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**THE ROCK OF AGES OR THE WINDS OF CHANGE?
THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR TWO ON THE ANGLICAN
CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of World War Two, a period of dislocation and turbulence, on the Anglican Church in New Zealand. It does so in terms of the tension between a desire to defend and preserve the Church's assumed identity and role, and a positive acceptance of the possibilities for change that the war brought. This tension, between "holding the line" until peacetime, and welcoming changes that might benefit the Church's role and image in the community and witness to the "unchurched", is examined in a number of key areas of the Church's life.

Wartime brought both challenge and opportunity to the Church in the areas of leadership, military chaplaincy, the Church Army, the role of women in Church and society, ecumenical initiatives, the regular life of parishes and other ministry units, pacifism, and endeavours to reflect theologically. In each area, the Church was facing questions about its identity, and therefore about its role in society.

This thesis examines the thematic tension between the forces of stasis and of change with regard to the social backdrop of contemporary New Zealand society, where wartime was stimulating both a climate of change, and an attitude of resistance to change. Voices within the Church echo this ambivalence. Comparisons are also made with the wartime Church in England, which to most Pakeha New Zealand Anglicans was still the "Mother Church", and to some extent with the Church in Australia. Part of an emerging debate within the Church concerned whether it should continue with its self-identification as a quasi-English ecclesiastical outpost, or become a Church with a distinctive New Zealand identity, able to acknowledge and value its bi-cultural nature.

This thesis concludes that, during the war and in the five years afterwards, the voices promoting stability and "business as usual" in existing structures and functions usually prevailed over those advocating structural and attitudinal change. Like the rest of the country, the Church was reacting to more than a generation of instability. After two world wars and the Great Depression, for the most part the Church wished to present itself as a "Rock of Ages", symbolising continuity, authority, and close identification with the political status quo. This self-image was challenged by those eager to see wartime developments become part of long-term change. When the war ended, the

Church was not ready to fully face the implications of these factors for change. Until the 1960s and 1970s, an era of social upheaval, the Church wished to expand its existing operations to cope with population increase, rather than to question and redefine its own structures and identity.

Acknowledgements

My original intention was to write a thesis about the Anglican Church in New Zealand and its military chaplains in World War Two. That conception changed and expanded. It was the kind of expansion at which W.P. Morrell hints, when he wrote: "The value of the chaplains' services was more and more appreciated as the war continued. The effect of the war on the Church is harder to evaluate."¹ Morrell's comment draws attention to the scarcity of evaluative writing about the Anglican Church's history in the twentieth century. In taking up the implied challenge, with specific reference to the impact of World War Two on the Church in New Zealand, I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable encouragement and support of the Rev. Dr Allan Davidson, who helped me from the outset to explore and expand the concept underlying this thesis, and to the Rev. Dr Janet Crawford, who joined him to co-supervise this project. Together they have offered me a healthy blend of challenge, encouragement, critique, creative suggestion, and friendship. Although final responsibility for the text is mine, without their input and support, this project might never have left the drawing board.

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¹ W.P. Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand: A History*, Dunedin, Anglican Church of the Province of New Zealand, 1973, p.191.

attended to my requests, found material of which I had been unaware, and given me cheerful encouragement. In particular, Judith Bright, librarian at St John's and Trinity Colleges and all her staff, Jane Teal, Christchurch diocesan archivist, Janet Foster, Auckland diocesan archivist, and Judith Curtis, librarian at Theology House, have given me considerable time and expertise, and shown patience, ingenuity and good humour. In addition, I greatly appreciate the co-operation of the diocesan staff responsible for the archives of the dioceses of Waiapu, Nelson and Waikato, of the staff of the Hocken, Turnbull, MacMillan Brown, Canterbury Public, and Auckland Museum Institute libraries, and the National Archives. I have also received willing co-operation from many parish archivists, secretaries and clergy, and from individuals who have loaned letters, diaries, wartime parish magazines, photographs, and other valuable material. The Rev. Dr Ken Booth, Director of Theology House, has kindly proof-read the thesis and offered constructive critique.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAW	Association of Anglican Women
ADA	Auckland Diocesan Archives
ATL	.....	Alexander Turnbull Library
CA	.....	Church Army
CCO	.....	Campaign for Christian Order
CDA	.....	Christchurch Diocesan Archives
CDAC	.....	Chaplains' Dominion Advisory Council
CEMS	.....	Church of England Men's Society
CF	.....	Chaplain to the Forces
CO	.....	Conscientious Objector
CORSO	.....	Council of Organisations for Relief and Service Overseas
CRE	.....	Council of Religious Education
DCAC	.....	District Chaplains' Advisory Committees
DSO	.....	Distinguished Service Order
CPS	.....	Christian Pacifist Society
GFS	.....	Girls' Friendly Society
HL	.....	Hocken Library
MAC	.....	Military Affairs Committee
MBL	.....	MacMillan Brown Library
MC	.....	Military Cross
MU	.....	Mothers' Union
NA	.....	National Archives
NCC	.....	National Council of Churches
NCW	.....	National Council of Women
NDA	.....	Nelson Diocesan Archives
NMC	.....	National Missionary Council
NZJH	.....	New Zealand Journal of History
2 NZEF	.....	Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force
PGS	.....	Proceedings of General Synod
PPU	.....	Peace Pledge Union
RNZAF	.....	Royal New Zealand Air Force
RNZN	.....	Royal New Zealand Navy
SCF	.....	Senior Chaplain to the Forces
SCM	.....	Student Christian Movement
SJC	.....	St John's College
WAACs	.....	Women's Auxiliary Army Corps
WAAF's	.....	Women's Auxiliary Air Force
WCC	.....	World Council of Churches
WkDA	.....	Waikato Diocesan Archives
WpDA	.....	Waiapu Diocesan Archives
WRNZNS	.....	Women's Royal New Zealand Naval Service
WWSA	.....	Women's War Service Auxiliary
YMCA	.....	Young Men's Christian Organisation
YWCA	.....	Young Women's Christian Organisation