

theology of most lay Presbyterians as not only 'child-like' but, more pejoratively, 'childish'.

I found James Veitch's chapter '1961-1990: Towards the Church for a New Era' the most difficult. In order to explain the Presbyterian adherence crisis of the last thirty years he invokes a 'completely new era in history' beginning in about 1960 which followed 'the emergence of a completely new understanding of the nature of the world'. There are problems here. First, long and complex historical processes, like the industrial and technological revolutions, are hugely compressed to create an artificial and unhistorical sense of overwhelmingly rapid change. Second, Veitch's concept of a 'completely new understanding of the nature of the world' rendering traditional theological formulations obsolete, though beloved of avant garde theologians, is historically dubious. Recent work in the history of science-and-religion has cast considerable doubt on the idea that the modern scientific understanding of the world undermined traditional religious and philosophical beliefs. These problems make the explanation of the crisis of Presbyterianism shaky as well as vague.

Whereas church histories in the past tended to be triumphalist, this one tended to smack instead of guilt-ridden white male liberal Presbyterianism — an agonizing combination these days. All the contributors criticized the Church for its racism, sexism and insularity. While there is plenty to feel guilty about, and no case for a return to the uncritical triumphalist church history of the past, there is perhaps not sufficient appreciation of the strengths, virtues and accomplishments of Presbyterianism. Matheson, Breward and Davidson came closest to striking the balance, but this history would, I think, tend to confirm those leaving the church in the wisdom of their decision, rather than to reconsider it. If the institutional church has a future — and presumably these contributors hope it has — then it may need more than self-criticism, healthy as that may be, to reverse current trends.

This said, this is an interesting, comprehensive readable history of Presbyterianism, which synthesizes the sources very well. An excellent addition to New Zealand religious history, it should be read not just by Presbyterians, but by anyone interested in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand.

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French Akaroa: An Attempt to Colonise Southern New Zealand. By Peter Tremewan. University of Canterbury Press, Christchurch, 1990. xx, 383 pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

FOR SIXTY YEARS, notwithstanding significant amplifications of detail and context by later researchers, Lindsay Buick's *The French at Akaroa* (1928) has remained the only substantial study of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company's efforts to establish a colony on Banks Peninsula in 1840. Now Peter Tremewan's *French Akaroa* does not merely correct Buick's errors and modify his perspectives but entirely supersedes the earlier work, which henceforth will have only historiographical and literary importance.

Tremewan, senior lecturer in French at the University of Canterbury, has built his study upon contemporary records, including, for the first time, a systematic exploration

of French language sources held in French archives. The most notable materials are those in the Archives Nationales, and the Decazes family papers (the Duke Decazes, who had commercial and political influence at the highest levels, was intimately involved in the affairs of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company). Tremewan has also used a variety of other French state and provincial records, as well as British Colonial Office records and New Zealand sources. The copious annotation will persuade the reader that the author has missed nothing of significance still extant.

The exposition is in four sections: the first details the initial 'purchase' of land by Captain J.-F. Langlois in 1838, the formation of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, and French government policy on colonization; the second deals with the responses of Captain C.P. Lavaud when he arrived in New Zealand to discover that the British had already taken possession of the South Island, and with further negotiations over land between the French and local Maori; the third section, 'A French Settlement', describes the settlers and their social and economic tribulations, the complex 'Akaroa entente cordiale' (p.217) by which the British and French authorities maintained honour as well as law and order, the artistic and scientific exertions of the French naval officers stationed at Akaroa, and the continuing riddle of ownership of the Akaroa and adjacent lands during the 1840s. The final section completes the history of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company with the purchase of its assets by the New Zealand Company in 1849 ('insider trading on an international scale', observes Tremewan on p.291), and briefly surveys the later fortunes of the resident colonists. The coverage is thus comprehensive, and although there is some loss of momentum in the narrative through the topical arrangement of the third section, Tremewan organizes a wealth of detail very satisfactorily.

Among the many insights Tremewan provides, two in particular may be noted here: the role of the French government in the initial stages of the project, and the disputes about the validity and extent of land purchase.

