

The response of grassroots Christians to the introduction of Sunday trading to New Zealand in 1989: by what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority?

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January 2011.

Abstract

This thesis considers the responses of grassroots Christians to the introduction of Sunday trading to New Zealand in 1989. The key question addressed is, “by what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority?” (Matthew 21:23). Did grassroots Christians consider authority resided with the church or the state and what shaped their ideas? Was the introduction of Sunday trading seen as weakening further any consideration of New Zealand as a “Christian” State? Did the correspondence indicate Sunday trading was an issue that included economic morality? Are the arguments used in opposing Sunday trading in 1988-1990 still being used by Christians opposing the proposed legislation to allow shops to open on statutory holidays: Easter Sunday and perhaps Christmas Day? The conclusion of the thesis suggests Christians opposing further extensions of the Shop Trading Hours Act might benefit from wider engagement with the many issues that can arise from biblical texts, and greater consideration of the history of the church and its Sunday practice, especially in New Zealand. Those who view society from a Christendom perspective are now in the minority. Debate in a pluralistic society raises issues not only of the authority claims that are made but also the language used in making these claims.

Sabbath-Sunday questions are included as these issues were important in some correspondents’ arguments. What grounds exist for the “transfer” of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday? Is the fourth commandment a creation ordinance and for all people for all time? What did the correspondents’ understanding of Sabbath law suggest about their attitudes to the authority of the state when it was perceived to be in conflict with the church or scripture?

The primary sources used in helping determine the *perception* of grassroots Christians to the question of authority included letters to the editor, submissions to the Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee (1988) and the Parliamentary Select

Committee: Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill 1900. Correspondence and articles on Sunday trading from forty newspapers and Christian and secular periodicals was reviewed. Two types were used in considering Christian responses to the introduction of Sunday trading. Correspondents in the "Christendom type" often used the bible or God as their source of authority. Those in the "Family, Economic, and Community Concerns" type used a wider range of authorities in presenting their arguments. In general correspondents appeared to consider the authority of scripture or God, rather than the church, as being above that of the state. However does this give Christians a right to impose "God's law" on society?

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The introduction of Sunday trading to New Zealand in 1989 was part of the economic and social change experienced in New Zealand from the late 1960s. The great “turning point” in recent New Zealand history was considered by Belich¹ to have occurred in 1984 with the election of the fourth Labour government, although he notes events before and after 1984 contributed to the changes. “A sharp recession in 1967-68 is sometimes seen as the beginning of the end, but the big shift really came from 1973, apparently triggered by two external events ... the ‘oil shock’ ... (and) Britain’s joining the European Economic Community.”² The perception some held of New Zealand in the 1960s as a “quarter-acre pavlova paradise,”³ where everyone who wanted to work was able to find a job, had been challenged by various events over the following decades. In the 1970s New Zealanders had experienced “careless days,” Think Big, high inflation and the accompanying wage and price increases. The 1980s included the free-market policies of Rogernomics, the sale of state owned assets and the bailout of the BNZ. Inflation peaked at 20.4% in June 1987. Tariffs and state benefits were removed, the latter reducing some farmers’ incomes by one third. However, “other sectors boomed including consumer goods, property, financial services, investment companies and , above all, the share market, which tripled in value, 1984-87,”⁴ until the world share market collapsed on “‘Black Tuesday’, 21 October 1987.”⁵

The economy was not the only area of New Zealand life to undergo significant changes from 1960- 1989. The Hunn Report (1961) proposed an assimilationist approach to “the genuine new problems created by the Maori population explosion

¹ James Belich, “Part 5 Beyond Better Britain, 1960s-2000,” in *Paradise Reforged: a history of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000* (Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 2001), 414.

² *Ibid.*, 396

³ Austin Mitchell, *The Half Gallon Quarter Acre Pavlova Paradise* (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1972).

⁴ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 406.

⁵ *Ibid.*

and by mass urbanisation.”⁶ However the Maori renaissance and the increased power given to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985 are expressions of later changes of attitude in New Zealand society. Other events and legislation that contributed to social (and economic) change in New Zealand include: the Springbok Tour (of 1981), Homosexual Law Reform (1986), changes to local and regional government which “underwent its greatest-ever reshuffle since the abolition of the provinces in 1876.”⁷ There were changes in foreign policy, especially anti-nuclear decisions, the ANZUS relationship and “an upsurge in New Zealand nationalism”⁸ following the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior on 10 July 1985. Alcohol sales were relaxed, the Picot Report and Tomorrow’s Schools introduced, and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (1986) established. The State Sector Act 1988 may have been, “designed to introduce into the Public Service many of the positive features and incentives of the private sector,”⁹ but was in reality another piece of legislation introduced over a relatively short period of time by the fourth Labour government. All of which contributed to a population that was becoming both weary and wary. Then Prime Minister David Lange perhaps recognised this in calling for a stop/ pause/ breather “for a cup of tea”¹⁰ before Rogernomics increased further the social costs of the new right policies.

As well as the above events and legislation I consider the introduction of Sunday trading in 1989 contributed to social and economic changes in New Zealand, re-shaping society from the grassroots up. Some newspaper correspondents protesting against the introduction of Sunday trading considered the New Zealand weekend

⁶ Ibid., 447. Cf. Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Viking, 2004), chapter 28. The Hunn report is mentioned in King, 482-3.

⁷ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 410.

⁸ <<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/nuclear-free-new-zealand/rainbow-warrior>> (20 January 2011).

⁹ “New Zealand’s State Sector Reform: A Decade of Change,” <<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?docid=2384&pageno=3>> (12 November 2010).

¹⁰ The phrase is recorded in each of these ways in various articles.

Selwyn Manning, “David Lange Passes Away After Long Illness,” <<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0508/S00105.htm>> (12 November 2010), wrote, “Michael Bassett, who along with Roger Douglas and Richard Prebble attempted to push the radical reforms of the 1984 Lange government so far that they might have destroyed the Labour Party itself - and who were only prevented from doing so His desire to halt the advance of the then new right economics heralded by Douglas caused a rift within the Labour Cabinet, leading to the demotion of Douglas and the eventual resignation of David Lange from the Prime Ministership in 1989.”

had become increasingly secular and now legislation was being proposed that would allow the sale of an increased number of goods on Sunday. This was seen by some as challenging the fourth (Sabbath) commandment, and thus God's authority. It was argued that the introduction of Sunday trading would further undermine the status of Sunday as a special day, a day God had commanded to be set aside from work. According to some of the correspondents Sunday trading was also expected to have a negative impact on family and community wellbeing.

Legislation allowing shops to trade on Sunday was proposed in Order in Council on 4 December 1989.¹¹ I suggest Sunday trading can be viewed in conjunction with other events and legislation, including those I mentioned briefly above, as contributing to the economic and social changes experienced in New Zealand from the late 1960s. This thesis will analyse the attitudes and responses of grassroots Christians to the introduction of Sunday trading as found in their letters to the editor and parliamentary submissions.¹² In doing so I hope to discover more about the "perceptions" grassroots Christians held regarding State-Church relationships as seen through this correspondence.

A Brief overview of the Shop Trading Hours Act Reform Bill 1990¹³ and the intent of this thesis

The STHAR Bill was introduced to parliament by then Minister of Labour, Hon. Helen Clark on 5 December 1989. "*Clause 1* relates to the Bill's Short Title and commencement. The Bill comes into force on 30 April 1990.¹⁴ *Clause 2* repeals the Shop Trading Hours Act 1877 and its amendments and subordinate legislation ...

¹¹ Hon. W. F. Birch, "Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Report of the Labour Committee," Hansard, vol. 506, 759. Cf. Hon. J. B. Bolger "Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Introduction," Hansard, vol. 503, 14315, who refers to the introduction of the STHAR Bill by "Executive order." For debate on the "Executive order," Hansard, vol. 503, 14317-20.

¹² Included in this thesis are some denominational responses to the STHAR Bill 1990 and correspondence from the Save Our Sunday and Keep Sunday Free campaigns. While this material comes from organisations rather than the "grassroots" it represents (and influenced) the responses of individuals at the "grassroots."

¹³ Hereafter usually referred to by the abbreviation STHAR Bill.

¹⁴ In fact the third reading didn't take place until 28 June 1990 and Royal Assent was given on 3 July 1990. Cf. "Schedule of Government Bills 1990," 821, Parliamentary Library Wellington.

Clause 3 gives certain protections to workers employed in or about shops ... *Clause 4* contains 4 (sic) savings provisions.”¹⁵

The principle of the Bill is to enhance the ability of retailers and the public to choose when shops should open, while also ensuring that shop employees and retailers in malls have the ability to choose how they respond to the changed legislative environment.¹⁶

The existing Act was “perceived to be difficult to interpret, and confusing. Its procedures are cumbersome. It is difficult to administer and enforce.”¹⁷ In responding to submissions emphasising the special nature of Sunday, the report of the Advisory Committee (1977) noted there was increased public demand for shops to open on Sunday and changes in the public’s attitude toward Sunday. Increasingly Sunday was seen as a secular day as much as a religious one. The number of people already employed on Sundays (shown in Appendix 12 of the Committee’s report), and a view that shopping was a legitimate leisure activity were other reasons used in supporting changes to the existing law. However the committee noted there was a “balance to be struck” regarding Sunday as a day of religious observance and “remained divided as to the appropriateness of the Act under this heading.”¹⁸

In focusing on the relationship between Church and State a key question will be, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”¹⁹ The question was asked of Jesus by the “chief priests and elders of the people.”²⁰ Presumably “these things” refer to Jesus’ earlier actions (Matthew 21:1-17): the entry into Jerusalem and proclamation by the people, cleansing the temple, healing the sick and now teaching. However, the underlying issue was the Messianic claims “these things” pointed to, the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God. Was Jesus the

¹⁵ For the full text, “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill 1990,” Parliamentary Library Wellington. Cf. R. A. Stockdill, “The Briefing Report for the Labour Select Committees First Meeting: Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill,” 1, Parliamentary Library L/90/219 Wellington.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Hon. Helen Clark, “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill,” Hansard, Vol. 503, 14313. For further reasons for repealing the Bill, R. A. Stockdill, “The Briefing Report,” 3-4. For other attitudes towards the Bill including the “major parties,” public and government, “The Shop Trading Act 1977 Report of the Advisory Committee, 30 June 1988, 16-18, Parliamentary Library L/90/222 Wellington.

¹⁸ Ibid., 40, Cf. 39-40

¹⁹ Matt. 21:23. All scripture quotations are from the NRSV unless stated otherwise.

²⁰ Matthew 21:23.

Messiah, and was His authority from God? Where did the authority of the religious and civic leaders come from? Which “authority” should people obey, and why? Some of these questions regarding authority are integral to the Sunday trading debate. Legislation that permitted shops to open on Sunday was seen by some correspondents to contravene God’s law as found in the fourth (Sabbath) commandment. Did the State have authority to act contrary to God’s law? Where did the State’s authority come from? In what way, if any, is the authority of the Church greater than that of the State? In seeking answers to the *perceptions* correspondents held regarding Church-State authority the key question I asked was, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Note the comparatively small amount of correspondence compared to that generated by issues such as the homosexual law reform. Nevertheless I consider there is sufficient material to gain some insight into the beliefs, concerns and practice of those protesting against the introduction of the STHAR Bill.

Newspapers, Denominational Magazines, Periodicals

In collecting responses to the STHAR Bill from letters to the editor I looked at the daily newspapers from the four main centres, daily papers in provincial towns and some smaller rural townships. In general the newspapers from rural townships/areas had limited, if any, coverage of “Sunday Trading” and letters to the editor tended to contain expressions of thanks on behalf of organisations or individuals, or the notification of local events.²¹ The lack of response to Sunday trading in the papers I did cite from the smaller rural townships, along with availability and access²² influenced my decision not to include every New Zealand newspaper in my research. Forty papers are included.²³

I reviewed newspapers from March 14-31 1988, when the Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee 1988 began its work. It met in the four main centres and Taupo,

²¹ Exceptions to this included the: *Dannevirke and District Evening News*, editorial 13 December 1989, 3. *Hauraki Herald*, 16 December 1989, 2, a satirical editorial argument against Sunday Trading.

²² Incomplete holdings at the National Library, Wellington; some papers only available in the centres where they were published; limited access to the Alexander - Turnbull library until 2012.

²³ *Sunday Star* and *Auckland Star* are reviewed as one paper.

Napier and Queenstown. The committees report was received June 30 1988. Not all newspapers covered the committees work. When coverage and/or letters were more extensive or appeared close to March 31 I extended the dates reviewed. This occurred in the *Auckland Star* and *Northern Advocate*. The other dates particularly relating to the introduction of the STHAR Bill were from about 17 November 1989, the announcement of the "Taupo decision"²⁴ to January 31 1990. In some cases I continued my research into February if there had been a significant (late) January response, and occasionally through to July 1990 when the Bill was finally passed into law.

One hundred and thirty letters on Sunday trading were published in the newspapers surveyed. Seventy three of these could be identified as "Christian." The writer either stated they were Christian, wrote in support of other Christian writers, (which may not mean they are Christians but at least suggested an affinity with some Christian beliefs), used scripture in a way that suggested the writer was a Christian, or the content of the letter suggested the writer could be identified as "Christian."²⁵ One hundred and three letters were opposed to Sunday trading, twenty one in favour, and six I considered neutral. Of the seventy three letters identified as "Christian" sixty six were opposed to Sunday trading, six were in favour, (mostly arguing a Seventh Day Adventist understanding of the Sabbath), and one was neutral. The main themes found in the correspondence opposing Sunday trading could be classified under four general headings: religious, humanitarian, economic, and social.

Religious correspondence often quoted or referred to Bible verses. The Bible was usually considered the highest authority and a literal understanding was given to the Bible verses used in arguments against the introduction of the STHAR Bill. There tended to be an acceptance of the fourth commandment as a creation ordinance. Some correspondents saw legislating for Sunday shopping as being legislation

²⁴ The Shop Trading Hours Commission decision was announced 17 November 1989 allowing Sunday trading in Taupo. Challenge Properties Ltd was also allowed to open seven of their malls in Auckland.

²⁵ Correspondents who wrote strongly against Sunday as the Sabbath, and supported or identified themselves as Seventh Day Adventists are included. Most of this group of letters either supported, or at least did not oppose Sunday trading.

against church attendance and the freedom to worship. (The possible effect Sunday trading would have on opportunities to worship was also found in the other themes). New Zealand was described as a Christian country, or at least considered to have once been a Christian country. Some of the correspondence in this heading included apologetic arguments.

Humanitarian and social themes overlapped. Sunday trading was unnecessary, and according to the polls, not wanted. It would result in a reduction in opportunities to care for others, less job security and a continuing moral decline (also noted in correspondence with a strong religious theme). Prices were expected to increase and other “flow on” effects could be expected to include increased gambling and greater access to alcohol. The possible break-down of family and community life was of concern given that less time would be available (at the weekend) to spend with one’s family or in the participation of voluntary activities. The loss of a common day of rest was a significant concern. A decline in health, especially for the “less privileged” was also expected to occur.

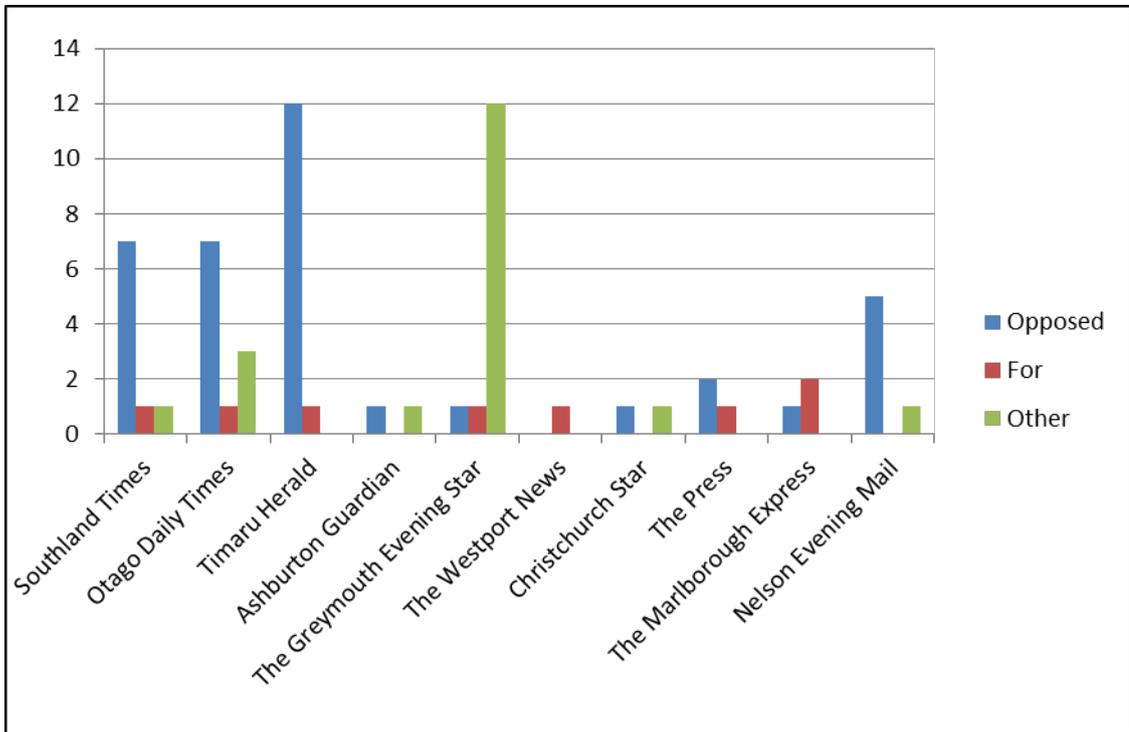
Economic themes included disagreement with the government’s claim that Sunday trading would benefit the economy, provide more jobs, or was wanted by tourists. Rather, a loss of full-time jobs and an increase in part-time employment was expected, along with a general deterioration in working conditions, especially for women. The forty-hour week would be lost.²⁶ New Zealand’s small population would not sustain shopping seven days a week. It was argued that the same amount of money was available whether shopping was allowed on six or seven days a week. The greedy and “big business” would benefit at the expense of small businesses and the less well off.

Below are graphs showing the number of letters sent to South and North Island Newspapers relating to Sunday trading. There is no graph for Christian periodicals.

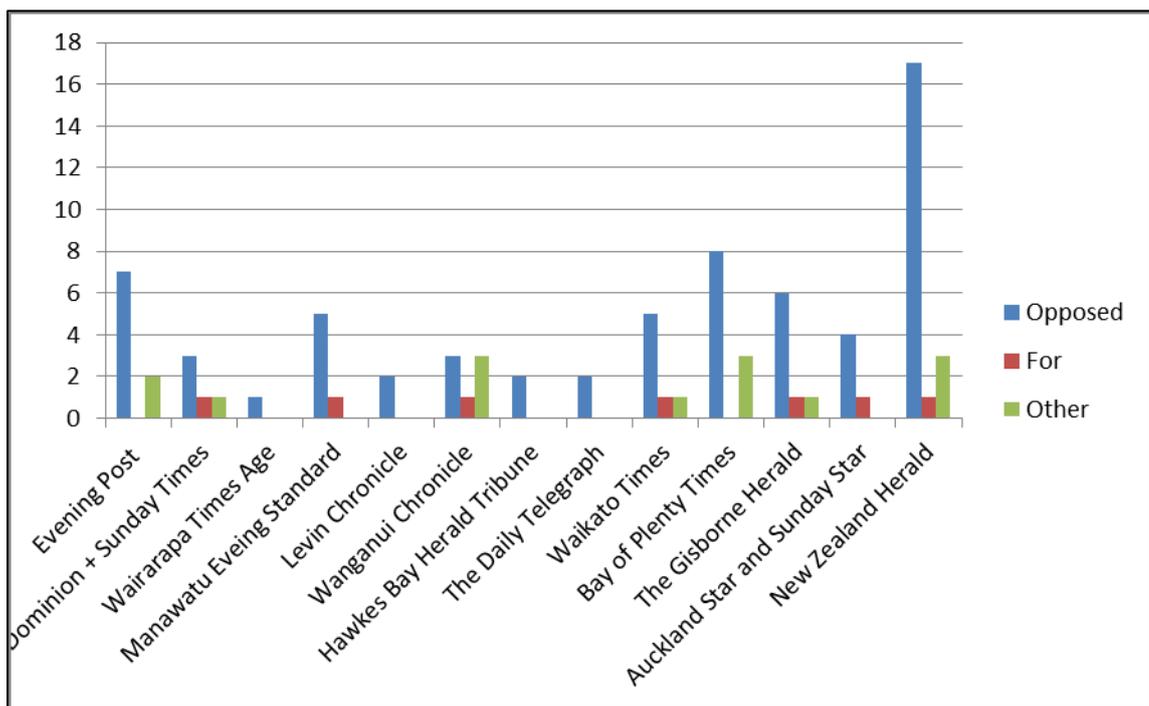
²⁶ Again the over-lapping of themes is noted. Some of the economic points above are also humanitarian and social concerns.

Not all periodicals had a letters to the editor page and there were a surprisingly small number of correspondents writing on this issue in the periodicals that did.

South Island Newspapers



North Island Newspapers



The majority of correspondence in each newspaper was opposed to the introduction of Sunday trading except in Greymouth where the “Sabbath controversy” received more attention, and in Westport, and Blenheim (*Marlborough Express*) where the small number of letters produced a majority in favour of the STHAR Bill.

Only a small number of denominational magazines received correspondence on Sunday trading, the largest number of letters appearing in *Challenge Weekly*. The *Listener* was the only secular periodical to publish a letter on Sunday trading.

Written Submissions to the Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee (1988)

The Advisory Committee presented these submissions in four parts. (Part A) included thirty-one submissions from organisations, (Part B) seventy-five from individuals, (Part C) eighteen from religious organisations, (Part D) forty-two “Individuals who are Christian or Organisations of a Religious Nature”²⁷ As with the submissions made to the Parliamentary Select Committee (below) these figures can be challenged. Captain G. W. Webb, Salvation Army Citadel Newtown is included in organisations (Part A), and not religious organisations (Part C), as are the submissions from the Salvation Army Women’s Organisations and Eileen O’Leary Executive Director of YWCA. Concerned individuals (Part B), includes at least six letters with clear Christian content including a submission from Paul Beech and twenty-eight Woolworth’s workers.²⁸ In Part D individual submissions were made by Mr. and Mrs. Aolbers, and two submissions by S. E. Clark. Together, these were counted as two, not four submissions. There were late submissions from two individuals and one from Catherine Evans for Pacifica Inc. which I have included in my revised numbers for Part C and D. I suggest Part A should include twenty-nine

²⁷ “The Shop Trading Act 1977 Report of the Advisory Committee”, 30 June 1988, Appendix One, Parliamentary Library Wellington.

²⁸ Paul Beech, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no date, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Included in this submission were the following points: Sunday should remain the Sabbath day “as the Lord God intended it to be.” It is a time to recharge our bodies and remember God. God created the world in six days and then rested: out of respect we should do the same. Did the twenty-eight workers all agree with the Christian content of this submission? If so it should be in Part C but as there is no way of knowing I have placed it in Part A.

submissions including Paul Beech and the Woolworths workers, Part B seventy,²⁹ Part C twenty-one and Part D fifty-one submissions, as a more accurate division. This thesis will particularly consider the Part D submissions individual Christians made to Sunday trading and what this might say about how they understand the relationship between Church and State. Forty-one different reasons for objecting to Sunday trading could be identified in the Part D, submissions from individual Christians.³⁰

Oral Submissions to Parliamentary Select Committee: Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill

Twenty oral submissions were made, only one by an individual and three by Christian organisations. All the Christian submissions opposed the introduction of Sunday trading, as did the submission from the Keep Sunday Free Coalition.

Written Submissions to Parliamentary Select Committee: Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill

One hundred and eighty eight written submissions were received.³¹ One hundred and eighty five submissions opposed the bill, one expressed “qualified opposition”³² and two were in favour of the repeal bill. In an earlier analysis of submissions 162/165 were opposed and ten percent of these (16/162) were considered to “oppose the bill on religious grounds.”³³ I consider this to be a rather extraordinary statistic. The ten percent figure was repeated in the March 1990 Notes prepared by

²⁹ This includes the submission from L. A. Brown from Part D. There is no specific Christian content in this submission.

³⁰ The most frequent reasons for opposing the STHAR Bill include: less time to care for others, reasons based on an understanding of the fourth commandment, the amount of money people had to spend remained the same regardless of the number of days shops were open, the government was responsible for the good of the people, Sunday trading would only benefit retailers, it would have a negative impact on families, there was a need to strengthen families, a common day was needed for rest and recreation, the impact on sport and volunteers would be negative.

³¹ Wendy Edgar, (Committee Secretary Labour Committee), “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Notes for Reporting Bill to the House,” 20 March 1990, 1, Parliamentary Library, L/90/230 Wellington.

³² Ibid., 2.

³³ Wendy Edgar, (Committee Secretary Labour Committee), “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Analysis of Submissions,” 15 February 1990, Parliamentary Library, L/90/229, Wellington.

Wendy Edgar.³⁴ Sixty-two submissions from individuals can clearly be identified as Christian, (32.9%), a further thirty-two submissions opposing Sunday trading were from churches, Christian organisations, or groups who identified themselves as Christian,³⁵ (17%). The “Standard Letter, Lower Hutt,”³⁶ appears to have a Presbyterian source and was used in thirty-nine submissions, (20.7%). A second standard form was used in nine submissions from Christchurch, (4.7%). There were also “several hundred cards placed in letter boxes by the Keep Sunday Free Coalition in Palmerston North.”³⁷ There were only six out of the one hundred and eighty eight submissions that might be considered to have used only Christian arguments or scripture passages in expressing opposition to Sunday trading, which, if this was Edgar’s basis for defining whether a submission was “Christian,” is less than ten percent. I consider a more accurate reflection of religious opposition to Sunday trading from the written submissions would be 75%. At least forty-eight reasons for objecting to Sunday trading can be found in the written submissions from individual Christians.

Thesis overview

There was never a “golden age” of Christianity in New Zealand³⁸ but for some the perception remained that New Zealand was, or had been, a Christian nation. The desire to see this continue may have influenced some Christians who wrote to

³⁴ Edgar, “Notes for Reporting Bill March 1990” 3. There is a slight difference in wording between the two documents. February/Analysis: “10% oppose the bill on religious grounds.” March/Notes: “10% of oral and written submissions oppose the bill on religious grounds.” I consider 23.5% (4/17) oral submissions opposed the bill on religious grounds.

³⁵ There were two other letters that didn’t have specific Christian arguments but the writers are Christian and known to me: Brent Costley L/90/117 and Don Mathieson Q.C. L/90/125. Wendy Edgar is unlikely to have known this but I mention it as part of a larger Christian contribution than that recognised in the analysis.

³⁶ Edgar, “Analysis of Submissions, February 1990,” 1. This apparent discounting of Christian material is also reflected in the way some letters were categorised (Parts A-D) in the written submissions to the Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee 1988.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2. There were also six submissions in support of the article Robin Gwynn wrote in the *Dominion* (31 January 1990, 10). Note however that ten percent of the “Keep Sunday Free” cards sent to the commission expressed *support* for Sunday trading.

³⁸ John Stenhouse, “The History of the Christian Movement in New Zealand,” in *New Vision New Zealand: calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole nation*, ed. Bruce Patrick, (Auckland, N.Z.: Vision New Zealand, 1993), at 36-37 quoted by Rex J. Ahdar, “A Christian State?” *Journal of Law and Religion*, 13:2, (1998-1999), 468.

newspapers, denominational magazines and made submissions to parliament. I expect an analysis of the letters to the editor (and other material) will give some insight into what the writers considered the relationship between Church and State (or perhaps a particular biblical understanding of that relationship) should be. Was the STHAR Bill 1990 seen as a (further)³⁹ weakening of the “Christian” State, or at least of Christian values underpinning the State in some way? Are there different interpretations of scripture evident in the letters/correspondence/articles: if so what might this suggest? Are the same arguments being used now in addressing the proposed legislation that would allow shops to trade on statutory holidays: Easter Sunday and Christmas Day especially?

“By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Do the letters Christians write show something of what motivates a response for/against particular legislation? I would like to explore the understanding (if any) of Sabbath Law found in Christian responses to the STHAR Bill and what this might suggest about attitudes to the authority of the State when it is perceived to be in conflict with the church or scripture.

“By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” How might Christians have understood the relationship between Church and State, particularly as they considered the introduction of Sunday trading? (Where did they consider the locus of authority was and why? How did they understand the legislation?) Are there particular theological understandings expressed in the letters and other material, if so, what? What actions were considered appropriate, and why, in opposing the legislation? Was this part of a wider Christian protest against the (perceived) secularisation of NZ society? To what extent does the church have a right to impose its moral and ethical understandings, as reflected in the letters to the editor and the other material reviewed, on society?

³⁹ See the section titled, *Erosion of De Facto Establishment in other Contexts* 642ff especially regarding legislation during the 1980’s in, Rex J. Ahdar, “Reflections on the Path of Religion-State Relations in New Zealand” in *Brigham Young University Law Review*, 2006:3, 619-659.

Chapter two briefly considers some Sabbath-Sunday questions. What grounds exist for the “transfer” of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday? There were correspondents who seemed more concerned about whether the Sabbath (Saturday) or the Lord’s Day (Sunday) was the day ordained for worship and rest than the introduction of the STHAR Bill. Saturday proponents tended not to oppose Sunday trading. Some correspondents argued against the introduction of the STHAR Bill from what they considered was a position of biblical authority, but if different Jewish and Christian interpretations, understandings and versions of the fourth (Sabbath) commandment exist in what sense might the Bible be considered authoritative? What were the origins of the Decalogue? Did it contain all the words of the Torah? Should they even be called “the Ten Commandments?”⁴⁰ I will suggest that some correspondents may have been influenced by culture and their Christian tradition as much as, if not more than, any exegesis in their application of the fourth commandment to the Sunday trading debate. Was the fourth commandment a Creation ordinance and were the commandments for all people for all time? The question of the authority of the fourth commandment extends to its practice. This is not simply a question of what, if any work was allowed on the Sabbath/Sunday but how should this be applied by New Zealand Christians in the late twentieth century? Critically, do Christians have a right or the authority to impose their views on others? “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”

Chapter three is an analysis of the correspondence from opponents to the STHAR Bill in the Christendom type. Is it possible to find a single definition for Christendom and would our type fit this definition? Might they be better defined by some of the characteristics of Christendom?⁴¹ Much of the correspondence in this chapter

⁴⁰Calum M. Carmichael, *The Origins of Biblical Law: the Decalogues and the Book of the Covenant*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 25. For other perspectives on the Decalogue Moshe Greenberg, “The Decalogue Tradition Critically Examined,” in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, ed. Ben-Zion Segal, trans. Gershon Levi, ed. (Jerusalem: The Magnus Press, The Hebrew University, 1990), 83-119. Gnana Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath: a comprehensive exegetical approach* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1988).

⁴¹This type is more fully defined in chapter two. At this point note that it is not synonymous with all who might hold to a Christendom worldview, at least in as much as some within the type wouldn’t consider living in Christendom made one a Christian.

reflects a more literal understanding of scripture and tends to hold the Bible in high authority. Whether the Bible is authoritative in its own right, or the authority of scripture claimed by many in the Christendom type is mediated through the Bible as opposed to authority coming directly from God is one of the issues considered in this chapter. In what ways did the Christendom type's view of the Bible shape their understanding of what a Christian nation was? Are there limits to biblical authority or is the common good best served by the imposition of biblical law? At the time issues such as abortion, homosexual law reform and evolution seemed to generate a greater volume of correspondence, and possibly media coverage than did shopping on Sunday.⁴² If Sunday trading was perceived as a biblical issue by some correspondents, especially in regard to the authority they cited in their opposition to it, what consideration did they give to the economic and social aspects of the proposed Bill? Was the Bible authoritative in these areas and if so how should Christians represent that authority?

The second type, Family Community Economic Concerns⁴³ correspondents produced a greater number of letters and submissions but it was more difficult from the content to identify whether or not the writers were Christian. Chapter four analyses the correspondence from this type in seeking an answer to authority in the relationship between Church and State. As the acronym suggests, consideration was given particularly to economic, social, and community values in their arguments against Sunday trading. Freedom of choice, including freedom of (from?) religion was an argument presented by FCEC opponents opposed to Sunday trading as well as by other correspondents who favoured Sunday trading.⁴⁴ On what basis did FCEC correspondents consider a decision should be made when individual freedom clashed with the common good and how was the common good to be determined? By what authority is one worldview to be preferred to another: or in a pluralistic society should all worldviews be considered equal? FCEC correspondents referred to

⁴² In the *Christchurch Press* there were more letters to the editor on the subject of seagulls than Sunday trading!

⁴³ This type will generally be referred to by the acronym FCEC throughout the thesis.

⁴⁴ Ahdar, "A Christian State?" 476. Ahdar cites *R v The Big M Drug Mart Ltd*, in regard to freedom of religion meaning freedom from religion.

a greater range of authorities than those in the Christendom type. One of the questions that arises from this chapter is to what extent the correspondents' worldview has been shaped by culture, including church culture and in what ways their ideas about finance and social concerns reflect biblical principles. The positions and contributions of the Keep Sunday Free Campaign (KSF) and Save Our Sundays (SOS) to the Sunday trading debate are examined in this chapter, as is the reigniting of the debate in some districts following Bob Jones' contribution in his "Punchline" column.⁴⁵ I consider whether the "true costs" of Sunday trading are social costs, and whether deeper issues of social and economic justice are explored in the FCEC correspondence.

The conclusions presented in the final chapter are tentative especially given that the correspondence was primarily written in opposition to the STHAR Bill and Sunday trading. I therefore acknowledge a certain amount of conjecture is involved in reaching some of these conclusions. I also draw on personal experience in suggesting how some correspondents might have viewed other issues that arose from their responses to the Sunday trading debate. Ahdar's warning in writing about conservative Christians is also apposite, "The 'silent majority' of 'ordinary' Christians seldom write letters to newspapers, protest in the street or lobby Parliament."⁴⁶ It could be questioned as to what extent the correspondence on the STHAR Bill represents the views of Christianity in New Zealand, or grassroots Christianity. I note however there were submissions with multiple signatures, and as with other issues the correspondence that is published may represent a 'silent majority.' It is probable that the minority who wrote letters and made submissions reflect to at least some degree the views of a larger group of New Zealand Christians. I conclude the thesis with brief suggestions to those who continue to write letters and make submissions to parliament in their opposition to the introduction of shopping on Easter Sunday, Christmas Day and possibly Good Friday.

⁴⁵ This article promoted freedom of choice with regard to shopping on Sunday. It was considered by some correspondents to be a personal attack on Tom Quayle, founder of Save Our Sundays, and to be disparaging of Christianity.

⁴⁶ Rex J. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding: conservative Christians and the law* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate/Dartmouth, 201), 3.

Chapter Two

The Sabbath - Sunday questions. A brief consideration of Sabbath Law, some Jewish and Christian understandings of the fourth commandment and the Sunday trading debate

The fourth commandment was the scripture reference quoted most frequently in the campaign against Sunday trading by correspondents in their letters and submissions.¹ Sunday it was argued, was a special day for rest, recreation, and worship. This chapter will consider some historical interpretations of the fourth commandment especially in Christian and to a lesser extent Jewish exegesis, and the questions it poses for correspondents who used the commandment in their arguments against Sunday trading. Should the fourth commandment be the final authoritative word in the debate?²

In our consideration of authority I explore questions about Sabbath practice and the interpretation of the fourth commandment that have been the subject of debate within Judaism,³ between Jews and Christians, and within Christianity.⁴ Who has it, Church or State, how should this authority be exercised (in relation to Sunday trading), and what do the correspondents suggest is the basis for this authority? In considering the fourth commandment's authority in relation to Sunday trading I will

¹ Eighty letters and submissions referred to the fourth commandment. Only a few correspondents numbered it as the third commandment. Cf. Scott M. Langston, *Exodus Through the Centuries* (Malden MA, Oxford, Carlton Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 200. Greenberg, "The Decalogue Tradition," 96-109, 112-14, re the numbering and division of the commandments.

² The larger question of correspondents' views on the authority of the Bible is considered in the following chapters.

³ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 22, "the rules of the Sabbath... are as mountains hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and the rules many." (*Hagigah* 1.8). Cf. H Weiss, *A Day of Gladness, the Sabbath among Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 2, 31, re the centrality of the Sabbath in the religious life of all Jews, but, "How to observe it and where precisely its significance resided were widely debated issues."

⁴ Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: the history of the day of rest and worship in the earliest centuries of the Christian Church*, trans. A.A.K. Graham (London: S.C.M. Press, 1968), 45-153.

It is difficult to accept the statement made by Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfred Stott, *This is the Day The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in its Jewish and Early Church Setting*, (Frome, London: Butler and Tanner, 1978), vii, that "It was not until some years after the Reformation that Sunday became a matter of serious controversy among Christians," if by this they imply it was only of minor significance prior to the Reformation.

address four key questions. Is it part of a perpetual covenant, and so for all people for all time? Is the Sabbath a creation ordinance? Are there grounds to consider the Jewish Sabbath can be transferred to the Lord's Day, the Christian Sunday? How should Christians keep the Sabbath/Sunday?

The fourth commandment as part of a perpetual covenant

The four questions above are far from exhaustive with each having the potential to lead to other issues. There are two further questions important in our consideration of the perpetual applicability of the fourth commandment and its use in the Sunday trading debate. Is this the only commandment that is considered a perpetual ordinance, or should the whole of the Decalogue be permanent? Is it for all people for all time or just a particular people at a particular time? Of course these questions in turn raise others. If the Decalogue contains the whole law⁵ in any sense, then should the whole law be considered perpetually binding on all people for all time? If not, why not? If only part of the Law is perpetual, who, or how, are we to determine which parts? Should the Law be interpreted in the same way, (literally?) in all situations throughout history? What are we to make of the differences in the fourth commandment as found in Exodus and Deuteronomy, and do passages such as Nehemiah 13:15-22 and Jeremiah 17:19-27 add to this commandment or at least bring its principles to bear on new (urban) situations? In what ways do the Halakah or Mishna add to the commandments, interpret them in new situations, or create new commands?

Many correspondents who quoted the fourth commandment appeared to hold an *a priori* view regarding the authority of scripture. The text of the commandment, the words God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, were therefore seen as sufficient in themselves and to be obeyed (by all people) for all time. The differences in the versions of the commandment, whether quotes were from Exodus 20, Deuteronomy

⁵ A. T. Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 355.

5, or some other passage weren't part of the correspondents' Sunday trading argument. The impression given was that whether quoting from Exodus or Deuteronomy this was a clear instruction from God and not merely a "suggestion" that shops were to remain closed on Sunday.⁶

While the correspondence published by editors and received by parliamentary select committees may not reflect all that the writers had considered about the relationship between the fourth commandment and Sunday trading, I note that wider and more complex issues were not included in the written correspondence. It is difficult to adduce from this silence on issues such as "the relationship between the Old Testament and the New,"⁷ biblical theology, aspects of history, hermeneutics, eschatology, prophecy, and the relationship between the covenants⁸ as to what extent these issues informed the correspondence submitted. It seems likely however, given the content of letters and submissions that even if the wider issues had been considered by the writers the *a priori* views expressed regarding biblical authority would have been deemed sufficient for them to oppose Sunday trading. The commandment, or perhaps better, God's authority as found in the commandment, was also used to present ethical and moral objections to Sunday trading. Some correspondents did include their understanding of the verses they used. The perpetual nature of the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath holy was stated in some correspondence and appeared to be assumed by other writers using these passages. Thus many correspondents applied a more literal interpretation of Old Testament law in their opposition to the Shop Trading Hours Act Reform Bill 1990.

But what if the seven day week or the Sabbath did not originate with the Jews, would this affect the authority given to the fourth commandment and its perceived usefulness in the Sunday trading debate? Did the Sabbath predate Moses reception

⁶ Allowance was made for "essential services" to operate and dairies to trade.

⁷ D. A. Carson, "Introduction," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 17.

⁸ Ibid.

of the Decalogue on Mount Sinai?⁹ To what extent were the fourth commandment and the Law fulfilled by Jesus? If they were fulfilled by Jesus does this mean they are no longer binding, and if so on what basis can we appeal to them in opposing Sunday trading?

What are the origins of the Sabbath: does this hold implications for the use of the fourth commandment in opposing Sunday trading?

There are various theories regarding the origins of the seven day week and the Sabbath. According to Harline, “Many early civilizations calculated a solar year at roughly 360 days ... and a lunar month at 29 (days)... But these civilizations showed infinite variety and imagination in subdividing years and months into more manageable weeks and days.”¹⁰ It has been argued that there is no particular reason to have developed a seven day week.¹¹ Given this, in exploring the origins of the Sabbath I will also consider the possible origins of a seven day week and later how the Sabbath became established as the seventh and last day.

