

## God's Own Silence

### SECULAR NATIONALISM, CHRISTIANITY AND THE WRITING OF NEW ZEALAND HISTORY



IN 1979, Ian Breward noted that 'many histories' of New Zealand had 'seriously under-estimated' the role of religion and identified 'a certain conviction among academics that religion is socially irrelevant'. In a 1991 survey Peter Lineham also observed that New Zealand historians continued to 'downplay the significance of religious belief', which remained 'poorly integrated into New Zealand history'. As he pointed out, religion was 'not the current interest of the New Zealand historical establishment'. Almost a decade later, Allan Davidson documented the extent to which religious history remained 'on the periphery of New Zealand history'. According to Davidson, religion's absence reflected 'something about the nature of New Zealand society and the perspective which people bring to their understanding of the past'. Apart from such brief comments, the absence of religious history in New Zealand has been little analysed. With the partial exception of James Belich's *Making Peoples*, general histories have also mostly 'written out, marginalised or trivialised' religion.<sup>1</sup> A country Richard Seddon once lauded as God's Own had gone rapidly, on such readings, to the Devil.

This loud silence in New Zealand historical writing is in stark contrast to the situation overseas where historians such as George Marsden and David Hollinger have written sophisticated studies of the secularization of higher education and the dechristianization of intellectual discourse in North America and Britain.<sup>2</sup> 'Subaltern Studies' historians such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Ashis Nandy have produced penetrating critiques of the ideological secularism of much modern Western and Western-influenced South Asian historiography. Many Indian nationalist and Marxist historians, they argue, remained deeply Eurocentric when it came to religion, doing violence to Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist pasts.<sup>3</sup>

This essay reflects critically on New Zealand history, historiography and religion. Aiming to stimulate, challenge and provoke debate, I raise questions about the values, assumptions and organizing frameworks (often implicit or unconscious) which have shaped New Zealand historical writing, focussing primarily on representations of Christianity in works produced during the second half of the twentieth century.

Complaints about the marginalization of religion in New Zealand history are only partly correct. Recognizably religious figures — Maori-despising missionaries, ineffectual humanitarians, sectarian bigots, pleasure-hating puritans, domineering patriarchs and uptight moral evangelists — appear regularly in New Zealand history texts. They constitute the religious 'Others' against whom 'We' — tolerant, modern, enlightened, liberal New Zealanders — define ourselves. 'They', our Anti-self, appear responsible for much of what

has been wrong with New Zealand's past. Organized Christianity appears in such writings much as the Roman Catholic Church did in earlier Protestant and Enlightenment historiography — as the source of darkness, ignorance and error.

Christianity's dubious presence in such texts helps explain its absence — the loud silence identified by Breward, Lineham and Davidson. Many historians of New Zealand, like their counterparts elsewhere in the West, both assumed the inevitability of secularization — the decline of religion and the rise of modern, secular, rational and scientific modes of thought and social organization — and depicted it as a Good Thing. By presenting religion as either dull, dying, or dysfunctional (or even all three simultaneously) their historical writings constituted tracts for the times as well as histories of them. Depicting New Zealand history as a story of progress from a dark religious past to a bright secular present, these mythologies — by which I mean histories shaped, coloured and inspired by contemporary ideologies — sought to save the country from Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

Signs of the emergence of a more complex perspective allowing religion more space and understanding appeared during the 1980s and 1990s, with scholars of Maori history and of women and gender leading the way. The best work, some of which I examine below, treated the religious consciousness of its subjects seriously, without condescension and without reducing religion to something else, allegedly more basic. Such work, integrating religion with war, politics, race relations, gender, family and community, opens up new perspectives on our past and promises to rescue religious believers — the great majority of past inhabitants of the country — from the enormous condescension of posterity.

Two assumptions animated and shaped much of the New Zealand historical writing produced during the second half of the twentieth century. By the 1970s and 1980s historians who embraced these assumptions had created what developed into a powerful, though not universal, consensus about religion's role in New Zealand history. Their historical writings combined prescription with description. By describing our past in certain ways — writing positively about certain people, institutions and processes while ignoring, marginalizing, or depicting others darkly — such histories also prescribed certain kinds of present and future.

Proponents of the first assumption, which I shall call the secularization thesis, acknowledged that religion mattered to certain groups early in our history, such as missionaries, Maori, some officials and some settlers. But religion soon disappeared, or retreated into the private sphere, where it allegedly ceased to have much wider social, cultural, intellectual or political significance. Many historians depicted secularization — the decline of religion and the rise of secular modernity — as a key dynamic of New Zealand history. New Zealand, the first British colony settled this side of the Enlightenment, grew steadily modern, rational, scientific and secular. On such readings, the demise of organized Christianity as a culture-shaper appeared as inevitable as the extinction of the Maori had seemed to many nineteenth-century commentators.<sup>5</sup>

Historians differed over chronology and causes. Erik Olssen depicted Edward

Gibbon Wakefield's New Zealand as 'a securely post-Enlightenment society', a 'social experiment' in the use of 'reason to construct an enlightened civilization'. In Wakefield's Britain, 'empiricism, utilitarianism and scepticism' set the 'main mood', leaving little room for religion, which received scant attention.<sup>6</sup> A general survey of nineteenth-century New Zealand history declared that Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, appearing in 1859, 'overturned the religious world'.<sup>7</sup> This assertion, unsubstantiated and at odds with recent scholarship, depicted natural science as a powerful agent of secularization.<sup>8</sup> Miles Fairburn's *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies* depicted the nineteenth-century churches as poorly attended and socially marginal, largely failing to knit together a bondless, anomic, minimally organized society.<sup>9</sup> Tony Grigg portrayed the prohibition movement between 1890 and 1914 as the 'nonconformist' churches' last desperate attempt to control a rapidly secularizing society. But they 'failed' to 'achieve the prohibition of alcohol', 'failed to prevent the emergence of a separate political labour party', 'failed to maintain their role as moral arbiters' and 'failed to meet the economic and social needs of a large section of the community'. The churches' 'failure' on all these counts was 'rapidly followed by their decline as important institutions in New Zealand society'.<sup>10</sup> According to James Belich, in contrast, popular religiosity flourished between 1900 and 1920. Yet the 'moral evangelism' that powered New Zealand's domestic 'Great Tightening' was a 'mainly secular crusade'.<sup>11</sup> By the middle of the twentieth century, declared Keith Sinclair, the 'prevailing religion' had become 'a simple materialism' in which the 'pursuit of health and possessions' filled more minds than 'thoughts of salvation'.<sup>12</sup>

Historians embracing the secularization thesis disagreed about when, not if, Pakeha Christianity dwindled into insignificance. Was the Enlightenment marginalizing religion even before the beginning of planned settlement? Or did it disappear after Darwin? Was the early twentieth century the key period? Or did the crisis arrive in the 1970s? Historians' disagreements suggest that the empirical evidence for secularization was complex, ambiguous and difficult to interpret. Recent overseas scholarship, though, suggests some reasons why New Zealand historians might rethink this secularization thesis.

