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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN ERA

John Evans †

I. INTRODUCTION

Some scholars, like the New Zealand church historian Peter Lineham, have argued that “church and state have been bound to each other in an unequal co-dependency” throughout New Zealand’s history.¹ In this partnership the state has always been the stronger partner, with the church having an increasingly smaller role as time goes on. In other words, the state has become more secular.² Such a thesis must, however, be qualified. The church does continue to have an important role in relationship to the state in contemporary New Zealand, especially in the provision of social services. This, in fact, becomes a particularly significant difference from the relationship the church had with the state in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. State aid for education and even for social services was a sectarian minefield and any support was eschewed by the state. However, while more state support for the church in the second half of the century became a significant

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1. P. Lineham, *Government Support of the Church in the Modern Era, A paper for the Conference on Church and State in New Zealand* at 1 (U Otago, 1997).

2. See D. Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Basil Blackwell, 1978) for a developed account of secularization as an historical process and L. Shiner, *The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research*, 6 J Scientific Study of Religion 207-220 (1967), for a discussion of some of the issues in establishing the presence of secularization. As an historical movement see, for example, O. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge U Press, 1975); and A.D. Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain* (Longman, 1980). For an examination of “the process of secularization” in the context of church-state relations in New Zealand, see, for example, M. Hill, *The Social Context of New Zealand Religion: ‘Straight’ or ‘Narrow’?*; W.J. Stuart, *Secularization and Sectarianism: The Struggle for a Religious Future for New Zealand in Religion and New Zealand’s Future*, K.J. Sharpe, ed, at 22-46 & 84-91 (Dunmore Press, 1982); J. Veitch, *The Rise and Fall of Christianity in New Zealand* in *Finding the Way: New Zealand Christians Look Forward*, M. Reid Martin, ed, at 74-78 (Joint Brd Christian Ed, 1983); A.C. Webster & P.E. Perry, *The Religious Factor in New Zealand Society* at 6-11, 16-18, 142-145 (Alpha Pub, 1989); and the essays within *Secularization of Religion in New Zealand* (Dept of U Extension, Victoria U, 1976).

qualification to “secularization theory,” neo-liberalism, rationalist economics and the consequent changes to the New Zealand state since 1984 have now raised questions even about this aspect of state support of churches.³ This paper explores the various types of government support for the Church in New Zealand this century, how that support has waxed and waned, and how now the future holds for the Church as a new century approaches.

II. THE GROWTH OF STATE SUPPORT FOR THE CHURCH

The modern era, in this instance from the time of the First Labour Government in 1935, saw a great increase in the role of the state in social and economic matters. The election in 1935 provided a radical social and political change which sections of the church actively supported and welcomed.⁴ The passage of the Social Security Act of 1938, the cornerstone of the welfare state, was even described by the Prime Minister, Michael Savage, as “applied Christianity.”⁵ Arnold Nordmeyer, a Minister in the First Labour Government, spoke of this legislation as the fulfillment of Christ’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.⁶ People facing hardship had their needs met by the state. Although not immediately, the coming of the welfare state heralded a significant change with regard to state support for the church and its social service activities. Beginning in the 1950s, all denominations (except the Baptists, initially⁷) began to receive quite extensive government funding for this work. Prior to this time, the work of the New Zealand churches was not extensive and funded from within their own resources.

3. In my study, *Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990 with Particular Reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches* (PhD thesis, Otago, 1992), I suggest that there are other exceptions to the secularization process in New Zealand. In particular, the role of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) with the Maori. The focus in this paper, however, is with just the changing nature of government support for the Church.

4. K.P. Clements, *The Religious Variable: Dependent, Independent or Interdependent in 4 A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, M. Hill, ed, at 44 (SCM, 1971). Clements has isolated three phases of church-state engagement during the Depression. The first phase, 1929-1931, “was one of tacit and at times explicit support for the status quo.” Id at 39. The second phase, 1931-1934, “was a period of religious and public dissatisfaction with Government policies.” Id at 41. This dissatisfaction came particularly from the Methodist and Catholic Churches. The third phase, 1934-1935, was when “religious opinion leaders developed new values or modified previously held values which were favorable and positively encouraging to radical social and political change.” Id at 43. For more details see his *The Churches and Social Policy: A Study in the Relationship of Ideology to Action* (PhD thesis, Victoria, 1970).

