America's Pastor and the 'Satin Satan': Politics and Celebrity in the Billy Graham Crusades, 1959.

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Billy Graham needs little introduction, save perhaps for people of my generation who've grown up in his quieter years. In 1949 the young North Carolina preacher burst into the headlines after an astonishingly successful revival hosted in Los Angeles. In many ways this set of meetings anticipated the hundreds of urban revivals he would lead across the world in the decades to come. Graham preceded his crusades with lavish publicity, church and business sponsorship and scrupulous organization. Venues were typically enormous tents or urban sports grounds. Within them, massive choirs, up to 5,000 strong, provided light-hearted jingles or more potent, emotional renditions as required. He concluded his gatherings with a powerful and direct method of appeal, the 'altar call', inviting the audience to rise and walk forward, to show that they would attempt to become, or be better Christians. According to Graham's theology this was not an easy commitment. It demanded a life of moral rigour, ethical integrity and a readiness to share the 'gospel' of salvation. The result was everlasting joy in heaven for the saved or everlasting separation for the lost. Those who indicated that they were prepared to work towards the former, Graham called 'inquirers'. For while they made 'decisions', or 'decisions for Christ' by rising at his call, Graham maintained that no one but God knew the heart well enough to call anyone a convert.

The 'crusades', as they came to be known, steadily grew in size and frequency. Between the 1940s and the 1990s, Graham and his lively brand of mass evangelism travelled abroad as never before, to Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The added outreach of electronic media, radio, television, print and even the silver screen made Billy Graham the most heard,

seen and read evangelist in the history of Christianity. By his retirement in 2005, Graham had preached to nearly 215 million people in ninety-nine countries, and perhaps to another two billion through live television. Taken together, those six decades of evangelism yielded more than three million recorded commitments for Christ. Around half-million New Zealanders participated in the 1959 crusade meetings, from which Graham and his team harvested over 16,000 'decisions for Christ' in a spare eleven days.

Nationwide, a new interest in religious matters was widely reported. In its wake, the Presbyterian General Assembly passed a motion to 'give thanks to Almighty God for the great blessing' which attended the crusade.[1] Today I will examine the New Zealand crusade with reference to popular culture and politics. However, I want to question, to some degree, the boundaries that are often charted between these dimensions of our history. Politics, like popular culture, is often considered to be solidly within the realm of the 'secular', whereas the Billy Graham crusade has been examined largely in terms of the 'religious', narrowly defined. I hope to demonstrate that focusing on the intersections and overlaps between 'religious' and 'secular' can enrich our understandings of both the 1959 Billy Graham crusade and the broader historical context in which it took place. I also want to argue against a more general narrative of 1950s New Zealand.

The most common image we encounter is of a dull, sheltered decade, pervaded by conformism, puritanism, and intolerance. For example, in the Penguin History of New Zealand, Michael King lamented that 'stodginess permeated national life', while historian Miles Fairburn agreed that creativity was recognized only in 'sport, war, growing grass, [and] do-it-yourself hobbies

