

Churchgoing in New Zealand, 1874–1926

HOW ‘MEDIocre’ WAS IT?¹



In 1983 the *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH) published an article by Hugh Jackson, ‘Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand’.² Jackson also published on New Zealand churchgoing in a French social science of religion journal and in his innovative 1987 book *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand*.³ Thirty years later, Jackson’s NZJH article remains the standard reference on nineteenth-century churchgoing in this country and his interpretation has been enormously influential. Jackson is cited in many histories, including such significant works as James Belich’s *Making Peoples*, Keith Sinclair’s *A Destiny Apart*, Miles Fairburn’s *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* and Caroline Daley’s study of gender in Taradale.⁴ The most important interpretation Jackson made – certainly the one most often cited – was that ‘The churchgoing of New Zealanders was mediocre by the standards of the British at home’.⁵ Jackson also revealed that New Zealanders were less diligent churchgoers than their colonial counterparts across the Tasman.

In this paper I take another look at the New Zealand census statistics on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century churchgoing. This important set of data – among the best in the world for this period – has received little detailed attention since Jackson’s work of the 1980s. John Stenhouse, in his 2003 and 2006 studies of gender, class and religion in late Victorian and early twentieth-century southern Dunedin, pointed out that historians needed to revise the ‘lapsed masses’ and ‘secular New Zealand’ orthodoxies which had prevailed for so long. Revisionist British historiography from the 1980s onwards revealed that the British masses were not so ‘lapsed’ as scholars once thought, and that religion remained a powerful ‘diffusive’ force in society. Stenhouse’s own study of southern Dunedin church records revealed considerable working-class involvement in religion, especially among women.⁶ As the 2011 *Spirit of the Past* volume of essays revealed, reputable work in religious history has flourished in New Zealand in recent years, and the arguments of Stenhouse and others have had an impact on general interpretations of New Zealand’s past.⁷ Nonetheless, it remains easy for scholars to take for granted the old assertion that New Zealanders were not very good churchgoers. Recent studies looking more specifically at measurements of church attendance in Britain raise a very important

question about Jackson's interpretations: exactly how mediocre, really, was New Zealand churchgoing?⁸

Governments and the measurement of churchgoing

From 1874 to 1926 the New Zealand census collected information about places of worship. Why the government took this step, mandated by the Census Act of 1858, is unclear. The census also collected – as today's census continues to collect – information on the religious denomination of individual New Zealanders, which provided a wealth of detail about religion in this country. Why, then, did they also want data about religious worship? 'Churches, Chapels, and other Places of Worship' appeared in Schedule B of the Census Act alongside a diverse range of 'Establishments or Institutions' about which the authorities were empowered to obtain 'important statistical information': 'Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums, Dispensaries, and other Charitable Institutions; Savings Banks; Friendly and Benevolent Societies; Land and Building Societies, and similar Associations; Mechanics Institutes, and other Literary or Scientific Institutions; and Manufactories, Mills, Works, Mines and Quarries.'⁹ Taken together, they provided some measure of the social, cultural and industrial development of the colony; the inclusion of places of worship suggests an attempt to measure also New Zealand's spiritual, or perhaps moral, development.

There were some precedents for collecting data on church attendance within New Zealand prior to the 1858 Census Act. In the early colonial period the Blue Books of information collected for the British authorities included, within the 'Ecclesiastical Return', details of each church and chapel, among them the 'number of persons generally attending'.¹⁰ As Jackson pointed out, many of the church attendance statistics in the Blue Books are suspiciously rounded; they are certainly less reliable than the later census data.¹¹ After provincial government came along in the early 1850s, some of the provinces also collected church attendance statistics. For instance, Nelson province published the 'average congregation attending' in its return of churches and chapels as part of its statistics for 1854.¹² Provincial governments undoubtedly had an interest in knowing the religious affiliation of their residents, for they sometimes gave grants towards the building of churches, dividing the allocated funds between the various denominations according to their strength within the population.¹³ Why some collected data on church attendance in addition to religious affiliation is unclear, although it did, of course, demonstrate whether any funds allocated had resulted in well-attended places of worship.

When including churches in the architecture of the census, the New Zealand legislators of 1858 probably had in mind the recent British 1851 census of places of religious worship, though the ‘motherland’ had collected this data in very different circumstances. The British government provided funding for its established churches (Anglican in England and Wales; Presbyterian in Scotland) and therefore had a vested interest in how the churches operated. Victorian-era censuses of Britain did not, like their New Zealand counterparts, collect information on religious affiliation from individuals, perhaps because all residents supposedly had an affiliation to the established church. Instead, officials decided, as the fashion for statistics grew, to measure religion in Britain through a census of churchgoing.¹⁴

The 1851 results came as a shock to the established churches: if the census was intended to prove them the churches of the majority, it failed. Many people were not at church on census Sunday, while those that did attend were most likely to be at ‘non-conformist’ services. In England, just under half of the total census attendances were Anglican.¹⁵ In Scotland, only 32% of churchgoers attended the Church of Scotland; an equivalent proportion attended the Free Church of Scotland, which had broken away from the established church just eight years earlier.¹⁶ The strength of religious dissent shown in this census was a powerful argument in the armoury of those who opposed established religion. It is unsurprising, therefore, that British authorities never repeated the census of places of worship. In the 1850s, though, the New Zealand government did not know that this was to prove a one-off event, and if Britain repeated this census, New Zealand would want similar data for comparative purposes.

The very fact that the New Zealand government census collected and published data about religion from two different sources – places of worship and individuals – over a 50-year period suggests that the authorities saw information about religion as valuable. It was, however, an obvious extravagance to double up in this way, so it is unsurprising that the surveying of places of worship was quietly dropped from the Census and Statistics Act of 1926. The new act modified census practice in the interests of efficiency and economy: the Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs reported that this new legislation ‘simplifies procedure and enables circumlocution to be avoided’.¹⁷

Results of the 1874–1926 censuses of churchgoing

If the rationale behind the collection of churchgoing data in New Zealand is not entirely clear, its value to historians is obvious: the long series of statistics provides an intriguing insight into the overall development of religious practice in this country. Although many churches collected their

own statistics for their own purposes, there is a special value in the census data because it collected data on *all* places of worship, without discrimination. Furthermore, this was part of a larger project, which provides very detailed population counts, both by geography and by religious affiliation, allowing for relatively sophisticated analyses. That does not mean interpretation is straightforward: indeed, there are numerous difficulties in making good sense of the results.

As the original returns were later discarded, all analysis depends on the published summary tables. A fire destroyed the 1901 returns before they were fully processed, leaving us with details of places of worship from 11 censuses. In 1874 there were counts of the buildings used for public worship, along with the number of people they could accommodate and the number usually attending services. Further information was added in later years, including what buildings were made of, the time of day of the largest service, the numbers of people in the district who attended and the numbers of Sunday school pupils and teachers. The data was collected locally from leaders of individual congregations rather than through national church authorities; no schedules for this part of the census have survived.¹⁸

The long series of raw numbers reveals steady growth in attendance until the 1920s, with a small drop between 1921 and 1926 (see Figure 1, p.120). Of course the population was also growing, so we need to measure these numbers as a proportion of the population. Proportionately, church attendance grew steadily over the first half of the period, and declined steadily thereafter (see Figure 2, p.120).¹⁹ Although this paper concentrates on the statistics at a national level, the census tables also provided counts by denomination and by geographical location (initially for region only; counties together with their internal boroughs were included from 1891 and there were separate county and borough figures for 1921 and 1926). As Table 1 (p.127) reveals, there was considerable variation in church attendance between regions. The residents of Westland topped the table for churchgoing by 1896, and at the final census of places of worship, in 1926, they were more than twice as likely to attend church as people living in the Wellington and Auckland regions (Auckland was then an enormous district incorporating the entire upper half of the North Island).