5. Michael Savage, 252 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 423 (1938).

6. Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, quoted in 3,2 Crosslink 2 (1989).

7. S.L. Edgar, *A Handful of Grain (Volume Four 1945-1982)* at 48 (New Zealand Baptist Historical Society, 1982).

State assistance was first provided for the establishing of homes for old people. Beginning in 1950, capital grants for up to 50% of the cost of new homes were offered.⁸ These grants were then extended to 75% of the capital cost of new homes in June 1955⁹ and in 1960, 100% was granted for approved projects.¹⁰ As J.R. Marshall, an active Presbyterian layman (later to be Prime Minister) who introduced these measures when he was Minister of Health, noted subsequently that "the response of the churches [was] immediate and practical."¹¹ By the end of the 1950s two million pounds had been made available to churches and over two thousand aged persons had been accommodated.¹²

Other areas of social services traditionally provided by the churches also received state support during this era. Financial help was given to children's homes, or as they were then called, "orphanages." This support was in the form of a capitation subsidy in the respect of each child cared for, and a grant of up to 50% of the cost of approved capital work. By 1960, 53 out of the 68 registered children's homes were church-run.¹³ Also in June 1951, the government introduced a scheme to provide religious and welfare organizations with 50% of the capital cost for establishing hostels. In the first year, nearly 63,000 pounds were given for this purpose.¹⁴

A similar link was established in prison chaplaincy.¹⁵ In 1952, a pilot project began with the appointment of a state-paid, part-time chaplain, the Reverend L.C. Clements, to the Invercargill prison. The Secretary of the Justice Department, S.T. Barnett, noted that "religion is, of course, one of the reformatory influences that should have the best possible opportunity of being brought to bear."¹⁶ The pilot project was

8. Annual Report, Department of Health, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1951 H.31, 4.

9. Annual Report, Department of Health, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1956 H.31, 9.

10. Annual Report, Department of Health, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1960 H.31, 73.

11. John R. Marshall, *Memoirs, Volume I: 1912-1960* at 196 (Collins, 1983).

12. Annual Report, Department of Health, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1959 H.31, 127.

13. Annual Report, Division of Child Welfare, Education Department, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1960 E.4, 17.

14. Annual Report, Department of Health, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1952 H. 31, 7.

15. For a history of chaplaincy in New Zealand see J.H. Roberts, *Prison Chaplaincy in New Zealand* (unpublished thesis, Diploma in Criminology, U Auckland, 1975).

16. Annual Report, Justice Department, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1952 H.20, 13; and see also C. Brown, *Forty Years On: A History of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand 1941-1981* at 104 (National Council of Churches, 1981); and *Church and Community* at 56 (1963). J.L. Robson, *Sacred Cows and Rogue Elephants* at 59

deemed a success, and “wrought much good and brought to bear much more effectively than ever before the undoubted benefit of a wisely exercised religious influence.”¹⁷ In 1955 the policy was announced that it was the Government’s wish “to see one chaplain per institution.”¹⁸ By the time of the resignation of Mr. Clements in 1959, the system of prison chaplaincy was well established. Chaplains were working in 13 institutions and a strong relationship between the Justice Department and the National Council of Churches had been forged.¹⁹

In the 1950s, and in some earlier instances, co-operation between the church and the state was also established for refugees and international aid. The traumatic events of the Second World War had prompted this relationship. At a meeting on August 16, 1944, convened by the Society of Friends, the National Council of Churches and the New Zealand Red Cross, it was agreed to form the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO).²⁰ This body was initially staffed by the state to administer New Zealand’s international aid and to support the international relief and reconstruction work of the infant United Nations.²¹ In February 1946, the National Council of Churches established the Interchurch Aid Department, modeled on the World Council of Church’s own Department of Reconstruction and Interchurch Aid. This agency worked closely with CORSO and the state in this period of post-war reconstruction.²²

(Government Print, 1987), notes “Quite early in his administration Barnett declared that religion was one of the best reformative influences upon inmates.”

17. Annual Report, Justice Department, AJHR, 1954 H.20, 12. Clements himself thought the scheme worked well: *Church and Community* at 8-10 (1954). The Secretary of the Justice Department, S.T. Barnett also thought the scheme had worked well, and provision for prison chaplains was made in the Penal Institutions Act, 1954. J.H. Roberts, *Prison Chaplaincy in New Zealand* (cited in note 15).