Rordorf asserts “clear evidence for a seven-day week is first found in Israel.”¹² He does accept a “planetary week was soon known all over the Mediterranean area,”¹³ but suspects the planetary week originated after the Jewish week, and then existed “side by side with it,”¹⁴ thus he considers it more likely that the Jewish week influenced the planetary week, not the other way around. He considers theories that suggest an antecedent to the Jewish seven day week to be conjecture including the

⁹ Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Louisville, Kentucky: The Westminster Press, 1974), 416.

¹⁰ Craig Harline, *Sunday: a history of the first day from Babylonia to the Super Bowl* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2, “That parts of the Middle East and then the Roman Empire settled on a seven-day week, with each day twenty-four hours long and named for a planet, was hardly inevitable.” Cf. John H. Primus, “Calvin and the Puritan Sabbath: A Comparative Study,” in *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin Essays in Honour of John Bratt*, ed. David E. Holwerda (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 64, “In the Institutes Calvin states explicitly that the church is not bound to the first day by divine authority, nor is the church absolutely bound to the rhythm of one day in seven.” Contra: Harold H. P. Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 24, “Sabbath originated with Israel and that with the Sabbath came the seven-day week.”

¹² Rordorf, *Sunday*, 9.

¹³ *Ibid.* For further information, S. Douglas Waterhouse, “The Planetary Week in the Roman West,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 308-22.

¹⁴ Rordorf, *Sunday*, 9.

seven day week being dependent, “on a division into four of the original lunar months,”¹⁵ or any connection with the number seven which was considered of great importance “by nearly all ancient peoples.”¹⁶

The veneration of the seven known “planets” which included our Sun and Moon has been suggested as a possible origin of the seven day week. The planets were known in antiquity, they played a considerable role in Babylonian astrology, and the Greeks “established a scientific relationship between the planets,”¹⁷ arranging them in order of distance from the earth. However none of this necessarily leads to the establishment of a seven day week and does not explain why one day was set apart as a day of rest.¹⁸ Rordorf also notes the difference in order between the Greek arrangement of the planets and their order in the planetary week. The explanations of Dio Cassius “in his *Roman History* (37.18-19)” regarding the planetary week are (reluctantly) accepted by Rordorf.¹⁹ However, “A general reverence for the seven planets does not mean that a seven-day week was also associated with them.”²⁰ Further Rordorf considers the planetary week had been in general use only from the beginning of the third century and while Dio Cassius and Tibullus mention Kronos’ day or Saturn’s day being observed in pagan circles from the first century B.C., Kronos’ day could have been associated with the Jewish Sabbath through the prohibition on travel both observe. Rordorf notes, “Considering the spread of Jewish sabbath customs in the Roman empire at that time,” it wasn’t at all surprising that over time “with the spread of astrological beliefs some superstitious ideas came to be associated with the observance of Jewish customs, especially as not everyone was aware of their Jewish origin?”²¹ He concludes by suggesting “Saturn’s day originated

¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁶ Ibid., 20. Rordorf argues that nature, “gives no recognizable preference to the number seven.” Some examples of groups of seven can be found such as in the seven stars in Pleiades, Orion and the Great Bear, but “other instances of seven in the natural order (e.g. the seven winds) have been discovered or invented after the number seven had already acquired its peculiar importance.”

¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

¹⁸ Ibid. Cf. 21, n.4. Rordorf considers the possibility that the day associated with Saturn as the “unlucky star” was set aside but if so he asks why not do the same for Mars which was also “counted as an unlucky star?” Note also on page 21 the dismissal of the Kenite argument from Exodus 35:3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 26, 33, n.2.

²⁰ Ibid., 27. Cf. n.1 on the same page for further argument on this distinction.

²¹ Ibid., 33.

by association with the Jewish Sabbath (and) that the planetary week as a whole developed in association with the Jewish week.”²²

Rordorf dismisses the view that the seven day week originated from the development of a market week into the sabbath week as there is no evidence of market weeks in Palestine, “much less seven day market weeks.”²³ He also considers the Old Testament tradition makes it improbable the Sabbath was originally a market day. The tendency for days of rest and festivity to become market days is noted but this would again be to reverse the original order, the Sabbath becoming a market day rather than originating from it.²⁴ He rejects the theory based on the relationship between the Hebrew word Sabbath and the Babylonian *šapattu*, the day of the full moon.²⁵ Rordorf states the theory is untenable as, “the Hebrew for the day of the full moon (is) *kese’* (Ps. 81:4) and not Sabbath, but it is also impossible to give a plausible explanation how the name sabbath came to be transferred to a weekly day of rest observed alongside the day of the full moon.”²⁶ The suggestion by J. and H. Lewy that in “their studies on the *hamuštu* periods of the Cappadocian cuneiform tablets”²⁷ they have found the origins of the Sabbath is also rejected as “unsuitable for explaining how the weekly Sabbath can have developed from these yearly intercalary periods.”²⁸ Rordorf concludes,

The background of the seven-day week does, therefore, still remain a mystery. it is nothing more than mere conjecture to assert that it goes back to the phases of the moon, or that it has developed from the numinousness of the number seven, or that it is connected with the economic necessity of holding markets, let alone that it may be traced back to one of the non-weekly models we have mentioned ... The Old Testament sources themselves give us clear information about the

²² Ibid. Rordorf also considers Dio Cassius’ views regarding the planetary week are confirmed by other “literary and pictorial evidence which is at our disposal.” Cf. 27, n.3, 4.

²³ Ibid., 22.

²⁴ Ibid. Cf. 22, n.4 where Rordorf gives the example of Constantine the Great permitting markets to be held on Sundays. Harline, *Sunday: A History*, 33, also notes the practice (in England) during the Middle Ages of gathering at the churchyard before and after mass for gossip, “striking deals, meeting friends, singing, dancing, sporting, and marketing.”

²⁵ A summary of the argument by J. Meinhold in favour is given by Rordorf, *Sunday*, 23. Cf. 23, n.3.

²⁶ Ibid., 23. Cf. 33, n.5. Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, (Philadelphia, New York, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 5751/1991), 112.

²⁷ Rordorf, *Sunday*, 23.

²⁸ Ibid., 24. Cf. 23, n.6, 7; 24, n.1.

original *meaning* of the seven-day week and of the weekly rest in Israel, but they do nothing to explain the *provenance* of the seven-day structure of this week.²⁹

Dressler summarises the theories regarding the seven day week and Sabbath origins under five headings, the Babylonian, Lunar, Kenite, Socioeconomic and Calendar theories³⁰ covering much the same content as Rordorf. Dressler concludes, “only the ancient Hebrew literature speaks definitively about a seven-day week and a Sabbath.”³¹ According to Gordon, many people in the Ancient Near East, “had days of rest when normal labor (sic) was restricted or forbidden. But no nation except the Hebrews developed such a day into a dynamic and lasting religious and social institution comparable to the Sabbath.”³² Sarna writes, “The Sabbath is wholly an Israelite innovation. There is nothing analogous to it in the entire ancient Near Eastern World.”³³ He considers the Sabbath, contra to the other known seven day units of time throughout the region, to be “the sole exception to the otherwise universal practice of basing all the major units of time – months and seasons as well as years – on the phases of the moon and soar cycle.”³⁴ The Sabbath then was given by God and “together with Creation as the basis for the institution, express the quintessential ideas of Israel’s monotheism: God is entirely outside of and sovereign over nature.”³⁵ Beckwith also considers the Sabbath a creation ordinance and finds the controversy over the Sabbath’s origins “somewhat surprising.” “The story of the Old Testament sabbath therefore begins with the sabbath or repose of God after his work of creation.”³⁶ He quotes Genesis 2:2 and Exodus 20:8-11 in support of this.

To summarise, while the origins of the Sabbath, and the seven day week may not be known conclusively, despite the arguments presented by some scholars, we do know

²⁹ Ibid. Emphasis original.

³⁰ Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” in D. A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 22-23.

³¹ Ibid. Further discussion on the etymology and meaning of “Sabbath,” Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 23, 24.

³² Cyrus H. Gordon, “The Biblical Sabbath: its Origin and Observance in the Ancient Near East,” *Judaism* 31, (1982), 12.

³³ Sarna, *Exodus*, 111.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 2.

the importance of the practice of the Sabbath in defining a people and the texts considered authoritative by some in the establishment of this practice. It appears that whatever its origins the Sabbath as found in the biblical texts was considered within Judaism as a commandment from God.³⁷ The seven day week and the Sabbath were a gift from God. “With the Creation as its rationale ... the seventh day of each week is invested with blessings and holiness. It is an integral part of the divinely ordained cosmic order and exists independent of human effort. For this reason it is described here as ‘a sabbath of the Lord God.’”³⁸

In the Sunday trading debate therefore, Christians who believe the Bible is God’s authoritative word are the most likely to include texts such as Exodus 16:23, 20:8-11, 31:15; Deuteronomy 5:12-15, in their arguments, especially considering the religious and social concerns contained in the fourth commandment. Some correspondents conveyed not just a desire to submit to God’s Law but held a literal interpretation of particular verses such that the nation would receive God’s blessings or curses depending on the obedience displayed towards God’s commandments.³⁹ There was nothing in the correspondence from writers who accepted the Bible as God’s authoritative Word to suggest the Sabbath was anything but given by God to Moses, or that the seven day week had origins separate from the creation myth as found in Genesis 1. The question, did the Sabbath predate Moses’ reception of the Decalogue on Mount Sinai, did not arise. While any comment on this question as it relates to the Sunday trading correspondence would be speculative it would seem that if the authority given to the Bible by some of the correspondents was significantly challenged then the usefulness of the fourth commandment in their arguments would be weakened.⁴⁰ However such a challenge would need to address the issues of faith and belief in God’s word which may be as much a part of their acceptance of biblical authority as any empirical evidence. Whether correspondents were right to

³⁷ Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 24-27. Cf. Gordon, “The Biblical Sabbath,” 12. Sarna, *Exodus*, 111-12. Martin Noth, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 160-1, 164.

³⁸ Sarna, *Exodus*, 111. However judgement is reserved regarding the Sabbath being a creation ordinance.

³⁹ See chapter 3 below.

⁴⁰ On the Ten Commandments, and therefore the Sabbath pre-dating Moses on Mt. Sinai, Scott M. Langston, *Exodus Through the Centuries*, 204-5, where Luther’s views are given.

use biblical law as “proof” that Sunday trading should not be allowed, or expect New Zealand’s law to be subject to biblical commandments are matters discussed below.

Should the fourth commandment be considered a perpetual ordinance?

In considering this question I will also discuss two other questions closely related to it. Are all Ten Commandments perpetual ordinances (and so the whole Law), and was the fourth commandment (along with the other nine) intended for all people?

There are differing opinions not only between Christians and Jews in regard to these questions but also within Judaism,⁴¹ and within Christianity. Beckwith argues the Sabbath was a creation ordinance with traces found “among many ancient peoples.” However the Sabbath wasn’t present in the patriarchal age as an “institution in its fullness.”⁴² He continues, as a creation ordinance the fourth commandment “stands on a different plane from the ordinances which originated in the Mosaic Law.”⁴³ These are not binding “in their literal sense” on Christians or other people as they were only given to Israel and Christ has fulfilled them.⁴⁴ The fourth commandment however, is considered a perpetual ordinance by Beckwith, although in presenting his understanding of Paul’s teaching on the Sabbath, and the Law more generally, he writes, “the only sense in which the Law still remains binding on Christians is the sense in which they are required to obey it by the fundamental commandment of love.”⁴⁵ Further he acknowledges there is much Paul “abolishes” with regard to the Sabbath, but considers that Paul “means to preserve the substance of the sabbath in the Lord’s Day. The substance of the sabbath would not be altered by a change of

⁴¹ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 8, identify two main traditions of interpretation of the Old Testament within Judaism that developed during the Intertestamental period, the Hellenistic (Alexandrian), and Semitic (Palestinian). Both held the fourth commandment to be a creation ordinance but the Hellenistic tradition maintained it was for all people while the Semitic tradition considered it “a sign between me and you ... a perpetual covenant between me and the children of Israel,” Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 18. Cf. Weiss, *A Day of Gladness*, 43, for Philo’s view that the “pattern is for the benefit of humanity, not just the Jews.” There is disagreement regarding whether Philo considered the Sabbath was for all people or only for the Jews, n.49 below.

⁴² Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6 Cf. Rordorf, *Sunday*, 107.

⁴⁴ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 26, consider Christ reformed rather than abolished Sabbath observance. Cf. D. R. de Lacey, “The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 177-9.

⁴⁵ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 26. Beckwith refers to Rom. 13:8-10, Gal 5:14 in support of this.

day, unless that change destroyed the signification of the sabbath, as a weekly memorial of creation and redemption.”⁴⁶

Beckwith also summarises a passage by Aristobulus in support of his contention regarding the perpetual nature of the Sabbath commandment, “God who created the world gave the sabbath to all men (sic) (not just to Israel) as a rest from the troubles of life.”⁴⁷ He notes Philo makes an almost identical point. The Sabbath is, “the festival not of a single city or country but of the universe, and it alone deserves to be called public, as belonging to all people.”⁴⁸

This understanding of the sabbath as a perpetual covenant between God and all humanity is contested by Carson et al.⁴⁹ Dressler considers the religious and social concerns found in the fourth commandment are a reminder to Israel of the “divine timetable” (Exodus 20:11), a sign that tells of God’s grace, holiness and authority; and the provision of a day of rest within the weekly cycle for all people (and livestock.)⁵⁰ However in considering the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant Dressler qualifies the “perpetual” nature of the commandment. “As a sign of the covenant the Sabbath can only be meant for Israel, with whom the covenant was made. It has a ‘perpetual’ function, i.e., for the duration of the covenant, and derives its importance and significance from the covenant itself.”⁵¹ He further argues the need

⁴⁶ Ibid., 27. Behind much of the argument in this section is an attempt by Beckwith to show that the “transfer” of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day has biblical warrant. In doing this he acknowledges that Paul allows there may be different practices between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 9. Beckwith, 8, quotes Aristobulus from Eusebius, *Praep. Evan.* 13.12. Cf. 146, n.7.

Where inclusive language has not been used in quotations, especially in the letters and submissions, I will not always use (sic). To do so would require several acknowledgements in some quotes.

⁴⁸ Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 89 cited in Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 8.

⁴⁹ A different conclusion to that of Beckwith and Stott (n.55) is reached by Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 53, “Philo regarded the Decalogue as the source of all legislation in the Torah (*Decal.* 19 and 154), but there does not appear to be evidence that he distinguished the Sabbath law as universal, rather than mere ancestral custom.”

Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” 350, with Beckwith and Stott agrees Philo considered the Sabbath to be a universal institution but, “His attitude was not typical of the way Jews thought of the Gentiles’ relation to the Sabbath. Jubilees 2:19-21, 31, can state, ‘the Creator of all things ... did not sanctify all peoples and nations to keep Sabbath thereon, but Israel alone’. Similarly in Rabbinic literature, it is stated that the seventh day of Creation was God’s Sabbath but not humanity’s. (*Gen.R.* 11).”

⁵⁰ Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 26f.

⁵¹ Ibid., 30.

to distinguish between signs and institutions of the covenant. The Sabbath is to be understood “as a *sign* of the Mosaic covenant,” designated in Exodus 31:13-17 between God and Israel.⁵²

Signs of the covenant and institutions of the covenant (sacrifices, priesthood, temple, monarchy) ought not to be confused. From the New Testament perspective all the institutions were fulfilled in Christ ... To attempt to transfer the signs and institutions of the old covenant to the new covenant, equating circumcision with baptism, Passover with communion, priest with pastor, temple with church, tithing with giving, Sabbath with Sunday, monarchy with ecclesiastical government, etc., is not valid in our opinion. In each case there are essential differences that would negate these equations.⁵³

The Sabbath was meant to be a sign of God’s Holiness and compassion for His people rather than the legalism and rebellion that Dressler considers developed. “In brief, Israel kept the Sabbath according to the letter of the law but often profaned it according to the spirit of the law.”⁵⁴ He notes each Sabbath gave an opportunity to renew the covenant. However if the “Sabbath is not viewed as a universal ordinance for all mankind (sic) but as a specific institution for Israel,”⁵⁵ as Dressler proposes then to what extent does this covenant continue to be efficacious within Judaism after the coming of the Messiah, and how are Christians to understand this and the other commandments? It would seem initially that either Jesus did fulfil the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17) and is a sacrifice “once for all” (Hebrews 7:27): or there is still a need for the weekly Sabbath (and sacrificial system?) to enable entry into God’s Kingdom. Orthodox Christian theology would argue that Jesus, through his sacrificial offering on the cross, has enabled a way for all people through all time to enter God’s Kingdom. In the *Epistle to the Hebrews* those who were rebellious, hardened their hearts (Hebrews 3:7-4:11) and were unable to enter God’s rest because of their unbelief.⁵⁶ The New Covenant instituted by Jesus enables all who believe to enter a present and eschatological Sabbath rest and if that is so the

⁵² Ibid. Emphasis original.

⁵³ Ibid., 40, n.83. Interestingly Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 7, while holding the Sabbath to be a creation ordinance and permanent, don’t view circumcision in the same way.

⁵⁴ Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 34.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 175-9. Cf. Nicene Creed, Westminster Confession XI.4, XIV.2.

Here orthodox is opposed to heterodox rather than referring to the Orthodox Church.

Mosaic covenant has been fulfilled through Christ. The Sabbath, which was given to a particular people at Mount Sinai as an expression of God's holiness, concern for all people, and an opportunity for rest and worship, is now available to all people through their belief in and relationship with Jesus.

This leads us to consider whether those correspondents who hold the fourth commandment to be both perpetual and applicable to all understand themselves to have an obligation or right to impose their views on others who don't hold the same views. While initially concluding with Dressler that, "As a sign of the covenant it (the Sabbath) was to last as long as the covenant," and so was not for all people for all time does such a conclusion also allow the rejection of the Decalogue as a "permanent ordinance" for all people and for all time? What of other viewpoints concerning the fourth commandment? Are the Ten Commandments still binding on Christians (and others) and if so in what way?

With regard to our key question, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Christian scholars differ in their views regarding the permanence of the fourth commandment. There are also various opinions regarding the permanence of the Decalogue. Further, opinions vary as to how the fourth and other commandments are to be understood and practiced at different times in history. Such diversity could be seen to undermine the authority of scripture, especially if it is accepted as God's inerrant and/or infallible word, a position some of those objecting to Sunday trading seemed to hold. It would appear that most of the correspondents who quoted or referred to scripture passages held to a literal interpretation of the passages. To successfully challenge the authority of scripture as God's infallible word could remove the cornerstone of their argument. For these correspondents the fourth and other commandments appear to be for all people for all time. Holding to an inerrant view of scripture would make it difficult to consider the words recorded as having been the spoken words of Jesus, as anything other

than having been said by our Saviour in the situation being described.⁵⁷ Neither is it likely they could agree with Rordorf who wrote, “The sabbath commandment was not merely pushed into the background by the healing activity of Jesus: it was simply annulled.”⁵⁸

However Jesus’ healing miracles need not be taken as an annulment of the commandments. Rather it could be seen that in fulfilling them (Matthew 5:17) Jesus has transformed and intensified⁵⁹ their meaning within the New Covenant. As well as the healings which can be understood as a practical demonstration that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, and that doing good (by healing regardless of the day and “law”) better fulfils God’s intention in giving the fourth commandment,⁶⁰ there are other examples of this transformation and intensification. These could be seen to include the command to love one’s enemy, (Matthew 5:43-44; Leviticus 19:18; cf. Luke 10:27-37); looking at a woman with lust in one’s heart, (Matthew 5:28 intensifies Exodus 20:17 and raises the status of a wife from simply being listed with the other possessions). The Sermon on the Mount was considered by the early church as,

⁵⁷ Cf. Rordorf, *Sunday*, 59, commenting on Lohse and Bultmann’s understanding of Mark 2:23ff. Note also Rordorf’s consideration of the “very loose” association of 1 Samuel 21:1-7 in defending the actions of the disciples at 60-3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 70. Rordorf also views Mark 2:27 as “throwing overboard the entire sabbath theology established by post-exilic Judaism (if we may accept Mark 2:27 as a genuine saying of Jesus.)” 62. Cf. Rordorf 63-65.

⁵⁹ Rordorf, *Sunday*, 100-18, argues the case for Jesus having intensified the Sabbath commandment in his consideration of the early church and its understanding of what was meant by Jesus “fulfilment” of the law. Here, he seems to give a different opinion to the earlier claim of “annulment” when discussing Jesus’ healing miracles on the Sabbath, 68-72. By way of a possible explanation note that Rordorf writes, “Jesus’ Yes to the law and his simultaneous No in particular instances have always caused surprise,” 77, note also 77, n.5; 78-9f.

M. Max B. Turner, “The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law in Luke/Acts,” *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 108, writes, “Jesus attitude to the law seems to involve elements of affirmation and yet, simultaneously, degrees of abrogation. He appears to assert both its continuity and, in some areas, its discontinuity.”

⁶⁰ A. Correll, *Consumatum Est* (London: SPCK, 1958), 63, cited in Carson “Jesus and the Sabbath,” 96 n.149. In reference to John 5, Correll wrote, “‘My Father worketh even until now and I work.’ (v.17) Thus he pointed out that while the Law of Moses forbade that man (sic) should do their own work on the Sabbath, it could in no wise forbid or prevent the accomplishment of God’s work on that day. He himself, had come to do the works of God...Indeed, his very doing of these things were a sure sign that the real Sabbath of fulfilment had come. Since, moreover, the risen and ascended Christ lives and works within the Church, her life itself is one continuous Sabbath—a pledge and foretaste of the consummation and the great Sabbath of eternity.”

a novel interpretation of the *sabbath* commandment. This interpretation is properly to be regarded as an intensification of the Torah ... This manner of interpreting the sabbath commandment unquestionably went far beyond the Jewish understanding of the law, for this interpretation led to the literal sense of the law being regarded as open to question and, in the end, to its abandonment in favour of a spiritual reality of a different sort.⁶¹

The healings Jesus performed on the Sabbath might break the Halakah, but did not break the Torah according to Carson.⁶² (Note Jesus was not charged with breaking the Sabbath at his trial: if he had broken the Torah it would have been an obvious accusation to bring against him.) The Sabbath healings confront the Pharisees with the issues of Jesus' authority. "If the authorities admitted to the healing (John 9:1-41) and therefore to the messianic implications that John sees, their own authority, including their interpretation of Sabbath law, would have to bow to Jesus."⁶³ While there is disagreement between Rordorf and Turner regarding how Jesus demonstrates his Lordship over the Sabbath both agree that the Sabbath healings do demonstrate this. Turner concludes, "Stopping the flow of messianic blessing for any reason - including appeal to the Sabbath regulations - is morally evil. It is in this way that Jesus demonstrates He is Lord of the Sabbath."⁶⁴

Again note the different academic opinions regarding Jesus' "fulfilment" of the law (and the prophets) and therefore the divergent views regarding the permanence and applicability of the Sabbath commandment. I consider Jesus fulfilled the law, at least according to Matthew 5:17, and with Carson that, "Jesus does not conceive of his life and ministry in terms of *opposition* to the Old Testament, but in terms of *bringing to*

⁶¹ Rordorf, *Sunday*, 101-2, emphasis original.

⁶² D. A. Carson, "Jesus and the Sabbath in the Four Gospels," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 59, cf. 69-74, 82. Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law," 104, considers this distinction between Halakah and Torah "virtually irrelevant." He considers the real point to be Jesus having authority that "transcends the law and the institutions revealed therein (cf. Matt. 12:5-6)." In contrast, Rordorf, *Sunday*, 65-72, considers Jesus did break Sabbath regulations as the healings he performed were not for people "in acute distress, his deeds of healing were an offence and a provocation." 66. However note Turner's response in "The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law," 105.

⁶³ Carson, "Jesus and the Sabbath and the Four Gospels," 83.

⁶⁴ Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law," 105.

fruition that toward which it points.”⁶⁵ Contra Rordorf I do not accept Jesus “annulled” the Sabbath commandment through his healing miracles, these are better seen in relation to the fourth commandment as part of Jesus’ intensification and transformation of the law and prophets. God permits one to do good, rather than doing nothing, if doing nothing is to allow the continuation of something evil on the sabbath.⁶⁶

With the various correspondents I agree that rest and worship are part of the blessings God intended for humanity with the gift of Sabbath, and that there is a continuation of these in the New Covenant. However this is not necessarily in the way it appears some of the correspondents propose. Correspondents who held to a literal interpretation of the Sabbath commandment appeared to want to maintain the status quo, protecting Sunday as a day of rest and the present worship opportunities, through current legislation. In doing so they seemed to be in danger of aligning themselves with the Rabbinic-Pharisaic traditions rather than Jesus’ teaching. In seeking to obey (the letter of) the law, there is a danger that the further regulations intended to define obedience may become a hindrance to the intentions of the law, particularly when conservative groups “espouse a more literal approach to the biblical laws.”⁶⁷ In their opposition to Sunday trading believing that “God’s Law” understood in a more literal way was also the best law for New Zealand, it is possible some correspondents focus was on the maintenance of God’s law (and the blessings they considered this would bring) rather than in practicing the principles contained in that law. Here their perceptions of their own behaviour and beliefs may not have been realised in the practice they desired for themselves and others. In Jesus’ actions and teaching there is room to consider a “perpetual” application of the

⁶⁵ D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 37, cited in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 77, emphasis original. For different understandings of “fulfil”, Carson, “Jesus and the Sabbath,” 77, 94 n.123-8. Rordorf, *Sunday*, 101-2.

⁶⁶ Note however Carson, “Jesus and the Sabbath,” 69-71, who considers some interpretations of Jesus’ actions in Mark 3:4, regarding the failure to do good, are considered “a trifle simplistic.”

⁶⁷ C. Rowland, “A Summary of Sabbath Observance in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 53.

commandments: but not in the way developed within Judaism re the regulations, however much this was an attempt to meet practical needs.⁶⁸ Barrett considers keeping God's commandments means, "obedience to the will of God as disclosed in his Son far more radical than any code, whether ceremonial or moral could ever be."⁶⁹

In considering whether the commandments are to be kept by all people we need to be aware of the purpose we assign to them. What did the correspondents think the purpose of the Sabbath commandment was? The letters and submissions of some correspondents suggested they held social concerns and/or a desire that New Zealand as a nation should keep God's law. For some correspondents this would be achieved by the nation obeying the commandments: they appear to have been influenced by scriptures such as Deuteronomy 8:19-20, 28:1-3; 1 Samuel 2:30; Proverbs 11:11. The STHAR Bill was considered by them to break the Sabbath commandment. To (continue) to receive God's blessings it was incumbent on the nation to turn back to God. For others there were questions as to whether it was acceptable to impose particular or indeed any Christian values and laws on all people. Even if God's law was for all people for all time can we override the free will of people through legislation?⁷⁰ Can the rest, recreation and worship some considered a day off in common be best achieved through legislation? Was the fourth commandment intended to be applied literally in the way some correspondents seemed to consider best for the nation? Beckwith, while affirming the sabbath as a creation ordinance, opposed "the legalistic way in which some who emphasise the creation sabbath have applied the doctrine to Christian practice ...

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Black, 1971), 169, cited in D. R. de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question, 177, in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982).

⁷⁰ Primus, "Calvin and the Puritan Sabbath," 67, for Calvin, the fourth commandment and the need to suppress our own will and open "ourselves to the will of God." For Calvin's theology of the Sabbath and Sabbath ethics, Primus 59-72.

Attempts have been made to legislate Sabbath practice. Alison Clarke, "A Godly Rhythm: keeping the sabbath in Otago, 1870-1890," in *Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand*, eds. John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson (Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 2004), 54-9.

Literal obedience to the detailed outward observances of the Law was seen by the first Christians as a burdensome yoke from which Christ had freed them.”⁷¹

Is the Sabbath a creation ordinance, and are there grounds to consider the Jewish Sabbath can be transferred to the Lord’s Day, the Christian Sunday?

I will consider these questions together as those who consider the Sabbath is a creation ordinance tend to use this point in arguing that the Jewish Sabbath can be “transferred” to the Christian Sunday. As with other questions about the Sabbath there is a clear yes, and an equally clear no to these questions: and a few “maybes”! Writers who seek to affirm the Sabbath as a creation ordinance consider there is evidence linking Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:8-11.⁷² Beckwith refers to God’s rest on the seventh day, and the command to rest found in the fourth commandment. He also notes that God “blessed” and “sanctified” the seventh day as a day of rest.

These same words are found in the commandment, where

we are told that it was not the seventh day but the ‘sabbath’ day ... which God blessed and sanctified at the creation. So what Gen. 2:2f. implies, when read in the light of this commentary supplied by Exodus, is that at the creation God commanded man (sic) to imitate his Maker by ‘doing work’ for six days and ‘resting’ on the seventh.⁷³

Beckwith defines a creation ordinance as that which “begins with man’s (sic) very creation.”⁷⁴ He considers with Murray that the Sabbath is one of four creation ordinances,⁷⁵ and “its unchanging validity is probably implicit in our Lord’s statement

⁷¹ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 5-6.

⁷² Ibid., 6, “He may have appointed the literal day as being merely analogous to the figurative ‘days’ on which he himself worked and rested, but it was a literal day that he appointed, and he did appoint it at the creation. On this, the fourth commandment leaves us in no doubt.” Cf. Beckwith and Stott *This is the Day*, chapter four, giving Chrysostom’s reasoning on 134; the authors’ conclusions, chapter 14. Weiss, *A Day of Gladness*, 30, notes the “exegetical tradition” of linking Genesis 2:2 with Psalm 95 in linking people’s rest with God’s rest.

Silvio Famularo, one of the correspondents to *Challenge Weekly* produced the following document, “Evolution; the Theories and the Facts,” available from Silvio Famularo <silvio@paradise.net.nz>

⁷³ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 2. Cf. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 414-7. H Weiss, *A Day of Gladness*, 41, re Philo’s view.

⁷⁴ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 7.

⁷⁵ The other three given are marriage, parenthood and work, from John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), page not given, cited in Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 7.

that ‘the sabbath was made for man’ (Mark 2:27).”⁷⁶ In supporting this understanding the similarities and differences between Mark 2:27 and Rabbi Simeon’s interpretation of Exodus 31:14 are compared, “the sabbath is given over to you, but you are not given over to the sabbath.”⁷⁷ Palestinian teaching in general and the *Mekilta* take “you” as meaning Israel.⁷⁸ This should present difficulties for Beckwith’s argument that the Sabbath is for all people. He suggests however there is a connection between Jesus’ choice of the word, “made” (*ginomai*) with the “making of the world,” and that “man” can refer to “mankind” as a whole. Therefore he considers Jesus’ words imply that when God made the world he also made the Sabbath for all of humanity, not just Israel.⁷⁹

Beckwith seeks further support for his argument that the fourth commandment is a creation ordinance and is permanent from John 5:17 and Hebrews 3:7-4:11. He concludes that while neither of these passages says anything explicit regarding a literal observance of the Sabbath to infer they exclude this possibility is “gratuitous. According to their teaching God is already enjoying his Sabbath rest in heaven, and his promise that men will share in it is already being realised; so why would a literal Sabbath not be a means of that realisation and a pledge of the full realisation still to come?”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid. For contra opinions regarding the universal application of Mark 2:27f, Carson, “Jesus and the Sabbath,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 64-66. Turner, “The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 103.

⁷⁷ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 11. Note Rordorf’s contra view in Beckwith and Stott, 146, n.9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁹ Beckwith also argues that “If the sabbath goes back to creation ... it stands on a different plane from the ordinances which originated in the Mosaic Law. These, as we have seen, are not necessarily binding in their literal sense on Christians, since they were not given to all mankind but to Israel only, and have now, with the coming of the gospel, been ‘fulfilled.’” *This is the Day*, 6. Emphasis added. Contra Turner, “The Sabbath, Sunday and the Law,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 34.

⁸⁰ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 12 cf. 11-12 for details of Beckwith’s exegesis of John 5:17, Hebrews 3:7-4:11, and also at 146, n.10. For a different opinion, A. T. Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 204-5; 218, n.23. Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” 351.

Nine of the Ten Commandments can be found in the New Testament in substance or substance and word.⁸¹ It is the fourth commandment that is missing but Beckwith argues that it does in fact have equal status. “If, then, any part of the Mosaic law is permanent, one would expect the Ten Commandments to be so. In general terms, this is admitted by most Christians to be the case, if only because so many of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament.”⁸² He notes Jesus and Paul both “reinterpreted” some commandments and on this basis, “The fourth commandment may require some measure of reinterpretation in a Christian context.”⁸³ Jesus said he had come to fulfil, not destroy the law, he taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath and participated in the service, if Jesus did not reject the Sabbath as an opportunity for worship and teaching “it follows that he did not reject the sabbath rest either.”⁸⁴ But does this necessarily lead one to conclude Jesus would accept the interpretation of the Pharisees,⁸⁵ or of Beckwith and Stott regarding the fourth commandment as a creation ordinance?⁸⁶

In attempting to establish continuity between the Sabbath (seventh day) and the Lord’s Day (first day of the week), “sabbath transfer,” Beckwith argues the Sabbath is a creation ordinance. While I accept “the main issue is not whether the two festivals are alike in name, but whether they are alike in their essential character,”⁸⁷ I suggest that the scripture passages used in assembling these arguments may be interpreted in different ways to that presented by Beckwith and Stott. Further the various links they claim are not necessarily as evident as they contend, and while there may be similarities between the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,⁸⁸ “to attempt to transfer the

⁸¹ For references Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 14f.

⁸² *Ibid.* Contra Rordorf *Sunday*, 106-7 who considers its omission an indication that the Sabbath commandment was no longer binding on Christians in “the old Jewish manner: otherwise they would certainly have unhesitatingly reproduced it.”

⁸³ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 15.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 Other arguments based on Jesus’ Sabbath actions are found on 22-24.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁶ Carson, “Introduction,” 14, lists others who hold similar views to Beckwith and Stott on this issue.

⁸⁷ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 43.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 43-7.

signs and institutions of the old covenant to the new covenant ... is not valid in our opinion.”⁸⁹

Beckwith and Stott argue that, “The Lord’s Day, then, was instituted to be a weekly memorial day, a weekly day of corporate worship and a weekly day of rest. In each of these three respects it resembles the weekly sabbath.”⁹⁰ However this resemblance does not of itself prove the Sabbath should be, or has been “transferred” from Saturday to Sunday.⁹¹ It remains possible that for a variety of reasons Christians at some point worshipped on Sunday rather than Saturday. Beckwith mentions the disagreement within Judaism with regard to whether the Sabbath was a creation ordinance, “If Hellenistic Judaism regarded the sabbath as a creation ordinance for all men, Palestinian Judaism by contrast regarded it as a Mosaic ordinance for Israel alone.”⁹² Lincoln distinguishes between those who practice a seventh day Sabbath, first day worship, and a first day Sabbath. While acknowledging Paul’s tolerance towards those “who judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike,”⁹³ he considers the evidence of the New Testament is towards first-day worship, a practice given canonical approval, unlike the observance of a first-day sabbath which “is a compromise theological position fraught with difficulties.”⁹⁴ Lincoln notes there were differences in the emergence of the Lord’s Day in Johannine and Pauline churches, and further there

⁸⁹Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 40, n.83. Cf. Samuele Bacchiocchi, “The Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982).

⁹⁰ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 42.

⁹¹ Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” 398-405. Cf. R. J. Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 240, “The story of the origin of the Lord’s day remains in many respects obscure. But we have seen reasons for holding that Sunday worship began at an early stage in Christian history and was from an early stage understood as commemorative of the Lord’s resurrection on the first day of the week. Our study of the origins of the Lord’s Day has given no hint of properly sabbatical associations; for the earliest Christians it was not a substitute for the Sabbath nor a day of rest nor related in any way to the fourth commandment. It was simply, by the normative custom of the apostolic church, the day on which Christians met to worship, and, for us, the use of its title, the Lord’s Day, in Revelation 1:10 gives that custom the stamp of canonical authority.” Contra, Bacchiocchi, “The Rise of Sunday,” 144.

⁹² Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 17.

⁹³ Romans 14:5.

⁹⁴ Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” at 388.

was a, “certain vagueness in the relation to the Lord implied in the term.”⁹⁵ There appear to have been different practices within the early church regarding the day on which worship was held, Paul asking for some tolerance on this issue.

Against Beckwith and Stott’s views Carson notes the expanded use made of the concept of a creation ordinance by nineteenth century Lutheran theologians who included “such social institutions as family, state, economy, civilization (and later, political order and race) in the creation order.”⁹⁶ He also refers to Helmut Thielicke who makes a distinction between the state of creation before and after the fall. As humanity was alienated from God the world as it now is, including humans, is no longer “in the strict sense, ‘creation.’”⁹⁷

Carson questions whether the Genesis text allows the Sabbath to be understood as a creation ordinance. In Genesis the text does not mention Sabbath “unless the reader equates “seventh day” and “Sabbath.” It would seem though, that this equation is the important link creation ordinance proponents make between the two passages. The context and different purposes of the two passages however, (one central within the Law, the other the climax of the creation myths),⁹⁸ seem to count against this link. Is the analogy between the creation myth and the fourth commandment sufficient to show that God’s rest on the seventh day is meant as a permanent command to all people for all time as some claim?⁹⁹ Can what is anthropomorphic

⁹⁵ Ibid., 389. Cf. Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 41, and compare with Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*.

⁹⁶ Carson, “Introduction,” 28.

⁹⁷ Helmut Thielicke, *Der Evangelische Glaube*, 2 Band (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), 362, trans. by Carson, in Carson, “Introduction,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, 28.

Note also von Rad who considers Genesis 2 does not make divine rest “normative for the rhythm of human life ... nothing is said here of Sabbath law, and Israel learns of it only at Mount Sinai.” Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays* (New York: 1966,) 101, n.9, cited in Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 28, in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*.

⁹⁸ The climax of creation is sometimes considered to be the sixth day when humans were made, as everything was then “very good.” However it was the “seventh” day that God blessed and hallowed, which Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 29, interprets as “an eschatological, proleptic sign indicating some future rest.” Further, Dressler at 30 adds that God’s last creative act within the creation story was not making humans but “the creation of a period of rest for mankind (sic).”

⁹⁹ Heschel considers the Sabbath date was independent of any event in nature such as determine the dates of festivals, “but by an act of creation.” However he presents a different thesis to that of many who hold to a creation ordinance position: “The sanctity of time came first, the sanctity of man came

be applied literally to humanity? God does not need to rest or be refreshed (Exodus 31:17).¹⁰⁰ If this passage (Genesis 2:2-3) is a model or type for humans to follow then God's "rest" was not literal. While the passage may be seen to establish a one day in seven rest it remains debatable as to whether this can be linked directly to the Sabbath. The fulfilment of this rest is eschatological,¹⁰¹ and in Jesus death and resurrection this becomes both realized and future. The blessing and sanctifying is arguably better understood when applied to the completion of God's creative process than the Sabbath.

There has been further disagreement in considering what form rest on the Sabbath (or Lord's Day) should take? Should it be a physical rest, and if so from all work? Were certain actions given precedence over the command to rest on the Sabbath, and if so why? How are we to understand "rest" in considering Jesus fulfilment of the Law? Is this rest to be observed by all people throughout history? How do the Sunday trading correspondents understand this concept of rest and what part does it play in their arguments? Does it matter which day we rest on: is it enough to have a day in common?

The provision of detailed regulations within the Pharisaic-Rabbinic tradition stating both what was not allowed on the Sabbath, especially where scripture was considered inadequate, and the circumstances in which a person was released from Sabbath obligations did not prevent differences of opinion between rabbinic

second, and the sanctity of space last. Time was hallowed by God; space, the Tabernacle, was consecrated by Moses." Heschel, *The Sabbath: its Meaning*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," 28, "Both anthropomorphic terms are employed not to tell us about God's activities but to inform us what man is to do." Cf. 39, n.62. Rowland, "A Summary," 54 n.5, which considers whether God keeps the Sabbath at all. In relation to this note John 5:17 and the various commentaries.

¹⁰¹ With regard to Jesus treatment of the Sabbath Carson, "Jesus and the Sabbath," 85, suggests, "the Sabbath rest is intrinsically bound up with God's eschatological purpose of salvation." Cf. A. T. Lincoln, "Sabbath Rest and Eschatology in the New Testament," in D. A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982). R. J. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," in D. A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 275-80, writing on Origin and Clement of Alexandria's views of Sabbath rest. God's Sabbath was not inactivity but the "contemplation of His completed work," 280.

schools.¹⁰² Note however that in his conclusions Rowland states that Rabbinic legislation was not an attempt to circumvent the Torah, rather it expressed a desire to make the will of God relevant to ordinary people with,

problems in the fulfilling of biblical regulations. The attempt by the rabbinic schools to meet the needs of such people was based on the conviction that the Torah did in some way speak to every human situation ... The complexities of Jewish Sabbath practices are to be understood as sincere attempts to translate the revealed will of God into the complex social setting of the Hellenistic world.¹⁰³

Something of the tension between obedience toward precepts and the allowances a humanitarian outlook on life might require in normal social circumstances, found in the rabbinic schools, also appears in the Sunday trading correspondence. Some correspondents held to a more literal interpretation of the Bible, and in particular the fourth commandment, but others who also argued against Sunday trading did so from a humanitarian perspective. Opponents to Sunday trading also differed regarding their attitude to sport on Sunday. Was it recreation, re-creation, or should sport, especially professional (paid) sport be allowed on Sunday? Did a common day of rest have to take place on the Sabbath/Sunday? Was it permissible for certain essential occupations to work on Sunday?¹⁰⁴

The form and understanding of rest on the Sabbath changed and developed throughout history. There is still disagreement over this issue. With regard to the Patriarchs, Beckwith considers that resting on the Sabbath/Lord's Day is worship and the distinction sometimes made between worship and rest is false. He especially criticizes Rordorf's "sharp distinction."¹⁰⁵ Beckwith concludes, "the Christian church in the first three centuries looked on its Sunday as a festal day, a holy day and a day

¹⁰² C. Rowland, "A Summary," 47. Cf. Rowland, 47-54. Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 20ff.