The various religious denominations also had varied patterns of churchgoing. Anglicans were the largest denomination in New Zealand (as measured by household census returns), but as Table 2 (p.128) shows, by 1891 there were more Presbyterian than Anglican churchgoers, and Catholics also outnumbered Anglicans for churchgoing in 1921. When the number of churchgoers for each denomination is measured against the number of

census affiliates for that denomination, it becomes clear that Anglicans were by far the least diligent of New Zealand's largest denominations in attending worship (see Table 3, p.129). The variation in churchgoing by denomination helps explain the regional variations in churchgoing, for each church had its own distinctive geography. The census only published data on denominational churchgoing at a national level, but a quick comparison with the general census results on religious affiliation reveals some correspondences. Most obviously, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that Westland, which had high rates of churchgoing, was also far more Catholic than other regions of New Zealand.

Those interpreting the attendance statistics have analyzed them, as in Figure 2, against the total non-Māori population. Jackson stated that the census counted 'European places of worship' and that it was 'unlikely that significant numbers of Maoris were included in the returns'.²⁰ I am not entirely convinced of this. Without the enumerators' instructions we cannot be sure, but there are some clues. In 1926, just ten months after T.W. Rātana declared the existence of a separate Rātana Church, the census recorded 1720 people attending Rātana services, though only 193 non-Māori New Zealanders recorded their religious affiliation as Rātana that year and the Government Statistician described it as 'purely a Maori organisation'. These attendances presumably included some of the more than 10,000 Māori Rātana census affiliates. The Government Statistician was unclear himself as to whether Māori were included in the worship data that year. In the general report he measured the total church accommodation against the total population, including Māori, but measured the total church attendance against the non-Māori population only.²¹

Another denomination numerically dominated by Māori was the Church of Latter Day Saints, or Mormons. In 1926, 85% of its census affiliates were Māori. Mormons first appear in the worship statistics in 1911. The figures for 1916 and 1921, where there were more worshippers than non-Māori census affiliates, suggest that some Māori churchgoers were being counted in these returns. But we should note, also, that no Mormon places of worship were counted prior to 1911, although the church's own missionaries recorded, as early as 1884, 11 Māori branches with 810 church members.²²

The worship returns for districts with high Māori populations hold further clues. It appears that in some years and in some counties the figures must have included Māori, and in others they must not. Waiapu – an East Coast county where three-quarters of the residents were Māori in 1906 – is a striking example of this (see Figure 3, p.121). In 1891 no places of worship were recorded there; the 1896 and 1906 censuses recorded more churchgoers than

non-Māori residents; there were very low numbers from 1911 to 1921, then a sudden increase in 1926. The most likely explanation for this huge variation is the alternating exclusion and inclusion of Māori churchgoers in the count.

On careful analysis, I believe we cannot state that the overall worship figures either included or excluded Māori: some Māori churchgoers and congregations were included while others were not, and there were probably more Māori included in the later censuses. If we measure church attendances against the total population including Māori, they drop a percentage point or two; the actual number probably fell somewhere between these two sets of figures.

An issue with much larger numerical implications is whether or not the statistics included children. Like other recent colonies, New Zealand had a youthful population: in 1874, 42% of the non-Māori population was under the age of 15.²³ Children attended church less often than adults: when very young they often remained at home, and many older children attended Sunday school rather than church. We do not know whether these statistics include children attending Sunday school, though it is unlikely that they did so from 1911, when the returns for places of worship gave separate figures for Sunday school attendance. Incidentally, prior to 1911 the census collected data on Sunday schools from household census returns; these revealed that over half of non-Māori New Zealand school-age children attended Sunday school. Based on anecdotal evidence and an 1882 Auckland survey (of which more below), I believe that there would have been some children counted in the church attendance figures, but they would have been a reasonably low proportion of the New Zealand child population. We can measure the usual attenders as a proportion of the adult population: the ‘true’ proportion of adult New Zealanders usually attending church probably lies somewhere between the calculations for the total population and those for the adult population (see Figures 4 and 5, pp.121-2).

‘Usual’ attendance

One critical issue remains in the basic interpretation of these statistics: what does ‘usually attending’ mean? Internationally, one popular measure of church attendance recorded the number of people present at all services on a particular day. The problem with this measure was that some people attended church twice and were counted twice, making it a record of attendances rather than attenders. The other popular method was to record the number present at one service only. This overcame the problem of counting the same person twice, but failed to count some people at all. It undercounted Catholics in particular, because many Catholic churches held a succession of masses

on Sunday morning.²⁴ Accurately recording the number of ‘twicers’ was a labour-intensive exercise, seldom carried out. A turn-of-the-century census found that around 39% of churchgoers in a sample of London churches were ‘twicers’.²⁵ Access to church services was easy in a large city like London; we might expect the number of twicers to be smaller in locations like rural New Zealand.

Authorities resorted to various formulae to come up with an estimate of individuals attending Sunday services. Horace Mann, architect of the 1851 religious census of Britain, calculated individual attendances as the total morning attendances plus one-third of the evening attendances.²⁶ New Zealand denominations, when collecting their own statistics, carried out similar manipulations. For instance, the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand instructed churches ‘to add one-third to the average attendance in good weather’.²⁷

Until 1916, the New Zealand census worship returns reported the ‘numbers usually attending’ and, as the Registrar-General commented, this might be ‘made up in different ways by the several denominations’.²⁸ From 1916, the report was more precise: the census recorded the number ‘usually present at the largest attended service of the day’. As Michael Papesch noted in his fine 1983 honours dissertation, the difference in the census attendance returns between 1911 and 1916 was very small, suggesting most of the returns had previously been those for the largest service anyway.²⁹ If the census always measured the attendance at the largest service, it undercounted fairly significantly the number of individuals attending.

The census authorities evidently found all this uncertainty unsatisfactory. In 1921 they added a further question, in an attempt ‘to elicit ... the number of persons who more or less regularly attended service’.³⁰ Congregations had to return, in addition to the numbers usually attending the largest service of the day, the number of persons in their district who attended services. Sadly, this proved too much for many officials, with around 10% of all congregations – and close to 20% of Anglican congregations – failing to answer the new question.³¹ Nevertheless, the results provide an estimate of total individual churchgoers in New Zealand in the 1920s, provided we adjust them by adding the average figure for those congregations which gave no returns. The 1926 figures suggest around half of all New Zealand church attenders were at the largest service of the day on any given Sunday; in 1921 the figure was a little higher (see Table 4, p.130).³²

The difficulty some church officials had in answering the question on the total number of attenders in their district reflected, in part, their failure to acknowledge the large number of occasional churchgoers. As Papesch

comments, church leaders sometimes overestimated the level of non-attendance: they assumed that ‘those who attended church did so every week and those who did not attend that week did not attend at all’.³³ This is a trap that historians fall into as well. Erik Olssen, for example, wrote in the *Oxford History of New Zealand* that ‘the 1881 census revealed that more than 70% of the population did not attend church’.³⁴ It would be more accurate to say that the 1881 census revealed that more than 70% of the population did not attend church *on any particular Sunday* (and the figure reduces to ‘more than 50%’ if we calculate it for adults only).

