity. The ROCOR (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) issued anathemas against ecumenism in 1983 and the Serbian Orthodox Church was also anathemised because of its proecumenical activity. (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/ecum_anath.aspx).

The Serbian Orthodox Church and its representatives officially participated at various ecumenical meetings thus showing its openness for an ecumenical dialogue. Representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church have been involved in theological dialogue with Catholic Church, in as much as that the Joint International Commission was held in Belgrade in 2006 and in Ravenna in 2007. The Commission worked on the ways toward “the restoration of full communion” between churches, (http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=en&id=719&tl=en).

”Serbia’s geographical location on the border between Eastern and Western Christianity gives her a unique opportunity to promote ecumenical dialogue”, expressed Pope Benedict XVI (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf).

There also were joint initiatives between the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and the Orthodox Theology Faculty of the Patriarchate of Serbia in Belgrade.
Even though the ecumenical dialogue has been present for several decades, there still remains to be seen if the Serbian Orthodox Church will continue its pro-ecumenical activity in the future and to what extent.
CHAPTER THREE
THE AUSTRALIAN DIOCESE: NATIONAL AND
TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1 The Australian Diocese and its Administration
Currently, the Serbian Orthodox Church across the world has 32 dioceses, 3578 parishes,
204 monasteries, 1900 parish priests, around 230 monks and nuns, five seminaries, two
theological faculties, and the Theological Institute (Serbian Orthodox Church, p.38).
There are also 275 Serbian Orthodox Churches across the world today outside Serbia,
mainly in the USA, Canada and Australia. Parishes are governed by a priest. All parishes
in one geographical region form eparchies or dioceses led by the Bishops.

Table 3.1: Serbian Orthodox Church - Listing of Serbian Orthodox Churches by
country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Churches/parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
[www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com](http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com)
In the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, there is a pattern of changing bishops every few years. The bishops appointed to Australia usually come from Serbia, but it is also common for bishops to come from other parts of the world where they have been on their previous assignments. After finishing their role/assignment in Australia, bishops are then appointed to their other assignments mainly in Serbia, but also in other parts of the world. Up until 1992 there were two bishops for the Australian dioceses reflecting the earlier split in the 1960s. Between 1969 and 1974 Bishop Lavrentije (Trifunovic) was appointed as a Bishop of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. After Australia, he went to Germany, and then to Serbia where he is currently Bishop of Sabac (Serbia). Then the new Bishop Nikolaj (Mrdja) was appointed in the mid 1970s. Now he is Metropolitan of Dabar and Bosnia and has held that position for many years. He was then replaced in the 1980s by Bishop Vasilije (Vadic) who is now Bishop of Srem (Serbia). Bishop Longin (Krco) was the Australian Bishop till 1992 and he is now Bishop of America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate. Bishop Luka (Kovacevic) was in Australia from 1993-1999, and now he holds the title of Bishop of Western Europe. Bishops of the former Free Serbian Orthodox Church and New Gracanica Metropolitanate were Bishop Dionisije (deceased) of America and Canada in the 1960s, and then Bishop Dimitrije (Balac) (deceased) of America and Canada till 1978. After that, there were appointed Bishops especially for the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand starting with Bishop Petar (Bankerovic) (deceased) of Australia and New Zealand till 1988, then Bishop Vasilije (Veinovic) (deceased) to 1993 and finally Bishop Sava (Juric) till 1999 who is now Bishop of Slavonia (Croatia). Bishop Nikanor (Bogunovic) prior to his appointment to Australia in 2000 was Bishop of Karlovac (Croatia), and he is now Bishop of Banat (Serbia). He was replaced in 2003 by Bishop Milutin (Knezevic) who stayed in Australia till 2006 and now he is Bishop of Valjevo. Thus, ten bishops who have worked in Australia have become bishops, archbishops or metropolitans in Serbia or the diaspora, highlighting the transnational nature of episcopal appointments. It is unclear what are the consequences of this constant movement of bishops. Certainly it contrasts with the relative lack of episcopal appointments in the Australian Greek Orthodox Church in recent decades.
The Serbian Orthodox jurisdiction for Australia and New Zealand consists of two dioceses, the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand and the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand (New Gracanica Metropolitanate) reflecting the earlier split. However, it is important to note that both dioceses are under the jurisdiction of one Bishop, currently His Grace, The Right Reverend Bishop Irinej Dobrijevíc reflecting the 1992 reunion and the one authority vested in the Patriarch in Belgrade. The parishes and monasteries in Australia and New Zealand are administratively divided between two dioceses.

In Australia, currently there are 43 Serbian Orthodox Church parishes and 4 monasteries, with 3 parishes in New Zealand (these are listed in Appendix 3). Forty seven clergy men serve in Australian parishes. Serbian churches in Australia were built with donations from the community members who also worked in their spare time on the building of those churches.

The Diocese of Australia and New Zealand has tried to remain faithful to the church authorities in Belgrade. However, the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand (New Gracanica Metropolitanate) became in 1963 a part of the Free Serbian Orthodox Church when it broke free from the communist influenced Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. The Diocese accepted the authority of Bishop Dionisije in America.

A new draft Constitution was accepted by all parish representatives on 4th September 2010 in Melbourne with the aim of achieving ecclesiastical and administrative unity, in other words to join together the two dioceses into one Eparchy. However, the Constitution will become valid until it is approved by the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. On the same day was also held the Second Annual Diocesan Day Celebration in Melbourne.

The Episcopal Headquarters of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia are located in Sydney as decided by the new Bishop Irinej. Previous bishops had their residence at the
New Kalenich monastery in Canberra. The Episcopal Secretariat is also attached to the bishop’s residence.

When it comes to the hierarchy and organisation of the Diocese, there are two Episcopal deputy-chancellors for each diocese and four Episcopal Deans, two for the Eastern Region (New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland and New Zealand) and two for the Western Region (Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania). There are also two Diocesan secretaries.

The Diocese of Australia and New Zealand has its Diocesan Executive Board while the Diocese for Australia and New Zealand (New Gracanica Metropolitanate) has the Diocesan Council.

The former Free Serbian Orthodox Church diocese has the Diocesan Plenum and three organisations: Federation of the Circles of Serbian Sisters, Organisation of the Serbian Chetniks “Ravna Gora” and St. Sava Serbian Cultural Club. The Dioceses also have the Ecclesiastical Courts, the Joint Constitutional Committee, the Joint Education Commission for New South Wales and the Joint Youth Movement.

There are also diocesan institutions and agencies that are under the church or closely linked to the church. These are: St. Sava Serbian Orthodox College in Sydney, Riza-Serbian Orthodox Vestments and Ecclesiastical Appointments, Diocesan Pilgrimage Agency, St. Simeon Retirement Village in Rooty Hill in Sydney, the Brotherhood of the Holy Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich, The Serbian-New Zealand Medical Association, the Serbian National Youth Conference Centre Jelena Miletic-Elaine and The Branko Radicevic Youth Club. Also, under the New Gracanica Metropolitanate, there are the Federation of the Circles of Serbian Sisters and St. Sava Children’s Camp.

1 The number of parishes in Australia and New Zealand is 46, whereas on the www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com it is still showing 30. The website has not been updated for a few years and in the meantime there have been new parishes founded in Australia and New Zealand.
His Grace Bishop Irinej Dobrijevic as the new Australian bishop was enthroned on 21st October 2006 in St. Sava Church in Sydney. The Bishop was born in 1955 and raised in Cleveland, Ohio where he became a priest in 1979. Bishop Irinej's career has been very successful both in the religious and diplomatic fields. As a priest, he was involved in and was a member of different organizations. He was a member of the Executive Council, Secretariat – Holy Synod of Bishops, Christian Churches Together and Religions for Peace. He was also previously executive director for the Office of the SOC in Washington, D.C. In 1999, Bishop Irinej was International Orthodox Christian Charities’ (IOCC) Church Liaison Officer. In 2004, he was appointed as a Consultant to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the SOC on International and Intercultural Affairs, and also the Editor-in-Charge of the Information Service of the SOC, Serbian Unity and World Council of Churches member and the Conference of European Churches (OrthodoxWiki, http://orthodoxwiki.org/Irinej_(Dobrijevic)_of_Australia_and_New_Zealand). He also was a consultant to the Serbian Orthodox Church’s Holy Synod on International and Interchurch Affairs. In 2004 at the Interparliamentary Conference on Human Rights and Religious Freedom in Brussels, he gave a speech from an Orthodox perspective, (Religious Freedom Coalition, http://www.rfcnet.org/news/default.asp?action=detail&article=239). He lectured at the Catholic Loyola University in Chicago, and at the Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. Currently, Bishop Irinej represents the Serbian Orthodox Church on the World Council of Churches (WCC) as a Central Committee member. He is a member of the Advisory Council of the Njegos Endowment for Serbian Studies at Columbia University. He was also a member of the Executive Council of the United States Conference of Religions for Peace (USCRP) (http://soya.org.au/sc/web/ourchurch/index/page/ourbishop).

Since his enthronement, he has become a controversial figure in the Serbian community as many people have opposed his attempts to bring innovation into church practice. Bishop Irinej’s modern attitudes and his tendencies for change within the SOC in Australia have brought divisions within the community. Being aware of the church’s place in multicultural and multifaith Australian society, in 2007 he applied for
membership in the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). However, the Serbian Orthodox Church was a member of the National Council of Churches Australia until 1999, when, during the NATO bombing of Serbia, Australia supported NATO. Application for membership in this ecumenical organisation was criticised by many community members as they thought they would gradually (if not immediately) become Catholics by the mere fact of becoming a member church. The bishop’s arrival divided the Serbian community even further. The older generation of Serbs stood against his reform ideas, especially after he wanted to introduce the sermon in English in order to attract the younger generation of Serbs and other English-speaking Orthodox believers. The other stream consisting mainly of younger people supported the Bishop. On his initiative, youth groups across Australia were founded. Also, the official website of the Diocese has improved both in content and design, with information in English and Serbian.

Bishop Irinej chose his residence to be in Sydney and not in the Kalenich monastery near Canberra which was the residence of previous Archbishops in order to develop more contacts and relationships with other communities and representatives from various organizations and institutions. His decision yet again was openly disapproved of by some influential community members. Bishop Irinej is also often criticised for his transnational travels and contacts, and also for his Serbian American identity.

3.2 Four Parish Case Studies

Four Serbian Orthodox parishes served as case studies to gain an understanding on how the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia operates. The parishes are described as follows:

1. Case Study One: Inner City Parish

The parish is located close to the city centre and it is the only church that has not been built by Serbian migrants. It is architecturally different as the building is an old Anglican church purchased in the 1970s and slightly redecorated internally in the Orthodox style.
On the church walls there are icons and in the centre of the church there is a small stand with an icon on it where people put money and kiss the icon. The church is listed as a heritage building, so the look of the church cannot be changed. It also looks different from other Orthodox churches as there are rows of seats which is not a custom in the Orthodox churches as people stand during the liturgy. The majority of parishioners are educated and financially comfortable and some even say that the Serbian intellectual ‘elite’ and professionals come to this parish. Parishioners are mostly drawn from the first migration wave (after WWII) as well as their descendents, together with skilled migrants and professionals that migrated during the 1980s.

The church is not opened daily but it is usually open on Sundays, Saints’ days and major religious holidays. The Sunday liturgy starts at 10.00am, however sometimes evening liturgies are also ministered. Usually around 200 people attend the liturgies. After the liturgy the bread is given by the priest to those who attended the liturgy.

The parish priest was born in Serbia, where he completed his theological studies. He migrated to Australia before the war in the former Yugoslavia, nearly 30 years ago. Beside his parish duties, he is also one of the secretaries to the bishop. Recently, another young priest was appointed to this parish as the old priest will retire in the near future.

The church’s patron saint is celebrated when approximately 200-300 people come to the liturgy, which is followed by lunch and celebration. The bishop usually visits the parish on that day. Volunteers and parishioners that are involved in the church’s activities help with organisation and food preparation. In this parish, literary evenings and poetry readings are also organized. Recently, youth seminars began to be held at the church premises. A social and a national club celebrate their Patron Saints on the parish premises. Singers do not perform in this parish as priest and people from the church’s committee dislike parties in their church hall. People and priest in this parish concentrate more on spirituality and religion, explains the priest. There is a church choir consisting of around thirty male and female singers and a conductor. The members of the choir belong to all age groups and sing during the Liturgy. The choir often performs in other parishes.
and churches around Australia. This parish developed a flyer informing the Serbian community at the time of the 2006 census with instructions on how to fill out correctly the census forms, regarding language, ancestry and religion.

The parish also has dance groups for young people and children. More attention is paid to religious education and the Serbian language school is held on Saturdays. A small newsletter is published twice a year usually around Christmas and Easter, or for the church’s Patron Saint Day. There is also a church committee that consists of approximately twenty people. The average age of the churchgoers is from 40-45 years of age, but there are also a lot of young people coming to the church. The priest pointed to three categories of parishioners: a group of people who are always helping and give a maximum of their time to the church, another group consists of those who come and help when asked by the priest, and lastly those who only come to the church when they need something.

This parish has provided some assistance to migrants and refugees, but not with writing support letters for their family members who wanted to migrate to Australia.

2. Case Study Two: Inner-suburban parish
This parish is located in a suburban area where in surrounding areas a large concentration of Serbian people reside. The area has been a great centre for European migrants from the 1950s. The church, founded during the 1950s, was completed in the 1970s with the manual help and donations from the parishioners. The church, built in typical old Orthodox style, has recently been extended as it has become too small. Near the entrance of the church on right and left sides there is a place to light candles for good fortune in life or for the souls of deceased persons. The icons are on every wall, and in the middle of the church there is a small table with an icon on it where people put money and kiss the icon out of respect. An altar boy helps the priest during the liturgy. After the liturgy bread is given by the priest to those who attended the liturgy.
Parishioners are from different migration waves, mostly WWII migrants, economic migrants and refugees from the Balkans war. The parish administratively still belongs to the New Gracanica Metropolitanate as it previously belonged to the Free Serbian Orthodox Church.

The priest was born in Bosnia, completed his priesthood training in Monastery Krka in Croatia and then did his theological studies in Moscow. He has worked as a priest in Sibenik in Croatia and has also lectured in ethics, the Russian language, philosophy and patristics at Monastery Krka. In 1993, he arrived in Australia with his family. Whilst in Australia, he has never worked outside his parish duties. This priest as a former lecturer is one of the most educated priests in Australia.

The church is not opened daily but it is usually open on Sundays and on bigger Saints days. Liturgy starts at 10.00am, but sometimes there are also evening liturgies. It is estimated that up to 2000 believers come to the church on the biggest religious holidays, and between 100-300 people for Sunday liturgies. The church’s patron Saint usually draws between 300-500 people and it is always celebrated on the Sunday before or after the exact date. There is also the joint liturgy with two or three priests from different parishes. Dedicated parishioners and ladies from Serbian Sisters Circle help out with the organization and food preparation. The Church committee consists of 15-20 people; at their meetings there are discussed their duties, church hall arrangements, meetings and celebrations, and renovations of the church and church hall. On the church committee, people with lesser levels of education predominate. The large church hall is used for various celebrations. Youth seminars and spiritual evenings are held at the church’s premises. The parish used to have a newsletter that was published four times a year; because of the SOC’s website it has ceased publication. The Serbian language school and religious education classes are on Saturdays in the nearby government primary school. Many young people are in dance groups and involved in church activities. The church organizes dances, fundraising activities and humanitarian work, and singers from Serbia perform in the church hall. There are dance groups for children, young people and older people, the Pensioner Group and the Serbian Sisters Circle. The Serbian Sisters Circle is
very active, volunteering for the food preparation for bigger events in this parish. Other activities within this parish are sports activities such as bocci, billiards, table tennis, etc. There is no church choir within the parish as the priest wants all believers to sing and therefore fully participate in the liturgy. The house that belongs to the church is still occupied by a migrant family. Many parishioners who arrived as refugees lived there for some time.

The level of commitment of parishioners is described by the priest as follows: around 60 per cent of the parishioners are willing to help at any time, and 20 per cent sometimes help, whereas there are also 20 per cent of those who complain and it is hard for them to help or even become involved. The average age of the churchgoers is between 30-40 years of age, but many young people come to the church.

The church’s role in the settlement of migrants and refugees has been significant as church members and priests have written letters of support, sometimes helped financially, and helped with finding accommodation and jobs.

3. Case Study Three: Outer-Suburban parish
Located in new outer-suburban area, it is one of the largest parishes in Australia with several thousand parishioners. The church was built by Serbian migrants with their donations and manual help. Parishioners are from all waves of migration, but this area received a large influx of refugees from the Balkans War.

The church looks different as large stairs lead to the entrance of the church. The church building is very spacious and it is one of the largest churches in Australia. The interior of the church is almost identical as in all other Orthodox churches with icons on the wall, places to light candles and a table with an icon in the middle of the church.

