

Is New Zealand's future churchless?

In the final New Zealand *Listener* of last century Professor Lloyd Geering, the leading public spokesperson for religion in this country, claimed that the religious statistics indicate we are witnessing “the death of religious institutions, the death of organised religion.”¹ In a newspaper article in 2003 he continued to claim that “conventional religion is coming to an end.”² This is a claim Geering, along with many others, has consistently claimed since the erosion in church statistics first showed up in the late 1960s. In one sense it is interesting he is still making the claim, rather than looking back posthumously on its funeral, as he predicted its demise would come before the end of the century. Are the prophets of doom right, even if the death is being rather prolonged?

That church-going has been in decline in all western countries, particularly since the 1960s, is beyond dispute. Whatever statistics one uses, and however one looks at them, they all point in one direction – down. In New Zealand, church attendance in 1960 was about 20% of the population weekly, and 40% monthly. By 2000 this had been halved to 10% and 20% respectively, figures identical to Australia and very similar to Britain (18% and 8% weekly), although much of the decline occurred from the late 60s to the late 80s and the figures have stabilised somewhat since. They certainly raise the question as to whether at some point in the future New Zealand will in fact be a churchless society.

However, if the data is beyond dispute, the interpretation of and

explanation for it is an area of significant divergence and contestation. In brief, the dispute can be summarised as between those who argue that with increasing modernisation religious belief has become implausible for increasing numbers, and so they have ceased belonging to religious organisations (classical secularisation theory), and those who claim that while people have stopped belonging, they have still continued to believe.

Reviewing the literature of the past forty or so years suggests there

“... the dispute can be summarised as being between those who argue that with increasing modernisation religious belief has become implausible for increasing numbers ... and those who claim that while people have stopped belonging, they have still continued to believe.”

are basically three different theories of church-going.

(1) *Secularisation*. Under the acids of modernity religious believing withers and as a result religious practices decline, especially church-going. An activity that was once sustained by deeply held religious beliefs becomes largely pointless. This view is represented by Bryan Wilson and the early Peter Berger.

(2) *Persistence* theories hold that, even in the modern world, religious beliefs and practices remain abiding features. There may well be relative shifts from one form of religious belief or practice to another, yet viewed as a whole, religious belief persists today as it always has in every society. It is part and parcel of the human condition. This is represented by David Martin and

Andrew Greeley.

The distinction between these two positions has now become more blurred. The recent work of Jose Casanova,³ is especially important. He accepts that church-going is declining in most parts of Europe and a process of separation, or differentiation, of church and state has happened or is likely to happen everywhere. Nevertheless, there is evidence, even within Europe, and certainly elsewhere in the world, of a deprivatisation of religion, of it taking on a significant public role. “Religious resurgence

... is as much a feature of modern societies as is religious decline.”⁴ Even though secularisation theorists are usually less dogmatic today than in the past, they do still tend to see church-going as the dependent variable and

religious belief as the independent and declining variable. As modern people become less religious in belief, so church-going will continue to decline. Many who argue for persistence also hold that religious belief is the independent variable, but argue that while these may change they will not disappear and are likely to find expression in ritual form.

(3) More recently a third theory, *separation*, has developed. This is based on the conviction that late modernity, or postmodernity, is characterised by growing fragmentation and religious pluralism. Reginald Bibby, Peter Berger, and Anthony Giddens⁵ have all been important in expressing this. The work of Grace Davie⁶ has been very significant in shaping it. She argues that in Britain the data

indicates that believing and belonging have become increasingly separated. While Christian “belonging” has clearly declined, Christian beliefs nonetheless persist.

Secularisation theory has had a rather hard time of it lately, despite a rigorous defence of it by Steve Bruce. At the Association for the Sociology of Religion conference in Atlanta last year, I found very few, if any, sociologists prepared to defend it. Indeed many are now writing about post-secular societies – as if we haven’t already enough “posts” to deal with. Peter Berger, one of its former proponents, writes: “The assumption that we live in a secularised world is false. The world today, with some exceptions ... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists ... is essentially mistaken. In my early work I contributed to this literature.”⁷ Another former advocate, Harvey Cox, now calls it “The myth of the twentieth century,”⁸ while Rodney Stark and Roger Finke title their chapter on the topic “Secularization: RIP”.⁹ Certainly in its classic form as the death of religious believing, such statements contain substantial truth. However to dismiss the whole theory is unjustified.

“Secularisation” is one of those slippery words with many different meanings, and at some levels it is unquestionably true. Casanova puts it well. “The core of the theory of secularisation, the thesis of the differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, remains valid.” These “function ‘as if’ God would not exist. This forms the unassailable core of secularisation.”¹⁰

However as Danielle Hervieu-Leger has observed this process of “exiting from religion” is not to be equated with the renunciation of belief. “Secularization of belief is not the end of belief but the movement by which the elements of belief break free of the structures

prescribed by religious institutions.”¹¹ In this sense belonging and believing need to be seen as separate variables. Religious belonging has indeed declined significantly in western countries, but religious believing has not suffered to anywhere near the same extent. This decline in belonging should be understood in relation to the parallel observation that virtually all voluntary associations have been finding it difficult in the last few decades to attract and retain members. An article in *Metro* outlined the decline in all kinds of voluntary organisations in New Zealand. I recently published research tracing decline in involvement in New Zealand’s sport of rugby, from 400,000 in the 1970s to 120,000 by 2000, despite the belief in it remaining incredibly strong in our culture, repeated All Black¹² failures notwithstanding.¹³ “Belonging” has been simultaneously losing its popularity in religion and in other fields as well. “The split between believing and belonging is therefore part of a broader pattern of change which happens to affect religious organizations amongst others. It is not a problem unique to religion and does not necessarily arise from the inner dynamics of religious organizations alone.”¹⁴

My own research on a number of congregations in New Zealand has convinced me that the loss of young people from our churches in the 1960s and 1970s, the root cause of the malaise the churches face, was because they no longer wanted to belong in the ways churches of that time demanded, rather than because they no longer believed. Wade Clark Roof’s research among baby boomers in the United States has indicated a similar pattern,¹⁵ as has Alan Jamieson’s more recent research among church leavers in New Zealand. Those who leave do not do so because they no longer believe, but for other reasons. They continue to have faith outside of the church, a “churchless faith”.¹⁶ Their believing has become separated from belonging, or, in the distinction increasingly used, they

are spiritual but not religious.