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to show that many New Zealanders attended church less often than weekly; this of course reduced the size of the usual congregation. William and Jeannie Muir were extremely devout Christians who lived at a farm south of Matura from the 1860s. These are just the sort of people we might expect to be weekly churchgoers, but the demands of the farm and seven children meant somebody needed to stay and ‘keep house’ on Sundays: husband and wife took turns and attended church week about.³⁵

Hard evidence of irregular churchgoing can be found in the service books of Anglican churches, some of which record church attendance.³⁶ These reveal enormous variability in the weekly Sunday attendance in every parish and at every period. The figures for four southern churches in 1881 (see Figure 6, p.123) show that the liturgical year had some influence, with large congregations at Christmas, which fell on a Sunday that year, and Easter. At Green Island, harvest thanksgiving proved more popular than Easter, and at Tapanui it was visiting clergy who attracted the largest congregations. All of these churches had very small congregations on 26 June, when there was heavy snow throughout the south.

A sample of four churches from 1911 (see Figure 7, p.124) shows even more variation from Sunday to Sunday. There may have been a core of people who attended church each week, but there was also a significant group who came less often. The usual number of worshippers each Sunday clearly did not reflect the number of individuals who passed the church threshold from time to time through the year.

The response of the churches

The various churches had varied responses to the results of the census of places of public worship, just as they had varied patterns of church attendance. Some took more interest in numbers than others. Methodists and Presbyterians were especially prone to measuring things: both churches had national statistical committees. At the 1923 Methodist conference the

General Statistical Secretary, Reverend Rugby Pratt, produced a 'Special Report on Government Census'. This focused on the household returns on religion rather than the census of places of worship, comparing the results with the church's own returns of attendance at worship. It expressed concern for the 'thousands of non-churchgoing Methodists who are not under our pastoral care', and noted that the government figures revealed that the growth of Methodism was not keeping pace with the growth of the New Zealand population. Such findings spurred the mission activity of the church.³⁷

Presbyterian clergy interpreted census worship statistics with slightly more optimism; their comments on the issue also appeared more frequently in the public press. In 1893, Reverend David Sidey's official report on statistics pointed out that allowance needed to be made 'for young children, and for persons whose avocations (household or otherwise) prevent them attending public worship'. Nevertheless, he was deeply concerned about the 266,488 people he estimated from the 1891 census to 'belong to no church whatever'.³⁸ Reverend Robert Wood's comments on the 1906 census results carried a warning that to assume that all those New Zealanders not counted in the worship census were 'outside the churches' was 'a very serious error'. He expressed concern for those who failed to attend church, but believed their numbers were much smaller than some had proclaimed: his comments were in response to an official Presbyterian report he believed had interpreted the census thoughtlessly and was 'an absurd exaggeration of the evil of non-churchgoing'.³⁹ A newspaper article on the 1916 census results by an anonymous Presbyterian minister – possibly Wood again – also suggested that the church attendance figures were 'not so disquieting and alarming as they seem. The total worshippers are never all present.'⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the other two large religious denominations made little comment on the census figures on public worship, either publicly or in their own reports and publications. The Catholic newspaper, the *New Zealand Tablet*, did publish a brief report on the results of the 1906 census, noting Catholics' high place when the major churches were ranked according to the proportion of their census adherents attending services: 'Roman Catholics are second on the list, the Church of England last, and the pushful Methodist a good first.' The paper also noted, though, that comparisons like this needed to be taken cautiously, due to uncertainty about how each church had calculated its returns.⁴¹ Immediately below this article appeared a piece on official statistics of the religions of criminal offenders, claiming 'the "Catholic" totals are swelled by the false declarations of non-Catholic criminals'.⁴² This may have been

a conspiracy theory, but it was one which promoted scepticism about government statistics.

Both *Tablet* articles revealed something important about New Zealand society: the various churches were competing for authority in a culture more dominated by religious sectarianism than by secularism. This was the environment which led to a secular public education system, mainly for fear of favouring one religion over another. For better or worse, the statistics invited comparison between the denominations. Presbyterians could take pride in their position as the largest body of churchgoers, while in the *Tablet* articles Catholics celebrated their diligence in attending worship and downplayed their contribution to the crime rate. The census revealed the wide spread of churches in New Zealand: ‘already in New Zealand we have a fairly varied assortment of the “fancy religions”’, commented the *Tablet*.⁴³ The survey of church attendance, in bringing down the ranking of this country’s largest denomination, the Anglican Church, further emphasized this diversity of religion and encouraged non-Anglican New Zealanders to feel they held a significant place in this country.

Not surprisingly, Anglicans avoided any public comment on the churchgoing statistics revealed in the census. Just as the 1851 census of public worship in Britain had proved an embarrassment to the established Church of England, its colonial offshoot fared poorly, when compared with other denominations, in the results of New Zealand’s 1874 to 1926 censuses of places of worship. Tellingly, Anglicans lobbied for the removal of the question about the number of people usually attending services from the census. At their national synod in 1911, a few months after the latest census, Archdeacon Coley Harper claimed that this question was ‘useless as a guide to the number of people who attend the services of the Church’ and could serve no purpose ‘except to allow those who wished to draw invidious comparisons between the different religious institutions to do so’. Archdeacon Thomas Fancourt suggested ‘the State had no right to this information ... They might well ask whether this was not a piece of tyranny or something designed to create an unhealthy rivalry between the different religious bodies in New Zealand.’ The synod voted unanimously that the Bishop should bring this matter before the Minister of Internal Affairs.⁴⁴ If such a meeting went ahead it had no discernible effect. It probably did not help the Anglican cause that the minister, David Buddo, was a devout Presbyterian, as was the Government Statistician, Malcolm Fraser.⁴⁵ The antagonism of many Anglican clergy towards the churchgoing census helps explain their higher rate of failure to provide the full data requested.

How did New Zealand compare?

At the core of Jackson's assertion that New Zealanders were 'mediocre' churchgoers is a comparison with Britain and Australia. He compared the New Zealand census figures of the 1880s with the British census of 1851, arguing that there was little change in attendances in the UK between 1851 and the 1880s. Some more recent British studies are less confident of such stability. Robin Gill, for instance, suggests that between the 1850s and 1880s there was a pattern of Free Church increase and Anglican decline, while Callum Brown notes a decline in churchgoing of around 20–30% in some towns during this period.⁴⁶ Thanks to a fashion for newspaper censuses of churchgoing, there is a rich source of data on urban attendance in early 1880s Britain. 142 different towns conducted these surveys and a census carried out by Auckland's *Evening Star* newspaper in 1882 allows us to compare like with like.⁴⁷

Hugh Jackson referred to the *Star* census briefly, as evidence of the accuracy of the government census of places of worship, but it is much more valuable than that. It was carefully conducted; recorded each separate service; provided separate counts for men, women and children; and published the detailed returns for each place of worship (see Figure 8, p.125, for a sample of the data collected). The census was conducted on Easter Sunday 1882 and, since wet and stormy weather that evening reduced attendance, repeated two weeks later. The census counted just over a quarter of urban Auckland's residents in church on each of the two Sunday mornings, as well as 17% on the stormy Sunday evening and 23% on the fine Sunday evening (see Table 5, p.130). Adults were greater attenders than children, with around 30% at church in the morning, and a similar number on the fine evening. The *Star* concluded that the people of Auckland were, contrary to prevailing belief, 'exemplary churchgoers'.⁴⁸

Although I have not been able to access the data of all the British newspaper censuses of the 1880s, we can compare the Auckland figures with those of many towns 'in the home country'. Most of these studies detailed total attendances, both morning and evening, as a percentage of the total population. As the ranked list in Table 6 (pp.131-2) demonstrates, Auckland had every reason to be proud of its church attendance. Available figures of worship censuses of Scottish towns only recorded the largest service of the day; we can extract comparable information from the *Star* census and, again, as Table 7 (p.132) reveals, Auckland compared well. We should not read too much into these comparisons; the Auckland counts show how variable attendance could be on different dates. But measuring the Auckland surveys against similar 1880s censuses is certainly fairer than Jackson's measurement of the New Zealand government census figures of the 1880s – which may

have counted either the largest service of the day, or all attendances, or some mixture of both – against the British census of 1851.