The parish, which has two priests to cater for the numerous parishioners, is well organized, with a big church and attached church hall that is practical and functional for big religious celebrations, concerts and weddings. A lot of people come to the liturgies
and many are involved in parish activities. Even though the parish is well-organized and functions very well, “there is always room for improvement, and especially, if you are dealing with good and religious and dedicated people, one can do wonders”, the priest points out. The church is not opened daily but it is usually open on Sundays and on bigger Saints days. Liturgy starts at 10.00am, but sometimes there are also evening liturgies. At liturgies, there are sometimes up to 500 people. For major religious holidays there can be more than 2000 believers. The church committee consists of approximately 20 people.

Even though there are two priests, just one was interviewed. The older priest has served in this parish for many years. The interviewed priest was born in Australia and thus is fluent in English. When 12 years old, his parents decided to move to Serbia. There he finished theological college and later completed theological studies at Belgrade University. He returned to Australia in the 1990’s and became married, later completing an Arts degree. Beside his parish duties, he works as an accredited interpreter and translator, and he also makes icons and other paintings.

The parish has religious education classes, Serbian language classes and classes on Serbian culture and history. Those classes are usually held on Saturdays or Sundays. Welfare activities are fundraising for the renovations and church building in Australia and money and clothing donations for overseas. There are also lots of people who are helping out with the building and renovation works. This parish does have an occasional newsletter, with basic information about the parish, the Australian diocese and the church in Serbia. Information regarding the church’s activities can also be found on the Serbian Orthodox Church website.

There is a large folklore group that consists of around 250 children and young people and is very popular. Children have an opportunity to speak Serbian and also to learn something about Orthodoxy. Priests organise trips around Australia to visit parishes in other cities. They have also organized travels to Serbia to visit churches and monasteries with a dance group from this parish that went on tour to Serbia. There is also a dance
group for older people, and a choir with more than thirty members. A soccer club is also within the parish with soccer being one of the most popular sports among the Serbs.

The commitment level of parishioners is generally high, though there are various levels. A small group of very spiritual people are dedicated and loyal to the church inspired by the deepest of religious feelings. Another group, also the largest, are those who, respecting church and religion, are helping out as much as they can, but they are, according to the priest “too nationally bound; for them church equals nation, they see church only through the nation. They are good people, but they require more time and work from the priests to make good Christians out of them and to teach them to truly grasp the meaning of the religion and Orthodoxy”. Lastly, there is also a group of people who come to the church sometimes or rarely, usually around Christmas and Easter. All generations are represented in the church congregation.

For Slava or Patron Saint day there is a fair/festival in the parish that lasts for 2 days. There are also present many guests from mainstream and other organizations as well as the bishop. Parishioners are helping out with organization and food preparation. The parish fair has more of a social than a religious and spiritual character. In the parish, there are also multimedia presentations, priest lectures about prayer and about Orthodox art (both paintings and icons), and exhibitions of local Serbian painters in the church hall. During Lent, there are organized spiritual evenings as well as youth seminars that were held at the church premises.

This parish has also assisted Serbian migrants and refugees in their settlement in Australia.

4. Case Study Four: Parish in a Regional City

This parish is located in a regional city which attracted migrants from late 1940s onwards because of the factories. Several hundred Serbs live in this regional city. The parish administratively belongs to the New Gracanica Metropolitanate as it belonged to the Free Serbian Orthodox Church. The church was founded in the 1960s and completed
in 1973 by donations and work from Serbian migrants. Predominant are economic migrants even though the church was founded by members of the first migration wave. Also, there is a significant number of refugees from the Balkans war. The majority of parishioners belong to the first two waves of migration and are fully settled and financially comfortable.

The interior of the church is almost identical as in all other Orthodox churches with icons on the wall, places to light candles and a table with an icon in the middle of the church.

As in other parishes, the church is not opened on a daily basis. The liturgy starts at 10.00am, and sometimes there are evening liturgies. Approximately 100 people attend the liturgy, and for a major religious holiday there can be around 700 people present at the Liturgy.

The parish priest was born in Croatia where he completed theological studies at the Monastery Krka. Then he went to Serbia to complete two years at the Theological University in Belgrade. He has worked as a priest in Croatia and Serbia, and then in 1999 came to Australia with his family. He has never worked beyond his parish duties in Australia.

Every year this parish celebrates its Patron saint when the bishop comes to the parish as it is the time of the year that does not interfere with his international travels. Slava is also celebrated on Sundays. There is a joint liturgy with up to four priest guests from other parishes. There usually gather between 200-300 people at liturgy and then in the church hall for celebration. It is a big celebration as Serbian Sisters Circle volunteers prepare the food for the festivities, dance groups perform traditional dances and children from the Sunday school recite poems in Serbian.

The parish has a newsletter edited by the parish priest with information on the community, religion, events, customs and traditions, Easter and Christmas. A newsletter is published 2 or 3 times a year, usually around Christmas and Easter.
There are dance groups, as well as a language school and a religious education program provided by the priest. The folklore group from this parish regularly attends Festivals of Serbian Folklore with many groups from Australia performing. Some dance groups go on tour to Serbia (such as in 2005 when 17 children went with the priest to Serbia), and to other parishes in Australia. When a dance group from Kosovo visited this parish in 2006, parishioners organised accommodation and collected money for group members. A youth club meets at the parish premises. There are various activities in the parish for different age groups such as pensioner groups, dance groups for young and older people, dances and fundraising activities, the Patron Saint Day and other celebrations. Spiritual evenings and youth seminars are held regularly in this parish.

The level of commitment of parishioners is high. There are different categories of churchgoers, those who regularly attend the church and those who come to the church once or twice a year. Those who are involved in the church committee, school, and dance groups give a maximum of their time to the church. All age groups are represented.

This parish played its role in the settlement of migrants and refugees as they sometimes organized accommodation for new arrivals, took them to the doctor, to the bank, Centrelink, etc. They were involved in a joint program together with the people from the Migrant Resource Centre. Priest and people from the church also helped with filling out the immigration papers and writing letters of support.

3.3 Liturgical Practices within the Church Calendar and Life in the Parishes

The Serbian Orthodox Church parishes in Australia, called a Church and School Community, generally consist of a church and an attached church hall. The description of the parishes contains information on parish activities, clergy and believers/members. In the parish Divine Liturgies, religious celebrations, Saint Days and sacraments are performed. The church board and other church committees have general and annual meetings.
Serbian Orthodoxy follows the old Julian Calendar which dictates that saint days and religious holidays are performed and celebrated on different dates from those of Western Christians. The Sunday liturgy usually starts at 10.00 am and lasts for approximately one hour, although its length may vary. Candles and incense are very important during the liturgy. People can light candles for the soul of deceased persons or for well-being and good luck (za srecu). At the church incense, icons, religious books and church calendars can be purchased. The language of worship is in Old Church Slavonic, followed by a sermon preached by the priest in Serbian. The liturgy in the vernacular English has not yet been introduced as is the case in some Orthodox churches in Australia such as St. Nicholas Antiochian Church (Batrouney, 2007).

Joint liturgies are sometimes held with priests from other parishes and priests from other Orthodox churches, especially on Saint Days. These liturgies are usually performed during the visits of some important church officials as was the case when Patriarch Pavle visited Australia.

From the researcher’s observation church attendance varies, but usually it is moderately high with a few hundred believers coming to the Liturgy. Women attend church services more frequently. Older people attended church more often than younger people, however there are some young Serbs very dedicated to the church and active in parish activities. According to the priests, there has been no decline in church attendance in recent decades. However, church attendance is highest during religious holidays, especially Christmas and Easter. On these days, even those not regularly attending liturgies and church services come to the church. Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January, but on Christmas Eve (6th of January) people go to church to collect Badnjak (oak tree branches) after the liturgy. According to the custom, Badnjak is placed under the table for several days to bring prosperity to the family. On Christmas Eve, there are two liturgies, one at 7.00pm and another at midnight. There are 40 days of fasting prior to Christmas that is supposed to cleanse the body as well as the soul as dairy products, meat and eggs are not allowed. Easter is usually celebrated on a different date from the Western churches. There are many customs, but a widespread custom is the coloring of eggs that symbolize
birth. Lent before Easter lasts for 40 days and believers do not have dairy products and meat as they fast.

Church Patron Saints’ Days are celebrated in the parish church that usually bears the name of the Saint. Such celebrations are occasions for visits by priests from other parishes and the Bishop, and the liturgy is followed by a feast. In the Serbian community in Australia there are no religious processions through the streets as it is not the custom. Instead, there are religious festivals held in parishes or monasteries. The majority of the participants attend religious festivals every year and some help out with the organization. However, some used to go there when younger. A number of participants said they do not go to festivals as they dislike crowds. For one participant, religious festivals are “inappropriate” as there are too many people and some behave in an inappropriate manner.

On family Patron Saint Day (Slava) those who are celebrating “Slava” go to church with bread that the priest blesses with wine. At the family lunch, the bread is eaten after the prayer.

Life in the Parishes
Often in the diaspora, the church and the church hall are places where people from the community meet and participate in various social activities of the parish. Consequently through church, the Serbs develop their networks, exchange information, and seek help and assistance from the priest and advice on community or personal matters. Activities within the parish vary. The hall is used for spiritual evenings, Saint days celebrations, religious holidays, dance group performances and fundraising activities. It can also be hired for other private celebrations such as weddings, christenings and engagements. Religious celebrations are organised by people who are involved in the activities of the church and members of the church committee. The cultural influence from the home country can be seen through the entertainment industry as singers, bands, dance and theatre groups come regularly to Australia and often perform at the parish church halls.
Another feature of transnationalism is the international flow of money as donations from Australia are sent to Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia through its welfare activities collects donations and raises money for needy people in Serbia. However, money is also used for various purposes such as for the building or renovating of the church and the adjacent buildings. In parishes there is a practice of collecting money after the liturgy, but donations can be given to the priest at any time. In the Serbian Orthodox Churches there is also an old custom when people kiss an icon, they place money on the icon in the middle of the church. Within the parish there are various humanitarian concerts organised, with collections of donations. The inner-suburban, regional and outer-suburban parishes mainly collected money for overseas. Money is sent to Serbia for welfare purposes such as the building of churches and monasteries, for refugees, sick children, hospital equipment, etc. In the city parish this practice was observed as different as the funds are mainly used for building and renovation of the churches in Australia. However, some money and other donations such as clothing and medicines are sent overseas. In the outer-suburban parish, money is also used for the renovations of some churches in Australia that are not complete even though they were built during the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s. Some churches have also been extended recently due to the growing number of believers attending the liturgy, especially on religious holidays. They also help and assist in organising humanitarian dinners, where the funds go for refugees, sick children and people with disabilities, and also for renovations of churches overseas. Through the church, there are also organized humanitarian nights in order to collect money and clothing for the Serbian population in Kosovo.

Only two parishes, the city parish and the outer-suburban parish, have a choir. In the inner-suburban church, the believers sing along with the priest as he believes that by singing, people are drawn closer to God and feel as part of the Divine Liturgy. The regional church’s priest does not want people to sing because, according to him, only the priest performs the liturgy.

Every parish has dance groups both for youth and adults that usually meet on Friday evenings as part of Serbian people maintaining their culture. Groups are also performing
at other parishes and sometimes in other cities. There is a social life and opportunity for social networking at the church premises as many groups and clubs use church halls for their meetings such as Serbian national clubs, pensioner clubs, dance groups, the Serbian Sisters Circle, etc. The clubs celebrate the feast of their particular Patron Saint within the church.

Educational programs sponsored by the church for children are language school and religious education classes. Sometimes, language school and religious classes are held in the nearby primary or secondary school. Religious education is very important with its role not only to pass on the knowledge of the Serbian Orthodox faith but also to keep alive the Serbian language. According to Cahill, religious or faith education is an important “element in maintaining and regenerating communities”, (Cahill, 2004, p.64). Tkalcevic in 1980 reported that “the Serbian Orthodox Churches are initiating and financially supporting the teaching of the Serbian language to the children of Serbian migrants” (1980, p.18). The Serbian Orthodox church’s role in promoting and maintaining Serbian culture and tradition has still remained crucial over many decades.

Spiritual evenings are organised in every parish during Lent where various religious and philosophical topics are discussed in a parish church hall after joint evening liturgies. Priests from other parishes are guest speakers and they lecture on various religious topics. There usually gather between 100-200 people of all ages.

Serbian Orthodox Ministry to Young People
The Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (SOYA) began its work in Canberra in 2008 and was founded on the initiative of Bishop Irinej. Soon after, in other cities other youth groups were founded. One major task of SOYA includes “deciding on ways to assist the younger generations with learning about Serbian religion, culture, traditions, language and history” (http://soya.org.au). A bilingual youth newsletter can be accessed online and downloaded from the official SOC website in Australia. SOYA also has pages on Facebook with information about the group and direct links to the official website of the
Serbian Orthodox Church for each of the Australian cities-Melbourne, Geelong, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide.

Recently more attention has been paid to the youth seminars than previously as church leadership has realized that the future of Serbian Orthodoxy in Australia lies with the younger generations. An important event was in June 2007 when a youth seminar was held at the Elaine Monastery located between Ballarat and Geelong with the Holy Liturgy ministered in the English language, followed by a lecture in English given by Bishop Irinej.

The Bishop and his Pastoral Visits
The Bishop is responsible for the whole diocese and its parishes and receives directions from Belgrade. Parishes are run by parish priests usually from Serbia as another example of the strong transnational links. There are two types of bishop’s visits and contacts: official visits which are more frequent and private visits when the bishop sometimes stays over at the priests’ house whilst visiting the parish. Parishes are visited by the bishop a few times a year, both on official and private visits. Parishioners are informed by the priest of the bishop’s visits and liturgies he will be serving, through Serbian media and recently through the website.

The bishop visits parishes on a regular basis, especially at the time of parish Patron Saint’s Day or some other important parish event. The bishop initiates contacts which are made over the phone, via email and face to face. It is not common for priests to visit the bishop's residence on a regular basis. A parish priest when he wants to discuss some important matters with the bishop has to make an inquiry with his secretary first, and then talk to the bishop if necessary. Priests are in contact with the bishop only if there is a need. From the bishop’s secretaries, priests receive books and other material that comes from Belgrade. Two of the interviewed priests are the bishop’s secretaries who contact the bishop almost every day due to the nature of their role as they are dealing with administrative matters. A young priest from an outer-suburban parish explained if there
is any problem within the parish he would contact a more experienced and older priest; if it is something serious, he would call the bishop.

**Priests, their Training and Inservice Programs**

In Australia currently, there are 47 Serbian Orthodox clergy men, of whom 42 are priests, 4 protodeacons and 1 deacon. The four monasteries are quite small as there are only 8 monks and 4 nuns. There are also 4 clergy from overseas on extra-Diocesan assignment from the Diocese of Zahumlje (Herzegovina), Diocese of Midwestern America, Archdiocese of Moscow (Russian Orthodox Church) and Metropolitanate of Nikaias (Greek Orthodox Church). There are also two unassigned priests and two retired priests.

Priests coming to Australia in the past did not possess knowledge of the English language so their communication with the rest of the community was limited. They were also unprepared for life in a multicultural society. That way they were also unable to expand their contacts to other communities and religious institutions. Nowadays, the church has taken a different approach as the priests appointed to Australia possess an understanding of Australian society and have knowledge of the English language. These are usually priests born in Australia or migrated to Australia as children or young men. Also, a few young priests are sons of older priests. It is also interesting to note that among the Serbian Orthodox clergy there are two former Anglican priests who have converted to Orthodoxy. One serves as a parish priest and the other is attached as a priest to one of the monasteries. Priests in Australia come from different regions of the former Yugoslavia and have different levels of education. Before their arrival in Australia, three of the four interviewed priests had served as priests in parishes in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. Only the outer-suburban priest upon completion of his theological studies went straight to Australia; the only interviewed priest to be born in Australia, he is fluent in English.

Annual Church three-day seminars (Crkveno-narodni sabor) are compulsory for all priests as they meet with Bishop Irinej and discuss the current situation within the church and the Serbian community, work methods and future directions. Selected laymen and committee members also attend these seminars. For example, in December 2007 on 15th
“Crkveno-Narodni Sabor” in Sydney discussed were: religious education and how to educate young people on Orthodoxy and Serbian language and culture, foundation of a Youth Group (http://www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=308&Itemid=30). That seminar marked an important moment when concern for the future generations was displayed. There are also regular meetings of the Diocesan Council with representatives from parishes, monasteries and other Serbian institutions that belong to the Diocese.