18. Annual Report, Justice Department, AJHR, 1954 H.20 12.

19. C. Brown, *Forty Years On: A History of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand 1941-1981* at 105 (cited in note 16).

20. R.T. Thompson, *New Zealand in Development: A Record of Overseas Aid*, at 7 (CORSO, 1969). See also R.T. Thompson, *New Zealand in Relief: The Story of CORSO* (CORSO, 1965) for a full account of these first twenty-one years.

21. It was on November 22, 1944 that the New Zealand government approved the constitution of CORSO and appointed J.H. Boyes Chairman, while Colin Morrison was seconded from the public service. In the initial years CORSO focused on the work of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRAA) and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). CORSO remained a specific responsibility of government, first the Department of Internal Affairs, and then the Department of External Affairs: J.K. Hunn, *Not Only Affairs of State* at 127 (Dunmore Press, 1982).

22. M. Lovell-Smith, *No Turning Back: A History of Inter-Church Aid Work of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand 1945-1983* at 21 (National Council of Churches, 1986).

The National Council of Churches and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul were also closely involved with the government on refugee and immigration matters. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul had helped the government with the settlement of Polish orphans during the course of the war. Early in 1949, there was a confidential meeting with the Acting Prime Minister over the part the Society could play in the settling of "displaced persons." A Joint Committee of Preparation was established to facilitate the arrival of the "displaced persons" in the following years. The experience of the World Council of Churches was used and appreciated by the government. Later in the 1950s, the National Council of Churches established the Consultative Committee on Overseas Aid Programs. In 1958 this became the Consultative Committee on Human Relations and Technical Assistance and advised both the government and the Council.²³

In his major study *Religion and the Law* in 1962, Richardson observed that it was because of the growth of the welfare state that this new relationship developed.

[I]n the fields of education and care of the sick, aged and dependent generally the function of the church and state overlap. Indeed, the churches were active in those fields long before the rise of the modern social welfare state. Thus in granting aid of this kind the state is acting not so much to promote religious purposes involved as to foster the vital social functions of assisting education and alleviating sickness and so on through organization which have for centuries carried on those functions.²⁴

The rise of the New Zealand welfare state therefore saw what was officially called "co-operation" between the state and the church. In the immediate post war period, New Zealand regarded itself as a Christian nation and the welfare state was readily seen as an expression of the Christian ideal of compassion. Moreover, New Zealand by the 1950s could also readily afford such state support. It was prosperous with virtually no unemployment and booming agricultural export industries.²⁵ As Mitchell, writing in the late 1960s said, "[The State] is the community in action."²⁶ State support for social service work would be

23. M. Lovell-Smith, *No Turning Back: A History of Inter-Church Aid Work of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand 1945-1983* at 105-106 (cited in note 22). In these early years of post-war refugee re-settlement the New Zealand government actually gave a direct donation to the World Council of Churches for the work it was doing in the area. *Id.* at 110.

24. I.L.M. Richardson, *Religion and the Law* at 14-15 (Sweet & Maxwell, 1962).

25. See R. Chapman, *From Labour to National* in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W.H. Oliver, ed, at 365 (Oxford U Press, 1981).

26. A. Mitchell, *Politics in The Pattern of New Zealand Culture*, A.L. McLeod, ed, at 91

natural, even expected. Furthermore, at least initially, this growth in church agencies was also a measure of the church's own vitality and strength. As the Presbyterian Assembly Social Service Committee said in 1962 "[Presbyterian Social Service] Associations have taken advantage of the initial help provided by the state, but their work still represents the mind and purpose of the Church to express the love of God to those who otherwise experience extreme unhappiness and insecurity in the evening time of their life."²⁷ The New Zealand Church in the 1950s was a powerful and influential social force.

During the 1960s, church social service agencies grew. The major new development was in the area of hospital chaplaincy. In 1971, the Interchurch Advisory Council on Hospital Chaplaincy was created to lobby and advise the government on the implementation and administration of the national hospital chaplaincy scheme. The lobbying was successful and from 1971, the government was prepared to meet 50% of the expense of hospital chaplains, for initially 40 and then by 1976, 55 chaplains.²⁸ In the area of youth services, new avenues of church-state co-operation also developed. In 1965, the government established the National Youth Council. This body had strong links with the National Council of Churches and offered assistance to youth organizations.²⁹ This link was quite ironic because the National Council of Churches' own youth work was floundering at the time.³⁰ At this point the state even funded churches in the building of church youth halls.³¹

By the 1970s many quite significant and powerful church organizations had become substantially funded by the state. This was, however, at a time when the strength and the vitality of particularly the mainline churches were in marked decline. There was, as Lineham suggests, a co-dependency, but it was more a partnership. The church was meeting a need, for example, in "aged care [that] cannot be done by government alone."³² The church became a part of a wider social phenomenon of the welfare state: the growth in non-government social

(Oxford U Press, 1968).