Jackson did better when he compared the New Zealand and Australian churchgoing statistics. Long series of statistics are available for New South Wales and Victoria, though they do not extend beyond the turn of the century. There are some difficulties comparing these figures: some have the vague ‘usual attenders’ tag, some count only those at the principal service of the day, and the later figures for Victoria measure the ‘approximate number of distinct individuals’ attending services, which boosted the numbers.

The figures do indicate, though, that fewer New Zealanders than Victorians attended church; the New Zealand figures are reasonably close to New South Wales through the 1880s and 1890s (see Figure 9, p.126). Rather than classing New Zealanders as poor church attenders, we should perhaps ask what made Victorians such high attenders. As Jackson suggests, differing denominational profiles provide some explanation. Victoria had fewer Anglicans and Anglicans dragged down total churchgoing rates.⁴⁹

Better than mediocre?

In conclusion, I return to a basic question: how many New Zealanders attended church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? As this possibly bewildering array of statistics has shown, answering this question is not straightforward. I estimate close to a third of adult New Zealanders could be found in the biggest service of the day on any given Sunday in the late nineteenth century, dropping off to around a quarter in the 1920s. Perhaps 10% or so of adults not present at that service attended an alternative service on the same day. Many of the 40–70% of adults not in church on any given Sunday would be surprised to learn that this made them, in the eyes of some scholars, secular or uninterested in religion. A significant proportion of them would be at worship the following week, or the following month, or on a couple of special occasions through the year. These estimates are based on the best evidence available: the census returns and the *Star* survey of 1882. I have taken the reasonably conservative measure of a halfway point between the assumptions that the census attendance figures include or do not include Māori, and a halfway point between the assumptions that they include or do not include children.

Any other voluntary organization would have been overwhelmed by this level of support from New Zealanders. Most churches, though, had high expectations: many clergy would have preferred all New Zealanders to attend church every Sunday. This clearly swayed their reactions to census results. While the *Star* commended Aucklanders as ‘exemplary

churchgoers', Reverend G.B. Munro of St Luke's Presbyterian Church, Remuera, bewailed the 'deplorable state of matters' revealed by the *Star's* figures.⁵⁰ Pronouncements like this should not fool us into thinking that New Zealanders were especially derelict in their spiritual activities. Comparatively speaking, New Zealanders of the late nineteenth century attended church less diligently than their neighbours in two of the Australian colonies, but by British standards they were good churchgoers. Indeed, Aucklanders of the 1880s were more likely to attend church than the residents of many English and Scottish towns.

Jackson developed various theories to account for his assertion that New Zealanders were 'mediocre' church attenders: the social composition of the settlers; their place of origin within Britain; greater social homogeneity weakening religious belonging; the process of migration and resettlement; and frequent geographical mobility. He was also suspicious of the 'calibre and supply of ministers'.⁵¹ That New Zealanders in fact achieved good churchgoing rates in the face of such barriers makes those rates all the more impressive. Perhaps some of these influences were actually encouragements rather than discouragements of churchgoing. For instance, the experiences of migration and geographical mobility may have inspired people to attend their local church in order to interact with their new community; the familiar rituals of worship could also be a comfort for people dislocated in other ways from their culture of origin.

As John Stenhouse has pointed out in recent years, in the later decades of the twentieth century New Zealand historiography was dominated by a nationalist and secular framework that tended to downplay the role of religion in our history.⁵² This was the intellectual milieu in which Hugh Jackson, located in the Auckland department led by Keith Sinclair, researched and wrote about churchgoing in New Zealand. It is long past time for us to drop his 'mediocre' label and attribute more significance to Sunday worship in New Zealand history. In the 52-year period covered by the government census of places of worship, many New Zealanders attended church, either regularly or occasionally, and this undoubtedly helped shape our society and culture. At Sunday worship people gathered together in communities. They were exposed to a range of sensory experiences, including a wide array of music and, in some churches, impressive architecture, together with works of art in stained glass and church furnishings. Churchgoers heard and spoke words from the bible, hymns and in many cases the prayer book; these sources had a deep impact on our literature, as on all Western literature.

Not to be dismissed, either, is the impact of messages from the pulpit. Clergy were among the most educated people in many communities during

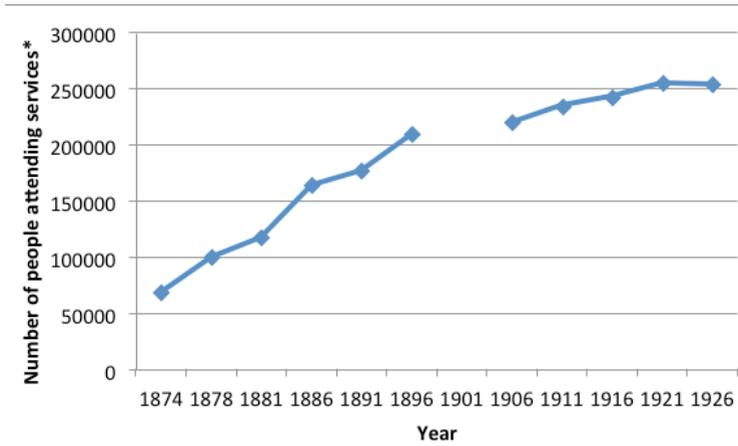
this era, and churchgoers took notice of their views on the social and political issues of the day. Many sermons and other talks by clergy appeared in newspapers and some survive as manuscripts in archives. Rutherford Waddell's 1888 sermon on 'the sin of cheapness', which spoke of sweated labour in Dunedin, famously pricked the social conscience of a nation; this sermon has received significant attention from scholars.⁵³ Other preachers may not have been so articulate or so socially radical; but week by week, their views influenced the thinking of the people in the pews. Their sermons, too, deserve the attention of anybody wanting to understand our social and political history.