**Parishioners and their Appraisal of Serbian Priests**

Participants in this study were asked to express their opinions about the quality of the religious personnel. There were mixed opinions ranging from very negative to extremely positive. Some were of the opinion that priests have to think seriously about their behaviour and have to change certain aspects in order to retain believers. Some believed that the reason why people do not go often to church is priestly behaviour. On the other hand, many thought that the quality of priests’ work is high (40 per cent). “The priests are of high quality, I don’t judge their personal lives, just how they do their job”, pointed out one participant. Those who thought the quality of the priests was very high were only 10 per cent.

Those with a good opinion of the priests (20 per cent) also thought that there is always room for improvement and it was suggested what priests should do in order to improve the quality of their work. This was the opinion from one churchgoer: “My impression is that the Serbian Orthodox Church sees the problem and gradually with young priests and new bishop improves the quality of the clergy. The problem is that the priests are allowing themselves to get involved into influential factions in the parishes and committees. They are politicizing too much. They should be more dedicated to the spiritual, get involved with young people, care for the sick and for the old, keeping the family together, have classes for kids about Serbian history, literature and art. They also could be more educated. English is a must; with fluent English they can better represent the community and the church and have cooperation with other churches and
communities”. Also, “some priests are really devoted to God’s teachings and some are going away from the true Orthodoxy” was another opinion. A few participants said they liked some priests and disliked others.

There were 30 per cent of those who had low opinion about the quality of the priests. Negative opinions were: “Very bad and poor, unfortunately, for some personal gain and success is predominant” or “I do not have a high opinion of particular individuals”. It was also said that the priests are “struggling for followers and are unable to understand the difference between the generations and the difference between past and present”. One participant said: “I am deeply and unquestionably dedicated to religion, but I am critical of the church’s work and attitude. I cherish spiritual values, not material benefits. Criticism goes to the priests – their attitude toward church, liturgy, their behaviour, their education”. Many were concerned about the personal lives of the priests and their morality.

Table 3.2: Quality of church personnel: Interviewees’ Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Contacts between Priests

Contact among priests is maintained through standard means of communication: over the phone, mobile phone or face to face. Sometimes contacts are made via email which is the least used means of communication. Priests are often guests at each other’s parishes on official and private visits, especially for the church’s Patron Saint Day. Priests visit parishes for joint liturgies, various lectures, spiritual evenings, the Serbian Sisters Circle meetings and other celebrations. Priests from other cities stay at their priest colleagues houses. Also, some of priests have school friends here in Australia whom they contact and visit regularly.
Cahill et al. write of “the continuance of transnational links with the religious source centres overseas” (2004, p.23), and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia maintains links with the mother church in Serbia, that are facilitated by international travel and the revolution in information technologies. There is a flow of religious personnel, money, donations, religious products (icons, candles, beads, etc.) and published materials. The most important is the flow of religious personnel with priests appointed from Serbia to Australia by higher church authority. While at theological school in Serbia, the future priests are told in advance of their first appointment. Nowadays, young priests from Australia upon completing theological college in Belgrade are appointed to Australia as they speak the English language and possess an understanding of Australian society and the Serbian diaspora.

3.4 Links and Contacts across the World

The bishop’s transnational travels are frequent; originally from the USA, he travels there often to visit his family. It is compulsory for all bishops to attend the Holy Synod Assembly meetings in Belgrade, thus, Bishop Irinej goes every year to Serbia. At the meetings, current issues and future directions of the church are discussed. For example, in July 2009 he was one of the SOC’s representatives at the formal reception at the US Embassy in Belgrade for the celebration of Independence Day and in 2009 he visited Constantinople where he met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on his Name Day Celebration (www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=633&itemid=30).

Also, he went to Geneva in August 2009 for a World Council of Churches Central Committee meeting, as one of the three representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In April/May 2010, the bishop also went to the Holy Synod Assembly in Belgrade, but has also travelled to other dioceses in the former Yugoslavia. In May he went to Herzegovina and served at the liturgy along with other priests and bishops for the 400th anniversary of Saint Vasilije Ostroski’s birth (www.soc.org.au).
The most significant event of the church was when the late Serbian Patriarch Pavle visited the Australian diocese in 2004 for the opening of the Theological College in Sydney. His visit was one of the most important moments for the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian community in Australia as well as for other Orthodox believers who wanted to see the Patriarch and pay their respects. Other Orthodox priests participated in joint liturgies in the Patriarch’s honor. During his stay in Australia, Patriarch Pavle visited parishes in Sydney, Melbourne and Geelong. Almost everyone who participated in this study saw the late Patriarch Pavle. “I wouldn’t miss it. His visit was very positive and people were delighted”, said one participant. “I saw him three times, or better said, I was blessed to see him three times as I love him very much for he is a true servant of God”, said one lady actively involved in the church. “I saw the Patriarch in my local parish and at the airport. I was with a folklore group and we greeted him dressed in traditional Serbian clothes. There were over one hundred people at the airport with Serbian flags, and many kids wore traditional clothes. I felt very happy and honored”, enthused one young participant.

Contacts with church officials in Belgrade are maintained through the bishop who is also in contact with other dioceses in the world as he is in charge of the spiritual and administrative functions of the diocese. The bishop reports regularly to the church in Belgrade about the situation in the diocese. Through the bishop and his secretaries, parish priests are informed of the changes within the church, new information, reports and new projects, and also of their requirements. Only those priests who are secretaries of the bishop are in regular contact with church officials in Belgrade. As the bishop goes to Serbia twice a year, secretaries need to correspond with and on behalf of Bishop Irinej whilst he is there. He also maintains links with parishes in the USA where he is originally from.

However, when it comes to private contacts of Australian priests with priest colleagues in Serbia, the contacts are regular and maintained through different means of communication. Priests from Australia are mainly in contact with colleagues from their theological college or University, or with their former priest colleagues from parishes
where they served before their arrival in Australia. The most frequent means of communication are phone and mobile phone (SMS), while communication via email is less popular. Whilst on holidays in Serbia, priests from Australia visit their colleagues and often are their guests.

“In a globalizing world, Australian faith communities are interfacing with their counterpart communities outside Australia, including with the assistance of the new technologies” (Cahill et al., 2004, p.113). Priests are of the opinion that links between churches around the world have been improved due to the new technology, though one priest disagreed and is reluctant to use the internet. Priests are also maintaining contacts with their colleagues around the world, mainly in parishes in Germany and the USA. A priest from the city parish has friends in the USA and he is also in contact with the former Archbishop Luka who now lives in Paris. He also maintains regular contact with three parishes of Serbian Orthodox converts in Barcelona and some converts in France. A priest from the inner-suburban parish has many friends in Russia as he studied in Moscow. Two other priests have contacts only with friends in Serbia.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade sends official documents to the Australian diocese to Bishop Irinej's office. Through the bishop, priests are regularly receiving official documents and materials, new books and the church’s monthly magazine from Serbia. From the bishop's office, materials published in Australia are sent to Belgrade so the church authorities are informed of the diocesan activities. As priests receive the same materials and books from Belgrade and have big libraries at home, they do not exchange books.

Only the bishop attends overseas meetings and seminars – priests can attend such seminars, but only rarely. Of those interviewed, only one priest had attended a religious seminar whilst on holiday in Serbia. The seminar was about theological themes and youth problems such as alcohol, drugs and night life. Other priests have never attended and in the near future will not be attending any seminars in Serbia, only compulsory seminars in Australia.
For the first time ever, in April 2010 elections were held in some Australian states at a
selected church to elect representatives of its diaspora for the Assembly of the Diaspora in Belgrade. This represents another step in the strengthening of the transnational links. The Serbian Orthodox clergy in Australia have been involved with the Serbian Ministry for the Diaspora. In several Australian states, a representative of those who were highly involved in church activities was elected in the church that hosted the event. As a part of transnational activity, three representatives of the Australian diaspora came in July 2010 for the Serbian Assembly of the Diaspora. Patriarch Irinej also received the delegates of the Assembly of the Diaspora.

As another feature of transnational religious activity, “religious pilgrimages, processions, and rituals are one way that migrants express their continuing attachment to their home country”, writes Levitt (2001, p.14). Pilgrimages to religious sites and churches in Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia and Montenegro while there on holiday are very common. Only men can visit Holy Mount Athos in Greece, and pilgrims visiting Jerusalem are few. Pilgrimages to Serbia and Jerusalem are also organized by the church’s Diocesan Pilgrimage Agency that advertises on Serbian radio and newspapers. In the years prior to this study, a few pilgrimages were organized by the church and local parishes. In 2004 an outer-suburban priest and 39 people from Australia went on pilgrimage to Serbia and Montenegro. In 2005, the regional parish priest, community members and 17 students from a dance group went to Serbia and visited many churches and monasteries. In 2006 a pilgrimage was organized by the previous Bishop Milutin. Also, a twelve day long pilgrimage to Serbia and Montenegro in May and in September 2007 was organised to discover “the roots of spiritual and national identity”. Even an audience with his Royal Highness, Prince Alexander, was arranged. In 2009 there was organized a pilgrimage to Jerusalem by the pilgrimage agency.

All interviewed priests had been on pilgrimages, mainly to Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia and to the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on the Holy Mount Athos in Greece. Only one priest from the city parish had been to Jerusalem. A priest from the inner-suburban parish had been on several pilgrimages to Russia, Georgia and Ukraine.
The visits of Serbian Orthodox believers to churches and monasteries in Serbia were documented in the survey. 90 percent of participants had visited Serbia since arrival in Australia. The majority had visited Serbia several times, and only 30 per cent of the participants had visited just once. Some had gone also to Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro and even Kosovo to visit churches. Only one participant did not visit churches or monasteries whilst in Serbia. One female participant went overseas especially to visit Ostrog monastery in Montenegro known for its healing powers. Several male interviewees went to Holy Mount Athos to Hilandar. Only a few had visited churches in the rest of the world, mainly in the USA and one in New Zealand. Only two participants had not visited churches or monasteries.

Publishing is important for the Diocese for Australia and New Zealand. The Church Calendar is the most significant. The calendar, written both in English and Serbian, is edited by a priest. It can be purchased in every parish. Along with the yearly calendar of the religious days and holidays, there is also some information on diocese activities. At the front, there is a photo of the Virgin Mary holding Jesus. Saints days are written in both languages, and dates are written according to the New and the Old Calendars.

Along with the dates, one can also find basic religious information. There are prayers to God and the Virgin Mary, the Ten Commandments and the Church’s Commandments, all written in Serbian. The Creed is written in Serbian and English. There are also the Seven Holy Secrets, the Christian Virtues and the Deadly Sins. In the Calendar, believers are also informed about Easter dates till 2011 according to the New Calendar as well as about Fasting days. There are also some instructions in Serbian and English concerning days when the sacrament of marriage cannot be performed and also the days when the sacrament of memorial service cannot be performed. The Lord’s Prayer and the Angelic Salutation are in English and Serbian. There is also a section about Holy Serbian Martyrs and a complete list of Australian and New Zealand public holidays. Four pages of Festal Gospels and Epistles are written in English and Serbian. In the calendar there are photographs of late Patriarch Pavle, Bishop Irinej and His Royal Highness, Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic. There is also a photo of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and
the words of the Australian anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*. In the last section, there is a list of dioceses and its parishes/churches but under two different administrations/offices. Parishes are listed with their official names, addresses, priests’ names and telephone numbers. There is a list of auxiliary organizations for both dioceses, list of clergy, list of Serbian educational and scientific forums, Serbian social institutions and Serbian sports and cultural centres. At the end of the Calendar, there are photos of different churches, photos of the bishop and parishioners.

“Saint Sava Herald” is the diocesan magazine. It is written in Serbian with articles on Serbian Orthodoxy and the Serbian community in Australia. It also covers current events from Serbia and the rest of the world. As of November 2010, Saint Sava Herald can be accessed online from website [www.soc.org.au](http://www.soc.org.au). All published materials in Australia are sent overseas.

**Church and believers**

To be able to determine relations between church and believers, participants were asked about their image and experience of the Serbian Orthodox Church. For the majority (80 per cent) the church’s image was positive as they regarded the church as “a keeper of tradition, culture, family, morality, history, spiritual values and education” as well as the entity that keeps Serbs together and helps young people to be aware of their roots. The church also helped during the initial settlement and has played a social and spiritual role for a large number of Serbian migrants in Australia. A young female participant said she likes to go to the church to meet other young Serbs, however, “young Serbs are becoming more Westernized and accept Anglo traditions such as the whole Christmas western tradition”. Others pointed to negative aspects because of the inappropriate behaviour of some priests, whom some participants ‘dislike’. For those there is “too much politics involved, priests are more businessman than priests, they are concerned for their gain and interest”. As one participant pointed out, “they are not choosing a proper course of action”. Many highlighted the social role of the church as some people come to the church on Christmas and Easter only because of the networking opportunities and meeting other people.
Table 3.3: Image of the church: Interviewees’ Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy, and where and how it was gained, was essential to explore. Participants were asked how good was their knowledge of Orthodoxy. The majority of participants (60 per cent) claimed they possessed a sound knowledge of their faith, followed by those whose knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy was average (35 per cent). Only a few (5 per cent) were proud of their extensive and vast knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy, and also of Serbian history and literature. Such ‘extensive’ knowledge was gained over years of involvement with church and community, and by reading religious literature. Young people had a fair knowledge gained through religious classes in Australia or overseas. Those who attended religious classes in Australia claimed that they learned more about the Serbs than about the faith. Only a few participants (5 per cent) had limited knowledge, focused generally on the major feast days. The majority know the most important Saint Days, fasting period and the rules to observe. On the other hand, older participants gained knowledge through self education, reading religious books and magazines, and recently on the Internet or in conversations with priests or friends. Younger people also gained their knowledge from parents or grandparents, through regular visits to church, reading the New Testament and other religious literature, and from conversations with friends and priests. For some, to gain knowledge about Orthodoxy was part of their upbringing, and, for others, part of general knowledge.

Table 3.4: Participants’ knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extensive</th>
<th>Sound / Fair</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The reading of religious literature is not widespread within the Serbian community. Few participants possess religious books and read them on a regular basis. Other participants
claimed to never read religious books or only rarely. Some read only two or three books a year.

To determine the level of commitment to the church was important so participants were asked about the frequency of their visits to church. The majority claimed they are committed to church, but do not go to church on a weekly basis. They pray, follow the Ten Commandments, respect religious holidays, do not work hard on Sundays and visit the church as often as they can, especially on religious holidays. Many expressed their wish they could spend more time in church. Private commitments such as work, family, and school together with distance were the major reasons for low church attendance. Only a few said they do not go much to the church as religion does not influence their life greatly. Those who had some functions within the church such as the Committee or Serbian Sisters Circle members are very active and dedicated to the church. The commitment to the church is high for those who were raised to believe and respect the church. Active church members help with organizing various activities and events within the parish and do not care about their other obligations; they just want to help the church. A very active participant regards Serbian Orthodoxy as “my soul and my being”, and thus the reason for such high commitment to the church.

Involvement in church activities and its extent were documented. Of those interviewed, half were active in the church and were regularly volunteering. Active parishioners help with organising activities, help in the kitchen, dance groups, etc. Many were more involved when they were younger and without commitments. Of the inactive (30 per cent), many quoted distance as the main reason for not participating nor helping out. However, some volunteer especially at Christmas and Easter if asked to help with hall preparations or in the kitchen. Those who are very active (20 per cent) have regular discussions with the priest on how to improve their parish. For example, one lady spends all her time in her local parish and in the monastery. She does whatever they need her to do – cooking, cleaning, organizing. When younger, she was a member of a dance group, now she is a member of the Serbian Sisters Circle, Serbian Royal Association and the
Greek Orthodox Sisterhood. Some participants do not want to be involved in the activities of the church.

Table 3.5: Interviewees’ Involvement in church activities

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<th>Very Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
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<td>50%</td>
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The frequency of visits to church for those not actively involved in church activities is only 2-3 times a year, usually for Christmas and Easter. Those very active go to church approximately twice a month, and there is a small number of those who go to church almost every week. One participant summarized the attitude of many: “I go to the church a few times a year, on bigger religious holidays, Patron saint or to light a candle for the deceased. The reality of life is in disparity with my spiritual needs. My work schedule does not allow me much opportunity to be more involved in church activities”. Three participants go to churches such as the Romanian, Greek or Russian, not necessarily to the Serbian Orthodox Church, and one female participant goes to Catholic and Anglican churches. For the majority of the Serbian Orthodox, attendance is compulsory for Christmas and Easter and for other bigger religious holidays.

3.5 The Serbian Orthodox and its Integration into Australian Society

How the Serbian Orthodox Church and its members have integrated into Australian society where religious freedom and tolerance are guaranteed by law was one aim of this study. In order to do that, it was crucial to observe integration from the church’s and believers’ perspectives.

