

**Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Pastor Shane Andersen**

Interviewer: Craig Pippin

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011

Location: Greater Sydney

Reason for interview: Gay Christians

Restrictions: None



| Time | Summary  | Keywords  |
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| 0020 | Born in Bath, England. Raised in a Salvation Army family. Went to a 'clappy happy' Salvation Army church. Family connection with Salvos founder William Booth.   | England<br>Salvation Army                             |
| 0214 | Migrated to Australia in 1959 at age 8 as a 'ten pound Pom'. Settled in Brisbane. Mother was more religious than father. He would wander away from Sunday School in England but embraced it in Australia. As a teen he was enthused by Billy Graham. Was a lay preacher. Looks back on it as a 'very exciting time'. | Sunday School<br>Billy Graham                         |
| 0647 | Was treated as a heterosexual. It started to change when he was a camp counsellor in mid teens with the Salvos and had urges to go into public toilets for sex with strangers. But didn't realise he was gay until later teens.  |   |
| 0830 | Studying for Salvos ministry. Commanding officer asked if he was a practising homosexual. He said yes and was told he could not be let into college. His heart sank and he gave up on God. But God had other plans for him.  |   |
| 0917 | The people at church had not challenged him on his 'double life'. They assumed he was straight. It surprised him that the Salvos rejected his offers to minister to homosexuals. Had sexual experience with bisexual counsellor in Salvos.   |   |
| 1119 | Salvos teaching that homosexuality was a sin. He came out properly when he was 20 after giving the matter a lot of thought. Rejection from commanding officer grounded him.  |   |
| 1240 | Difficult to remember how he was acting out his homosexuality as it was not a big part of his life. There was a gap between his rejection and God's revelation to him that God had a plan for him.   |   |
| 1340 | Impossible to get Salvos to accept homosexuality. He broke off all contact with the church and religion. Quite a dramatic change for someone so committed.   |   |
| 1406 | Long walk through the streets of Brisbane. Guided to Camp Inc. gay counselling centre. The start where God said 'I love you' and will guide you towards understanding of your gayness. He was at Camp for about a year.  | Brisbane<br>Camp Inc.                                 |
| 1507 | Other Christian gay options. Cross Section in Sydney run by an Anglican, Peter Bonsall-Boone. He got in touch with them and immediately flew down to Sydney. He and his partner Peter De Waal were big names in Christian gay circles. He had very high standards and values.  | Cross Section<br>Peter Bonsall-Boone<br>Peter De Waal |
| 1703 | Bonsall-Boone encouraged him to start Cross Section in Brisbane. Before Cross Section he had wandered the streets of Brisbane and walked into a Pentecostal church 'to have a bit  |   |

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|      | of a snicker'. He was stunned by a message from the Lord delivered by an old woman as he walked up the aisle. This was the start of the next part of his journey.   |  |
| 2000 | That was the big turning point in his life ('God loves me'), and it was what led him to seek out Cross Section.   |  |
| 2040 | Started Cross Section in Brisbane. The goals were that 'you don't have to suffer the crap that society dishes out'. Put ads in the Courier Mail newspaper but met resistance.   | Courier-Mail   |
| 2055 | He was a Scout leader before Cross Section. He thought it wouldn't be right for him to continue with the scouts. The parents tried to demand his return by way of a petition.   |  |
| 2325 | Problems with Courier-Mail ads mentioning Christian homosexuals. He met with the advertising manager, who had coincidentally organised the petition. He apologised and undertook to run the ad. 'The Lord was working in incredible ways'.  |  |
| 2450 | Opposition to Cross Section. A couple of bad letters. One anonymous letter writer put a feather in some scat.   |  |
| 2550 | The size of the group. Troy D. Perry from Los Angeles wanted to visit Australia with a view to establishing the Metropolitan Community Church in Australia (he was its founder). The letter was sent to Camp Inc, which passed it on to Shane, who said 'Yes Lord'.   | Troy D. Perry<br>Metropolitan<br>Community Church<br>(MCC) |
| 2712 | He had been working as a cleaner and was sacked for being gay, even though they didn't tell him that. They saw him as a political risk but used another excuse to sack him.   |  |
| 2910 | He didn't see it as a risk to talk about his gayness to his employers.  |  |
| 3020 | He didn't move into MCC, but instead started Christ's Community Church, which had begun in Adelaide. When Troy Perry came, they were still Cross Section. He didn't was to be part of MCC. He wanted the same principles, and he respected Troy Perry. He decided on affiliation because he didn't want to be run by Americans. | Christ's<br>Community Church                               |
| 2154 | Christ's Community Church began well. It became affiliated with MCC. In Sydney it was set up as MCC, which led to Christ's Community Church becoming MCC. Adelaide remained Christ's. He was convinced to go with the rebranding because Sydney had gone with it.   |  |
| 3335 | Troy Perry was facing opposition in the US, getting churches burned down. But this did not happen in Queensland. That was because people didn't know of it.   |  |
| 3419 | Troy is 'a magnificent human being'. A good old fashioned Pentecostal minister, which is 'way different from me' (and the Salvos). Shane says he was 'more grounded'.   |  |
| 3510 | Shane's move to Sydney. Mid 1975. While still in Brisbane he had a new person in the church with a background in Catholic ministry. He trained him in providing the sacrament of communion for those who wanted it. Story about spotting a twink walking down the road and a comment he made referring                          | Catholic   |