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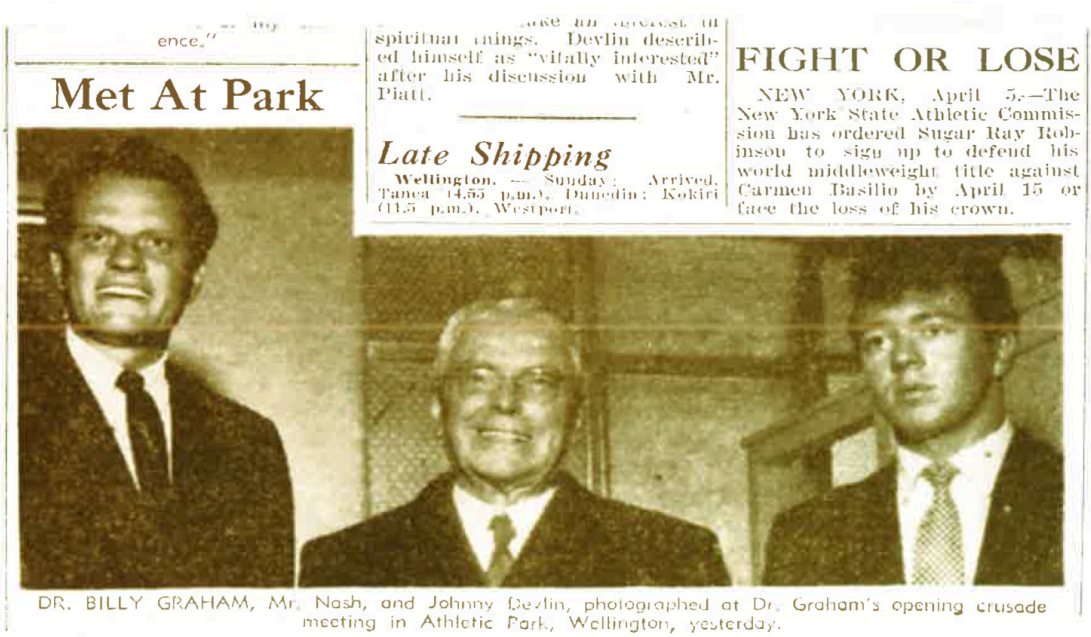
[1] *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand,* (1959), 26, in Bryan D. Gilling, 'Mass Evangelism in Mid-Twentieth Century New Zealand', in Douglas Pratt (ed.), *'Rescue the Perishing': Comparative Perspectives on Evangelism and Revivalism,* (Auckland: College Communications, 1989), 56. On crusade figures see Warner Hutchinson & Cliff Wilson, *Let the People Rejoice,* (Wellington: Crusader Bookroom Society, 1959), 142-146: up to 574,300 New Zealanders attended a crusade meeting, at least 17,493 recording 'decisions for Christ'.

and pastimes'.[2] Then a vast majority of New Zealanders continued to identify with one Christian denomination or another, and filled their allotted pews every Sunday. Perhaps because of this, the fifties have received a somewhat unsympathetic treatment from historians.

'Moral Panic' is a somewhat condescending term frequently used to describe the outraged hand-wringing of Christian politicians, public figures, clergy and their flocks as reports of teenage sex scandals, violent crimes and antisocial behaviour surfaced throughout the decade. An oft-cited cause was the flood of violent comic books, racy pulp novels, hollywood films and rambunctious rock 'n' roll music from North America.

As such, many historians have supposed that the brash, uninhibited behaviours of the new Americanised youth culture and the more sedate traditions of the religious and/or socially conservative mainstream were incompatible. The prevailing assumption has been that the respectable and repressed society of the fifties could not possibly enjoy the pleasures of American popular culture, and the young people who were doing just that were presumably less religious, or not religious at all. I will argue that New Zealands' political, popular and religious cultures were more dynamic and interpenetrating than many scholars have acknowledged.



ence."

Met At Park

spiritual things. Devlin described himself as "vitally interested" after his discussion with Mr. Piatt.

Late Shipping

Wellington. — Sunday: Arrived, Tanea (4.55 p.m.), Dunedin; Kokiri (11.5 p.m.), Westport.

FIGHT OR LOSE

NEW YORK, April 5.—The New York State Athletic Commission has ordered Sugar Ray Robinson to sign up to defend his world middleweight title against Carmen Basilio by April 15 or face the loss of his crown.

DR. BILLY GRAHAM, Mr. Nash, and Johnny Devlin, photographed at Dr. Graham's opening crusade meeting in Athletic Park, Wellington, yesterday.

As if to illustrate my point, above we see Billy Graham posing for a photograph with teen rock star Johnny Devlin on the right, and Prime Minister Walter Nash center.[3] By conventional logic, Walter Nash, principal representative of an ostensibly secular state, should not wish to tacitly support the twentieth century's most iconic Protestant Christian leader by appearing with him in a photograph. Billy Graham, for his part, stands shoulder to shoulder with a young man dubbed 'the Satin Satan', for his titillating style of rock 'n' roll. Nash should also presumably see a foe in Devlin, greasy-haired 'juvenile delinquency' incarnate, which the establishment had battled to control throughout the decade. That Devlin should hold his conservative elders at arm's length goes virtually without saying.