As with the other Orthodox churches in Australia, their individual ethnic and jurisdictional characters have also been a characteristic of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Also, ethnic separatism is a strong feature of Orthodox churches in Australia, including the Serbian Orthodox Church (Batrouney, 2007). As an immigrant church, the Serbian Orthodox Church has found itself in a different environment away from the mother
church. Due to migration, the church along with its believers experienced a shift from a religiously homogeneous society to a multicultural and multifaith society. As Godley and Hughes explain, “the ancient Orthodox Church has had to confront the complex issues to be found in modern, pluralistic societies while maintaining its faithfulness to its traditional beliefs and teaching. In this new, migrant situation, the church has, once again, become a focus for social and cultural identity in multicultural situations” (1996, p.4). Cahill also points out that as immigrant churches with their overseas centres, they experienced difficulties “in establishing themselves in a country such as Australia, and institutionalizing themselves in terms of buildings, personnel, structures, etc.” (2004, p.60).

How has the church integrated into Australian society? Despite its allegiance to the centre in Serbia, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia has gradually become aware also of the Australian roots of a large number of its believers. The church’s integration is seen through successful communication with mainstream and other religious and cultural groups, and also its clergy’s willingness to represent the church to the wider community. This will be explained in more detail later in the following chapters.

Although Serbian Orthodoxy has been present in Australia for over a half of the past century, the Serbian Orthodox Church is still not a member of the National Council of Churches in Australia (the SOC exited the NCCA in 1999). However, the church has applied for membership. This application was welcomed by NCCA as the Serbian Orthodox Church “was once a member of the Australian Council of Churches and it is heartening that Bishop Irinej, who has recently arrived in Australia, is keen that they move towards membership in the NCCA” (http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Working_Papers_pt1_1-72.pdf).

Serbian migrants are integrated into Australian society in terms of citizenship, home ownership, qualifications and employment, and participate in most aspects of life in Australia, while maintaining their Serbian identity. According to the 2006 Census figures, 97.6 per cent of those who were Serbia-born had Australian citizenship. Regarding the
qualifications, “19.9 per cent had Diploma level and higher education qualifications, and 18.5 per cent had Certificate level qualifications”. In terms of employment, among the Serbia-born “employment rate was 51.7 per cent and the unemployment rate was 7.3 per cent” (http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/_pdf/serbia.pdf). Language, religion and culture are the factors that distinguish the Serbian community in Australia from other communities, with religion also being a marker of identity. The Serbian Orthodox church was a major factor that has helped preserve cultural identity, language, customs and tradition, and above all religion of the Serbs in Australia. Language is maintained through the church, community centres, Sunday school and language classes.

Peggy Levitt highlights “the unique role of religious institutions in reinforcing ethnic identities among the children of immigrants” (2001, p.26). For the Serbian children there are dance groups within church and language school; through those they are able to socialise with other Serbian children. It is also an opportunity to speak Serbian and learn about religion and culture.

3.6 Religion, Identity and Serbian Orthodoxy
In the relationship between religion and identity, as already stressed, it has to be again pointed out that there is a strong link between the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian nation/ethnicity. Cynthia Enloe points out that “many individuals behave as if their ethnic affiliation and professed religion are one and the same: to be born Croatian is to be born Catholic”. This similarity applies to Serbs. Therefore, according to Enloe “it may be futile and unrealistic to separate religion and ethnic identity”, (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996, p.199-200). The majority of the Serbian people feel the same way. For many, being Serbian and being Orthodox are the same, or Serbian nation equals Orthodox religion, and religion strongly influences, and in some cases determines identity. However, there are people whose ethnicity is Serbian but who have converted to other religions. Do they still call themselves Serbs even though they changed their religion?
One priest in an interview explained the connection between religion and identity and how its mixture can be dangerous when the meaning of religion is not understood. According to the priest, “Only going to church does not make one a true Christian. Faith and belief in God are more complex than that. A true believer should be unbiased and open to other people no matter what their religion is. In faith, there is no room for prejudice”. He went on: “The core and very essence of Orthodoxy are faith, good deeds, honesty, freedom and love. Some of the believers are unable to see and grasp the full meaning of our church and faith; in Orthodox religion and beliefs, they see only Serbianness and the Serbian nation. For them, there is no spirituality and no true religious feeling and no dedication to religion. One cannot understand religion with this attitude. When the liturgy ends, spirituality does not end either.”

Tkalcevic wrote about the Serbian community in the late 1970’s while highlighting “cultural identity problems facing the 2nd generation of Serbian immigrant children” (1980, p.29). Those generations of Serbs have multiple identities as Australian born Serbs feel strongly about both their Serbian and Australian identities and speak English better then Serbian. Batrouney also writes about both Orthodox and Australian identities and the role of the church in maintaining two identities: “St. Nicholas has encouraged its parishioners, especially the young, to be both Orthodox and Australian. It is also revealed in the language of worship as St. Nicholas gradually moved to bilingual liturgies as well as some full English language liturgies and services” (2007, p.97). On the other hand, Radmanovich criticizes the role of the Serbian organizations while he acknowledges their positive role and importance “in providing cultural continuity, tradition and folk values for 2nd, 3rd and succeeding generations of Australian-Serbs”. He criticizes their ideologies that “often prove unintelligible to these generations who are absorbing Australian lifestyles and values” (1990, p.145). Radmanovich also writes about the issues of “assimilation” and the future generations of Serbs with clashes present between two different cultures, Serbian and Australian: “it is immediately obvious that these inside/outside influences must create tensions between the two differing cultural heritages, arising from the family based Serbian heritage and the Australian based multicultural heritage.” (1990, p.146).
Preserving Serbian identity in Australia’s multicultural society is a task the church has taken upon itself. “We Serbs also have our own identity defined by the Serbian language, Serbian cultural heritage and the Orthodox religion. To fully preserve our identity, we would have to preserve all three distinctive features of our identity, that is: the Serbian language, the cultural and ethical values of our ancestors, and the faith of our forefathers” Matejic wrote (1996, p.19). Identity is seen through its features, the language, cultural and ethical values and religion. A feature of the Serbian cultural identity, “svetosavlje” or teachings of St. Sava, shows the deep influence of and a connection with religion. “The most important single feature of Serbian cultural identity is Svetosavlje, not only as religious, but also as a cultural concept. As a cultural concept, Svetosavlje is ‘Christianity applied in daily life. Through Svetosavlje, Christian ideals became the ideals of individual Serbs as well as of the entire Serbian nation. The personal virtues of Saint Sava too, became Serbian ideals and the traits of Serbian national identity”, Matejic writes (1996, p. 22). Along with the cultural, Svetosavlje is also a core religious concept.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia is still an immigrant church and it is a long way from making a shift to display less its ethnic character. With the liturgy celebrated in Serbian and Old Church Slavonic, to actively participate in the life of the Serbian Orthodox Church and to understand the liturgy one needs to speak Serbian. Recently there has been discussion to introduce the English language into the church’s sermons so the 2nd and 3rd generation of Serbs who do not speak good Serbian can understand them. “As most Orthodox services are conducted in languages other than English, the younger people do not feel as familiar with the language of the Orthodox Church as do the older people”, write Godley and Hughes (1996, p.54). Cahill et al. also point out that “the lack of English fluency was causing problems in communicating with the second-generation faith groups who were more fluent in English than their family heritage language” (2004, p.67).

Batrouney describes the St. Nicholas parish and their shift to liturgies in Arabic and English, a combination of liturgies (2007). He writes of “a varied linguistic pattern” with “available liturgies in English or Arabic only, then combination of two languages, and
also weddings, funerals or baptism are available in English or Arabic. “However, most services reveal a degree of switching between the two languages” (2007, p.120). However, some argue that by introducing English into church services, the Serbian language might disappear. For example, one of the interviewed priests sees a possible solution in combined liturgies where half the liturgy is in English and the other half in Serbian, but it is only possible in those churches where priests speak English. Also, a large number of Serbs are not fluent in English or do not speak any English at all. For them the liturgy in Serbian is the only option, as the liturgies are celebrated only in Old Church Slavonic with sermons preached in Serbian. Recently, at youth seminars English liturgies have been introduced².

**Priests in a multicultural Australia**

The role of priests as leaders within the community and representatives of such communities in a multicultural Australia was important to explore. The personal commitment of the priests and their respected role within the community are factors that influence their success as the community representative in the society. Living in a multicultural and religiously pluralist society, the importance for the Serbian priests to speak English is crucial. Cahill writes about the issues in communicating with religious leaders and highlights the lack of English language proficiency and the “need to be sensitive to the dynamics of cross-cultural communication” (2004 p.19). Previously, priests that were appointed from Serbia to Australia were not proficient in English and no cross-cultural training for the priests coming from overseas was ever delivered. The priests that are coming usually from overseas have “inadequate levels of English and an uninformed appreciation of the functioning of a religiously diverse society”, writes Cahill (2004, p.118). However recently, younger priests who speak English and possess an understanding of Australian society have been appointed to Australian parishes. From the data, low proficiency in English was documented. Only the Australian born priest was fluent in English.

² In March 2011 a new parish in Sydney has been founded where the official liturgical language is English
The opinions of priests and believers on the importance for priests to speak fluent English were gained during the interviews. The priest from the inner-suburban parish thought it is very important for a priest in Australia to speak English. He does not speak good English, but he would definitely recommend to a priest from overseas coming to Australia to learn English, otherwise not to come here. The regional priest differed - according to him, the priest in Australia does not need to speak English very well. However, a priest must possess a basic knowledge of English to be able to communicate. The priest from the city parish was concerned about the future of the church in Australia and he thinks that it is very important for Serbian priests in Australia to speak very good English. To some extent, it is even more important than to speak good Serbian in order to attract young people to church. The Australian-born outer-suburban priest believes it is crucial for the Serbian priest in Australia to speak very good English in order to communicate with believers who do not speak Serbian well, or with other people and representatives from other religious institutions and mainstream. It is also crucial to attract young people and it can only be done if the priest speaks good English. Also, if one wants to convert to Orthodoxy, it is really important for a priest to communicate with that person and introduce him/her to Orthodoxy. He believes that the liturgy in the English language should be introduced into the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia and also supports recent attempts of Bishop Irinej to introduce such practice. The opinions of the Serbian Australian lay people were much more defined - Serbian priests in Australia should speak English as over 90 percent think it is very important, if not critical. English language fluency is important for all Australian residents, not only for the priest. For some, knowledge of the English language is “the best way to feel as a part of this society rather than an outsider”. It is also important for a priest as “he is a bridge between the Serbian community and wider Australian society” and he needs to communicate with people from other communities and the wider society: “that way it is easier for them to help people from the Serbian community and makes their involvement with other communities more effective”. It is also important for successful communication between priest and young Serbs who do not speak very good Serbian.
According to almost every participant (95%), church committees lack young and educated people who speak good English, and not “jaded individuals who seem to be ruining the community”. Young people are underrepresented in the church’s decision-making process was the overall opinion. Young people on church committees are important because they can more easily relate to young Serbs, have fresh ideas, know more about the Australian laws and the way of life, employment opportunities and education. They can also give better advice and support to the community. Some interviewees see it is as a huge problem, though recently more young people are becoming involved in the youth groups. There are youth seminars where they are introduced to the spirituality, religious heritage, culture and folklore. “There is a huge need for those people in order to overcome certain difficulties and accept that we live in the present. People should be more future oriented and not live in the past”, one young female participant said.

**Involvement in the wider community**

Unlike his predecessors, Bishop Irinej has become more involved in mainstream Australian life, both cultural and political, with contacts expanded not only with other Orthodox, but also with other communities. In his letters to Prime Ministers John Howard (1996-2007) and Kevin Rudd (2007-2010), Bishop Irinej appreciated the freedom that the Serbian religion and culture enjoy in Australian society. “We give thanks unto the Lord, who has deigned that our faith and our culture, as that of so many other nations and peoples, will be preserved in our cherished new homeland, Australia. Our appreciation and our joy are multiplied knowing that this freedom-loving Nation allows us to erect our churches, monasteries, community centres, schools, sports complexes, aged care facilities, and the like. Here, we are assured of the prospering of our Orthodox Christian faith and our traditional Serbian heritage” ([http://www.spc.yu/Vesti-2007/10/irinej-dobrijevic-susret-premijer.html](http://www.spc.yu/Vesti-2007/10/irinej-dobrijevic-susret-premijer.html)).

As a part of Australian society, the Serbian Orthodox Church has shown concern for major issues and events in Australia. As Cahill et al. noted in their case study, “in Meringle, the Serbian Orthodox priest, whilst his community retain a very Serbian view
of recent events in the Balkans, was helping to create a sense of belonging to Australia” (2004, p.71). For example, regarding the bush fires in Victoria in February 2009, Bishop Irinej said: “We pray, and invite you to pray to God Omnipotent that in accordance with our DESIGNATION Sunday, 15 February 2009 the Great Feast of the Meeting of the Lord – to be set aside as the common day for aiding all suffering persons in Australia, … through liturgical prayers and the solicitation of an extra collection in every parish church. In like manner, all Church-School Community Boards are requested to set aside a financial contribution as a donation, and in addition to prepare proper events for the solicitation of the funds” (http://www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=551&Itemid=1).

Radmanovich also pointed out that Serbs should be more involved in the mainstream life:”Perhaps Serbs in Australia are still to come to terms with their roots in Australian society and the need to break with their overseas statehood. This is not to say Australian-Serbs should forget their cultural inheritance and ethnic roots, but as citizens of Australia they have to participate in the mainstream Australian community outside the organized Serbian community here” (1990, p.133).

3.7 The Serbian Orthodox Community and its Relationships with Other Religious Communities

Interfaith cooperation and relations with other communities were important to explore to determine the Serbian Orthodox Church’s integration in a multicultural society. Interfaith cooperation is explained as “not just living harmoniously side-by-side (though this is a good beginning) but actively knowing about and respecting each other’s beliefs in fair and honourable competition, not allowing the mistakes and tragedies of the distant and recent past to pervert the present” (Cahill et al., 2004, p.12). Relationships with other religious communities are maintained through official contacts of the diocese and through the individual contacts of priests and believers.
However, in communicating and developing relationships with other religious communities there have been some barriers. One of the major barriers has been language as three out of the four interviewed priests do not speak English well. Another barrier is the ethnocentric character of the church, and lastly, unpreparedness of some of the clergy to live and work in a multicultural society. The Serbian Orthodox Church has not been representing Orthodoxy to the wider community in Australia as is the case with some other churches such as the St. Nicholas Orthodox church which did not remain a migrant church. It introduced English which has became “the major language in Church life and activities” (Batrouney, 2007, p.169).

Interfaith dialogue with other religious communities was limited according to the findings. On Ministers’ Fraternal gatherings or local gatherings of Christian clergy, the data clearly showed very low participation by Serbian Orthodox clergy even though the priests have been invited to the meetings. Other Orthodox clergy such as the Greek also had low participation in the local ministers’ fraternals as well as in any local interfaith networks (Cahill, 2004). Only the priest fluent in English sometimes attends interfaith meetings. According to the findings, the poor English of the Serbian clergy was the major reason for low attendance. But sometimes, one of the parishioners who speaks English attends meetings if asked by the priests. However, the priest from the city parish did not attend Ministers’ Fraternal due to different reasons, even though he was invited by representatives from the local Interfaith Committee that came to his parish. His reason for avoiding the meetings was that the Serbian Orthodox Church was a member of the National Council of Churches in Australia till 1999, but when the Council’s official policy blamed Serbia for the war in Kosovo, the SOC exited the council. Only the priest from the outer-suburban parish had attended local gatherings because of his knowledge of the English language, and he appreciates the importance to be present at those meetings.

Overall contacts with representatives from other religious communities were very limited or restricted to other Christian denominations. However, only the inner-suburban priest has relationships with any of the non-Christian religions. The regional priest sometimes has meetings with Anglican priests, but he leaves it to Bishop Irinej to develop those
contacts. A priest from the city parish did not develop relationships with other Christian churches, let alone with other religious communities. He was also of the opinion that it is the bishop who has to develop contact with other religious communities, not priests. The outer-suburban priest had developed relationships only with priests from other Christian churches. The priests generally did not show much initiative in forming interfaith relationships. Reasons stated for such an attitude were heavy workload, family responsibilities and parish duties. Other authors have similar findings of the Serbian Orthodox priests who “had no formal or informal contacts with other local faith communities, Christian or non-Christian” (Cahill et al., 2004, p. 75).

