

Much more than a dry factual chronicle, *Blue, White and Dynamite* is a compelling read, containing much of interest to both surf life-savers and social historians.

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Living Legacy: A History of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland. Edited by Allan K. Davidson. Anglican Diocese of Auckland, Auckland, 2011. 432pp. NZ price: \$60. ISBN 978-0-473-18031-7.

THERE IS ALWAYS A TEMPTATION to apply the cliché of the famous Punch cartoon ‘The Curate’s Egg’ to ecclesiastical histories, for as a historical genre they continually encompass, in revision of another cliché — ‘the good, the bad and — if not the ugly, then the mundane and minutiae’. Such histories also suffer from being in-house productions for an in-house readership. The genre is therefore limited by the demands and requirements of the readership, but also often by the decision to make such histories jointly authored. Who is to be asked to write, and on what? How many historians are there willing to participate? Who gets the times of scandal and intrigue, and who gets the days of worthy but dull church building. Who gets the missionaries and who gets the Sunday schools? Ecclesiastical histories of a synod also run the risk of being expanded parish histories written by several authors. How is the history to be presented? Do women and Māori get their own chapters or do they get subsumed into wider chronological chapters? Such tensions and questions are ones that all ecclesiastical histories suffer from and yet, in its own way, this history of the Auckland Anglican diocese is the model for a new kind of church history. Allan Davidson notes these tensions in his introduction, writing candidly about the difficulties in representing the tension of unity and diversity. For an institutional history is also as much a history by the institution as it is a history of the institution, given that it needs to have the support of those it is written about and for. Therefore, the final approach is to be so even-handed that applicability and readership outside of the institution is limited. Reading such a history I am always reminded of the road movie *Goodbye Pork Pie* because it, too, presented a version of New Zealand and New Zealanders that served to confirm the requirements of the audience, who turned out to watch their own locality pass, albeit briefly, on the big screen.

The size of this history is telling: 348 pages of text, followed by a 31-page appendix of ‘bishops, diocesan officers, parishes, institutions, and chaplains’, a glossary of Māori terms, 23 pages of double-column notes and a 10-page double-column bibliography. It is a solid piece of storytelling backed up by a determination to ensure all interest groups and individuals have no cause for claiming an oversight. Yet it is a remarkably singular and familiar story which is not just confined to this diocese or indeed to the Anglicans: church finances; problems getting enough clergy; a struggle to keep congregations; an institutional and congregational tension with Māori, women and homosexuals, especially in leadership; a declining influence in Auckland and wider afield; and internal disputes over worship and theology. All of which can be summed up in Reverend Joan Coles’s open letter in 1986 to the Anglican charismatic leader Bill Subritzky: ‘the marvel is that we can both call ourselves Anglican — the question is, are we disciples of Christ’ (p.308).

Reading this history you could get the idea that to be an Anglican is to be involved in parish life and to live under the influence of a bishop who defines the period they preside over. It is a life of congregations and committees, and these are the tensions Davidson writes of in both his introduction and conclusion. While not wishing to dismiss the strenuous and often painstaking efforts to cover their time period in detail of the other authors, on reflection I felt Davidson’s introduction and conclusion, with an appendix

of a judicious selection of illustrations, could have served the diocese just as well. For Davidson seems the one most willing and able to stretch the boundaries of institutional constraint and expectation, yet with the eye for the telling detail that can incorporate other stories yet to be fully told. Another reading is that this is a story of muscular Christians who did not always adapt to an increasingly urban and modern society, a church that in doing its utmost to encompass everyone found itself a series of competing congregations, committees and social groups, a story of a church that is primarily female in the pews but still led and written about primarily by men, a church that reduces the story of Māori to two separate chapters, each spanning 70 years ... the list could go on. Yet again, this is no different from any other ecclesiastical history.

What *Living Legacy* really misses is a critical engagement with the theology of the church. Peter Lineham gives some broad coverage in his chapter on the fraught issues of the charismatic revival, and Adrienne Puckey's chapter on Māori in the twentieth century likewise briefly covers the tension of creating and celebrating a distinctly Māori Anglican identity and theology. Yet this is history of a diocese in which theology appears to have little impact — or when it does is evenly glossed over by the underlying mantra of 'unity and diversity'. Where, too, is the mention of Anglican involvement in the Student Christian Movement, Christian Union or the Buchmanites at Auckland University — or indeed of the university itself? A similar excision is the Anglican involvement in participating and often leading protests against sporting contacts with South Africa, including in 1981, and the anti-nuclear movement. The Anglican history of social protest is in the main so briefly noted as to ensure it can be applauded in the case of the acceptable city mission (though it has also faced ongoing difficulties) and be safely relegated almost to footnote status elsewhere.

So why did I say this is a model for a new kind of church history? The answer is because it looks so good. This is a heavy-weight coffee-table diocesan history that is perfect for flicking through because it contains a wealth of illustrations covering paintings, cartoons, maps, photographs and charts. Adding to these aspects are brief sidebar comments and photographs that hint at what might have been, each pointing to a fascinating event or person who is included to enliven the worthy story slowly unfolding in the main body of text. So read Davidson's introduction and conclusion, look at the pictures and read the sidebars — for that, I presume, is what most of the intended readers — and especially buyers — will do. Yet this is a shame, for each chapter, written clearly and carefully for the general reader, also contains fascinating insights into the ongoing issues of Christianity and culture in this country, even if they are too often hidden in extraneous and pedantic detail. It is perhaps most limited by being, in the end, a bishop's carton of battery hen's eggs.

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Te Wiremu — Henry Williams: Early Years in the North. Edited by Caroline Fitzgerald. Huia Publishers, Wellington, 2011. 349pp. NZ price: \$45. ISBN 978-1-86969-439-5.

LAWRENCE M. ROGERS's *Early Journals of Henry Williams*, published in 1961, has long been a staple of historians of the early contact period in New Zealand. Williams was not just a keen observer of cultural interactions in the pre-annexation era, but a major player in those events. In his role as the senior member of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in New Zealand, Williams was responsible for overturning Samuel Marsden's emphasis on civilisation as a prelude to evangelisation, sparking a more vigorous (and successful) approach to the 'conversion' of Māori to Christianity. More controversial was his hurried