Numerous surveys indicate the resilience of religious belief in secularised western societies. In Canada, where religious trends are very similar to New Zealand, Reginald Bibby declares that “belief in a supernatural dimension of reality is widespread ... and shows no sign of abating.”¹⁷ In Britain, research by David Hay on the spirituality of non-church goers found in 1987 that 48% admitted to a form of religious spiritual experience. In 2000 he found it had increased to 76%.¹⁸ A group of Australian researchers after analysing a raft of data write: “What this research makes clear is that many of those who are not attending are nonetheless religious, oriented to God, open to those aspects of life which are beyond the material.”¹⁹ In New Zealand, the International Social Science Surveys²⁰ carried out in 1991 and 1998, indicate, if anything, a slight increase in religious believing. For instance 64% still indicated belief in God and certain belief was indicated by 31% of people, up from 29%; belief in life after death was up from 57% to 60%; and 30% of people indicated they prayed several times a week, up from 22%. In the 2001 New Zealand census, 61% of the population still identified as Christian, scarcely the culture of unbelief, the truly secular condition, many predicted would be here already.

However it is important not to assume that because people are still believing, their beliefs have remained the same. Davie observes that “belief begins to drift further and further away from Christian orthodoxies as regular practice diminishes.”²¹ Research by Gill, Hadaway and Marler demonstrates that in Britain support for distinctively Christian beliefs appear to be declining.²² They summarise the data as demonstrating a decline in several traditional Christian beliefs, a confusing pattern of persistence and some slight increase in New Age beliefs. One indicator of this is belief about God. Whereas in 1947

more believed in a personal God than an impersonal God (as Spirit or Life Force), by 1993 the balance had changed so that belief in a personal God was the minority understanding. The New Zealand ISSSP survey indicates the same preference. Alan Webster, the director of the study, writes that “belief seems to be evolving rather than fading away.”²³

It appears there are two critical issues that come out of this brief overview of data and interpretive theories. The first is that secularisation was a modern metanarrative. These, as we know, are being widely abandoned. It is also a narrative of decline and sociology is increasingly abandoning this perspective and rather describing what has been happening as change, which is often multidimensional and at times apparently contradictory.

The second is the question of how you count religion or the religious. Narratives of religious decline did two things. They counted church attendance or membership and these have been in decline. They also pointed to census returns, which showed an increasingly higher percentage ticking “no religion”. These two sets of figures were then interpreted to mean people were losing their religion. This is the line consistently taken by Geering and Veitch, the darlings of the New Zealand media, to whom they return again and again, whenever religious trends are considered worthy of treatment.

But increasingly both of these are being challenged. The first equates religion with belonging to an institution and attending regularly. We have seen this is going out of fashion in all kinds of spheres, but it does not mean the activity itself is going out of fashion. If I can use another sporting analogy. I spent many years when I got too old for rugby, running competitively. A number of years ago I retired from that, but more recently returned. What I noticed was a huge difference. Numbers in events for registered runners were very much smaller, veterans

sections were by far the largest, clubs were much smaller, many had merged in order to survive, and others were seeking to. The club I joined had one senior man (under 40) and one woman. All the rest were veterans. There were no youth. It sounds very much like many churches. But come the City of Christchurch Half Marathon, there were record entries, over 3000, and considerable numbers of young people. If you go running around Ross Creek or Hagley Park there are more people running than ever. In other words running is thriving, more than ever are doing it, but few want to join organised institutions to do it. It would be a huge mistake to equate the state of running in New Zealand solely with clubs and events organised under Athletics New Zealand.

Preoccupation with institutional expressions of religion can be seen as part of the modern focus on institutions and specialisation. Only what is in that sphere equates to religion. But “the religious” is much broader than that. Martyn Percy notes that “religion as a differentiated category only emerged within Europe in the seventeenth century. Culturally what many describe as postmodernity may be nothing more than religion’s return to nondifferentiation.”²⁴ This line of argument has long been sustained by Greeley and Martin in challenging the standard secularisation thesis. Greeley argues that in the late medieval period regular church-going was not particularly high and religion fundamentally operated in very diffuse cultural forms.²⁵ Martin shows that the popular image of a sacred medieval society is the product of history written from the perspective of medieval elite society controlled by the church. There is no reliable evidence that religious life in Europe has declined since the Middle Ages.²⁶ High church attendance itself was a result of the institutionalisation and compartmentalisation of life in modernity and, as Percy shows, reached its peak in England in the

Victorian era. So there was no long period of high church involvement which has steadily declined since the onset of modernity. Rather this was an unusual period, part of the institutionalisation of all of life, and the changes that have occurred in the second half of the twentieth century may in fact be a return to a more “normal” and less institutionally located religiosity.

The second source, census returns, is also very interesting as it raises the question of what people mean when they tick “no religion”. The assumption has been that they mean they are not religious, “secular atheists” one might say. In New Zealand the number indicating this, or “object to state” has increased from 9%²⁷ in 1961 to 24% in 1996. A similar trend can be found in Australia where this group increased from 11% in 1966 to 25% in 1996. In the United States, although relatively small, those in this category doubled in the 1990s from 7% in 1991 to 14% in 1998. These increases are frequently cited in support of the secularisation thesis. However more detailed research done on the beliefs of those who now define themselves as having “no religion” throws this assumption into question. Hout and Fischer note that once again the most significant factor in the increase in this category was the “cultural experience of coming of age in the 1960s”²⁸ and find that “religious scepticism proved to be an unlikely explanation.”²⁹ Most people with no religion “hold conventional religious beliefs, despite their alienation from organized religion.” They argue that:

In a country with as much emphasis on religion as we see in the United States ... the growing detachment of a significant proportion of the adult population from organized religion is important. Equally important is the evidence that indicates how the new religious dissenters have distanced themselves from the churches, not from God ... The majority of adults who prefer no religion continue to believe in God and an afterlife. Few

are atheists or agnostics. Most pray. Many reject the "religious" label, but they think of themselves as "spiritual"... In short, the critical feature of most such people is not their beliefs, or personal piety, but their estrangement from organised religion.³⁰

Similarly in Australia, the National Social Science Survey data shows that "most people who have dropped out of church life or who were nominal in their involvement had not rejected belief in God."³¹ In New Zealand research by A.C. Neilsen commissioned by the Presbyterian Church among people who did not attend church, but had some previous experience of church, found that "despite not currently attending a church or other formal religious institution, spiritual belief is still strong."³² All of this research indicates that the decline in church belonging cannot primarily be explained by people losing their religious belief. They have not embraced a fundamentally non-religious stance, or lost their religion in the deepest and most fundamental sense. Richard Wright wrote in *The Outsider*, as far back as 1953, "Since religion is dead, religion is everywhere.... Religion was once an affair of the church, it is now in the streets in each man's heart. Once there were priests; now every man's a priest."³³

An interesting illustration of this appeared in a Christchurch *Press* article about a month ago, documenting the increasing popularity of home altars, a tradition of ancient cultures. A professor from Union Seminary in New York, commented that "In rural parts of medieval Europe, home altars were kept by Christians who could not easily travel to church". But now "the altar's popularity has less to do with physical distance than with the spiritual gulf that separates many people from organised religion."³⁴

There is, then, some support for each of these three theories. Some signs of decline, several signs of persistence and clearly belief has become increasingly separated from belonging. The situation is

increasingly described as a change from "religion" to "spirituality."³⁵ The 2000 survey, carried out for the BBC's "Soul of Britain"³⁶ series, found that whereas in 1990 54% called themselves "religious", by 2000 that figure had fallen to 27% while 31% preferred to call themselves "spiritual". Roof's research among baby boomers found that 73% preferred to use the language of "spirituality" rather than "religion".³⁷ The words in this shift signify different realities. "Religion", according to these findings, connotes rigid, authoritarian, oppressive institutions; dogmatism and lack of openness to alternative perspectives; and cold formalism or ritualism. "Spirituality" by contrast, suggests flexibility and creativity; tolerance and respect for alternative insights from others; room for doubt and searching; and an emphasis upon personal experience.

Robert Wuthnow also tracks this change in American spirituality since the 1950s.³⁸ He suggests that a spirituality of "dwelling" or "place" has given way to a spirituality of "seeking" or "journey". He defines the former as an orientation that links spirituality to participation in institutional religion and is marked by sharply drawn symbolic boundaries. Spirituality is indicated by membership in the organisation and "being there", by belonging.³⁹ This kind of spirituality, he suggests, flourishes in times of social and cultural stability. With the social and cultural upheavals of the 1960s though, people began to shift to a spirituality of seeking or journey. "The 1960s began with theologians declaring God was dead; it ended with millions of Americans finding that God could be approached and made relevant to their lives in more ways than they had ever imagined."⁴⁰ A spirituality of seeking views the spiritual life as an ongoing journey or quest, with the process as important as the destination. It is more ambiguous, with vague and open boundaries and loose connections, if any, to religious

institutions. Roof describes it as a "quest culture."⁴¹

Two other terms are helpful in understanding the nature of this change. The first is what has been called "detraditionalization." Paul Heelas defines this as a "shift of authority from 'without' to 'within'."⁴² In religion:

The shift in authority has been from faith in, or reliance/dependency on, that which lies beyond the person to that which lies within. "Voice" is thus displaced from the establishment of traditions to the creativities of the spiritually/religiously inspired self.⁴³

In tracing this "flight from deference" Heelas sees it as part of the shift from religion to spirituality which is having widespread affect on all kinds of religious traditions. It means that even in traditional religious institutions the authority of the institution has less hold on the individuals who belong to that institution as they take more account of their own personal convictions and beliefs. It can be found, for example, in the work of Donald Miller on "new paradigm churches" in the United States, such as Vineyard and Calvary Chapel, where it is repeatedly emphasised that personal conviction counts more than doctrine, the Holy Spirit more than external tradition.⁴⁴ Heelas holds that:

Crudely, detraditionalized people want detraditionalized religion: a "religion" which is (apparently) more constructed than given; with practices which emphasise the authority of participants; which enables participants to be personally responsible for their salvation; which says that "sacred texts should confirm what is in you"... Which provides guidance and personal experience rather than beliefs; which does not demand that one should belong to a particular organisation.⁴⁵

What we are seeing, then, is not so much a decline in religion, as an evolution of religion as its cultural context changes. This means it is now much less located in institutions which consequently

carry considerably less authority in determining how people express it or of the resources they draw on to shape it. Many of these are now drawn from the wider culture rather than the institutions.

The second helpful framework for understanding the changes over this period is provided by the writings of Ernst Troeltsch on mysticism. Troeltsch built on Max Weber's well known distinction between church and sect as the two basic social forms of Christianity, by adding a third, mysticism. He argued that Christianity can assume any of these three basic social forms and that all have existed throughout Christian history.⁴⁶ What is most significant for us is that he held mysticism was the most rapidly growing type and was likely to come to predominate in the modern world.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, mysticism was omitted from most subsequent analyses of religion, as it is only rarely found in institutional form. In particular Richard Neibuhr in his highly influential *The Social Sources of*

Denominationalism eliminated it from the church-sect discussion.⁴⁸ This is unfortunate as the church-sect distinction has become increasingly difficult to maintain, with newer forms blurring the differences, and discussion centred on it has often been unhelpful in seeking to understand religious change.⁴⁹ Much of what I have found emerging in my own research, however, clearly fits within Troeltsch's understanding of mysticism.

These two frameworks of detraditionalisation and mysticism place the changing nature of religion then within the increasingly individualistic character of western societies, especially since the 1960s. A significant number of social commentators see this process as

continuing with devastating consequences. Many church leaders, faced with a seemingly more and more difficult task as they lose church members, also subscribe to the analysis.⁵⁰ Modern and postmodern culture, especially its individualism, is the enemy to be resisted at all costs before it swallows us all down the sink hole.