What, firstly, did New Zealand's origins as Britain's first post-Enlightenment colony signify? Instant secularity? Did the Enlightenment constitute a revolutionary watershed in Western history, in which European, British and North American thinkers abandoned religion for modern, secular, rational and scientific modes of thought? The American historian Peter Gay thought so, famously identifying the Enlightenment as a rejection of Christianity for atheism, materialism and republicanism — 'the rise of modern paganism'.<sup>13</sup> Yet Gay's interpretation, privileging the views of a small minority of male French atheists, marginalized or ignored the vast majority of Europeans who remained religious, including the millions of women and girls who comprised most of the active lay Christians in Europe and North America.<sup>14</sup> In the German- and English-speaking worlds, the Enlightenment developed within Christian frameworks more than outside and against them. According to Roy Porter, for example, the 'Enlightenment in Britain took place within, rather than against, Protestantism'.<sup>15</sup> Scholars now routinely investigate both Protestant and Catholic Enlightenments in Western societies. Contributors to the latter included such

notables as Christina Rocati (1732–1797), professor of physics at the Accademia dei Concordi in Rovigo, Italy, a learned and devout Roman Catholic woman who presented Newtonian physics and cosmology to large audiences as scientific, rational and theologically up-to-date.<sup>16</sup>

Enlightened Protestantism — politically liberal, religiously tolerant, socially inclusive, scientifically-oriented and intellectually progressive — constituted one of colonial New Zealand's most central cultural traditions. Enlightened Protestants, often-liberal Anglicans, such as George Grey, Edward Shortland, Francis D. Fenton, James Edward FitzGerald, F.W. Hutton and James Hector played key roles in New Zealand politics, race relations, science and intellectual life during the nineteenth century. Female Protestants such as Kate Sheppard (a Congregationalist) and Kate Edger (a Baptist) feminized this liberal Protestant tradition. Its popularity helps explain why a predominantly Protestant population regularly elected Jews, Catholics and freethinkers to high political office during the nineteenth century. Yet few historians have investigated this tradition in any detail, by asking what enlightened Protestantism meant, for good and for ill, in the case of figures such as George Grey. Reintegrating religious history with Maori history, social history and the history of ideas may, in the case of Grey, help us achieve the kind of historical understanding that will transcend the cartoon stereotypes of traditional (Good Governor Grey) and more recent (Bad Governor Grey) historiography. Maori leaders such as F.W. Bennett, Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck), Apirana Ngata and Maui Pomare embraced this enlightened Protestant tradition and developed it in distinctively Maori ways, as Ranginui Walker has shown in his biography of Ngata.<sup>17</sup> Nuanced investigations of the meaning of religious belief in individual lives — Maori and Pakeha — could do much to improve our understanding of the psycho-social worlds of nineteenth- and twentieth-century New Zealand.

New Zealand historians must engage more systematically with overseas scholarship that, on both Left and Right, recognizes religion's significance in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British culture. According to Linda Colley, for example, over two centuries of warfare with continental Catholic powers hammered Protestantism deep into the heart of the identity of patriotic Britons.<sup>18</sup> Anglican Christianity lay at the heart of English intellectual, political and religious life during the long eighteenth century, argues J.C.D. Clark. Nonconformist Protestants, Irish Catholics and unbelievers, all growing in numbers and influence, brought Anglican hegemony tumbling down in Britain's constitutional revolution of 1828–32.<sup>19</sup> Religious differences — between High, Low and Broad church parties within the Church of England, between Anglicans and Nonconformists, between Protestants and Catholics and between Christians and unbelievers — continued profoundly to shape British politics, science and intellectual life into the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> According to Boyd Hilton, evangelical theology permeated Victorian political economy, which cannot be understood as a 'secular' set of ideas.<sup>21</sup> Historians of science such as F.M. Turner, Jim Secord, Adrian Desmond and Jim Moore have shown how deeply pre-existing religious and antireligious convictions informed the formulation, content and reception of Victorian science.<sup>22</sup> Evangelical religion, argued Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, was a significant influence on family life

and gender relations amongst the English middle classes.<sup>23</sup> Scholars of British imperialism as diverse as Chris Bayly, Catherine Hall and Peter Van der Veer have argued that religion shaped and coloured imperial ideology and practice throughout the modern period.<sup>24</sup> According to Van der Veer, historians who depict a modern, secular, rational West encountering a pre-modern, exotically religious Rest misunderstand both sides of imperial encounters.<sup>25</sup>

Yet many New Zealand historians continue to write as though religion either vanished on the voyage south or soon after the colonists arrived. Pakeha settlement coincided with processes that historians writing in the 1960s and 1970s commonly depicted as massively secularizing: the Victorian crisis of faith and the mass alienation of the British working class from organized religion. On this view, the gold rushes of the 1860s and the Vogelite immigration of the 1870s pumped into New Zealand thousands of lower middle- and working-class males, a vast influx of wild, godless colonial boys that crippled colonial Christianity from birth.

New Zealand's high proportion of single, non-churchgoing, working and lower middle-class males helps explain why nineteenth-century churchgoing rates were slightly lower than in many parts of Britain, the Australian colonies, Canada and the United States. Miles Fairburn and Jock Phillips, among others, have rightly drawn attention to this group's importance in shaping the nineteenth-century social pattern. Yet two decades of social history have substantially altered our understanding of religion in Victorian Britain. There, Christianity flourished in diverse forms in all social classes far longer than many historians in the 1960s and 1970s supposed. A recent book summing up the last two decades of revisionist scholarship has argued that Britain remained substantially Christian until the 1960s.<sup>26</sup>

The Victorian 'crisis of faith' has thus now assumed more modest proportions.<sup>27</sup> While some, mostly male intellectuals, abandoned religion, many others did not. Most people, including most women, carried on regardless. Science had considerably less secularizing impact than previously supposed.<sup>28</sup>

An earlier generation of scholars exaggerated the extent to which the Victorian working classes abandoned Christianity partly because they paid little attention to gender. Many, probably most, working-class folk went to Sunday school as children. Skilled workers, members of the labour aristocracy, dominated many Nonconformist chapels as well as the leadership of many 'secular' working-class organizations into the twentieth century. Many working-class women, including the wives of unskilled workers, attended church while their husbands stayed at home. Women dominated the ranks of active lay Christians in most churches and at all levels of British society. Oral histories have shown that many non-churchgoers thought of themselves as Christians and practised what historians have called 'diffusive' or 'implicit' Christianity — low key, unostentatious, practical forms of faith that valued deeds over words. Modernization, urbanization and industrialization did not spell doom for Christianity; 'most Victorian cities had a flourishing religious life'.<sup>29</sup>

This revised picture of British Christianity as pervasive, diverse and culturally significant well into the twentieth century supplies the context to support Belich's observation that during the first quarter of the twentieth century New