27. 1962, Social Service, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 28a.

28. J. Evans, *Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990 with Particular Reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches* at 190 (cited in note 3).

29. Annual Report, Department of Internal Affairs, AJHR, 1965 A.22, 53.

30. C. Brown, *Forty Years On: A History of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand 1941-1981* at 143 (cited in note 16).

31. Annual Report, Department of Internal Affairs, AJHR, 1967 A.22, 53.

32. A letter to the Minister of Health, D.N. McKay, tabled in the Aged Care sub-Committee of the Presbyterian Social Service Committee on June 15, 1970: Minutes, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand Archives Office.

service agencies. From early co-operation, there was now an extensive new partnership. Throughout the town and cities of New Zealand, new caring institutions emerged, chaplaincy was expanded—all run by the churches, but largely funded by the State.

III. STATE SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

In this modern era, however, the increase in state support for church-sponsored social welfare organizations was primarily driven by the needs of an expanding welfare state. Even though this increase began with the First Labour Government, it was supported by both sides of politics. The fact that the church was being supported was even seen to be a positive. State support for the church was not qualified by those sectarian concerns which had dogged the relationship in the nineteenth century. The political discussions over support of Christian social services did not revisit the early question of establishment or herald a new erastianism. Dogmatic issues on the role of church and state did not feature. True, the churches were respected institutions within New Zealand society, but this church-state partnership was delivering certain services the New Zealand people desired and were now expected to be provided.

This changing focus on state-supported social welfare can be illustrated by comparing the features of state support for education and state support for service work. To begin with in the modern era, state support was at first markedly different, but then effectively the same. The great nineteenth century battle over state aid for church schools was at an end by the 1970s.³³ In early New Zealand history, the state may have endorsed military chaplains³⁴ and provided some very limited assistance to the church's charitable aid work, but it was not going to support church schools. The 1877 Education Act, establishing a national secular and free education system, set the parameters for church-state relations through to this post war period; the 1877 Act was, in fact, New Zealand's religious settlement. Church and state were separate. No state aid for denominational schools was provided and only indirect opportunities for religious education existed within the state education system.³⁵ The state assiduously eschewed the church

33. See J. Mackey, *The Making of a State Education System: The Passing of the New Zealand Education Act, 1877* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1967).

34. See J.B. Haigh, *Men of Faith and Courage: The Official History of New Zealand's Army Chaplains* (The Word Publishers, 1983) for the history of New Zealand military Chaplains.

35. This was through religious instruction in schools provided by the churches known as Bible in schools: see I. Beward, *Godless Schools? A Study of Protestant Reactions to Secular Education in New Zealand* (Presbyterian Bookroom, 1967).

support during these times of often open and heated sectarian conflict.

This nineteenth century position continued with respect to education, even while the welfare state was beginning to support Christian social services of other kinds—a contradiction rarely noted at the time, especially by the Presbyterians who vigorously opposed state aid for denominational schools. During the 1950s, the Holy Name Society organized a large petition for state aid for church schools but was unsuccessful in securing funding for church schools.³⁶ The Presbyterian Church in 1959 believed in the “strength of the public system as a bulwark of our democracy and as an expression of the solidarity of the community.”³⁷ In 1960 New Zealand’s Christian heritage was still decidedly Protestant!

The Currie Commission, a Royal Commission on Education in New Zealand in 1962, again affirmed that there should be no state aid for church schools, and the secular clause (that is, no religious instruction would be provided by the state) should be maintained.³⁸ However, by 1975 the situation had been completely reversed. Not only did an extensive range of state aid for schools exist, but also the structure was in place for the “integration” of all private church schools within the state system. Denominational schools could now receive recurrent operational funding and still maintain their special religious character.³⁹ A possibility also existed that religion could even be taught within the state system as a part of the curriculum.