The Christian Ecumenical movement aims “to bring the Christian churches together in the pursuit of Christian unity is organizationally supported by most churches” and has “reduced inter-church hostility amongst the Christian churches” (Cahill et al., 2004, p.90, p.118). It was clear from the data that the majority of the Serbian Orthodox believers are not adequately informed about ecumenism. Many believe it would involve complete submission to the Catholic Church and loss of Orthodox identity. Therefore, many are opposed, thinking that it would be the end of their church and Orthodoxy. On the other hand, there are also those who are open to dialogue, but remain unsure of the future of bringing churches together. Serbian Orthodox priests are not opposed to the idea of ecumenism, and officially the Serbian Orthodox Church has been involved in ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic Church for decades. Most priests showed their enthusiasm for the ecumenical movement. The priest from the inner-suburban parish thinks that “people and politics cannot be above God and his rules. We are praying for the unity of all churches, and we want dialogue between all churches as we are all preaching love, peace and goodwill”. The regional priest thinks that the church should be opened for dialogue, but it is up to higher church authorities to decide which path the church should follow. “The Christian church is only one and we are the same and share the same belief in Jesus Christ”, explains the priest from the city parish. “The church should be open for a dialogue” says the Australian born priest from the outer-suburban parish who thinks positively of ecumenism.
Priests’ knowledge of other religions and the level of their knowledge was crucial to explore, as while undertaking a study on religious communities in Australia, Cahill et al. noticed that “the level of knowledge of Australia’s faith adherents about other faiths is questionable and often negative” (2004, p. 118). Interviewed priests claimed that their knowledge of other religions was sound as they had learnt a great deal about other religions as a compulsory subject whilst in theological college. As expected, all priests possess a sound knowledge of other Christian denominations which they had gained in theological school. The regional priest had explored in depth Catholicism, Buddhism and Islam as he was interested in other major world religions.

The attitude toward and knowledge of other religions as well as their level of tolerance toward others were the questions that Serbian participants were asked. Based on findings, it seems that they are not ignorant about other religions and the majority possessed basic or general knowledge. Every participant respected other religions as “most of us believe in the same thing” and they are “happy to coexist with people who practise other religions”. For example, a lady said she was very open to everyone and goes to other churches as she married a Roman Catholic and they baptized their children in the Uniting Church. Some participants, interested in other religions, had done a lot of research on Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism, Lutheranism and the Bahai religion. Even though some claimed they had had bad experiences during the war with Muslims and Catholics, they still “cannot generalize people”. One participant disliked Jehovah’s Witnesses as “they are too pushy, they are knocking on your door and you can’t get rid of them”, whereas another disliked Catholics and Muslims, but had a respect for Protestants and Jews. A young woman tried to compare Orthodoxy and other religions: “I am very happy being Orthodox, and it is a great and true religion. Orthodoxy is the religion that gives you freedom, there are no strict rules like with the Muslims, they are not allowed to eat pork, during the Ramadan they cannot eat or drink during the day, women have to cover their hair and bodies. In that sense, Orthodoxy gives you freedom. However, I like Catholicism and Anglicanism; I like Western customs such as Santa Claus, Christmas spirit and their family values”.

Two participants liked Catholic churches better because “it is good to sit during the service, Orthodox have to stand during the liturgy which is hard”. Younger participants liked Catholics and Western customs. Only a few participants stated they possessed very good knowledge about other religions. “As an intellectual, I am challenged to gain a sound knowledge of other religions in order to better understand them and their religious beliefs”, explained one male participant. One participant had Jewish friends and had learnt from them a great deal about Judaism. Some participants suggested that Catholicism and Orthodoxy were very similar religions and there was not much difference in teachings and practice. Many young people learned about Catholicism from the movies.

Every participant had friends belonging to other religions and cultures. 95 per cent have Catholic friends, followed by Protestants, Lutherans and Anglicans. Only 30 per cent have Muslim friends, and very few had Jewish friends. Two participants were best friends with Croatian Catholics. One lady had an Anglican Australian lady as her best friend. Also, the majority had Catholics and a few of them Muslims in their extended families.

Visits to other religious institutions are not frequent amongst Serbian Orthodox believers, but the majority have visited other religious sites. Only two participants had never been to other religious institutions. The majority had visited Catholic churches followed by Adventist, Uniting, Lutheran and Anglican churches. Only two participants had been to a synagogue or mosque, and one had visited Catholic monasteries, seminary and even an Islamic school. A few participants said that there is no much difference between the Orthodox and other Christian churches as “we all believe in Jesus Christ”. No one had visited a Buddhist or Hindu temple.

The priests had visited other churches or religious institutions, but mainly Christian churches, Catholic and Anglican. Visits to other places of worship such as mosque, synagogue and Buddhist temple were not recorded.
Opinions about multicultural and multifaith Australia were recorded. For the majority, Australia is the best country to live in, a great country with a well-functioning society and government. Many thought that by living in this country they were given a great opportunity to learn more about other nations and religions. For the majority, Australian multiculturalism is great “as long as no one tries to impose their particular ideas and religion” but still everyone is free to practise their religion and express their faith. One male participant said:”Australia is a great and successful example of a multicultural society. Government invests in it knowledge, money and energy so this society can function better and overcome certain hostilities between nations and religions. The idea of multiculturalism is generally good, but I think that Australia must preserve its own identity, its culture and values what are uniquely Australian, and new immigrants have to respect that”. Some said “Fantastic, I love it and embrace it”. A few participants had met their partners in Australia who are of a different cultural and religious background. However, some complained of “some indirect forms of racism” and that “tolerance should extend to all faiths and nationalities”. Also, a few participants thought that all religions are not “equally respected “and complained that “Orthodox, especially Serbs, are not respected enough. Muslims are more respected by the state”. A few young people complained of recent African immigrants who “bring trouble” even though they were given an opportunity to live in this country and they are “wasting it with fights and trouble”. Even though the Serbian Orthodox are generally well settled, some think their religion and heritage are not respected enough and that gives them a sense of alienation.

When it comes to the relationship between the Serbian Orthodox Church with other religious institutions in Australia it is maintained on two different levels, official and individual. Official contacts at diocese level are maintained by the bishop, whereas at parish level parish priests have joint liturgies but only with other Orthodox. However, involvement in local interfaith networks is limited. Contacts on an individual level are contacts between parish priests and their colleagues, and the Serbian Orthodox believers’ contacts with members of other religions.
Cahill et al. point out “the isolationism of particular groups, including the Orthodox churches and the Sikhs” (2004, p.85) and it can be said for the Serbian Orthodox Church, which did not develop relationships with other religious groups and is still fairly closed and turned to other Orthodox. Cahill et al. also noticed during their research that “the Serbian Orthodox priest had no formal or informal contacts with other local faith communities, Christian or non-Christian” (2004, p.75). The Orthodoxy in Australia “operates largely within its own ethnic world” (2004, p.33) and their “reluctance to participate in inter-faith events, especially inter-faith services” (Cahill et al., 2004, p.94) as was evident during the 2009 Parliament of the World’s Religions in Melbourne. However, there are some contacts being developed as based on the findings; there certainly has been some improvement which shows that the SOC is gradually shifting toward involvement with others.

Serbian Orthodox priests mainly contact other Christian priests, usually Orthodox. With non-Christian religious leaders there was very little contact, or they were not developed at all. Only the inner-suburban priest had contact with religious leaders from other communities. They talk about religion and their parishes, and inform each other, but they do not have joint liturgies. Due to his lack of English language skills, he was not in contact with as many people from different religious backgrounds as he would like. The regional priest had no contact with leaders from other religious communities. The priest from the city was in contact with a few religious leaders from other Christian communities. The outer-suburban priest had mainly developed relationships with other Orthodox priests, however his relationship with priests from other religions is still basic because of his numerous obligations and commitments.

Whether inter-faith or inter-denominational marriages are taking place within the Serbian Orthodox Church was important to document. Cahill et al. write that “an increasing number of inter-church and inter-faith marriages were occurring though the Orthodox strategy was not to encourage them” (2004, p.82); however, interviewed priests were not opposed and were happy that interfaith marriages took place within their parishes. Tkalcevic also wrote in the late 1970’s that “ethnic and religious intermarriages among
Serbs in Australia are not infrequent. The imbalance of sexes among Serbian immigrants in Australia, particularly amongst the early post-war arrivals, was a major contributing factor to such intermarriages” (1980, p.29). All the priests had inter-denominational marriages in their parishes as registered wedding celebrants. According to the official church’s law on marriages, Orthodoxy permits marriage as long as a person is Christian and baptized. If not, one must be baptised in order to marry in the Serbian Orthodox Church. The priest from the city parish had married seven Greek couples and a Macedonian couple in his church. He often goes to the Greek Orthodox Church for weddings and christenings as it is his usual practice. The inner-suburban priest had been a celebrant in a few inter-faith and inter-denominational weddings in his parish. Moreover, he even went to a Catholic and to an Anglican Church for a joint wedding. Also, to his church a Catholic priest had come for a wedding ceremony. Recently, he had a Serbian man marrying a Chinese Buddhist, who was baptized in the church in order to marry. The outer-suburban priest has also been a celebrant in marriages between Serbs and non-Serbs. As he had married many inter-faith couples, his attitude toward mixed marriages is positive.

Few participants are involved in interfaith or intercultural marriages. One participant was married to a Roman Catholic Hungarian, one man to a Chinese Buddhist and two female participants to Macedonians. One participant’s son is married to an Italian. Other participants have cousins who married people from other backgrounds. A few participants had divorced their partners who were of a different background.

3.8 Relations with other Orthodox churches in Australia
The early days of Orthodoxy in Australia had a Pan-Orthodox character. According to Batrouney, ”This early form of pan-Orthodoxy was essentially one in which the various Orthodox Churches provided assistance and support to each other as they struggled to establish themselves in their new land” (2007, p.33). Those Orthodox who did not have their own churches went to other already established churches. Such was the case with
the first Serbian migrants who used other Orthodox churches to attend liturgies until the completion of their churches.

All Orthodox churches in Australia since their beginning have been immigrant churches, founded by immigrants and all using their native languages in church liturgies. However, with time a few have become more mainstream introducing the English language into the liturgy and attracting English-speaking believers.

What characterizes the Orthodox churches in Australia is their multicultural and multijurisdictional character with Orthodoxy still having “the shackles of language and ethnicity, which was and still is a dominant feature of Orthodoxy in Australia” (Batrouney, 2007, p.46). Cahill also writes about Orthodox “struggles to overcome its ethnic divisions and ethnic rivalries in Australia” (2004, p.115).

In spite of their ethnocentric character, Orthodox Churches in Australia are all joined together under the umbrella of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Churches in Australia (SCCOCA) founded in 1979, with one of the founding members being the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was founded to foster cooperation between Orthodox Churches.

Relations and contacts between Orthodox are developed and maintained at diocesan and parish levels. Serbian priests and believers now have more contacts with Orthodox from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Orthodoxy is the factor that fosters such contacts and relations. The priests from the different Orthodox churches have joint liturgies on major religious holidays and during church officials’ visits. The Serbian Orthodox priests have had joint liturgies with other Orthodox, especially with the priests from the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches. When the late Serbian Patriarch Pavle visited Australia, other Orthodox priests participated in liturgies that were ministered together in the Serbian Orthodox parishes. Official meetings between Orthodox Bishops and priests are held regularly so the contacts
of Bishop Irinej with other Orthodox in Australia are frequent. For example, in 2007, Bishop Irinej visited Bishop Ezekiel of the Dervis diocese of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia where they talked about the state of the Orthodoxy in Australia. (http://www.soc.org.au).

Also, on the Australian Diocese website, there is information about other Orthodox and their Archbishops, as well as about visits of church dignitaries from overseas. There are regular updates on events, meetings between Orthodox priests and leaders, future plans, directions and official visits. At the Pan-Orthodox concert of spiritual music in Melbourne in May 2007, a Serbian choir performed along with Greek, Russian and Antioch church choirs in the Antiochian church of Saint Nicholas. “The choirs chanted in Greek, Slavonic, Arabic and English, revealing both the multicultural and multilingual nature of Orthodoxy in Melbourne” (Batrouney, 2007, p.48-49). The concert was one of the important Orthodox events.

Year 2008 marked two very important events for the Orthodox churches in Australia. First was Orthodox Week in Sydney. There was a joint liturgy held in the Greek church where over 40 priests and three Archbishops participated. Also, the SCCOA sponsored the 27th Annual Opening of the Law Term for 2008 with a Pan-Orthodox Prayer Service held at the Greek Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral in Sydney in February 2008. Bishop Irinej also participated (http://www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=328&Itemid=30).

Bishop Irinej also met with Metropolitan Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad in February 2008 where they discussed their political views, and Metropolitan Kyrill expressed solidarity with Serbs after Kosovo declared independence, (Serbian Orthodox Church, http://www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=352&Itemid=30).

The relationship between the Serbian and other Orthodox churches remains good, except for the relationship between the Serbian and the Macedonian Orthodox Churches which
nosedived after it declared its independence in 1964. Being once a part of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Macedonian Orthodox Church is still not recognized by the other canonical churches. Even though there are no official contacts between the two churches, interviewed priests talked about some relationships with Macedonian priests, but again stressed there are no joint liturgies. The majority of Serbian participants think that the Macedonian church is not acceptable especially as it is not recognized by other Orthodox churches. However, recently many Serbs have married Macedonians and some of the couples wed in the Macedonian church.

Serbian priests have developed relationships with other Orthodox priest colleagues and they have joint liturgies. Joint liturgies are held at different parishes, not only with the priests but with bishops and archbishops from other Orthodox churches. Sometimes, priests jointly perform sacraments of marriage especially if those who are getting married are Orthodox. Church officials have regular meetings, joint liturgies and religious celebrations.

To look more closely at those relationships, personal contacts between priests were explored. A priest from the regional parish had developed relationships and had joint liturgies with other Orthodox priests, mainly Russian, Greek, Coptic and Ukrainian. He again highlighted that productive relationships were established with other Orthodox churches in Australia in the form of joint liturgies and meetings. The priest from the city parish often goes to the Greek Church for weddings and christenings. He thinks that any relationship with other Orthodox in Australia is mainly spiritual, based on friendship and mutual understanding. At SCCOCA meetings they have joint liturgies and recite short prayers in the different languages. The priest from an outer-suburban parish has joint liturgies, mainly with Russian priests. When a new Russian church was built, he went there and served at the joint liturgy with other priests. An inner-suburban priest also has participated in such joint liturgies.

As all Orthodox Churches have the same teachings and liturgies, it is very common that the other Orthodox believers attend liturgies in the Serbian Orthodox church. People from
other Orthodox churches come to the parishes that served as case studies, mainly older people or people who live close to the church. In the inner-suburban parish other Orthodox such as Greeks, Macedonians, Russians and Ethiopians participate in the liturgy. Also, people that belong to other religions such as Hindus and Catholics are coming to the church. The priest highlights that “our church welcomes everyone”. The regional parish was visited by many Romanians, Bulgarians and Greeks. The city parish welcomes other Orthodox believers such as Greeks, Russians and Macedonians. In the outer-suburban parish there are also other Orthodox. Priests welcome other Orthodox as their attendance is “very common and desirable”.

Contacts with other Orthodox priests have been developed on a personal basis and at parish levels, according to the data, mainly because of the same Orthodox allegiance and other things they have in common. The priest from the inner-suburban parish is friendly with Russian priests and they see each other very often, not only in their parishes. He even went to Hobart to minister at a liturgy together with the Russian priest. There is also a good relationship with priests from Greek and Coptic churches. During the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia/Serbia, Greek priests helped with donations and held joint liturgies to show their support. The priest from the city parish had developed relationships with Greeks, Russians, Antiochians, Bulgarians and Romanians.

3.9 The Serbian Orthodox Community: its Historical Legacy and its Future

Impact of the Balkans war on the Serbian Orthodox Image in Australia

Since the first Serbian migration wave after WWII, the period during and after the Balkans war was the most difficult period for the Serbian Orthodox Church both in Australia and across the world. Priests and participants were asked to express their opinion regarding the impact of the Balkans war. The Balkans war had definitely impacted on the church as well as on the image of the Serbian people in Australia. According to the answers, two sides of the impact became evident; the negative impact was seen by the non-Serbs as the church was portrayed as bad by non-Serbs and positive by Serbs as Serbs reverted to their religion after decades of atheism under communism.
and a sense of unity was evoked. Many Serbs who had previously declared themselves as Yugoslavs again embraced their Serbian identity and religion. The Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church have often been blamed for war mongering and have limited contacts with other communities from the former Yugoslavia.

Even though priests similarly answered, there were some differences noticed in their perceptions of the image and the total situation. The inner-suburban parish priest thought that the war had impacted very badly on the image of the church. However, on the other hand, it was good as more Serbs had turned to the church and religion. Also, Australian officials had been communicating with the Serbian community through the church. The impact of war on the Serbian people in Australia was also positive as Serbs had become nationally and spiritually “enlightened”; they turned more to God and their Serbian roots. The regional parish priest thought that, as a nation, Serbian people have a bad image in every sense of the phrase. He explained that when someone says they are Serbian some people look with reserve. Fortunately, “our church is not portrayed as badly”. For the priest from the city parish, the Balkans war had had a negative impact on the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people. Due to the huge mass media influence, the Serbs were portrayed negatively and people in the world were not presented with the right information about Serbs. “The Serbian Orthodox Church has a bad image because of the war, but it will improve with time on both church and people”, said the priest from outer-suburban parish. Cahill’s findings from interviews with the Serbian priests were also similar as there were thoughts that “the war in Yugoslavia was the war against Orthodoxy and the “New World Order” “(Cahill et al., 2004, p.75).