More recently this worst case scenario is being challenged. In the 1970s Berger and colleagues wrote *The Homeless Mind*.⁵¹ What happened in the counterculture was that people lost faith in the primary institutions of society – government, education, business, religion, family – where people had previously found belonging, “homes”, and ended up with minds with nowhere to park, “homeless”,

“Sociology maintains that faith is both socially transmitted and socially maintained. The relationship between Christian belonging, or community, and personal faith, or spirituality, has become increasingly disconnected, and as it has done so the latter has become less orthodoxly Christian.”

except for the self. The “me” decade. However many are now suggesting that since the mid 1980s there has been a reconnecting with belonging; a quest for new forms of community. Some sociologists talk about a new communitarian age. It is not however occurring by people going back to those primary institutions through which older generations belonged, but in what Berger termed “secondary” institutions. These are face to face, open, tolerant, inclusive, non judgemental and democratic,⁵² much looser. Wuthnow, in researching the now incredibly widespread small group phenomenon, which fits this category, suggests it is bringing together two important contemporary searches: the quest

for the sacred and the quest for community,⁵³ believing and belonging.

This, I suggest, is the essence of the challenge the church in societies like New Zealand faces. Sociology maintains that faith is both socially transmitted and socially maintained. The relationship between Christian belonging, or community, and personal faith, or spirituality, has become increasingly disconnected, and as it has done so the latter has become less orthodoxly Christian. Is a reconnection possible or do we face a future which, while it may be religious, is churchless and therefore may be ultimately without Christianity in any traditional sense?

If we ignore the perspectives from either end of the spectrum (that the death of Christianity is inevitable because of secularisation or that the churches need to return to more traditional forms and people will flock back⁵⁴) there are two main schools of thought. First, there are those who argue for the *reformation*

of existing forms. There is still a growth dynamic in the semi-traditional congregation so long as it is done well. On the other hand, there are those who are increasingly suggesting that the inherited mode of being church has had its day, and tinkering around with it cannot turn around the decline. Something more drastic is required; a *revolution*, a new beginning with completely new forms not weighed down by the baggage of outmoded forms and traditions. My contention is that we need to do both, but there is also a third and even more important challenge.

1. Reformation: making existing forms of church more effective. In analysing international studies identifying effective churches and

comparing these with my own congregational studies, we can identify some common characteristics of “effective churches”. However in further researching these growing churches, I also found that most of the people in them came from the already church sector of New Zealand society. Very few were drawn into them from outside of it. This group, who have belonged to the Christian church in some way during their life, is still a significant sector of people, as the number still identifying as Christian on census returns indicates.⁵⁵ The church has often been compared to a boat or ship afloat on the sea.⁵⁶ Using this analogy, if the ship is leaking on the ocean of contemporary culture, then the most sensible initial task is to endeavour to stop, or at least slow down, the leaks. Those churches that have reformed along the lines of this research, have, to some degree, been clearly successful in this.

Two factors, though, put a limit on how effective mere reformation will be. First, those socialised as Christian, and therefore still identifying as such, are an increasingly aging sector, most of them over 40. Second, research indicates that most of those who are going to return have done so by the age of 40.⁵⁷ Thus, if the churches are going to rely on reform alone, they will be appealing to an increasingly limited market. Australian researchers, after noting that many of those who do not attend are nonetheless religious, go on to state that “it is [however] unlikely that they will be brought into the ranks of church attenders in large numbers.”⁵⁸ I think this is the reality the church in New Zealand faces. The majority of the under 40s, while they may be interested in spirituality and religion, are not going to be attracted into the kind of social institutions that existing forms of church represent, however contemporary the packaging may be made. It is just not their social world.

2. Revolution: creating new forms of church

I have outlined the paradox of a strongly, and perhaps increasingly, spiritual culture and the continued decline in church belonging in countries like New Zealand. Michael Moynagh asks the critical question of whether this interest in spirituality will “remain, as now, largely private, individualised and unfocused, or will it once more be channelled into church?”⁵⁹ He goes on to suggest that the “Church may connect with our more spiritual age if it offers not only a spiritual map, but the freedom for people to select the route most helpful to them”.⁶⁰

There seem to be two key parameters for new forms of Christian community. First, in line with the pluralism and fragmentation of the culture, there will be a great variety of forms of congregation that need to emerge, either within the structures of existing churches or as new churches. Second, in line with the increasing individualism and freedom, these new forms will need to give space to individuals to make their own choices from a selection provided, rather than prescribe what is expected in a standardised way.⁶¹

Many have identified the cultural and social change over the second half of the twentieth century as being from a modern to a postmodern society. Part of this are looser, less structured, less hierarchical and more fragmented forms of society. Zygmunt Bauman uses the suggestive analogy of the “solid” structures of modernism being liquefied, so he describes the emerging culture as “Liquid Modernity”.⁶² In this liquid world he argues the old certainties, stable institutions and predictable linear ways of thinking no longer make sense and in so many spheres, what was once stable and predictable is increasingly fragile, friable and liquefied. Along similar lines Manuel Castells uses the term “network society” to describe the new type of social structure that has emerged in the last two decades of the twentieth century. He defines a network as a “set of interconnected

nodes” and points out that “networks decentre performance and share decision making. By definition a network has no centre.”⁶³ Tracing these trends, Wuthnow finds a change to “porous social institutions” with permeable structures and a society marked by “loose connections”, where people have much greater flexibility and limited commitments in a wider variety of networks.⁶⁴ He quotes from a follow-up study of the “organization men” of the 1950s, which found that their “children utterly lacking their father’s loyalty to a specific organization, are more inclined to join many ever-shifting networks than to seek a niche in one immortal hierarchy.”⁶⁵ It is obvious that forms of church that effectively contextualise the Christian faith into this fluid and shifting culture will be markedly different from those that did so for a previous solid and stable culture. They will be marked by fluidity rather than solidity.⁶⁶

If church is to resemble more this kind of social and cultural context, to be fluid rather than solid, what will these forms look like? Harvey Cox suggests that:

*So far, only faint harbingers of the new era are discernable. If the qualities of most of the new religious movements presage anything, we may expect a world that prefers equality to hierarchy, participation to submission, experience over abstraction, multiple rather than single meanings, and plasticity rather than fixedness.*⁶⁷

If churches do embody these principles, then the forms they take will undergo a process of significant further change. Church leaders could do worse than take the philosophy of Mao Tse Tung’s cultural revolution in China and seek to “let a thousand flowers bloom.” Some will wither and die very quickly, some will doubtless become non-orthodox or heretical, but among those that thrive are likely to be found new social groupings needed to contextualise our faith into the new world of post Christian, postmodern and post secular New Zealand.