Zealand was 'the very opposite of irreligious'.<sup>30</sup> Protestant Christians, mostly female, numerically dominated the great social movements of the period 1880 to 1930: prohibition and temperance, Bible-in-Schools and votes for women. Their interconnected religious, moral, maternal and family concerns inspired and directed these socio-religious crusades, which shaped the wider culture for decades to come. Yet few New Zealand historians have made religion an integral part of their studies of the ideas and politics of the period. Phillida Bunkle's work on the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), for example, preferred to interpret first-wave feminists as engaged in a 'social purity' campaign. Similarly, Judith Devaliant's biography of Kate Sheppard, the WCTU's franchise superintendent, paid little attention to Sheppard's liberal Congregationalist faith, without which Sheppard's public life and her conflicts with more conservative Christians in the WCTU, cannot be understood.<sup>31</sup>

If Christianity remained culturally significant during the first half of the twentieth century, when did it allegedly collapse? Belich dates Pakeha Christianity's death rattle later than any other New Zealand historian, identifying the 1970s as the crucial decade in which Pakeha began 'rejecting churchgoing'. According to Belich, in the 1970s secularization plunged both 'conservative and liberal religion' into 'crisis'.<sup>32</sup> To make this claim he relied heavily on churchgoing statistics, the significance of which he had rightly questioned for the early twentieth century. Sunday school, church attendance and adherence rates in the big three Protestant churches declined from the late 1960s. The number of New Zealanders professing 'no religion' and objecting to stating a religious preference increased. Both trends have continued into the twenty-first century. The meaning and significance of these statistics remain ambiguous, however, as international debates amongst sociologists and historians over secularization illustrate.<sup>33</sup> Generations of Christian 'habits of the heart' did not suddenly disappear. While loose church connections got looser for many Pakeha New Zealanders, we cannot assume that the free-floating religious consciousness so powerful earlier in the century simply vanished. Other statistics suggest that many Pakeha New Zealanders did not abandon their religious identities and convictions. The latest census reveals that slightly over half the population continues to identify not just as generic Christians but also with established Christian denominations. The churches and lay Christians — many of them female — remain significantly involved, often in partnership with the state, in social welfare and education. Overseas sociological studies suggest that many of the growing group professing 'no religion' should be understood not as doctrinaire secularists or atheists but as 'floaters' who, embracing eclectic 'pick-and-mix' beliefs derived from various spiritual traditions, identify with no particular denomination or brand of religion.<sup>34</sup> Believing without regularly belonging remains the dominant religious pattern in twenty-first century Pakeha New Zealand.

Rugby provides a helpful analogy. Membership of New Zealand rugby clubs plummeted during the last third of the twentieth century, sometimes faster than church membership. Many other voluntary associations — political parties, sports clubs, service organizations such as Jaycees and Rotary — also declined, as in many other parts of the West.<sup>35</sup> Yet nobody would suggest, on the basis of

falling club membership that rugby was dying out in New Zealand. Religious change cannot be understood unless it is integrated into mainstream social, cultural and economic history. The large-scale entry of women — previously the backbone of the churches — into paid employment, the ageing of the welfare state and the decline of middle-class incomes affected a whole range of voluntary organizations, including churches. Civil society began to buckle. Yet only David Thomson has raised serious concerns about the likely consequences of the social, economic and cultural changes of the last third of the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

The secularization theory flourished in New Zealand historical writing not simply because of its intellectual merits, which were real though limited, but because of its ideological attractions. Many New Zealand historians consigned Christianity to oblivion because they considered it not only irrelevant but pernicious, a Bad Thing.

In this New Zealand scholarship was scarcely unique. The American intellectual historian Frank Turner identified a pattern dominating the writing of modern European intellectual and cultural history for most of the twentieth century. Intellectual and cultural historians generally ‘portrayed religious thought and activity in a critically negative light while favourably presenting secular intellectual activity as progressive and desirable’. For most historians of Victorian Britain, wrote Turner, the ‘undermining of the influence of the Church of England and the Nonconformist denominations as well as the erosion of religious faith and conviction among the educated classes by modern intellectual forces seemed almost inevitable and unproblematic’. Such developments ‘rarely if ever’ excited ‘regret or criticism’.<sup>37</sup>

Many New Zealand historians constructed progressive, teleological histories that depicted a dark religious past giving way, gradually but inexorably, to a brighter, more enlightened secular present. In depicting organized religion critically, sometimes hypercritically, such historians followed a well-established trail blazed in the West first by Protestant reformers and then by Enlightenment critics of the churches.

Keith Sinclair deserves special attention in this regard. The most productive and influential New Zealand historian of the second half of the twentieth century, he did more to establish the new secular paradigm than any other figure. Though not the first historian of New Zealand to eschew Christianity — William Pember Reeves, our most influential nineteenth-century historian, was a free-thinker — the Auckland sceptic wrote with deep ambivalence about Christian tradition. Whereas agnostic Reeves depicted the missionary period glowingly, to Sinclair, by contrast, missionary ideas ‘were as destructive’ of Maori society ‘as bullets’.<sup>38</sup>

Sinclair’s ambivalence toward Christianity, which he appears to have lumped together with the Britishness, conservatism and puritanism he disliked in mainstream Pakeha culture, created problems and paradoxes in his historical writing. In *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, for example, Sinclair characterized missionary and humanitarian Christians as well-intentioned destroyers of Maori society: ‘Official and missionary alike looked at primitive people through Christian eyes and the measures which seemed most essential to them

were terribly destructive to the heathen societies they meant to protect'. The 'destructive effects of their work . . . left them working among the ruins' of Maori society.<sup>39</sup> While no one can doubt the havoc colonization wreaked on Maori society, nor the sometimes arrogant attitudes which missionaries displayed, the links between evangelical ideas and the destruction of Maori society must be demonstrated, not simply asserted. As Sinclair himself showed, the Protestant missionary societies and especially the Church Missionary Society (CMS), opposed British colonization during the late 1830s because they believed — rightly — that Maori would lose lands and lives if it went ahead. Many missionaries and some humanitarians extended medical and nursing care to Maori communities. During the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, settler critics repeatedly attacked missionaries and humanitarians as deranged *defenders* of Maori lives, lands, rights and welfare.<sup>40</sup>

While evangelical ideas destroyed Maori society, wrote Sinclair, they made little impact on Pakeha because evangelical Christians had warm hearts but weak brains: 'pity and sentiment provided the initial dynamic of humanitarianism and set a limit to its capabilities'. Despite 'benevolent aims' and 'good intentions' the humanitarians lacked a 'clear programme'. These English Christians, 'exotics even in a colony of exiles', did 'not belong to the frontier'. Their 'vague' ideals ran up against the concrete material interests of pragmatic settlers and lost hands down. The humanitarians 'failed in the task of finding a means of inhibiting the tendencies to war which existed from 1840 onwards'.<sup>41</sup>

However, Sinclair himself provided evidence that cast doubt on this damning verdict. He showed that during the 1840s, 1850s and early 1860s, humanitarians such as William Martin, William Swainson, Bishop Selwyn, Bishop Abraham, Octavius Hadfield and others regularly championed Maori rights and welfare, took a high view of the Treaty of Waitangi and criticized government policy and settler racial attitudes and behaviour. Such men worked long, hard, intelligently and courageously to prevent or minimize racial conflict. If their campaign to preserve and protect Maori from the worst consequences of colonization was largely pious claptrap, why did it arouse so much criticism from so many settlers and colonial politicians?<sup>42</sup> To condemn the humanitarians for failing to prevent war seems analogous to blaming Bartolomé de las Casas and other Spanish champions of the Indian for the conquest of the Americas. Such a judgement assigns too much political responsibility to the humanitarians and too little to their opponents.