¹⁰³ Rowland, "A Summary," 53.

¹⁰⁴ Christians opposing Sunday trading are likely to agree that the services associated with saving lives (doctors, firemen, police etc.) are among the essential services, but what about plumbers, electricians, builders when a response is need following a natural disaster? To what extent can regulations be made to protect the Sabbath/Lord's Day in every situation "work" may be required? By what authority is it permissible to "over-rule" the Sabbath/Lord's Day commandment?

¹⁰⁵ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 39, cf. 40-42. Rordorf's position is summarized (without doing full justice to his study), in H Weiss, *A Day of Gladness*, 4, "[I]n the Old Testament the Sabbath came in as a day of rest and in time became a day of worship, in the New Testament Sunday began as a day of worship and in time became a day of rest."

of rest on which ordinary tasks were laid aside. At the same time they differentiated it from the Jewish sabbath.”¹⁰⁶ However Lincoln considers there is no warrant for applying the physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath to the Lord’s Day. Nor is there any convincing New Testament evidence as to why rest has to be associated with Sunday. He questions why the physical symbol of the day of rest needs to be preserved simply because “rest” has not yet been consummated at the second coming.¹⁰⁷ Bauckham also considers the Christian Lord’s Day is unrelated to the fourth commandment and sabbatical rest.

Our study of the origins of the Lord’s Day has given no hint of properly sabbatical associations; for the earliest Christians it was not a substitute for the Sabbath nor a day of rest nor related in any way to the fourth commandment. It was simply, by the normative custom of the apostolic church, the day on which Christians met to worship, and, for us, the use of its title, the Lord’s Day, in Revelation 1:10 gives that custom the stamp of canonical authority.¹⁰⁸

Bauckham argues the practice of Sabbath rest originates somewhere between the second and fourth centuries in the post-apostolic church, although even by the end of the fourth century a “full Sabbatarian theory” had not developed.¹⁰⁹ There continued to be a variety of views regarding sabbath practice in the second-century church including the views of Jewish Christians who kept the Sabbath but did not impose this on Gentile converts and “Gentile Christians who adopted the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, while others regarded themselves as entirely free from the commandment,” either because they held it was a Jewish law or followed Paul’s teaching, “that the Sabbath was a shadow of the reality that had now come in Christ.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 74.

¹⁰⁷ Lincoln, “From Sabbath to Lord’s Day,” 216. Lincoln refers to the “Heidelberg Catechism (Lord’s Day 38),” as “perhaps the best exposition of what the injunction to rest of the fourth commandment now means for the believer.” Compare this with “The Westminster Confession,” XXI.8.

¹⁰⁸ Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 240.

¹⁰⁹ Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday,” 252.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 254. Cf. 269, “It must be stressed that outside Jewish Christianity, all second-century references to the Sabbath commandment either endorse the metaphorical interpretation or reject the literal interpretation as Judaistic or do both.”

Constantine's declaration that "the most honourable day of the Sun" was to be free from public work was the first law seeking to make Sunday a day free from work.¹¹¹ The earliest writing available which sees the Sabbath transferred to the Lord's Day is Eusebius commentary on Psalm 91. "[T]he Word by the new covenant has changed and transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the rising of the light. He has given us an image of true rest, the day of salvation, the Lord's day and the first of the light."¹¹² One of the issues for Christians at this point, in considering both the transference of the Sabbath to Sunday and what form any rest¹¹³ should take, is in what way has Christ made all days "holy?" If this has occurred then should Sunday, or Saturday be considered as set apart, sanctified? Alternatively, does the "de-secularisation" of Sunday advance the cause of secularism,¹¹⁴ or does the transference of the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday and its consideration (veneration?) as in some way set apart from the other days lead to a desacrification of the rest of week? This of course leads back to our key question, by what authority do you do these things, (and how is such authority being interpreted?)¹¹⁵

"In spite of the Constantinian legislation it is clear that true Sabbatarianism was a medieval, not a patristic, development."¹¹⁶ Sabbatarianism does not appear in the writing of Augustine but his "interpretation of the spiritual Sabbath was taken over

¹¹¹ Ibid., 280 Note farmers were exempt.

¹¹² Eusebius, in *Ps 91 Commentary*, cited in Bauckham "Sabbath and Sunday," 283, in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*. Cf. 298 n.108 re Stott's recognition of Eusebius' themes but (according to Bauckham) wrong conclusions that the transference of the Sabbath to Sunday had always been in Christian thinking. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday, 287, considers Ephraem Syrus' sermon in the mid-fourth century may be the first possible reference applying the Sabbath commandment to Lord's Day, but note more concern was expressed regarding the sins idleness might give rise to than the "sins to which Sunday rest gave rise." {*Examiner notes Ignatius, Magnesians 9:1 predates Eusebius.*}

¹¹³ There were practical considerations as well as the theological concerns of literal and/or spiritual rest. Christians weren't to be "idle" on the Lord's Day as it was claimed the Jews were on their Sabbath. Cf. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday, 285-6.

¹¹⁴ A concern expressed by Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, ix, (and echoed in correspondence opposed to Sunday trading), was that a "reduction in the biblical basis" for the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday opens the way to secularism.

¹¹⁵ Various arguments have been made regarding Jesus' Sabbath practice in supporting the idea that one day, Saturday originally but then Sunday is to be set apart. Arguments have also been presented that consider Jesus the authority in declaring all days are equal as He has "fulfilled" the law. (The devil remains in the detail, or at least in our interpretation! What did Jesus abolish, transform, retain...)

¹¹⁶ Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday, 287. Cf. 298, n.223.

in medieval exegesis with varying degrees of approximation to his full meaning.”¹¹⁷ Although imposed from above through legislation, Bauckham considers medieval Sabbatarianism was not so much a theological development as a growth from below of popular sentiment. There were practical reasons for this increasing regard for Sunday rest: it provided leisure for worship; there was a need to educate new Christians; to provide occupation for any considered idle; and Sunday rest was promoted by analogy with the Old Testament Sabbath long before an acceptable theological application of the Sabbath commandment.¹¹⁸ Bauckham traces the development of Sabbatarianism during the Medieval period including the influence of newly converted Germanic tribes who were impressed by the “similarity between the Jewish Sabbath and their own pagan taboo-days;”¹¹⁹ the various regulations against labour including those against rural work which had been permitted under Constantine; the first appearance of the “Epistle from Heaven” which claimed to give “direct divine sanction to a strictly Sabbatarian Lord’s Day observance.”¹²⁰ In 1234 C. E., “Sunday rest became a general church law when it was incorporated in the Decretals of Gregory IX.”¹²¹ Bauckham considers Medieval Sabbatarianism had a legalistic quality that was also apparent in Sabbatarianism in later periods.

Its legalistic quality derives less from its Old Testament model than from its origin in attempt(ing) to legislate for a Christian society. The laws for Sunday rest had a minimum of genuinely ethical content and existed for several centuries as rules in search of a theological context and justified by a divine authority curiously difficult to locate.¹²²

Protestant reformers in the sixteenth-century returned to a less Sabbatarian position that was closer to the New Testament writers and early Fathers: however a new Sabbatarianism rapidly developed within the tradition especially in English

¹¹⁷ R. J. Bauckham, “Sabbath and Sunday, in the Medieval Church in the West,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 301. For Augustine the Sabbath commandment was “the one commandment of the Decalogue that Christians are not to take literally.” Cf. Bauckham, 307, n.9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 302

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 303

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.* For other developments in Sabbatarianism during the Medieval period, including Rabanus Marcus, Peter Comestor, Thomas Aquinas and an understanding of the Decalogue as Natural Law which meant the Sabbath command could be understood by Christians literally not spiritually without “Judaising,” Bauckham, 302-7.

Puritanism. “[T]he most consistent form of Protestant Sabbatarianism, was seventh-day Sabbatarianism. Protestant views of the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day have always, however, remained very varied.”¹²³ Not everyone who based their theology on Luther’s *sola Scriptura* was convinced of Sabbatarian arguments.¹²⁴ Luther considered that human, rather than divine authority lay behind the requirement to rest each Sunday. In this he was not repudiating Christian worship on Sunday but considered the Decalogue as law had been given to the Jews. He wished particularly to maintain the liberty of Christians in respect to both Roman Church authority and practice and the teaching of Karlstadt whose, “position was scarcely distinguishable from later Protestant thought.”¹²⁵ For Luther the Decalogue was the clearest statement of God’s law which was now written on our hearts. The Sabbath commandment remained relevant to Christians spiritually, and as part of “natural law,” as people needed physical rest.¹²⁶ The one day rest in seven could however occur on any day.

Calvin agreed with this last point, “In the Institutes Calvin states explicitly that the church is not bound to the first day by divine authority, nor is the church absolutely bound to the rhythm of one day in seven.”¹²⁷ Christians were to love God and their neighbour self-sacrificially all seven days of the week, not just on one special day. Like Luther, Calvin considered the retention of Sunday as the day for worship and rest to be a matter of convenience and order. However there appear to be Sabbatarian tendencies in some of his writing, “both daily work and recreation should be suspended for the whole duration of the day in order that the whole day should be devoted to corporate and private worship and religious instruction.”¹²⁸ Calvin also considers the requirement to “give our servants and labourers relaxation

¹²³ R. J. Bauckham, “Sabbath and the Sunday in the Protestant Tradition,” in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 312.

¹²⁴ Cf. Bauckham, “Protestant Tradition,” 313.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 314. Bauckham (318) considers writers following Luther remained close to his position but in other reformed theologians (Bucer, Zwingli, Peter Martyr) “we find what was to become a general Reformed position: that God’s law requires a weekly day of rest for worship, but does not specify *which* day.” Emphasis original.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 314.

¹²⁷ Primus, “Calvin and the Puritan Sabbath,” 64.

¹²⁸ Bauckham, “Protestant Tradition,” 317.

from labour ... (an) incidental part of the original institution,"¹²⁹ that nevertheless remains valid. Calvin and Luther both considered a weekly day of rest to be a creation ordinance.

Bullinger maintained the humanitarian understanding that servants should rest on the "Sabbath", but this rest is specifically to allow for worship. In his application of details from the Old Testament Sabbath rest to the new covenant he "blurs the distinctions between the covenants" even inferring it was the "duty of the Christian magistrate to punish Sabbath breakers, even by death."¹³⁰ His views on what could and could not be done on Sunday had wide influence in England and the distinction he made between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath "was widely accepted throughout the Reformed churches of Europe."¹³¹ Bullinger's successors tended to be even more Sabbatarian in their outlook. The Sabbath controversy continued throughout the seventeenth-century.

In England the Westminster Assembly's Directory for Public worship gave some idea of what was expected of the majority of seventeenth-century Puritans, but the strictness of John Wells' *The practical Sabbatarian* was moderated somewhat by the end of the century when "many writers came to see that the rigor of Sunday observance must be adapted to human capacities if its real religious ends were not to be frustrated."¹³² A decline in practice if not doctrine occurred in the eighteenth-century at least until the evangelical revival and a new "concern for strict Sunday observance."¹³³ In the nineteenth-century the Rev Daniel Wilson's sermons led to the founding of the Lord's Day Observance Society in 1831. "Sabbatarian controversy in the nineteenth century largely resulted from the vigorous efforts of the LDOS to propagate and implement Wilson's doctrine."¹³⁴ The seventeenth to nineteenth

¹²⁹ Ibid. Cf. 336, n.30.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 319 Cf. 336, n.41

¹³¹ Ibid., 319.

¹³² Ibid., 327. Cf. 320-27, which include details of English Sabbatarianism, and 337, n.62 for further material on this topic.

¹³³ Ibid., 327.

¹³⁴ Ibid. Contra Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology," 216, who considers there is no warrant for applying the physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath to the Lord's Day. Neither is there convincing New Testament evidence as to why rest, (all rest is ultimately consummated in the second coming)

century disputes in England were not so much about Sunday as an institution but what sort of institution it should be: the practice of Sunday rather than the day itself. Was it necessary to give the whole day over to worship? The King's Book of Sports in the seventeenth-century was part of the Laudians' opposition to the Puritans' strict Sabbath.¹³⁵ The Laudians argued that the religious character of Sunday was best preserved by allowing some recreation, and "rest" was an accessory rather than the principle of the Sabbath.¹³⁶ Another example regarding the practice of Sunday related to whether it was acceptable to open the Crystal Palace on Sunday afternoons in the nineteenth century.

Another difficulty arising from the creation ordinance position is whether or not the days of creation were literal days: if not, the seventh day is not the twenty-four hour period of the Sabbath.¹³⁷ Thus not all scholars accept the seventh day and Sabbath are the same day. There is disagreement as to whether God blessed and hallowed the seventh day on the day itself, and thus worked (on the Sabbath?) or whether these actions had occurred prior to the seventh day beginning.¹³⁸

In summary, Beckwith and Stott consider, "The Lord's Day, then, was instituted to be a weekly memorial day, a weekly day of corporate worship and a weekly day of rest.

has to be associated with Sunday. The sign (Sabbath) need not be retained until the Parousia. Lincoln refers to the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 38), "let the Lord work in me by his Holy Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath."

¹³⁵ The basis of Sunday observance was the most common point of disagreement amongst non-sabbatarians. Bauckham, 332, notes six texts from the New Testament were commonly referred to in attempting to establish various positions including the view that, "Sunday observance therefore rests wholly on the authority of the church. Alternatively it has no authority as a religious institution, but only pragmatic value as a human institution." Bauckham gives the four main positions on the six texts. In the pages following Bauckham considers Seventh-Day Sabbatarianism.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 331. Cf. 329-331 for further details.

¹³⁷ Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day," 347, considers "the scheme of the creation week is a literary device and that the non-literal nature of the seventh day in particular is indicated by the absence of the evening-morning formula."

Beckwith *This is the Day*, 6, considers it sufficient that a twenty-four hour day is intended in the fourth commandment; but if the same is not true of the "seventh day" in Genesis it stretches the analogy between the two passages even further. I doubt seven-day creationists consider it as easy to ignore this in any defence they might make of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance.

¹³⁸ Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," 39, n.61. Cf. Rowland, "A Summary," 54, n.5 and at 45, the writer of Jubilees, who proposed "a rather strict and uncompromising attitude towards the observance of sabbath ... considered Israel's participation in the Sabbath to be an extension of the rest that was demanded in the heavenly realm ... God Himself had to keep the Sabbath."

In each of these three respects it resembles the weekly sabbath.”¹³⁹ However, the links made between Genesis 2:2-3 and the fourth commandment need not lead to the conclusions creation ordinance proponents claim. If this link is not established then the fourth commandment could more readily be considered as having been given to Israel at Sinai, rather than to all people for all time. This does not mean Christ abolished the commandments and that Christians can ignore them. A literal practice and understanding of the fourth commandment might not be intended for all cultures at all times but its principles may be considered permanent.

Interpretations that increasingly limited human freedom, even when the intention had been to allow people time for “rest” and worship, at times resulted in a legalistic application of the commandment.¹⁴⁰ What was deemed permissible regarding work and recreation, and thus what was considered to be “rest” on the Sabbath, changed over the centuries. If the exegesis and application of the fourth commandment varied, as it did, then which interpretation was correct? On what grounds does one claim the “authority” of scripture, if the Catholic Church claimed it alone had the authority to interpret scripture: but the authority of the (Catholic) Church was rejected by Protestants during the Reformation? By what authority can the Jewish Sabbath be “transferred” to the Lord’s Day?¹⁴¹ Can “rest” on any day be enforced through State legislation or Church regulations? Does “freewill” include freedom not to worship or rest one day in seven?¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 121.

¹⁴⁰ Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” 34, “The giving of the sabbath law was never meant to be a burden; in fact the sabbath was to reflect God’s compassion for His people, as well as to emphasise the character of His holiness. But this intention was forgotten in arrogance and rebellion as legalism and traditionalism grew.”

¹⁴¹ One aspect of this authority includes consideration of the various opinions regarding the moral and ceremonial aspects of Sabbath law. Rev Hugh M. Cartwright, “Calling the Sabbath a Delight,” <<http://www.berbc.org/Library/Calling%20the%20Sabbath%20a%20Delight.shtml>> (24 February 2010), argues the ceremonial aspects have been done away with by Christ but the moral and spiritual aspects remain. Cf. Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 26-8. D. A. Carson et al. *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*, 16, 68, 111, 320-1, 333-4, 390.

¹⁴² Freedom not to rest raises issues far wider than the Sunday trading debate. Should the State legislate in ways that restrict how many hours a person works each week? What are the social and humanitarian implications of the State not providing suitable boundaries for the welfare of its citizens? To what extent does “loving our neighbour” require Christians to seek preventative legislation for the “common good”?

How should Christians keep the Sabbath/Sunday?

Cultural and political factors as well as biblical and theological understandings have contributed to the practices of Sunday/ Lord's Day observance since the beginning of Christianity. Various opinions have been expressed regarding the origins of Sunday worship, what this worship entailed and how the "rest" on this day was to be observed. Given these various opinions, I propose that just as there were different interpretations of the law in Judaism, "Various Jewish approaches to the observance of the sabbath resulted in a variety of regulations with varying degrees of complexity,"¹⁴³ so the Christian observance of the Sabbath including whether worship was on Saturday, Sunday or some other day¹⁴⁴ has also varied from its early beginnings. Differing interpretations and practices have continued throughout the history of Christianity. For instance Christians had greater freedom to participate in worship and rest on the Sabbath in the Constantinian era than in earlier times when persecution had been greater and Christian worship had been restricted by cultural, civic, economic and religious factors.¹⁴⁵

In the medieval period some aspects of medieval monasticism reflected the influence of Alexandrian theology. The call to "keep Sabbath at all times"¹⁴⁶ showing the influence of Origen's description of the "perfect Christian ... all his days are the Lord's and he is always keeping the Lord's Day."¹⁴⁷ A problem associated with this view is that it had the potential to create two grades of Christians, those who needed a special day to celebrate because they were unable or unwilling to "keep every day as a festival"¹⁴⁸ and others who are able to continuously keep the Lord's Day. The monastics were able to give all their time to contemplation (although their

¹⁴³ C. Rowland, "A Summary," 53. Cf. 47-52 for differing Jewish interpretations. Note for instance the decision in 1 Maccabees 2:41, to allow fighting on the Sabbath.

¹⁴⁴ Bacchiocchi, "The Rise of Sunday," 132-4.

¹⁴⁵ It is hard to sustain Beckwith and Stott's claim, *This is the Day*, 40-2 that prior to the Constantinian edict services were likely to be long and the whole day devoted to God in the way they suggest. They base their claim on their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 16:2 and an argument that Christian services followed a synagogue "template." Cf. Walter F. Specht, "Sunday in the New Testament," in *The Sabbath and Scripture in History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 124-5.

¹⁴⁶ Bauckham, "Medieval Church in the West," 302.

¹⁴⁷ Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday," 277.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 278.

day could involve significant periods of work): for others there was the Lord's Day. The Medieval period saw a move towards Sabbatarianism, initially at the popular level. In late medieval and traditional Roman Catholic theology the Thomist view became the prevalent view, "Sabbatarianism grounded in Natural Law was propagated by the casuistic manuals of the late Middle Ages."¹⁴⁹ In discussing what could and could not be done on Sunday Bullinger considers rest, if not used for worship would be idleness. However he allows, "works of mercy and necessity ... (but) 'fleshly pleasures,' 'any handy occupation' and sleeping late"¹⁵⁰ are censured.

Sabbatarianism developed more rapidly and strictly within English Puritanism and Scottish and American Protestantism. In England the Sabbath remained a controversial issue through the seventeenth century, especially with regard to recreation and Sunday amusements. Did Christians need to give up the whole day to worship?

Sunday activities and practice also varied depending on which class one belonged to. For the elite a Dutch Sunday might just be another day of revelry; others could be entertained for at least part of the time by watching the elite at their public banquets; while merchants could be found "working at home or in their stores on Sunday evenings hoping to get a head start on the week's business."¹⁵¹ Some workers wanted shops to open on Sundays, "because they were paid on Saturday evening and wished to buy things the next day. Industries such as textiles and brewing found it difficult to skip any day of work at all, given the long process involved in the manufacture of their wares and the possibility of spoilage."¹⁵² Differences in Sunday activities and practice amongst the social classes continued

¹⁴⁹ Bauckham, "Medieval Church in the West," 307. Note however Craig Harline, *Sunday: a history*, chapter 2. Differences existed in Sabbath practice between rural and urban areas and some practices continued whether approved by the church or not, (see Harline 62-65). In chapter 3 Harline also notes differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic observance of Sunday.

¹⁵⁰ H Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, T Harding, ed., (Cambridge: University Press, 1849-52), 1:262-66, cited in Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday," 319, in Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*.

¹⁵¹ Harline, *Sunday: A History*, 85.

¹⁵² Ibid. The economic importance of these crafts meant the town's rulers were reluctant to tell them to close on Sunday. Another example of Sunday practice being determined by factors other than scripture, church doctrine or theology.

into the nineteenth century, especially in some European cities. For workers increasing industrialization meant “the line between work time and free time became more distinct, and it was basically drawn around Sunday.”¹⁵³

Two world wars contributed to the altered views of Sunday in the twentieth century. The understanding of Sunday as a holy day, set apart for worship decreased, especially in the Western nations, and Sunday practice amongst Christians remained diverse. In some places in the USA where Christianity was predominantly conservative and evangelical, social pressure and upbringing saw a continuation of some Sabbatarian practices, at least for a time. Increasing secularisation however, including dances, movies, and eventually Sunday shopping, along with (professional) sport and a wide variety of amusements became common place in most parts of America by the end of the century.

In the UK a more restrained Sunday was favoured by some after the First World War, but certainly not by all. The Lord’s Day Observance Society was “comfortable with a Sunday that included merely reading, light walking, music, contemplation of nature and time with family and friends.”¹⁵⁴ However a few clergy were more sympathetic towards recreation on Sundays.¹⁵⁵ Opinion remained divided as to the British Sunday and its practice, some considering it “dreary,” a view well portrayed by Tony Hancock in “Sunday Afternoon at Home.”¹⁵⁶ Harline also notes there were different attitudes and practices on Sunday in the UK depending on one’s social class.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Ibid., 107. Harline draws attention to the impact urbanization and industrialization had on Sundays with particular reference to Paris where pleasure and work contrasted with the “Victorian Sunday” in England. Cf. Harline, 142, 162-3. R. Strang Miller, *His Day or Ours?: studies on the biblical and reformed basis of Lord's Day observance*, (Manurewa, N.Z.: Westminster Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1964), 35, quotes Murray McCheyne, “Alas! poor Paris knows no Sabbath; all the shops are open, and all inhabitants are on the wing in search of pleasures - pleasures that perish in the using. I thought of Babylon and Sodom as I passed through the crowd.” (No source is given for this quote.)

¹⁵⁴ Harline, *Sunday: A History*, 222.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 224-5.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 223. This episode of “Hancock’s Half Hour,” is from a popular radio programme aired in the 1950s, “but every activity (and inactivity) it describes was present and familiar in the 1930s.” Part one of this programme is available, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScV1U2xOJdM>> (20 November 2010).

¹⁵⁷ Harline, *Sunday: A History*, 227-36.

With regard to the introduction of Sunday trading in the late twentieth century the United Kingdom was anything but united. The Thatcher government's proposal to allow shopping on Sundays was defeated in 1986, a point used by several correspondents and organisations opposed to the STHAR Bill in New Zealand. In August 1994 legislation was passed allowing limited Sunday trading in Wales and England: hours were limited and trading restricted to "larger" stores. In Scotland Sunday trading was already deregulated, although barbers and hairdressers had been prohibited from opening on Sunday until 1994. Shops are able to open on Easter Sunday, and although few did so, on Christmas Day. Sunday shopping in Northern Ireland was regulated under the "Sunday Trading (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Opening hours are more limited, usually between 1pm and 6pm."¹⁵⁸ The objections of churches who considered a gap was needed between Sunday morning services and the opening of shops influenced the Northern Ireland decision.

In New Zealand, Christians who hold a more literal understanding of the fourth commandment in the sense of taking the text at "face-value," seemed to promote Sunday, the Lord's Day as primarily a day for worship. The restrictions some Christians place on Sunday activities or at least their preference that some activities did not happen seems to stem from a desire to see Sunday as a holy day, a day set apart.¹⁵⁹ Rest appears to be considered more in its relation to worship than to recreation, where recreation is sport in particular and perhaps "fun" more generally. This approach appears to be motivated more by the desire to keep the Sabbath holy than any direct attack on the pleasures of others.¹⁶⁰ Although greater restrictions would be placed on Sunday activities, those who hold this view appear to genuinely

¹⁵⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_shopping#Northern_Ireland> (20 July 2009).

¹⁵⁹ F Foulkes, "Set aside one day in seven," *Challenge Weekly*, June 24 1988, 7. Cf. M. McKenzie, "Sunday might as well be a rest day," *Timaru Herald*, 24 May 1990, 4, who writes, "the Bible says nothing about keeping Good Friday, Easter Sunday, or Christmas Day holy, but it does say remember the sabbath (sic) day to keep it holy ... as for advertisements on television, we get enough every other night without having them on Sunday as well." Joe H. Emmett, "Christian Courage," *Waikato Times*, 3 January 1990, 4; Kathleen North, "Secular Sunday," *New Zealand Herald*, 23 December 1989, 8. Note *Doyle v Whitehead* 1917 re playing golf on Sunday in Rex J. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding: conservative Christians and the law* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate/Dartmouth, 2001), 13.

¹⁶⁰ Clarke, "A Godly Rhythm," 52, in colonial Otago not all sabbatarians were "dour kill-joys, but it was true for many. A rosy glow pervades descriptions of families on the sabbath."

believe the fourth commandment as understood in this more literal way, is how God intended us to live. Therefore, to obey its precepts both honours God is considered best for humanity. R. Strang Miller, a Presbyterian minister, gives an example of this approach to “sabbath keeping.”

Let the First day of the week be then kept, as the Lord’s Day: a day wherein we are, weekly, ‘in the Spirit’: a day in which we rest from secular toil and selfish pastimes, and set our affection on things above; a day when, through public and private worship, we prepare for the inheritance of the saints in light.¹⁶¹

If New Zealand’s Christianity was “transplanted” then this could be seen to include the varied attitudes found towards the Sabbath.¹⁶² Clarke refers to the fierce debate on leisure in Otago which included whether public transport should be permitted to operate on Sunday thus making leisure activities more readily available. While some people held strict Sabbatarian views, the majority of Otago residents favoured a more relaxed Sunday, which included “riding, driving, drinking, shooting, gossiping, aimless strolling about, and above all Sabbath-visiting.”¹⁶³ Different approaches to the Sabbath included the views of those who believed a strict Sabbath was God’s intention for humanity and the appropriate way we were to honour God. Others viewed the Sabbath from a non-religious perspective. Some Christians practiced a less strict application of the Sabbath rest.

The keeping of Sunday as a day of rest indicated that this was a Christian society, and its residents respectable people. Arguments arose over the extent which the Sabbath rest should take, but almost all agreed that this was a day when ‘regular employment’ should be avoided... If Sundays brought families together, they also allowed for contemplation of the grand questions of human life.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Miller, *His Day or Ours?* 22.

¹⁶² “Presbyterian Report on the state of religion and morals,” (Document 4.34) 227, cited in Allan K. Davidson, Peter J. Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1989). (Source, “Abstract of report on State of religion and Morals”, *PGA*, 1890, 66-7). “Sabbath desecration appears to be on the increase. In the leading cities complaints are made about tobacco shops and shops for the sale of fruit and confectionary being allowed to remain open during the whole of the Sabbath. It is not uncommon for Church goers, after attending the morning service, going out riding or driving in the afternoon, and thus oftentimes neglecting Church in the evening.” Cf. Alison Clarke, “‘Tinged with Christian Sentiment’: Popular Religion and the Otago Colonists, 1850-1900,” in *Christianity, modernity and culture: new perspectives on New Zealand history*, ed. John Stenhouse assisted by G.A. Wood (Adelaide, S. Aust.: ATF Press, Australian Theological Forum, 2005), 109-13. Clarke, “A Godly Rhythm,” 47, writes, “As a Free Church enterprise, Otago inherited both Scottish Sabbatarianism and the movement against it.”

¹⁶³ *Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago 1885*, (Dunedin: Wilkie, 1885), 59, cited in Clarke, “‘Tinged with Christian Sentiment,’” 111. Cf. Clarke, “A Godly Rhythm.”

¹⁶⁴ Clarke, “‘Tinged,’” 113.

Theological, doctrinal and biblical beliefs may have played a part in shaping the views of some people but it appears there was also a continuing cultural base (a form of authority?) on which decisions regarding Sabbath practice were made.¹⁶⁵ My own experiences of New Zealand Sundays as a child in the 1960s seemed to mirror those of some parts of society in England and colonial New Zealand. I suspect my parents never thought deeply as to why we were not allowed to play outside with friends after church on Sunday. It is difficult to say what combination of social expectations, culture, class, and just possibly religious belief influenced their decisions.¹⁶⁶ As participants in an Anglican church, like our Protestant neighbours, we did not play with others on Sunday. Playing with other children when we visited friends and relations however, was permitted. The limited contact I had with Catholic families suggested the “no play on Sundays” rule was also in force for their children.

I note the continuing variety in New Zealand with regard to “keeping the Sabbath,” reflected to some extent in the Sunday trading correspondence. Most correspondents who appear to have held to Seventh Day Adventist’ doctrines were firm in declaring that Saturday was the day on which Christians should worship and on that basis some considered Sunday trading a good idea.¹⁶⁷ For other correspondents the Sabbath had clearly been transferred to the Lord’s Day. Some correspondents reflected a predominantly humanitarian concern, perhaps motivated by biblical insight, in seeking to retain the aspects of rest and what they perceived as associated family and community advantages in sharing a day of rest in common. Freedom to worship, especially if legislation “forced” people to work on Sunday and a belief that in some way the introduction of Sunday trading would negatively impact the nations’ morality, were also concerns. It is possible that generational differences contributed towards the varied attitudes held regarding Sunday and the activities

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 108, where the seven day week is referred to as a “cultural construct.”

¹⁶⁶ Harline, *Sunday: A History*, 231, describes a “working-class” Sunday. “On the way back home, (from morning church) the children usually dawdled, because once home they were not allowed to play outside.” Not all members of the family attended church!

¹⁶⁷ *The Greymouth Evening Star*, 11-14 December 1989; *Otago Daily Times*, 14 March 1989.

that were considered acceptable on the day.¹⁶⁸ The changes in New Zealand society from 1960-90, some of which were noted in chapter one presented a very different world to the younger generations of the 1980s than that which their parents had faced at a similar age. Church attendance was no longer necessary to conform to the expectations of society. The influence of the church continued to decline in wider New Zealand society. While it appears many within the church, and perhaps some outside the church, remained in “Christendom” the world was moving on.

Conclusions

I acknowledge the strongly held beliefs of many Christians regarding a preference for worship on a particular day, their reasons for setting one day in seven aside, and how the day should best be spent. However, given the diverse interpretations of the fourth commandment and resulting activities on the Sabbath/Lord’s Day, I note there is no consensus amongst Christians as to how the authority they claim for their actions is understood. Neither is there agreement as to which authority should determine Sunday practice. The Sabbath-Sunday questions are answered by some claiming the authority of scripture, while others, including some of the Reformers, have acknowledged the role of the State in determining (and at times enforcing) how the Sabbath/Lord’s day is spent.¹⁶⁹

Four key questions were posed in considering some of the issues relating to the Sabbath-Sunday. These in turn led us to other questions relating to the perpetual nature of the fourth and other commandments. Was the fourth commandment for all people, or just Israel? Is it a creation ordinance and thus pre-dates its reception by Moses at Mount Sinai? What authority does the fourth commandment hold in regard to any decisions made about Sunday trading? Some correspondents appeared

¹⁶⁸ This remains an impression. I have no direct evidence. However I also consider that by the end of the twentieth century the generations (“Silent,” “Boomer,” “Gen X” and “the Millennials”) held some values in common that had previously distinguished them from one another. An example would be the increasing number of elderly (silent generation) whom I prepared for marriage who had “lived together.” Even in the 1970s and 1980s this appeared to be a “Boomer” practice frowned upon by their parents in the “Silent” generation.

¹⁶⁹ Other authorities are considered in the following chapters.

to hold an *a priori* view of scripture, taking this commandment especially, at face value. The letters gave little indication of the some of the more complex issues arising from a study of the fourth commandment and its possible application to shop trading law in New Zealand in 1989.

Scholarship offers a number of theories in seeking the origins of the Sabbath. If the Sabbath's origins and the origin of the seven day week were extra-biblical could the fourth commandment, even as a creation ordinance, be used with the same authority some ascribe to it in the Sunday trading debate? With regard to the STHAR Bill, however sincerely some of the correspondents held to the belief of biblical authority and possibly the inerrancy of scripture, their arguments and belief were insufficient to convince parliamentarians to stop the Bill from proceeding.

Rordorf considers Jesus annulled the Sabbath commandment,¹⁷⁰ a view not accepted by all scholars. The relationship between the Old and New Testaments, the healing miracles and other Sabbath actions of Jesus, and how best to understand Jesus' "fulfilment" of the Law were important considerations in seeking an answer to the question of authority regarding Sabbath practice in general and shops opening on the Lord's Day/Sunday in particular. In claiming "biblical authority" and seeking a particular kind of Sunday there was a danger some of the correspondents were reverting to a form of legalism more closely associated with the Pharisees Jesus was seen to engage with. (Matthew 23:1-36).

How the Sabbath rest was to be understood and practiced not only changed throughout history but different interpretations also led to significant tension in some periods. The Laudian and Puritan battles are one example. Was God's rest at creation to be understood as ordering a literal rest for humans? What types of work, recreation and amusement were permissible on the Sabbath, under what circumstances and by what authority was this to be determined? Could the Jewish

¹⁷⁰Rordorf, *Sunday*, 70.

Sabbath (and accompanying regulations?) be transferred to the Lord's Day: if so, by what authority?

In considering the place of the fourth commandment in the Sunday trading debate I recognise a need for rest, recreation and the opportunity to worship on one day a week, preferably a day in common. It is not certain however as to whether that day should be Sunday (or Saturday) especially if the argument is being made primarily from scripture. Jewish and Christian exegetes have arrived at different understandings of the Sabbath-Sunday questions. Thus the freedom to participate in Sunday observance and the practice of Sunday have varied in strictness at different times in history. The principles of the Sabbath have a perpetual nature but a literal application of Sabbath law might prove to work against some of the things it was meant to achieve. I agree with Brunner that a Pharisaical and Puritanical idea of the day of rest is not in keeping with the commandment.¹⁷¹ The true Sabbath that has come with Christ is not a literal physical rest but consists of the salvation that God has provided. "In short the physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath has become the salvation of the true Sabbath. Believers in Christ can now live in God's Sabbath that has already dawned ... the Sabbath keeping now demanded is the cessation from reliance on one's own works (Heb. 4:9, 10)."¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1937), 389.

¹⁷² A. T. Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest and Eschatology," 215.

Chapter 3

An analysis of the letters to the editor in newspapers, denominational and (some) other magazines, the “Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee (1988)” and parliamentary submissions: the Christendom type

This chapter considers the various Christian understandings of Church-State relationships found in the letters and submissions of correspondents in what I have called the Christendom type. This type is primarily characterised by correspondents who considered the Christian worldview, at least as they understood it, should influence if not determine the nation’s laws. Thus while some in our type would certainly not have held the view that living under Christendom made one a Christian they wrote from a Christendom perspective that expected Christian values to determine or at the least significantly influence New Zealand law. Their belief appeared to be that the common good would be best served if the nation obeyed God’s law. (Whether they also considered this would require a theocratic government is another question). In presenting their views the fourth commandment and other biblical texts were often used in support and sometimes to “prove” the claims they made. Some correspondents engaged in apologetics. Others, but certainly not all those in this type were clear that to be a Christian required a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The second type, Family Community Economic Concerns (FCEC),¹ that I use in helping determine how grassroots Christians understood the Church-State relationship, is considered in the next chapter. As with the Christendom type this will be through an analysis of the correspondence and submissions made regarding the introduction of Sunday trading. Within these types, the question that we are asking is not so much is/was New Zealand a Christian nation,² but how was it *perceived* by Christians protesting against the STHAR Bill? Perception, like beauty, may be in the eye of the beholder,

¹ A small third type could be identified: those in favour of Sunday trading. Apart from the “Sabbath Controversy” letters in *The Greymouth Evening Star* there were only four other letters that could be readily identified as being Christian that were in favour of Sunday trading and three of these were also about the Sabbath Controversy.

² Rex J. Ahdar, “A Christian State?” 453-482.

but I will attempt to draw some conclusions, however tentative, from the correspondence reviewed.³

Christendom: and the Christendom type

The beginnings of Christendom, as opposed to Christianity, can be linked to Constantine and the proclamation of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.⁴ It is perhaps easier to identify characteristics of Christendom than expect any one definition to cover the various ways in which “Christendom” might be defined throughout its history.⁵ Kreider writes, “In the time of Charlemagne, things were of course very different from the way they were in the times of Calvin or the young Karol Koytila (sic): there have been many varieties of Christendom.”⁶ Murray makes a similar observation in *Post Christendom*, “Historically circumstances produced several versions of Christendom in different eras and regions.”⁷ Kreider notes there are different possibilities as to when Christendom might be considered to have begun. “[T]he West is a civilization that has been called Christian. From the seventh century to our own time, this civilization has been called Christendom.”⁸

³ I acknowledge that in some instances assigning a letter or submission to one particular type is a subjective judgement. Some of the arguments opposing Sunday trading appear in both Christendom and FCEC correspondence.

⁴ Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 25, “The Edict of Milan in 313 represented a joint declaration by Licinius and Constantine guaranteeing Christians freedom from persecution throughout the Empire.” but cf. 25, n.2, 25, 37, and 40 when Christendom is (finally?) established in the reign of Theodosius I.

⁵ Alan Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 86, and 91-8 where Kreider uses the following headings in considering characteristics of Christendom. 1. A Common Belief: Orthodox Christianity. Heresy is not tolerated; unofficial alternatives live on; religious instruction is often rudimentary; the society’s symbols, art, and ritual are Christian. 2. A Common Belonging: Recruitment - the Christening of all infants; the church and its constituent parishes are large; Church/State symbiosis; lack of choice; Church and world; clericalism; localism; mission. 3. A Common Behaviour: Behaving ‘like a Christian;’ enforcement of behavioural norms; exceptionally committed Christians. He concludes, coercion “underlies all three characteristics of Christendom.” Cf. Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 19, who considers Christendom (and its demise) involves “both institutional and philosophical changes.” Note also Murray’s list in *Post-Christendom*, 20, outlining the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom. This could also be seen as containing some characteristics of Christendom e.g. “in Christendom the Christian story and churches were central,” Christians enjoyed privileges, “Christian churches could exert control over society.”

⁶ Kreider, *The Change of Conversion*, 91.

⁷ Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 23. Note also Murray quotes Kreider, *The Change of Conversion*, 24, “there has been little attempt to define Christendom as a term or discuss it systematically as a phenomenon.”

⁸ Kreider, *The Change of Conversion*, xiii.

While this is true he later writes, “Whatever the motivation of the converts, it is clear that by the second half of the fourth century we have entered a new era of church history ... Christendom - a Christian civilization with common understandings of belief, belonging, and behaviour, and with widely shared forms of religious experience - was dawning.”⁹ The term Christendom is applied by Kreider to a particular historic period and to a point in time considered to be its “beginning.” These considerations as to Christendom’s “beginning” remain only one factor in attempting a definition. Should the term “Christendom” only be applied to the Christian West, and/or Western churches?¹⁰ Is the same understanding of Christendom encompassing the beliefs, belonging, and behaviour of people, to use Kreider’s categories, held by all or even a majority of the people who are counted as being within Christendom at a particular time in history?¹¹ (Does being within or under Christendom mean you are a Christian?) Has the concept of Christendom remained the same since its beginning? Do those outside Christendom define and understand it in the same way as those who belong in Christendom?¹²

There also appears to be more than one understanding of what Christendom is in the correspondents’ letters and submissions. A. Bruce’s letter to the *Auckland Star*¹³ complains of the failure of “those who call themselves true Christians” to attend “Divine Service on the Sabbath.” These non-attenders are portrayed as having what

⁹ Ibid., 42. Cf. Murray *Post-Christendom*, 23, “Although the term ‘Christendom’ was coined in ninth-Century England, the story begins in fourth-century Rome.”