3. Resourcing: the social and cultural role of the church

With the drift of values and beliefs in our culture from those that have been shaped by centuries of Christian orthodoxy, it is also obvious that connecting believing with belonging will be increasingly challenging. This is the main argument of Callum Brown's significant book, *The Death of Christian Britain*, which sees the critical issue as the loss of "discursive Christianity", the death of the "Christian centred culture" from which people found guidance as to how they "should behave and how they should think about their lives."⁶⁸ It is also obvious that if "belonging" is in itself less of a cultural value, a focus by the church which is primarily directed at those concerns⁶⁹ will mean that its role will be both increasingly diminished and less and less effective. If, however, the church sees as part of its role the shaping of the values and beliefs of the wider culture and society in which it exists, then it needs to put energy and resources not only into connecting with people's beliefs in order to move them toward belonging, but also with connecting in order to help shape those beliefs and values. Unfortunately the focus of church leadership has seen a preoccupation with these institutional concerns and a neglect of the wider kingdom role of the church as salt, light and leaven in society.

The church must relate to the culture in a double movement. Not only must it be shaped by the culture as it seeks to incarnate the Christian message into forms that are relevant to it, but it must also seek to shape the culture by those gospel values that transcend it. It must be both faithful to its "context" and faithful to its "text".⁷⁰

Harvey Cox writes that:

In many places in Europe today one gets the distinct impression that although the institutional forms of religions may be weaker than they once were, religion still plays a strong role in public culture.

References and allusions appear in

*such widely disparate places as poetry and drama, film, political debates and even popular music.... Could Christianity in Europe be moving away from an institutionally positioned model and toward a culturally diffuse pattern, more like the religions of many Asian countries....*⁷¹

In similar vein Martin sees the religious, the spiritual and the sacred "leaking" into ordinary life at every level.⁷² As a consequence, in this changing location of religion we are finding that new vehicles for religious expression are coming from outside of religious institutions, drawing upon other cultural forms that are not formally related to religious institutions (in other words secular) and so we find popular cultural forms taking on some of the tasks of traditional religions. Some have described what we are seeing as the sacralisation of the secular. Conrad Ostwalt writes: "If the modern era of secularization promised the disappearance of religion, the new era, the postmodern era of secularization, promises the increasing relevance of religion expressed through popular cultural forms."⁷³ So many are now claiming that secularisation, rather than leading to the disappearance of religion, actually encourages a return of religion to ordinary life, leaving it more powerful, diffuse and omnipresent, and so "we might even view the age of secularization as the age of religious saturation."⁷⁴

Given these changes it is "nowadays better to conceptualise religion as a cultural resource or form than as a social institution."⁷⁵ Even in its institutional form it needs to seek to operate to resource the culture rather than preserve an institution.⁷⁶ All revolutions go through first a destructive and then a constructive phase. There is increasing recognition that, especially since the 1960s, we have seen the collapse of modern society, aided by the postmodern deconstructive critique of modernity. Many are suggesting that we are now entering a phase where the emphasis is increasingly

on reconstructing new forms of society. This lies behind the new quest for community we have identified and also, I suggest, behind the renewed interest in spirituality. Walter Brueggemann suggests that in this process the task of the church is "to fund – to provide the pieces, materials, and resources out of which a new world can be imagined."⁷⁷ It is important to recognise though, that in this changed world the role of the church in this regard is not the same as the role it held in Christendom. That world has gone forever, despite the longing for its return by some. And so he suggests "The work of funding consists not in the offer of a large ordered coherence, but in making lots of pieces that admit of more than one large ordering."⁷⁸

There are many areas that could be explored in this. I want to offer three.

(1) Resourcing the personal spiritualities and faiths of people. A major theme of my research is that many of those who do not attend churches regularly still have religious beliefs that are significantly shaped by the Christian tradition. As we have noted, over 60% still identify with the Christian faith, a fact that indicates a level of openness and some allegiance to the churches and their beliefs and values. While they may not be regular worshippers or "belongers" there are still times when they wish to express that identity through liturgy or worship or a chance to reflect on life or events helped by religious symbols, stories or sacred spaces.

Death and marriage are perhaps the most obvious of these in our society, with a significant proportion of funerals and marriages still taking place in religious settings, whether inside or outside churches.⁷⁹ Also important for some are births. The church needs to consider ways in which it can offer religious resources in more accessible and relevant ways to those who may be interested in religious expressions at such events. In the more public sphere the

interest in Christmas, Easter and Anzac Day as public religious rituals offer opportunities for the church to seek to connect with the spiritual dimension of our culture in ways that can help to fund and shape it. Then there is the increasing demand for the church to play a role in significant public tragedies and deaths. This has been well commented on in Britain,⁸⁰ but there are ample examples in New Zealand. The response to the death of Princess Diana and September 11 are international events in which significant numbers of New Zealanders turned to the church. In New Zealand the death of Charles Upham,⁸¹ the murder of Police Constable Duncan Taylor,⁸² the killing of Mark Parker in the Bali bombing⁸³ and more recently the multiple deaths in a Christchurch plane crash are all examples of the church engaging positively in a public religious role.

Clearly, religion is still in demand in New Zealand society and the church needs to respond to this with a confidence born of an awareness that

our society refuses to leave religion alone and so “continue to offer a ministry and a faith to a public that wishes to relate to religion without necessarily belonging.” To do this it needs more approaches that “engage with contemporary culture in interrogative, empathetic and critical-friendly ways.”⁸⁴ We have identified that most now see spirituality as a journey or quest, hence the tremendous popularity of films such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*. It also resonates with the ancient and once again contemporary notion of pilgrimage. It may then be better to conceptualise the local church as a way station for pilgrims rather than as an institution to which they “belong”.