The participants’ answers about the impact of the Balkans war on the image of the church were mixed. For the negative image of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the negative impact of war, a ‘biased’ media was blamed by almost 70 per cent of the participants. Some blamed political leaders from the former Yugoslavia and also from NATO for what had been done. The war had left a very negative image as Serbs were portrayed as “murderers and butchers”, “trouble makers”, “bad people” and “killers and monsters”. A few participants said that the media “supported the other side” and the Serbs had been
“wrongly accused and blamed for everything”. A young female said:”That was very hard for me as people in high school and at university judged me when I said I was a Serbian”. Another young female had also had problems at school as “some kids said that only the Serbs were guilty, Muslims were not to blame. It is unfair that the Serbs are blamed for everything”. Even though the Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church had been negatively perceived and described, the image had now improved and it was suggested that Serbs “need more positive publicity”. However, the war had brought Serbs together and the “church got closer to the people”. Some were of the opinion that “there was no impact on the church as it was never involved in politics and war”, thought one young participant.

The settlement of migrants and refugees

The settlement of migrants and refugees and the church’s help in their settlement and adaptation to a new environment was important to explore so as to see the role of the religion and its importance in the migration and settlement process. “Churches in communities of origin are well aware of the spiritual needs of prospective migrants and their families and cater to them”, Hagan points out (2002, p.89). Cahill et al. also acknowledge the role of the faith communities in the settlement of immigrants and in “creating a sense of belonging for immigrants and meeting their spiritual needs” (2004, p.11). Even though Serbian migrants from the Balkans war arrived on humanitarian and refugee visas and therefore were entitled to help and assistance from the government agencies (finding accommodation, Centrelink benefits, etc.), the church has helped many of them during their migration and settlement process. The church has also played a social role as people went to the church to meet other Serbs and to feel closer, not alienated, in a joint feeling of solidarity.

By the involvement in the Serbian community, both the Serbian community and its church supported the integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees. Involvement in the community life and interaction with people who share the same language, culture, tradition and religion were factors that largely facilitated integration into a new society. For some newly arrived, it was very hard to settle without links to their ethnic community
and church. Adaptation also depended on their social networks, as well as family and friends who were sources of information and assistance.

Participants were asked if they had received the church’s assistance when they first arrived. Many stated that the church had given them “acceptance, comfort, peace and the ability to socialize” during the initial stage of their settlement. For some the church had more of a social function through which they were able to meet other Serbs upon their arrival. Also, a few participants said that the priest came to their homes when they arrived to see if they needed any help. “He assured us that everything would be OK. And he was right”, said one female participant. Participants pointed out that it was also good to make some contacts and to gain assistance in settling. The church had provided some of them with accommodation. For example, Sanja’s family arrived in the suburb close to the church and immediately they were introduced to the priest and Serbian community leaders. Along with finding accommodation, they helped find employment for her father. They also gave them some furniture and informed them of GPs from the former Yugoslavia. They also introduced her to a Serbian-speaking career education person to help her with high school subject selection. Some said that the church did not help them with material assistance but the spiritual help was “enormous”. “Spiritually, it gave me power, faith and belief in a better and secure future, and above all, hope”, said one. For some, people from the church have written support letters to assist their relatives in migration to Australia. Two of those who participated had lived in church accommodation for months until they were able to find themselves other accommodation.

For those who belong to older migration waves, the church did not help them; instead, they helped to build up the church as it was not very strong back in the 1960s and 1970s. Those who arrived during the 1980’s did not get any help from the church as they arrived as skilled professionals. Some participants did not obtain any help from the church as they did not ask for it.
The future of Orthodoxy

The future of Serbian Orthodoxy in Australia is somewhat uncertain. Participants were asked to give their opinion about its future. Half were optimistic and the other half pessimistic. It is interesting to note that all participants agreed that certain changes should be introduced into the life of the church. Some blamed church committees for the current state of the church and stated that because of that the number of young churchgoers will decline. Others blamed the priest for the situation in which the church has found itself and it was suggested that new things should be introduced into the life of the church. For some, the future is not very bright as many parents do not teach their children about the religion and the younger generations of Serbs speak the Serbian language very poorly. Even though the Serbian language is important, the liturgy in English should be introduced in some parishes, suggested nearly half of the participants. However, the Serbian language should prevail in the liturgy as it is “a keeper of Serbianness”. One participant said that the Serbian Orthodox Church should copy the Catholic Church and be more modern and open to other people. Another participant suggested that church should employ PR and establish a bigger presence in the community and media. Some of the young people had the wrong idea of what Serbian means and they are “behaving like idiots and embarrass the Serbs in Australia”. The future is very uncertain for some as there is a decreased number of young people in the church and because of “inappropriate management” and “priests’ behavior”. There are small signs that the situation will improve in the future, thought one young male participant.

Others are very positive and forecast a prosperous future as “we survived Islam, attacks of the Catholic Church and 50 years of communist oppression and tyranny”. The majority suggested that for a bright future the priest should speak English and more young people should get involved. It could be a bright future but only with a highly educated clergy fluent in English who possess an understanding of Australian society. Many participants agreed it is also necessary to introduce English into church sermons so young people can understand spiritual messages. Some had observed a resurgence of Serbian Orthodoxy after the fall of communism. One was very positive. ”As long as I live, I will go to the Serbian Orthodox Church and keep my heritage and my religion. I hope that my kids will
be true Orthodox. It would be ideal to marry a Serb because we are of the same background and share the same religion, customs and everything. It would be a lot easier to bring up kids that way”. However, those positive about the future had some suggestions and said there is always room for improvement.

The priests’ opinions were divided between optimism and pessimism. However, the majority were generally positive about the future. They all agreed that Orthodoxy will continue to exist in Australia though the major barriers to the future of Orthodoxy were noted. Some are of the opinion that the future of Orthodoxy will be bright by introducing English into church in order to attract more believers from the 3rd and 4th generations of Serbs. Younger generations are seen as keepers of Orthodoxy.

The priest from the inner-suburban parish is an optimist. For him, Orthodoxy is the ‘true faith’ and therefore the religion of the future, which will continue to exist as there are people in Australia who are converting to Orthodoxy. However, the future of Orthodoxy depends both on priests and church as an institution as well as on believers. The priest from the regional parish was, however, pessimistic and thinks the future of the Orthodoxy will be very difficult. Some Serbs are leaving their religion for other faiths such as Jehovah’s Witnesses. If a Serb, for example, marries someone from the Church of England, his family would convert, as people are prone to assimilation and want to become more mainstream. The priest from the city parish was optimistic and had some ideas for the future of Orthodoxy. Orthodox churches should join together and concentrate on how to attract and then how to keep young people. They should develop a special strategy for attracting young people to be able to maintain Orthodoxy in Australia. The Orthodox churches should also avoid and try to ignore their “folklore nationalism” and be much more open to each other. They need to invest in the future generations. A liturgy in English should be introduced because of the 2nd and 3rd generation of Serbs. Also, 90 per cent of weddings should be in English, also sometimes baptisms and funeral masses should be conducted in English. The inner-suburban priest was also positive about the future. The young priest from an outer-suburban parish thought the future
should be good, Orthodoxy is about to be one of the leading religions in Australia. Young Serbian people are becoming more involved in the church activities.

It seems that the church has finally realized that its future lies in the younger generations and the only way to secure the future of Serbian Orthodoxy in Australia is to attract young people to church. Youth seminars are playing an important role as young people are educated about Orthodoxy through their regular meetings and seminars. Plans and future directions are also being discussed.

In the Serbian Youth Seminar Newsletter a young parish priest wrote of the success of the Second Orthodox Youth Forum, “One thing that I gained from the Keysborough Forum was to see so many young Serbs taking an interest in their faith, their church, and thus their fate, here in Australia.” (Youth Seminars Newsletter, September 2008, www.soc.org.au). Also, in The Church-Youth Seminar 2009 it was expressed that “the Serbian Orthodox community of Australia and New Zealand has a future, and a very bright one at that” (Youth Seminars Newsletter, Summer 2009, www.soc.org.au).

Although there were two predominant opinions regarding the future of Orthodoxy, the majority of the participants expressed opinion that the church itself is responsible and that the future depended mainly on her, not only believers. Believers as well as some of the Serbian Orthodox clergy thought that the future of church could be positive if there are some changes introduced into the life of the church. Also, young people are showing an interest for Serbian Orthodoxy which certainly shows that Orthodoxy would continue to exist in Australia.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE WEBSITES OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

4.1 Content Analysis of the Serbian Orthodox Church Websites

With improvements in information technology, religious information has become increasingly accessible where one can learn about Orthodoxy and remain informed. Dissemination of news and information on its websites facilitated the Serbian Orthodox Church in maintaining global linkages between churches in Serbia and with the diaspora that facilitate religious connections. These websites facilitate interconnectedness between Serbian churches, the ability to exchange information and access to the events of other communities.

Only the official Serbian Orthodox Church’s websites have been investigated. Numerous other websites of the Serbian Orthodox dioceses and parishes have not been explored as that would be time consuming and beyond the limits of this thesis. Only the content of the official website in Serbia, two websites in Australia, two from the North American diocese and one in Switzerland (Diocese of Central Europe) have been analyzed. These are: website of the Serbian Orthodox Church (www.spc.rs), website of the Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese of Australia and New Zealand (www.soc.org.au), the Serbian Orthodox Youth Association of Australia and New Zealand Incorporated (http://www.soya.org.au), the Serbian Orthodox Church (http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com and http://www.orthodoxchurch.net) and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Switzerland (http://www.spcoluzern.org or http://www.spcportal.org). This last one is an excellent, if not the best, electronic repository for information about Serbian Orthodoxy.

Heidi Campbell writes that “the view that communities have moved from a geographical focus to become dispersed networks of support and sociability has allowed researchers to study computer networks as social networks and a new form of community”.

118
Furthermore, “when technology mediates and sustains relationships, geographical separation no longer is a factor for exclusion from a social network”. (2005, p. 37-38). Barna adds, “the internet has come to represent an otherworldly space allowing people to reengage with spirituality in their daily lives” (Barna in Campbell, 2005, p.55).

Being a religious institution with patriarchal status, the Serbian Orthodox Church has its official website which is regularly updated with news and current events. There are also other official websites maintained by other dioceses in other parts of the world. The websites are characterized by very rich information and are excellent resources for learning about Orthodoxy; they can be easily accessed from every corner of the globe. Easy navigation and many links to other Orthodox websites are their characteristics. The SOC’s websites provide information about the organization of the church and the Orthodox faith. Due to the links and easy navigation, information about other parishes’ events and activities can be read and accessed. The researcher looked at the range of websites to determine their character and analyze their content.

Priests who maintain, design and control websites are responsible for content and development of the SOC’s websites. Those who are responsible for the content of websites are aware of the message as it also applies to the responsibility should there be for xenophobic content or any ideas promoting religious intolerance. However, there exist certain websites that are not under the church’s responsibility. Information needs to be accurate and possess quality. Cahill et al. have warned of “growth of the religious websites, usually sourced from overseas… containing hate propaganda targeting other faith communities” (2004, p.118). This content analysis of the Serbian Orthodox Church’s websites aims to determine if those websites contain such information as well as to determine what kind of information they have and how up to date they are.

Bishop Irinej has also written about the Internet and the media, highlighting the church’s responsibility in creating website content and other material for the media. His thoughts are contained in ‘On the Sin of Internet and Media Abuse’: “We must strictly warn and sternly admonish all monastics and clergy, all sons and daughters, our spiritual children
on this Fifth Continent, concerning the public sin of Internet and other media abuse, shared equally by those participating in the writing, providing of alleged information, regarding or in distributing the same…” (http://www.soc.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=41, accessed March 2007).

Priests were asked their opinions about websites in Australia and Serbia. They talked about plans for designing their parish websites. The inner-suburban parish did not have a website, but there were plans where, for the design of the website, one of the young parishioners would be responsible and the priest for the context. A priest from this parish does not visit other websites as he is too busy. He agrees with the context of websites as long as it is written and approved by the church. If it is written by individuals who attack other people and other religions, he does not agree with the content. The regional parish did not have its own website “as there is no need for a parish website”, explained the priest. The priest sometimes wrote articles for the official website of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. The priest from the city parish often goes to SOC’s websites to read news and other articles on religion and Orthodoxy. He agrees with the content of those websites as they are official, and disagrees with the content of unofficial websites. He also likes the diocesan website in Australia, and the fact that priority is given to the news and events in Australia. He thinks that the website should be also written in English “as we live in Australia and the younger generation is not fluent in Serbian”. The priest from the outer-suburban parish regularly visits SOC’s websites to stay informed. He finds their content to be informative and useful, and the SOC’s and other Orthodox websites are quite popular, especially amongst young people. He agrees with the content as long as it is an official website of the church. However, at the same time there is “a lot of rubbish on the Internet”, anyone can write anything, no matter good or bad, he explains. Also, the church needs to keep up with modernity and must have websites.

Believers were also asked about their opinion of the Serbian Orthodox Church websites and how often they visit SOC’s websites and if they like their content. 30 percent of
participants do not use the Internet so they were unable to answer this set of questions. Of those who use the Internet, the majority visit such websites. Only a small percentage of participants did not visit websites. Participants visited websites for different reasons such as some wanting to refresh their memory about their religion, to find out about certain monasteries in Serbia or in other parts of the former Yugoslavia, to keep up to date with news and events in Serbia, and to be informed about other Orthodox churches. Participants also stated that websites are informative and educative, and one can find many interesting things.

Participants’ opinions on how they liked the SOC’s websites were documented. Some websites are rich with much useful and accurate information, while others have just general information. A few participants complained that in some articles written by individuals there is a lack of proper historical research, facts and references, and they usually express biased views. One pointed out. “I came across two different extreme views depending on authors. It was quite confusing for someone from a non-Serbian background”, explained one participant. One participant thought that information presented on every site is not accurate, just on those sites that are official. “There is a lot of information about everything on the Internet nowadays. A question is whether that is accurate or not. The same question may be raised about religion, Serbian history and culture. It depends on the source of information. Finally, a comparison of sources is the best indicator. “I haven’t found a big discrepancy between sources about religion, Serbian history and culture, so information is pretty accurate”, pointed out one male participant. Only two participants disliked the content, while one thought that it could be better written and presented.

The site www.spc.rs is the official website of the Serbian Orthodox Church, written in Serbian and English. The design of this website is effective and it is easy to navigate. It is well constructed, with rich content and much information regarding the Orthodox faith and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The site’s design has been changed several times in the last five years.
The home page consists of the Menu on the top of the page and with the News in Serbian. The home page is dominated by a photo of Patriarch Irinej in the left corner, his coat of arms in the middle of the page and, in the right corner, the photo of the late Patriarch Pavle. The News section concentrates on the life of the church, events, new books, exhibitions, and the Church synod. On the right hand side of the page, there are links to the information service, messages from the heads of the Orthodox churches, press releases from the pan-Orthodox conference in Chambesy, Committee for Jasenovac, destruction of the churches in Kosovo and memorandum for restoration of the Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo. On both right and left sides of the home page there are news from the Archdiocese, Dioceses, from other Orthodox churches, news from Kosovo, Announcements and new Publications. On the English version of the site, there is far less information.

The menu structure is easy for users to navigate and consists of the following: The Church, Culture, Life, Science, Statements, Archives and Links. The Church section contains rich information in Serbian and English with links to sections about the Patriarch, the Holy Assembly, The Synod, the Great Ecclesiastical Court and the Patriarchal Steering Committee. In English under the Church section, there is only a list of Serbian Archbishops and Patriarchs. Under Culture there are texts about recent cultural events, books, music and films. The Life section describes the life of the church, church and young people and media. Texts about Orthodoxy and science are under the Science section, whilst Statements contain the Patriarchal message, Holy Assembly and Synod Announcements, Diocesan statements and statements from various conferences. The electronic Archive goes back to 2004 and Links are to Serbian Orthodox Dioceses, other Orthodox churches, Orthodox educational institutions on the Internet, Welfare societies, Church choirs and other Orthodox texts. There are also links to the Theological University in Belgrade, the Academy of Serbian Orthodox Church for Iconography and Conservation, Orthodoxy (the Serbian Patriarchy Magazine), Svetosavsko zvonce (St. Sava’s Bell) (children’s magazine), and the Philanthropy-welfare fund.
There is also an interchange of news from other Orthodox Patriarchates and churches as well as news from the dioceses across the world.

Even though this site is characterized by good web design, easy navigation and rich content, there could be far more information. There is a complete lack of information on important things such as Theology, the Patriarchate and a Slava (Patron Saint Day). The volume of information in the English language should be increased to meet the needs of the English speaking users. A search engine within the site in Serbian can only be used if written in Cyrillic script, but it works fine in English. However, the site is effective with accurate and useful information.