Though successive French ministries were guarded about the New Zealand enterprise, Tremewan, extending the work of J.-P. Faivre, makes clear the keen interest of the government in the activities of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company. As in Africa and elsewhere in the Pacific, French governments during this period preferred private companies to be the vanguard of French influence. It was hoped, nevertheless, that the commercial undertaking would lead to French sovereignty over the South Island of New Zealand, Stewart Island, and the Chatham Islands; and the fear of the British getting hold of the South Island first haunted the government as well as the Company. In that sense there was indeed a 'race' between the British and the French (pp. 30, 58). 'It is at Mururoa, not the Chatham Islands, that the French nuclear tests have been held', Tremewan reminds us at the end: 'But it was quite a close race' (p.306).

Of greater moment is his discussion of French land purchases from the Maori (Christine Tremewan's assistance in these matters is acknowledged). In addition to providing a full account of French misdeeds (the '2 August 1838' deed printed in the British Parliamentary Papers and reprinted by Buick is in fact an antedated 1840 document, and two other deeds, of 11 and 12 August 1840, were drawn up *after* Maori signatures were placed on blank paper), Tremewan gives proper weight to Maori statements that Akaroa land had not been sold to Langlois in 1838, and that only certain very limited locations around Banks Peninsula were sold in 1840. Other land had been promised but not paid for. Maori continued to build houses in various unoccupied bays of the peninsula as an assertion of their claims that these lands had not been sold. But when the Crown made its arrangements with Akaroa Maori and with the New Zealand Company in 1856, 'The fact that the French had promised further payments was lost from sight. And the wording of deeds began to prevail at the expense of local understanding of what the agreed boundaries and conditions were' (p.299). The written deeds protected the

French and German settlers at Akaroa, but, by contrast, these deeds were used to dispossess the Kai Tahu. For Kai Tahu, the issue has been current ever since 1840, and Tremewan's evidence has been presented before the Waitangi Tribunal.

French Akaroa includes a comprehensive bibliography, some excellent maps, photographs of a number of grim-faced settlers in their latter years, and a generous selection of contemporary or near-contemporary etchings and pencil drawings of Akaroa. The writing throughout is precise and often elegant, and Tremewan enlivens the text by teasing out the paradoxes, as in the case of Belligny's land sale to the British magistrate, C.B. Robinson, 'who then became an interested party in establishing the validity of the French land titles' (p.260). Altogether *French Akaroa* is a model of scholarship, and in its concern to incorporate Maori points of view is a work which illuminates the wider historical horizon as well as its professed subject.

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New Zealand and the French. Two Centuries of Contact. Edited by John Dunmore. The Heritage Press Ltd, Waikanae, 1990. 202pp. NZ price: \$32.50.

HOW WOULD Flaubert or Proust have been welcomed had they ever travelled to rural New Zealand? Maybe not so well, judging from this team account of New Zealand's relations with the French, a product of last year's sesquicentennial. Despite France's status as a once-great power, and its critical role in the European exploration and annexation of New Zealand, it is the surprising lack of two-way influence between the two countries over the last two centuries which comes out most strongly — an ironic conclusion given the aim of this publication. Although the various contributors search valiantly for a significant French connection, their case is ultimately unconvincing. Only ex-diplomat Merwyn Norrish points out that France has, on the whole, failed to project an influence on New Zealand in keeping with its political and cultural status in the rest of the world. Whether in spite of or because of this, New Zealanders' attitudes towards the French seem extraordinarily negative, varying between critical admiration and outright dislike (Norrish diplomatically understates that they 'do not automatically find French people and French attitudes fully congenial', p.156). As opinion polls confirm, the French have what Madison Avenue calls an 'image problem' in New Zealand.

We see this all the more for the gymnastic efforts of these essayists to uncover solid French influence on New Zealand. Strong and undoubted in the exploration period (ably charted by John Dunmore), the French connection seems to have weakened considerably from the mid-nineteenth century until after the post-war period. Roger Collins, for instance, argues (ch. 14) that French influence on New Zealand art (Impressionism, Cubism etc.) dominated in the period 1890s to 1960s, but his evidence of direct links is slim, and he undercuts his own case by admitting that the work of artists most heavily influenced by France — like Frances Hodgkins, Raymond McIntyre and Edith Collier — was shunned at home. As Gillian Boddy's essay on Katherine Mansfield confirms, taste back in New Zealand seems to have been conservative, British-oriented, and on the whole slow to accept French influence. John Dunmore entertainingly chronicles the rise of the image of glamour, taste and fashion which has seen New Zealanders introduced to