(2) Connecting with the spiritual and religious questing that is taking place in our culture in all kinds of ways, especially in popular culture;

film, literature, art, music, tourism and even sport. Film provides a powerful illustration of this.⁸⁵ Stories are one of the main ways we make sense of the often chaotic and haphazard world in which we live. There is no doubt that film is now the principal story teller in our culture. George Miller, producer of *Babe*, *Mad Max* and the *Witches of Eastwick*, has suggested that cinemas have become our covert new cathedrals.

I believe cinema is now the most powerful secular religion and people gather in cinemas to experience things collectively the way they once did in church. The cinema story tellers have become the new priests. They’re doing a lot of the work of our religious institutions, which have taken so much of the poetry, mystery and mysticism out of religious belief, that people look for other places to

“It may then be better to conceptualise the local church as a way station for pilgrims rather than as an institution to which they ‘belong’.”

question their spirituality.

Films do entertain, but they do so much more and the millions who go to watch them are going for more than just a bit of light relief. As Catherine Albanese has stated films express or reinforce “the powerful beliefs about life and provide a web of fundamental beliefs.” They act like sacred stories because they establish a “world that makes sense and give people a feeling for their place in the scheme of things” and introduce “what the world means and how it means.”⁸⁶

You just need to examine the nature of so many of the most popular films. I have already mentioned *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars*. But one could mention so many: *Forest Gump*, *Sixth Sense*, *Matrix*, *The Lion King*, *Gladiator*, *Keeping the Faith* and *Whalerider*. Their mythic and religious qualities are self evident.

The spiritual quest in them so clear.

Robert Wuthnow in a recent book on music, art and religion⁸⁷ finds part of the reason for the vitality of religion in the face of secularising forces, is in the increasing role of the arts in our culture. Rather than being incompatible with active church involvement and the Christian faith, as they are often portrayed, his studies show that “those with greater exposure to artistic activities are more likely than those with less exposure to be seriously committed to spiritual growth.”

If in our world spirituality is increasingly disconnected from institutions and people are exploring it and fostering it through the arts, then it is critical that the church and our theological institutions enter and engage with that world. First in ways that create opportunities for people to engage

with Christian perspectives and voices in their “reflection” on it. And second in ways that the Christian tradition gets out there in that world and seek to put some

Christian narratives into the field. An excellent recent example of this is the Christian film producer Tom Shadayc, in *Bruce Almighty*.

If Callum Brown is right, and there is a loss of discursive Christianity in the culture, (and while he overstates the case, there has clearly been a significant loss), this is in some ways an even more urgent challenge than that of getting bodies into churches. Weber talked about people becoming musically tone deaf so far as religion is concerned. Clearly he was wrong and people can still hear the religious and spiritual notes in the culture. But maybe many of the under 40s are tone deaf as far as the Christian religion is concerned. We need to connect with the broader culture not only to help them interpret these in light of the Christian gospel, but also to ensure that some of those spiritual tones in

the culture are Christian, and maybe to even put some gospel tunes into it.

(3) A reawakening of the voice of the church in the public arena. The response of the newly installed Dean of the Christchurch Cathedral, Peter Beck, to criticism of derogatory remarks made about immigrants to New Zealand by the leader of the New Zealand First Party, Winston Peters, led to a striking editorial in *The Press*.

*The notion that the Church should limit its activities exclusively to the ecclesiastical realm contradicts the teaching and life of the Jesus of the Gospels and the spirit of a faith that demands of its adherents' engagement with the world. A Christianity that did not speak about the moral dilemmas society faces and the way it is conducted would be a vacuous creed.... For decades the pulpit of all denominations was a force in public life, and the nation was the better for it. ... regret should be universal that they are so timid in engaging in the life of the nation. They alone can fill the spiritual and moral gap that exists in a society not just secular but also lacking articulated common beliefs. No other force than religion exists which is capable of proclaiming a comprehensive ethical doctrine.... No other force is so deeply entrenched in the history and culture of the world, so enmeshed in the great journey of the human race. Religion ... has a store of wisdom that needs to be drawn on if we are to avoid the catastrophes that tempt individuals and communities on all side.*⁸⁸

As our fragmented society seeks to redefine some common values and beliefs without which it cannot function, the church can play a significant public role. A positive example of this was the "Hikoi of Hope". Another was the positive role of the churches in the "Royal Commission on Genetic Modification." This re-emergence of the church and religion to a more significant public role in other western countries has been described by Casanova. "Religious

traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatised role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them." They "went public".⁸⁹ It is important to note, however, that he is clear that this is not a return to the dominance of the church of Christendom. Even where the Catholic Church has played a significant role, such as in Spain and Poland, it has accepted the fact of the secular society, the separation of church and state and the removal of religion from the control of public life. It means for countries like New Zealand that the church has to accept that it is no longer at the centre of society, and must learn to function and speak from the margins, as one voice among many.

So to return to our original question of "is New Zealand's future churchless?" I hope I have clearly articulated that I do not believe this is our future. There will still be churches, but there will also be a wider and more diverse religiosity and spirituality outside of the church, "churchless" faith, beyond its control. The church, however, can still have an important role resourcing that and seeking to give some Christian shape to it. So it will not be a "church-less" society but it will be one with "less-church", if I can reverse the order of the words. The church will be less; in its form being less institutional, in its role being less central, and its authority being less powerful. Learning how to function positively in this new social and cultural reality is, I believe, the central challenge we, who still identify as belonging not only to the Christian faith but also, to the Christian church, face.

Endnotes

1. P. Matthews, "The Afterlife" *The New Zealand Listener* (December 1999): 17.
2. "Beyond Belief – why are we turning away from religion," *Sunday Star Times* (13 April, 2003): C4.
3. J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).
4. R. Gill, *Church going and Christian Ethics*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 61.