Some years later, however, Sinclair depicted humanitarianism more favourably. A famous, now controversial, 1971 article identified 'evangelical attitudes' and 'the humanitarian imperial ideology at the time New Zealand was annexed' as the main reasons why race relations in New Zealand developed better than in virtually every other white settler colony in the world.<sup>43</sup> This time Sinclair gave humanitarian ideas more influence, both during the colonial period and since.

How do we account for Sinclair's conflicted representations of humanitarian Christianity? His secular left-liberal nationalism surely helps. Humanitarian leaders such as Selwyn, Hadfield, Abraham and Martin personified almost everything Sinclair most disliked: puritanism, Christianity, Britishness and



elitism. All these devout, upper middle-class Christians had close personal and family ties to the British Establishment. They symbolized much of what Sinclair, as a secular, left-liberal, egalitarian nationalist sought to liberate New Zealanders from. To him, the nation constituted the primary imagined community. Religious believers, whose transnational and multiethnic imagined communities — the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God and so on — transcended the nation and in principle at least relativized allegiance to it, posed problems. Sinclair recognized and praised humanitarian Christians in so far as it suited his nationalist agenda of telling the glorious story of a racially enlightened nation. But the humanitarians succeeded, on Sinclair's telling, in spite of their alienness and their muddle-headed and destructive religiosity.

New Zealand readers, mostly Protestant, devoured Sinclair's books, partly because the secular nationalist tradition which Sinclair took over from William Pember Reeves had intriguing affinities with the Puritan mythologies of New England divines such as Cotton Mather. The latter's *Magnalia Christi Americana* helped create a powerful and enduring sense of America as God's light to the nations, a specially chosen land on which the eyes of the world were fixed.<sup>44</sup> The secular New Zealand of Reeves and Sinclair outshone even Protestant America as a world exemplar of enlightenment and virtue. Both historians depicted little New Zealand as a post-Enlightenment 'city upon a hill'; a pioneer in enlightened race relations, votes for women, industrial and labour legislation, old age pensions and other humane and progressive social policies. Their nationalist histories, celebrating the remarkable achievements of the New Zealand people, appealed greatly to their readers.

The Sinclairian secular nationalist tradition offered answers to real problems. In the Old World religious differences divided nations. British Christians spilled each other's blood in the mid-seventeenth century; in the nineteenth century religious divisions remained potent forces in British politics and English, Scots and Irish settlers brought them to New Zealand. Reeves and Sinclair, seeking to construct historical myths of origins and identity around which New Zealanders could unite, played down religion, which they distrusted as divisive, by secularizing our past. The secular nationalist tradition appealed to many New Zealand Christians who favoured a secular society understood not as atheistic or irreligious but as religiously liberal and tolerant, free of sectarian division and ecclesiastical domination. During the 1960s and 1970s, liberal Protestant church leaders were busily repudiating old sectarian attitudes and forging larger unities in the National Council of Churches.

Sinclair gave his historical writing not only a secular nationalist thrust but also a populist, masculinist flavour. Showing affinities with Barry Crump, he celebrated the values of the 'ordinary bloke': mateship, egalitarianism, anticlericalism, rugby, racing and beer. 'Sunbathing and surfing, uninhibited striptease shows, the vast numbers of drinkers listening to singers or bands in suburban bars' illustrated the New Zealander's 'love of varied pleasures', he enthused. 'Many a "Kiwi" drinker must look into his nine-ounce glass', he observed in *A History of New Zealand*, 'only to discover there the disapproving face of his Primitive Methodist ancestor'. But the day of the wowser had gone and a 'simple materialism' had supplanted Christianity as the 'prevailing religion'

of New Zealanders. The 'pursuit of health and possessions' filled 'more minds than thoughts of salvation'.<sup>45</sup>

This vision of the New Zealand past, celebrating a healthy, fun-loving, secular present displacing a morbid, puritanical religious past, reached a growing audience during the 1960s and 1970s. As tertiary education boomed, left-liberal university-based historians, with Sinclair leading the way, constructed myths of origin that also constituted myths of national identity. Now secular historians, not Christian ministers or laypeople, told New Zealanders where they had come from, who they were and where they were going.

Sinclair wrote critically about Christian tradition, then, because Christian leaders, clerical and lay, competed with secular intellectuals as cultural authorities. By depicting his rivals' tradition negatively, secularizers such as Sinclair could take over and dominate the national clerisy. Peopling New Zealand's past with Maori-bashing missionaries, ineffectual humanitarians, drink-despising wowsers and pleasure-hating puritans accomplished this task well. Yet who were the wowsers and the puritans? To what extent did their campaigns against drink, gambling, barmaids, the Contagious Diseases Act and so on reflect female religious, maternal and family values? Whose interests did hostile depictions of wowsers and puritans serve? In history texts that purported to be above the fray, contests for cultural authority raged. A prolific scholar, Sinclair became a major if not the dominant figure in the New Zealand historical establishment burgeoning during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>46</sup>

Left-liberal historians writing during these years took up many of the themes Sinclair had sounded, ejecting more religious snakes from a south Pacific Eden. *A Legacy of Guilt*, for example, depicted early missionary Thomas Kendall's Calvinist religion as almost psychopathological: 'A child of the English Evangelical movement, Thomas Kendall was predestined to be the victim of the fearful tension that Calvinism can create in a soul'. Kendall and his fellow CMS missionaries rejected the 'deistic picture of the noble savage' for the 'naïve and deceptive view of an "'ignoble and degraded brute who might be saved from eternal damnation only by concerted missionary activity"'. Determined 'to save the souls of the heathen', they aimed to 'destroy their culture, considered merely indicative of the degradation of its creators'. Driven by a 'profound sense of their infallibility' as 'instruments of the Divine Will' the missionaries sought to 'transform, indeed eradicate' the 'existing structure of Maori society'. They 'were certain the values they would preach were the absolute values of Christianity — when in fact they were the values of English middle class life'. On this reading, the early missionaries appeared almost as Anti-Christ: ignorant, arrogant, destructive religious fanatics, whose values had nothing to do with Christianity. After delivering New Zealand from missionaries, the text promised, in antinomian voice, more comprehensive deliverance still: 'Sin, the desire for that of which one has been taught to be ashamed, is after all self-induced'.<sup>47</sup>