Was this so? One might think so by looking at Johnny Devlin. He was New Zealand's first home-grown rock idol. Complete with ducktail, loud suits, and hepcat lingo, he assimilated himself into the culture portrayed in American teen movies of the era, earning the title of 'the Wanganui Elvis'. Devlin's first and phenomenally successful national tour of 1958 echoed the Presley brand of theatrical eroticism on a number of occasions. A stage-managed 'riot' in a Lower Hutt record store and an 'orgy' involving teenage fans in a boarding house after the Wellington opening night whipped up a media frenzy.[4] In Invercargill, female fans mobbed Devlin's dressing room and attempted to remove his trousers, forcing him to escape through a toilet window. In Greymouth, fire-hoses were turned on a mob that broke down the theatre doors, while in Dunedin a policeman lost a finger.[5] Manager Graham Dent routinely unpicked Devlin's shirt-seams for the pleasure of ecstatic female fans, who could strip the former

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[3] *Dominion,* April 4th 1959, 2.
[4] Redmer Yska, *All Shook Up: The Flash Bodgie and the Rise of the New Zealand Teenager in the Fifties* (Auckland: Penguin, 1993), 108, 178-9, 195.
[5] Bronwyn Dalley, 'The Golden Weather, 1949-1965' in Bronwyn Dalley & Gavin McLean (eds.), *Frontier of Dreams: The Story of New Zealand,* (Auckland: Hodder Moa, 2005), 334; Chris Bourke, *Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music, 1918-1964,* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010), 287; Yska, 195-212.

body-builder piecemeal and even look forward to receiving a piece of the 'King's shirt' in the mail after the show was over.[6]

However, on April the 4th, 1959, the 'Satin Satan' donned a suit and tie for Billy Graham's open-air ministry in Wellington's Athletic Park. Historian Bronwyn Dalley later commented that the lurex-wearing, guitar-toting rocker seemed to have transformed into a teenaged choirboy.[7] Outward respectability aside, an image peopled by a salacious milkbar cowboy and a man otherwise known as the 'Thirteenth Apostle' raises many questions, especially when it was brought about a very polite telegram to the Mayor of Wellington: *'Would you please convey to Dr. Billy Graham and his party my sincere wishes on behalf of New Zealand teenagers for his continued success in promoting harmony throughout the Christian world. It is my greatest wish that I meet with Dr Graham while he is in New Zealand. Sincerely yours, Johnny Devlin".*[8]

If Johnny Devlin was 'a fiery preacher extolling the virtues of rock 'n' roll', these were not necessarily the virtues of the Devil.[9] Early in 1959 *The Press* released an article entitled 'Rock 'n' Roll Singer "a Nice Young Man"', claiming Devlin had 'none of the affectations cynics might expect of him'.[10] The piece emphasised his humble, soft-spoken manner and noted that as his portrait was being taken for the article, Devlin politely requested another be taken with his parents, who happened to be present for his interview.

Indeed, as one delves into the 'Satin Satan's' personal history and public image, the fault lines between religion and entertainment, church and stage, begin to blur. When questioned about his plans for his substantial salary, at the time the highest ever earned by a New Zealand musician, the former bank teller told *The Press* that it was being banked, and would later be invested.[11] In an age

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[6] John Dix, *Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock 'n' Roll, 1955-1988,* (Auckland: Paradise Publications, 1988), 19; Yska, 198.
[7] Dalley, 335.
[8] *The Otago Daily Times,* April 3rd 1959, 2.
[9] Dix, 26.
[10] 'Rock 'n' Roll Singer a "Nice Young Man"', *The Press,* 10th January, 1959, 8.
[11] 'Nice Young Man', *Press,* 8.

where analogies between teenage consumerism and sexual intemperance were common, 'saving' as opposed to 'spending' was widely regarded as an admirable trait.[12] Devlin was not however, averse to spending on his family. He used his earnings to redecorate the family home and publicly aspired to retire his mother from her job at the Wanganui hospital laundry.[13] He married young and fathered his first child in early 1962, seeing the *Women's Weekly* office flooded with letters of congratulations, many suggesting baby names such as Elvis and Marlon. A reporter for the *Weekly* observed that the well-wishers included teenagers, but also mothers, fathers and even grandmothers.[14] Devlin was also noted for his sense of social responsibility, performing charity shows for hospitals and the intellectually disabled.[15] Later in life he would brush off the suggestion of an autobiography, claiming there would be little of interest as his experiences of 'Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll' were strictly limited to the latter.[16]