¹⁰ Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 14, writes, “*Post-Christendom is not the experience of all Christians*. It is the experience of Christians in Western Europe and other societies with roots in this culture.” (Italics original.) Cf. Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 15-9.

¹¹ For more on belonging, believing, behaving, Stuart Murray, *Church After Christendom*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), 9-38.

Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 17, writes about the “deeply entrenched form of Christendom” in North America, despite the separation of Church and State there.

¹² In seeking a definition for Christendom the cultural, geo-political, ecclesial, and theological differences (among others) existing during various historic periods, including the role of baptism and the catechumenate in Christian initiation/Christendom should be considered.

The Catholic Encyclopedia, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03699b.htm>> (10 August 2010), adds, “In its wider sense this term (Christendom) is used to describe the part of the world which is inhabited by Christians, as Germany in the Middle Ages was the country inhabited by Germans...But there is a narrower sense in which Christendom stands for a polity as well as a religion, for a nation as well as for a people. Christendom in this sense was an ideal which inspired and dignified many centuries of history and which has not yet altogether lost its power over the minds of men.”

¹³ A. Bruce, “Keeping the Sabbath,” *Auckland Star*, 27 December 1989, A.6.

might be considered part of a Christendom view in which a male¹⁴ minister or leader along with his wife and family, “appear in public reasonably well dressed ... drive a fairly modern car and keep it in good condition, and also keep their home and grounds in good order.” The minister is expected to perform public rites of passage and provide pastoral visits. Bruce’s “true Christians” attend church irregularly keeping carefully in the background and providing little in the way of “(financial) contributions to the upkeep of their faith.”¹⁵ While not using the word, Bruce gives an impression of Christendom as he found it. For Bruce there is a difference between keeping up appearances, cultural expectations and practice that might fit more readily into some views of Christendom than they do into Christianity. Then there are the people who consider themselves “true Christians” but are irregular in their church attendance, expect a male, ordained or lay, to lead the church and carry out specific pastoral and public duties, and conform to particular social expectation in dress and living standards. From Bruce’s letter we can gain an insight into how some “true Christians” perhaps fail to recognise a difference between Christian and Christendom worldviews.¹⁶ We are a Christian country because we are Christians: we are Christians because we go to church ... sometimes. For Bruce church attendance was obviously an important part of practicing one’s faith, along with financial support for the church and active participation in church activities extending beyond attending worship and including support for the minister/church leader.

¹⁴ There were letters to the editor in various newspapers, especially the *Otago Daily Times*, referring to the ordination of Penny Jamieson as Bishop of Dunedin. The first female bishop in the worldwide Anglican Church was not readily accepted within all “Christendom.” Cf. Satorius, “Anglican Bishop,” *Otago Daily Times*, 29 November 1989, 8. Bert Power, “Anglican Bishop,” *Otago Daily Times*, 29 November 1989, 8. C. J. Rodley’s reply to Bp. Cullinane, “Anglican Bishop,” *Otago Daily Times*, 7 December 1989, 8; Confirmed Anglican, “Anglican Bishop,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 December 1989, 8; Seeker, “Anglican Bishop,” *Otago Daily Times*, 29 December 1989, 8.

¹⁵ A. Bruce “Keeping the Sabbath.” Contra Bruce’s support for clergy they are seen as contributors to the “passing of the Lord’s Day,” by D. Elliot-Hogg, “Clergy to blame,” *New Zealand Herald*, 15 March 1988, 8. Jane McSweeney, “Survey reveals most churchgoers intolerant of those less fortunate,” *Sunday Times*, 31 December 1989, 2, writes, “Dr Webster said the trend to secularism was supported by the clergy, who were translating religious principles into social programmes. But they were up against a conservative, materialistic laity.”

¹⁶ Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 32, writes, “Christendom also distorted conversion by assuming everyone born into a ‘Christian’ society was automatically Christian.” Cf. Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 8-9.

However Bruce's perception of Christians and Christendom was not the only one held within our Christendom type, or within the wider pluralistic society in New Zealand. In New Zealand Christianity was in decline at least numerically, and had been for some time especially in the mainline denominations.¹⁷ Values associated with traditional Christianity were no longer accepted as the norm: Christendom worldviews were also being moved towards the margins of society. Reporting on a survey by Webster and Perry¹⁸ Jane McSweeney wrote, "the numbers of people claiming to be religious are falling more dramatically in New Zealand than in most western countries. Only about 12 per cent of New Zealanders regard themselves as religious. One-third believe in a personal God but only a half of these are personally religious."¹⁹ Further note the possible difference in the beliefs that might be expected of Christians towards the less well off, the perception Christians had of themselves, and the findings of the Webster Perry survey reported by McSweeney. "[R]eligious people have little interest in 'loving thy neighbour.' Their main interest, apart from acquiring material goods, is a cocoon-like belief in religion itself."²⁰ Eighty percent of the churchgoers in the survey "valued prosperity as the key to a good life."²¹ I suggest that the influence of our culture, especially in regard to materialism and a conservative morality,²² may have shaped the Christendom type, and indeed other Christians in New Zealand, more than the Bible, despite any claims some might make to being "biblically based"²³ in their worldview.

¹⁷ Peter Lineham, "The Condition of the Church," in *New Vision New Zealand: calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole nation*, ed. Bruce Patrick, (Auckland, N.Z.: Vision New Zealand, 1993), 98-9.

¹⁸ Alan C. Webster and Paul E. Perry, *Values and Beliefs in New Zealand* (Palmerston North: Alpha Publications, 1992). Webster and Perry concluded, xv, "Religious beliefs had little effect on broader social values and attitudes. In other words, religion is a conservative memory of our history and culture and religious life is a personal interest."

¹⁹ Jane McSweeney, "Survey reveals most churchgoers," 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, In regard to the wider New Zealand population cf. Ahdar, "Reflections on the Path," 620. "The prevailing religion is a simple materialism. The pursuit of wealth and possessions fills more minds than thoughts of salvation."

²¹ McSweeney, "Survey reveals most churchgoers," 2.

²² *Ibid.* "Churches are dominated by moralists with more sympathy for money and business than for people who have social problems," McSweeney continued, "it believed the predominant anti-nuclear view held by most churchgoers was more of a cultural ideal coupled with political expediency."

²³ Brian Malley, *How the Bible Works An Anthropological Study of Evangelical Biblicism* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2004), especially chapter 3.

George Elder, "Use of Sunday," *Crosslink*, 4 May 1990, recognises a lack of respect by those Christians who were in favour of Sunday trading for the biblical interpretations of "earlier generations" who valued the fourth commandment. Those who prefer convenience over "basic moral

From the Christendom type there were thirty-two letters or submissions²⁴ that are particularly noted for their use of Bible verses and apologetic arguments in opposing Sunday trading. Stout defends the Christian faith (and Tom Quayle) in his response to Bob Jones' article on Sunday trading. Contrary to Jones' opinion of Quayle as "a guiding light," Stout writes, "Mr Quayle points to the Bible and not to himself. There was only one perfect person to the Christian and he was crucified for his principles and love."²⁵ Stout includes Jesus' death and resurrection, and the need for a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ," in his apologetic arguments. Stout quotes scripture, Philippians 2:5-8; Acts 16:31,²⁶ lines from a hymn and from "The Servant Song" in building his case for Christianity. He also seems to allude to Matthew 7:24-27 when he writes, "Every building if it is going to stand must have a foundation and it is my firm conviction that Christianity is the ideal."²⁷ In his letter Stout presents an understanding of Christians as people in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the church as a (place/people?) of praise and as servants to others, seeking to live with the same attitude found in Christ, all of which seems rather at odds with the survey results of Webster and Perry. (Does Stout consider the possibility that "humbled himself and became obedient to death?" may require a literal response in some societies?) Nevertheless, for Stout, Christianity is positive, relevant and "about life in this day and age." He finds authority for his views and the basis of his arguments in scripture.

guidelines" may have "very badly miscalculated the whole and final cost." (As well as showing a less able understanding of scripture).

²⁴ Francis Foulkes, "Set aside one day in seven," *Challenge Weekly*, 24 June 1988, 7, is not included in this total. Cf. Appendix 1. As noted previously letters and submissions did not always fit exclusively into one type. The submission from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints is included. I recognise they are not accepted as a Christian denomination by many in the wider Church.

²⁵ Doug Stout, "Sunday trading," *Southland Times*, 25 January 1990, 6.

²⁶ Assuming the verse intended is Acts 16:31, Stout slightly misquotes the reference, "Trust in the Lord...," instead of, "Believe on the Lord..." Again the context of the verse is ignored, and the last phrase omitted.

²⁷ Ibid.

For some, Christendom still appeared to mean “all the world is Christian,”²⁸ or at least all the Western world. Others such as Stout held that only through salvation in Jesus Christ (perhaps with certain doctrinal variations) could one be called a Christian. Our Christendom type then includes both those who hold to a traditional-evangelical view of salvation and others who perhaps considered that living in a Christian country (with or without attending church) qualified one as a Christian. They have in common arguments that appear to be based on an understanding that Sunday trading is contrary to a Christian/Christendom worldview. Their worldview includes their perceptions and cultural determinants as well as any direct biblical influences. It is possible that while correspondents in the Christendom type believe their opposition to Sunday trading was based on Christian or biblical principles they may not have been aware of the other factors contributing to their worldview. The Christendom type then, includes correspondents who exhibit different theological and doctrinal understandings but share in common some of the characteristics of Christendom (note 5 above.) They also have in common their opposition to Sunday trading, at least in part arising from their (differing) worldviews. As noted above a single definition may not do justice to the differences that have existed and continue within Christendom.

I agree with Kreider that “the term Christendom is evidently not identical to Christianity;”²⁹ and even if at times the perception of some was such that those living in a “Christian society” (Christendom?) were considered Christians, this only highlights the misconceptions arising from the association of Christendom with Christianity. These misconceptions see our Christendom type including correspondents who, while opposing the introduction of Sunday trading will have differing views on why Christians should oppose the legislation, different interpretations and applications of the Bible, and even the degree of authority that should be accorded Church and State. Nevertheless, all the letters included in the Christendom type contain something of a Christendom worldview. Kreider notes

²⁸ John Galsworthy, *The Island Pharisees*, <http://www.pdfbooks.co.za/library/JOHN_GALSWORTHY/JOHN_GALSWORTHY-THE_ISLAND_PHARISEES.pdf> (14 August 2010), 10.

²⁹ Kreider, *The Change of Conversion*, 86.

there are “common traits, assumptions, and values that, over a period of more than a millennium, keep recurring. These are sufficiently similar to justify a shared category called ‘Christendom’ - a culture seeking to subject all areas of human experience to the Lordship of Christ. Its institutions and mindsets are still with us in the West.”³⁰

Christendom Correspondence: biblical authority and a “Christian nation”

The 1960s is the decade in which the “demise of Christendom” is considered to have occurred throughout the Western world³¹ and in particular in New Zealand. While the church is perceived to have been increasingly marginalised in a steady shift to a secular and now post-modern worldview in New Zealand I will contend that at its grassroots the body of the church has taken much longer to accept the death of Christendom, if indeed some who attend church in New Zealand ever have.³² An observation supported by Murray,

“The end of Christendom and transition into post-Christendom in Western culture is a paradigm shift. Many Christians are resisting this shift in employing familiar tactics of defending the old paradigm, denying its demise, dithering on the cusp of a new era or delaying their commitment to this new reality.”³³

In the letters and submissions a Christendom worldview could be found in the belief that the Sabbath (Sunday more often than Saturday) was the Lord’s Day and therefore had been sanctified.³⁴ It should remain a day for rest, recreation and

³⁰ Ibid., 91.

³¹ Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001).

³² Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 16ff quotes B. Carrell, B. Patrick, L. Gerring in support of “the demise of Christendom.” In my experience Christendom is still very much alive at the grassroots level of Church. In the Mainline (Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic) churches, my observation is that there still appears to be an expectation that people will just “walk in.” Numerical growth tends to be biological or by transfer if it occurs at all. There are of course some exceptions to this.

³³ Murray, *Church After Christendom*, 7. In New Zealand the question of just how much influence the church had historically is addressed in Ahdar, “Reflections on the Path,” *Worlds Colliding*, “A Christian State?” and Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse, eds. *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience* (Dunedin New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2000). The extent of the churches’ influence and authority historically and now regarding the state is a debatable point. Perceptions regarding this authority will vary.

³⁴ Some correspondents attempt to avoid the “Sabbath Controversy” and focus their argument on the need for one day’s rest. “We realise that there can be debate whether Saturday or Sunday is the ‘Sabbath’, but the key point is that it is a clear command of scripture that one day in seven should be

worship, whether this was legislated or not. Melgren considered it would be hypocritical to vote for Sunday trading “and then sing ‘God defend New Zealand,’ when God ordained a day of rest and worship.”³⁵ It appears that for some correspondents, in a Christian nation Sunday would be a time for physical, emotional and spiritual rest. If tourists chose to come it would be “up to them to respect our laws and customs,”³⁶ (which in a Christian nation would presumably be “Christian”). God, especially as interpreted through scripture, would be the point of reference from which our values and law evolved, rather than “Mammon.” That is, the law should be based on Christian’ principles and be in accord with God’s law whether or not Christians are in the majority in New Zealand. David Coyle writes, “a stronger voice than Tom Quayle’s has advised us humans to rest and meditate on the day. ‘Keep it holy’ are the exact words used in the Bible.”³⁷ Houghton adds that to honour and bless the Lord “is of far greater and lasting value, than the extra dollars which are likely to change hands as a result of Sunday trading.”³⁸ However apart from worshipping God and spending time with our families, there is little else mentioned about how we are to rest and fill our time on Sunday. Does this reflect a (Protestant) determination not to proscribe what happens on the “Sabbath” in the way the

kept as a day of rest.” Church of Christ, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 9 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Some of the issues regarding the authority ascribed to the fourth commandment and Sunday trading are discussed in chapter 2 above.

³⁵ B. Melgren, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/138 Wellington.

³⁶ C. A. Kennedy, “Sunday trading,” *Bay of Plenty Times*, 19 December 1989, 4.

³⁷ Coyle, “The seventh day,” *The Dominion*, 30 January 1990, 10. Coyle was responding to Bob Jones’ Punchline article. He seems to attach significant authority to “the exact words” of the Bible. Whether or not they are considered Christian the Mormon Church also taught the “sanctity of the Sabbath.” Regardless of which day, “the Sabbath is not just a ‘holiday’, but a ‘holy day’, set apart by God. Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 14 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. The Latter Day Saints keep the Sabbath, “not just because of what has occurred in the past but because the Lord in this day has so commanded by direct revelation.” It appears Mormon authority relating to Sabbath observance is based on the Bible and more recent “direct revelation.” Cf. Jenny Evans, “What do Mormons Do On Sunday,” suite 101.com <http://mormonism.suite101.com/article.cfm/what_do_mormons_do_on_sunday> (5 July 2010). This site also contains a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities for Mormons on the Sabbath.

³⁸ Mrs. Shirley Houghton and others, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 9 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Cf. D. M. Chisholm, “Sunday Trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 12 December 1989, 8. P. Stuart “Sunday Trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 30 May 1990, 8.

Pharisees did?³⁹ Is it assumed the population in general “know” what is acceptable behaviour on the Sabbath? Is Sunday trading part of a wider change in New Zealand society suggesting a variety of attitudes and values are now held within the population and, if they ever were, those of our Christian forbears are no longer dominant?⁴⁰

Correspondents in the Christendom type also suggested the following about what a Christian nation might be. It would be one in which “basic human values” were evident and there was no contradiction between what the government said and what it did. Legislation would not be passed attacking the traditional Sunday, “one of the most valuable of our New Zealand institutions.”⁴¹ It would be a place where Christian leaders would be expected to teach “the basic elements of Christianity.” The current “secular and materialistic climate” was seen to be actively encouraging people to believe God did not matter as evidenced by Sunday sport and trading. Presumably in a Christian nation sport and trading on Sunday would be prohibited along with other activities that might detract from the writer’s traditional-biblical understanding of Sunday. Haverland considers both Sunday trading and organised sport on Sunday “go against God’s commands regarding this day.”⁴² He recognises that not everyone accepts this biblical reason for keeping Sunday as a special day but continues his submission with a reminder that “our society has been built on a Judeo-Christian value system”⁴³ and Sunday has historically been kept free from trading in Western countries. “Historical precedent and benefit are on the side of retaining the special character of this day.”⁴⁴ He reinforces his historical argument

³⁹ Matthew 5:20, 12:1-3; Luke 6:6-8, 14:1-3; John 9:15-17. There were thirty-nine areas of work forbidden on the Sabbath, Lutz Doering, “Sabbath Laws in the New Testament Gospels,” in Reimund Bieringer, Florentino García Martínez, Didier Pollefeyt & Peter J. Tomson, eds. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 213.

⁴⁰ For an insight into keeping the Sabbath in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, Alison Clarke “Tinged with Christian Sentiment”: Popular Religion and the Otago Colonists, 1850-1900,” in *Christianity, Modernity and Culture: new perspectives on New Zealand history*, ed. John Stenhouse assisted by G.A. Wood (Adelaide, S. Aust.: ATF Press, Australian Theological Forum, 2005), 108-113.

⁴¹ D. Elliot-Hogg., Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 2 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/111 Wellington.

⁴² Rev. J. Haverland, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 9 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

with examples of unsuccessful attempts to alter the one day in seven cycle of rest. Further arguments include the expected adverse effects Sunday trading would have on family and social life. Thus, while his primary authority is scripture, the authority of “historic precedent and benefit” is also recognised. His conclusion does not suggest that all changes should be subject to the authority of historic practice or precedent but those that are not regarded as “being helpful or beneficial to the nation.”⁴⁵ Thus in acknowledging the common good Haverland may also attach some authority to it.

In a Christian nation Christianity would be centred on Christ, not Creation Spirituality with its New Age influences or other “do it yourself philosophies” which would be seen as deceptions. Christians would not be discriminated against as could happen with the proposed shop trading legislation.⁴⁶ The impression given in some of the letters is that the writers’ desire Christianity to be the predominant, or perhaps the only religion practiced, and the nation’s laws to reflect a particular traditional/conservative and twentieth-century understanding of biblical law.

A few letters harked back to a golden age, to “halcyon days” when we were a “Christian” nation. A time of “small suburban shopping areas... friendly personal service, home deliveries,” treats for the children and reasonably priced goods.⁴⁷ There was low unemployment, and chores were completed in five days with the help of “labour saving devices.”⁴⁸ This was a time when the whole weekend was “just a blessing.”⁴⁹ The vision of the Christian nation being alluded to might be the writers’ memories, or at least the lingering impressions of these memories, from the 1950s or 1960s. Brooke’s letter is an example of this “golden age lost” tone. Sunday’s unique character is no longer protected from the pressures of monetarism and with the advent of Sunday trading civilised values have been dismissed as “tired old

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ G. R. Shaw, “Erosion of faith,” *Waikato Times*, 13 January 1990, 8.

⁴⁷ D. G. Tucker, “Shop soiled,” *Auckland Star*, 9 January 1990, A.6.

⁴⁸ H. G. B. Erickstad, “Mammon at work,” *Christchurch Star*, 12 December 1989, A.8. H. G. B. Erickstad, “Mammon’s Inducement,” *Auckland Star*, 26 December 1989, A.8. D. G. Tucker (above) allows 5 ½ days for the completion of chores!

⁴⁹ C. de Boer, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 2 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/103 Wellington.

arguments.” There is little understanding now for human needs both physical and spiritual. All this is a price paid by any society “which has no relief from advertising and trading - even on Sundays.”⁵⁰ Can this sense of loss be seen as one side of a coin, the reverse being a belief that Christianity should, in the advance and eventual rule of God’s Kingdom, include political authority? After all there is no authority except from God...

J. P de Klerk in response to an editorial in the *Manawatu Standard*⁵¹ writes, “We must be and remain a Christian nation. We must show that and set good examples. That is for the greater good of the community.”⁵² The editor had argued that “common sense will eventually prevail” in determining Sunday trading law. Retailers should be able to trade “in certain places” if it is to their advantage. However “outside the major tourist trails” any advantage is likely to be minor and “would have to be balanced against the greater good of the community.”⁵³ de Klerk adds his Christian perspective to the editor’s understanding of “the greater good,” perhaps influenced by Matthew 5:16. “We” (Christians or all New Zealanders?) must live in a way that shows we are a Christian nation through setting “good examples.” Is the reasoning here, the greatest good of the community would be to see the way Christians live and adopt their lifestyle so that we are and remain a Christian nation?

The letter offers no indication as to whether de Klerk considered a Christian lifestyle went beyond the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour or included changes in our economic behaviour. He does not state in what sense he sees New Zealand as a Christian nation. Is it when the majority/all the people are Christian, does the government need to be Christian, (consisting of Christians and/or passing “Christian” law), is it enough for a minority of the people to be Christian but continue to influence the direction of the government in ways the minority considered Christian? Is a nation Christian if its laws are based on Judeo-Christian foundations? de Klerk and others in our Christendom type do not clearly define what a “Christian nation”

⁵⁰ A. J. Brooke, “Sunday trading,” *Nelson Evening Mail*, 28 December 1989, 4.

⁵¹ “Sunday row needs sense,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 21 November 1989, 2.

⁵² J. P de Klerk, “Christian example,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 6 December 1989, 2.

⁵³ “Sunday row needs sense,” 2.

is, although P. R. Clayton is clear about the government, “it is indeed pagan and insensitive.”⁵⁴ These correspondents appear to expect that readers will know what they mean, or perhaps that (most) readers will understand “Christian nation” in the same way they do. While not being explicit, there are nevertheless some indications in the letters that can be used to help determine something of what is meant when the writers use the phrase “Christian nation.”

Peter Best considers that as long as the Ten Commandments are “the basis of our legal system, Sunday trading can never be right.” He argues that historically governments of Christian nations have “been careful to ensure” that the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, has “been suitably recognised by its citizens. I believe it is your duty as parliamentarians to make sure that the Sabbath principle remains. The State has a duty to uphold true religion - not to demolish it.”⁵⁵ Acceptance of the fourth commandment, which Best quotes in full, seems to underpin this belief about the State’s duty. The Bible is his authority, therefore any disregard for the commands it contains would be a rejection of God, and not the action of the government of a Christian nation. For Best a Christian nation has the Ten Commandments as “the basis” of its legal system. He considers it is the government’s responsibility to uphold this position, regardless of the “personal views” politicians may have. Clearly God’s law, including the Ten Commandments, over-ride non-Christian legislation and according to his understanding of scripture governments are subject to God’s authority.

Jebson presents a similar argument. “When a government enacts legislation which is contrary to this law (the fourth commandment) it is implying that Christianity is no longer relevant, for New Zealand.”⁵⁶ The health of a nation relates to the moral code

⁵⁴ P. R. Clayton, “Sunday trade,” *New Zealand Herald*, 26 December 1989, 8. Clayton also writes, “next, no doubt, trading on Anzac Day, and Christmas and Easter. Why not?” Few others included this as a “flow on” from Sunday trading, but it remains an issue. Katarina Filipe, “Mixed support for Easter Bill,” *Timaru Herald*, 7 August 2010, 3.

⁵⁵ Peter Best, Oral Submission to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, (no date), Parliamentary Library L/90/3 Wellington.

⁵⁶ R. S. Jebson, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee, Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, (no date), Parliamentary Library L/90/45 Wellington.

of its citizens.⁵⁷ He argues the introduction of Sunday trading, broke God's law, "Thou shalt not work on Sundays (sic),"⁵⁸ and Sunday trading is saying to the population that moral codes are no longer necessary and self-interest is now the guiding principle. Jebson believes the government should acknowledge the authority of Christianity unless a better "moral code" can be found.

H. M. Craig however, considers it is through worship that the nation's morals "are maintained, not by any outward compulsion but by inner discipline...Without inner morals a nation quickly decays." He agrees with the previous writers that Christian ethics are essential to the well-being of a nation, but does not think this is achieved through legislation. For Craig, ignoring the proper place of Christian worship leads to "The ever increasing need for a larger police force."⁵⁹ The Christendom type is not united in the role the government should play in legislating for the "common good." Bad legislation, as Sunday trading was perceived to be, may have a negative impact on society and be contrary to God's law. Unlike other correspondents in this type Craig argues that morality is an "inner discipline" achieved through worship, not the enactment of legislation recognising the authority of the Bible.

In summary, the letters of de Klerk, Best and Jebson can be seen as representative of a number of Christendom correspondents with regard to scripture, authority, and the State. They make the following points about a Christian nation. Christians should live in a way that promotes the greater good, with an expectation that others might be drawn to emulate this "Christian" lifestyle and good works. The Ten Commandments should be the basis of a Christian nation's legal system and the government should protect "the sabbath principles" and uphold "true religion." (We are not told what is required to achieve this.) The Bible would be the final authority, (but what of the different interpretations and particularly the question of whether the Ten Commandments are for all people for all time?) Christian ethics would be essential "to the wellbeing of the nation," but according to Craig these should be

⁵⁷ H. M. Craig, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 21 January 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/55, Wellington.

⁵⁸ Jebson, L/90/45.

⁵⁹ Craig, L/90/55.

maintained through “inner discipline” not outward compulsion. (Is Craig therefore opposed to legislation that would force Christian law on the wider population, contra to the apparent views of other writers who consider such legislation necessary for the wellbeing of the nation?)

Continuing the analysis of letters and submissions, “R. N.” writes that a loving God gave us commandments, including the fourth, for our welfare. This and the other commandments were given in perfect wisdom as a requirement, safeguard and blessing. “Our laws change like the wind, often in compliance with public opinion ... God never changes and His laws are eternal.”⁶⁰ He seems to consider that because “we call ourselves a Christian country” (and because they are God’s laws) we should obey (all?) of God’s eternal commands. The letter does not say the commandments are for all people as well as for all time, but it appears “R. N.” seems to think the commandments should be upheld by all Christians in a Christian country, or perhaps even by all people who live in a country that is assumed to be Christian.⁶¹

This raises a number of issues regarding our key question, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Some Christians, including R. N. who opposed Sunday trading, did so because they considered God’s laws were the highest authority and for all time.⁶² Is it God, or the Bible which contains God’s law, that is the source of authority? Can we learn from the correspondence how and

⁶⁰ R. N. “Sunday trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 11 December 1989, 8. Cf. Marie Shaw, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 4 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/82 Wellington. “Almighty God ... gave us His instructions as a command and not an alternative.”

⁶¹ Neither did the submissions to the Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, clearly state the fourth commandment was for all time and/or for all people. At least some of the writers may have assumed this, such as D. MacPherson, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/144 Wellington, and thus felt no need to record their belief specifically in the submissions, especially those who suggested a direct cause-effect between breaking this commandment, and our society being “cursed” by God, “courting disaster” or “suffer(ing) some consequences” if we broke His laws by introducing Sunday trading.

⁶² L. & E. Berry, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 14 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. “We strongly advocate a return to the principles of life laid down for us by the Bible ... We’d like to think that you would bow to God before conceding to man.”

why the writers considered the Bible authoritative? Did they see any differences between God's authority and the authority of scripture?⁶³

God was considered omniscient, loving, and therefore His commands are perfect and should be obeyed eternally. For "R. N." and others⁶⁴ it seemed the State should not pass legislation that contravened God's laws, such as the fourth commandment. Sunday was the Lord's Day, a day given to us for our benefit by God and set aside by God to worship and honour Him. There were submissions that either clearly stated or implied parliamentary law should be based on God's commands. With regard to Sunday trading the law should be in agreement with the fourth commandment. "God said, 'Keep the sabbath holy.' God also said, 'On the seventh day you shall rest.' (Ex 16:23, Ex 20:8-11). I challenge the authority by which you dare override the words of my God!"⁶⁵

Other verses used in support of a worldview that State legislation should be in accordance with God's law included Exodus 16:21: two days of manna being given to allow a rest on the Sabbath, therefore we should also rest on the seventh day. Exodus 16:23: God's command of a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath. Exodus 31:15 was used in the submissions to either reinforce, or in place of the fourth commandment as found in Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Proverbs 11:11 in the Living Bible refers to "the moral decay of the wicked." It appears this text was used to highlight the error and consequences of the government's proposal to introduce Sunday trading. Matthew 6:13 was used in support of the argument that advertising on television and radio on Sundays and Sunday trading are ways in which we were being led into temptation. The use of these and other verses in over seventy submissions supports the suggestion that the Bible was an important authority in

⁶³ These questions will be addressed below.

⁶⁴ B. Andrews, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 13 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington, wrote, "New Zealand is supposed to be a christian (sic) country but more and more inroads are being made on the laws set out in the Bible. Sunday is the Lord's Day, let us keep it so & not turn it into the world's day." Cf. M. J. Pascoe, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 7 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁶⁵ Peter Aolbers, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 10 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

correspondents' arguments against the STHAR Bill. These correspondents may have considered their worldview, on the basis of their use of scripture, to be biblically based. However we also need to ask how scripture was interpreted and what place culture, teaching and belief played in shaping their worldview?⁶⁶ Or even to what extent correspondents' opposition to Sunday trading came from an attitude that considered this (Christendom) was the way the world had always been and was how the world should stay.

Another quite different view was expressed by Latham in claiming, "our concern should not be with the laws that are made by a non-Christian government in a non-Christian country (a reality we need to recognise), that will never be what we want. Our concern should not be with the economic viability of businesses."⁶⁷ Latham considered that if Christians believed in the prophecies in the Bible "we would know where things are going."⁶⁸ Christians have been given "foreknowledge" of what is going to occur. Rather than opposing things that will inevitably happen we should be "giving people something no law can take away - faith and hope."⁶⁹ In this view, based on a particular understanding of biblical prophecy, Latham appears to argue that Christians should not be concerned with the actions of a secular government or present economic circumstances, rather a Christians' focus should be towards giving others the "faith and hope" (we have in Christ?)⁷⁰ The arguments Latham presents seem to suggest a predetermined view of history in which we should strive for the fulfilment of scripture so that with the arrival of the "end-times" our present suffering will cease. Latham could be accused of advocating evangelism and the hope found in Christ through salvation, while ignoring the call of the Gospel and biblical prophecies to act in ways that promote justice and action on behalf of the oppressed.

⁶⁶ Malley, *How the Bible Works*, explores this question more fully.

⁶⁷ J. Latham, "Sunday Trading," *Ashburton Guardian*, 19 December 1989, 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ For general traits of Evangelicalism that affect its political impact, including the tradition of separation of Church and State, David Martin, "The Evangelical Upsurge and its Political Implications," in, *The Desecularization of the World Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 39.

Others disagreed New Zealand was no longer a Christian nation and argued from what might be defined as an evangelical or even fundamentalist perspective of Christianity.⁷¹ “Our country is a christian (sic) nation, and no one has the right to change this, as Sunday trading would.”⁷² They considered New Zealand is, and always was a Christian country, and that is how it should remain. “We must be and remain a Christian nation ... All the ground rules for our society can be found in the Bible. Remember, the Lord made this world in six days and rested the seventh day; that is the right example for all of us.”⁷³ As Ahdar notes, “Some Christians in New Zealand think that they still live in *corpus Christianum* or Christendom. The mindset is a hard one to eradicate and is often called ‘Constantinianism’-the assumption that Christians should rule.”⁷⁴ It appears that whether correspondents perceived New Zealand to be a Christian nation or not some still preferred the Bible, and in particular the fourth commandment to be the authority on which Sunday trading legislation was determined.

The fourth commandment and/or other scripture passages that hold a similar message are quoted or used as a foundation in more than eighty letters and submissions including those by correspondents who considered New Zealand was no longer a Christian country. Harvey considered that based on the fourth commandment, “God has required us to give a seventh of our week to His service, and for a day of rest.”⁷⁵ God made us and knows us best, so to disregard God’s law will result in suffering. McNamara writes, “The laws of our land were once based on the Ten Commandments, which included the keeping of Sunday as a holy day. It is

⁷¹ More information on the understanding of scripture especially from an evangelical perspective can be found in, Malley, *How the Bible Works*. N. T. Wright, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005), especially chapter 7.

⁷² P. Lumsden, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 15 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Cf. Kaye Stammers, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no date, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington, who wrote, Sunday trading would be an “ill-reversible (sic) step backwards ... that will effect (sic) people’s liberty.”

⁷³ de Klerk, “Christian example,” 2. Cf. Shaw, L/90/82. R. W. Bent, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 4 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/136 Wellington.

⁷⁴ Rex J. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 18.

⁷⁵ M. Harvey, “Sunday trading” *The Gisborne Herald*, 14 December 1989, 2.

difficult to work out on what they are based today.”⁷⁶ Stout refers to the Massey research by Webster and Perry in recognition of his claim that we are “not a Christian country.”⁷⁷

For these correspondents there appeared to be an assumption that New Zealand had been, but was no longer a Christian nation as Sunday trading broke the fourth commandment. They may also have considered other legislation recently passed by the Government had also been contrary to the Bible.⁷⁸ “[T]he Government has officially knocked on the head the notion that we are a Christian nation by the introduction of seven days a week trading (contrary to the injunction to ‘keep holy the Sabbath day’ whether observed on Saturdays or Sundays.)”⁷⁹ Despite the view they held that New Zealand was no longer a Christian nation it appears these correspondents and others still argued against Sunday trading from what could be described as a Christendom perspective.⁸⁰

The Bible was used by correspondents as the authority for arguments they made against Sunday trading, and in some instances was considered to contain the solution for the economic and social ills they perceived were besetting New Zealand in 1988 -1989. Chisholm and Lamb suggest it is more likely New Zealand’s difficulties would be addressed if Christians followed God’s instructions to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14, than in any attempt to “boost the economy,” and thus address “the attendant social ills” by allowing shops to trade on Sundays. “When Christians practice the conditions and realise the promise as written in 2 Chronicles 7:14 our

⁷⁶ C. M. McNamara “Bob Jones column” *Southland Times*, 30 January 1990, 6.

⁷⁷ Stout, “Sunday trading,” 6. Contra to the Webster and Perry research Rev. Don Dickson, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 15 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington, wrote, “The last census clearly shows a substantial majority of New Zealanders regard themselves within the Christian tradition.” Further, he considered there had been a strengthening in Christian conviction due to immigration (particularly of Pacific Islanders and “Asians”), and the impact of the Charismatic renewal.

⁷⁸ Cf. Sybil Davies, “Politics,” *The Gisborne Herald*, 20 December 1989, 2.

⁷⁹ So What? “Sunday Trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 11 December 1989. Cf. Doug Stout, “Sunday trading,” 6.

⁸⁰ D. M. Bunn, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no date, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. L. & E. Berry, “Letter.”

country will be on the way to a safer, family orientated society and a more stable economy without reverting to any means that will justify the ends.”⁸¹

The inference is that Chisholm and Lamb both appear to consider a literal application of the text by Christians will result in New Zealand becoming a better country because this is what God promised in the verses they quote. Such an argument could be seen as the working out of simple faith: it might also conceal a “cause and effect” understanding of scripture. That is, God promised blessings or curses depending on our obedience to God’s instructions: therefore if we obey, God will deliver on the promises made, if not we receive the curses. It appears the correspondents see God acting according to a predetermined set of rules which our actions initiate rather than from love which includes justice. If we choose to act in a particular way, the cause, then God will respond according to the “rules” as set out in scripture, the effect. Scripture applied in this way continues the misunderstanding of Job’s friends and is allied more closely to legalism than it is to God’s unconditional love.⁸² While Chisholm and Lamb may not have consciously intended scripture to be understood in this way, and might even argue against such an understanding, their letters suggest a literal interpretation that leaves open the possibility of a “cause-effect” hermeneutic. Lamb concludes, “Now if it takes less than a cup of salt to make a gallon drum of water salty then the 33% Christians in New Zealand can surely take God’s word seriously and believe in his promises.”⁸³ Christians are a greater percentage of the population than a cup of salt to a gallon of water. The land will be healed if we “seek God’s forgiveness as a nation for the many commandments we have broken. The ills of New Zealand can be put right if we turn back to God and His principles.”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Chisholm, “Sunday Trading,” 8.

⁸² Cf. Matthew 5:20, 23:1-15; Romans 3:19-26; 7:4-8:4; 1 John 4:16b-19.

⁸³ Thomas Lamb, “Sunday trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 19 December 1989, 8. Lamb appears to use Matthew 5:13 for the “salt” analogy. The 33% of New Zealanders identified as Christian refers to the survey by Webster and Perry, *Values and Beliefs*.

⁸⁴ Lamb, “Sunday trading,” 8. Does Lamb intend the whole nation or just Christians to repent and pray?

Apart from the possibility that Chisholm and Lamb might be suggesting that in some way we have power through our actions to determine how God will act, given that God is bound to God's law, note the original context of this verse. By what authority have they appropriated this record of God's second appearance to Solomon, at the mid-point of his reign, to New Zealand in 1989? Are the blessings and curses in this passage for Israel and a particular time, or for all people for all time?

Peter Aolbers also considered the Bible to be the authority to which Government decisions should be subject, "I challenge the authority by which you dare over ride the words of my God." He urged the State to "accept the advice of the churches in N.Z. To go against the commands of God is folly. To remain faithful to those words will enable God to bless this country."⁸⁵ Written objections to Sunday trading were for some Christians an expression of their Christendom worldview. They may have assumed the wider population would accept the authority of the Bible and thus the "correct" relationship between Church and State. This was reinforced in some letters with quotes from scripture such as 1 Samuel 2:30,⁸⁶ Amos 8:5,⁸⁷ Proverbs 11:11⁸⁸ warning of the consequences if God's authority was ignored suggestive of the cause and effect relationship mentioned above. If we obey God we will be blessed: if we do not obey God then God cannot/will not bless us. This can be seen as a variation of the theology of Job's friends. Job must have sinned because God was punishing him: when Job repents God will bless him. Aolbers and others could have been influenced by scriptures such as Job 34:11-12, Psalm 91:7-9, Proverbs 10:16 in arguing God blesses the righteous and punishes sinners, but did this mean we could guarantee or predetermine what God's response would/should be to our actions? Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery did not provide the outcome expected.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Peter Aolbers, "Letter." Cf. C. Aolbers, "Letter," who writes that as God's own nation, "we will not be heard if we fail to obey Him by reserving one day per week to honour Him." G. Chapman, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 11 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Trading on the Lord's Day breaks God's law and we "can only expect the wrath of God."

⁸⁶ Harvey, "Sunday trading," 2.

⁸⁷ C. G. R. Chavasse, "One day a week," *New Zealand Herald*, 30 December 1989, 8. The writer implies Israel's fate will be ours if we act as Israel did and disobey God.

⁸⁸ Barbara Miles & Richard Louis Gilbert, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 14 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁸⁹ John 8:3-11.

Underlying the writing of some Christendom writers may have been a (mis)-interpretation of passages from the Old Testament, including the covenants, from which they reached conclusions that were very black and white. It is also likely that Rushdoony and the doctrines of Christian Reconstructionism influenced some of the Christendom writers, especially those from Reformed churches.⁹⁰

Use was made of other scripture passages in arguments against Sunday trading. 2 Chronicles 7:14 is one of several popular verses that were sometimes offered as a “quick-fix” to more complex situations. In other letters and submissions similar use is made of 1 Samuel 2:30 and Exodus 31:15b although just how literally this last verse is to be applied is not explained by the correspondents who quote it!⁹¹ Clearly scripture is authoritative for Chisholm, Lamb, and other Christendom correspondents: but is it the “words,” the text alone, that is authoritative or should the context also be considered when the authority of scripture is being claimed in a different time and place, and possibly for reasons that are not the same as those in its original location?⁹² Is there a sense of “shared culture”⁹³ that enables Chisholm and Lamb to identify themselves with the “my people” in the biblical text?⁹⁴

⁹⁰ R. J. Rushdoony, founder of the Chalcedon Institute came to New Zealand in 1986. Anson Shupe, “The Reconstructionist Movement on the New Christian Right,” *The Christian Century*, October 4 1989, <<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=234>> (19 May 2010), 880-2. In the US, “The Bible—particularly Mosaic Law—offers a perfect blueprint for the shape such a “reconstructed” society must take. Reconstructionists believe that an absolute God creates consistent ethical principles for all time, not just for one people.” Shupe continues, “Since Reconstructionists maintain that God’s blessings flow to a nation that honors (sic) its covenant, they foresee practical benefits to a Reconstructed America. People would enjoy longevity (a foretaste of eternal life) ... and material prosperity under their dominion. To be fair, Reconstructionist authors do not posit a guaranteed cause-and-effect relationship between obedience and prosperity, but it is easy to see in their writings an easy slide into the health-and-wealth gospel.” While the cause-effect may not be guaranteed by Reconstructionist authors it appears to have influenced sections of the Christian community, including some in the Christendom type.

⁹¹ R. M. Edwards and nine others, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 16 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. “[W]hoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death.” Cf. B. M. Mitchell and twenty-eight others, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 12 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁹² For example I have observed Jeremiah 29:11 used as a promise and to encourage individuals who were suffering in a wide variety of circumstances, but especially as a text giving assurance of God’s guidance to a person.