The official website of the Serbian Orthodox Church Diocese of Australia and New Zealand is www.soc.org.au. Material about the activities of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia is contained on the website. For its content one priest is responsible; however, other priests write articles and provide information about the latest events from their parishes. Along with this website in Australia, there are also 13 websites of parishes and a website of the children’s camp at New Kalenic near Canberra (see Appendix 6). The majority of the websites are written in English and Serbian, with, however, three websites only in Serbian. The websites’ content is similar with information about the diocese, parish, events in Serbia, history, religion, news and gallery.

This webpage is written in Serbian and English with a recent shift from the Serbian language to English. Numerous and visible changes have been incorporated from 2004 onwards. There is also more data regarding church activities and more links to other websites. Only in the last four years has text started to be written in English on this website after ignoring for many years the fact that many from the 2nd and 3rd generation of Serbs are not fluent in the Serbian language.

The Home page is dominated by the coat of arms and icon of the Virgin and Child in the right hand corner. The home page is also divided into left and right sections. On the left there are texts and news, and on the right there are photos of Patriarch Irinej and Bishop
Irinej as well as a few links to other pages and other photos. The Home page changes regularly and is always up to date with news. The user has the option to switch language; however, some texts are not available in English, moreover the texts in English are very limited. Even though it has some sections in English, it is not genuinely bilingual. The website design consists of home page, news from dioceses and parishes, news in English about Bishop, hot topics, Diocese and parishes, directory of Diocese, parishes, monasteries, clergy, Diocesan institutions and agencies, Serbian social institutions and students of theology, gallery and links. There are also timetables of liturgies in parishes around Australia. When it comes to the transnational aspect of the website there is an interchange of news across the Serbian diaspora and links to other SOC’s dioceses, parishes and other Orthodox churches. The website has links to other websites such as the official website of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, Archdiocese of the SOC, Archbishopric of the SOC, Serbian Orthodox Dioceses, links to parishes in Australia and New Zealand, Joint presentation of diocese, Sister’s Orthodox Dioceses in Australia and New Zealand, other Orthodox Churches and other links. The News archive dates back to June 2004. At the bottom of the home page, there is a link to Saint Sava Herald (even though the magazine is still not published electronically), a photo gallery and audio and video recordings of Bishop Irinej.

The content is mostly religious; however, there are some articles concerning welfare such as the Serbian retirement village in Rooty Hill. The activities of the Bishop and the Diocese are described and regularly updated, together with other important events such as religious festivals, the church’s Patron Saint or visits of other officials as well as other events from the Serbian community. A gallery is rich with plenty of photos of churches and events.

On the website there is no search option, so it is very hard for users to access/find relevant information. The website is constantly changing so for example, a Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (SOYA) newsletter could be accessed online and downloaded from this website but not anymore. There were five newsletters from September 2008 till May 2009.
The official site for the Serbian Orthodox Youth Association of Australia and New Zealand Incorporated (SOYA) is http://www.soya.org.au. SOYA was founded on the initiative of Bishop Irinej and began its work in Canberra in 2008. The purposes of forming this organization were to bring the Serbian Orthodox youth together. The Home Page consists of News, Events, About SOYA, How to Join, Programs, Our Church, Serbs, Gallery, Links and Contact. The website is maintained in English and Serbian, and users have the option to switch languages. Home pages dominates a photo of the church, latest news, SOYA news in every state where the user has the option to click on the state to access the news, and two important links to SOC in Australia and New Zealand and the SOC in Serbia. In the right hand corner there is a Member login, the latest news and a calendar, whereas in the left hand corner there is photo of youth and an option to sign up. There is also a direct link to SOYA on Facebook.

Youth Seminars Newsletters can be accessed online and downloaded from the SOC official website. In the first issue of the Youth Seminar Newsletter from September 2008, there was a welcome and a brief introduction. In first issue, there is a message from Bishop Nikolai of Alaska, who had been a guest in the Australian diocese. This issue has also an invitation for the second Orthodox Youth Forum, on 12th October 2008 at the St Sava Church, Greensborough, written by the priest from that parish. Serbian youth were invited to come and join as “For too long, Serbian youth in Australia has been excluded from ‘working on its future’ by the established, usually older, Serbian community”. In the newsletter, there are some articles, How to address an Orthodox Bishop in person, written and explained by a priest. A Column “When an infanticide became an abortion” and a column written by a young Serbian girl called “Between you and me … Just quietly…” In the text, the author talks about the era of consumption and media manipulation, as well as about being Serbian in the media manipulated society. “Afraid that being too Serbian or too Orthodox might result in isolation from the mainstream. “. “In essence, we may be a minority in this society, but it does not mean we have to follow the majority. Being Serbian Orthodox and enjoying pertinent traditions is a privilege…” (p.5).
In the 2nd issue from October 2008, the newsletter informs of the Church-Youth Seminar between 26-28 December 2008 at St Sava, New Kalenic Monastery near Canberra. There were greetings from Bishop Irinej and an invitation for a seminar. The bishop had requested “each Church-School Congregation throughout our God-protected Dioceses to elect 2-3 young adults from 18-30 years of age and sponsor all travel costs and incidentals to attend an initial CHURCH-YOUTH SEMINAR…” The purpose of the seminar was “the formation of a structured Youth Movement for the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand”. There was also a schedule of events of the Youth Seminar. The newsletter had also a text “My Reflection” written by a 16 year old about the first Youth Forum at the Keysborough parish. Forum was described as ”a constructive and informative forum that understands that we need to learn more about the religion we all believe in. It’s also a great way to meet other Serbian youth”. There was also an invitation to the Third Orthodox Youth Forum in St George’s Church, St Albans on 23rd November 2008. After the Holy liturgy, the Forum provided a lecture on “Fast-Confession-Communion” and also Gospel interpretations. A newsletter contained some really good text about “The Orthodox Stance on some issues”. The topics that were covered were Fasting, Organ Donations, Sexuality and Contraception. (Youth Seminars Newsletter, October 2008, www.soc.org.au).

The third issue of Summer 2009 follows the usual pattern and there was also an invitation to the Fourth Orthodox Youth Forum at the Brunswick Church on 22nd February 2009 with the main topic “Prayer and Holy Communion”. There was a report from The Church-Youth Seminar 2009 in Canberra. “The Serbian Orthodox community of Australia and New Zealand has a future, and a very bright one at that”. “They came to fulfill their long-awaited dream of forming a Church-Youth organization which would gather young Serbs around our Holy Church and represent not only our youth, but our entire community to the world around us”. A text “Between you and me…Just quietly…” is repeated from the first issue. There are also series of articles about the “Orthodoxy in Christendom”. The section explores Orthodox Christianity, Other Christianities such as Non-Chalcedonians and Roman Catholic and Protestant, and Orthodoxy after the Great Schism. At the end of the newsletter, there is A Picture story from the Youth Mingling @

One of the biggest sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church is http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com. This site is written both in English and Serbian which is convenient for non-Serbian speaking visitors to find information on Serbian Orthodoxy. This website is rich with information such as library, museum, radio, Orthodox spiritual music, and magazines even though the website was last updated in November 2009. The home page is dominated by the coat of arms in the middle of the page.

The main page was under construction at the time of the study. However, there is notification that the site is ‘constantly updated’. The Main menu is divided into sections: Head of Serbian Orthodoxy, Organizations, Educational Establishments, List of churches, Links, Magazines, Introduction, and links to SerbianOrthodoxChurch.net and SerbianOrthodoxRadio.com. Head of Serbian Orthodoxy links to The Holy Assembly of Bishops and to The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, The Patriarchal library, Museum of the SOC, The Great Ecclesiastical Court, The Patriarchal Executive Board, Archives of the Serbian Patriarchate, The Church-Educational Institutions and Magazines. Churches by Country and Churches by name have a complete list of the Serbian Orthodox Churches across the world. Other Links consist of: Main links to Serbian, Russian and Greek Orthodox churches, Churches and their websites, Parishes and Diocese, Orthodox organizations, Conference Halls and Social Centres, Educational Institutions, Historic Churches, Monasteries, Orthodox Christian History, Church History, Church Documents and Texts, Theological/ Readings, Prayers Liturgical, Church Music, Icons, Byzantine, Architecture and Museums, Saints, The Orthodox Experience told by Converts, Orthodox Family and Children Issues, Ethnic and Christian Foods, Sanctity of Life, Various for Searching Christians, Fonts, Bookstores, Publishing Companies and Religious Items, and Other Links. There are also links to some Catholic churches, a mosque and a Buddhist Temple.
From this site there is a link to http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.net which has been created with the blessing of Bishop Irinej-Gavrilovic and Bishop Longin of the Diocese of North America. This site is also rich with information about Serbian Orthodoxy.

On the main page there are fourteen sections with an icon of Saint Elijah displayed on the left hand side of the page. On the right hand side there is a menu. Orthodoxy Origin is currently unavailable, but from Serbian Church History three e-books, a few articles in English and Serbian and an Index of Saints can be downloaded. The Service books section is under construction. From Church Music there is represented a variety of spiritual music traditions that can be downloaded. The Church Calendar is out-of-date and dates only from December 2006 to January 2008. However, the Archives and Literature sections are under construction. Circle of the Serbian Sisters contains two old articles. There are five online Church Shops. Greeting Cards, School Reference and Introduction are under construction. Under Miscellaneous, there are Fasting day recipes, a Latin to Cyrillic converter, a Dictionary of Orthodox Terminology and also 60 Cyrillic and 60 Latin fonts are available. However, e-greeting cards, literature, and English-Serbian and Serbian-English dictionaries are currently unavailable.

The website http://www.spcportal.org or http://www.spcoluzern.ch/ has been created in Luzern, Switzerland in three languages, Serbian (both in Cyrillic and Latin scripts), English and German. It is again an extremely rich website with many texts, photographs and information about Serbian Orthodoxy and the Serbian people.

On the Home Page there are links to History, Orthodoxy, SPC Luzern, Activity, Diaspora, Forum and Login. On the left side of the Home Page there are also links to Organisation, Patriarchate, Eparchies, History, Conventions, Fasting, Holy Days, Sacraments, Monastery, Kosovo and Metohia, Photo gallery, Cookbook, Icons, Hilandar (Serbian monastery at the Mount Athos), FAQ, Prayer, Serbian Rulers, Links, Library, Download and Contact.
The analyzed websites are bilingual, written in Serbian and English, with one in German. Websites were found to be rich in data and great sources of information, with the official SOC’s website being the least informative about Orthodoxy. Also, the official Serbian Orthodox Church’s websites did not contain messages that were promoting hatred between religions and xenophobia.

The extraterritorial nature of the Internet contributed to the spread of news and information thus adding a new dimension to the transnational activity of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The transnational character of the SOC’s websites is evident in various links connecting them to other websites, online papers, radio stations and links to other Orthodox churches. Therefore, those websites possess transnational linkages as they are interconnected. The transnational nature of the SOC’s websites allows people from the diaspora to access websites in Serbia, while those from Serbia can access websites anywhere in the world.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions
As religion has become increasingly viewed as a transnational phenomenon, this study aimed to explore the current situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia both in its Australian and its transnational contexts. Working within the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, this research served as a case study about transnationalism and faith/religious communities. The focus was on the Serbian Orthodox Church, its activities and the activities of parishioners. As the Serbian Orthodox Church functions as a transnational network, theories on transnationalism provided the theoretical base for this study.

Four parishes served as case studies and four Serbian Orthodox priests and forty six Serbian Orthodox believers were individually interviewed. The methodology adopted for this study was a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

The background factors such as Orthodoxy and the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church were presented as well as the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. A review of the Serbian community in Australia and a demographic profile were also presented.

Intra-religious national networks
The Serbian Orthodox church has been a major factor in helping to preserve the cultural identity, language, customs, traditions, and, above all, the religion of the Serbs in Australia since WWII.

The Diocese of Australia and New Zealand with its two administratively separated dioceses is under the jurisdiction of Bishop Irinej (Dobrijevic). The bishop appoints priests, travels to Serbia twice a year to Holy Synod meetings and pays regular visits to
parishes across Australia. Activities within the Diocese are Annual Church Seminars, Spiritual Evenings, and recently introduced Youth seminars. On the Bishop's initiative, the Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (SOYA) was formed in 2008 and youth seminars are regularly organized in Australian parishes. The church publishes the St. Sava Herald and Church Calendar in Australia.

Four parishes have been described in some detail where Divine liturgies, religious celebrations, saint days and the sacramental rites are performed. In church halls there are organized various celebrations and fundraising activities. In parishes, there are also language and religious education classes, dance groups, pensioner groups and other social activities. Church halls provide an opportunity for social networking between Serbs. Priests are regularly in contact with their priest colleagues in Australia and have joint liturgies especially on Saint days or religious holidays.

It was important to document believers’ opinions about the image of the Serbian Orthodox Church. For the majority of Serbs, the image was positive as they regarded the church as “a keeper of tradition, culture, family, morals, history, spiritual values and education”. On the other hand, others pointed to its negative image because of the inappropriate behaviour of some priests and lack of young people on the various church committees.

Knowledge of Serbian Orthodoxy for the majority of participants was assessed as fair/sound (50 per cent), followed by those whose knowledge was average. Only a few participants possess religious literature and read it on a regular basis while others read it rarely. The level of commitment to the church was explored and the frequency of visits to church. The majority is committed to the church, but do not go to church on a weekly basis. However, there are some very active members who help in organizing various activities and attending church very often, some on a weekly basis.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has helped some migrants and refugees during their settlement in Australia. The church also played a social as well as spiritual role as people
went to church to meet other Serbs, to feel closer and easily adapt into the new environment. For the majority, the church’s help was more social and spiritual, however, some were assisted with finding a job, accommodation, or writing support letters for family members who wanted to migrate to Australia.

When it comes to the role of the SOC in the Serbian community’s adaptation to a multicultural and multifaith Australia, it can be said that the community has integrated but the church still remains locked into its past though there are signs of breaking the lock. It remains an immigrant church with a strongly manifested ethnic character and the Serbian Orthodox Church has been mainly encouraging Serbs to keep their Serbian identity, language, customs and tradition. With such an approach there thus arose issues such as problems in understanding and communicating with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} generations of Serbs in Australia. That is why recently there have been some attempts of introducing the English language in the church. Also, priests that were coming to Australia did not possess knowledge of the English language nor of Australian society. Such clergy could not pass on knowledge about settlement and adaptation into this society. The church mainly encouraged the things of old, and acted to keep the things the way they were. Even though the church has integrated in Australia to some extent, it is strongly linked to the centre in Serbia. However, there are emerging indicators that show that the integration is not complete as there are limited contacts with other religious communities.

It seems that only recently has the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia realized that the future of Serbian Orthodoxy lies in the young and future generations of Serbs and the only way to secure its future is to attract more young people. Youth seminars play an important role as young people are educated about Orthodoxy at the meetings and seminars where they also develop plans for the future, and future directions are being discussed. Regarding the future of Orthodoxy, even though priests’ opinions were divided between optimistic and pessimistic, they all agreed that Orthodoxy will continue to exist in Australia. Younger generations are seen as keepers of Orthodoxy and some priests even suggested the introduction of English into the church services.
Also, participants all agreed that certain changes should be introduced into the life of the church so the church could have better prospects for the future.

**Intra-religious transnational networks**

The Serbian Orthodox Church functions as a transnational network with the mother church in Serbia operating globally and linking other Serbian Orthodox churches around the world. There is also the transnational nature of episcopal appointments as bishops are frequently changed in their diocesan appointments and after Australia, they are appointed to Serbia or to other parts of the world. Thus interesting to note is the pattern of changing bishops/archbishops in the Australian Diocese every few years as bishops come from Serbia or from other parts of the world to their Australian assignment. For example, in the last forty years thirteen different bishops were assigned to Australia. One of the most important events for the diocese was the late Patriarch Pavle’s visit in 2004.

The transnational nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church was demonstrated in the high flow of religious personnel, as well as the flows of money, donations and religious artefacts. Links with other churches are developed mainly through the bishop; however, some priests have developed contacts with other Serbian Orthodox dioceses in the world. Contacts with church officials in Belgrade are made through the bishop and his office. The bishop also attends the Holy Synod in Belgrade every year, and other relevant seminars. He also travels to other countries, mainly USA and meets other church dignitaries. Pilgrimages as a transnational religious activity are common for both clergy and believers. The majority has been on a pilgrimage to Serbia as well as to other parts of the former Yugoslavia, but only a few have been to other countries such as Greece, Russia or Jerusalem. The Diocese receives books and religious materials from Belgrade on a regular basis. Priests are often in contact with their priest colleagues in Serbia or in other parts of the world.