The first and perhaps most significant reason for this vast change in approach to state support was that by the 1970s, the possibility of heated and open sectarian conflict had dissipated. As late as 1966, John Macfarlane, the headmaster of Scot’s Wellington (a Presbyterian School), claimed that the Presbyterian Church was still motivated by old sectarian hostilities and the fear of the spread of Catholic Schools.⁴⁰

36. (1956) 310 NZPD 2742. Professor G.L. Bailey, Professor of Education at Victoria University, in his evidence to the Education Committee of the House of Representatives Committee stated: “Since 1877 New Zealand has adhered to the separation of Church and State, a decision arrived at after the most thorough and searching examination of its kind. It is a conviction of the great majority of New Zealanders, and accepted by successive governments and that [sic] the long and well laid tradition of separation should continue and that the State in consequence should abstain both from teaching religion or from financially aiding the teaching of religion; it should neither hinder it nor promote it.” Quoted by D.M. Rae in the report of the Petitions Committee to Parliament (1956) 310 NZPD 2726.

37. 1959, Public Questions, PCNZ 79a and 1959, Minutes, PCNZ 40.

38. *The Report of the Royal Commission on Education in New Zealand* at 685 (Government Printer, 1962).

39. The Private Schools Conditional Integration Act, 1975.

40. *The Outlook* at 11 (June 11, 1966).

However, as the Catholic Church changed, mostly significantly after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the relationship between the Catholic Church and Protestant churches underwent a rapid transformation. As the journal of the National Council of Churches declared in April 1963, "every week something happens which was considered impossible two years ago."⁴¹ Ecumenical co-operation allowed the state to do what was unthinkable a century before. Secularization was also a factor in the changes on state support. It was true that churches were just not as significant as they once were. Church attendance was declining and the church's control over the nation's morals was waning. At the same time, political parties could see a sizeable group of voters who could be won with the offer of state aid for church schools. Such an offer would not now be met with overwhelming opposition and outcry. The National Government, which had not offered state aid in its electoral manifesto of 1969 (unlike the opposition Labour Party), endorsed the concept and in 1971 began with state assistance for up to 20% of teachers' salaries backdated to February 1970. Even the Presbyterian Church saw that by 1971 there was no use complaining—the money was there, even for its own schools.⁴² State aid for church schools was now a reality.

The sectarian element in New Zealand political life also became less relevant in other ways. An argument that was successfully used by the proponents of state aid was the need for the state to recognize a "freedom of choice" for parents.⁴³ That this argument was accepted as the basis for state funding of schools shows how the New Zealand nation had moved in its conception of itself. In the nineteenth century, the need for a national identity and hence a national system was seen as the major reason why the state support for the Catholic parochial schools was rejected.⁴⁴ Similarly, the Currie Commission rejected state aid because it threatened the ethos of national unity and identity.⁴⁵ However, the bar on state aid was ultimately overturned precisely to counter this monocultural national focus in education, a sea change

41. *Church and Community* at 12 (April 1963).

42. 1971, Public Questions, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 108.

43. The Catholic Case for State Aid was actually appended to the Currie Commission Report, *The Report of the Royal Commission on Education in New Zealand* at 834-840 (cited in note 38). Particular reference is made to Article 26 of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights which gives parents the right to choose an education for their child.

44. J. Mackey, *The Making of a State Education System: The Passing of the New Zealand Education Act, 1877* at 267 (Geoffrey Chapman, 1967).

45. *The Report of the Royal Commission on Education in New Zealand* at 707, 711 (cited in note 38).

which coincided with more significant political attention to the concerns of the Maori and Treaty of Waitangi (1840) issues. As the Catholic journal *Zealandia* noted, an integrated school system illustrated “those qualities of diversity in unity which are such a vitalizing factor in the function of a liberal democracy.”⁴⁶ Diversity and pluralism could now be supported by the state, and as it seemed, welcomed by the Church. This was a significant new feature of the modern era. The church was now just an aspect of broader society; other values and institutions could be recognized.

Perhaps the long expressed concern of the Presbyterians over the demise of the state system was actually vindicated. State aid did destroy any sense of national unity and encouraged a diversity of competing systems and values. Things did not work out, however, quite as the Presbyterians had forecast. The Presbyterian concern that the Catholics would achieve their “long term aim of building a nation within a nation and ultimately achieve [their] own end”⁴⁷ did not happen. Protestant supremacy may have ended in the New Zealand of the late twentieth century, but it had not been replaced by any overt Catholic privilege and domination. The move to state aid, and the arguments employed, instead illustrated and reinforced a New Zealand move to a more secular and pluralistic society and a willingness in the 1970s to offer support for the welfare state.