5. R. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987); A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self Identity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); P. L. Berger, *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

6. G. Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

7. P. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in P. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2. Bruce calls this "The curious case of the unnecessary recantation." S. Bruce, "The curious case of the unnecessary recantation: Berger and secularisation," in L. Woodhead, ed., *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion* (New York: London, 2001), 87-100. A fuller defence of secularisation can be found in S. Bruce, *God is Dead: secularization in the west* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

8. H. Cox, "The Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rise and Fall of 'Secularization'." in G. Baum, ed., *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview* (New York: Orbis, 1999), 135-143.

9. R. Stark and R. Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

10. Casanova, *Public Religions*, 6, 40.

11. D. Hervieu-Leger, "Limit of the notion of secularisation," in Woodhead, *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion*, 119.

12. The name of the New Zealand national representative team.

13. K. Ward, "Rugby and Church: Worlds in Conflict?" *Reality* 53 (Oct/Nov 2002): 26-30.

14. J. Beckwith quoted in G. Davies, *Religion in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 19.

15. W. C. Roof, *A Generation of Seekers* (San Francisco: Harper & Collins, 1993; Spiritual Marketplace, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

16. A. Jamieson, *A Churchless Faith* (Wellington: Philip Garside, 2000). This is based on his PhD thesis of the same title, University of Canterbury.

17. R. Bibby, "Religion in the Canadian 1990s" in *Church and Denominational Growth*, D. Roozen and C.K. Hadaway, eds., (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 288.

18. D. Hay & K. Hunt, *Understanding the Spirituality of People who Don't Go to Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000).

19. P. Hughes, C. Thompson, R. Pryor, G. Bouma, *Believe it or Not: Australian Spirituality in the 90s* (Surrey Hills: CRA, 1995), 1.
20. *International Social Science Survey Programme* (Department of Marketing, Massey University, 1991, 1998).
21. Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945*, 76.
22. R. Gill, C. K. Hadaway and P. L. Marler, "Is Religious Belief Declining in Britain?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no.3 (1998): 507-16.
23. A. Webster, *Spiral of Values* (Hawera: Alpha Publications, 2001), 168.
24. Martyn Percy, *The Salt of the Earth: Religious Resilience in a Secular Age* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 24.
25. Andrew Greeley, "The Persistence of Religion," *Cross Currents* 45, no. 1 (1995): 24-41.
26. David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).
27. This figure of 9.1% consists of 7.9% "object to state" and 1.2% who "returned no religion". The latter was not actually offered as an option on census returns until the 1986 census which resulted in a dramatic increase in "no religion" and significant decline in "object to state."
28. "The cohorts born prior to 1935 are more religious than those that came after, each cohort from 1935 to 1950 is increasingly less religious than the one right before it, and those born after 1950 are at the same (low) level of religious attachment as the 1950 cohort. We think that this pattern of cohort difference reflects a 'sixties effect' ... that people who were old enough in the 1960s to have well-established religious identities were less affected by the changes of those times than were cohorts just coming of age then. Thus the cohorts that were over 30 years old in the 1960s less often expressed preferences for no religion in the 1990s than did cohorts that were in their teens and twenties then." M. Hout & C. S. Fischer, "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations," *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 2 (April 2002): 183.
29. Using an analysis that includes a "six statement belief-in-God item" they find that the "increase in no religion preference is concentrated among those with the firmest beliefs, not among sceptics." Hout & Fischer, "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference", 187-8.
30. Hout & Fischer, "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference", 188.
31. P. Bentley, T. Blombery & P. Hughes, *Faith Without the Church: Nominalism in Australian Culture* (Kew: Christian Research Association, 1992), 70.
32. *Attracting New Zealanders to Spiritual Life*, a Report prepared for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand, by A.C. Neilsen (NZ) Ltd. (November 2002) 5. The open ended qualitative research was carried out among 40 people who indicated in preliminary research that they considered themselves either religious or spiritual but did not attend church.
33. Richard Wright, *The Outsider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 359. Quoted in C. Oswalt, *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 189.
34. "Altars of Intimacy," *The Press* (January 27, 2004) B5.
35. See P. Heelas, "The spiritual revolution; from 'religion' to 'spirituality'", in L. Woodhead, P. Fletcher, K. Kawanami, D. Smith, eds., *Religion in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations* (London: Routledge, 2000), 357-377.
36. "Soul of Britain with Michael Buerk, 4th June 2000, What do people believe today?" www.facingthechallenge.org/soul1.htm
37. W. C. Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
38. R. Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
39. In another work, tracing changes in civic involvement, Wuthnow describes this as being expressed in the 1950s by the "organisation man" who "performed his civic responsibilities by joining a lodge ... or by belonging to a service club." R. Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 31. This again illustrates that the way in which people participate in religious communities is a part of the wider social and cultural context and is strongly influenced by whatever changes occur there.
40. Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, 53.
41. Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*. He quotes one group of observers that "Events in the last decades of the twentieth century seem to demonstrate that there is no longer such a thing as religion as we know it." 4.
42. He goes on to add: "It entails the decline in belief in pre-given or natural orders of things. Individual subjects are themselves called upon to exercise authority in the face of disorder and contingency which is thereby generated. 'Voice' is displaced from established sources, coming to rest with the self." P. Heelas, "Introduction: Detraditionalization and its Rivals", in P. Heelas, S. Lash and P. Morris, *Detraditionalization* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 2. This fits with Anthony Giddens notion of change from "traditional" to "post-traditional" society in many parts of the Western world, with the centre of authority being moved from socially accepted traditions to the self. A. Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society", in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 56-109. He describes the "emergence of an internal referential system of knowledge and power."
43. Heelas, "Spiritual revolution," 375.
44. See discussion in chapter 3 on Miller's work.
45. P. Heelas, *The New Age Movement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 172.
46. E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Churches*, trans. O. Wyon, 2 vols (London: George Unwin Ltd., 1931).
47. Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings*, 381.
48. W. R. Garrett, "Maligned Mysticism: The Maledicted Career of Troeltsch's Third Type", *Sociological Analysis* 36, no. 3 (1975): 211. A further factor in this may have been the hostility of some Protestant theologians, and in particular the hugely influential Karl Barth, to mysticism.
49. I have found that in New Zealand, with no one working in the sociology of religion over the past decade or so, most of the New Zealand analysis has been based on this framework.
50. A keynote address by Murray Robertson, Pastor of the largest non-Pentecostal church in New Zealand, at the Annual New Zealand Baptist Assembly in Christchurch, November 2002, took this line. Talking about how difficult church leadership was in the current context, he blamed the individualism, selfishness and consumerism of the culture for the problems churches, including his, were confronting.
51. P. Berger, B. Berger & H. Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1974).
52. See also P. Heelas, "The spritual revolution: from 'religion' to 'spirituality'", in L. Woodhead, P. Fletcher, K. Kakawani & D. Smith, eds., *Religions in the Modern World: Transitions and Transformations* (London: Routledge, 2000).
53. R. Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

