

with Cullen's encouragement, the Marists had also begun operations in Ireland with a view to making Irish recruits, one result of which was the foundation of St Patrick's College in Wellington in 1885.

Space precludes mention of all the topics dealt with in this volume, but they do extend to such as Cullen's dealings with William Gladstone, his interest in architecture and his concern for social welfare. Conceivably, there is still more that could usefully be found out about Cullen, but his 'world' is certainly no longer a *terra incognita*. Incidentally, Sweetman's essay is a valuable extension of a discussion in Nicholas Reid's perceptive biography (2006, pp.32–42) of James Michael Liston, Bishop of Auckland from 1929 to 1970. Liston was clearly an 'heir' of Cullen.

HUGH LARACY

*University of Auckland*

*Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840–2000.* By Laurie Guy. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2011. 607pp. NZ price: \$44.99. ISBN: 978-0-86473-641-3.

THE HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND and the history of religion in New Zealand have tended to be treated, studied and written as two distinct entities, especially for the years following the initial missionary period up to 1840. Those works that have attempted to cross the divide have tended to be either collective church histories, such as Davidson's *Christianity in Aotearoa* (still the standard text), or chapters such as Stenhouse's in the *New Oxford History of New Zealand*. The third approach is to assemble a collection of essays that fittingly reflect the variety of religious and theological voices and actors. Yet all such ventures suffer from a widespread response that New Zealand not only was and remains a secular country, but that religion has no place to play in its understanding of society.

Writing against such a misunderstanding, Laurie Guy argues for a rethinking of the role played by churches in public issues and debates over the years 1840–2000. The author identifies a number of themes and issues — race relations, sabbatarianism, prohibition, war and peace, apartheid, sex, gender and homosexuality — and carefully teases out the varying responses of churches and individuals to them. Guy is a church historian at Carey Baptist and so is attuned to the often unconscious ways that religion in New Zealand has been written and discussed along denominational lines, thereby neglecting and excluding participants. Therefore, in this history, each theme covers the responses and issues arising from the various churches and their disparate individuals, clergy and laity. There are few texts in which Baptists sit so easily alongside Catholics, for this is a most ecumenical history. Yet such a thematic approach can at times become an on-going denominational roll-call as each church's response is weighed and, in the main, found wanting. If these responses were weighed primarily against each other then what eventuated would have provided a particularly valuable historical insight into the history of New Zealand Christianity. Guy, however, is also writing a particular type of social justice theology and apologetics. To be fair, he is overt about this, noting in his preface that not only does he write as a Christian, but also from a perspective that is 'convinced that the Christian faith remains a moral and social compass for an often anchor-less and rudder-less society'.

*Shaping Godzone*, in fact, reflects a major shift in the Christian voice in New Zealand, for as the liberal church has declined in both numbers and influence across all denominations, the evangelical church has re-imagined and increasingly expressed a wing that is evangelical in its theology but more socially liberal (within a broader Christian

framework) and aligned to issues of social justice. Guy's history is actually the story of how that shift occurred and came to be expressed. Even more so, it is a call to action to social justice evangelicals to follow the examples of their fore-bears and become re-involved in social justice and public issues. So this is not so much history as a particular type of political theology that uses history for examples of what could be done — and, perhaps most importantly for Guy, to learn from the mistakes of the past. This is most evident in the chapter conclusions that read like social justice theology homilies, most often of regret. For this is a history of missed opportunities; an excoriation of churches that are seen, in the main, to lack a prophetic edge. Some individuals on the other hand emerge as heroes, most notably Rutherford Waddell in his anti-sweat-shop campaign, and George Armstrong in his peace protests. Yet as Guy regretfully chronicles, too often the various churches' involvement in public issues was either to oppose social liberalisation and moves to equal rights, or it was to promote anti-ecumenical moves and opinions. The church therefore lacked — and continues to lack — a collective voice, and this is a major theme of this theological history.

The diversity of beliefs, opinions and attitudes with individual churches, starting at parish level, means it is impossible to identify and express a singular Christian voice or expression on any of these public issues. Thus the churches reflect wider society, and this is not necessarily a problem for any historian — except if they are seeking to express and promote a particular theological agenda and especially one that attempts to hold together evangelical theology and social justice liberalism. For what is apparent is that in the main the churches have tended to reflect and promote the voices and opinions of those who are more socially and theologically conservative. This has, in Guy's opinion, contributed to the increasing sidelining of the churches from influence in public issues because their social conservatism, in particular, has meant they could be too easily rejected as out-of-touch and out-of-step with contemporary New Zealand. This is therefore a history of missed opportunities to regain relevance and influence — a hand-book for evangelicals in transition to a particular form of Christian social activism.

The result is a history of lament: of what could have been, of what shouldn't have happened, and of what can be learnt from the past for today. It is a particular call to action, for the church, and more-so, for the evangelical church, to become involved in public issues 'to be a conscience of the country' in 'a world where money, pleasure and individualism seem to be the dominant values' (p.482). How then should this book be read? On the one hand it is a particular type of history and a thoroughly researched one at that: the notes, bibliography and index run to 124 pages. But it is not just history, it is political theology: a type of evangelical Christian call to arms in the name of a particular reading of history.

MIKE GRIMSHAW

*University of Canterbury*