



Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 1 | 2024

Autumn issue on Missions, Culture and
Colonialism

ISSN 2815-9489

Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania

Volume 3 | Issue 1 | Autumn 2024

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Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania

In association with Te Piri Poho at St John's Theological College

202 - 210 St John's Road, St John's

Auckland, New Zealand

www.stjohnscollege.ac.nz/research

ISSN 2815-9489

Produced in New Zealand

Aims and scope of Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania

The *Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania* supports the kaupapa (purpose) of [Te Piri Poho](#), which is to foster a network of intellectual discipleship – theologians and scholars broadly working within the Anglican tradition, contributing research and resources in service of God and the mission of the church in Aotearoa and the Pacific. The journal additionally welcomes readership and contributions from the global Anglican and theological communities.

The aim of the journal is both inclusive, encouraging a variety of theological scholarship, reflection, and creative expression, and specific: to actively promote indigenous and contextual theologies. That is, the journal aims to give voice to areas of scholarship and other outputs that are often marginalised in church and academia, while also welcoming more traditional areas of theological scholarship.

The views expressed in the Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors, Editorial Board, or St John's Theological College.

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Editorial

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Kia whai korōria te Atua i runga rawa,
Kia mau te rongo ki runga ki te whenua,
me te whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata!
(*Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those
whom he favours!*)

Ruka 2:14 (Luke 2:14)

This edition of the *Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania* explores the kaupapa (theme) of “Missions, Culture and Colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand and Beyond.” The theme recognises recent anniversaries and commemorations, in particular the 200th anniversary of the Williams’ family’s arrival and the commencement of the influential Paihia mission settlement of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1823. In addition, many scholars, church leaders, missions and indigenous culture practitioners gathered at a wānanga-symposium in November 2023, at Waitangi, around a similar theme; elements of papers shared there are included in this issue.

Drawing on a range of perspectives and disciplines – historical, theological, missiological, indigenous – this issue examines aspects of the history and present realities of missions in this country of Aotearoa New Zealand and in other global locations, including South America. As such, this is perhaps the most “global” collection of essays and articles so far published by this journal. This befits a topic that has its origin in the Great Commission of Ihu Karaiti (Jesus Christ) in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and, in more recent times, in the unfolding of a global missionary movement from the sixteenth century as Jesuits and other counter-Reformation groups led missional enterprises to far-flung reaches of the globe. Aside from some earlier efforts associated with European colonial settlements, and the important example of the Moravian missions, not until the end of the eighteenth century did the Evangelical Revivals spur the modern, Protestant missions movement, which fanned out across Oceania, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. It is these modern, Protestant missions –

which included, prominently, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) – that are most connected to the narratives and themes of this issue.

The unfolding of this modern, Protestant missionary movement was intertwined with the expansion of western European empires, especially the French and British in the nineteenth century, while in the twentieth century, missionaries from many nations were sent all over the globe. Given that modern missions often spread with empires – as at first Christianity did with the Roman variant – it is not surprising that their legacy is mixed in terms of importing forms of institutional Christianity to new lands that were western or Eurocentric in culture and attitudes, and often colonialist or racist in the exercise of Church, or State, power. It is necessary, however, to unsettle such a homogenous, monolithic, or neat picture of missions and colonialism, as it does little justice to the wide range of missionary and indigenous responses to empire. Missions in the modern era sometimes preceded western empires, sometimes followed them. Missionaries sometimes (or often) opposed imperial regimes, while at other times they remained neutral and, on still other occasions, they supported government actions. Nor does a neat (and wholly negative) picture reflect the histories of indigenisation and contextualisation of Christianity in missions' contexts, as Christian scriptures and prayer books were translated, and as indigenous peoples adopted and adapted Christian faith and practice in their own cultural contexts.

Therefore, although empire (or colonialism) and western culture shaped much of the context in which the modern global church emerged, they still only form part of the picture; they comprise realities which background, or foreground, missionary work over the last several centuries, but they do not define it unilaterally. Other forces were at work, including theological and humanitarian currents, human compassion and love, and motivations to serve unstintingly the Great Commission and the Christ who commanded it. Moreover, as various essays in this collection explore, western missionaries and indigenous Christians did not inhabit hermetically sealed cultural worlds, incapable of change or adaptation to new ideas and practices. Rather, they adapted to new cultures and ideas, fulfilling the missionary model of St Paul – “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.” (1 Cor 9:22) Their adaptation or contextualisation was usually imperfect, sometimes seriously so, but most missionaries – then and now – knew that they needed to go where the people were and preach in their language, if not bend to their customs, to make inroads for the Gospel message. Indeed, without adaptation to local languages and practices, they would not have survived long. Furthermore, the essays contained here show many instances of how Christianity quickly became an indigenous possession, finding a home in hearts and cultures; and how indigenous peoples quickly, and early, became missionaries themselves.