⁹³ Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 9. Note in his methodology Malley assumes “that texts do not have intrinsic meanings.” He then asks, “why people think they do and what processes lead to the ascription of meaning.” Similarly we might ask, but could not answer from the material available, what process leads to the ascription of authority to the text? Cf. Malley, 11-15, and in chapter 3

In comparing the letters from these two correspondents we notice that Lamb quotes the text and Chisholm uses a reference. These two methods of including scripture are found throughout the correspondence on Sunday trading. While it remains speculative, in regard to authority are those who quote the text seeking to add weight to their argument? Are the words more persuasive when printed than merely giving a reference to the same verse/s? Is there a didactic purpose: an assumption that at least some of those reading the letter don't know, and would not look up a scripture reference? Do correspondents consider that in reading the printed text people are reading "the word of God" and so might be convinced of its authority and thus the correspondent's argument?⁹⁵ Or do those who only used a reference do so because they attribute sufficient authority to it? Was the reference to God's authoritative word deemed sufficient to establish the authority of the text (and argument), and so the text need not be quoted in full? Was there an assumption that readers would know the verse: or at least look it up having recognised the Bible as its source and acknowledge the authority of the Bible? Or was the correspondent simply running out of time, space, or did not consider it necessary to write the text in full?

Other arguments used against Sunday trading by correspondents in the Christendom type included referring to or quoting other people. In doing this it is unlikely they considered the Bible to be insufficient as an authority. Stout⁹⁶ used biblical quotations and also referred to contemporary scholarship in citing the research by Webster and Perry in his support for the Save Our Sunday Campaign (SOS) and

where he writes, "evangelical interpretations are sometimes derived from the Bible and sometimes merely attributed to it."

⁹⁴ The question is beyond this thesis and the information available from the documents studied. However we should note the possible incompatibility for some correspondents who might hold strong views on (the present nation of) Israel being God's people but claiming on the basis of 2 Chronicles 7:14 they are also God's people, thus being a part of and opposed to "replacement theology/supersessionism." Against "replacement theology," Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130-33. Other views on Israel and scripture: Wright, *Last Word*, 35-41, 108.

⁹⁵ Isaiah 55:10-11

⁹⁶ Stout, "Sunday trading," 6.

opposition to Sunday trading. Harvey⁹⁷ quotes Sir Matthew Hale, whom he incorrectly identifies as a doctor, in concluding his argument that Sunday should be “well spent” not “profaned.”⁹⁸ (Misinformation and incorrect biblical quotes can be found in several letters. The biblical misquotes are somewhat surprising given the authority ascribed to the Bible. They may indicate that what has been repeated in conversations within church culture is accepted as “gospel,” and therefore there is no need to check the accuracy of the passages by referring to the Bible). The references to non-biblical sources may have been to broaden the appeal of correspondents’ arguments, or help prove that they have contemporary (Stout) and historic (Harvey) authority. The use made of other authors and the references to other material may have been intended to show the reader that the points being made were not just those of the correspondents, even if the authors referred to were not necessarily known by the reader.⁹⁹

An appeal to experts was also made in the submissions from Edwards and Mitchell. They referred to the claim by psychologists who in recent years have learnt “that men (sic) need time away from work for leisure, spiritual and emotional development in order to perform at their best level.”¹⁰⁰ The Church of Christ’s submission noted the “considerable medical and societal evidence that stress and stress-related diseases are affecting an increasing number of people. There seems to be a physical foundation for the scriptural indication that mankind (sic) needs one day in seven as a day of rest.”¹⁰¹ This submission also considered “a de-facto discrimination situation” would develop for people not wanting to work on Sunday. Families, especially in their opportunities to spend time together, proprietors and staff of small businesses, and the “special character” of Sunday in New Zealand would all be affected negatively. The “customary ways” were still supported by “a substantial component (of people.)” The cost and difficulty in policing the current

⁹⁷ Harvey, “Sunday trading,” 2. Charles Spurgeon, “A New Years Retrospect and Prospect,” Sermon preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle Newington, 1 January 1871. <<http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols40-42/chs2342.pdf>> (15 June 2010), includes quotes from the same passage by Hale in the introduction to the sermon.

⁹⁸ Sir Matthew Hale was Chief Baron and Chief Justice and Member of Parliament for Gloucestershire.

⁹⁹ It seems unlikely Sir Matthew Hale was a “household name” in 1989.

¹⁰⁰ Edwards & nine others, “Letter.”

¹⁰¹ Church of Christ, “Letter.”

regulations are not sufficient reasons to seek changes. Correspondents referred to the authority of medical experts and experts' "observations" in support of long held biblical principles relating to a day of rest, and therefore presumably to the retention of the present law regarding Sunday trading. These submissions seemed to imply that biblical authority was (at last?) confirmed through expert evidence that was in agreement with biblical law.

In opposing Sunday trading and in response to Bob Jones' "Punchline"¹⁰² article Hicks refers to God's long term perspective for individuals and society. He then argues that, "ordered beauty is evidence of a master plan designed in both creation and human society to promote peace and harmony."¹⁰³ Hicks may be using an argument here that behind the evidence of order and beauty in Creation there is a Creator.¹⁰⁴ Reasons for a common one day in seven rest are given. God's wisdom found in scripture is contrasted with individualism and liberalism promoting "selfishness instead of service, confusion instead of cooperation, which trail of life inevitably leads on to cynicism and futility."¹⁰⁵ Hicks appears to argue that increased suicides and drug use, and the "bizarre sensuality" that dominates the headlines is evidence of a country that in its search for profit has lost its soul. He ends by quoting Matthew 16:26. The source of authority for Hicks' argument is clearly scripture.

However with regard to the use of scripture in opposing the STHAR Bill none of the letters or submissions referred to Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1-8, or Titus 3:1,¹⁰⁶ scriptures that were possibly tacit in underpinning the Christendom arguments against Sunday trading. It is possible, but unlikely, that these scriptures were

¹⁰² "Punchline" was a regular column in newspapers. Cf. Bob Jones, "Dogmatic views on Sunday trade," *Timaru Herald*, January 18 1990, 4. This article generated responses from Christians in different parts of New Zealand defending their opposition to Sunday trade, including SOS and Tom Quayle.

¹⁰³ H. R. Hicks, "Punch line response," *Levin Chronicle*, 1 February 1990, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Cf., Alister E. McGrath, *Science and Religion an Introduction* (Oxford, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999). John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 1. While agreeing that purpose suggests a Mind, (God) behind the act of Creation, Hicks may not have agreed with all the arguments presented by Polkinghorne.

¹⁰⁵ Hicks, "Punch line response," 4.

¹⁰⁶ The verse from Acts could have been used in arguing God's authority is to be obeyed when there appears to be a clash between Christian/biblical values and human authority. The Romans passage and Titus might have been used in helping formulate a relationship between Church and State.

completely unknown to all the writers. Taken in a literalistic way, Romans might be understood to say that as the governing authorities have been appointed according to God's will Christians should obey them. In the Acts passage however Peter and the apostles say, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."¹⁰⁷ To avoid these seeming contradictions, which may be unacceptable to some holding a Christendom worldview, the phrase "except given by God" (Rom. 13:1b) could be read as an "opt out" clause. Thus I have heard it argued that when these "human authorities" disobey God's law Christians are no longer obliged to obey the human authorities.¹⁰⁸ Sunday trading could be seen by some holding to a Christendom worldview as contravening the fourth commandment. Therefore the government, or at least the "Sunday Trading" legislation, is not of God and protests opposing it should be made. This raises a further issue. What forms of protest are admissible to Christians when they consider the government is no longer "instituted by God?"¹⁰⁹

Consideration of the role Acts 5:27-29, Romans 13:1-8 and Titus 3:1 might have played in shaping the Christendom worldview of some of the correspondents is speculative. We cannot be certain that this is how those who have written from a Christendom perspective would interpret these passages from the Bible, or if the scriptures referred to above contributed to shaping their worldview. However some of those in the Christendom type seem to demonstrate a clear underlying belief that God should be honoured above the State, even if we can only speculate as to how they came to hold this belief.¹¹⁰ It is not altogether surprising however that the three

¹⁰⁷ Acts 5:27b

¹⁰⁸ For further reading, Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: essays on church, world, and living in between* (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1988). Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Between Christ and Caesar: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1986).

¹⁰⁹ The material reviewed included calls to boycott shops that opened. Individual writers, their families, and in a few cases the church groups they belonged to threatened this action. People were urged to write to their MP's and/or letters to the newspaper. No other forms of protest were mentioned.

¹¹⁰ Another passage that might have been used in supporting a view that places God before the State but was not included in the letters or submissions was 1 Peter 2:11-17.

The following are some of the correspondents who include material in which the government is urged to obey God's law. Rev. J. A. T. van Dorp, "Sunday trading," *The Gisborne Herald*, 13 December 1989, 2; D. Garner, "Base measures" *New Zealand Herald*, 16 December 1989, 8; Bent, "Letter;" C. Aolbers, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 10 March 1988, Archives New

scripture passages above were not mentioned in the Christendom letters and submissions. The primary reason for writing was not to argue the authority of scripture, even if this occurred or was implied in some correspondence, or to exegete verses that may have been seen as supporting the argument against the introduction of Sunday trading. The main issue was simply to oppose the introduction of Sunday trading. Some correspondents did consider the issue of authority, Gods or the governments, while others appear to have made an assumption about authority. The writers were not primarily engaged in an apologetic defence of the authority of scripture, even if the use of scripture was considered authoritative by them in their correspondence.

For most Christendom writers it is likely there was no need to convince anyone of the Bible's authority, it was a given. To say something was breaking God's law was sufficient. For example worship and relaxation are reasons to keep Sunday free but, "there is one further reason to kep (sic) it free. God has explained this in Exodus 20:18 (sic)." The verse, presumably 20:8 was meant, is considered by the writer as a reminder to us that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Famularo continues, "the move to make Sundays just ordinary days is a consequence of the ridiculous 'theory of evolution' which carries with it the implication that the fourth commandment is meaningless."¹¹¹ To allow Sunday trading is to change something God has ordained holy. Famularo gives his reasons for opposing Sunday trading as freedom for worship, relaxation and Sunday as a day that is holy and reminds us that God created the world. He does not give any reasons in this letter as to why the Exodus verses are authoritative, or why the theory of evolution implies the fourth commandment is meaningless.¹¹² We are not able to tell if he is suggesting that remembrance of the creation act is of more significance than the command to rest and worship, or if he is filling in what he considered an omission in the

Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. ; B. Andrews, "Letter." Silvio Famularo, "Sabbath Sunday," *Challenge Weekly*, 31 March 1988, 14.

¹¹¹ There were letters in several newspapers on the evolution debate and *The Press* published more correspondence on this topic than on Sunday trading.

¹¹² Famularo did expand on these views in personal correspondence with me. Cf. Chapter 5, n.13.

editorial.¹¹³ In his conclusion Famularo writes, “I agree with those who say we Christians have no right to impose ‘our’ virtues on others. But this is quite a different thing to imposing the will of God.”¹¹⁴ It appears that for Famularo and others who hold similar views, whether or not a person believes in God or the authority of the Bible, Biblical authority should take precedence in shaping a nation’s law. In common with the view that Christians have the right to impose their beliefs on others if they are in accord with God’s will there appears to be an assumption that a government concerned for the good of the people (the common good?) should enact legislation that agrees with scripture. Does this mean that in seeking the common good Christians should press for God’s laws to be included in State law?¹¹⁵

Not all Christians would answer yes to this last question. Neither is it likely those in favour of the proposed changes to Sunday trading would agree to some Christian interpretations of God’s law being the arbiter of the nation’s law. “A Cynic,” writing in the *Southland Times*, objects to what he considers will be a loss of freedom if Quayle’s view that Sunday is a special day for Christians was implemented as law. He adds, “Sunday trading will not threaten my own religious ideals. Although religious hierarchies are no doubt responsible for much good, they are also responsible for most of the conflict and evil in the world today. It seems these characters are replacing politicians as the leading characters promoting warfare.”¹¹⁶ In “A Cynic’s”

¹¹³ John Massam, “From the Editor,” *Challenge Weekly*, 18 March 1988, 2. Massam contends restrictions are necessary when “what is best for the community as a whole” is put at risk by the freedoms claimed by others. Christians have rights and should exercise them. He considers Sunday a special day “that provides an opportunity for worship and relaxation for those who choose to use it that way, and (Christians) must say so now.”

¹¹⁴ Silvio Famularo, “Sabbath Sunday,” 14.

¹¹⁵ See comments by Best 69-70 above. We might also ask, to what extent should Christians be involved in civic affairs? Opinions have varied within “Christendom.” Compare for instance, the Augsburg Confession Article xvi, “Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29,” with article iv of the Schleithem Confession, “From this we should learn that everything which is not united with our God and Christ cannot be other than an abomination which we should shun and flee from. By this is meant all Catholic and Protestant works and church services, meetings and church attendance, drinking houses, civic affairs, the oaths sworn in unbelief and other things of that kind, which are highly regarded by the world and yet are carried on in flat contradiction to the command of God, in accordance with all the unrighteousness which is in the world. From all these things we shall be separated and have no part with them for they are nothing but an abomination.” See also the thirty-seventh of the Thirty-nine Articles.

¹¹⁶ A Cynic, “Sunday trading,” *Southland Times*, 8 February 1990, 6.

view, history shows Christianity does not provide an acceptable model for the common good in some circumstances, presumably including decisions relating to Sunday trading. Editorials were also generally in favour of Sunday trading, and thus disagreed with trade unions' concerns, and the efforts made by some Christians in seeking to apply "God's law" to the nation. Some Christians and certainly most editorials considered the freedom of choice to shop and to open shops when one wanted a "principle worth preserving."¹¹⁷ Note also the unsuccessful attempts by some Christians to convince parliament to make laws in accord with their Christian beliefs.¹¹⁸

In considering the Christendom worldview as presented in the letters and submissions, other issues raised by the question "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" include how was the Kingdom of God understood? Was this seen at least in part as being worked out through the political rule and reign of Christian/Christendom ideas?¹¹⁹ M. Willmoth wrote, "To remove this landmark (the Sabbath) would make our claim to be a Christian nation void. It would show contempt for our heritage and destroy the credibility of our

¹¹⁷ "Sunday trading," *Marlborough Express*, 5 December 1989, 6. Other editorials in favour of Sunday trading or opposing undue Christian influence on political decisions include: "The politics of playing religion," *The Dominion Sunday Times*, 5 June 1988, 10. "Good news in shop hours," *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1989, 4. "Shopping on Sundays..." *Waikato Times*, 22 November 1989, 8. *Auckland Star*, April 13 1988, A8. "The long weekend," *The Northern Advocate*, December 5 1989, 2. Note however the change in emphasis in the editorial of the *Marlborough Express*, 16 February 1990, 6, where the importance of Sunday as a day of rest, an expected loss of full-time employment, the negative impact on small businesses and trades people and shop workers being forced to work on Sunday are reasons presented against Sunday trading. The editor still supported the right of retailers to open if they chose to do so, but with reservations. Acknowledgement of public opinion to "Keep Sunday Free" resulting in a different emphasis in later editorials can also be found in other newspapers.

¹¹⁸ Peter Lineham, "Government Support of the Churches in the Modern Era," in *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, ed. Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2000), 52, writes, "Instead the traditionalists suffered for their desire to use the state as controller and regulator for the sake of moral and family values." However it would be wrong to consider the government only ignored "Christian" opposition to its policies, as the response to the purchase of a frigate and protests against the "Employment Contract Bill" demonstrate. Passing the STHAR Bill was also contra to the Trade Union position.

¹¹⁹ Cf. David Coyle, "Spiritual shake-up," *Evening Post*, 9 December 1990, 6. "The Christian church's main job is to make known to lay people the spiritual laws which, if adhered to, will usher in the Kingdom of God on earth."

Note the later "rise" of Christian political parties cf. Jonathan Boston, "Christian Political Parties and MMP," in *God and Government The New Zealand Experience*, ed. Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2000). 105-6, 115-124.

Parliament in the sight of those Nations (sic) who are traditionally non-Christian as well as those who still claim Cristian (sic) Institutions.”¹²⁰ Willmoth argued for the status quo re Sunday trading as New Zealand was a Christian nation that gave honour “to the God of the Bible before each Parliamentary Session begins and to our Queen as head of State.”¹²¹ Again the ultimate expression of authority is God, affirmed for Willmoth in the government’s practice of opening each parliamentary session with prayer acknowledging the need for the guidance of God in all things.¹²² Note though the Queen is also accorded some authority as head of State. (An implied acceptance of Romans 13:1-3, and application of 1Timothy 2:1-3?)¹²³

Willmoth presents a history of the Sabbath, originally the “weekly day of rest and worship of the jews (sic) instituted at creation.”¹²⁴ Several submissions argue that the Sabbath was instituted at the Creation and links were assumed to exist between Genesis 2:2 and the fourth commandment. God “rested” on the seventh day, so humans are commanded to rest each seventh day. Whether this was considered a literal rest or not it was seen as establishing a law that humankind was to follow. Thus Sunday trading was opposed to God’s law. Rev. G. H. Kleinjan wrote that Bible teaching on Sunday as a day of rest is “grounded in creation itself.” He acknowledges the following historical exceptions to Sunday rest in the Western world: works of necessity, mercy and piety. “However, ... God intended a one-day-in-seven day of rest for all mankind, not just Jews or Christians.” Kleinjan considers this is clear from the original command to our first parents, Adam and Eve.¹²⁵ Sunday was a special “family day” and society needed healthy family units if it was to remain stable. “Wherever this divine plan is abandoned, (six days work, one day of rest), society inevitably breaks down. Heads of households begin to overwork themselves, and

¹²⁰ M. Willmoth, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 16 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ahdar, “A Christian State?” 457-8. Ahdar, “Reflections on the Path,” 630, n.68.

¹²³ Romans 13:1-3 requires “every person” to be subject to the ruling authorities, “for there is no authority except for God.” The passage from 1Timothy “urges that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions ...”

¹²⁴ Willmoth, “Letter.”

¹²⁵ G. H. Kleinjan, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 15 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/201 Wellington. It is difficult to determine which Bible verses Kleinjan refers to as “the original command” in relation to the argument he presents.

family life becomes disrupted. Families break down, and since families are the core of society, then society as a whole is adversely affected.”¹²⁶ Kleinjan appears to consider the Sabbath a creation ordinance to be observed by all people for all time.

Willmoth considers the early Christians kept the seventh day as the Sabbath, but also began meeting on the first day of the week in remembrance of Jesus’ resurrection. Acts 2:1 is used to support this claim, and Mark 2:27 is quoted, apparently in support of Sunday as the Sabbath. “To remove this landmark (Sunday as the Sabbath?) would make our claim to be a Christian nation void.”¹²⁷ 1 Timothy 3:4 is used in opposing the potential Sunday trading has to reduce family time (at least on Sunday), increase stress resulting in “family breakdowns ... causing more strain on overworked Social Welfare services and further housing shortages.”¹²⁸

Christendom Correspondence: moral, economic, political values

“Christian,” in a letter to the *Waikato Times* writes in support of the local National Party candidate who has been an Ilam church elder for ten years. He expects this candidate to work for the abolition of Sunday trading, and appreciates the opportunity to vote “for someone whose church believes God comes first and sexual relations are for making babies and not for pleasure.”¹²⁹ “Christian,” as a representative within the Christendom type, expresses conservative moral values in his letter and supports the New Zealand political party considered to be conservative. His preferred parliamentary candidate is attending a Pentecostal Church. “Christian’s” letter suggests his idea of a Christian nation would have moral legislation in accord with biblical law, at least as it is interpreted from a conservative, perhaps fundamentalist understanding. He appears to prefer some, perhaps all politicians to be Christian.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Kleinjan, L/90/201.

¹²⁷ Willmoth, “Letter.”

¹²⁸ Mitchell and twenty-eight others, “Letter.”

¹²⁹ Christian, “Sunday shopping,” *Waikato Times*, 22 December 1989, 6.

¹³⁰ Note also van Dorp, “Sunday trading,” 2 wrote, “Politicians, whether at the regional or parliamentary level, are duty bound to consult not what the public demands but what God’s moral law teaches.”

Janiewski and Morris observed, “The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the resurgence not only of arguments in favour of capitalism but also the growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity. According to Max Weber and also Buchanan, particular religious dispositions and practices are conducive to the development and growth of capitalism.”¹³¹ Conservative Christians such as “Christian” are also more likely, according to Janiewski and Morris, to support capitalism and some “New Right” ideology. In their survey of values and beliefs in New Zealand, Webster and Perry observed, “This resistance to economic controls contrasts sharply with religionists’ insistence on moral control. Moralism individualism seems to be the prevailing ethos of the religious.”¹³² So a tension may exist for those in the Christendom type between the economic freedoms promoted within a capitalist worldview especially if this view is understood by them to be biblical: and the need for restrictions on Sunday trading because they consider the Bible clearly states that the fourth commandment would be broken by the introduction of STHAR Bill. The Christendom type generally accepts the authority of the Bible on moral issues: but their economic values (if they consider economic policy a moral issue as opposed to an issue of biblical authority), are shaped not just by the Bible but in ways they may not recognise. I suggest these include the influence of Western culture and the values of capitalism. This tension may help explain why Webster and Perry found, “In regard to economic principles, clear majorities or pluralities of New Zealanders favoured more government regulation and control of the economy...”¹³³ which is seemingly at odds with the reference in Janiewski and Morris above that “particular religious dispositions and practices are conducive to the development and growth of capitalism.” Within Christendom there appears a mix of biblical values, values that are considered biblical but may not be, a desire to live a “Bible based” life, and the reality of a life lived that is not so different, at least in economic goals and practice, from the majority of non-Christians living in the community.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Dolores Janiewski and Paul Morris, *New Rights New Zealand: Myths, Moralities and Markets*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2005), 87.

¹³² Webster and Perry, *Values and Beliefs*, 38.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 54-60.

It is important to note that while “Christian” supports the National Party there was never a coalition between the political-economic New Right and religious and moral conservatives in New Zealand, as occurred in the USA.¹³⁵ In fact, “the religious and moral conservative right (in New Zealand) repeatedly lost, rather than won, its battles in the 1980s and 1990s,”¹³⁶ including their attempt to prevent the STHAR Bill passing.

These losses are unlikely to have surprised van Dorp. He saw a “gradual erosion of Christian morality with all the evil fruits of increasing crime, violence, illegitimacy, abortion, homosexuality and venereal disease including Aids”¹³⁷ in this generation. While he objected to Sunday trading on “moral grounds,” it is unclear from his letter whether this included any consideration of economic morality. In van Dorp’s opinion the public, as well as politicians, “should be concerned with the will of God” and society needed to “learn again” that the ballot box was not the place to establish moral authority. Rather this was “nothing else than the old immorality of paganism and is the mark of the broad way that leads to destruction.”¹³⁸ For van Dorp, our laws should acknowledge God’s law as the authority on which our laws are framed, especially laws dealing with moral issues.

There is no doubt that this land has been raised from barbaric and degrading practices by the principles of Christianity brought to New Zealand by dedicated and self-denying missionaries. One of the doctrines they taught is the sanctity of the Lord’s day as the divinely appointed day of rest in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This truth is unalterably enshrined in the moral code of the ten commandments.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Janiewski & Morris, *New Rights*, 4. “The religious right never managed to forge an alliance with a dominant political party during the fifteen years of the rise of the New Right.” Reasons given for this included the small religiously active population of New Zealand, a focus on “market faith and the morality required for work, thrift and investment rather than on sexual sins...”

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ van Dorp, “Sunday trading,” 2.

¹³⁸ van Dorp, “Sunday trading,” 2. Cf. Coyle, “Spiritual shake-up,” 6, who considered all social and economic backlashes in NZ today stem directly from people’s rejection of the spiritual laws.

¹³⁹ Rev J. A. T. van Dorp, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 6 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/130 Wellington.

van Dorp argues that the moral standards that have regulated New Zealand life for many years are based on this same “unalterably enshrined” truth, so the fourth commandment requires Sunday to be a divinely appointed day of rest on which we commemorate Jesus. He considers it tragic that the Sunday trading legislation was being introduced at a time when the Treaty of Waitangi was being celebrated.¹⁴⁰ He considered Sunday trading legislation opposed scriptural principles which needed to be “bolstered” at this time, and is “dishonouring to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.”¹⁴¹ Ministers of the gospel should receive support from ministers of the crown, not this kind of opposition. In considering the role of the crown was to support the gospel and its ministers van Dorp may have had in mind a theocratic state.¹⁴² He certainly argues that legislation should not oppose scriptural principles and considers society’s moral standards should continue to be formed by scripture. Whether his conclusions, both regarding the history of New Zealand and the place and authority of scripture in government legislation are “biblical” is another matter.

D. Garner’s arguments are similar to van Dorp’s. Democracy has failed and “the government has abandoned all responsibility by providing casinos, abortion clinics and Sunday trading.”¹⁴³ van Dorp and Garner both include Sunday trading among the issues that showed moral decline in New Zealand. Some correspondents included protests against what they saw as a loss of freedom to worship on their day of choice in their letters, and some considered the introduction of Sunday trading to be a form of discrimination¹⁴⁴ against Christians. In their understanding Christianity was being

¹⁴⁰ “In 1990 New Zealand marked the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Public focus and awareness was on issues surrounding ownership and control of Maori resources as well as partnership between the tangata whenua (Maori) and tangata tiriti (Pakeha, the people of the Treaty). Official representation at Waitangi on 6 February (Waitangi Day) returned after a two-year absence, which had occurred because of rising Maori protest.”

<<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/treaty/treaty-timeline/treaty-events-1950>> (19 March 2010)

¹⁴¹ van Dorp, L/90/130

¹⁴² Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*, 123, “In 1986, Rousas Rushdoony, the Christian Reconstructionist from the Chalcedon Institute, told us about the need to incorporate the Bible into all our laws, including capital punishment for homosexuality. His supporters in Reformed churches in New Zealand preached the same need for a theocratic state and biblically correct legislation.”

¹⁴³ Garner, “Base measures,” 8.

¹⁴⁴ Shaw, “Erosion of Faith,” 8. Dickson, “Letter.” Rosemary Collier, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 12 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/176

displaced by the god Mammon. New Zealand was heading into a further secular and materialistic decline. “If our greed to exploit people financially means that we, in Nelson, destroy everything that Sunday stands for, we’ll deserve the even more rapid decline of what used to be a civilised way of life.”¹⁴⁵ In many of the Christendom letters concern was expressed that profit rather than Christ was what determined government decisions, and greed was the motive for (some) shops opening. However, there is little to suggest, apart from the inculcation of Christian morals and ethics, as to what the writers might do to institute a biblical/ Christian economy, or what such an economy might look like.¹⁴⁶ Neither is it possible from the letters cited to tell whether the disjunction of freedoms was considered by those in the Christendom type. That is, a “resistance to economic controls” and the notion that capitalism should be free to expand opportunities to trade (including on Sunday): as opposed to the freedom promised in obeying God¹⁴⁷ and thus necessary restrictions on Sunday trade. How long Christians opposing Sunday trading refused to shop on Sundays was another issue!

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Wellington. There was especially concern that Christians would be discriminated against in employment if they chose not to work on Sundays. Some of the correspondents mentioned the sacking of two women in Wellington who had refused to work on Sunday. Gavin Evans, “Saleswomen fired over Sunday job,” *Evening Post*, December 9 1989, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Brooke, “Sunday trading,” 4. Cf. Harold Beer, “Sign of decline,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 December 1989, 4. Jebson, L/90/45. Rev Roy Bullen, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 16 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Bullen is particularly concerned with the value of family life within Christianity and the negative impact the decline in Sunday observance is having on the family.

¹⁴⁶ Further reading: Ulrich Duchrow and Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Property for People, not for Profit* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2004). Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism*, trans. by Elizabeth Hicks, Keith Archer, Keith Schorah, Elaine Griffiths (Utrecht: International Books, 1995).

¹⁴⁷ Luke 11:28; John 14:21, 23; Romans 2:13.

¹⁴⁸ Permission sought from Fairfax Media.

It would seem that for Christendom correspondents if the doctrines of the New Right, here particularly the freedom to choose when a shop will open, were contrary to God's laws then Christians should protest. The authority of a biblical command, the fourth commandment, seems to have been more influential in determining the beliefs of these writers than were the economic doctrines of the New Right. Obeying God's commandment is more important than the freedom to trade.¹⁴⁹ The religious dispositions that favour the development and growth of capitalism observed by Weber and Buchanan have limits imposed by biblical belief at least in regard to the Christendom type's response to Sunday trading in New Zealand.

In communicating their idea of a Christian nation, did Christendom writers of the late 1980s appear any more willing to accept religious pluralism or cultures other than those arising from (European?) Judeo-Christian roots than some commentators from overseas? For instance the "Christian" society Rushdoony envisaged was intolerant of other faiths and non-Reconstructionist Christians. "In the name of toleration, the believer is asked to associate on a common level of total acceptance with the atheist, the pervert, the criminal and the adherents of other religions."¹⁵⁰ P. VanderWel is concerned about the important values that are being sacrificed in the rush for material gain. The move to deregulate Sunday trading "would be playing right into the hands of those who seek to destroy the Judaeo-Christian values in our society."¹⁵¹ While it is not possible from the correspondence to be certain as to how intolerant some of the writers were towards pluralism, and the attitude they held towards other faiths, for some of those in the Christendom type, and especially writers from the Reformed churches, there appeared to be a preference for New Zealand, to at the least, be a society in which traditional/conservative interpretations

¹⁴⁹ Amos 8:5-7, Exodus 20:8, 31:15.

¹⁵⁰ Rushdoony, quoted by Anson Shupe, "The Reconstructionist Movement," (Shupe does not give a reference for this quote). Contra, H. Young, "Freedom of Religion," *Evening Post*, 28 February 1990, 6, who raises concerns about the Christian Heritage Party's claim that "it would not suppress freedom of religion." He asks by what authority they "pick and choose from the Bible" and is particularly concerned with the way they might implement the first commandment if "Government legislation must not contravene biblical principles."

¹⁵¹P. VanderWel, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 10 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

of scripture dictated the practice of its citizens and parliamentary legislation was in accord with scripture.

Conclusions

I conclude that on the basis of the letters and submissions there is no “one size fits all” definition for our Christendom type, or indeed for Christendom. There was little interaction between those opposing Sunday trading in letters to the editor, with very few people writing more than one letter, and a lack of engagement between those in favour and those opposed to Sunday trading.¹⁵² The lack of interaction between correspondents in the letters to the editor might be a reflection of the relatively small amount of contact between members of different denominations at the grassroots level in most towns in New Zealand.¹⁵³ Exceptions to this would include personal friendships and attendance at regional or national conferences. Most church-attenders were involved in activities in their own church. Increasingly in many of the churches with declining membership time was spent primarily in an effort to keeping the church open.¹⁵⁴

My experience in pastoral ministry leads me to conclude that “politics” (including issues such as Sunday trading) was not an area all Christians wanted to be involved in. Some of my parishioners considered it wrong for Christians to be involved in protests about any political issue, although they still voted at each election! Others,

¹⁵² Tom Quayle was an exception as were the “Sabbath Controversy” correspondents in Greymouth.

¹⁵³ John Terris, Hansard, “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Report of the Labour Committee,” vol. 506, 790, said, “Many of the churches that made submissions did so from an individual point of view as a congregation, without much reference to what others were doing. That was a great shame. I thought that this was an opportunity for churches to come together to present a common view, and by that means make their points more forcefully.”

¹⁵⁴ Statistics and observations from Murray, *Post-Christendom*, 5-8, regarding churches in the UK highlight the decline in membership of the Mainline churches. The decline in membership especially in New Zealand Mainline churches means there are fewer people to continue the traditional tasks and the work of organisations associated with church membership. Cf. Lineham, “The Condition of the Church,” 96-119. Alan Withy, “Who’s Growing, Who’s Not,” in *New Vision New Zealand: calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole nation*, ed. Bruce Patrick (Auckland, N.Z.: Vision New Zealand, 1993), 123. Kevin Ward, “Religion in a Postquarian Age: the tide is running out,” <<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/research-resources/research-papers/religion-in-a-postquarian-age>> (10 December 2010). William James Hoverd, “No Longer a Christian Country? - Religious Demographic Change in New Zealand 1966-2006,” *New Zealand Sociology*, 23:1, 2008: 41-65.

but certainly not all, would sign petitions if they considered the government was enacting “(im)-moral” legislation contrary to their biblical understanding. There was also an accompanying tiredness in some congregations. Contributing to this, tiredness and leading to an inward focus on church matters that left little energy for other (political) issues, could have been factors such as the almost complete lack of young people and the enthusiasm and energy they can bring,¹⁵⁵ the hard work of establishing and maintaining the church in previous decades, and a feeling of discouragement as parishioners consider the present church situation.

It is not surprising that variations within the Christendom type are apparent given the minimal contact between members of different congregations through geographic separation, the generally small amount of contact between members of local churches, and sometimes between the congregations within one church or parish.¹⁵⁶ I note this lack of contact was to some extent addressed after the formation of the two nationwide organisations protesting against Sunday trading, the Save Our Sunday Campaign and Keep Sunday Free. Background material others could use was provided by these organisations. There were also “form letters” which appear to have originated from churches in Christchurch and Lower Hutt.¹⁵⁷

In the 1988 submissions to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977 fifty-three percent of Part D, individual’s submissions, were in the Christendom type, whereas only eleven percent of Christian submissions made to the Labour Select Committee in 1989-90¹⁵⁸ were in this type. This reduction in the individual submissions from the Christendom type is somewhat surprising given the somewhat higher profile the Sunday trading issue received as a result of SOS and KSF letters and articles, and especially in the case of SOS the provision of statistics and arguments through regular mail-outs. I can only speculate that SOS might have been

¹⁵⁵ In some Anglican dioceses youth meant up to the age of 35!

¹⁵⁶ Exceptions include some inter-denominational home groups, the use of form letters (although this may not have involved grassroots discussions), and perhaps para-church organisations such as Bible Society. Meetings of local Christian leaders’ associations also afforded contact between denominations but this is not “grassroots.”

¹⁵⁷ It is not possible to tell whether or not the Christchurch correspondents represent different denominations. The Lower Hutt form letters appear to be from Presbyterian churches.

¹⁵⁸ The committee considering the “Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill 1990.”

seen by its members to have been acting on their behalf so they did not need to respond personally, despite the requests made to write to Members of Parliament. Perhaps there was a measure of fatigue and a feeling of inevitability? There appeared to be little progress towards changing government opinion after the “first round” of letters and submissions, would an individual contribution make any difference this time, especially given the government’s record of ignoring public opinion on other issues such as the frigate purchase, homosexuality, and employment laws?

Opposition to Sunday trade remained a common element shared by the Christendom correspondents, generally based on their belief that the authority of Divine law, as found in scripture, was greater than that of legislation passed by governments. This was especially true when they perceived a conflict between State law and what they considered to be God’s law. Some writers seem to assume that the primacy of God’s law would be understood by the general public. According to a few of these correspondents, for the government or members of the public to disagree with God’s law was to invite God’s wrath. The breaking of God’s law was also offered as a reason for what was seen as the moral decline in New Zealand society. These correspondents seemed more concerned with presenting the “biblical” reasons Sunday trading should be opposed than engaging with others over doctrinal or theological differences, although in some cases doctrinal positions also contributed to the reasons for opposing Sunday trading. For example the Reformed theology found in the letters and submissions from van Dorp and VanderWel. Some correspondents also appealed to “experts” in making a case against Sunday trading, presumably with the hope that the influence of the people named would at least add authority to the arguments being made. History and tradition were used by some Christendom correspondents along with appeals to the majority, and concern for the common good. It is unlikely any of these other authorities would have been considered by the correspondents as being equal to scripture.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ This assumes the correspondents held to Protestant understandings of the authority of scripture rather than the equal authority accorded scripture and tradition at the Council of Trent. Wright, *Last Word*, 75.

In correspondence that suggested the influence of a more literal understanding of particular biblical passages, when the “common good” was mentioned, it was seen as being best served by ensuring our country’s law followed the law of God. Proof texts from the Bible are cited to show how a nation should be governed. The correspondents did not develop any theory of government. Stopping the Sunday Trading Hours Repeal Bill rather than debating systems of government was the primary topic, or perhaps the writers considered that stating the “facts” as they understood them, through the use of key passages from the Bible would be sufficient to convey to others how the country should be governed. However some correspondents within the Christendom type seem to indicate preferences as to how a Christian country should be governed. These range from the theocratic State van Dorp and others may have had in mind, to Willmoth’s justification for the status quo. Willmoth argued the status quo had its origins in our claim to be a Christian nation.¹⁶⁰

The eventual passing of the STHAR Bill shows a failure to convince the wider public and politicians of the biblical argument Christendom correspondents presented.¹⁶¹ Neither was the claim made by some correspondents regarding the authority of scripture necessarily helpful in promoting their position, or even a correct understanding of scripture's authority. N. T. Wright argues,

To affirm ‘the authority of scripture’ is precisely *not* to say, ‘We know what scripture means and don’t need to raise any more questions.’ It is always a way of saying that the church in each generation must make fresh and rejuvenated efforts to understand scripture more fully and live by it more thoroughly, even if it means cutting across cherished traditions.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ For different forms of government found in the Bible, Christopher J.H. Wright, *The People of God and the State: An Old Testament Perspective* (Bramcote Nottingham: Grove Books Ltd, 1990).

¹⁶¹ The editor of the *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 5 December 1989, 2, considered those objecting to Sunday trading needed to direct their efforts at consumers rather than the government. “[I]t can be assumed the government is well aware of objections and has decided these are not powerful enough to halt change,” and, “The anti-Sunday shopping campaign will need to be directed at consumers, not at the Government.” However note that far more submissions were made to Members of Parliament than there were letters to the editor. I also note that despite polls showing a “majority” opposed to Sunday trading, people took advantage of the extra day to shop when shops were opened on Sunday, especially in the main centres.

¹⁶² Wright, *Last Word*, 91, emphasis original. For more on Wright and the authority of scripture see 29-30.

Those correspondents holding doctrinal positions and “cherished traditions” that held the fourth commandment to be for all people for all time, and saw its application in 1989 as requiring all but essential services to remain closed on the “Sabbath” may have been using scripture in precisely the way Wright warns against. This particular way of claiming the authority of scripture could also suggest a failure to recognise (or accept?) the increasing pluralism and secular nature of New Zealand society and the ever reducing influence of the Church in a post-Christendom era.

It seems there was no difference between God’s authority and the authority of the Bible in practical terms for those writing in our Christendom type. While not explicit in any of the letters the perception given is that many of the writers held to an argument that went something like: God is the highest authority, God gave us the Bible containing God’s commands, therefore as the Bible came from God it has God’s authority. Within the Christendom type the authority of the Bible as given by God was simply accepted, there was no need to explain it. One either obeyed the Bible (God) or not. As Malley notes, the “Four sorts of evidence-surveys, the doctrinal statements of evangelical institutions, evangelicals’ discursive practices, and evangelicals’ maintenance of a boundary between the Bible and all other texts-suggest that evangelicals regard the Bible as authoritative.”¹⁶³

In defining the authority of scripture as, “a shorthand for God’s authority exercised *through* scripture,”¹⁶⁴ N. T. Wright leads us to a consideration of scripture’s work within the Kingdom of God and its formation of the “mind of the church.” It may appear that Wright was at one with writers in the Christendom type given the high place he assigned to scriptural authority based on the outworking of God’s authority. Even Wright’s statements that the authority of scripture makes sense within the work of God’s Kingdom “at every level from the cosmic and political through to the personal,”¹⁶⁵ and that scripture points away from itself and that “final and true

¹⁶³ Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 132.

¹⁶⁴ Wright, *Last Word*, 23, emphasis original. Cf. 138.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 116.

authority belongs to God himself, now delegated to Jesus Christ,"¹⁶⁶ is within our Christendom type's understanding. However Wright does not think, contrary to the Christendom correspondence, that scripture can be reduced "to a set of 'timeless truths' on the one hand, or to mere fuel for devotion on the other, without being deeply disloyal, at a structural level, to scripture itself."¹⁶⁷ Thus, how the church, the people of God, are to address the issue of Sunday trading and remain faithful to the authority of scripture is a more complex issue than simply applying a literal interpretation of the fourth commandment as the "biblical" solution. Coupled with this literal understanding of the commandments found in the Christendom type there seemed to be an assumption that they are God's instructions to all people for all time.¹⁶⁸

Wright offers an alternate view that enables us to honour the authority of scripture and "facilitate the Spirit's working in and through us, as individuals, congregations and the larger church," energizing God's people for mission and "ordering their life accordingly."¹⁶⁹ Rather than reducing scripture to "timeless truths" Wright considers the reading of scripture should be, "(a) totally contextual, (b) liturgically grounded, (c) privately studied, (d) refreshed by appropriate scholarship and, (e) taught by the church's accredited leaders."¹⁷⁰ The individual letters and submissions opposing Sunday trading cannot lead with any certainty to conclusions about the correspondent's liturgical grounding, scholarship and study, or the accreditation of their leaders as biblical teachers. However, when considered as a type, the Christendom correspondents give the impression that they had not fully engaged with the several issues that arose from the relationship they claim between the Sabbath commandment and Sunday trading in New Zealand in 1989.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 24.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 122. The correspondence from Christendom writers does not include a pietistic use of scripture as Wright refers to here, but scripture is certainly presented as a "timeless truth."

