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ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS REDWOOD:
HIS CONTRIBUTION TO CATHOLICISM
IN
NEW ZEALAND

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY AT
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NICHOLAS ANTHONY SIMMONS

1981

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Auckland Diocesan Archives
AJHR	<u>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</u>
AT	Alexander Turnbull Library
CDA	Christchurch Diocesan Archives
CT	<u>Catholic Times</u>
HACBS	Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society
MAW	Marist Archives Wellington
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
MM	<u>Marist Messenger</u>
MP	Member of Parliament
NZFJ	<u>New Zealand Freeman's Journal</u>
NZPD	<u>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</u>
NZT	<u>New Zealand Tablet</u>
PPA	Protestant Political Association
SM	Society of Mary
SJ	Society of Jesus
WAA	Wellington Archdiocesan Archives

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INTRODUCTION

Unspectacular and evolutionary - these two words sum up the general picture of New Zealand religious history in its present state. This is hardly surprising in that the span of our history has been marked by the growth of secularism. Religion was not the prime motive for migration to New Zealand, as it was for many of the first English immigrants to the United States of America. Our forefathers came seeking financial reward in an "antipodean utopia" that had an economic rather than religious base. But, the plain flavour of New Zealand religious history is also due to a lack of research and writing in the field. No church in New Zealand has had its story told in a way that does it justice. Several church histories have been written but they are either dated¹ or incomplete.² However, these books provide a start to a field of historical endeavour that should be exploited in the future.

Our religious history has had several figures that have provided spark, like Bishops Selwyn and Moran, or even notoriety as in the case of the Reverend Howard Elliott.³ A fruitful track in studying our religious history would be a closer examination of the leading figures to see what they said and did, and the impact they had. This thesis seeks to do this, having as its subject Archbishop Francis Redwood, the second Catholic Bishop of Wellington. It is my contention that he did more than any other in transforming the Catholic Church in New Zealand from its missionary state to the institutional type we know today.

-
1. Wilson, J.J. The Church in New Zealand, Dunedin, 1910. (Catholic)
Elder, J. The History of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand 1840-1940, Christchurch, 1940.
 2. Simmons, E.R. A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, Auckland, 1978.
Hames, E.W. Out of the Common Way, Auckland, 1972;
Coming of Age, Auckland, 1974. (Methodist)
Morrell, W.P. The Anglican Church in New Zealand, Dunedin, 1972.
 3. See Moores, H.S. "The Rise of the Protestant Political Association - Sectarianism in New Zealand Politics During World War I", M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland, 1966.

Leadership in the Catholic Church is hierarchical and more authoritative than in any of the Protestant churches. A bishop is invested with considerable powers over the clergy and laity in his diocese. Because of this he has the potential to do a lot in the areas that are within his brief: education, buildings, social and political issues, Catholic doctrine and practice, church personnel and structure. In the course of his long episcopate (1874-1935), Redwood made contributions in all these fields. Under each chapter, this thesis will seek to describe the contributions Redwood made, and to evaluate their effectiveness and strength, relative to his fellow bishops, and to the context in which they were made.

Obviously the descriptive part of an historian's job is easier than his analytical or evaluative function. In Redwood's case, though nothing comprehensive has been written chronicling his achievements, a thorough search of Catholic archives provided the solid basis of the description that follows. Evaluating the effectiveness of his work proved to be easier in some fields than others. For instance, the role of a church or school building is clear so long as attendance keeps up. Conversely, the effectiveness of a Redwood sermon, pastoral letter, or public statement on an issue is difficult to gauge, especially in the absence of significant oral history. Therefore evaluative statements made in this area are not matters of fact, but my considered opinion in the light of the data found.

After being consecrated in London, Redwood came out to his see in 1874. By that time a few significant events had occurred in our New Zealand's Catholic religious history which provide some background to his episcopate.

The Catholic mission began in New Zealand in January 1838 with the arrival of Bishop Pompallier, and two Marist assistants. The New Zealand mission had been given over to the care of the Society of Mary, or Marists, as they were usually called. Their priests, the first in New Zealand, were mainly Frenchmen, but as the European population

grew they were surpassed by priests from the United Kingdom (mostly Irish), and later still, by a New Zealand born clergy. Anglican missionaries had previously established their mission in 1814, and the Wesleyans in 1822. After the Catholics arrived, the mission was spiced with doctrinal disputes and competition in conversion. The presence of these rival missionary groups helped ensure that a state religion was not imposed in New Zealand as was the case in the United Kingdom.⁴ In 1848 the New Zealand Catholic mission was divided into two dioceses, divided by the 39th degree of latitude. Pompallier was given charge of the northern diocese known as Auckland, and Bishop Viard became the administrator of the Southern diocese centred at Wellington. Progress fluctuated as the missionaries pondered over the respective merits of their dual apostolate to the Maori and the pakeha. The gold rushes and the wars of the 1860's provided excitement and vitality that did little for the success of missionary endeavours. Viard's huge diocese proved to be unmanageable, and Rome formed the new diocese of Dunedin, whose first bishop, Patrick Moran, arrived in February 1871. Viard's attempt to have Redwood appointed as his coadjutor was still not finalised, when he died on 2 June 1872. On 10 February 1874, Francis Redwood was appointed Bishop of Wellington. His diocese which included the provinces of Taranaki, Wellington, Hawke's Bay, Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury and Westland, was the largest in New Zealand. The southern provinces of Otago and Southland constituted the Dunedin diocese, and the Auckland province made up the diocese with the same name. With the steady growth of the European population in the Wellington diocese the need was felt to divide Redwood's diocese in two. In 1887 the Vatican's

4. How this came about is explained in Wood, G.A. "Church and State in New Zealand in the 1850's", Journal of Religious History, Vol.8, 1974-75, pp 255-270.

Missionary office (Propaganda) formed the provinces of Canterbury and Westland into the new Christchurch diocese. In recognition of the growing status of the Catholic church in New Zealand it was decided to make one of the existing dioceses the metropolitan see, with its bishop, consequently, becoming an archbishop. A fair degree of controversy marked the time both before and after the decisions were made as to who would be the archbishop, and who would be the first bishop of Christchurch.. It was the most torrid and pressurized time of Redwood's episcopate, and will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7. As his story unfolds, it will be seen that he handled this situation, as with others less stressful, with much perspicacity.