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FIGURES AND TABLES

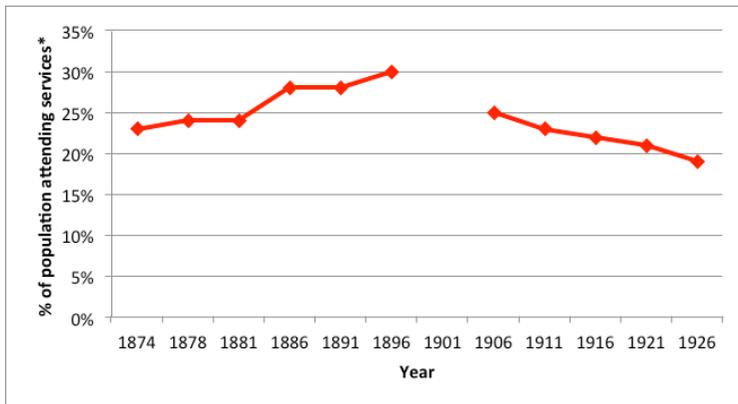
Figure 1: Church attendance in New Zealand, 1874–1926



*For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926.*

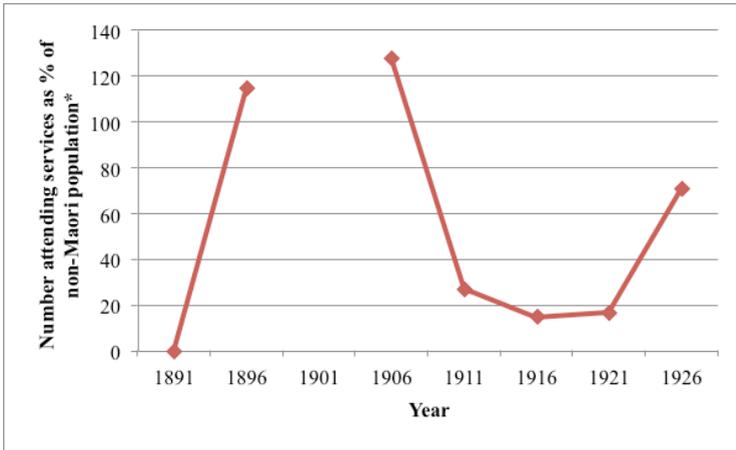
Figure 2: Census church attendance as percentage of total non-Māori population, 1874–1926



*For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926.*

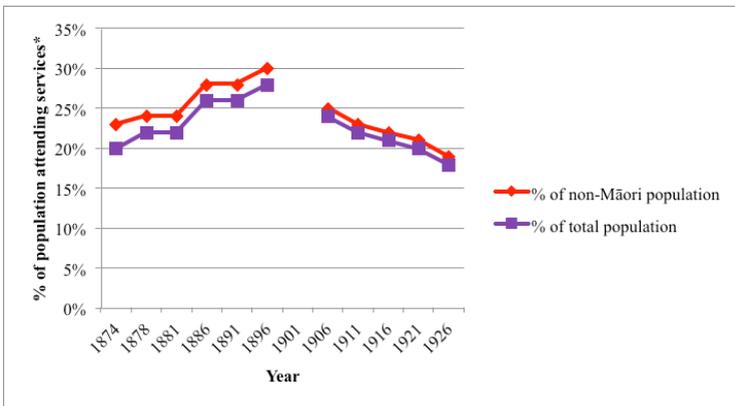
Figure 3: Church attendance in Waiapu County, 1891–1926



*For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1891–1926.*

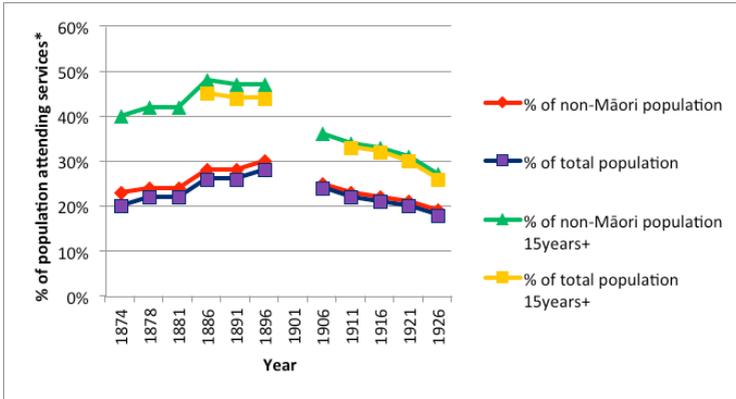
Figure 4: Census church attendance as percentage of total population, compared with percentage of non-Māori population, 1874–1926



*For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1891–1926.*

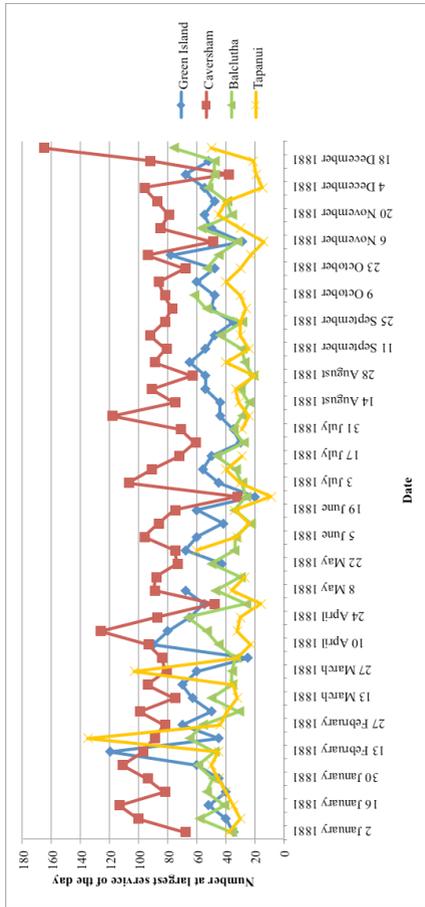
Figure 5: Census church attendance, percentage of adult population versus total population, 1874–1926



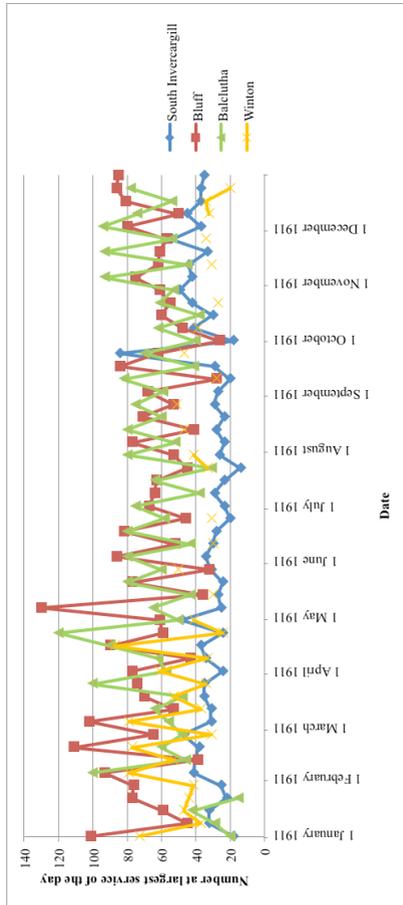
*For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1891–1926.*

Figure 6: Attendance at the largest Sunday service in four Anglican churches, 1881



Sources: St Mark’s Anglican Church, Green Island, vestry book 1878–1885, MS-1886/014; St Peter’s Anglican Church, Caversham, service record book 1877–1884, AG-040/020; St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha, register of services 1876–1883, AG-519/022; All Saints Anglican Church, Tapanui, register of services 1878–1891, AG-221-04; all held at the Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

Figure 7: Attendance at the largest Sunday service in four Anglican churches, 1911

Sources: St Aidan's Anglican Church, South Invercargill, register of services 1910–1924, MS-2217/004; St Matthew's Anglican Church, Bluff, vestry book 1910–1918, AG-717-4/02; St Mark's Anglican Church, Balclutha, register of services 1908–1919, AG-519/039; Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Winton, register of services 1910–1923, MS-2358/006; all held at the Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

Figure 8: A small sample of the data published in the *Evening Star* census of church attendance in Auckland, 1882

Church of England

MORNING SERVICE:

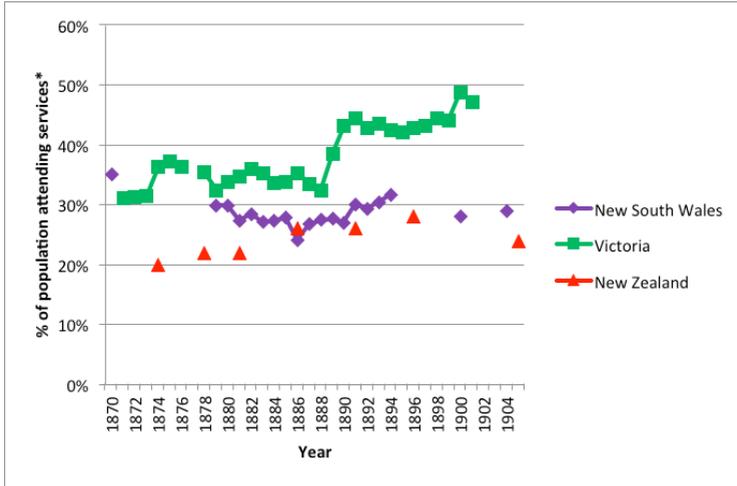
| Church. | Preacher. | M. | W. | C. | Tl. |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----|------|-----|------|
| St. Paul's | Nelson | 147 | 172 | 127 | 446 |
| St. Mary's, Parnell | Penny | 150 | 144 | 144 | 438 |
| St. Matthew's | Burrows | 171 | 168 | 193 | 532 |
| All Saints' | Bice | 100 | 117 | 131 | 348 |
| St. Thomas's | Edwards | 38 | 46 | 51 | 135 |
| St. Sepulchre's | Bice | 136 | 201 | 202 | 539 |
| St. Sepulchre's | Early Sacra. | 30 | 40 | – | 70 |
| St. Mark's | Pritt | 51 | 67 | 29 | 147 |
| Trinity Church, North Shore | Maunsell | 48 | 88 | 81 | 217 |
| Epiphany Ch. | Sloman | 23 | 24 | 24 | 71 |
| | Totals | 894 | 1067 | 982 | 2943 |

EVENING SERVICE:

| Church. | Preacher. | M. | W. | C. | Tl. |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| St. Paul's | Nelson | 106 | 116 | 24 | 246 |
| St. Mary's, Parnell | Walsh | 88 | 92 | 10 | 190 |
| St. Matthew's | Bispham | 140 | 157 | 14 | 311 |
| All Saints' | Bice | 86 | 95 | 21 | 202 |
| St. Thomas's | Edwards | 36 | 55 | 18 | 109 |
| St. Sepulchre's | Penny | 135 | 169 | 55 | 359 |
| St. Mark's | Pritt | 44 | 49 | 11 | 104 |
| Trinity Church, North Shore | Maunsell | 43 | 52 | 14 | 109 |
| Epiphany Church | Haselden | 22 | 32 | 3 | 57 |
| | Totals | 700 | 817 | 170 | 1687 |

Source: *Evening Star*, 12 April 1882, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

Figure 9: Church attendance as percentage of population in New Zealand, New South Wales and Victoria, 1869–1906



Sources: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1906*; *New South Wales Statistical Register, 1890–1894*; *Statistical Register of Victoria, 1888–1900*; Walter Phillips, ‘Religious profession and practice in New South Wales, 1850–1901: the statistical evidence’, *Historical Studies*, 15 (1972), pp.378–400; Walter Phillips, ‘Statistics on churchgoing and Sunday school attendance in Victoria, 1851–1901’, *Australian Historical Statistics*, 5 (May 1982), pp.27–40. Australian percentages are calculated using total population figures from Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012006?OpenDocument>

Table 1: Total church attendance as percentage of total population by region, 1874–1926

| | 1874 | 1878 | 1881 | 1886 | 1891 | 1896 | 1906 | 1911 | 1916 | 1921 | 1926 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Auckland | | | 25.70% | 23.35% | 25.12% | 20.62% | 18.71% | 17.64% | 17.28% | 16.32% | |
| Taranaki | | | 20.62% | 21.31% | 21.74% | 23.52% | 18.83% | 19.61% | 19.07% | 17.82% | |
| Hawke's Bay | | | 23.24% | 21.34% | 30.52% | 22.14% | 21.97% | 21.38% | 21.74% | 17.65% | |
| Wellington | | | 24.65% | 25.21% | 25.38% | 19.65% | 20.90% | 16.99% | 18.97% | 16.05% | |
| North Island | 18.28% | 21.31% | 21.43% | | | | | | | | |
| Manitowangi | 24.29% | 18.83% | 19.29% | 27.01% | 25.37% | 26.12% | 24.29% | 22.44% | 28.39% | 20.52% | 23.54% |
| Nelson | 14.37% | 20.02% | 23.57% | 26.04% | 25.42% | 29.31% | 23.45% | 21.92% | 22.41% | 20.46% | 21.70% |
| Westland | 18.08% | 21.22% | 26.97% | 31.81% | 27.83% | 34.37% | 34.12% | 32.01% | 31.53% | 23.78% | 32.92% |
| Canterbury | 26.89% | 25.66% | 24.90% | 27.39% | 32.33% | 31.17% | 26.65% | 23.20% | 26.11% | 21.94% | 19.15% |
| Otago | | | | | | | 27.36% | 30.66% | 28.31% | 23.98% | 20.18% |
| Southland | | | | | | | 29.85% | 23.43% | 25.47% | 25.85% | 23.40% |
| Otago/Southland | 20.09% | 20.84% | 20.23% | 28.38% | 27.92% | 31.60% | | | | | |

For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day. Figures cannot be calculated for the separate North Island regions prior to 1886 as regional Maori population figures are not available. Separate attendance figures are not available for Otago and Southland until 1906.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926*.

Table 2: Attendances at the nine largest churches as percentage of total church attendances, 1874–1926

| | 1874 | 1878 | 1881 | 1886 | 1891 | 1896 | 1906 | 1911 | 1916 | 1921 | 1926 |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Presbyterian | 26.81% | 25.47% | 24.83% | 24.22% | 23.04% | 23.24% | 23.65% | 23.51% | 25.01% | 23.36% | 25.40% |
| Anglican | 28.80% | 28.80% | 27.44% | 24.63% | 21.04% | 22.94% | 22.68% | 22.66% | 22.62% | 22.28% | 23.10% |
| Roman Catholic | 15.86% | 13.45% | 16.47% | 15.82% | 17.24% | 17.20% | 18.85% | 20.49% | 22.18% | 22.80% | 21.73% |
| Methodist | 21.70% | 22.70% | 20.41% | 18.00% | 20.11% | 19.60% | 18.81% | 19.61% | 17.27% | 15.61% | 13.50% |
| Salvation Army | | | | 6.93% | 8.16% | 7.52% | 4.64% | 3.47% | 2.88% | 3.57% | 3.77% |
| Baptist | 2.33% | 2.30% | 2.20% | 3.09% | 2.83% | 2.69% | 3.19% | 2.57% | 2.48% | 2.72% | 2.91% |
| Brethren | | | 0.61% | 0.83% | 0.49% | 0.98% | 1.96% | 1.52% | 2.52% | 2.80% | 2.90% |
| Congregational | 1.65% | 2.91% | 2.89% | 2.90% | 2.09% | 1.66% | 1.85% | 1.80% | 1.34% | 1.18% | 1.43% |
| Church of Christ | 0.57% | 0.62% | 0.99% | 0.79% | 1.60% | 1.41% | 1.66% | 1.59% | 1.29% | 1.22% | 1.11% |

For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926*.