¹⁶⁸ For further discussion see chapter 2 above. Cf. Wright, *The Last Word*, 57, who uses, "Galatians 3:22-29, where Paul argues that God gave the Mosaic law for a specific purpose which has now come to fruition, whereupon that law must be put aside, in terms of its task of defining the community, not because it was a bad thing but because it was a good thing whose task is now accomplished. But ... the people of God renewed through Jesus and the Spirit can never and must never forget the road by which they travelled."

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 127.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. For details of these points, Wright, 128-141.

While I consider there were allusions to particular forms of government in correspondence from the Christendom type, and a clear preference in much of the writing to have the nation's laws based on biblical law, note the absence of any overt consideration of the Kingdom of God. Again it is only fair to say Sunday trading was the primary reason for writing. However, given the content of some of the arguments presented against the introduction of the STHAR Bill, one might have expected something about the place of the Kingdom of God in addressing the relationship between Church and State, especially as some correspondents clearly thought the State was subservient to God's commands. Would a "biblically based" nation for those correspondents be seen as one example of the in-breaking of God's Kingdom?

Part of the entire Gospel is the cultural mandate to redeem and transform, as far as humanly possible, the world. Christians, then, are instruments of God's common grace or providence, obedient to the divine command 'to promote righteousness and hold back the forces of evil in society.' The law ought not to be used to secure mankind's (sic) salvation, but there are still other important ends it may contribute to.¹⁷¹

Some of the correspondents appeared to consider themselves to be in a war against "the forces of evil" not just the battle against Sunday trading.¹⁷² Sunday trading was the most recent issue the Christendom type had to fight in their efforts to retain a "Christian" society and halt the moral decay and legislation they considered evil. Earlier examples included abortion (1970s),¹⁷³ homosexual law reform (1980s) where legislation perceived to be contrary to biblical teaching was enacted. This impression the correspondents gave of being in a battle for God can perhaps be understood when the characteristics Blamire's uses to describe the "Christian mind" are considered in relation to the Christendom type.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Colson and Pearcey, "Quoting the Bible isn't enough," *Christianity Today*, 11 August 1997, at 72 cited in Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 109.

¹⁷² de Boer, L/90/103. van Dorp, "Sunday trading," 2. Jebson, L/90/45. Elliot-Hogg, "Clergy to blame," 8.

¹⁷³ For a brief history of NZ abortion law, <<http://www.abortion.gen.nz/information/history.html>> (31 May 2010).

¹⁷⁴ Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 51-52. Ahdar considers most of Blamire's six characteristics of the Christian mind "fit nicely into (his) model of the CC (Conservative Christian.)" I suggest they generally fit the "Christendom type," I use.

Some correspondents in the Christendom type referred to the eternal nature of God's law, especially when citing the fourth commandment. Sunday was a sacred day for them, a permanent reminder of God's ordering of human life. They considered God set the pattern we were to follow by resting on Sunday, thus the "spiritual reasons" for Sunday should be observed.¹⁷⁵ These beliefs would fit into the first of Blamire's characteristics, supernatural orientation, which Ahdar in his analysis of Blamire's characteristics described as, "a frame of reference which reaches out to the supernatural."¹⁷⁶ An awareness of evil was Blamires second characteristic. Some of the Christendom correspondents were certain that the government's intention to pass the STHAR Bill was an act of evil in that it was contrary to God's law and would lead to God cursing the nation. While it may be argued the passing of this legislation was not "evil" particularly in the way the Christendom writers saw it, for those writers who seemed to hold a black and white approach to biblical passages this Bill was perceived as being evil. Something of the eschatological now-not yet tension might be found in this response to the STHAR Bill. Christ has won the victory over evil, but until Jesus' return the battle continues.¹⁷⁷ Third, Blamires considered truth was found in God's revealed word, the Bible, "it is discovered by inquiry and not elected by majority vote; ... it is authoritative and not a matter of personal choice."¹⁷⁸

The fourth characteristic identified by Blamires was the acceptance of and "attitude to authority, which modern secularism cannot even understand, let alone

¹⁷⁵ de Klerk "Christian example," and Genesis 2:2-3.

¹⁷⁶ Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 51.

¹⁷⁷ The absence of any direct mention of eschatological concerns, the now-not yet tension, in the correspondence is noted.

The way contemporary music might have contributed to the formation of a worldview in which Christians were engaged in a daily battle (along with the popularity of passages such as Ephesians 6:10-18) is a topic for future exploration. Cf. "The Battle Belongs to the Lord" Words and music by Jamie Owens-Collins; "Army of the Lord," Harvest; "More Power to Ya," Petra; "Awesome God," Rich Mullins.

¹⁷⁸ Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (London: SPCK, 1963), 107, cited in Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 52. Cf. van Dorp "Sunday trading," 2. Note however that polls, where they were seen to represent the "majority choice" were used in Christendom arguments.

tolerate.”¹⁷⁹ For Blamires, “It follows equally from all that has been said about the doctrines of individualism and self-sufficiency permeating current secularism that our age is in revolt against the very notions of authority that are crucial to Christian thinking and acting.”¹⁸⁰ For our Christendom correspondents the STHAR Bill could be seen as yet another example of the advance of secularism, individual rights and the demise of Christian values and authority. The State and supporters of Sunday trading were seen to be promoting authority (individual choice, the power of Government), as being above the authority of the bible. A clash of worldviews was inevitable when the State’s law was seen as being contrary to the Christendom writers’ biblical understanding. As mentioned above, the Christendom type generally appeared to hold a belief that all authority was from God. When a government was seen to be acting contrary to God’s law, it was biblical law and not the transitory nature of human regulations, they considered should be obeyed. It would appear that for at least some of the Christendom writers this was clearly a time when obedience to God rather than “men” (Acts 4:19, 5:29) was to be applied to a current situation. Thus they were justified in their opposition to the authority of the rulers (Romans 13:1-3). In proposing legislation that would break the fourth commandment writers in the Christendom type considered the government was exceeding its authority. For some, their honouring of biblical authority as they understood it left no place for a consideration of any authority or validity the proponents of Sunday trading might claim.

Blamire’s last two characteristics of the Christian mind were, fifth, “its concern for the person, and sixth, its sacramental cast.”¹⁸¹ This last perhaps seen by Christendom correspondents in their desire to retain Sunday as a day set apart, especially in a country that some claimed, was still Christian. The concern for people, (Blamire’s fifth characteristic), was a more common characteristic in FCEC correspondence, although arguments made by Christendom writers included

¹⁷⁹ Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 132, cited in Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 52.

¹⁸⁰ Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 132.

¹⁸¹ Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 51.

concerns that shop workers would not have adequate time for rest and families needed time together.¹⁸²

Despite my observations above that some Christians preferred the separation of Christianity and politics there were others for whom the authority of God, as found in scripture, should be proclaimed in the public arena.¹⁸³ At the very least it was apparent in some correspondence the writers felt a responsibility to alert the government and the general population when they were seen to be in danger of departing from God's law. These letters might even have been considered prophetic in pointing out the error (sin) of the proposed legislation and warning that consequences would follow if the legislation was enacted.¹⁸⁴ If so, this was just one of the "prophetic schools" that could be found in New Zealand during the 1980s and 1990s. The New Right was also described as having "prophets" keen to spread the message of market liberalism, freedom, choice, and personal responsibility.¹⁸⁵ The prophetic voice from the Christendom type however failed to impress the public or change government legislation regarding issues of morality. New Zealanders were less tolerant of "moral tutelage. If we could afford to pay the costs of our pleasures or our sins, we could avoid the public scolding or the consciousness that seemed prevalent where the heirs to the Puritans held forth."¹⁸⁶

Perhaps part of the failure to mobilise a greater number of protesters against Sunday trading was that sexual morality, not economic morality, was the usual field of

¹⁸² R. Cother "Sunday sacred," *Evening Post*, 15 December 1989, 6. C. McGowan, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, no date, Parliamentary Library L/90/30 Wellington. I. F. Pinel, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/148 Wellington.

¹⁸³ Protests against the 1981 Springbok Tour, apartheid, and changes to the employment law.

¹⁸⁴ Ron Taylor, "Sunday - for trading or resting?" *The Marlborough Express*, 22 December 1989, 6. van Dorp "Sunday trading," 2. Chapman, "Letter."

¹⁸⁵ Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*, 82, and at 77, "We examine the claims made by market liberal prophets ... These include Hayek, Friedman and Buchanan." For descriptions of the New Right (1970s) and the "new rights" movements/groups, Janiewski and Morris, 5.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 4. Note at 115, the comments on "nanny state," and Jenny Shipley, as a "stern rural chastiser."

engagement for Christendom prophets?¹⁸⁷ Sunday trading was opposed within the Christendom type because it was seen to contravene God's law, especially the fourth commandment. In arguments by some correspondents this commandment was used as a "proof text." However their writing gave no indication as to whether any need to change economic practices, apart from the boycotting of shops that opened on Sunday, had been considered. There was no engagement with the deep issues raised by biblically inspired approaches to property, private ownership, labour, the market, and how (or if) the Jubilee passages such as Leviticus 25 should be applied today.¹⁸⁸ Again, this might be more than one would expect in letters in which the purpose was to protest against the breaking of the fourth commandment by the introduction of Sunday trading. My concern is that the impression given by the correspondence (the *perception* of the correspondents?) is that the economic status quo was acceptable, or even perhaps that the aims of capitalism were equated with Christian/biblical principles by those in the Christendom type. The Christendom correspondents lamented the greed of big business and the worship of Mammon but appeared not to consider that they might be contributing to the underlying issues.

Some correspondents in the Christendom type believed that New Zealand was or had been a Christian nation as our law had Judeo-Christian roots. A point also made by Ahdar:

There is a certain amount of truth in the statement that Christianity is part of our law. In the first place, the Christian religion has played an important part in shaping our culture, our tradition, and our law. As Lord Sumner pointed out in

¹⁸⁷ Compare the 800,000 signatures on the petition against homosexual law reform with the less than six-hundred letters and submissions opposed to Sunday trading. This excludes the "several hundred cards" similar to L/90/28 received by the Labour Committee. A handwritten note was added to the Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/28 Wellington. It read, "90% signed in support. 10% objected to the original campaign and reworded cards in support of Sunday trading."

For more on the prophetic voice of the church, Lineham, "Government Support of the Churches." Webster and Perry, *Values and Beliefs*, 156, who wrote, "Church members are frequently disturbed about this prophetic role." Allan K. Davidson, "Chaplain to the Nation or Prophet at the Gate? The Role of the Church in New Zealand Society." in *Christianity, Modernity and Culture: New Perspectives on New Zealand History*, ed. John Stenhouse assisted by G.A. Wood (Adelaide, S. Aust.: ATF Press, Australian Theological Forum, 2005) 311-331.

¹⁸⁸ See Ulrich Duchrow Hinkelammert, *Property for People*. Charles Waldegrave and Rosalyn Coventry, *Poor New Zealand, an open letter on poverty*, (Wellington: Platform Publishing Ltd, 1987). For some of the possible Christian responses to the State, Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 54-55.

Bowman v Secular Society Ltd [1917] AC 406, 464-465, the family is built on Christian ideals, and Christian ethics have made a tremendous impact on the development of our law, as is only natural considering the majority of New Zealanders come from a Christian back-ground.¹⁸⁹

But there was also evidence of a formal and legal separation of Church and State in the nineteenth century. The debate over whether a prayer should be said at the opening of parliament, the 1877 education Act, and as Peter Lineham notes the Freethinkers of the 1880s did not need to mount a constitutional campaign for the separation of Church and State as "the two were relatively separate" already.¹⁹⁰ A "second disestablishment," the erosion of the cultural de facto establishment of Christianity, can be traced by some commentators to a "paradigm shift" beginning in the 1960s.¹⁹¹ "A shift has occurred. There have been long-term trends, huge subterranean movements within Western culture...in the church we haven't grasped what has happened, and by and large we are still operating with the kind of mentality we had prior to the 1960s."¹⁹² It was this continuing battle against the erosion of Christian values and Christian law including the introduction of the STHAR Bill that the Christendom type was protesting against.

There appeared to be several views held by correspondents in the Christendom type regarding the relationship between Church and State or whether Christians had any authority to impose their views on others. Latham seemed to incline towards the separation of Church and State and perhaps a withdrawal from at least some aspects of this world in favour of what was to come. Foulkes¹⁹³ considered Christians did not have the right to impose their views on others, while Massam argued that when the health and welfare of the nation was at risk Christians should speak out. Other correspondents were concerned with the effects of Sunday trading on families and communities now, as well as the implications they considered might result from

¹⁸⁹ Ahdar, "A Christian State?" 460.

¹⁹⁰ Peter Lineham, "Freethinkers in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," *N.Z. J. History*, 61, (1985), 71, cited in Ahdar, "A Christian State?" 457.

¹⁹¹ Ahdar, "A Christian State?" 460.

¹⁹² Rev. Murray Robertson, "New Zealand as a Mission Field: The Paradigm Shift" in *The Vision New Zealand Congress*, ed. Bruce Patrick (Vision New Zealand, 1993), 46.

¹⁹³ Appendix 1.

breaking God's fourth commandment. There were also differences as to which activities Christians and others should be permitted to engage in on Sunday, although this was generally a matter of interpretation (and perhaps tradition) rather than a literal application of scripture verses.

Letters were written to the editor, submissions made to parliament, sermons preached, statements made that shops that opened on Sunday would be boycotted, but did Christians practice what they preached, or at least what they protested against? Did they also "worship Mammon" by shopping on Sunday? I suspect a former Vicar of St James Lower Hutt was not the only priest to preach against the introduction of Sunday trading and be spotted at the checkout by a parishioner after the morning service.¹⁹⁴ In my experience as a priest during the last nineteen years, if Sunday trading is considered an "issue" today comments tend to be along the lines of, "Well I do when I have to, but I'd rather not. It is convenient sometimes..." It appears the majority of Christians have accepted, albeit some reluctantly, that Sunday trading, along with Sunday sport, advertising, and the ability to purchase alcohol on the "Sabbath," are now part of New Zealand life.

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Have Christian protests against any future proposals that would seek to allow shops to open on Easter Sunday, or Christmas Day and Good Friday changed since the SHTAR Bill? I suggest there is still a section within the present day church holding to a Christendom worldview. The battles they engage in, such as the possibility of

¹⁹⁴ Anecdote from the Diocese of Wellington. Cf. "Heath's view."

legislation that would allow shops to trade on Easter Sunday in particular and Good Friday¹⁹⁵ or Christmas Day, and their expressed opposition to the continuing advance of secularisation and immorality as they perceive these issues, are being undertaken in the same way Sunday trading was addressed in 1988-89. Correspondent's primary authority in opposing the proposed legislation remains scripture and its authority. At the grassroots level, despite the observations from Murray Robinson (above) and others there continues to be a failure to recognise the changes in wider society and engage with the "world" in ways that are meaningful outside the Christendom castle.¹⁹⁶

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¹⁹⁵ Rosa Studholme, "Dean holds hope for Easter Bill," *Timaru Herald*, 21 October 2010, writes about Jacqui Dean's private members bill proposing Easter Trading be allowed in "the tourist hotspots of Wanaka and Rotorua." Dean continues to work on her amendment to the STHAR Bill and is trying to address "workers issues and religious concerns ... Extra clauses for the bill deal with worker's rights, allowing workers rostered on at Easter to decline work without penalty," and "I (Dean) have decided to exclude Good Friday from the bill, focusing specifically on Easter Sunday." Cf. Katarina Filipe, "Mixed support for Easter bill," *Timaru Herald*, 7 August 2010, 3.

¹⁹⁶ Jonathon Boston "Christianity in the Public Square: The Churches and Social Justice," in *Voices for Justice: church, law and state in New Zealand*, ed. Jonathan Boston, Alan Cameron (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press, 1994), 28-31, on some of the difficulties the church faces in communicating in the public arena. David Hollenbach SJ, "Fidelity to the Gospel/Respect for the Other," in *Faith in the Public Forum*, ed. Neil Brown and Robert Gascoigne (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1999), 9. Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: essays on church, world, and living in between* (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1988), 11-12, 47-65.

¹⁹⁷ One of the points to note in this cartoon is that while unions appear in the protest against Sunday trading the church is absent.

Chapter 4

An analysis of the letters to the editor in newspapers, denominational and other magazines, the “Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee (1988)” and parliamentary submissions: Family, Community, Economic Concerns, (FCEC) type

The largest number of letters and submissions were found in the second type, Family Community Economic Concerns. This type included considerably more letters to the editor from writers who were not able to be identified as Christian, than from clearly identifiable Christian correspondents.¹ It also had a larger number of submissions to parliament than the Christendom type.² However the number of submissions to the Shop Trading Hours Act Reform Bill Select Committee was significantly boosted by the inclusion of the standard letters from Lower Hutt and Christchurch.³ The FCEC type includes correspondents who argued against Sunday trading primarily from a concern for family, community or economic issues. These issues are sometimes found in correspondence from the Christendom type but not as the primary reason for their objection to Sunday trading. The line between the two types is also blurred when FCEC correspondents used passages from scripture in their arguments. However this was usually in support of other points they were making. The Christendom type used the authority of scripture as a sufficient reason not to introduce Sunday trading. I have also included a section on Save Our Sunday and Keep Sunday Free campaigns. While these are organisations, they both represent individual (grassroots) responses and encouraged individuals to respond to the proposed introduction of Sunday trading. Material originating from KSF and SOS can be found in the letters and submissions opposing Sunday trading. Some

¹ There were forty-one FCEC type letters. Twelve could be identified as having been written by Christians.

² Sixty-nine including one on favour of Sunday trading to the Parliamentary Select Committee, STHAR Bill committee 1990, and twenty to the shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee 1988.

³ The Shop Trading Act 1977 Report of the Advisory Committee, Appendix 3 Part 2, 30 June 1988, also received “a 123 signature petition which was collected in South Auckland. This petition was accompanied by an anonymous letter which stated that the petition was signed by both the public and the congregation of a church (unnamed).” Three reasons were given for opposing Sunday trading. 1. “Six days thou shalt labour the seventh thou shalt rest. 2. Children don’t go to school Saturday and Sunday. If mum has to (work), what happens to the children many mums are solo mums no dad at home to keep an eye on them. 3. Sunday is a family day where we can talk and get together, all this will be destroyed if Sunday trading comes in.”

correspondents mentioned their approval of one or other organisation or their leaders.⁴

FCEC correspondents primarily raised social, humanitarian and economic concerns in arguing against the introduction of the STHAR Bill. They were concerned about the impact that Sunday trading was expected to have on various aspects of family and community life. Some correspondents anticipated a reduction in “quality time” in families and further erosion of family relationships. They considered families would be forced to abandon their responsibilities (to one another and the community?) and there would be fewer opportunities to teach young children their Christian faith. “Sunday is a special day, most especially for families ... With so many marriages failing these days and children being affected by the results, surely one day a week can, by law, be left comparatively untouched by buying and selling.”⁵

FCEC correspondents argued that Sunday trading would result in “flow on” effects such as businesses being forced to open to maintain market share, tradesmen being required to work, higher prices, an increase in crime, and increased alcohol consumption and the opening of hotels on Sunday. The increase in the availability and consumption of alcohol was predicted to cause more accidents and increase the stress on police.⁶ It was anticipated there would be fewer opportunities to care for others,⁷ a reduction in the number of volunteers available for sport recreation and social activities, a further decline in moral standards, and an increase in social

⁴ There were no letters or submissions in which approval was expressed of both SOS and KSF: did this reflect a perceived theological divide? Was SOS seen by some as more “fundamentalist” while others may have considered it to be more “Christian”?

⁵ G. R. & J. G. Cooper, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 8 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/131 Wellington. Note that while clearly stating they are Christians, “as Christian people,” the Coopers propose the government legislate to protect Sundays but do not refer to biblical texts. Cf. Rodney Duncan, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 20 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/203 Wellington. Garry Muir, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no day, March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington. Paul Beech, (Union delegate Woolworths Massey Superstore), Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no date, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁶ Brenda Morgan, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 20 November 1989, Parliamentary Library L/90/56 Wellington.

⁷ Is there a sense of Christian tradition behind this concern? Visiting the sick and engaging in acts of mercy *especially* on Sunday. If so it may reflect something of Kleinjan’s understanding, (chapter 3 above), of scripture and the exceptions he lists to “work” on Sunday.

problems. Rather than benefitting the economy there was likely to be increased hardship for many workers. Family activities and church attendance as a family unit would be compromised if one or more members of the family had to work on Sunday. Concern was expressed by some FCEC correspondents over the potential loss of religious freedom to worship “at a time and place of (a person’s) choice.”⁸ The opportunity to shop on Sunday was considered a further “seduction” eroding “Christian faith and family togetherness.”⁹ Commercial interests should not be the most important consideration in any decisions made by the government. In short, Sunday trading was expected to have a negative impact on faith and church attendance, spiritual physical and mental health, and the New Zealand way of life.

Submissions to the parliamentary select committee on the STHAR Bill (1990) expressed concern about the effect Sunday trading would have on worker’s rights and conditions, especially for the health of people who might choose or be required to work a seven day week. “There is ample evidence to suggest that many thousands of New Zealanders are already severely stressed. The creation of a 7 day working week can only worsen this situation.”¹⁰ A loss of full-time jobs, an increase in part-time employment, and an expectation that working conditions would generally deteriorate and in particular affect women were also concerns.¹¹ The forty hour week that had been fought for in the past would be lost. The increase in part-time jobs would mean people were working fewer hours in any one job, but may need to work longer than forty hours in two or more positions. Submissions also expressed concern that workers may not be able to attend worship on Sunday.

⁸ Comments from Salvation Army Women’s Organisations, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 21 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

⁹ Keith Goodisson, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/168 Wellington.

¹⁰ C. B. & S. L. Corney, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 26 January 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/58 Wellington.

¹¹ The expected effect Sunday trading would have on women occurred more frequently as an argument in the church/group submissions. These submissions often noted the large number of women involved in retail work.

FCEC correspondents argued that the freedom gained by some to trade on Sundays was more than offset by the loss of freedom for others who would now have to work on what had been a day of rest.¹² Employees would be forced to work on Sundays and retailers would have to open their shops if their competitors decided to trade on Sundays, thus losing the right to a day of rest in common with others. No longer would there be freedom from the “tyranny of commercial exploitation,” with the “adverse effect on family and social patterns” that was expected to result from Sunday trading.¹³

The original restrictions on trading and on other activities on Sundays had a Christian origin, based on the Sabbath as a day of rest. We see this as vital, not on any narrowly religious grounds, but as a universal principle for the good of the individual, the family and society as a whole.¹⁴

Several questions are raised by FCEC concerns regarding the potential loss of freedom. These questions may help in addressing how this type viewed the relationship between Church and State and where they considered authority to reside. To what extent should the interests and concerns of Christians (or other minority groups) be “considered”¹⁵ in formulating legislation? Does the FCEC correspondence say anything about how decisions should be made when there is a (potential) clash between individual freedom and the common good? “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”

Beginning with the last question, different sources of authority are appealed to by FCEC writers including, the United Nations, “Freedom of religion is one of the four main freedoms in the United Nations Charter. If we lose this freedom how civilised

¹² Dame Miriam Dell, Social Responsibility Commission Anglican Church of New Zealand: Public Affairs Unit, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, Parliamentary Library L/90/142 Wellington. “Increased freedom for a few traders could well take away a considerable amount of freedom for many others. Within the last two months there have been reports of coercion, with workers and managers being told they would lose their jobs if they did not agree to work on Sundays.”

¹³ Kerry Enright, “Sunday trading,” *Wanganui Chronicle*, 21 November 1989, 6.

¹⁴ Dell, L/90/142. For the development of restrictions on Sunday, and pagan and Jewish influences on the “Lord’s Day,” Harline, *Sunday: a history*, especially chapter 1.

¹⁵ Harry C. Swadling, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, Parliamentary Library L/90/106, Wellington. The submission implies at point 3 that as “returned service people are a minority group, yet Anzac Day remains sacred,” the same consideration should be given to churchgoers regarding the STHAR Bill who “make up a minority of the population.”

will we be?”¹⁶ Polls, God and the Bible are also considered authoritative by some correspondents. The Ten Commandments, in particular the third, (fourth), are considered “solid terrain” for the “discerning public” by Toohey.¹⁷ Hume paraphrases the fourth commandment.¹⁸ Penniall implies that as Sunday “is the long established day ordained for Christian worship,” its authority is being attacked by the STHAR which, “looks to be very pro greed and anti-Christian.”¹⁹ Skilton is concerned at the deterioration in New Zealand society where the “laws and standards were initially based on the Bible.”²⁰ Mrs G. E. Jacques states, “A country that forgets God’s guidance will in the finality receive God’s judgement.”²¹ Pastor Colin Renouf suggests that if the “Government pushes thru (sic) anything that the majority are opposed to, surely they are on shaky ground.” He also calls on the authority of God, “As christians (sic) we believe that if our Creator and Saviour instructed mankind (sic) to keep 1 day in 7 set apart as a special day, then that is what mankind should do.”²² I suggest a certain authority was accorded the results of public opinion surveys, even if this was only with the expectation that the government as a democratic body should accept/be persuaded by majority opinion. A more dangerous assumption by those citing the poll results would be that the majority opinion was automatically right.²³ The correspondence gives no indication as to whether the possible use of the majority/ polls as an authority was seen to conflict with other sources of authority such as scripture or God, or how this conflict might be reconciled.²⁴

¹⁶ Anne Smith, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 20 June 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

Cf. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18, <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a18>> (4 June 2010).

¹⁷ M. W. Toohey, “Who is imposing views on whom?” *Timaru Herald*, 20 January 1990, 4.

¹⁸ Anne Hume, “Jones on Sunday,” *Bay of Plenty Times*, 19 January 1990, 4.

¹⁹ Lee Penniall, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 11 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/191 Wellington.

²⁰ Margaret Skilton, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 5 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/84 Wellington.

²¹ G. E. Jacques, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 4 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/102 Wellington.

²² Colin Renouf, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 3 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/181 Wellington.

²³ Cf. Richard Gunther, “Godless world keen to dominate,” *Timaru Herald*, 14 December 1988, 4, on the potential for intolerance within majority rule.

²⁴ Is the Kingdom of God political, spiritual or both? Cf. Oliver O’Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, chapter 3. For Luther’s “two kingdoms,” Alister McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea: the*

Wiklund argues that belief in God preceded civilisation “and all the consequential freedoms and peace”²⁵ that came to the Western world. The reason for this is found in scripture, “I (God) will bless the nation that calls me Lord.”²⁶ Scripture, Wiklund adds, also “makes it clear that the Sabbath (our Sunday) is to be a holy day when no work is done.”²⁷ Ignoring the authority of scripture will result in our society reaping “the same ills and misfortunes that other secular humanist societies have.”²⁸ The government is also recognised as a source of authority in Wiklund’s presentation. It should remember those who campaigned for the introduction of a forty hour working week, and presumably the improved social and working conditions achieved by that legislation. “To go back in ‘time’ is not only ridiculous but amazing.”²⁹ While critical of the government’s failure to use its authority for the “general good” Wiklund appears to consider God and God’s commands to be the ultimate determinate of a nation’s well-being.

Other FCEC correspondents want the government to use its authority and prevent businesses from trading on Sundays. Enright encourages people to write to the “Shop Trading Hours Commission,” in this case not to allow a new shopping complex in Wanganui to open on Sundays.³⁰ D’Arcy asks, “Why not take up a petition against Sunday trading and fight for justice for all people?”³¹ McKenzie argues the government is allowing things that society would be better off without such as Lotto, beer and racing, casinos and Sunday trading. “It would be better if the government

Protestant revolution, a history from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 317-18.

²⁵ J. L. Wiklund, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/173 Wellington.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. Note the cause-effect rationale between disobeying God and a nation being subject to God’s wrath is also found in the Christendom type.

²⁹ Ibid. For others concerned about the forty hour week cf. Thomas Brown, “Sunday trading,” *The Gisborne Herald*, 12 January 1990, 2. Brown refers to the Tolpuddle martyrs. Bob Vette, “Sunday loss,” *New Zealand Herald*, 20 January 1990, 8. John Massam, “We need Sunday for our rest,” *Challenge Weekly*, 24 June 1988, 2. J. M. Purdie, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 7 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/118 Wellington.

³⁰ Enright, “Sunday trading.” Garry Muir, “Trading Hours Act,” *The Tablet*, 30 March 1988, 3, also calls on readers to make submissions to parliament.

³¹ Bill D’Arcy, “Fight against Sunday trading,” *Timaru Herald*, 23 March 1989, 4.

concentrated on getting the crime rate down and people back in jobs.”³² Malley simply expressed a desire for the government to “ensure Sunday remains a free day, a holy day for some, a holiday for others, for everyone in New Zealand.”³³ These writers all hope the government, influenced by the wishes of the public, will use its authority and not pass legislation allowing Sunday trading.

Various FCEC correspondents acknowledge God, scripture, the government, and the United Nations or some of these in combination as sources of authority. It is clear in some letters God or God’s commands are the highest authority for the writers, but there remains an expectation in other letters and submissions that the government has the authority to prevent the STHAR Bill being enacted. This does not of course mean that all these correspondents see the government as the primary source of authority. Very few writers referred to the decision on the STHAR Bill being a conscience vote rather than a vote on party lines.³⁴ Does this mean they saw the government as an institution or the majority party as having authority rather than the individuals that are elected to govern?

Does the FCEC correspondence say anything about how decisions should be made when there is a (potential) clash between individual freedom and the common good? Leaving aside the difficulty of reaching agreement on what the common good might be,³⁵ there are still several value-systems potentially in competition. Will what

³² E. McKenzie “Sunday should remain rest day,” *Timaru Herald*, 16 December 1989, 4.

³³ Michelle Malley, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 5 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/120 Wellington.

³⁴ C. B. & S. L. Corney, L/90/58.

³⁵ Ahdar, “A Christian State?” 472-3. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 77-80. For other views: Jonathan Boston, “Christian Political Parties and MMP,” in *God and Government: The New Zealand Experience*, ed. Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2000), 109. Jonathon Boston, “Christianity in the Public Square: The Churches and Social Justice,” in *Voices for Justice: church, law and state in New Zealand*, ed. Jonathan Boston, Alan Cameron (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press, 1994), 22-3. Alan Cameron, “Law, Justice and the State,” in *Voices for Justice: church, law and state in New Zealand*, ed. Jonathan Boston, Alan Cameron (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press, 1994), 54-7. Ruth Smithies, “Catholic Social Teaching A Rich Heritage,” in *Voices for Justice: church, law and state in New Zealand*, ed. Jonathan Boston, Alan Cameron (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press, 1994), 147-165. Neil Brown and Robert Gascoigne, ed. *Faith in the Public Forum*, (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1999), viii-ix. David Hollenbach SJ, “Fidelity to the Gospel/Respect for the Other,” in *Faith in the Public Forum*, ed. Neil Brown and Robert Gascoigne, (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1999), 7-8. M. John Phillips, “Economic Imperatives and the Common Good,” in

is good for the individual always be good for “the family, and society as a whole?”³⁶ Who is to decide when individuals or groups differ not only in what might be best for society but also the means by which this is to be achieved? (Who or what authority should arbitrate between competing visions of the common good?) In particular, who decides which of the competing worldviews should determine whether trading is permissible on the Sabbath/Lord’s Day?

Several articles and editorials reported government expectations that Sunday trading “would be good for the economy, by creating jobs and assisting tourists needs, and that it will be popular with shoppers.”³⁷ Was there a belief, or perhaps hope on the government’s part that what was good for the economy would be good for the people? Thus, improvement in the economy would benefit the “common good.”³⁸ Correspondents objected to these views referring to polls that showed the majority of people opposed Sunday trading³⁹ and pointing out there was only a given amount of money to spend regardless of the number of days shops opened.⁴⁰ Tourists came to enjoy the New Zealand quality of life, including “traditional” Sundays: “they do not come to New Zealand as a shopping mecca (sic) of the world.”⁴¹ The government should not “destroy” the New Zealand way of life by introducing Sunday trading just because they (tourists) have money to spend. If they chose to come here it is up to

Faith in the Public Forum, ed. Neil Brown and Robert Gascoigne (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1999), 47-62. Duchrow and Hinkelammert, *Property for People*, chapter 7, especially 157-62, 165-8.

³⁶ Dell, L/90/142.

³⁷ Comments attributed to Ms Clark, and the Prime Minister Mr Palmer in, “Not much support on Coast for shops to open on Sundays,” *The Greymouth Evening Star*, 5 December 1989, 1. Cf. Editorial, “Opening the doors on Sunday,” *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1989, 8. Peter Luke, “Shop doors flung open on Sundays,” *The Press*, 5 December 1989, 1.

³⁸ Contra, Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*, 41. “The ‘trickle down theory’, i.e. that if businesses are profitable and successful then workers and people on low incomes will reap the benefits, is just not true. These profits are creamed off ... before they reach the workers who made them possible.”

³⁹ The Shop Trading Act 1977 Report of the Advisory Committee, 30 June 1988, Parliamentary Library L/90/222 Wellington, Appendix 8, contains a summary of some of the polls. Cf. Tom Quayle, “Sunday trading outrageous,” *Timaru Herald*, 21 December 1989, 4, “It is significant that virtually every independent public opinion poll has indicated that the majority of New Zealanders are opposed to this radical change.” Quayle refers to the Save Our Sunday-National Research Bureau poll results.

⁴⁰ McKenzie, “Sunday should remain rest day,” 4. Cf. the cartoon below by Ellison, “Stretching the family dollar,” *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1989, 1. Swadling, L/90/106.

⁴¹ A. J. Brooke, “Sunday trading,” *Nelson Mail*, 28 December 1989, 4.

them to respect our laws and customs.”⁴² Correspondents argued the needs of tourists were catered for adequately by existing legislation. “The Government’s own review committee, in 1988, looked hard at the tourism question. It’s conclusion?: tourists showed ‘little or no interest ... in having shops open on Sundays.’”⁴³ There was also doubt regarding the claim that Sunday trading would create jobs. “Overseas countries with Sunday Trading, find it results in fewer (full-time) jobs, and more people have to take casual, or part-time jobs.”⁴⁴ Given unemployment was consistently a major concern in opinion polls⁴⁵ it might be expected that any efforts by the government to address this would be welcomed. However Sunday trading wasn’t seen as the answer, at least in helping create full-time employment. Neither did the correspondents seem to think economic growth through a possible increase in tourist spending was a satisfactory solution if Sunday trading meant changing what was considered the New Zealand way of life. The “Wellington worldview” and the promise of a better economy failed to persuade the FCEC opponents to Sunday trading.

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⁴² C. A. K., in “Brevities” *New Zealand Herald*, 12 January 1990, 8. Cf. L. H. & M. Brooks, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, no date, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kawanatanga, Wellington, who wrote, “We consider that laws should be made first and fore most (sic) for the benefit of the people of this country and not imposed on us for the benefit (or is it?) of people who just visit for a few weeks but do not live here all year round.” Contra Susan Snell, “Mixed reaction to Sunday shopping,” *Oamaru Mail*, 5 December 1989, 1. Editorial, “Lost opportunity in tourist trade,” *Auckland Star*, 25 March 1988, A.6.

⁴³ Supplementary Oral Submission, “Keep Sunday Free Coalition,” to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, no date, Parliamentary Library L/90/4a Wellington, 1.

⁴⁴ Rev. Jean M. Waugh, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 12 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/194 Wellington. Cf. “Lukewarm reception for Sunday trading,” *Ashburton Guardian*, 5 December 1989, 1 “Opening the doors on Sunday,” 8. “Keeping Sunday free,” *The Marlborough Express*, 16 February 1990, 4.

⁴⁵ “Unemployment top concern,” *Timaru Herald*, 7 September 1989, 3. Unemployment was considered to be the biggest issue by 54% of those polled in April 1989 and 58% in August 1989.

The government's worldview appeared to favour economic considerations and freedom of choice for those who wanted to open their shops on Sunday. Elliot-Hogg notes the "significant contradiction between what some Government spokesmen are saying and what the Government is doing." The Prime Minister's vision for the 1990s included a "shift back to basic human values in place of the commercial values of the Rogernomics years...The Hon Fran Wilde observes similarly that people coming here for a holiday like us and our homeland to be different; they are happy for us to have and keep our own ways and values." Elliot-Hogg considers legislation that allows casinos, racing and trading on Sunday to be contrary to the "basic human values enshrined in the traditional Sunday." The government rather than protecting the "simple pleasures, traditional values, nature and a sane pace of life...is putting an end to it."⁴⁶

The "Shop Trading Hours Advisory Committee (1988)" received five submissions that considered Sunday trading was just for monetary or commercial gain. The correspondents argued Sunday trading would result in a contest between shopping and fulfilling one's spiritual needs and that it was not the best way the government could use its revenue, "With up to 100,000 unemployed where is the money coming from to launch such a service (Sunday trading)?" There are other more pressing needs to be found in "public transport; broadcasting; ships at sea; hospitals; the hotel industry (to provide accommodation.)"⁴⁷ Correspondents seemed to think that Sunday trading would be a further cost to the public through government spending, rather than creating wealth as the government argued through increased employment and additional spending. Whatever their understanding of economic and employment issues, some correspondents seemed to *perceive* Sunday trading as an example of the government misusing "its revenue" and encouraging the fulfilment of a person's material needs rather than their spiritual needs.

⁴⁶ Elliot-Hogg, L/90/111.

⁴⁷ L. & E. Berry, Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 14 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga Wellington.

FCEC correspondents expressed concern about the negative impact they expected Sunday trading to have on families and community groups and the loss of a day off in common, concerns which were both biblical and humanitarian.⁴⁸ However my own response to Sunday trading and my observations suggest Christians did (gradually?) participate in Sunday shopping. Kevin Smith considered the Save Our Sunday's Campaign had failed to gain public support when "hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders...shopped on the Sundays before Christmas."⁴⁹ Although nearly all the letters and submissions from Christians opposed Sunday shopping a few of the letters written by Christians supported its introduction. Did the letters and submissions, and the differing opinions of Christians regarding Sunday trading influence politicians? It appears from the record in Hansard the government considered the repeal of the present Act which was "perceived to be difficult to interpret, and confusing. It is difficult to administer and to enforce...riddled with anomalies and unfair,"⁵⁰ of greater public (and economic) benefit than its retention. There was little in subsequent parliamentary debate to suggest much consideration was given to Christian protests against the STHAR Bill.⁵¹

It appears that Christian influence both at the grassroots level and also that of church leaders had little effect on politicians' consideration of the STHAR Bill. Among the various possible reasons for this I wonder to what extent Christianity was

⁴⁸ Aline Pengelly, "Smothering Christmas," *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 11 December 1989, 2, supports R. & M. Gwynne and their associates' challenge to Sunday trading, "not only or even primarily on religious grounds, but for the sake of our common human need for breaks in the pace of living, time to engage in relaxing and enjoyable leisure activities - or inactivity - and for restoring ourselves in whatever way we choose." Cf. "Keep Sunday Free Coalition," Oral Submission to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 13 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/4 Wellington.

⁴⁹ Kevin Smith, (Retail and Wholesale Merchants), "Saving Sunday trade," *The Dominion*, 17 January 1990, 14.

⁵⁰ Hon. Helen Clark, Hansard, "Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Introduction," vol.503, 14313-4. Other factors that seem to have influenced the introduction of the STHAR Bill include Christmas Day falling on a Monday in 1989, shopping would not have been allowed on Sunday the 24th, Christmas Eve. The Commonwealth Games being held in Christchurch in February 1990, a perceived change in public opinion and values and an expectation that Sunday trading would boost the economy.

⁵¹ An exception to this was John Terris, Hansard, "Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Report of the Labour Committee," vol.506, 790-93, and earlier, John Terris, Hansard, "Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill: Introduction," vol.503, 14329-31. Cf. Jane Clifton, "Terris wants shops closed during church," *The Dominion*, 8 December 1989, 2.

perceived to be a “Sunday” event, both by some holding a Christendom worldview⁵² and others from outside the church? What dictates Christian behaviour Monday to Saturday?⁵³ Were the values Christians practiced, especially relating to their use of money and in setting financial goals identifiably different to that of non-Christians? To what extent, if any, should the Levitical laws shape our concepts of private property? Do people consider work, in particular paid employment, is for the benefit of the community or to meet our own needs and increase our personal wealth?⁵⁴ If the values Christians brought to their financial practices were perceived to be similar to or the same as those of non-Christians, then by what authority did Christians protest against Sunday trading?