One cannot, however, overlook the economic factor that influenced the amount of state support available for church schools as well as for social services. During the 1960s when some grants to church schools first began, New Zealand was still very prosperous. Education, perhaps like other industries, certainly like welfare services, was able to be subsidized by the state from a health exchequer. Later, state support, at least after the oil shocks of the 1970s, became a simple factor of economics. Indeed it became one of the arguments for state aid that if support was not given to church schools, the private school system would collapse and even greater state expenditure would be required by the state for its own system. Church schools, particularly Catholic parochial schools, were financially desperate. Actual school closures were threatened.⁴⁸ (Interestingly, in the Catholic system one financial factor was the dramatic decline in Religious available to teach. In their

46. *Zealandia* at 10 (August 19, 1975).

47. The quote is the 1956 Presbyterian declaration on the State and Private Education: *The Outlook* at 2 (October 2, 1956).

48. E.A. Atkins, *The Effects of Integration of New Zealand's Roman Catholic Schools* at vii & 9 (unpublished MA thesis, Auckland, 1978).

stead, Catholic Schools had to hire lay people who had to be paid salaries commensurate to public school teachers. This became financially prohibitive.) As the future Prime Minister Robert Muldoon noted, it was sensible to provide help because the private school was "taking a burden away from the taxpayer."⁴⁹ Thus, in a strange way the church-state co-dependency continued by the dint of economics.

IV. THE DEMISE OF THE WELFARE STATE

By the 1980s, New Zealand had a sizeable non-profit sector within its national framework. It was even recognized as the "fourth dimension" at the September 1984 Economic Summit of the Fourth Labour Government.⁵⁰ There were church schools and church welfare agencies even chaplains, largely funded by the state. To maintain such a sector there were also appropriate lobby groups and national associations, like the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. They came to work closely with government seeking to extend their funding base and scope of work. However, the state was changing. Each year, until almost the end of the 1980s, the Department of Health would make the following entry in the annual *Yearbook*:

Government assistance is offered to religious and voluntary organizations and local authorities in providing housing, accommodation and services for elderly people and others with special needs. Under this partnership with government, the social service agencies of all the major religious bodies, as well as other welfare organizations, have established additional accommodation for the aged, frail and sick who need residential care in either an old people's home or geriatric hospital.⁵¹

However, in nothing short of a revolution, New Zealand changed. For years the *Yearbook*, year in and year out would say, the welfare system "reflected the traditional, humanitarian, egalitarian and pragmatic approach of New Zealanders and most importantly, reflects an acceptance of community responsibility for social welfare."⁵² This included state support of churches. Beginning in the 1980s everything has dramatically changed. This revolution came through the economic rationalist policies of Roger Douglas, the Treasurer in the Fourth Labour

49. Quoted by M. Wilson in *The State Aid to Private Schools Issue in New Zealand: 1963-1974* at 15 (unpublished MA thesis, Auckland, 1975).

50. R.P. Trotter in the foreword to *View from the Summit: A Look at the '84 Economic Summit Conference* at 2 (New Zealand Government, 1984).

51. 1987-1988, Health, *Yearbook* 200. The last entry in this form.

52. 1987-1988, Social Welfare, *Yearbook* 180.

Government (1984-1990).⁵³ In today's New Zealand, the market is everything, and indeed there is a market for everything—even those services that once were provided by the church. The church-state partnership has been shattered and any co-dependency dissolved. Just as all dealings of the state should be transparent, the position of the church within the New Zealand nation and with the New Zealand state is also transparent. Perhaps the state had all along been in partnership with itself?