By the 1980s, some historians were banishing humanitarian Christians, too, from New Zealand's past. Belich, for example, criticized Sinclair and his predecessors for creating the complacent Pakeha myth that 'we' had the 'best blacks' and treated them best. The legend of New Zealand race relations flattered the colonists, exaggerated the importance of humanitarian Christianity and failed

to recognize Maori achievement, especially their tremendous military success against great numerical and technological odds. In attacking Sinclair's argument for the enduring significance of humanitarianism, Belich depicted the Pakeha world as ideologically largely monolithic, missionaries and humanitarians displaying racial attitudes scarcely less condescending and ethnocentric than those of out-and-out racists. The fat, greedy settler became, in Belich's telling, a power-hungry, scientific racist as well — and Victorian Pakeha the late-twentieth-century historian's benighted 'Other'.<sup>48</sup> While Belich was virtually eradicating humanitarian Christians from New Zealand's past, Henry Reynolds, across the Tasman, was rediscovering them in Australia's.<sup>49</sup>

If sympathy for Maori and commitment to a bicultural nation encouraged a new generation of post-colonial historians to treat Pakeha Christianity more critically than ever, similar trends may be discerned in the evolution of women's history during the 1970s. New Zealand historians of women, like women's historians in the US, Britain and Australia, were influenced by the new social history and by second-wave feminism, arguing that females, a majority of the human race, constituted perhaps the most neglected of those 'hidden from history'. Feminist historians made recovering the historical experience of women central to what became in the 1980s a larger project of rewriting general histories in new ways that recognized the importance of gender. Organized religion came under fire. E.P. Thompson, who despised Methodism as 'psychic masturbation', articulated an attitude widely shared by the new breed of social historians, whose campaign to rescue the poor and marginalized from obscurity turned out all too often, when it came to religious believers, to be highly selective.<sup>50</sup> Second-wave feminist antipathy toward patriarchy, which some feminists perceived as the root of virtually all evil, saw several depict the churches as patriarchal bastions. Erik Olssen and Andrée Lévesque, writing in 1978 on the origins of the European family in New Zealand, portrayed the churches as providing 'the principal justification for the patriarchal family'; Otago's clergy were a 'moral police', serving as 'eyes and agents of community control'. During the 1920s, 'God's Police', the 'puritan legions', elaborated 'an ideal of sexual purity and temperance' and a 'cult of domesticity' and 'imposed these upon New Zealand society'.<sup>51</sup> According to Barbara Brookes, the government Committee of Inquiry into abortion of 1936–37 'turned to the church' in order to 'counter the views of the feminists and political radicals'. Brookes depicted 'the church' as a reactionary institution upholding a puritanical social order that, out of touch with the realities of women's lives, limited access to birth control, condemned abortion and discouraged recognition of women's 'individual autonomy' and 'their right to freely elect, or deny, motherhood'.<sup>52</sup>

These interpretations, critical of the 'puritan legions', attributed to them considerable historical significance. To sustain such arguments, the connections between organized religion, women and the family required careful investigation. If Christian moral, sexual and domestic ideals won a considerable following in New Zealand, we need to know how, when, why and amongst whom. We do know that most first-wave feminists were Protestant Christians who criticized Victorian patriarchy on the basis of scripture and Christian teaching. Yet their religious beliefs and values remain surprisingly neglected. Indeed hostility to

their religious values has too often overshadowed historical understanding. According to Phillida Bunkle, for example, the WCTU simultaneously demanded 'freedom for women and complete sexual repression'. Convinced that 'sex degraded women', the WCTU allegedly 'attacked sex itself'. These assertions, characterizing first-wave Christian feminists as sex-despising puritans, received virtually no empirical substantiation.<sup>53</sup> Recent scholarship suggests that they caricatured Victorian Christian sexual attitudes.<sup>54</sup>

By the 1980s, it began to look as though historians respectful of other cultural and religious traditions felt free to level hostile, sweeping generalizations at Christianity. Because late nineteenth-century New Zealand was 'vigorously religious and rigidly moralistic', explained Manying Ip, local Christians saw Chinese 'non-adherence to Christianity' as 'further proof that they were uncivilised and evil'. During this 'age of evangelism', New Zealand Christians allegedly 'despised' any 'non-Christian, non-white, non-European culture or race'.<sup>55</sup> The evidence needed to substantiate such a generalization did not appear.

Collectively, the texts I have just discussed constituted a powerful indictment of New Zealand Christianity. With all those Maori-bashing, sex-despising, pleasure-hating, racist and patriarchal Christians exposed and New Zealand's past exorcized, the country could go forward into an enlightened, liberated and harmonious future, guided by its secular nationalist clerisy. While critical of this secular nationalist tradition, which by the 1980s had become an entrenched and seldom-questioned orthodoxy, I am not arguing that historians' criticisms of New Zealand Christianity were unfounded. New Zealand Christians all too frequently fell prey to ethnocentrism, racism, sectarianism, sexism, puritanism and so on, as historians have shown. I contend, rather, that historians have too often offered generalizations about New Zealand Christianity based on inadequate arguments and insufficient evidence. More accurate, precise and better-substantiated stories must be told.

Sinclair's secular nationalist tradition never had the field to itself. W.H. Oliver's *The Story of New Zealand* appeared in 1960, one year after Sinclair's *History*. A more conservative liberal than his Auckland colleague, Oliver wrote more sympathetically not only about New Zealand's British heritage but also about its Christian past. Personally interested and involved in a variety of religious traditions for much of his adult life, Oliver's historical writings did not seek aggressively to liberate New Zealanders from Britishness or from Christianity. *The Story of New Zealand*, for example, depicted missionaries and humanitarians more cordially than Sinclair, though never uncritically.<sup>56</sup>

The Oliverian tradition, as I will call it, was sustained during the 1960s and 1970s by a number of historians, not all of whom embraced Oliver's liberal Christian humanism. John Owens, for example, a self-described agnostic, wrote insightful, even-handed accounts of Maori-missionary encounters. So did Kerry Howe, Kaye Sanderson and historians of religion such as Breward, Lineham and Davidson. Many, perhaps most, New Zealand historians during this period sat somewhere between the Sinclairian and Oliverian traditions, embracing bits of both.

But social change began to make Oliver's approach appear somewhat cautious and unfashionable. Sinclair and his students, pouring out well-researched books and articles, were beginning to dominate the local historical establishment. In the wider culture, both mainline Protestantism and Britishness were facing trouble. In 1967 the Presbyterian church, its membership declining, tried one of its most prominent theologians for heresy. Four years later, Professor Geering quit ecclesiastical employment to become foundation professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. There he wrote a series of books and articles that predicted the imminent demise of Christianity and the rise of faith's new secular age. New Zealand's most prominent theologian was articulating a secular world view remarkably similar to Sinclair's.