**Inter-religious transnational networks**

The Serbian Orthodox Church operates globally and is linked with other Orthodox churches. Its patriarchal status gives it an influential position within the Orthodox world.
Relationships with other Orthodox churches are friendly and cooperative except for the Macedonian Orthodox Church which proclaimed independence from the Serbian Orthodox Church and is still not recognized by other Orthodox canonical churches. During the Balkans war there were organized meetings between Orthodox and Catholic clergy and Muslim Imams as they all called for peace and worked on the reconciliation process. In the last few decades, the Serbian Orthodox Church has become involved in ecumenical activity with the Catholic Church with joint meetings in Belgrade. Even though the official attitude of the church is pro-ecumenical, other powerful voices within the church are strongly opposed to the idea of possible union between two churches. The SOC’s clergy has its representatives in the World Council of Churches, with Bishop Irinej and Archpriest Vladan Perisic being Committee members. Perisic is also a member of the Conference of European Churches. On his travels outside Australia (mainly to the USA and Serbia), Bishop Irinej has regular meetings with dignitaries from other churches.

**Inter-religious national networks**

Relationships between the Serbian Orthodox Church with other religious communities in Australia are maintained on the official (Diocese) level and individual (priests and believers). In Australia, Orthodox churches, especially the Serbian Orthodox Church did not develop strong relationships with other religious groups. Thus, contacts with religious leaders from other communities have been very limited. When asked about contacts with religious leaders from other communities, Serbian priests contact mainly other Christian priests, preferably Orthodox. With non-Christian religious leaders there was extremely little contact, or contacts were not developed at all. There was also limited participation of Serbian priests in local interfaith networks such as with Religions for Peace Australia.

Unlike his predecessors, Bishop Irinej has become more involved in mainstream Australian life, both culturally and politically, with contacts expanded not only with other Orthodox, but also with other communities. As a part of the Australian society, the Serbian Orthodox Church is showing concern for issues and events in Australian society. However, the Serbian Orthodox Church is still not a member of National Council of
Churches in Australia, but the church on the bishop’s initiative has applied for membership. That was a significant step further in acknowledging the importance of the SOC’s involvement with other churches.

Priests’ competence and their preparedness to work in Australian multicultural society were also assessed. It was documented that the majority of the priests have low proficiency in English even though the overall opinion was that it is important for a priest to speak good English. Priests sent previously were not proficient in English and there was no cross-cultural training provided that would enable them to understand Australian society. Recently, priests appointed to Australia are more proficient in English and possess a better understanding of Australian society which makes it easier to communicate with 2nd and 3rd generations of Serbs as well as with people from other communities and from the mainstream.

The relationships with other religious communities are maintained through official contacts of the Diocese and through individual contacts of priests and believers. However, in communicating and developing relationships, there have been some barriers, one of them being language as one quarter of interviewed priests do not speak English well, followed by the church’s strong linkage with Serbian nationalism and the unpreparedness of the majority of the priests to work in a multicultural society. Interfaith dialogue was limited as noted above, and at local gatherings of clergymen, participation of the SOC’s priests has been low.

Overall, contacts with representatives from other religious communities were limited or restricted to other Christian denominations, and priests did not show much initiative in forming interfaith relationships. The official attitude of the SOC is pro-ecumenical with the church being involved in ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic Church for over forty years. Interviewed priests represent the official attitude of the church and are not opposed to the idea of ecumenism. The majority of the SOC’s believers are not adequately informed about Christian ecumenism as many believe it would imply eventually complete submission to the Catholic Church and a loss of Orthodox identity.
It was also important to determine priests’ and believers’ knowledge of other religions. Priests claimed their knowledge of other religions was sound as they had learnt about other religions whilst at theological college, mainly about other Christian denominations. The SOC’s believers are not ignorant of other religions and the majority possessed basic or general knowledge. Every participant has friends that belong to other religions and cultures.

Visits to other religious institutions are not frequent amongst Serbian Orthodox believers. The majority have visited Catholic churches followed by other Christian churches. However, priests have visited only Christian churches.

The reality of intermarriage is present within the Serbian community as intermarriages between Serbian Orthodox and people of other religions are taking place. All the priests had presided over interfaith and interdenominational marriages in their parishes. Priests have also gone to other parishes to perform a sacrament of marriage or to other churches for a joint wedding ceremony.

Relationships with other Orthodox churches were crucial to explore, as Orthodox churches, including the Serbian Orthodox Church, are joined together by the Standing Conference of Canonical Churches in Australia (SCCOCA). Therefore, relationships with other Orthodox are well developed, except with the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Contacts between Orthodox are maintained on official and private levels. Official contacts and meetings are regular between the Bishop Irinej and other Orthodox church’s dignitaries with priests also having joint liturgies. Other Orthodox believers are coming to the Serbian Orthodox Church parishes and their visits are “common and desirable”.

The Balkans war and its aftermath have had a double impact on the Serbian Orthodox Church, positive and negative, in the view of priests and believers. The negative was highlighted as other people saw Serbs in a negative light and the Serbs were blamed for everything that happened in the Balkans war. The positive impact of the war was that
Serbs turned back to their religion. Serbs were portrayed badly in the media due to biased media influence, according to the priests and 90% of participants. Both priests and the parishioner interviewees thought that the media portrayed the Serbs in a very negative way. Also, the Balkans War brought refugees from Croatia and Bosnia to the Serbian community in Australia, thus creating a new migration wave and increasing the number of its members.

Dissemination of news and information on the websites facilitated the Serbian Orthodox Church in maintaining global linkages between churches in Serbia and with the diaspora to facilitate religious connections. Serbian Orthodox Church websites and their contents have been analyzed as part of the transnational activity of the church. The majority of those sites are written in English and Serbian; however, there are three websites from Australia that are in Serbian only. While their content is mostly religious, there are also sections and texts on welfare, culture, literature and history. Also, the official Serbian Orthodox Church’s websites did not contain messages that were promoting religious hatred and xenophobia.

The future of the church certainly depends on a vision, plans, use of modern technologies and young believers. Young people are showing an interest in Serbian Orthodoxy which certainly shows that Orthodoxy would continue to exist in Australia. So there remains a question: what role will it continue to play in Australia? The future of Orthodoxy remains uncertain; will there be separate ethnic churches or one Australian Orthodox Church? Radmanovich wrote: “Perhaps Serbs in Australia are still to come to terms with their roots in Australian society and the need to break with their overseas statehood. This is not to say Australian-Serbs should forget their cultural inheritance and ethnic roots, but as citizens of Australia they have to participate in the mainstream Australian community outside the organized Serbian community here” (1990, p.133). More than twenty years later this still remains true. The integration of the Serbian community, renewed by the recent refugee wave, seems to have been setback by the Balkans War.
Facilitated by transportation and telecommunications, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia is able to maintain ‘multiple ties’ with homeland and with the rest of the Serbian diaspora. Transnational links have been thickened compared to the past, for example, in the 1970s when transnational visits were not numerous. The consequence was that it has tended to keep the Serbian community closed on its inner self, being aware of what was in mainstream, but it was easier and preferable to follow their Serbian sources.

5.2 Recommendations

This study has indicated the limited nature of relationships with others unless they were Orthodox, but especially even more limited contacts with non-Christian religions. There is still a lot of work to be done in overcoming barriers in communicating with other religious communities. Attention should be paid to respectful and peaceful coexistence between religions.

It seems that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia is aware of the challenges that the future might bring so it had to adapt and prepare to introduce concrete measures and innovations. These measures would be partial introduction of the English language in the language of the church, and more attention to youth groups that have been recently formed around Australia. More articles in English should be available on the official website, and also three parish websites should also be bilingual as they are written in Serbian only. Also, websites should contain more quality and credible information on Orthodox teachings, and the history of Orthodoxy with the history of Serbian Orthodoxy and other relevant topics.

With more education and cross-cultural training for the priests coming to Australia, as well as with the Australian-born clergy or clergy who possess knowledge of the English language and understanding of the Australian society, the church can attract young Australian Serbs who should be encouraged to be proud of both their identities, Australian and Serbian. That way, the relationship with other religious groups can be
developed and even strengthened. The Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia should have a different approach and possibly develop welfare and youth programs on how to combat drug and alcohol abuse, violence within the community and religious/racial intolerance.

The competence of the priests to work in multicultural Australia is of great importance as they are the leaders representing the Serbian community. Cross-cultural communication is a very important requirement for religious leaders in a multicultural and religiously pluralist society, therefore “the need for cross-cultural and inter-faith education for all religious personnel” as well as introductory training for religious personnel coming from overseas is suggested (Cahill et al., 2004, p.83). “The question is heightened when the religious leader has been educated and trained overseas in a country very different from Australia” as it was the case with the majority of the Serbian Orthodox priests (Cahill et al., 2004, p.66). Such was the case with the Serbian Orthodox priests as out of those interviewed, only the Australian-born priest possessed a sufficiently deep understanding of Australian society. The other three came here unprepared, without the training that would enable them to understand a multifaith country and without knowledge of the English language.

Along with the church’s attempts for better education and preparedness for new clergy appointed in Australia, bishops appointed to Australia also need to speak the English language, and have an ability to successfully communicate with representatives of other religions as well as with the Government representatives. New bishops have to be aware of the policies and laws of the receiving society and have a vision and responsibility to influence its church/community and to promote religious tolerance. Such was the case with current Bishop Irinej who unlike his predecessors possesses those requirements. But the question is: will future bishops have the same abilities and qualities to successfully lead the Serbian community in Australian society? Serbian Orthodox priests as community leaders must be aware of the importance of forming interfaith relationships in order to promote understanding and religious tolerance in a multicultural society, and especially within the Serbian community. Therefore, contacts with other religious
communities have to be increased. Currently, the church is paying more attention to those requirements when appointing new priests.

The position of the church in this society should be clear and with the church’s damaged image from the Balkans war, it should better think of its image as a representative of the Serbian community in Australia and of Christian acceptance and hospitality. The church should also become more involved in the life in Australia both on local as well as state levels. It should further strengthen relationships with Orthodox communities, but more importantly it should develop relationships with other religions in this society not only Christians such as Catholics and Anglicans.

Serbian Orthodoxy should see itself more as a “peace-making, bridge-building faith community” and less as a protagonist of national interests in their home country (Cahill, p.4, 2004), and “the diasporic Orthodox Churches could educate and share their insights with the heartland Orthodox Churches in playing a constructive role in the major current transitions” (Cahill, 2004). With such actions and attitudes, the Serbian Orthodox Church is “challenged to examine and explore its relations with people of other faiths, moving beyond passive tolerance to constant, critical and creative dialogue with them” (Tschuy, 1997, p.157).
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Archdiocese of Belgrade-Karlovci (Serbia)
Metropolitanate of Dabro-Bosna (Bosnia)
Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Coastlands (Montenegro)
Metropolitanate of Midwestern America
Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana (Croatia and Slovenia)
Diocese of America and Canada (New Gracanica Metropolitanate)
Diocese of Australia and New Zealand
Diocese of Backa (Serbia)
Diocese of Banat (Serbia)
Diocese of Banja Luka (Bosnia)
Diocese of Bihac and Petrovac (Bosnia)
Diocese of Braničevo (Serbia)
Diocese of Budim (Hungary)
Diocese of Budimlje and Niksic (Montenegro)
Diocese of Canada
Diocese of Central Europe
Diocese of Dalmatia (Croatia)
Diocese of Eastern America
Diocese of Great Britain and Scandinavia
Diocese of Milesevo (Serbia)
Diocese of Nis (Serbia)
Diocese of Osijek and Baranja (Croatia)
Diocese of Ras and Prizren (Kosovo)
Diocese of Sabac-Valjevo (Serbia)
Diocese of Srem (Serbia)
Diocese of Slavonia (Croatia)
Diocese of Sumadija (Serbia)
Diocese of Temisvar (Romania)
Diocese of Timok (Serbia)
Diocese of Vranje (Serbia)
Diocese of Western America
Diocese of Western Europe
Diocese of Zahumlje and Hercegovina (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Diocese of Zica (Serbia)
Diocese of Zvornik-Tuzla (Bosnia)
The Orthodox Archdiocese of Ohrid (Macedonia)
Appendix 3

Parishes in Australia and New Zealand:

New South Wales Metropolitan (Sydney):
Alexandria - St. Lazarus
Blacktown – St. Nicholas
Cabramatta - St. George Cathedral
Dapto - St. John the Baptist
Flemington - St. Sava
Liverpool - St. Luke the Apostle Mission
Rooty Hill - St. Steven the Archdeacon
Warriewood-Mona Vale - St. Sava Pro-Cathedral

New South Wales Regional:
Central Coast (Gosford-Wyong) - Synaxis of the Serbian Saints Mission
Lightning Ridge - St. George Mission
Moree - Sts. Simeon and Ana Mission
Newcastle - St. Nahum of Ochrid
Wollongong - St. John Baptist
Young - Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos Mission

Victoria Metropolitan (Melbourne):
Brunswick East - Holy Trinity
Carrum Downs - St. Steven of Dechani
Dandenong - St. Basil of Ostrog Mission
Greensborough - St. Sava
Keysborough - St. Steven Archdeacon
Rockbank - St. Petka
St. Albans - St. George

Victoria Regional:
Ballarat - St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Aidan of Lindisfarne Mission
Geelong - St. Nicholas
Wodonga - Sts. Peter and Paul
Wodonga (New Gracanica Metropolitanate) - Sts. Peter and Paul
Yallourn North - Holy Trinity

Queensland Metropolitan (Brisbane):
South Brisbane - St. Nicholas
Wacol - St. Nicholas
Woollongabba - St. Nicholas
Queensland Regional:
Cairns - St. Elijah the Prophet Mission
Gold Coast - Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

Western Australia (Metropolitan) Perth:
Highgate - St. Sava
North Perth - St. Basil of Ostrog Mission
Perth - Holy Trinity
Rockingham - St. Basil of Ostrog Mission

South Australia Metropolitan (Adelaide):
Hindmarsh - St. Sava
Woodville Park - St. Sava

South Australia Regional:
Andamooka - St. Petka Mission
Coober Pedy - St. Elijah the Prophet

Tasmania Metropolitan:
Hobart - Holy Cross Mission

Northern Territory Metropolitan:
Darwin - St. Sava Mission

Australian Capital Territory:
Farret - St. Sava
Forrest - St. Sava

New Zealand:
Auckland - Hamilton - St. Milutin the King
Christchurch - St. Nicholas Mission
Wellington - St. Sava
Monasteries in Australia:

Elaine (Vic) - St. Sava Monastery
Hall (ACT) - St. Sava New Kalenich Monastery
Inglewood (SA) - Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Skete
Tallong (NSW) - Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos Skete
Appendix 4
The Serbian Orthodox Church websites:

Official website of the Serbian Orthodox Church: www.spc.rs

Serbian Orthodox Church, Diocese of Australia and New Zealand: www.soc.org.au

Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (SOYA): http://www.soya.org.au

Serbian Orthodox Church: http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.com

Serbian Orthodox Church, Diocese of the North America: http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.net

Serbian Orthodox Church (Luzern, Switzerland): http://www.spcportal.org or http://www.spcoluzern.ch
Appendix 5

Orthodox churches and their websites:

The Church of Constantinople, www.ec-patr.org
The Church of Alexandria, www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org
The Church of Antioch, www.antiochpat.org
The Church of Jerusalem, www.jerusalem-patriarchate.org
The Church of Russia, www.mospat.ru
The Church of Georgia, www.patriarchate.ge
The Church of Romania, www.patriarhia.ro
The Church of Cyprus, www.churchofcyprus.org.cy
The Church of Greece, www.ecclesia.gr
The Church of Albania, www.orthodoxalbania.org
The Church of Poland, www.orthodox.pl
The Church of the Czech and Slovak Republics, www.pravoslav.gts.cz
Appendix 6
Parish websites in the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand

St. Sava Church, Canberra, http://www.svetisavacanberra.org/
St. George Church, Canberra, http://www.stgeorgecanberra.org/
St. Nicholas Church, Wacol, Brisbane, http://www.svetinikolawacol.org/
St. Sava Church, Flemington, Sydney, http://www.svetisavaflemington.org/
St. Lazarus Church, Alexandria, Sydney, http://www.lazarica.org/
St. Nicholas Church, Brisbane, http://www.socgabba.org/
St. Sava Church, Woodville Park, Adelaide, http://spcsocadelaide.org/
Holy Trinity Church, Perth, http://www.churchholytrinity.com/
Children’s Camp, New Kalenic, Canberra http://www.childrenscampkalenic.org/
Appendix 7

Other important Orthodox websites:

Orthodox Research Institute (ORI), www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org
Into the Wilderness, http://notofthisworld.freeservers.com/
Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion, (OCAMPR), http://www.ocampr.org/
International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), http://www.iocc.org/
Orthodox Christianity. net, http://www.orthodoxchristianity.net/
On Earth As In Heaven, http://www.onearthasinheaven.com/
OrthodoxWiki, http://orthodoxwiki.org/