Table 3. Church attendance of the nine largest churches as percentage of non-Māori census affiliates, 1874–1926

| | 1874 | 1878 | 1881 | 1886 | 1891 | 1896 | 1906 | 1911 | 1916 | 1921 | 1926 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Salvation Army | | | | 216% | 154% | 150% | 122% | 84% | 70% | 79% | 78% |
| Brethren | | | | 43% | 24% | 41% | 55% | 45% | 63% | 65% | 57% |
| Congregational | 21% | 53% | 51% | 61% | 55% | 51% | 55% | 48% | 40% | 38% | 50% |
| Church of Christ | 35% | 40% | 49% | 32% | 54% | 51% | 52% | 41% | 34% | 36% | 35% |
| Baptist | 25% | 25% | 23% | 35% | 34% | 35% | 40% | 30% | 29% | 35% | 34% |
| Roman Catholic | 27% | 23% | 28% | 32% | 35% | 37% | 33% | 34% | 36% | 36% | 32% |
| Methodist | 60% | 60% | 52% | 53% | 56% | 56% | 47% | 49% | 40% | 36% | 28% |
| Presbyterian | 26% | 27% | 26% | 30% | 29% | 30% | 26% | 24% | 23% | 20% | 20% |
| Anglican | 16% | 17% | 16% | 18% | 15% | 17% | 14% | 13% | 12% | 11% | 11% |

For 1916–1926 the figures are for attendance at the largest service of the day. Religious affiliations for Māori were not collected until the 1926 census, so are not used in this table.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926.*

Table 4: Numbers in district attending versus attendance at largest service, 1921–1926

| Year | Number in district attending* (number at largest service) | % of non-Māori population | % of total population | % of non-Māori population 15 years+ | % of total population 15 years+ |
|------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1921 | 482,586 (257,484) | 40 (22) | 38 (20) | 58 (31) | 56 (30) |
| 1926 | 509,471 (258,055) | 38 (19) | 36 (18) | 54 (27) | 52 (26) |

*This number has been adjusted upwards to take account of the 10% or so of congregations who did not return a figure for ‘number in district attending’: for each incomplete return the national average per congregation has been added. There is no particular reason to think small congregations were less likely to complete the return; in fact the opposite may have been true.

Source: *Results of a Census of the Dominion of New Zealand, 1821–1926.*

Table 5: Percentages of total population attending church in Auckland, 1882 *Evening Star* census

| Category | 9 April – morning | 9 April – evening | 23 April – morning | 23 April – evening |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Children (12 and under) | 22 | 5 | 23 | 11 |
| Men | 31 | 23 | 27 | 27 |
| Women | 30 | 23 | 30 | 32 |
| Total | 28 | 17 | 26 | 23 |

Sources: *Evening Star*, 12 April 1882 and 24 April 1882; total population statistics from *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1881*, and ‘Census of the Maori population, 1881’, *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1881 Session 1, G-3, p.13. The area included in the survey approximated the boroughs of Auckland and Parnell plus Eden county. As age-specific Māori figures are not so detailed, it has been necessary to include Māori aged 14 and under, rather than 12 and under, in the child category. In view of the small numbers involved this does not have a significant impact on the totals.

Table 6: All church attendances as percentage of total population, 1880s newspaper censuses

| Town | % of population |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Bath | 61 |
| Scarborough | 58 |
| Peterborough | 55 |
| Bristol | 54 |
| Gloucester | 52 |
| Auckland (23 April 1882) | 49 |
| Ipswich | 48 |
| Hastings | 46 |
| Auckland (9 April 1882) | 44 |
| Southampton | 42 |
| Hull | 42 |
| Coventry | 39 |
| Northampton | 39 |
| Leicester | 39 |
| Barnsley | 38 |
| Darlington | 37 |
| Wolverhampton | 37 |
| Derby | 37 |
| Portsmouth & Gosport | 36 |
| Burnley | 36 |
| Bolton | 35 |
| Barrow | 34 |
| Rotherham | 33 |
| Liverpool | 33 |
| Stockton | 32 |
| Bradford | 32 |
| Nottingham | 32 |
| Warrington | 31 |
| London | 29 |
| Sheffield | 29 |
| Bradford | 29 |
| The Potteries | 28 |

| | |
|--------|----|
| Hanley | 17 |
| Widnes | 14 |

Sources: *Evening Star*, 12 April 1882 and 24 April 1882; Hugh McLeod, 'Class, Community and Region: The Religious Geography of Nineteenth-Century England', in Michael Hill, ed., *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain: 6*, London, 1973, pp.29–72; Robin Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited*, Aldershot, 2003, p.57.

Table 7: Attendance at largest service as percentage of total population, 1880s newspaper censuses

| Town | % of population |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Brechin | 33 |
| Montrose | 27 |
| Auckland (23 April 1882) | 26 |
| Auckland (9 April 1882) | 24 |
| Dundee | 22 |
| Edinburgh | 22 |
| Inverness | 20 |
| Greenock | 20 |
| Paisley | 20 |
| Glasgow | 19 |
| Ayr | 18 |

Sources: *Evening Star*, 12 April 1882 and 24 April 1882; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh, 1997, p.59.

NOTES

1 This paper arises from a project I am working on with Peter Lineham and John Stenhouse: I am most grateful to John and Peter for our discussions on this issue, and also to the journal's two anonymous readers. A version of this paper was presented at the New Zealand Historical Association Conference in 2011, and I thank those who made helpful comments there.

2 Hugh Jackson, 'Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 17 (1983), pp.43–59.

3 Hugh Jackson, 'The Late Victorian Decline in Churchgoing: Some New Zealand Evidence', *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 56 (1983), pp.97–106; H.R. Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860–1930*, Wellington, 1987.

4 James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland, 1996, pp.417, 438; Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington, 1986, p.185; Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989, pp.177–8; Caroline Daley, *Girls and Women, Men and Boys: Gender in Taradale 1886–1930*, Auckland, 1999, p.98.

5 Jackson, 'Churchgoing', p.51.

6 John Stenhouse, 'Christianity, Gender, and the Working Class in Southern Dunedin, 1880–1940', *Journal of Religious History*, 30 (2006), pp.18–44; John Stenhouse, 'God, the Devil and Gender', in Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law, eds, *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, Auckland, 2003, pp.313–47. Among the most important British studies are Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870–1930*, New York, 1982; Mark Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth 1740–1865*, Oxford, 1994; S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870–1920*, Cambridge, 1996; and S.C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880–1939*, Oxford, 1999. Stenhouse's *Journal of Religious History* article includes a helpful discussion of the British literature.

7 Geoffrey Troughton and Hugh Morrison, eds, *The Spirit of the Past: Essays on Christianity in New Zealand History*, Wellington, 2011. The introduction to this volume includes a perceptive analysis of New Zealand's religious historiography.

8 P.S. Morrish, 'Church Attendance at Ripon in 1891', *Northern History*, 20 (1984), pp.217–23; Clive D. Field, 'A Godly People? Aspects of Religious Practice in the Diocese of Oxford, 1738–1936', *Southern History*, 14 (1992), pp.46–73; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh, 1997; Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000*, London, 2001; Robin Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited*, Aldershot, 2003.

9 Census Act, *New Zealand Statutes*, 1858, pp.91–96.

10 Blue Book of Statistics, 1842, pp.194–5, IA 12 03, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. The Blue Books are available digitally on the Archives New Zealand website at <http://archives.govt.nz/events/blue-books-statistics-information-1840-1855> (accessed 28 May 2013).