The *Oxford History of New Zealand*, appearing in 1981 under Oliver's editorship, reflected these cultural sea changes. It was characterized by a sense of introversion and isolation. Neither Britishness nor Christianity received much attention or sympathy. Jeanine Graham, one of the few female contributors, dissented from the volume's predominantly secular orientation and tone, insisting that 'Christian faith and practice played a fundamental role in the shaping of colonial society', the 'greater proportion of the population' acting according to 'what was essentially a Christian code'.<sup>57</sup> In the twentieth-century chapters, by contrast, Christianity appeared either peripheral, or terminally ill.

Signs of a recovery of the Oliverian tradition appeared in the 1980s and 1990s. As global political and economic forces weakened the autonomy and sovereignty of Western nation-states, scholars questioned established stories of the nation and religions in many parts of the world roared back into public prominence. In New Zealand, Maori history led a recovery of the religious dimensions of our past. Several scholars showed that Maori, far from being passive dupes of Pakeha missionaries, engaged actively, critically and independently with the Bible and Christian tradition to forge powerful new religious movements. Blending ancestral and biblical worlds, tradition and modernity, hope and protest, these movements offered Maori new meaning and identity, helping them survive the traumas of colonization.

Judith Binney, for example, produced a series of books and articles on Maori religious leaders culminating, in 1996, in *Redemption Songs*, a biography of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki. Binney entered Te Kooti's mind and heart, his religious consciousness, with exemplary empathy and insight. The book showed how intimately Te Kooti's faith shaped and informed his 'secular' activities: warfare, relations with other Maori leaders, the government, his enemies, followers and family. Like most Maori of the time, Te Kooti did not see religion as occupying a private sphere hermetically sealed off from the 'real' world of secular affairs.<sup>58</sup>

More recently, Lyndsay Head has placed Maori Christianity at the heart of Maori modernity. It is difficult, she writes, 'to make sense of change in nineteenth-century Maori society without attempting to understand the intensity of the relationship between Maori and the Christian faith'. In 'a society that believed in the connectedness of all things, Christianity did more than refit religious observance. It acted as an entire formulation of society, affecting ideas about politics as much as religion.' Maori Christian leaders appeared in Head's

analysis as anything but spineless, brainwashed Uncle Toms. During the 1860s, she argued, many Maori found Christian belief 'politically empowering, to the point of sanctioning conflict with the state'.<sup>59</sup>

In a similar vein, Tony Ballantyne has urged historians to 'move beyond the nation-state as the organizing unit for the writing of the history of imperialism' and pay more attention to trans-national networks and communities, including religious ones. Criticising the old 'fatal impact' interpretation of missions, he analyzed the ways Maori made Christianity and literacy their own, creating new forms of identity, community and authority. Kingitanga (the King movement), 'profoundly Christian' in its 'ideology and language', emphasized 'the primacy of the Gospel and the potency of the law'. Ballantyne drew attention to the neglected 'majority of Maori' who throughout the nineteenth century remained doctrinally orthodox and 'continued to subscribe to mission doctrine, worship in mission churches and correspond with missionaries'.<sup>60</sup>

Both Head and Ballantyne transcended the limitations of an older historiography that tended to depict missionaries, on the one hand, as destroyers of Maori culture and Maori, on the other, as utilitarian rationalists who treated Christianity merely instrumentally, as a means to their 'real' material and political ends. Both insisted, as had Binney, that understanding Maori public sphere activities such as war and politics required understanding Maori religion. Neither secularization nor the privatization of religion offered much insight into nineteenth-century Maori worlds.

Similar dynamics operated in women's and gender history. Feminist, women's and gender historians looked back on the past with new eyes. Everywhere they looked they found religious women. In nineteenth-century North America, for example, talented, charismatic women such as Anne Lee, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen White and Aimee Semple McPherson launched remarkable new religious movements. Protestant women concerned about church, home and family dominated first-wave feminism, turning the WCTU into an international organization that enjoyed early success in Australasia. Women's voluntary associations played important roles in social welfare and educational provision before, during and after the rise of the modern welfare state. Women outnumbered men in the active lay membership of virtually all churches, Protestant and Catholic, as far back as records went. As the American historian Ann Braude provocatively put it, 'Women's History *Is* American Religious History'.<sup>61</sup>

In New Zealand, while pioneering women's historians often wrote critically about the churches as pillars of patriarchy, as noted above, those attuned to female historical agency soon began to question the assumption that patriarchy determined how religious women believed and behaved. Margaret Tennant, for example, who in the 1970s had written 'somewhat scathingly' about the Christianity of middle-class female social reformers, was by the 1990s depicting the 'Christian frameworks' within which most past women lived out their lives as not only 'restrictive' but also 'enabling'.<sup>62</sup>

Jessie Munro's beautifully written biography of Mother Suzanne Aubert depicted a remarkable French Catholic nun whose highly traditional piety inspired a joyful zest for life and a career dedicated to loving and helping everybody, including the despised and rejected, without regard for colour,

class, or creed. Mother Aubert's gracious, inclusive, practical Christianity won respect and affection from Maori as well as Pakeha communities, rich and poor, from freethinkers and Protestants no less than from Catholics. Though a dutiful daughter of her church, Aubert did not hesitate to quarrel with male clerical superiors when she thought it necessary.<sup>63</sup> *The Story of Suzanne Aubert* won accolades as the Montana Non-Fiction Book of the Year in 1997 partly, I suggest, because its remarkable subject symbolized a kinder, gentler, more inclusive world that some worried we were losing.

Caroline Daley's study of gender in Taradale between 1886 and 1930, appearing in 1999, drew attention to important interconnections between gender and religion. Like Binney, Head, Ballantyne and Munro, Daley took the religious consciousness of her subjects seriously. In oral histories, women 'told stories about home and family, religion and community and presented themselves as home-loving, law-abiding, religious and tolerant citizens', she noted. Men, by contrast, more often told stories 'about crime and disorder, alcohol and fighting', a 'larrikin world where men were firmly in control'. Daley illuminated religion's importance in the lives of women, children, families, local communities and — by implication at least — the wider society. With religious women dedicated to building homes, families and communities accorded their rightful place, Taradale appeared considerably less atomized, bondless and anomic than Fairburn had suggested.<sup>64</sup>

Was it sheer coincidence that so many female historians were extending and developing the Oliverian tradition, with its sensitivity to religion, in important new ways? Histories from the bottom up which accorded previously marginalized groups such as Maori and women the same empathic historical understanding as any other group, discovered that religion mattered to their subjects. Those who managed to set aside the assumption that religiosity was either private and irrelevant or intrinsically dysfunctional showed that taking the religious beliefs and values of Maori and of women seriously shed new light on our past.<sup>65</sup>

The tide may at last be turning. In a recent article, Scott Worthy showed that previous historians, including Keith Sinclair, had distorted Anzac Day commemorations by retroactively secularizing them. In fact, Christianity 'was a central force in providing meaning, context and solidity to the new and untested Anzac Day'. Religiosity, he noted, has by no means disappeared today. Similarly, Alison Clarke has argued that Christian discourse, symbols and imagery permeated celebrations of the monarchy in colonial Otago. Maori, Pakeha and Chinese, Protestants and Catholics, workers and employers, women and men virtually all joined in a quasi-Christian civil religion that transcended ethnic, racial, sectarian, class and gender differences.<sup>66</sup>

What held New Zealand society together during the course of our history? The prevailing historiography makes one wonder. Much of that produced in recent decades, reflecting the growing uncertainty of the times, has emphasized the destructive and dysfunctional forces driving New Zealanders apart: individualism, class conflict, racism and sexism. Historians have discerned deep darkness in a past that, some argue, we must leave behind as quickly as possible in order to find an authentic New Zealand identity. A country Richard Seddon once lauded as God's Own had gone rapidly, on such readings, to the Devil.