Sunday trading could be seen as a symptom of wider economic practices and values (within Western society) rather than the cause of “evil” that some correspondents seemed to consider it. In pursuing the cause rather than the symptom we might gain some insight from Aristotle. “Aristotle analysed the *difference between the need-oriented household economy and the money-accumulation economy.*”⁵⁵ That is, the difference between a household economy “designed to supply the basic needs of the members of the household and of the community as a whole (*koinonia, polis*),”⁵⁶ and the accumulation of wealth for its own sake, the money-accumulation economy. This second economy, according to Aristotle had two forms, “the creation of monopolies and price speculation, and ...usury.”⁵⁷ The money-accumulation economy was regarded by Aristotle as “unnatural and extremely dangerous to households and the community at large.”⁵⁸ In such an economy the accumulation of profit by some inevitably lead to others being deprived. It could be argued that this is what occurred

⁵²Not to be confused with the “Christendom type” of the previous chapter.

⁵³Cf. Alistair Mackenzie and Wayne Kirkland, *Where’s God on Monday* (Christchurch: NavPress NZ Ltd, 2002), chapter 9.

⁵⁴In my experience even “bible-believing evangelical Christians of the late twentieth century rarely if ever addressed these questions, or considered the possible connections between “their” finance and property, the poor, and God, apart from the issues of tithing. This could be changing with the “new evangelicals,” and the work and publications of people such as Tom Sine and Jim Wallis.

⁵⁵K. Polanyi, *Origins of Our Time: The Great Transformation*, (London: Gollancz, 1945), 53, cited in Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism*, trans. by Elizabeth Hicks, Keith Archer, Keith Schorah, Elaine Griffiths (Utrecht: International Books, 1995), 20, italics original.

⁵⁶Duchrow, *Alternatives*, 21.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

in the liberal market-economy introduced into New Zealand between 1984-1999, a market that “in practice continually failed to deliver the promised benefits.”⁵⁹ Correspondents were challenging the symptom, Sunday trading, not the cause, which some considered to be the underlying “free-market” philosophy. By and large free-market principles, including the continued accumulation of wealth, did not appear to be seen by Christians as depriving others of their share in the good life.⁶⁰ Neither did there seem to be any awareness that the (unquestioned) acceptance of the free-market economy was removing people further from “what a ‘good life’ is, i.e. a life in community (*koinonia*).” Duchrow sees this failure to live both in community and for the community as ultimately self-destructive.⁶¹

Returning to our key question, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” I suggested the FCEC worldview may have been shaped by our culture in regard to considerations of finance, private property and employment along with any informed biblical understanding.⁶² As noted above a range of authorities including the government, individual rights, the Bible, the United Nations, and even majority/public opinion seemed to underpin the Family Community Economic Concern type’s response to Sunday trading.

The desire of FECE correspondents to uphold the good of the community and the rights of employees seems to me to be weakened by their not including economic arguments relating to the “need-oriented household economy” in their letters and submissions. They expressed concern for aspects of community life if Sunday trading was introduced, but remained silent with regard to the impact of the free-market

⁵⁹Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*, 175. Cf. Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*.

⁶⁰ This is not to ignore the work of various Christian social agencies, mission organisations and some individuals. However I question the extent to which the Church in New Zealand identifies with “the poor” beyond charitable giving and the illustrations, stories, and appeals made by the social service and mission agencies.

⁶¹Duchrow, *Alternatives*, 21.

⁶² Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 2, writes, “Evangelical Biblicism is cultural as much as it is a pattern of beliefs and practices inherited by individuals as part of membership in evangelical communities.” I suggest these comments might be applied to some correspondents in the FCEC type. In chapter three Malley’ considers the way evangelicals respond to biblical text. He notes (117) “that Bible readers, in searching to find a text’s relevance to their lives, can go beyond the text as a given.”

and individualism. Again I acknowledge this point was not the primary purpose for writing.

“Keep Sunday Free” and “Save our Sunday”

This thesis is mainly concerned with the responses of grassroots Christians to Sunday trading. Some attention however, needs to be given to the two organisations that helped individuals to express their opposition to the STHAR Bill. Keep Sunday Free, (KSF), and Save Our Sunday, (SOS), provided another vehicle for protests and supplied information individuals were able to use in their letters and submissions. Some of the correspondents associated with KSF and SOS may have held Christendom views, and so could have been placed in the Christendom type. They are included in the FCEC type because the arguments they presented in opposing Sunday trading generally reflect concern for social and economic issues affecting families and the community rather than arguments directly from scripture.

Fifteen letters to the editor were sent to newspapers and four to denominational magazines that can be linked with Keep Sunday Free and Save Our Sunday. Of these eight were written by Tom Quayle, the SOS national coordinator and two by Robin Gwynn, president of KSF. Eight other letters referred to SOS and/or Quayle and one to Gwynn. The thirteen SOS letters included seven responding to the “Punchline” column by Bob Jones. This column had been seen as a personal attack on Quayle and was critical of SOS and its opposition to Sunday trading.⁶³ Both organisations made submissions to the Advisory Committee. A further nine submissions referred to SOS/Quayle and one to KSF. The Advisory Committee also received hundreds of pamphlets from the KSF campaign. Gwynn also wrote an article for *The Dominion*.⁶⁴ There were references to Quayle/SOS (three) and KSF (one) in other letters opposing

⁶³ Jones, “Dogmatic views,” 4, wrote, “A Timaru Herald correspondent with the highly suspicious name of Tom Quayle (shades of Puritanism and missionaries), and who described himself as the national co-ordinator of something calling itself the “Save Our Sundays Campaign” wrote protesting the advent of Sunday shopping.”

⁶⁴ Robin Gwynn, “Why our Sundays should be free,” *The Dominion*, 31 January 1990, 10.

Sunday trading where the correspondent was not able to be identified as a Christian and three letters supporting Sunday trading referred to Quayle and one to Gwynn.

Save Our Sunday (SOS) began in May 1988 and according to Tom Quayle, the national Co-ordinator, SOS was formed “to safeguard our enjoyment of Sunday.”⁶⁵ Contrary to the way it was sometimes portrayed as a more fundamentalist Christian organisation, “The membership of the SOS campaign is open to any person, irrespective of whether they belong to a church or not. We perceive the issue of Sunday trading as one which directly affects every New Zealander”⁶⁶ Nearly all the correspondence supporting SOS however, could be identified as Christian. It was therefore somewhat surprising that the letters from Quayle contained no scripture references and that only the second of the ten points made by SOS in opposition to Sunday trading is specifically Christian. The economic and social arguments while reflecting Christian principles are not linked to biblical texts as found in other correspondence. SOS claimed a membership of “more than 2500 New Zealanders from Kaitia to Invercargill.”⁶⁷

The ten points regularly used by Tom Quayle were also found in other correspondence reflecting SOS ideas. First, Sunday was a special day for the family, and up to 60,000 workers “directly involved in Sunday trading would be denied opportunities to enjoy Sunday with their families.”⁶⁸ It was argued this could lead to increased social problems if children were left at home without parental control. (KSF correspondents also argued that Sunday trading would damage family life).

⁶⁵ Tom Quayle, “Reasons for opposition to Sunday trading outlined,” *Southland Times*, 30 January 1990, 6. Tom Quayle, “Sunday trading decision opposed,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 3 January 1990, 2.

⁶⁶ Quayle, “Reasons for opposition,” 6. For a “fundamentalist” view of SOS, see Jones, “Dogmatic views,” 4.

⁶⁷ Tom Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” *The Dominion*, 29 December 1989, 12.

⁶⁸ Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” 12, but Ruth Cullen, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 9 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/127 Wellington, wrote that 100,000 workers and their families would be directly affected.

Second, Sunday is a special day for Christians, “ordained for worship, rest and recreation.”⁶⁹ Third, it is opposed by the majority of New Zealanders. Several correspondents included the SOS-NRB poll and/or other poll results in support of their claim that the majority of people were opposed to Sunday trading. Fourth, “the greed of retailers is promoting the commercial exploitation of Sunday.”⁷⁰ KSF notes the damage to small businesses and the likely increase in prices (SOS point five). Sixth, retailers’ freedom of choice will be eroded. Seventh, New Zealand has a small population adequately served by the present system, including shopping on Saturday and the availability of “essential” goods on Sunday. The eighth point expressed concern about the possible detrimental effect Sunday trading could have on workers’ health and well-being.⁷¹ Ninth, big businesses will have the opportunity to “squeeze out the patronage and support for small shops and make it difficult for them to survive.”⁷² Tenth, “the existing law already makes provision for Sunday trading in tourist areas.”⁷³ Correspondents also considered there was inadequate consultation with unions, church groups and others opposed to Sunday trading and that insufficient time had been allowed for consultation.⁷⁴

Quayle and nearly all correspondents whose letters showed the influence of SOS material included the results of the polls on Sunday trading. “It is significant that virtually all independent public opinion polls have indicated that most New Zealanders are opposed to this radical change.”⁷⁵ Nearly all the polls showed a majority against Sunday trading, although to be fair the “majority in the SOS-NRB

⁶⁹ Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” 12. Cf. “Keep Sunday Free Coalition,” L/90/4, 20, “It makes no psychological sense to do away with one day in seven to provide rest and a break from the monotony of the rest of the week.”

⁷⁰ Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” 12.

⁷¹ Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” 12. Cf. Anne Hume, “Sunday trading,” *Bay of Plenty Times*, 12 December 1989, 4. D. Marriott, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 1 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/188 Wellington. E. Jack, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 15 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/207 Wellington.

⁷² Quayle, “Sunday trading outrageous,” 12. Robin Gwynn, “Save our Sundays,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 2 January 1990, 2, writes, “What is certain is that many dairies would be forced to close - between 500 and 1000 shut as a result of Saturday opening, and casualties would be far higher if large stores regularly opened on Sundays.”

⁷³ Quayle, “Sunday trading move outrageous,” 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Cf. Hume, “Sunday trading,” 4. Contra, K. Smith, “Saving Sunday trade,” 14.

⁷⁵ Quayle, “Sunday trading outrageous,” 12. Cf. Jacques, L/90/102. Skilton, L/90/84.

poll was very slight!⁷⁶ Does this use of polls mean that a degree of authority was being given (however unintentionally) to majority opinion by those correspondents? It certainly appeared that given the number of times this was included as a reason against Sunday trading some importance was being attached to “majority opinion.”

“Keep Sunday Free” (KSF) was formed in “the Autumn (sic) of 1989.”⁷⁷ It was a broad-based coalition and did not “represent any one interest group such as workers or employers, Christians or sports people, dairy owners or individual small traders. It has therefore attempted to look at Sunday trading in broad terms.”⁷⁸ However, at least two members of the organising committee, Robyn Gwynn and Brian Carrell, were Christians.⁷⁹ In seeking to reflect the concerns of the wider community, as opposed to SOS, which despite their claims was perceived as primarily being an organisation that engaged with Sunday trading from a Christian perspective, the KSF coalition involved and represented a range of community groups and organisations. Their seeding grant “came from Union sources.” Further money was quickly raised “almost entirely from the trade sector” and “churchgoers and concerned citizens” delivered 25,000 pamphlets in the Palmerston North region.⁸⁰

KSF stated it was attempting “to look at the effects of Sunday trading in broad terms,” as opposed to the approach taken “by Government representatives who have normally talked as though Sunday trading was simply an economic issue.”⁸¹ In rejecting the governments “simplistic approach” the KSF coalition argued the damage to family life, sport and leisure activities, full-time employment for women, small businesses, and the increase in prices were an unacceptable price to pay for

⁷⁶ 50% were opposed and 45% in favour of Sunday trading. An exception was the MRL research group poll for National Business Review and Radio New Zealand which claimed 54% support for Sunday trading. The poll was described as “naive and riddled with holes” by the Distribution Workers Federation, NZPA, “Sunday results,” *Bay of Plenty Times*, 16 December 1989, 2. Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 12. Cf. The Shop Trading Act 1977, Report of the Advisory Committee, 30 June 1988, Appendix 8.

⁷⁷ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, Appendix 4, 32.

I have not included standard letters one and two in this section as they can be clearly identified with a particular geographic area/church rather than a nation-wide campaign.

⁷⁸ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 1.

⁷⁹ For the other committee members, Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, Appendix 4, 34.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸¹ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 1.

Sunday trading.⁸² To these “costs of unfettered Sunday trading”⁸³ can be added other FCEC concerns about increased social problems, the expected difficulties some people might encounter in attending worship, and a decline in spiritual, physical and mental well-being.

Differences between SOS and KSF were not limited to the perception that one was “broad-based” while the other represented (some) Christians. For instance should the day on which one rested be the “Sabbath” or could it be any day? According to KSF, in theory any day could be set aside from normal work activities. They were more concerned about New Zealanders retaining as much as possible a day of rest in common, than in protecting Sunday for religious or any other reason. “Our argument is not that there is something extra special about Sunday as Sunday.”⁸⁴ However, “the heritage of Western society means that the ‘free’ day we have is Sunday, and it is unrealistic to suppose that any other day could take its place.”⁸⁵ One of the ten points SOS correspondents made in opposing Sunday trading was the special nature of Sunday for Christians, which they considered had been “ordained for worship, rest and recreation.”⁸⁶

Unlike KSF, which was concerned only with Sunday trading, the SOS campaign was also seen to oppose the possibility of hotels taverns and bottle stores opening on Sundays, and the introduction of Sunday racing.⁸⁷ It is unlikely all the Christians who opposed Sunday trading would be opposed to the introduction of Sunday racing or the ability to purchase alcohol on Sunday. SOS may have split its constituency in

⁸² Ibid., 4-10. The coalition also endorsed the arguments made by Anglican and Catholic Bishops in 1988.

⁸³ Ibid., 3. Cf. Harry J. Harris, “Protect Sundays,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 31 January 1990, 2, “The social fabric of our society is built around the weekend being for rest and recreation. Do your readers know the true cost of losing it?”

⁸⁴ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid.,. Cf. Gwynn, “Why our Sundays,” 10.

⁸⁶ Tom Quayle, “Save our Sundays,” *Waikato Times*, 22 December 1989, 6.

⁸⁷ Tom Quayle, “We must fight to save our Sunday,” *New Zealand Baptist*, June 1988, 2. Cf. “Signature indecipherable,” Letter to the Advisory Committee Shop Trading Hours Act 1977, 7 March 1988, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahora o te Kawanatanga Wellington. Gunther, “Godless world keen to dominate,” 4. D. Baron, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 12 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/37 Wellington. Contra Terry Kennedy, “Retailing being forced back to the 1950’s,” *Timaru Herald*, 11 November 1989, 2.

linking these issues. They also opened themselves to the “wowsler” tag used by Jones.⁸⁸ The KSF coalition might in the end have had a broader appeal, not just because it was seen to be representing a number of groups and individuals opposed to Sunday trading but also because it was only concerned only with this one issue.

At least in regard to the 25,000 leaflets⁸⁹ it distributed, hundreds of which were sent to the Advisory Committee, KSF had a greater impact in mobilising the general public than the SOS campaign. That Quayle/SOS were referred to in a greater number of submissions, in which the content was based on the SOS ten points, probably reflects the Christian background of the writers, their understanding of SOS as a Christian organisation and its formation before KSF. The number of letters Tom Quayle personally wrote to editors should not be overlooked. Letters from both organisations included reasons for opposing Sunday trading and encouraged readers to write to their Members of Parliament. However, despite the pamphlets, letters, and submissions the editor of the *Manawatu Evening Standard* proved correct in writing, “it can be assumed the government is well aware of objections and has decided these are not powerful enough to halt change,” and, “The anti- Sunday shopping campaign will need to be directed at consumers, not at the government.”⁹⁰ Clearly the letters to editors and the reasons correspondents gave for retaining the status quo or opposing Sunday trading failed to convince either the politicians or the general public as consumers. A case of individual’s convenience proving stronger than community needs?

Similarities as well as differences existed between the two organisations, especially in the reasons they gave for opposing Sunday trading. Both organisations were concerned about the damage to family life. “Widespread Sunday employment and open commercial Sunday shopping must, quite clearly, have a major effect on the patterns of family behaviour.”⁹¹ KSF was especially concerned about the lack of

⁸⁸Note however there were more letters to the editor objecting to the views Jones expressed in his “Punchline” column on nuclear ships than there were to Jones’ “Sunday trading” column.

⁸⁹Harris, “Protect Sundays,” 2.

⁹⁰“Shoppers will vote on change,” *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 5 December 1989, 2.

⁹¹Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 4.

protection for managers, “who lack union protection and are often instructed to be present whenever their shops are open,”⁹² the loss of full-time jobs and an increase in part-time employment. KSF also expressed concern about the impact Sunday trading was likely to have on women who made up a large part of the retail and office workforce. The first point made in many of the SOS letters was that, “Sunday is a special day for the family.”⁹³ 60,000 workers could be “denied the opportunity to enjoy Sunday with their families.”⁹⁴ The damage to small business, and increased prices were also concerns shared by both organisations. KSF, while not speaking on behalf of churches endorsed the Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops’ communication of 1988,⁹⁵ and SOS was concerned Sunday trading would “ruthlessly destroy this special nature of Sunday and prevent some Christians from attending worship.”⁹⁶

Other reasons against Sunday trading from SOS and KSF correspondents include concern for the impact Sunday trading could have on marriages and the lack of parental care available for children if “buying and selling” was allowed by law every day of the week. “People’s spending ‘power’ will only be spread over 7 days should this Bill be passed,”⁹⁷ so there will not be any advantage to retailers. O’Dell was concerned at the impact Sunday trading (racing and the opening of hotels and taverns on Sundays) would have on “believers individually and collectively, meeting for worship, reachout, (sic) teaching etc.” Undermining Sunday as a family day “could hasten even further corrosion of our sick society.”⁹⁸

The omission of any reference to Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it,” was another similarity the two organisations shared. Given the creation ordinance position some correspondents held I expected an argument against Sunday trading that also included God as Lord over all things:

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Quayle, “Sunday trading outrageous,” 4.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 10.

⁹⁶Quayle, “Sunday trading outrageous,” 4.

⁹⁷G. R. & J. G. Cooper, L/90/131.

⁹⁸D. B. O’Dell, “Save Our Sundays,” *The Treasury*, August 1988, 151.

an argument linking the creation account in Genesis with Psalm 24:1, or a similar passage.⁹⁹ God created all things, God is sovereign over all, and as stewards concerned for the common good we should obey God's law, the fourth commandment. Property is leased to us by God. As stewards we should use property to benefit of the whole community, not individual aggrandizement.¹⁰⁰ Sunday trading, it was argued, was only of benefit to the "greedy" and "big business," not the common good. Given the use some correspondents made of scripture I found it surprising they made no reference to God's rule over all things in seeking to persuade readers to obey the commandments.

The omission of other passages such as Leviticus 25, and Matthew 25:31-46 seems to me to challenge correspondents who presented a literal application of the fourth commandment in their opposition to Sunday trading.¹⁰¹ At the least one can ask by what authority are some passages in scripture ignored while others are considered to be for all people for all time? I suggest if further consideration had been given to the way biblical economics, justice, sacrifice and love were linked a stronger argument might have been presented for God's authority as mediated through scripture, although given the short length of the letters and most submissions this may not have been possible.¹⁰²

Freedom, authority, KSF, SOS, and Bob Jones

It should help in seeking to answer the question, "By what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority?" to ask why SOS and KSF

⁹⁹ Cf. Psalm 47:2, 7-9; 89:11; 97:1-9; 103:19.

¹⁰⁰ Duchrow and Hinkelammert, *Property for People*, 21. "The laws of Leviticus 25 rest clearly on the rejection of the absoluteness of property. Anyone wanting to follow the biblical God must accept God as the owner of the land. God can only give rights to use or lease the land (means of production in an agricultural society) so that all can share in it. All else follows from that."

¹⁰¹ Passages expressing God's concern for the poor might also have been included, for instance: Exodus 23:10-13; Leviticus 25; Isaiah 10:1-3, 58:6-8; Ezekiel 16:49; Amos 5:11-13, 8:4-5; Zechariah 7:9-10; James 2:2-6, 4:13-5:6.

¹⁰² For some alternatives to the present economic system and responses Christians can make, Duchrow and Hinkelammert, *Property for People*, chapters 7 and 8. Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*, recommendations are given at the end of each chapter.

correspondents were opposed to Sunday trading, and Jones (and others) favoured it.¹⁰³

Some of the correspondents responded to articles¹⁰⁴ that were in favour of Sunday trading. Reasons found in the articles favouring the introduction of Sunday trading included: it would benefit the economy; the present act had too many anomalies;¹⁰⁵ trading was already occurring on Sunday; it would benefit shift workers, farmers and some other parts of society; the “traditional” Sunday had already been altered with supermarkets open Sunday and racing and advertising on Sunday. Sunday shopping was following a trend already set; the “flood of exemptions” could not be processed in time for Christmas Eve 1989 (a Sunday); it would benefit the Commonwealth Games and New Zealand’s sesquicentenary; there would be increased employment opportunities; tourists would be able to spend more. A reduction on the costs of regulating the present Act would benefit consumers, “particularly low income households.”¹⁰⁶ The present Act “represents an unwarranted intrusion by the State into the affairs of traders and the lives of thousands of consumers.”¹⁰⁷ This last point was an argument for freedom of choice or perhaps a preference for individual rights being the final arbiter. The reasons proponents of Sunday trading give, at least as they are found in the articles, suggest the following authorities lie behind their arguments: the right of the individual; the authority of the government, especially

¹⁰³ A Cynic, 6. J. W., “Sunday trading,” *Otago Daily Times*, 14 March 1989. Wayne D. Church, “Sunday trading,” *Ashburton Guardian*, 7 December 1989, 3. E. L. Krammer, “Sunday trading,” *Nelson Evening Mail*, 22 January 1990, 4. Smith, “Saving Sunday trade,” 14. Happy Shopper, “An individual decision,” *Wanganui Chronicle*, December 14, 1989, 6. “Good news in shop hours,” *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1989, 4. “Shopping on Sundays,” *The Northern Advocate*, 23 November 1989, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Terry Kennedy, “Retailing being forced back to the 1950’s,” 2. Luke, “Shop doors flung open on Sundays,” 1. NZPA, “Shops warn of Sunday defiance,” *The Marlborough Express*, 8 November 1989, 7. “Repeal of shop hour law urged,” *Evening Post*, 21 March 1988, 3.

¹⁰⁵ A joint submission from Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry to the Shop Trading Hours advisory Committee wanted the present Shop Trading Hours Act repealed, “on the grounds of efficiency and equity,” cited in “Repeal of shop hour law urged” 3. Note the arguments by Gwynn, “Why our Sundays should be free,” *The Dominion*, 31 January 1990, 10, and “Shop hours’ cases to be argued,” *Evening Post*, 17 March 1988, 4. Shops are able to open 70 hours a week now but only 52 hours are being used. The Retail and Wholesale Merchants Association also acknowledged that shops were not open “all the hours allowed,” in “Repeal Shop Hours Act,” 4.

¹⁰⁶ “Repeal of shop hour law urged,” 3.

¹⁰⁷ Submission to the STHA Advisory Committee from the Retailer and Wholesale Merchants Association, cited in “Repeal Shop Hours Act,” *The Evening Post*, 23 March 1988, 4. The association argued “most retailers did not anticipate trading on Sundays or outside the current hours allowed. But they felt they should be able to open when they, and where appropriate their staff, wanted to.”

when legislation is needed to ensure or protect individual freedom; accepted practice, in particular when this supports the opportunity to increase one's profit margins or favours individual freedom: some opponents to Sunday trading might add the god Mammon.¹⁰⁸

Freedom, and especially freedom of choice, was an argument found in correspondence from those in favour, as well as those opposed to Sunday trading. It was also discussed in articles and editorials on Sunday trading. Points raised in the syndicated "Punchline" column by Bob Jones¹⁰⁹ on Sunday trading are representative of those who consider it should be a matter of individual choice. Shopkeepers should be free to open on Sunday if they choose to do so, and employees free to choose whether or not they work. There is no compulsion to shop on Sunday, it is an individual choice. "If there is no public demand for shopping on Sunday, it will stop on its own accord, thereby reflecting the ultimate individual democratic freedom determinant of an open society."¹¹⁰

Skilton and others argued that, "freedom of choice for retailers would be eroded" by the introduction of Sunday trading, "in that competitive pressure will cause many reluctant traders to open for extended hours."¹¹¹ Jones,¹¹² and others in favour of Sunday trading as well as those opposed to its introduction both used the "free choice" argument to support their position. It could even be argued, and was, that freedom of choice through the introduction of Sunday trading would be good for the economy, and presumably benefit the family.¹¹³ It is ironic the same argument, freedom of choice for the individual, was being used by SOS and KSF correspondents

¹⁰⁸ Vette, "Sunday loss," 8. Retailers opposed to Sunday trading included Peter Warnock, in "Sunday buying 'novelty' will soon wear off," *Evening Post*, 5 December 1989, 3. Ron Bower, in "Claims retailers not polled on Sunday trading," *Marlborough Express*, 7 December 1989, 2. For consideration of some free-market philosophy during the 1980s and the responses of New Zealand MP's to Sunday trading, Simon Collins, "The free market tide sweeps left and right," *New Zealand Herald*, 16 December 1989, 8.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, "Dogmatic views," 4.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Skilton, L/90/84. Cullen, L/90/127. Quayle, "Sunday trading outrageous," 4.

¹¹² Cf. L. K. Allnutt, "Sunday trading freedom of choice," *Timaru Herald*, 23 Dec 1989. "A Cynic," 6, who also argued it was the anti-Sunday trading lobby that was restricting freedom of choice.

¹¹³ n. 37 above.

opposed to Sunday trading and the proponents of Sunday trading. Jones et al. wanted the freedom to work. For them authority resided in the individual's right to choose, and perhaps in the market and profitability associated with opening. For SOS and KSF writers the freedom they wished to retain was to enable time (in common) with others and with one's family: time to recharge spiritually, physically and mentally and the freedom *not* to work. Freedom from work on the Sabbath was an argument generally based on the fourth commandment. The ultimate authority SOS correspondents in particular might claim was likely to be God and the Bible. The letters and submission linked with KSF acknowledged a wider range of authorities.

Jones however, at least in regard to Sunday trading appears to make an individual's freedom to choose the ultimate authority. In doing so he qualifies or rejects various other possible sources of authority. The special nature of Sunday for Christians as a day of rest recreation and worship is "end-of-the-world guff." Christians are free to "practice such mystical rites as is their wont, but are outrageously arrogant and impudent to demand of the overwhelming majority of citizens that they must freeze one seventh of their lives in some sort of acknowledgement of these curious minority rituals."¹¹⁴ Jones considers people are free to practice their religion but not to impose values they might consider integral to that practice on others. He considers the authority of God and Holy Scripture is limited to those who choose to accept it. Individual choice is usually, but not always, the highest authority for Jones. When the government is able to cater to opposing views it should leave individuals the freedom to choose. However, "With the frigates and capital tax issues the Government could not simultaneously cater to both opposing views in making a decision, which is why I (Jones) suggested it had an obligation to bow to the majority."¹¹⁵ So in some situations for Jones individual freedom is the ultimate

¹¹⁴ Jones, "Dogmatic views," 4. Jones refers to the Webster- Perry survey in countering the claim that the "majority" of people do not want Sunday trading. New Zealand is legally a secular country, and according to the survey only 17% of people "actually practice religious pursuits." Is Jones implying the 50% majority is representative of that 17% or at best the one third of the population who "subscribe to any belief in the supernatural?" If so he misrepresents the National Research Bureau poll commissioned by SOS.

¹¹⁵ Jones, "Dogmatic views," 4.

authority and in others the Government, guided by majority opinion remains the source of authority.

SOS correspondents especially responded to what they saw as a personal attack by Jones on Quayle. They also contested Jones' claim that individuals should have the freedom/right to open their stores to enable Sunday shopping if they chose to do so.¹¹⁶ This exercise of individual freedom by some would result in others being forced to work and thus denied the freedom they had previously enjoyed to spend time with their families to worship, rest, or participate in various activities that took place on Sunday.¹¹⁷ It could be argued that the market, not the individual as Jones states, becomes the source of authority. Shops may be forced to open to survive or because the owners of malls have said they must do so. Employees, including managers, then have to work. Jones may be correct in observing that in a time of high unemployment there would always be people willing to take the place of those who did not want to work on Sundays, but concern was expressed by others that such a practice would only lead to the loss of full-time jobs, an increase in part-time employment and the eventual removal of penal rates.¹¹⁸

As presented by Jones, individual choice, and the authority thereby ascribed to individuals was another example of the "Wellington worldview" and individualism. Others might have seen it as a power encounter between the authority of the god of mammon and the authority of God found in scripture.¹¹⁹ As Duchrow notes, "Adam Smith's idea of the 'invisible hand' governing the market is really a mystification of

¹¹⁶ Toohey, "Who is imposing views on whom?" 4. Trevor Lane, "Kill the messenger," *The Dominion*, 3 February, 1990, 6. Hume, "Jones on Sunday," 4.

¹¹⁷ Cf. "Keep Sunday Free Coalition," L/90/4, 6-7. Gwynn, "Why our Sundays," 10.

¹¹⁸ Cf. "Open all hours," *Otago Daily Times*, 6 December 1989, 8. Paul Kimble, "Sunday trading final nail in the coffin of NZ weekend," *Timaru Herald*, 15 December 1989, 4. "Opening the doors on Sunday," 8. Harris, "Protect Sundays," 2.

¹¹⁹ Toohey, "Who is imposing views," 4, writes, "The arguments advanced (by Jones) are altogether too specious and lacking credibility to be taken seriously. The first of them is the virtual dismissal of the 10 Commandments, and certainly of the third commandment." Is Toohey listing the commandments according to their Jewish numbering here?

the visible hands turning the wheels towards profit making.”¹²⁰ Individual choice may have been declared a reason for supporting Sunday trading, but was it at least in part an attempt to divert scrutiny from authority being given to a free-market? Was the markets “authority” left undeclared in the articles by Jones?

The KSF submission considers the government has a responsibility to legislate for the common good which was considered more important in this case than individual freedom. “The freedom of a few individuals to do as they please is not as important as the public’s freedom NOT to be subject to commercial pressures seven days a week. The common good is more important.”¹²¹ This returns us to the question of how the common good is determined and who has the authority to do this. Gwynn¹²² suggests that limits to an individual’s freedom are needed to ensure the safety of people and prevent actions that would be offensive to the public. Governments are expected to try to “reach an acceptable balance between what individuals may want to do and what is in the interests of society as a whole.”¹²³ It appears from this that Gwynn considers authority resides with the government, which must try to determine what the common good is in making its decisions. In reaching a decision on Sunday trading, Gwynn argues the government should consider the common good is best met by protecting the needs individuals, families and communities have for a day of rest in common, as opposed to the freedom to shop or any supposed economic benefits arising from seven day trading. He refers to Aristotle’s dictum that “we operate in a social framework, and need to seek the greatest good for the greatest number.”¹²⁴

The claims and counter-claims about the loss of freedom and the imposition of unwanted values are part of the wider worldview of both opponents and proponents of Sunday trading. Newspaper columnists in reporting conflicting views about public

¹²⁰ Duchrow, *Alternatives*, 26. Cf. Duchrow, 30-32, 55. Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*, 78-9, for more on Adam Smith, the “invisible hand” and Smith’s integration of justice and benevolence with market forces, a point Janiewski and Morris claim is ignored by proponents of market liberalism.

¹²¹ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 14, emphasis original.

¹²² Gwynn, “Why our Sundays,” 10.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

demand for Sunday trading raise the question as to whether the legislation that introduced it was warranted.¹²⁵ Was it a “flop,”¹²⁶ was there a “significant public demand for greater flexibility in shop trading hours,” or had there been, “As expected ... a great deal of variation in the extent to which the enhanced freedom to trade has been used.”¹²⁷ Was it a “fizzer” with people confused about whether shops were open in the city (Christchurch) and suburban malls? “One week before Christmas ... about one shop in 10 (was) open.”¹²⁸ Were the two and a half thousand SOS members “heavily outnumbered by the hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders who shopped on the Sundays before Christmas?”¹²⁹ Opponents of Sunday trading, especially in the FCEC type referred to the polls showing the majority of New Zealanders did not want shops to open on Sunday. Proponents noted the large number of people who participated in Sunday shopping, and that the claims of price increases and the breakdown of family life had not happened. Both sides claimed the support of the public. Both those in favour and those against seemed to ascribe some authority to majority opinion.

The cost of Sunday trading: the place of economics

The KSF coalition claims the “true costs (of Sunday trading) are social ones, which would, over time be paid not so much in dollars and cents as in frustration, shallower personal relationships and increasingly pressurised lives.”¹³⁰ While not disagreeing that the social costs and “increasingly pressurised lives” that were expected to accompany Sunday trading could affect personal relationships, I am less certain economics can be detached from the “community we live in” in the way the KSF

¹²⁵ Snell, “Mixed reaction to Sunday shopping,” 1. NZPA, “Shops warn of Sunday defiance,” *The Marlborough Express*, 8 November 1989, 7. D. Cooper, “Price increases,” *Nelson Evening Mail*, 15 December 1989, 4. “Shoppers will vote on change,” 2. In general initial opinion in the smaller rural centres was that Sunday trading would be of benefit in larger cities and tourist areas but not smaller rural centres. Cf. “Rural tiptoe on Sunday trade,” *Waikato Times*, 18 December 1989, 3.

¹²⁶ Richard Ninness, “Sunday shopping is a bit of a flop,” *The Greymouth Evening Star*, 27 January 1990, 6.

¹²⁷ Sue Newman & NZPA, “Sunday trading extension comes as no surprise,” *Ashburton Guardian*, 31 January 1990, 1.

¹²⁸ W. J. C. Royds, “Sunday shopping,” *The Press*, 27 December 1989, 12.

¹²⁹ Smith, “Saving Sunday trade,” 14.

¹³⁰ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 3.

submission points to. KSF wrote, “Ultimately, though, the debate is not about economics. It is about the sort of community we live in.”¹³¹ Economics plays an integral part in determining “the sort of community we live in.” At just one level there is the cost of buying into a community, the cost of housing and land values. The proportion of one’s life spent in earning to pay off a mortgage, perhaps balanced against time spent with family or in social activities. What is an appropriate return on any loan taken to purchase a house? In most circumstances Calvin allowed five percent interest to be charged. How are interest rates determined today, and “by what authority are you doing these things?” What measures, if any, should a geographic or church community take in assisting members in financial difficulty?

I suggest Sunday trading could have been part of a wider economic debate. There were issues other than whether opening seven days a week was motivated by greed or was a public service, an opportunity for retailers to increase their profits and/or a reduction in working conditions and the end of penal rates. While concern was expressed regarding the negative impact working on Sundays was expected to have on women, “who make up the bulk of the retailing workforce,”¹³² on families, and the community, the Sunday trading debate was also an opportunity to explore alternatives to the economic status quo and examine biblical principles relating to economic practice. This was an opportunity missed by grassroots Christians and the leaders of SOS and KSF.

The willingness of New Zealanders to help their neighbours and to donate to local and overseas charities, even while experiencing economic hardship themselves,¹³³ may suggest the “Christian foundation” some correspondents assumed our country was built on.¹³⁴ New Zealanders responded to events such as Telethon¹³⁵ with

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.

¹³² Ibid., 7.

¹³³ On economic hardship, Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*, 33, “Its (money’s) absence imperils their adequate survival and deprives them of the ordinary things most other people take for granted.” Cf. Waldegrave and Coventry, chapter 4.

¹³⁴ While it can be argued New Zealand was a de facto Christian State, Rex Ahdar, “New Zealand and the Idea of a Christian State,” in *God and Government The New Zealand Experience*, ed. Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse (Dunedin New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 2000), 59, law based on Judeo-Christian principles, and immigrants from a Christian country do not in themselves mean New Zealand

Christian charity and humanitarian concern, rightly accepting the opportunity to help others less fortunate, but may still have ignored the demands made by justice and love to consider the “weightier matters of the law.”¹³⁶ I suspect most of us gave like the rich, out of our surplus,¹³⁷ even if we did not recognise this. If so it may be considered there was a failure, especially at the Christian grassroots level, to recognise there was/is a problem at the foundations of our (economic) Christian practice.¹³⁸ The way we conduct our daily lives, the way we shop, conduct our businesses, and set economic and other goals are appear generally to be indistinguishable from our non-Christian neighbours. From my experience I found Christians, when they did consider setting personal or financial goals have done so largely on the same acceptance of individualism and desire to be financially secure, if not “well-off” as non-Christians.¹³⁹

Davies wrote, “Society is not free. It is in the grip of materialism which has dictated the liberalisation policies that have been the hallmark of the Government for the past five years...The ‘Save our Sundays’ campaign is aimed to help release society from the chains of materialism that bind it.”¹⁴⁰ If Davies has in mind Jesus’ words in Luke 4:18b, then the SOS campaign could be seen as a continuation of Jesus “commission.” The captives and the blind (New Zealand society?) are to be released, according to Davies, from the evil of materialism and liberal policies, which for

was a Christian nation. Cf. Ahdar, “A Christian State?” 468, “Most settlers came here to get on with life, not to worship God.”

¹³⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telethon#New_Zealand> (11 June 2010). “Telethons were run nationwide in New Zealand in 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1991 by TVNZ and later, CanWest's TV3 in 1993 and 2009...After the first Telethon in 1975, broadcast within a week of new channel TV2's launch, and which raised over \$585,000 for Saint John's Ambulance, each Telethon outdid the previous total for several years, peaking in 1985 with over \$6 million, and a mere one month later TVNZ participated in the LiveAid global telethon bringing in \$1.8 million for New Zealand's contribution. The largest undertaking including smaller regional centres with host locations was 1988. However the economic climate at the time saw money raised drop in 1988 (\$5 million) and 1990 (\$4 million) while hosting costs soared.”

¹³⁶ Matthew 23:22-24 (KJV)

¹³⁷ Luke 21:1-4

¹³⁸ This is not to say all grassroots Christians consider their financial decisions are “biblical” just because they are Christians, or that none give sacrificially.

¹³⁹ This observation arises from nineteen years as an Anglican priest preparing couples for marriage, part of which include discussing personal and financial goals. I found the observation also applied to the students I tutored in biblical studies at Aoraki Polytechnic.

¹⁴⁰ Sybil Davies, “Trading,” *The Gisborne Herald*, 24 January 1990, 2.

Davies included: free trade and commercial advertising on Sundays, gambling, national lotteries and casinos, repeal of the homosexual law, a fiscal policy encouraging solo parenting, and the establishment of the ministry of Women's Affairs, "with its divisive anti-family bias between men and women." Sex education in schools and the upcoming Bill of Rights,¹⁴¹ were also included in Davies' list of liberal policies. I note that along with the usual moral issues, Davies is one of the few writers who mentions economic decisions that might be addressed in seeking to "release society" from materialism and liberalisation. So what might a free society look like for Davies? Would a free society need to accord with Davies' understanding of biblical principles in which God, rather than wealth/materialism, is the one served?¹⁴²

I consider Sunday trading a symptom of materialism and the Wellington/Western worldview Davies' perspective clashed with. In reflecting on these different views my perception is that Christians in the West are part of an economic system that in practice, as opposed to economic theory, has produced an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the West and the rest.¹⁴³ This disparity was apparent in New Zealand by the late 1980s.¹⁴⁴ The freedom to acquire (more) goods, increase profits, and gain more of the world's (Gods) resources has become an end in itself.

Today, the global market economy has been sacralised and elevated to an imperial throne. It has changed places with human beings who created it. By defining what it means to be human, it has become the creator of human beings. Thereby it usurps the sovereignty of God, claiming a freedom that belongs to God alone. For us Christians, it raises the question of idolatry and of loyalty to God or mammon.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Sybil Davies, "Politics, 2.

¹⁴² Cf. Matt 6:24; Luke 16:9-13; Hebrews 13:5; James 4:13-5:6.

¹⁴³ This is not to overlook the existence of poverty in Western countries: however the West is often considered wealthy in comparison to other geographic areas. By what authority do we allow, "Almost half the world to live on less than \$2.50 a day?" Anup Shah, "Poverty Facts and Stats," *Global Issues*, <<http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>> (11 June 2010)

Cf. Jeff Gates, "Statistics on Poverty and Inequality," *Global Policy Forum*, <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/218/46377.html>> (11 June 2010).

"Poverty Reduction and Equality," *The World Bank*, <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20153855~menuPK:435040~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:430367,00.html>> (11 June 2010).

¹⁴⁴ Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*; Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*,

¹⁴⁵ World alliance of reformed churches 1995, *Reformed Faith and Economic Justice*, documentation of consultation in Kitwe, Zambia, Geneva, cited in Duchrow and Hinkelammert, *Property for People*,

I suggest that the “true costs” of Sunday trading go beyond the social costs identified in the KSF submission and could have been more accurately identified if a wider economic debate had occurred around the Sunday trading issue. This might include consideration of the “global market economy” in the way it is perceived by Duchrow and Hinkelammert above. It would have been interesting to consider the definition of Christianity as “a philosophy of individual behaviour,”¹⁴⁶ and what, if any impact free-market principles had on New Zealanders’ views about charitable giving.¹⁴⁷

Despite efforts to support fair trade, act ethically, green the environment, respond to legislation through adding our signatures to petitions, (which often opposed legislation that was considered by some Christians to promote immorality), and donate to charity, I am concerned that the continued acceptance of present economic practice and values contributes to the deprivation others experience. In any wider economic debate about Sunday trading now we might consider the words of Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, “The wisdom of riches is in sharing. The goodness of possessions can only really increase if they are shared. The richness of life can only increase if it becomes life that is shared. This is what it means to be rich towards God.”¹⁴⁸

Conclusions

What does this say about FCEC notions of authority especially in determining who or where the authority to permit Sunday trading resides? The FCEC correspondents

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¹⁴⁶ James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), 303, cited in *New Rights*, Janiewski and Morris, 83.