While his outlandish style and onstage antics may have been a shock to the status quo, Devlin indeed seems to have been 'a nice young man'. Although he did not wear his faith on his sleeve, our Antipodean Elvis was, in fact, a practicing Catholic who attended Church on Sunday, even when on tour.[17] Episcopal instruction discouraged Catholics from participating in the crusades, but a priest approved his meeting with Graham provided he didn't pray there.[18]

If we look to histories of popular music and culture in New Zealand, we find Johnny Devlin cast as the figurehead of a fearless, enlightened youth movement who railed against the puritanical attitudes of their elders and

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[12] Sturma, 135-136.
[13] Helen Frizell, 'Johnny Devlin', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 23rd September 1959, 56.
[14] 'Names for Devlin Baby', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 7th February 1962, 43.
[15] 'New Years' Honours: Johnny Devlin, New Zealand's Elvis', *New Zealand Herald,* December 21st, 2007, retrieved August 3rd, 2015. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10484802
[16] Chris Bourke, 'It's a Long Way to the Shop if You Want a Sausage Roll' Interview with Johnny Devlin, *North & South*, 2006, retrieved August 3rd, 2015. http://www.chrisbourke.co.nz/main.php?id=longwayto
[17] Interview with Johnny Devlin in Bourke, 287.
[18] *New Zealand Methodist Times,* 11th April 1959, 661, in Bryan D. Gilling, 'Retelling the Old, Old Story: A Study of Six Mass Evangelistic Missions in 20th Century New Zealand', (PhD diss., University of Waikato, 1990), 252; Bourke, 287.

embraced modernity and sexual freedom. The fact that Devlin held his faith, family, and respectability in high esteem has, with few exceptions, been lost in the telling.[19]

At an institutional level, the story is much the same. Church and community groups did not universally prohibit their young congregants from enjoying the latest teen fads from America. In fact, many were heavily invested in providing young people with safe and wholesome settings in which to enjoy them.[20] In Auckland, churches financed and managed as many as sixteen youth clubs, with a combined membership of 5,000. The Otahuhu teenage club, with its rock 'n' roll colors, ming blue and black, claimed a total membership of over 600 in 1959. Its rules were pinned to the wall: no liquor, no smoking under the age of sixteen, and respect for female members. Youngsters could sip soft drinks and jive to rock 'n' roll under ample supervision. The bands that played regularly were always sure to wind down early, preventing young revelers from becoming over-enthused in each other's company.[21] Popular culture and religion could also mix in settings outside church walls, for example, at Invercargill's Civic Theatre, when in 1959 Australian rocker Johnny O'Keefe inserted a hymn halfway through his set. According to reports, the teenaged audience fell silent and respectfully applauded, after which the 'hot' rock 'n' roll beat was picked up and the stamping, clapping and cheering resumed. Evidently, young people did not uniformly display a haughty disdain for the Christian beliefs of their elders.

Christianity and the entertainment world also came together in the 1959 tour of a prominent fellow believer. The toe-tapping hymnody, moving testimonies and electrifying sermons Graham offered, made for a fine night out, or home by the radio, for all ages.[22] However, Australian historian Judith Smart

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[19] Yska, 195-203; Tony Mitchell, 'Flat City Sounds: A Cartography of the Christchurch Music Scene' *Popular Music and Society* 21, no.3 (1997): 87; Dix, 19- 30. For exceptions see Dalley, 335; Bourke, 283-89.
[20] Yska, 203-4.
[21] *Daily Mirror,* 7th November 1953, in Sturma, 134.
[22] 'The Billy Graham Crusade in New Zealand' (sound recording 45rpm), A side: Auckland & Christchurch Crusade Choirs, (Wellington: Radiola, 1959); Bryan D. Gilling,

argues that his appeal struck a deeper chord… writing that his popularity was 'part of larger developments in popular culture and mass entertainment… to which the individual "star", largely an American creation, was central'.[23]