While there was some successful opposition by the churches to this neo-liberal drive, such as the coalition they made with sporting and other groups to protect taxation concessions for charities in 1988, such victories have been rare.⁵⁴ The general push was that the state should not provide the same level of assistance for those in need as it used to. This was now the community's responsibility. The church itself, using its own resources should become "more involved in the responsibility for social welfare."⁵⁵ "Community responsibility" is no longer understood as the state acting on behalf of all the people of New Zealand; now it means that individuals and groups, such as the church, help other individuals and groups within the community. The state would now minimally help such endeavors. Unfortunately, New Zealand had not developed any great tradition of philanthropy and support for such charitable work of the churches or for charities generally as in the United States. There was no dogmatic separation of church and state because the welfare state and the state support of the church welfare programs seemed a natural response to growing need. In this new situation, the churches have responded as best as they have been able—creating food banks, for example, as churches endeavor to

53. See J. Boston & M. Holland, eds, *The Fourth Labour Government: Radical Politics in New Zealand* (Oxford U Press, 1987); M. Holland & J. Boston, eds, *The Fourth Labour Government: Politics and Policy in New Zealand* (Oxford U Press, 1990); M. Wilson, *Labour in Government 1984-1987* (Allen & Unwin, 1989); B. Jesson, *Behind the Mirror Glass: The Growth of Wealth and Power in New Zealand in the Eighties* (Penguin, 1987); C. James, *The Quiet Revolution: Turbulence and Transition in Contemporary New Zealand* (Allen & Unwin, 1986); and C. James & A. McRobie, *Changes?* (Allen & Unwin, 1990). With regard to the state sector reorganization see J. Boston, et al, eds, *Reshaping the State: New Zealand's Bureaucratic Revolution* (Oxford U Press, 1991); J. Roberts, *Politicians, Public Servants and Public Enterprise* (Victoria U Press for the Inst of Policy Studies, 1987) and J. Boston, *Reorganising the Machinery of Government in New Zealand: Objectives and Outcomes* (paper presented to the New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference, Otago U, May 1990 and reprinted in J. Boston, *Reshaping the State: New Zealand's Bureaucratic Revolution* at 233-267 (cited in note 53). References here are given to the paper.

54. J. Evans, *Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990 with Particular Reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches* at 346 (cited in note 3).

55. 1988-1989, Social Welfare, Yearbook 256-7.

respond to welfare and benefit cuts.⁵⁶ However, in terms of endeavoring to tackle major issues confronting the welfare of New Zealand citizens, the churches, along with other organizations, have evolved into simply contractors with the state, providing those residual services which are seen to be necessary for the minimal preservation of community and harmony.

At least by the 1990s, leaders of church welfare services became more forthright in their opposition to the direction of government policy. A more strident and advocacy role emerged, which has represented a new, and exciting position for the church. For example, the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services in March 1991 changed its Mission Statement to read

In common obedience to Jesus Christ, the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, being committed to social justice and the Treaty of Waitangi will inform and support its members, co-ordinate policy formulation and advocate for the development and delivery of social services.⁵⁷

No longer was the church just a quiescent lobby group seeking its fair share of the welfare cake for its members. The Social Justice Statement in 1993⁵⁸ was also born of this need for the Church to be an advocate. The usually uncomplaining community work of the church and what could be called the “prophetic” role of the church had come together. Certainly a situation now had arisen that required theological reflection for the sake of the state, but also for the church’s own relationship with the state. Certainly not since the pre-war days of Christian Socialism and the First Labour Government had these questions been so widely canvassed.

V. CONCLUSION

State support for the church in the modern era has, I suggest, moved full circle; however, both the church and the state have radically changed in that process. At the beginning, the church and state were not very co-dependent, nor are they now; but for a generation—or even two—in the middle of New Zealand’s history, they were co-dependent. At the start, primarily sectarian concerns prevented the state providing that support to the church, although New Zealand would still have

56. See *Foodbanks - A New Industry* in 5,5 *Crosslink* 12 (1991).

57. Executive Minutes, New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. March 10-12, 1991.

58. See J. Boston & A. Cameron, eds, *Voices for Justice: Church, Law and State in New Zealand* at 11 (Dunmore Press, 1994).

regarded itself as being a Christian nation. At the end, in the 1990s, the new nature of the state has meant that at best there is a contractual relationship between the state and the church in a secular and pluralistic context. However, for the intervening era, a rethink on a simple secularization model, which posits declining influence and irrelevancy for the church, is required. We must ask whether this period of co-dependency was just the exception in the inexorable process of secularizing all aspects of life, including the state. Perhaps we are still too close to tell. For it is still true that the church still has a very significant institutional role within the towns and cities of New Zealand in the provision of educational and welfare services. From this base it can speak with authority on behalf of weaker sections of society. From the margins the church still exercises power—power which even the state still acknowledges and at times grudgingly accepts.