

grand cathedrals that were never built might justly have given way to one or two of the many humbler mid-twentieth-century parish churches that actually were.

As the author of a diocesan history, O'Meehan understandably decided to make the subject more manageable by relying on diocesan sources and not writing any more than necessary about broader issues. Herein lies a strength and a limitation. Concentrating on the archives of the Wellington Archdiocese has produced an impressive and detailed work to which future historians will be indebted, but its perspective is naturally that of the administrators who compiled the archive, not that of the pilgrim people who make up the Church. A number of secondary sources are indicated in the notes (not always on religious topics), but a bibliography would have been useful to both researchers and general readers.

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*Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand.* Edited by John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2004. 272 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877276-92-8.

*BUILDING GOD'S OWN COUNTRY* is the third in a series by the University of Otago Press aiming to bring graduate student research before a wider audience. There has been considerable interest in religious subjects in recent years and this volume serves an excellent function in making research in that area more readily available. The 15 essays included derive from work completed at Otago between 1975 and 2001. Most relate to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with just one dedicated to the years after World War II. One happy consequence of this concentration is that burned-over themes like secularization and the Geering controversy are absent. This makes for a fresh and appealing collection.

As John Stenhouse's introduction admits, the contributions have been grouped 'somewhat arbitrarily' into four sections. Nonetheless, these are well crafted and flow logically. The first section deals with 'Southern Presbyterians'. Knox Church in Dunedin features prominently; its first minister, the Rev. D.M Stuart, is the subject of one chapter, and its music another. There are also particularly significant contributions by Rosalind McClean and Alison Clarke. McClean's chapter on 'Scottish Piety' details patterns of belonging, social composition and religious identity in the earliest years of the Otago settlement, and offers unusually sympathetic interpretations of Thomas Burns and Free Church disciplinary regimes. Clarke's deft study of nineteenth-century Sabbath-keeping emphasizes the ideological priority of worker protection over respectability. Like others in this section, she also challenges caricatures of Presbyterianism as unalterably dour and uniform by providing examples of innovation, variety and warmth.

The second grouping considers 'Communities of Faith' — an eclectic array of small but interesting groups from around Otago such as the Congregational Church at Moray Place, Dunedin's Jewish community and the diminutive but controversial Salvation Army at Milton. A fourth chapter, by Billie McLeod, fills a gap in the recent literature on the Dunedin-based (Irish) Catholic periodical the *New Zealand Tablet* by providing a survey of its origins and content under Bishop Moran. A similarly diverse third section on 'Missionary Encounters' tackles the career of CMS printer William Colenso during his years at Paihia, early Mormon Mission activity among Pakeha and Maori and Alexander Don, the pioneer Presbyterian missionary to Otago's Chinese goldminers.

The final section, on 'Gender', includes two essays that explore Protestant Christianity's influence on New Zealand masculinities. These extend Stenhouse's own recent challenge

to Jock Phillips's binary opposition between wowserite (religious) masculinity and the hegemonic boozier/hard-man. Justine Smith's study of the YMCA in Dunedin demonstrates that some popular masculinities readily incorporated virility and religion, while Kieran O'Connell illustrates that religion could be formative in men's lives even when formal religious association was weak. Future discussion about masculinity will need to consider 'muscular Christianity' more carefully, though the term's meaning in twentieth-century New Zealand still needs clarification. The book concludes strongly with chapters by Karyn-Maree Piercy on the early-twentieth-century Deaconess movement, and Angela Matthews on the introduction of 'an Anglican female priesthood'.

The last set of essays illustrates particularly clearly how important social and cultural history approaches have become in recent religious historical writing. In this book clergy, missionaries and institutional material are all still prominent. Yet questions of gender, race, complexity, variety and the experiences of smaller religious groupings are apparent throughout. Popular religion is a significant theme in some of the more recent research, and there is clearly much scope for work in this area.

Most of the essays provide excellent introductions to their subjects. However, at points, the volume could have been enhanced by paying greater attention to the interpretive sections. For example, Matthews' otherwise admirable essay concludes rather weakly that women priests were accepted quickly in New Zealand because 'there was a greater readiness to change than in other communities'. Similarly, historiographical issues might have been explored further, especially with some of the better-known subjects. Grant Phillipson provides a good overview of early Colenso, but consciously resists engagement with the more controversial debates about him.

Unfortunately, there are one or two production blemishes. The endnote numbering is out of synch for some of the early chapters, as is one of the titles. More substantially, the titles of some chapters are more ambitious than their delivery. Keith Furniss's history of Moray Place Congregational Church purportedly covers 1862 to 1966, but there is not much to be gleaned from the half page devoted to the years after 1893. O'Connell's chapter provides interesting case studies of some Dunedin 'men', but could have developed the idea of 'Christian masculinities' more clearly.

Despite these observations, this book makes a significant contribution. Nothing else in the field quite compares for breadth, and this alone makes it noteworthy and commendable. The collection provides solid introductions to some familiar topics, but also breaks genuinely new ground. It suggests that there are new religious tales worth telling and old ones worth revisiting. Moreover, it successfully demonstrates that the study of religions can help illuminate subjects of general historical interest and importance. Hopefully this will stimulate further graduate work of similar quality, and encourage others to develop some of the broader implications more fully.

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*A Question of Faith: A History of the New Zealand Christian Pacifist Society.* By David Grant. Philip Garside Publishing, Wellington, 2004. 120 pp. NZ price: \$29.95. ISBN 0-9582275-8-6.

THIS BOOK MAY BE UNDERSTOOD as a farewell, not without poignancy. Throughout the 60-plus years of its existence, the Christian Pacifist Society was sometimes vilified, more often ignored, never honoured in its own country. In 2002, the decision having been made to wind up the Society, a remaining bequest provided sufficient funds to commission David Grant to write a history. Grant was already well known to members.