¹⁴⁷ Analysis of the influence of the free-market, or other economic systems, on charitable giving in New Zealand is beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁴⁸ Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, “Rich toward God,” Sermon, St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh, June 6 2010, <<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/sermons/rich-toward-god-st-marys-cathedral-edinburgh-june-6-2010.html>> (16 June 2010).

generally appealed to a mixture of “authorities” rather than one single authority.¹⁴⁹ Some, but certainly not all correspondents used quotations from scripture and references to God and religious principles, suggesting the Bible was seen as authoritative and God as a source of authority.¹⁵⁰

The letters from Quayle and the SOS submission are assumed, especially by Jones, to be from a Christian perspective. However the omission of any scripture quotations and only one point out of ten referring specifically to Christianity is somewhat surprising. Was this a decision by the SOS committee? Did they consider the use of scripture and its association with Christian views a hindrance in gaining support? Had thought been given to the difficulties of religious language when Christians engaged in public debate? “When the church contributes to public debate on matters of concern to society at large, it should forget that it is the church of Jesus Christ and should address society in terms common to all participants. The attempt to be distinctively Christian belongs to the pursuit of internal discipline among the faithful.”¹⁵¹ (This view seems unlikely to have appealed to members of SOS.) Were humanitarian and economic arguments considered more likely to persuade the public and politicians than quotations from the Bible? Despite the lack of scripture references in their writing it is probable that God and scripture were the sources of authority for SOS and Quayle. Other correspondence showing SOS influence did have scripture quotations or references to the Bible, especially to the fourth commandment.

¹⁴⁹ C. B. & S. L. Corney, L/90/58, included the majority opinion, family and economic and religious arguments. Cf. Matt O’Byrne, “Stay home on Sundays,” *Evening Post*, 30 December 1989, 6. Garry Muir, “Trading Hours Act,” 3. Malley, L/90/120.

¹⁵⁰ McKenzie, “Sunday should remain rest day,” 4. George McMillan, “Sunday shopping,” *Bay of Plenty Times*, 16 November 1989, 4. I. D. & E. A. Hewlett, Letter to Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, no date, Parliamentary Library L/90/183 Wellington.

¹⁵¹ Oliver O’Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, (Leicester: IVP, 1986), 20, cited in Jonathon Boston, “Christianity in the Public Square: The Churches and Social Justice,” 29, in Jonathon Boston Alan Cameron, ed. *Voices for justice: church, law and state in New Zealand* (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press, 1994). Cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 11f, 47-65, 178.

The fourth commandment as a creation ordinance¹⁵² was included in FCEC correspondence as a reason to oppose Sunday trading: but how did correspondents in the FCEC type (and other Christians) apply Jesus' two great commandments in their daily lives? Several of the characteristics in what Ahdar has called the "Wellington Worldview" should have conflicted with the worldview/s expressed in FCEC correspondence on Sunday trading,¹⁵³ particularly the emphasis given to the individual. "If liberalism views society as simply an aggregation of individuals, then *a fortiori* it views groups or communities likewise."¹⁵⁴ However, this need for a clear distinction between the individualism and autonomy found in the Wellington worldview, and arguably Western culture, and Christian *koinonia* is not always apparent in the correspondence.

While accepting God and the Bible as authoritative, it can be argued from their correspondence that the understanding and application of this authority by correspondents in the FCEC type left room for other authorities. Quayle in his letter to the New Zealand Baptist wrote, "If enacted by Parliament, they, (the government and its proposed legislation allowing Sunday trading, hotels to open and race meetings on Sundays), will fundamentally change Sunday as we know it and for one basic reason - to make more profit irrespective of any social harm which may result."¹⁵⁵ The authority of the government was recognised, even if Quayle was opposed to the decisions that might be made. The acceptance and use of other authorities may not have been recognised or intentional for all correspondents. The emphasis given to poll results suggests some authority was ascribed to majority opinion, and implied the government should use its authority in accord with public opinion. SOS correspondence seems to consider the polls, as they represented

¹⁵² Beckwith and Stott, *This is the Day*, 3, 17. Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 28. A. T. Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day A Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1982), 346.

¹⁵³ Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, chapter 3, table 4.1. Note Ahdar compares the Wellington worldview with that of his Conservative Christian. It is unlikely all FCEC correspondents should be categorised as Conservative Christians.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁵⁵ T. J. Quayle, "We must fight to save our Sunday," 2.

majority opinion, had some authority. It is the government that will enact the legislation, but the “majority” including SOS members opposed the government’s proposed legislation. In this situation it appears SOS correspondents favoured majority opinion over the authority of the government. Perhaps they resolved the tension by referring to Acts 5:29?

The distinction between SOS, which was perceived as representing a Christian viewpoint, and KSF which declared that it represented a “broad-based coalition” of people and groups opposed to Sunday trading that included support from Christians, is important. KSF included “the churches”¹⁵⁶ in their submission, but if God was a source of authority in KSF correspondence then this was usually seen indirectly through the social and humanitarian concerns that were expressed. The government, particularly in attempting to legislate for the common good, appears to be a source of authority for the KSF coalition. The sources of authority found within SOS and KSF correspondence include majority opinion, especially as found in public opinion polls, the government, God and the Bible. These can be set against authorities of the proponents of Sunday trading: the market and its “invisible hand,” individualism, a (different?) majority, and profit.

Other institutions were also assumed to have a role in determining whether Sunday trading should be permitted including the United Nations as a source of authority for freedom of religion. This freedom was considered to be threatened by the introduction of Sunday trading. Writers thought the government should heed the opinion of the majority in making its decision, both by inference in correspondence and results they quoted from polls. Some writers also informed the STHAR committee that the majority of members at their church were opposed to Sunday trading.¹⁵⁷ This might imply that although church membership only represented a minority of people, they saw themselves as part of a larger majority (as seen in the polls?), and some considered the voice of the majority should at least be carefully

¹⁵⁶ Keep Sunday Free Coalition, L/90/4, 10-11.

¹⁵⁷ Margaret Arnold, Letter to Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, no date, Parliamentary Library L/90/86 Wellington. Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Eastmond, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 5 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/124 Wellington.

weighed if not determine the outcome of the Sunday trading debate. Some correspondents appeared to see the implementation of majority opinion as democracy at work.¹⁵⁸ One writer expressed this appeal to democracy as an authority by asking, “Is there any constitutional way a New Zealand Government can be called to account before a general election?”¹⁵⁹ The government was seen as a source of authority, whether its legislation was in accord with majority opinion or not. FCEC correspondents may also have considered their arguments as authoritative because of the logic or perhaps “rightness,” (righteousness?), they contained. The impression given in some correspondence was that the authority/persuasiveness of humanitarian and social arguments stood on their own merit, just as the authority of scripture did for others in the Christendom type. It was at this point, the authority ascribed to arguments, that the differences between Christian and non-Christian worldviews as they related to Sunday trading became blurred. “Keeping Sunday free from working hours is not just a religious argument.”¹⁶⁰

FCEC correspondents, in objecting to the negative impact they expected Sunday trading to have on families, the economy, and the community responded by writing letters and submissions and suggested a boycott of shops that chose to open on Sunday. There were competing authorities and worldviews found in Sunday trading correspondence. The acceptance of a particular authority as arbiter of the common good, or being *the* authority to determine which of several competing worldviews should determine issues such as Sunday trading appeared to be an individual decision. To shop or not to shop: that is the question.¹⁶¹ However the answer would impact the whole community. “It (the Shop Trading Hours Act Reform Bill) is just fuelling the malaise of much of the population of New Zealand - greed, self interest,

¹⁵⁸L. R. Burgess, “Sunday shopping,” *The Press*, 8 December 1989, 12. Lindsay S. Day & others, Letter to Parliamentary Select Committee Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 10 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/141 Wellington. Letters also noted how the government had ignored public opinion on other issues such as the purchase of war ships. John G. McAulay, “A protest about Sunday trading,” *The Greymouth Evening Star*, 7 December 1989, 8.

¹⁵⁹Burgess, “Sunday shopping,” 12.

¹⁶⁰Mary Dixon, “Sunday trading,” *Nelson Evening Mail*, 14 December 1989, 4. Cf. D’Arcy, “Fight against Sunday trading.” 4. Kimble, “Sunday trading final nail in the coffin of NZ weekend,” 4. Harris, “Protect Sundays,” 2.

¹⁶¹With apologies to W Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3 Scene 1. Should Christians live with “the slings and arrows” of an unbearable situation or protest against “a sea of trouble?”

and the seeking of satisfaction through the accumulation of wealth and property. It does nothing to improve the mental or physical well-being of the people of New Zealand.”¹⁶²

Humanitarian, social, and biblical arguments have a place within the FCEC response to Sunday trading. However I suggest the (continuing) debate might benefit from the inclusion of wider economic issues perhaps arising from a comparison of Aristotle’s need-oriented household economy with the money accumulation economy. Christian communities might also engage in studies of biblical economic principles which could include a review of how individuals and communities respond to concepts such as God’s Kingdom, Sovereignty, and God’s provisions for humanity. Of course the deeper issues these last two suggestions raise were not likely to appear in the letters and submissions of correspondents in the Sunday trading debate of 1988-1990. Their main focus was to present arguments convincing politicians not to pass the STHAR Bill, and to try and persuade the public that the impact of Sunday trading would be detrimental, rather than beneficial, to the common good and the New Zealand Weekend.

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¹⁶² J. M. Purdie, Letter to Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill, 7 February 1990, Parliamentary Library L/90/118 Wellington.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The primary reason for the letters and submissions correspondents sent to newspapers, periodicals and parliament was to express their opposition to the Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill. The Bill and its provisions were only mentioned directly in a few instances, most correspondents referring to Sunday shopping, shops opening on the Sabbath or to Sunday trading in their writing against the proposed legislation. Given that the purpose was to oppose for various reasons the extension of shop trading hours to include Sunday trading, and that most letters and submissions were relatively short, the silence on deeper issues of theology and biblical exegesis relating to the Sabbath was perhaps to be expected. In acknowledging this silence, including the lack of direct reference to the Bill by most correspondents it is still possible to infer, if only tentatively, something of the perception and attitude held in regard to our key question, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” This chapter will suggest some possible answers to this and other questions raised in my proposal, compare the responses of the Christendom and FCEC types in their opposition to Sunday trading, and from my study of Christian opposition to the STHAR Bill from 1988-1990 outline some of the issues Christians who continue to engage in the debate over Sunday trading, shops opening at Easter or possibly on Christmas Day might consider.

“By what authority...”

Scripture, often in the form of “proof texts” appeared to be the primary source of authority within the Christendom type and for some of the correspondents in the FCEC type. Some letters and submissions expressed the belief that the Bible was inerrant. In these cases it appeared scripture was seen as mediating God’s authority to humanity. The verses quoted or referred to were generally interpreted in a literal manner. In particular the fourth commandment contained instructions, not suggestions or “alternatives” as to how the Sabbath/Lord’s Day was to be kept.

However, is it appropriate to attempt to impose through legislation the commandments God intended as a reminder of liberation, freedom and rest?

A number of correspondents tended to an *a priori* view of biblical authority. For them there was no question as to whether the Bible was authoritative or why, it simply was. Therefore what was contained in the Bible could either be accepted or rejected, the one leading to God's blessing and the other to curses. Some correspondents saw the rejection of "God's Word" by the nation as a cause of increasing social problems and immorality in New Zealand. Obedience to biblical commands was seen as a solution to the nation's economic and social problems by some correspondents,¹ while others considered these same problems to be a result of our disobedience to God's law. Latham however, appears to set concern for the present economic situation and the role of secular government in opposition to a Christian's responsibility to give "people something no law can take away - faith and hope."²

FCEC correspondents were more inclined to acknowledge a wider range of "authorities" than those in the Christendom type. These included: majority opinion as recorded in poll results,³ the United Nations Charter, the government, perhaps the logic of their arguments, the Bible and God. In some cases combinations of the above were used as authorities in FCEC letters and submissions. This does not necessarily mean the Bible was less authoritative than other sources for all the correspondents in this type, but some FCEC correspondents certainly expected the government to use its authority, follow majority opinion and withdraw the STHAR Bill. Renouf referred to both majority opinion and God's instructions as reasons to keep one day in seven as a "special day." Thus government authority should at the very least, in his and some other correspondents' views, heed majority opinion. However it was God's instructions that remained certain in his argument. So while public opinion and governments will change, for many of our correspondents, it appears God's authority remained constant.

¹ Especially 2 Chronicles 7:14.

² J. Latham, "Sunday trading," 3.

³ Majority opinion and polls that showed "most" New Zealanders (the margins were small) were opposed to Sunday trading were also used authoritatively in arguments made by the Christendom type.

Although Christian correspondents cited a variety of “authorities” the Bible and God were considered the main source of authority in most of the correspondence, especially in the Christendom type. For this type and others who considered the Bible inerrant, a clash in worldviews or competing authorities was of concern primarily in the refusal of those who held the competing viewpoints to accept God’s word as the sufficient and supreme authority. However some correspondents appeared more open to accepting authorities other than the Bible/God in decisions affecting the common good and individual freedom.

The authority of scripture...

In claiming the authority of scripture in their opposition to Sunday trading correspondents used a select number of references. The most frequent passages referred to were one of the versions of the fourth commandment⁴ or 2 Chronicles 7:14. Old Testament verses predominated but noticeably absent from the Old Testament was any reference to the Jubilee passages in Leviticus, and with few exceptions, the prophets.⁵ Also missing, although perhaps understandably given the primary nature of the letters, were biblical texts such as Romans 13:1-8, Acts 5:29, Titus 3:1. These passages could have been used in seeking to establish a “biblical basis” when considering Church-State authority and part of a response to the STHAR Bill. Despite the absence of these texts I conclude that the Bible was considered authoritative especially by the Christendom type.

It was unclear from other correspondence as to how the relationship between scripture as an authority and God’s authority was perceived. Were the written words of scripture equal in authority to God because they were considered to have

⁴ Correspondents did not enter into debate regarding the different versions or emphases of the fourth (third) commandment, the changes in practice and differing scholarly interpretations. Whether the Sabbath was Saturday or Sunday received more attention than whether the fourth commandment was a creation ordinance, although some correspondents argued from a creation ordinance position.

⁵ C. G. R. Chavasse, “One day a week,” 8, refers to Amos 8:5 in arguing the rich wanted to abolish the Sabbath and Israel’s fate would be ours if we abolished one day’s rest in seven. Some correspondents included passages from 1 Samuel.

“come from” God? What authority was given to the Bible as a holy book: God’s Word for salvation?⁶ If the Bible was not inerrant then in what way should it be considered an authority, and could the fourth commandment especially or any other verse be used in the argument against Sunday trading? If the words themselves did not contain or convey the authority of God, then did the principles contained in them hold any authority? Could this authority be applied to decisions relating to Sunday trading in New Zealand in 1989? In short, can God’s authority stand above that of the State if the Bible is considered fallible, or if God is not accepted as an authority?⁷

These last questions posed a challenge for some Christians when the government rejected both majority opinion and according to some of the correspondents, the commands of God as well. If all authority came from God then what action, if any, was it appropriate for Christians to take if the government (assumed to have been appointed according to God’s authority and will?) was not acting in a way some Christians considered to be biblical? Sunday trading was viewed in this way by some of the correspondents who claimed its introduction would be contrary to the fourth commandment. One response was to use the authority they claimed for scripture in pointing out the government’s error and disobedience and the consequences of continuing with the proposed legislation: perhaps a prophetic response? However the impression given was that these writers held a literal expectation that what God had said would come to pass. The reasoning appeared to be that as God had created us, God would know what was best for us. Governments and the legislation they proposed should be in accord with God’s law. It appeared that God’s law, as it was understood by these correspondents, was considered by them to be what was best for the country at large, that is, the common good.

For others the issue was not as clear. Variations within the evangelical tradition were found in correspondence to the *Challenge Weekly* with regard to the right of

⁶ N. T. Wright, *The Last Word*, 137, “‘the authority of scripture’ is really a shorthand for ‘the authority of God’ exercised through scripture.”

⁷ Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 54-5, on the role of the State as considered in various Christian traditions. Cf. Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1937), 679-82. Harline, *Sunday: a history*, 89.

Christians to impose their views on others. In an editorial⁸ John Massam wrote that when considering Sunday trading there were more important issues than consumer demand and increased profits, “love and compassion must be motivated by care for fellow men, not restricting others for their own advantage.”⁹ Massam considered Christians had a right to express their opinions, but this should be done for the right reasons: simply to protect church attendance was not a sufficient reason. Speaking out from a desire to protect the “health and welfare of the nation” coupled with an attitude and lifestyle that shows “commitment and reverence for God,”¹⁰ was acceptable. Massam also notes the rights of others to conduct business on Sunday, and the responsibility the government has to “act in the best interests of all.”¹¹ Without mentioning pluralism, Massam appears to recognise that within a pluralistic society there will be competing rights and authorities. He argues if (evangelical) Christians are going to exercise their right to be heard then it should be for the good of the community, not to protect Christian practices. In “imposing” their views on others Massam appears to mean through example, rather than legislation or claiming any authority that would force others to adopt the practices and beliefs of Christians.

Silvio Famulari argues strongly for the authority of the Bible in his letter, referring to Exodus 20:8 as a reason to keep Sunday free.¹² He considers this verse reminds us of God’s creative act and the need for one days rest each week. For Famulari the “theory of evolution,” in denying a literal seven day creation, would make this commandment meaningless. He concludes, Christians have no right to impose their “virtues” on others but they do have the right to impose the will of God. In correspondence with Famulari he expands on this belief. “Our” (human) virtues may

⁸ John Massam, *Challenge Weekly*, 11 March 1988, 2.

⁹ Ibid. Contra, the view expressed by the Rev. John Terris in, Jane Clifton, “Terris wants shops closed during church,” 2.

¹⁰ Massam, 11 March 1988, 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Silvio Famularo, “Sabbath Sunday,” 14. A letter from Mary Boxhold is published on the same page in which she also supports the need for rest and worship on Sunday arguing from a creation ordinance position.

be wrong, but God commanded us to be obedient to Him. This includes obeying the Ten Commandments.¹³

In his article, “Set aside one day in seven,” Francis Foulkes considers both God’s creative and liberating acts.¹⁴ There are no detailed rules for those “following Jesus” regarding how Sunday should be kept, but there is wisdom in setting one day aside from work. In agreement with Massam he writes, “Christians cannot legislate for the whole of society, but we can ourselves act in the way that we feel is right for us and for others.” However on the basis that, “it is not for the good of all” Foulkes suggests Sunday trading and “organised sport” by clubs are counter to “the best interests of society.”¹⁵ He draws from scripture, understandings established following the Reformation regarding the sacredness of all days, “practical” considerations, and the example of other Christians in reaching his conclusions. Scripture however is his primary authority.

While the correspondence from some evangelical Christians in the Christendom type shows a strong belief in the authority of the Bible, God’s authority, there are variations as to how this could best be applied. Some consider legislation promoting Biblical law appropriate. Usually this is accompanied by a belief that obedience to God including the commandments given in scripture will be what is best for the common good. However others appear to have considered the secular and pluralistic nature of society, and while they might prefer legislation that reflects biblical principles or even encapsulates the commandments, they acknowledge the rights of others and (possibly) that there are different authorities competing in society. It appears they would not support Christians imposing their beliefs on the government or other citizens. Some correspondents seem clear in their view that the Bible should determine government policy, at least as far as we can tell with regard to Sunday

¹³ Personal correspondence in the author’s possession. (7 November 2010). “It is simply because God commanded us to be obedient to Him. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus said, ‘*Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*’ (Matt 16:19),” emphasis original.

¹⁴ Foulkes “Set aside one day in seven” 7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

trading. However the authority of the Church standing above that of the State does not necessarily follow.

My perception is that as the church was usually seen as being disjointed rather than as a united body, both from within and by the wider community it would be more difficult to argue it held the same authority some gave to scripture. Which part of the church and whose voice should be accepted as authoritative? (Of course the authority of scripture might also be challenged on the same grounds: whose interpretation, which version?) In my experience at the grassroots level the “church” tends to be understood as a local building or perhaps denomination far more than as the body of Christ on earth, let alone including the communion of saints. The role and responsibilities of the church have not been defined solely by its members. For instance limits are placed on the church by government and local body regulations and arguably by society’s expectations. When issues such as Sunday trading arise church members express various opinions, including a belief Christians should not be involved in politics.

Authority, economic morality, and the “church”

Within the Christendom type when Sunday trading was considered a moral problem, it remained unclear in the correspondence whether this included economic morality. For Sybil Davies writing in the Gisborne Herald, free trading, Sunday advertising, gambling, and “fiscal legislation encouraging solo-parenting” were “indicative of a leadership that has lost its way ... a party infiltrated by atheistic and radical viewpoints detrimental to the building of Christian traditional family life and the inherent values of service and responsibility.”¹⁶ van Dorp in the Gisborne Herald and in his submission to parliament¹⁷ also links Sunday trading to a decline in the nation’s morality and disobedience to God’s Word. Although both refer to “morality” in their opposition to Sunday trading and Davies lists several issues that might contribute to economic hardship within a family, gambling, and being on a solo-

¹⁶ Davies, “Politics,” 2.

¹⁷ van Dorp, “Sunday trading,” 2. van Dorp, L/90/130.

parent benefit,¹⁸ neither correspondent seems to associate the economic immorality that Sunday trading might be seen to contribute to, or link the wider issues of economic morality¹⁹ to their “moral” opposition to Sunday trading. This perhaps illustrates Webster and Perry’s observation that, “This resistance to economic controls contrasts sharply with religionists’ insistence on moral control. Moralistic individualism seems to be the prevailing ethos of the religious.”²⁰

In chapter three I considered what seemed to be a discrepancy between the Christendom type’s acceptance of biblical authority being applied to “family values” and sexual morality, but apparently not to their understanding of economic issues and practice. I suggest this “log in the eye”²¹ can still produce a distorted view among New Zealand Christians in regard to everyday financial decisions.²² It appears to me that cultural influences both from our church culture/s and wider society have probably influenced the consideration of finances, private property, and employment, more than carefully informed biblical beliefs. Further to this, while there was never any formal coalition between the “religious right” and any political party in New Zealand at this time, the free-market policy remained unchallenged in the Christian responses to Sunday trading.²³ While it is an argument from silence, there remains a suspicion that some correspondents supported the individualism of the free-market without considering the contradiction this presented regarding their opposition to Sunday trading. The tensions between competing freedoms, a free-market on the one hand and the freedom to ensure a “biblical” Sunday on the other, remained unaddressed.

¹⁸ Davies, “Politics,” seems to imply that government policy is promoting immorality in her reference to solo-parents. There is nothing in her letter to suggest receiving an income inadequate to provide one’s “daily bread” might also be immoral. Cf. Charles Waldegrave and Rosalyn Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*, 114-15.

¹⁹ Davies, “Politics,” 2. van Dorp, “Sunday trading,” 2. Waldegrave and Coventry, *Poor New Zealand*, especially chapters 3, 13. Duchrow and Hinkelammert, *Property for People*.

²⁰ Webster and Perry, *Values and Beliefs*, 38.

²¹ Luke 6:42

²² The Hikoi of Hope might be considered as a later response to free-market policy.

²³ The unions on the other hand did argue the effects they considered free-market policy had on both employees and managers/owners. Cf. Kimble, “Sunday trading final nail in the coffin of NZ weekend,” 4.

I considered the small amount of contact there appeared to be between members of one church and others in the same town. There was also limited interaction between correspondents on the Sunday trading issue and where interaction occurred it was mostly in relation to the “Sabbath controversy” or Bob Jones’ “Punchline” column. In the way “church” was often understood, opposition to Sunday trading came from individual members rather than “the church” in the correspondence to editors. While some denominations and church groups made submissions to parliamentary committees it was SOS and KSF that appear to have presented a more ecumenical public face, even if SOS was perceived as presenting a narrow Christian viewpoint.

Foulkes notes the danger of Christians being seen as negative and holding “an endless range of prohibitions about Sundays.”²⁴ In this sense the “church” was perceived as being the opposition, although with regard to STHAR Bill the trade unions also opposed the Bill. Foulkes argued there was more to be gained through the encouragement of positive action: but to what extent did the lifestyles of Christians as they might be perceived, including Jones’ description of Christians opposing the STHAR Bill as “wowsers”²⁵ count against the claims made for church authority? I also note that the role and authority of the church in New Zealand had been diminishing throughout the twentieth century.²⁶ The increasing marginalization of Christianity and the perception (rightly held in many ways) of the “Church” as a divided organisation could be seen as two of the factors working against any claim that God’s authority, at least as it was represented by the Church, should stand over that of the state.

The church itself was divided over the issues of authority: was scripture the supreme authority or should tradition and reason be given equal weight?²⁷ Did the Reformers’

²⁴ Foulkes “Set aside one day in seven,” 7.

I wonder if the churches opposition expressed in the Hikoi of Hope was perceived more positively because it was seen to be *supporting* the poor, and gave expression to an even wider opposition to government policy?

²⁵ Bob Jones, “Dogmatic views on Sunday trade,” 4.

²⁶ Lineham, “Government Support of the Churches,” 45. Lineham, “The Condition of the Church,” 114-6. Davidson, “Chaplain to the Nation,” 311-31.

²⁷ Wright, *The Last Word* 70-81. Note especially Wright’s comments on the way the meaning of “authority” was changed and understood by the Reformers and their opponents, “primarily in terms

rejection of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church lessen any claims our correspondents might make regarding church authority? I mentioned the diverse interpretations given to some of the key passages of scripture used in opposing the introduction of Sunday trading. Not all Christians held the same understanding of the Sabbath commandments, and therefore opinions differed regarding the authority that might be ascribed to scripture in opposing the STHAR Bill.²⁸

However the perception I gained was for at least some correspondents, God's authority was supreme over all things, despite the absence of certain verses in their letters and submissions. There was no real attempt to link God's sovereignty, or for that matter give any consideration to the Kingdom of God, as they related to the wider issues of economic morality. Even allowing for the limitations imposed by word limits in letters to the editor and perhaps time constraints in writing submissions, I wonder if *consideration* of these points might have resulted in actions in addition to those the correspondents suggested. However for some correspondents, regardless of how Christians or the church were perceived by those outside, and irrespective of the perception of other members, God's Word and authority would remain infallible. It appeared that in the understanding of scripture for these correspondents all authority came from God, (Romans 13:1-3), so the teaching of scripture, especially with regard to Sunday especially God's fourth commandment, would take precedence over "mans" law. This did not necessarily mean a theocratic government was preferred, although some indication of this appeared in correspondence from writers from the Reformed tradition.²⁹ Note however that it was scripture and/or God who are seen as the source of authority, not the church. While some concern was expressed that Sunday trading might hinder church attendance if people were forced to work on Sunday the STHAR Bill did not appear to be considered as an attack on the church *per se* as much as it was

of 'the place where you could go to find an authoritative ruling.'" 75. This tends to be the sense in which authority is used in the Sunday trading correspondence especially in regard to the Bible.

²⁸ Mark 3:24-25.

²⁹ Janiewski and Morris, *New Rights*, 123, "In 1986, Rousas Rushdoony, the Christian Reconstructionist from the Chalcedon Institute, told us about the need to incorporate the Bible into all our laws, including capital punishment for homosexuality. His supporters in Reformed Churches in New Zealand preached the same need for a theocratic state and biblically correct legislation."

perceived to be (another) expression of the nation's disobedience towards God. It seems it was God's authority, rather than the church's authority that was to be placed above that of the State by some correspondents.

Conclusions

Correspondents from both the Christendom and FCEC types accepted the Bible and God as a source of authority although this was not the only authority found in either type. Other sources of authority were found more often in FCEC correspondence than from the Christendom type, including appeals to more than one authority within single letters or submissions. In general the Christendom type showed a more deliberate acceptance of the Bible/God as the ultimate source of authority although other forms of authority were recognised. The FCEC type, as suggested by their name, included more humanitarian concerns in their opposition to Sunday trading. Christendom correspondents generally demonstrated a more literal understanding of scripture and its application. They were more likely therefore to see the Church, or perhaps more accurately scripture and the authority of God, as being above that of the State ("man's" law.) Some Christendom correspondents appeared to consider the common good would be best served if the State enacted legislation in accord with God's law.

Arguments from scripture used by FCEC correspondents in opposing Sunday trading included the need for a day of rest, preferably in common, opportunities to worship, and concern for family and community well-being. This concern for the community and family was not absent from Christendom correspondence but my perception is it was based on a more literal application of the texts. However neither type engaged to any degree with the deeper and more complex issues that arise from the Sunday-Sabbath debate. This was not altogether surprising especially given the short length of many of the letters and their primary purpose, which was to express opposition to Sunday trading from a particular point of view.

The STHAR Bill was seen by at least some of the correspondents as another attack on the authority of God, or perhaps the continued secularisation of what had been (perceived as) a Christian country. For some, but certainly not all, it was also an attack on Christians' rights. For these correspondents opposing the STHAR Bill might be considered an affirmation of God and the authority of the Bible as they understood it.

A minority of correspondents, on the basis that God was the supreme authority, seemed to consider Christians should "impose" what they saw as the will of God, God's law, on the rest of the nation. However apart from what seemed to be an expectation that parliament should do this there was little in the way of practical suggestions as to how this was to occur.

The perception I gained was that most Christendom correspondents held an orthodox-evangelical theological position, seeing the STHAR Bill and Church-State relations more readily in black and white terms. It was more difficult to generalise with regard to the theology of FCEC correspondents, but their appeal to a wider range of authorities might be *perceived* by some as coming from a more liberal position. The smaller number of FCEC correspondents and the variety within the correspondence means this can only be a very tentative suggestion.

I conclude that there was not a uniform understanding of the relationship between Church and State to be found in the correspondence opposing the Shop Trading Hours Act Repeal Bill. In general correspondents appeared to assign greater authority to the State than the Church. However in answer to our key question, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" some, but certainly not all the correspondents appeared to claim the authority from the Bible as they understood it, and/or from God.

Is there anything that can be learnt from Christians' engagement with the STHAR Bill in responding to legislation that will allow trading on Easter Sunday, and possibly at a later date Good Friday and Christmas Day? I suggest a wider engagement with the

many issues that can arise from the biblical texts, and that greater consideration be given to the history of the church and its Sunday practice, especially in New Zealand. While Christians have the right to claim the authority of scripture or God in presenting their arguments there is probably an even greater need now than in 1989 to recognise the different authorities and worldviews that exist in New Zealand society. Those who view society from a Christendom perspective are in the minority. Debate in a pluralistic society raises issues not only of the authority claims that are made but also the language used in making those claims. In their opposition to proposed legislation or in seeking to have legislation enacted Christians would also do well to consider the wider issues of authority as they relate to the Kingdom of God. Hauerwas notes the failure of Christians to see how deeply they have become compromised (through Christendom worldviews) when they consider their task is to rule.³⁰ I conclude with a quote from Hauerwas,

Every person, no matter how great, is a product of his age, seeking to give answers to the problems of his own time. Calvin was no exception. The main question that had to be answered in his day was not so much the nature of human authority, but who or what was the final authority on this earth - the pope, the king, a council, the people, or Scripture?³¹

Consideration of this question might benefit grassroots Christians who oppose Sunday and Easter trading in the future.

³⁰ Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 183. Cf. Ahdar and Stenhouse *God and Government*, 15. Ahdar, *Worlds Colliding*, 18-21, 45, n.100. For a different viewpoint, Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, 138.

³¹ Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 210.

Appendix 1

Francis Foulkes

In his article published in *Challenge Weekly*¹ Foulkes examines Sunday trading from a particular evangelical perspective. The use of scripture as the foundation of the arguments made by Foulkes, and the inclusion of many of the key issues found in other correspondence on this topic are reasons for the articles inclusion here.

The Bible is the source of authority for Foulkes. He begins by referring to both versions of the fourth commandment, Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12, then considers what the law as found in these verses is saying to people. The Sabbath is a day of rest from normal work, and to be kept holy. Keeping the Sabbath was meant to be a delight, not a burden, a time to remember God's goodness, and a sign that those who kept this law were God's people.² He explores Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath. He worshipped regularly in the synagogue (Luke 4:16). "In other words, he endorsed the principle of having a special day in the week for God's people to meet together to hear God's word, to worship, and to pray, and so be strengthened to go out to live for God in the world during the week."³ Jesus spoke against the many restrictions imposed by the "Jewish teachers." Reference is made to Mark 2:23-24: and the response to Jesus' healing on the Sabbath at Luke 13:14. Foulkes quotes Mark 2:27 and on this basis considers, "it (the Sabbath) is to be a blessing for all people, in the opportunity to rest and to worship."⁴

In the scriptures, Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, there are indications that Christians came together "to celebrate the first day of the week, the day of the Lord's resurrection."⁵ Foulkes moves from these scriptures to the way Christians today should keep the Sabbath. "If we follow the spirit of the teaching of Jesus we

¹ Rev. Francis Foulkes, "Set aside one day in seven," *Challenge Weekly*, 24 June 1988, 7. Francis Foulkes was my lecturer in New Testament studies and Warden of St. John's College, Auckland.

² Foulkes uses Exodus 31:13, Ezekiel 20:12, Isaiah 58:13 in helping establish these points.

³ Foulkes, "Set aside one day," 7.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

will not make Sunday a day with detailed rules about what to do and what not to do - but it will be a different day." The "difference" he writes of is presumably in comparison with the other six days, rather than an attempt to distinguish the Lord's Day from the Jewish Sabbath. Note also the desire to honour God and His commandment without proscriptive rules from Jews or Christians as to how this should be done. "Following the demand of the commandment itself, we should try to make it possible for others to have one day's rest in seven, and to have opportunity to worship if they wish to do so."⁶ Foulkes then outlines the progression from the Jewish Sabbath to the Lord's Day as he understands it. His next concern is in the retention and practice of the principles found in the fourth commandment, thus, "Worship, rest and refreshment, the strengthening of the bonds of family life, all are at stake in our keeping Sunday a special day."⁷

However Foulkes, as well as considering the blessings and freedom of the Sabbath, does comment on some of the things that he considers should not happen on the Lord's Day. "Sunday trading and business can militate against family life and sometimes prevent Christian people having the opportunity to worship."⁸ While not favouring the "strict sabbatarian rules forbidding Sunday sport" found in some countries, he opposes sport organised by clubs as it "has no regard for Christians' times of worship, and national and international competitive sport that causes a vast number of people to work in the organising of transport, trading and entertainment, cannot be said to be in the interests of society."⁹ Foulkes allows that participating in Sunday sport may be the best way for some people to relax and a more appropriate way for young people to be occupied than other things which may take up their time and energy. He does not mention the possibility of economic benefits to a community or city through national or international sporting events. It would appear he considers any (perceived) economic benefit would be outweighed by the (potential) harm to the common good, or "interests of society."

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Foulkes acknowledges the necessity of some people to work on Sundays, “unless we agree” to forgo “very many of the amenities we take for granted in life”¹⁰ such as public transport and electricity. “We have to practical, to be wise, and to be concerned for the good of all.”¹¹ In his acknowledgement of the common good, (“good of all”) Foulkes gives some authority to people as they work towards a perceived common goal. He is also aware that sacrifices will sometimes be required if what is in the “best interests of society” is to be maintained. Eric Liddell and Michael Jones are examples Foulkes gives of athletes who showed “courageous determination to put God first. The Christian Sunday - like the Old Testament sabbath - becomes a sign of loyalty and service offered to God.”¹² He notes that not everyone is prepared to make the required sacrifice, and so people choose to trade and participate in organised sport on Sunday.

Christians need to be wise and “honour God in what we say and do about Sunday,” according to Foulkes. The action we take should be positive, “action that encourages rest and leisure and that can lead people to lift their eyes to see the greatness and goodness of God.”¹³ Again we come to the question of interpretation and application of the Sabbath commandment. While Foulkes supports some restrictions and prohibitions they are less proscriptive than those given by rabbis or in more recent times, the suggestions made for members of the Mormon Church.¹⁴

However, what restrictions should Christians acknowledge in seeking to “encourage rest and leisure” on the Sabbath and help people see God’s “greatness and goodness?” Some correspondents in the Christendom type tend to be more literal in the interpretation of the fourth commandment and the way they would prefer it to be applied in New Zealand. Whether Christians, or more often a particular group within Christianity, should expect their understanding of scripture to be the basis of

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Foulkes writes in, “Set aside one day in seven,” “It is said there were more than 1500 things that were not to be done on the sabbath.” Jenny Evans, “What do Mormons do on Sunday?” *suite101.com*, <http://www.suite101.com/content/what-do-mormons-do-on-sunday-a137840>> (5 July 2010)

legislation for the whole of society is an area of disagreement amongst correspondents. Foulkes writes, “Christians cannot expect to legislate for the whole of society, but we can ourselves act in the way we feel is right for us and for others.”¹⁵

In this view the authority exercised by Christians and expressed in their actions should satisfy their own conscience, presumably as long as this does not harm (or impose itself?) on others. By encouraging individuals to determine for themselves what passages in the Bible mean there is always a risk that the conclusions reached are not the ones desired by those promoting this freedom. Further this greater risk of diversity in interpretation amongst Christians may weaken the claim some would make for Biblical authority.¹⁶ If Christians hold different interpretations of Bible verses, individually or as communities, how will a decision be reached as to which interpretation and its application is correct? Can the Bible be authoritative if the meanings attributed to the same passage are inconsistent? This may pose problems for some Christians in arguing against Sunday trading on the basis of “biblical authority.”

At one extreme, although almost certainly a misunderstanding itself of Foulkes’ desire that Christians act in a way they feel is right for them and for others, is the way some Christians use Biblical authority to legitimize their particular interpretation and practice of scripture. “Christian” individualism then results in a practice more akin to some of the characteristics of liberalism identified by Ahdar.¹⁷ The right/freedom to interpret the Bible for oneself must have some checks and

¹⁵ Ibid. Contra Famularo, “Sabbath Sunday,” 14. Massam, 11 March 1988, 2, who wrote, “Somehow we have absorbed the idea that Christians have no right to impose their views on others...if the health and welfare of the nation is at risk then Christians must speak out.” Cf. Richard Gunther “Godless world,” 4.

¹⁶ As in the “Peasants War,” 1525 when Müntzer, Luther, and the peasants held different understandings of what the Bible legitimated in regard to authority. Alister McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution – A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. (New York: Harper Collin Publishers, 2007), 65. “It was well known that Luther’s early optimism about the ability of *Herr Omnes* - his term for the German people - to interpret the Bible was severely challenged by the events of the Peasants’ War.” Cf. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation, Europe’s House Divided 1490-1700* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 157-63.

¹⁷ Ahdar, *World’s Colliding*, 76-85.

balances. It is not enough simply to be convinced one's own understanding of particular Bible verses is the "truth."¹⁸ It seems to me possible that some Christians at the grassroots level simply apply the authority they credit the Bible with to their interpretation and application of the Biblical text. If so it is ironic that the attempt to help people understand the Bible by making it more accessible, including translations into vernacular languages, can result in conflicting interpretations of scripture that continue to divide the church.¹⁹

Given that scripture itself is subject to various interpretations, and that many of the people holding these various interpretations might claim they are authoritative, it seems unlikely there would be one Christian response to Sunday trading. Does this mean individual choice is the final authority on whether or not to shop on Sundays? Foulkes' challenge is to individual members of the Christian community to act in a way "that we feel is right for us *and* for others."²⁰ There is a need to encourage positive action avoiding the "endless range of prohibitions about Sundays, like those who would have stopped Jesus healing on the Sabbath and his disciples plucking corn."²¹

While decisions to buy bread, pluck grain,²² may be made on the basis of an individual (Christian's) conscience and their interpretation of scripture, a Christian community might better serve the common good and fulfil God's Sabbath principles through the "positive action" Foulkes commends. To continue that process of learning to worship in "spirit and in truth," love one another as we have been loved," and care in ways that declare we are Christians.²³ Would the Christian protest against Sunday trading have been any more effective if the content of the letters and

¹⁸ Cf. Wright, *The Last Word*, 128-41, for helpful suggestions re the interpretation of scripture.

¹⁹ This is not to imply that divisions in the body of Christ only occurred with the availability of the Bible in vernacular languages. However, the misunderstandings/misinterpretations of scripture by individuals which played a part in the Peasants War continues today, and "authority," who has it and on what basis do they make their claim, remains a part of these issues.

²⁰ Foulkes, "Set aside one day," 7. Emphasis added.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Perhaps it is stretching Matthew 12:1-8 a little too far in seeing in it a precedent that allows the purchase of hot bread on Sunday!

²³ John 4:23; 13:34-35.

submissions had been primarily concerned with the blessings and benefits of Sunday: positive reasons for its retention? Perhaps if Christians had been seen to give practical help to the families/individuals most affected by Sunday trading within the community of faith and the wider community, they might better have declared God's love and the coming of God's Kingdom, two components of the "Lord's Day."

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