

Who are we?

Before we take a walk on the wild-side of being a missionary in the NT, let's take a quick look at MSC the Catholic order.

The most famous battle-cry at MSC schools is: *Huu-waa, Huu-waa- Huu-waa We? We are the boys from MSC!*

So what is MSC an acronym for? The order's English name is *Missionaries of the Sacred Heart* - which is 2 out of 3 - so what's the C-word?

Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis (Latin)

As the name implies, MSC, at its *Cordis*, is a missionary organization. When you talk about religious zeal - it doesn't get any zealier than MSC.

The order was founded in France by eccentric priest, Jules Chevalier in 1855. In researching this, i read an excellent (though flawed, imo - will explain as we go along) thesis by [Professional Historian at Osbaldwick Consultants](#), Wendy Beresford-Maning - have reffed it a few times already. It's a slanted version the MSC's adventures in the NT, titled, [For the Love of God](#). It's a valuable resource, in that it collates a substantial collection of primary resources, the *best kind*. She adds to this with her own interviews with elderly key-participants in the MSC order in Australia. This for example:

*Very few of the MSCs, in fact, seem to be particularly aware of Chevalier's charism. .. During a conversation with the Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin, Father John Kelliher MSC, and the current Northern Territory MSC Superior, **Father Malcom Fyfe**, both commented that they were **not surprised** that there was not much sense of connection to the founder since, even within the order, there had been little emphasis on this or other aspects of MSC history or theological orientation during the time that Leary, Merritt and Burke (1950's - '80's) would have been seminarians. p100*

Right, so Aussie MSC had broken free - *doin it for themselves*... That's fine ... if you're a missionary in the farthest flung corners of the known earth, you are the expert, on the spot. It's all DIY. No-one's there watching over you. Who gives a shit about Jules Chevalier in France?

Reading Fyfe & Kelliher's frank admission, at first i thought, *so what?* It's a simple statement of fact: *Stuff France, we're Aussies - we'll do it Aussie-style*

Later though, after reading on, i wondered whether Fyfe was commenting in opprobrium - a crafted piece of MSC-speak re Leary, Merrit, Burke. Especially Leary.

There was historical tension between them - clear battle-lines:

Fyfe & O'Loughlin from HQ on one side ...

... the on-site Missionaries on the other side

Was Fyfe trying to pull up the draw-bridge on a dark-chapter of MSC's history ...? Explain it as a *straying from the path* ... that we've all *moved on* from? That period - Leary especially - is a good yarn - sounds like he may have gone a bit Kurtz-esque up on Daly River. Father Caruana's report of being propositioned by a group of young girls at there - *Daly River Mission* - that was Leary's baby - as was Port Keats. Is this the Sacred Heart of Darkness...? I don't know, yet. But as part of understanding i'm keeping alive the possibility that Fyfe trying to politely distance MSC from that?

Or: Had MSC-Aus-management itself, unlinked from their founder? Not only some rogue missionaries operating on the fringes of society - the whole Aussie MSC Order had disconnected from its roots ... ? Fyfe does say: *even within the order, there had been little emphasis* (on Chevalier).

Unmoored or not, this is a tale about MSC, so as the spiritual source of the order, Jules Chevalier, he's gotta be in it. Let's give him some love ... even if MSC Australia did lose touch ...

(teaser: The Chevalier page is funny, imo. Not my wit, unfortunately, but as told by MSC)

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