11 Jackson, 'Churchgoing', p.51.

12 Table 21, *Statistics of Nelson, New Zealand, from 1843 to 1854*, Nelson, 1855, n.p.

13 For example, the Canterbury Provincial Government distributed grants in 1858 and 1862 for the building and running of churches and church schools, supposedly already paid for by the settlers when they purchased land from the private, now failed, Canterbury Association. The grants were shared between the four largest denominations according to their numerical strength. See Stephen Parr, *Canterbury Pilgrimage: The First Hundred Years of the Church of England in Canterbury, New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1951, pp.39–40, 61.

14 There are many studies of the 1851 worship census. For a detailed modern analysis of the census in England and Wales, see K.D.M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion*, Cambridge, 2000.

15 John D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England*, London, 1971, pp.45, 55.

16 Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh, 1997, p.45.

17 Census and Statistics Act, Statutes of New Zealand, 1926, pp.7–12; ‘Annual Report of the Department of Internal Affairs’, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1927, H-22, p.12; Jackson, ‘Churchgoing’, p.45.

18 *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1874–1926*. Jackson states that he was unable to locate any set of instructions to enumerators relating to places of worship (Jackson, ‘Churchgoing’, p.45, note 10). I repeated the search, finding instructions for the 1874 census only. These state that for the ‘minor returns’ – including those for places of worship – local enumerators were to give the form to an appropriate person: ‘It is assumed that the Enumerator’s local knowledge will sufficiently guide him in the selection of persons to whom such applications are to be made’ (‘Instructions to Enumerators’, p.3, LE12 1, 2/6, Archives New Zealand, Wellington). A Presbyterian report on the 1891 census results confirms that the churchgoing data was collected locally: ‘On enquiry, I find from the Registrar-General that this information was obtained by the enumerators from the Ministers or office-bearers of the Churches’ (‘Report on Statistics, 1893’, *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1893*, Appendix IX, p.58). In 1916 the explanatory notes accompanying the published census tables explicitly stated that the data was collected from ‘responsible officials of congregations throughout the Dominion’.

19 Sunday School attendance – then recorded in a separate section of the census – peaked in 1901, and church attendance may have done so also.

20 Jackson, ‘Churchgoing’, p.43.

21 *Dominion of New Zealand Population Census, 1926. Volume XVII: General Report*, Wellington, 1931, p.99.

22 J. Henderson, ‘The Trials of the Saints: Mormons in New Zealand, 1854–1940’, in John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson, eds, *Building God’s Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 2004, pp.139–52.

23 This dropped to 30% by 1926. By comparison, the figure for 2006 was 22%: Statistics New Zealand, ‘QuickStats About New Zealand’s Population and Dwellings’, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/nzs-population-and-dwellings/sex-and-age.aspx> (accessed 22 October 2011).

24 In the 1882 *Evening Star* survey, for instance, 680 people attended the largest service of Easter morning, the 9am mass, at St Patrick’s Catholic Church, Auckland. But a further 919 people attended the 7.30am and 11am masses; the largest service accounted for well under half the mass-goers that morning. See *Evening Star* (Auckland) (ES), 12 April 1882.

25 Richard Mudie-Smith, ed., *The Religious Life of London*, London, 1904, pp.6, 15.

26 Gay, *Geography of Religion*, pp.52–53.

27 ‘Report on Statistics’, *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, Napier, 1893, p.58.

28 E.J. von Dadelnszen, *Report on the Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand Taken for the Night of the 29th April, 1906*, Wellington, 1908, p.24.

29 Michael E. Papesch, ‘Church Attendance in New Zealand 1919–1939’, BA (Hons) research exercise, Massey University, 1983, pp.11, 25.

30 Census, 1921, Appendix E, p.vi.

31 In 1921, 10.5% of all congregations did not answer the question, and 18.5% of Anglican congregations did not. The figures for 1926 were 9.2% and 12.8%.

32 The figures for the various large denominations reflect the well-known fact that

Anglicans were the least diligent churchgoers and Catholics the most diligent: in 1926 Catholic attenders in the district were 1.7 times more than those at the largest Sunday service, Presbyterians and Methodists each had 1.9 times more people in the district attending than in church on Sunday, and for Anglicans the figure was 2.7.

33 Papesch, p.47.

34 Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society', in W.H. Oliver and B.R. Williams, eds, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, p.263. He made the same statement in the second edition, edited by Geoffrey W. Rice, Auckland, 1992, p.268.

35 William Muir diaries, SA-008, Otago Settlers Museum.

36 Based on my survey of the numerous Otago and Southland service registers / vestry books held at the Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

37 Methodist Church of New Zealand, *Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Conference held at Dunedin, 1923*, Dunedin, 1923, pp.67–69.

38 'The Doctrine of Indifference', *Daily Telegraph* (Napier), 6 March 1893, p.2.

39 Robert Wood, 'The Religious Census of 1906: The Presbyterian Church and its Non-Churchgoing Constituency', *Otago Daily Times*, 25 April 1908, p.4.

40 A Presbyterian Minister, 'The Religious Census of 1916', *Dominion*, 15 March 1919, p.8.

41 'Public Worship Statistics', *New Zealand Tablet* (NZT), 28 February 1907, p.9.

42 'Always a Roman Catholic when Locked up', NZT, 28 February 1907, p.9.

43 'Public Worship Statistics', NZT, 28 February 1907, p.9.

44 'Church and Census', *Dominion*, 7 July 1911, p.7.

45 Geoffrey W. Rice, 'Buddo, David', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3b56/buddo-david> (accessed 5 August 2013); family information on Malcolm Fraser (my great-grandfather).

46 Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, p.162; Gill, *Empty Church Revisited*, p.91. For a more detailed look at a decline in churchgoing between the 1850s and 1880s in two very different locations, see Field, 'A Godly People', on the Diocese of Oxford; and R.B. Walker, 'Religious changes in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 19 (1968), pp.195–211.

47 For a count of the British towns surveyed and a list of the original sources, see C.D. Field, 'Non-Recurrent Christian Data', in W.F. Maunders, ed., *Reviews of United Kingdom Statistical Sources, Volume XX: Religion*, Oxford, 1987, p.292. Most of the results were published in the newspapers of the time and are not readily accessible from New Zealand; I have relied on results published in modern secondary sources for data (see the list of sources below Tables 8 and 9 for details). The ES survey results were published in that paper on 12 April 1882 and 24 April 1882 (available via the National Library of New Zealand's digital newspaper collection, Papers Past, under the title Auckland Star, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>).

48 ES, 24 April 1882, p.2. On the prevailing opposite belief, see 12 April 1882, p.2.

49 Jackson, 'Churchgoing', pp.57–58.

50 'Rev. G.B. Munro on "The Recent Church Census"', ES, 17 April 1882, p.2.

51 Jackson, 'Churchgoing', pp.54–55.

52 John Stenhouse, 'God's Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the Writing of New Zealand History', NZJH, 38 (2004), pp.52–71; 'Religion and Society', in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Melbourne, 2009, pp.323–56.

53 Ian Breward, 'Waddell, Rutherford', from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30 October 2012, www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2w1/waddell-rutherford (accessed 7 August 2013). A well-attended 2012 conference in Dunedin – 'No Sweat! Rutherford Waddell and the Sin of Cheapness' – included papers from well-known historians and scholars of religion, together with a dramatic reconstruction of Waddell's famous sermon.