If Christianity began and remained marginal, as many historians have assumed, the question of what held society together becomes still harder to answer. Religion had provided much of the social cement gluing Old and New World societies together. Alexis de Tocqueville, the brilliant French writer, regarded Christianity as crucial to the moral and political cohesion of the United States, which class, sectional, racial, sectarian and individual interests constantly threatened to tear apart. Many New Zealand historians, by contrast, have depicted religion not only as weak but also as largely dysfunctional, infecting an already anomic society with religious ills: sectarianism, puritanism and patriarchy. While the stories they have told about dying or destructive religion can and should be told, they must be told better than they have been. Assertion, indiscriminate generalization, stereotype and caricature will not do.

I would like, in conclusion, to sketch an alternative to the dying-and-dysfunctional grand narrative currently dominant. Christian tradition — by which I simply mean Christianity as ordinary New Zealanders, Maori and Pakeha, female and male, young and old, understood and lived it — has been a largely unheralded success in New Zealand. Its main architects were all those quiet, unglamorous religious believers, often female, in all ethnic and religious communities, who cared for women, men, children, parents and strangers, working hard, without much praise or recognition, day in and day out. In unobtrusive, still forgotten ways they knitted together marriages, families, communities, churches and the nation. These people and their beliefs and values, remain subaltern in New Zealand historiography.

In race relations, for example, we need to know a great deal more about all those Maori Christians who, despite provocation, refused to wreak indiscriminate vengeance on Pakeha settlers. Are they to remain forgotten on the assumption, both condescending and dubious, that all those Maori Anglicans, Methodists and Catholics who maintained connections with Pakeha churches were brainwashed Uncle Toms? Surely our modestly good race relations record owes more to Maori Christians of all varieties than historians have yet acknowledged. Similarly, those Pakeha humanitarians — missionaries and ordinary settlers — who attacked the greed, racial hatred and unjust government policies of their day deserve to have their stories told. Or are levelling nationalist historians going to keep on cutting down the tall British Christian poppies in our past? Justice for Maori can hardly be advanced by painting the Pakeha past blacker than it was.

Furthermore, what is striking about New Zealand's past is not that religious bigotry existed but that it so seldom erupted into violence. By world standards, New Zealanders handled their religious differences remarkably well. Our peaceable Protestants, Catholics, Jews, agnostics and atheists deserve to be remembered. Much the same may be said about class differences. Ongoing research in southern Dunedin suggests that Christian politicians and community leaders such as Thomas Kay Sidey, a wealthy, philanthropic Presbyterian and Labour politician, and John Thomas Paul, a working-class Methodist, adroitly handled the class and sectarian divisions that plagued the Old World and parts of the New.<sup>67</sup> New Zealand's mostly Christian population built what for much of the twentieth century was one of the most stable, prosperous, cohesive and egalitarian liberal democracies in the world.



Have we forgotten so quickly? Have we become so preoccupied with our predecessors' failings that we have forgotten their virtues and achievements? Undoubtedly our Christian past has bequeathed to us ghosts that we must lay. But if New Zealand is becoming an increasingly plural, multicultural, multifaith society, then understanding our Christian past, its virtues as well as its vices, may be preferable to demonizing or ignoring it in the hope that it will go away.

JOHN STENHOUSE

*University of Otago*

## NOTES

1 I. Breward, 'Religion and New Zealand Society', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 13, 2 (1979), pp.138–48, quotation on p.139; Peter Lineham, 'Religion', in Colin Davis and Peter Lineham, eds, *The Future of the Past: Themes in New Zealand History*, Palmerston North, 1991, pp.3–28, quotation on p.21; Allan K. Davidson, 'New Zealand History and Religious Myopia', in Susan Emilsen and William W. Emilsen, eds, *Mapping the Landscape: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Christianity. Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ian Breward*, New York, 2000, pp.205–21, quotations on pp.212 and 217; James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland, 1996.

2 George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*, New York, 1994; George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield, eds, *The Secularization of the Academy*, New York, 1992; David A. Hollinger, Science, *Jews and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History*, Princeton, 1996.

3 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*, Chicago, 1992; Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion*, New Brunswick, NJ, 2002.

4 See further William H. McNeill, *Mythistory and Other Essays*, Chicago, 1986, pp.3–22.

5 New Zealand has always been a secular society in certain respects. The state is officially secular and neutral with respect to the religions of its inhabitants — though Roman Catholics and Maori Christians at Parihaka, Maungapohatu and elsewhere did not always see it that way. From the late nineteenth century on, the state took over educational and social welfare roles that, in Britain, the churches had dominated. But we cannot simply assume, because New Zealand was a secular society in these respects, that religion had no public significance. For a dispassionate account of recent debates over secularization theory, which recognizes its insights as well as its limitations, see José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago, 1994.

6 Erik Olssen, 'Mr Wakefield and New Zealand as an Experiment in Post-Enlightenment Experimental Practice', NZJH, 31, 2 (1997), pp.197–218. Olssen painted a nuanced picture of the Enlightenment, noting a Christian version in North America and enlightened evangelicals, humanitarians and Quakers in Britain and New Zealand.

7 Judith Binney, Judith Bassett and Erik Olssen, *The People and the Land: Te Tangata me Te Whenua: An Illustrated History of New Zealand, 1820–1920*, Wellington, 1990, p.83. Professor Binney presumably had in mind the Pakeha religious world; her explorations of Maori history showed how vibrant and important religion remained in many nineteenth-century Maori communities.

8 John Stenhouse, 'Darwinism in New Zealand 1859–1900', in Ronald Numbers and John Stenhouse, eds, *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion and Gender*, New York, 1999, pp.61–90; and see the works listed below in n.29.

9 Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989, pp.177–78, 184.

10 Tony Grigg, 'Prohibition: The Church and Labour', NZJH, 15, 2 (1981), pp.135–56.

11 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.122.

12 Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, revised edition, London, 1969, p.288.

13 Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, An Interpretation, vol.1: The Rise of Modern Paganism*, London, 1967.

14 See further Olwen Hufton, 'What is Religious History Now', in David Cannadine, ed. *What is History Now?*, New York, 2002, pp.57–79.

15 Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment*, New York, 2000, p.99.

16 Paula Findlen, 'A forgotten Newtonian: Women and Science in the Italian Provinces', in William Clark, Jan Golinski and Simon Schaffer, eds, *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, Chicago, 1999, pp.313–49.