How did Billy Graham appeal to the new cult of celebrity in New Zealand? Well, his Hollywood face stood him in very good stead, and was consistently remarked upon by the New Zealand press.[24] Before his arrival in the capital, freelancer Dorothy Moses enthused in *The Evening Post* '[Graham has] a smile as million-dollarish as a movie star's', while another commentator described him as 'tall, slim, bronzed, [with] sharp blue eyes, a dashing smile and an easy friendliness'.[25]

Like his Hollywood counterparts, Graham appeared on silver screens throughout New Zealand in impressive, full-length feature films such as *Souls in Conflict* (1954) and *Wiretapper* (1955) In 1956, three screenings of *Souls in Conflict* at His Majesty's Theatre, Dunedin, were attended by 3,600 people, including many from out of town. Movie-goers could be seen queueing down the street an hour and a half before the screenings, and many were turned away.[26] In the months before the crusade, Graham's face jostled with those of Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, Dean Martin, and Elizabeth Taylor in the dailies, cinema billboards and shop windows throughout the major centers.[27]

'"Almost Persuaded Now to Believe": Gospel Songs in New Zealand Evangelical Theology and Practice', *Journal of Religious History* 19, no.1 (1995): 92-111.

[23] Judith Smart, 'The Evangelist as Star: The Billy Graham Crusade in Australia, 1959', *Journal of Popular Culture,* 33, no.1 (1999): 167; for analysis of Graham's broader cultural appeal in Australasia see David Hilliard, 'God in the Suburbs: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies,* 24, no. 97 (1991), and 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History,* 16, no.2 (1998).

[24] 'American Evangelist Billy Graham Touches Down', *Auckland Star,* 3rd April 1959; 'Prayer: a Powerful, Positive Weapon', *The Press,* 1st April 1959; 'Delighted To Be Here', *Auckland Star,* 31st March 1959, in Collection 360, reel 19, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Illinois.

[25] *Auckland Star,* April 6th 1959, 5; 'Amazed at Interest His Work Creates', *Evening Post,* April 6th 1959, 2.

[26] *The Otago Daily Times,* 17th July 1956, 14.

[27] 'Billy Graham Campaign Favoured', *Evening Star,* 3rd March 1959, 12; *Evening Star,* 22nd February 1959, 3; 15th March, 8; 24th March, 6; 27th March, 10; 2nd April, 2. *The*

Yes, hard-living men such as Marlon Brando and James Dean appeared in the cinema of the 1950s. But they shared the screen with disciplined men such as Charlton Heston and Jimmy Stewart, strong enough not to fall into the vices of sex and violence in the first place. Graham sided strongly with the latter. His rugged good looks, trim physique, spiffy wardrobe and forceful gestures harnessed the cultural power of a manly presence.[28]

The press dwelt on Graham's former ambition in professional baseball, described his rigorous exercise regime and the physical demands of his occupation.[29] The *Evening Post* even likened him to a spiritual boxer, with Satan as his opponent.[30] The New Zealand crusade meetings were held in sports parks.[31] Ironically, the 'largest [sporting crowds] in New Zealand's history', which only three years earlier had gathered for the Springboks vs. All Blacks test matches, were rivalled by crusade attendees. Altogether, they numbered more than half a million, about a quarter of New Zealand's total population.[32]

Here we observe the impulses of popular religion at work. Rather than living in a cloistered vaccum, a significant number of Christian New Zealanders and their institutions engaged freely and enthusiastically with popular culture's latest — so much so that one of them became the country's first rock 'n' roll superstar.[33] We may also observe that Billy Graham fashioned a creative amalgam of Christian piety and celebrity entertainment which appealed

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Press, 17th February 1959, 11; 7th March 1959, 11; *Dominion,* 22nd March, 1959, 12; 1st April 1959, 3, in Collection 360, reel 41.

[28] Wacker, 82-87.

[29] *Auckland Star,* 5th April 1959, *Evening Post,* 30th April 1959, *New Zealand Women's Weekly,* 11th April 1959, Collection 360, reel 36.

[30] *Evening Post,* 30th April 1959, 2, in Collection 360, reel 36.

[31] Gilling, 'Retelling', 261.