54. This latter response has been labelled fundamentalism and a move in this direction is popular in some of the more conservative sectors of the church. It is response to the fragmentation of life and values in an increasingly pluralistic society. Baumann argues that fundamentalism will thrive under the conditions of postmodernity. "The allure of fundamentalism stems from its promise to emancipate the converted from the agonies of choice; here one finds, finally the indubitably supreme authority to end all other authorities. One knows where to look when life-decisions are to be made, in matters big and small, and one knows that looking there one does the right thing and so is spared the dread of risk taking. Fundamentalism is a radical remedy against that bane of postmodernity/market-led/consumer society – risk-contaminated freedom." (Z. Baumann, *Postmodernity and its Discontents* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997], 184.) While it will be attractive to some it is unlikely though that it will ever attract a majority in modern liberal democratic societies such as New Zealand, and is therefore an ultimately unhelpful response.

55. Marler and Hadaway say that data from a number of studies indicate that "people with heavy levels of childhood religious involvement usually retain the denominational identity they held in childhood – in spite of religious inactivity as adults.... In a sense they were 'imprinted' as children through religious involvement." C.K. Hadaway & P.L. Marler "All in the Family: Religious Mobility in America", *Review of Religious Research* 35, no. 2 (1993): 104-5.

56. Picking up this analogy a number of commentators have compared attempts to reform the church as like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic after it had been fatally holed.

57. R. Bibby, *There's Got to be More: Connecting Churches & Canadians* (Winfield: Woodlake, 1995), 75.

58. Hughes, Thomson, Pryor and Bouma, *Believe It or Not*, 1.

59. M. Moynagh, *Changing World Changing Church* (London: Monarch Books, 2001), 87.

60. Moynagh, *Changing World*, 89.

61. Moynagh describes the fundamental change in western culture as from a standardised "I must fit in" world to an "it must fit me" world. Along this line Roof writes as follows: "high levels of religious individualism do not necessarily undermine spiritual vitality. Individualism often does erode certain forms of institutionalised

religious participation – usually the older more acculturated styles that have lost touch with everyday life – but it also opens up 'free space' for forming new activities and solidarities as individual proclivities evolve in a seemingly endless kaleidoscopic fashion That people today are bonding more around their emotions, experiences, and yearning need not spell the demise of traditional structures, but it does mean that such structures as well as any new type of spiritual movements now taking form, must accommodate, indeed, actively embrace, personal concerns in its formation of community." Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, 163.

62. Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

63. M. Castells, "Materials for an exploration of the network society", *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (January/March 2000): 5-24. His work is detailed in *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Vol. 1, The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

64. Wuthnow, *Loose Connections*.

65. Wuthnow, *Loose Connections*, 49.

66. Roof also picks up on this concept of liquidity or fluidity. "On Being Fluid and Grounded", *Spiritual Marketplace*, 111-144. A style of religion "privileging themes of individuality, adaptability and fluidity," 112.

67. Cox, "Myth," 143.

68. C. G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), 193.

69. In crude terms this is often referred to in church circles as being preoccupied with "bums on seats".

70. See the discussion on the relationship between gospel and culture in Chapter 3, 70-3.

71. Cox, "Myth", 138-9.

72. D. Martin, *The Breaking of the Image: A Sociology of Christian Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

73. Conrad Ostwalt, *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 25.

74. Joel Martin and Conrad Ostwalt, *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth and Ideology in Popular American Film* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 158.

75. J. A. Beckford, *Religion in Advanced Industrial Societies* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 171.

76. Of course this is tremendously challenging for the institutional church, on which many including myself depend to pay our salaries and hopefully superannuation, but we need to relate to our world as it is becoming, not as we would wish it was.

77. W. Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 20.

78. Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation*, 20.

79. Exact figures are difficult to find, but indications are that it is still about 50%.

80. See for example Davie, "From obligation to consumption", 5-6.

81. Charles Upham was New Zealand's great military hero. His funeral in November 1994 in Christchurch Cathedral saw over 5,000 people cramming the Cathedral and the streets outside.

82. Taylor was murdered in Palmerston North on 5 July 2002. The Roman Catholic Cathedral in Palmerston North was used for people to pay tributes and a large public funeral. In Timaru, his hometown, the Roman Catholic church was used for the public to pay tributes.

83. His funeral in his hometown of Timaru was performed by an Anglican priest, Mike Hawke, with over 1,000 people attending.

84. M. Percy, "Things Are Not as Bad as You Think: Religion in a Secular Age", *Ministry Today* 22 (October 2002): 9, 10.

85. This year I am teaching in the University of Otago a new course, "Spirituality in Film".

86. Quoted in Martin and Ostwalt, *Screening the Sacred*, 156

87. R. Wuthnow, *All In Sync: How Music and Art and Religion are Revitalizing American Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

88. "Turbulent Priests," *The Press* (17 December, 2002): A8.

89. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, 2, 5.

Kevin Ward is a secondary school teacher, Baptist pastor and Bible College of New Zealand lecturer. Last year he completed a PhD looking at the impact of social and cultural change on the church in New Zealand since the 1960s. Since 2003 he has been a lecturer and Dean of Studies at the School of Ministry, Knox College, and associate lecturer at the University of Otago. This article was presented as the inaugural lecture at the School of Ministry in February this year.