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|      | to pederasty. The Catholic person reacted to this afterwards by swamping the church service next Sunday and calling for a vote of no confidence in Shane because of his 'pederast's eyes' comment. This led to Shane's move to Sydney.   |  |
| 3836 | Shane ended up with a nervous breakdown because of this. His friend Rev Lee Carlton counselled him and invited him to Sydney. It was July 1975 and he became Lee Carlton's assistant. The Catholic started a branch of MCC in Sydney some time later but ended up going to jail for being a pederast himself.  | Rev Lee Carlton  |
| 4055 | Sydney was a good thing for Shane. A big step. Brisbane was surviving without him. In Sydney he started a crisis intervention centre. Gayline. He had to teach the counsellors telephone counselling technique. Used Transactional Analysis (Gestalt). As counselling, it was a mixed bag. He was also involved with Bill Crews, who was in charge of counsellors at The Wayside Chapel. | Gayline<br>Transactional Analysis (TA)<br>Bill Crews<br>The Wayside Chapel |
| 4250 | Crank calls. Little opposition.  |  |
| 4308 | MCC had at least 100 in their congregation. There was some heckling but very little.   |  |
| 4410 | MCC has a different view on gender than other churches. There was acceptance of gender bias but now they use genderless bibles.  |  |
| 4602 | Mostly there have been women represented at MCC. In Sydney it took a while for the women to come because they regarded it as a 'gay male' thing. The idea of some gay men that 'lesbians are taking over'.   |  |
| 4714 | MCC's involvement in AIDS crisis. Personally it stopped Shane doing the beats. It didn't stop him from loving fellow gay persons in the hospice. He lost a lot of friends but also has older friends who've gone on to leave a healthy life because of medication.   |  |
| 4637 | Half the MCC congregation had AIDS at the time. We knew because we'd cancelled them. Perhaps a third of the congregation died of AIDS. Memorial tapestries at the back of the church.  |  |
| 5000 | Shane's personal involvement in Mardi Gras was from the beginning. He wasn't arrested and bashed by the police but he was one of those protesting by bashing on the doors of the police station. Incensed at publication of names and addresses of those arrested.   | Mardi Gras   |
| 5139 | He wrote to his mother. She was ashamed but loved him nevertheless. She supported him. His father, it was a different story. Parents were separated. His father insisted he couldn't be gay and would get over it. This was in his early 20s.  |  |
| 5310 | More recently his father was not accepting it but getting used to having a gay son. He visited his dying father in Toowoomba in his clerical collar. But his father came back to life after Shane's prolonged visit.   | Toowoomba  |

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| 5532  | Counselling members of his congregation with parents hostile to their homosexuality. Also involvement with PFLAG supportive parents.   | PFLAG                                  |
| 5631  | Have you ever gone to straight churches? Yes. He planned for his MCC congregation to meet and dialogue with a hostile congregation. But he was the only one who turned up and was quite nervous about it. Went to churches of a variety of denominations. Made good headway with the Baptists. But he was let down when he visited the Salvos in NZ. | Baptists<br>Salvation Army NZ          |
| 10031 | OMC was the church for which he was ordained (Outreach Ministries Church). It is an 'internet church'. He distanced himself slightly from MCC. He preached a fire and brimstone sermon to MCC and got complaints. He thinks there should be a place for fire and brimstone. Shane is a supporter of social justice issues.                           | Outreach<br>Ministries Church<br>(OMC) |
| 10320 | OMC church is international. But they're not meeting as a church service (yet). They provide info and they meet online. They distribute Gospel music and video messages. Quite a variety of articles on his website.   |  |
| 10511 | What would Jesus say to gay-hating churches if he came back today? Dialogue on the train countering the Mary as the way to God.  |  |
| 10650 | The future of MCC. It will have to change and evolve. It is diversifying. It rightly denies it is a gay church. Their doors are open to everyone, while other churches are closed to certain.  |  |
| 10730 | Those who are refused communion because they're gay (in Catholic Church - Rainbow Sash).   |  |