[32] Greg Ryan. 'Sport and society - Rise of spectatorship', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 20-Jan-15
URL: http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/video/39406/spectators-at-springbok-rugby-test-1956; 'Crusade Ends with Crowd of 50,000 Plus', *Christchurch Star,* April 9th 1959, 4; Warner Hutchinson & Cliff Wilson, *Let the People Rejoice,* (Wellington: Crusader Bookroom Society, 1959), 142-146; Paul Moon, *New Zealand in the Twentieth Century: The Nation, The People,* (Auckland: Harper Collins, 2011), 324-5.

[33] Dix, 28.

immensely to New Zealand audiences. From this perspective, the boundaries between Christianity, and popular culture, the transcendent and the worldly, appear permeable indeed.

The presence of a third party in our crusade snapshot, Prime Minister Walter Nash, also begs to be adressed. Indeed, the state's public expression of support went above and beyond Nash's presence at Athletic Park. Governor General Lord Cobham received Billy Graham at Government house, where they were snapped by the press exchanging banter on the lawns.[34] Present at Athletic Park with Nash were Minister of Finance Arnold H. Nordmeyer, Minister of Police P. G. Connolly, and deputy leader of the opposition, J. R. Marshall.[35] Standing before a choir of 1,800, Nash publicly welcomed the Billy Graham team to the dais at Athletic Park.[36] *Furthermore,* no less than three government departments cooperated directly with the crusade.[37] The Post and Telegraph Department assisted with advertising, landline relays and radio broadcasts- spreading word of the crusades, and their music and sermons in real time, to every corner of the country. The Railways Department ran discounted 'gospel trains' to the crusades, while the Transport Department chartered buses. Both adjusted their schedules to manage the great crowds converging on the major centres.

How can we explain government support of the Billy Graham crusades, if our country's political foundations were highly secular? If we look to the history books, it would appear that many historians consider the secularity of the state to be self-evident. The facts that New Zealand's parliament, from the outset, refused to institute a state church, embraced freethinking and Jewish representatives, secularised marriage law in 1854 and public education in 1877,

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[34] 'Governor General Receives Billy Graham', *The Otago Daily Times,* April 4th 1959, 5; 'Picture of Billy Graham 1959', MS-2790/209, Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin.
[35] 'Familiar Faces at Crusade', *The Otago Daily Times,* April 6th 1959, 5.
[36] 'Two Thousand Make Decisions: Billy Graham Preached to Many Thousands at Athletic Park', *Evening Post,* April 6th 1959, 2.
[37] Warner Hutchinson & Cliff Wilson, *Let the People Rejoice,* (Wellington: Crusader Bookroom Society, 1959), 20-22, Stenhouse, 'Religion and Society', 351.

seems to confirm the states' foundational estrangement from all matters religious.[38] In reality, from the beginings of settlement, a state which offered the churches no formal constitutional role in the running of the country was in fact open to fostering a myriad of enduring, informal links with them.[39] Legal scholars Rex Adhar and Ivanica Vodanovich go so far as to call New Zealand a *de facto* Christian state.[40] New Zealand's parliamentary proceedings, national anthem, flag and coat of arms, public holidays, civic ceremonies and laws enshrine christian moral codes, practices and symbols. Undeniably, the churches also shaped and informed the values of many of New Zealand's political leaders, and Walter Nash, an Anglican lay preacher,

Arnold H. Nordmeyer, a former Presbyterian minister, and J. R. Marshall, a practicing presbyterian, were no exception.[41] Furthermore, the New Zealand government and its representatives espoused many similar approaches to the social issues of the day as those offered by the churches and Billy Graham's ministry: a return to the foundational principles of Christianity, and the values and social forms of organisation it engendered in the individual, family, and community.

The most productive example of these shared aims emerges with respect to the spiritual and social wellbeing of young New Zealanders. Young people who lived in the cities enjoyed leisure time and had access to employment and discretionary income. They could afford to go to the movies or dances, buy cars and motorbikes. Agents of the new youth culture, similar to American 'greasers'

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[38] John Stenhouse, 'Religion and Society', in Giselle Byrnes (ed.), *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 336; Peter J. Lineham, 'Government Support of the Churches in the Modern Era', in Rex Adhar & John Stenhouse (eds.), *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2000), 41; G. A. Wood, 'Church and State in New Zealand in the 1850s', *Journal of Religious History,* 8, no.3 (1975): 256.

[39] Lineham, 'Government Support', 42, 47; Phillippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86; Wood, 'Church and State', 223.