17 Ranginui Walker, *He Tipua: The Life and Times of Sir Apirana Ngata*, Auckland, 2001.

18 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, New Haven, 1992.

19 J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660–1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Régime*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 2000.

20 David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire*, Cambridge, 1996.

21 Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785–1865*, Oxford, 1988.

22 Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*, Cambridge, 1993; James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, Chicago, 2000; Adrian Desmond and James R. Moore, *Darwin*, London, 1991.

23 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, London, 1987.

24 C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: the British Empire and the World, 1780–1830*, London, 1989; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867*, Chicago, 2002.

25 Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, Princeton, NJ, 2001.

26 Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800–2000*, London, 2001.

27 Richard J. Helmstadter and Bernard Lightman, eds, *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, Stanford, 1990.

28 John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*, Cambridge, 1992; Ronald L. Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America*, Cambridge, Mass., 1998.

29 Hugh McLeod, 'Religion in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 38, 4 (1999), pp.385–91, quotation on p.387. Brown's *The Death of Christian Britain* summarizes recent revisionist scholarship on interconnections between religion, class, age and gender. On 'folklorized Christianity' amongst the urban working classes, especially women, see Sarah Williams, 'Urban popular religion and the rites of passage', in Hugh McLeod, ed., *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830–1930*, London, 1995, pp.216–36.

30 Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.164.

31 Judith Devaliant, *Kate Sheppard: A Biography: The Fight for Women's Votes in New Zealand: The Life of the Woman Who Led The Struggle*, Auckland, 1992.

32 Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.515.

33 See further Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, New York, 1992. For a critique of secularization theory see Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000.

34 See further Peter Berger, 'Reflections on the Sociology of Religion Today', *Sociology of Religion*, 62, 4 (2001), pp.443–55.

35 K. Ward, 'Worlds in Conflict? Rugby and Church', *Reality*, 53 (2002), pp.26–30.

36 David Thomson, *Selfish Generations?: The Ageing of New Zealand's Welfare State*, Wellington, 1991.

37 Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life*, Cambridge, 1993, pp.4–5.

38 Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, p.42.

39 Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland, 1961, p.26.

40 John Stenhouse, 'Churches, State and the New Zealand Wars, 1860–1872', in Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse, eds, *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, Dunedin, 2000, pp.21–40.

41 Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, pp.23, 25, 224–5.

42 See further M. Grimshaw, "'Fouling the Nest": The Conflict Between the 'Church Party' and Settler Society During the New Zealand Wars 1860–1865", unpublished PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1999.

43 Keith Sinclair, 'Why are Race Relations in New Zealand Better than in South Africa, South Australia or South Dakota?', *NZJH*, 5, 2 (1971), pp.121–7.

44 On Mather and American Puritan historiography, see David Harlan, *The Degradation of American History*, Chicago, 1997, pp.36–8.

45 Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, pp.287–8.

46 James Ng, *The Presbyterian Church and the Chinese*, Christchurch, 1987, pp.6, 9; *Windows on a Chinese Past: Round Hill: Alexander Don: Missions: Mixed Marriages: The Optum Evil*, Vol. 2, Dunedin, 1995, pp.136–53.

47 Judith Binney, *The Legacy of Guilt: A Life of Thomas Kendall*, Auckland, 1968, pp.1, 6, 13, 14.

48 James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland, 1986.

49 Belich, *Making Peoples*; Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, Ringwood, 1987; Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in our Hearts*, St. Leonards, 1998.

50 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London, 1968, pp.385–410.

51 Erik Olssen and Andrée Lévesque, 'Towards a History of the European Family in New Zealand', in Peggy E. Koopman-Boyden, ed., *Families in New Zealand Society*, Wellington, 1978, pp.1–25, quotation on p.3.

52 Barbara Brookes, "'Housewives' Depression": The Debate Over Abortion and Birth Control in the 1930s', *NZJH*, 15, 2 (1981), pp.127, 131–4.

53 Phillida Bunkle, 'The Origins of the Women's Movement in New Zealand: The Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1885 and 1895', in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes, eds, *Women in New Zealand Society*, Sydney, 1980, pp.54, 62.

54 Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*, Oxford, 1994; Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexual Attitudes*, Oxford, 1994.

55 Manying Ip, 'Chinese New Zealanders, Old Settlers and New Immigrants', in Stuart William Greif, ed., *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?*, Palmerston North, 1995 pp.171, 174–5.

56 W.H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London, 1960, pp.42–47.

57 Jeanine Graham, 'Settler Society', in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams, eds, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, pp.112–39, p.128.

58 Judith Binney, *Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki*, Auckland, 1995.

59 Lyndsay Head, 'The Pursuit of Modernity in Maori Society', in Andrew Sharp and Paul McHugh, eds, *Histories, Power and Loss: Uses of the Past – A New Zealand Commentary*, Wellington, 2001, pp.97–122, quotations on pp.103, 111, 113.

60 Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*, London, 2002, pp.146–68, quotations on pp.160, 162.

61 Anne Braude, 'Women's History Is American Religious History', in Thomas Tweed, ed., *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997, pp.87–107.

62 Margaret Tennant, 'Sister Mabel's Private Diary 1907–1910: Sisterhood, Love and Religious Doubt', *Women's Studies Journal*, 14, 1, (1998), pp.43–59 quotation on p.56. The same might be said about all the frameworks by which humans order their lives.

63 Jessie Munro, *The Story of Suzanne Aubert*, Auckland, 1996.

64 Caroline Daley, *Girls & Women, Men & Boys: Gender in Taradale, 1886–1930*, Auckland, 1999, pp.10–11; Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989. To be fair to Fairburn, his study ended in 1900, only 14 years after Daley's begins.

65 Limited space prevents me from doing justice to the range and quality of work in religious history appearing during the 1980s and 1990s, much of it produced by historians such as Peter Lineham, Allan Davidson, Ian Breward and Rory Sweetman. Religious history attracted many postgraduate students. Fine theses include Grant Phillipson's study of Bishop Selwyn, Brett Knowles on the New Life Churches, Chris Van der Krogt on the Catholic community, Nicholas Reid's work on the Catholic press and Alison Clarke on holidays and festivals in colonial Otago. Sociologists such as Michael Hill, Wiebe Zwaga and Kevin Ward wrote insightfully about secularists and humanists as well as religious believers. For full references to all these works, and to everything else in the field, see the annually updated A.R. Grigg and P.J. Lineham, *New Zealand Religious History: A Bibliography*, <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~plineham/relhistNZ.htm>.

66 Scott Worthy, 'A Debt of Honour: New Zealanders' First Anzac Days', *NZJH*, 36, 2 (2002), pp.185–200, quotation on p.192; Alison Clarke, "'With one accord rejoice on this glad day": Celebrating the Monarchy in Nineteenth-Century Otago', *NZJH*, 36, 2 (2002), pp.137–70.

67 John Stenhouse, 'Religion, Community and Identity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1940', unpublished paper, History Department, University of Otago, 2002.