[40] Rex Adhar, 'New Zealand and the Idea of a Christian State', in *God and Government,* 59-60; Ivanica Vodanovich, 'Religion and Legitimation in New Zealand: Redefining the Relationship Between Church and State', *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 3 (1990): 52.

[41] Keith Sinclair, *Walter Nash* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1976), 18

or British 'rockers', were New Zealand's 'bodgies', their female counterparts, 'widgies', their motorcycle-owning counterparts, 'Milkbar Cowboys' and 'pillion pets'. They dressed strangely, frequented milk bars, cinemas, and record stores, thereby facilitating the invasion of loud American music, troubling films and titillating literature.[42]

These influences appeared to have very clear effects. In 1953, fifty-nine Hutt Valley adolescents were charged with 107 sex offences, carried out in darkened cinemas and unsupervised house parties. The following year two Christchurch schoolgirls, thought to be lovers, killed one of their mothers when she tried to part them. In March of 1955, Hawera teenager Sharon Skiffington was dealt a fatal shotgun blast by her spurned lover Frederick Foster, and barely three months later, nineteen-year-old Albert Black plunged a five-inch dagger into the neck of his rival, Alan Jacques, as he leaned over the jukebox in an all-night café.[43] A storm of interest in 'juvenile delinquency' persisted throughout the decade.[44] The press reported hordes of milk bar cowboys, bodgies and widgies running riot, and advised parents how to check for signs of the 'odd clothing cults' in their own children. Historical accounts converge on the government's nation-wide distribution of the Mazengarb report in 1954, and, in its wake, the tightening of censorship legislation, the enforcement of stricter standards in radio and advertising, and the unusually liberal dispensation of death sentences to youthful offenders. As such, it is largely readings of state repression and outraged hand-wringing that dominate scholarly renderings of the 1950s.

Where was religion in all of this? Well, many psychological reports, radio documentaries and pages of print published on the troubles affecting youth, the disintegration of families, a rising tide of communism and the looming threat of nuclear fallout conceived these social malaises in terms of spiritual poverty. Here we find strong motivation for state support of the churches, Christian initiatives

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[42] Belich, *Paradise Reforged,* 504-5.
[43] Yska, 155, 177.
[44] Bronwyn Dalley, F*amily Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998), 180.

and events. They were perceived to be for the public good: promoting the acceptance of common values and beliefs, and helping to hold the nation together.[45] It was a recognition of this social utility, as well as the personal sentiments of many politicians, and their conviction that they were shared by their constitutents, that underpinned the state's unembarassed support of the fellow believer who toured in 1959.[46] The example of government cooperation with the Billy Graham crusade suggests that the state used Christianity not only to repress immoral influences, but to uplift and unite its citizens under the banner of a widely shared faith. In the face of threats of nuclear war and social upheaval, New Zealand's leaders supported a message that many found hearteningly familiar and immensely comforting.[47] Throughout the crusade meetings, the number of enquirers aged between fifteen and twenty years old struck a steady 55% of those who walked forward, or telephoned, at Graham's invitation.[48]

In conclusion, to understand Billy Graham's 1959 crusade in 'religious' terms, narrowly conceived, puts us in danger of seeing it as a mere exercise in expanding church rolls. However, an image of Billy Graham rubbing shoulders with a national leader and a rock 'n' roll superstar suggests there were greater cultural forces at work. Likewise, examining the fifties without taking religion seriously has led many historians to conceive of it as a cultural battle ground. The young worshippers of Hollywood and rock 'n' roll revolted, and a repressive state sought to drag them back to the status quo by any means necessary, while a declining conservative Christian mainstream looked on in distress. If we reintegrate religion into the social, cultural, intellectual and political dimensions of history, we arrive at a more nuanced understanding. Existing alongside antagonism, estrangement and anxiety were many instances of cooperation, innovation and enthusiasm. The example of the Billy Graham's New Zealand crusade 1959, encourages us to see that the realms of religion, popular culture

[45] Wood, 'Church and State', 221.
[46] Lineham, 'Government Support', 53-7.
[47] Gilling, 'Mass Evangelism', 50.
[48] Hutchinson & Wilson, 20, 56, 86.

and politics have long been on friendlier terms than established national histories would suggest.