This more multi-dimensional outline of modern missions is still wholly inadequate to cope with the wide diversity of encounters between faith and culture in imperial contexts. On the theme of peacemaking in empire, Peter Lineham's book review of *Pacifying Missions* in this edition closes with an apt conclusion on such a variegated picture: “Perhaps the key theme is that missionary idealism and desires to bring peace were unable to restrain imperial violence once it was unleashed.” This captures one major theme of this important recent contribution to missions and empire scholarship. In the specific context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the latest anthropological history from Prof. Jeffrey Sissons of Victoria University reveals the richness of engagement by Māori leaders with Christianity and colonial authority,

and with the Biblical text, which inspired new forms of cultural expression and protest against government policies. This is an important contribution to the rich historiography of Māori prophetic movements, as Samuel Carpenter's book review explores. Sissons has underlined how the prophetic movements and leaders – Tāmāti Te Ito of Kaingārara, in this case – were intertwined with political opposition to colonial policy – his relationship with Wiremu Kīngi Te Rangitāke being particularly important. Sissons has especially shown how the prophets cannot be understood without their Christian or scriptural inspiration. These are deep histories of spirituality in Aotearoa which are sourced in both te ao Māori and the Bible (as translated by CMS missionaries).

Samuel Carpenter's essay (the Selwyn Lecture of 2022) explores the intersections of Māori and European cultures at the dynamic local site of the Paihia mission settlement in the 1820s-40s period especially. This significant site of early Christianity in Aotearoa became a hybrid Māori-European village, where new Christian practices and the translated scriptures and prayer books mediated Christian belief to local Māori chiefs and hapū (tribes). Carpenter shows how missionaries and Māori lived, worked, prayed, and ate together; how the mission schools created learning spaces freed from Māori tapu norms; and how missionaries acted as peacemakers in conjunction with local leaders. This essay, following cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, "thickly describes" the way of life of a whole community, which used Māori language as its primary medium of communication and was embedded in observances of Māori tapu (sacred restrictions) even if the missionaries usually disagreed with their spiritual-conceptual basis.

An essay by Rev'd Patricia Carter, awarded the St John's College "St Hilda Prize" in 1997, has been chosen as the contribution of previously unpublished work from the archives of the John Kinder Theological Library. Rev'd Carter examines how evangelical theology was reflected in the lives of missionary wives, with a particular focus on the life of Marianne Williams, who was married to Rev'd Henry Williams and based at the Paihia mission. As such, Rev'd Carter's acute analysis and fine reflections complement Samuel Carpenter's Selwyn Lecture on the Paihia mission.

Brian Stanley, now Emeritus Professor at the University of Edinburgh – having only recently retired – delivered the 2023 Selwyn Lecture at St John's Theological College. His lecture is published here, and explores why the modern, Protestant missionary movement has in recent times experienced a significant lessening in "missionary enthusiasm." Professor Stanley begins by quoting a stirring address on missions given by Bishop Selwyn at Cambridge University in 1854 – as a way to capture the missional confidence of the mid nineteenth century. But as postcolonial movements gained traction in the twentieth century, and missionary anthropology and missiology became more considered, such confidence began to wane. Stanley, however, draws our attention to other explanations for this phenomenon that are less commonly posed, including the impact of visual images and the camera in portraying non-European peoples, the emphasis on relief for refugees and orphans during the World Wars, and the consequent emergence of the development NGO. The lecture finishes with apt reflections on what a renewed theological focus on the universality of the Christian gospel might mean.

Dr Jay Matenga graciously responded to Professor Stanley's Selwyn Lecture on the night it was given; he reprises and expands on that response here. Matenga draws our

attention to the split between the Ecumenical and Evangelical movements after the 1960s especially, with their different emphases on social action and evangelism. He points to the paradigm of local, indigenous missions and church leadership rather than the foreign missions that tend to dominate the history and literature. He argues that Evangelical missions enthusiasm has declined only quite recently, if at all. He nevertheless raises the possibility that non-white missionaries in foreign mission fields – that is, missionaries from the Majority World – are also beginning to see a similar diminishing of missionary enthusiasm to that which has afflicted western missions organisations. He calls for new integrated missions to revive the global church's missionary calling.

Alistair Reese's essay on *te Tiriti o Waitangi* emphasises the role of the Church, or British missionaries, in translating and interpreting the treaty – in such a way that it was seen by many at the time (and certainly has come to be so understood) as a covenant, or agreement with deep spiritual significance. Reese argues for a contextual interpretation of the treaty that invites us into a historico-theological space of *karakia*, metaphor, biblical neologisms, and covenantal ontology. Without appreciating these many dimensions of the original agreement, we cannot appreciate the treaty as a sacred compact which has the capacity to reconcile New Zealand's peoples to each other and with the *whenua* (land).

Issaac MacKenzie's essay continues the focus on *te Tiriti* by exploring it in historical context as a "humanitarian" document. Recent scholarly histories by Ned Fletcher and other historians lend entire support to this well traversed theme of older New Zealand historiography, in which the Protestant missions on the ground in New Zealand, and their parent bodies in the United Kingdom, opposed systematic colonisation of New Zealand. MacKenzie explores how this humanitarian intent to protect Māori interests was reflected in Hobson's views of the treaty and in Henry Williams' translation.

Nicole Coffin's elegant essay on three significant Māori prophet movements – Ringatū, Rua Kēnana and Rātana – compares their main beliefs and practices in the historical contexts in which they arose. She reflects with real insight on how these movements drew deeply on Christian scripture while also departing from strict orthodoxy as they struggled with the challenges to Māori *mana* and survival presented by colonial war and policy. Coffin argues that the prophet movements reveal the rich and complex relationship between indigenous spirituality and Christianity in Aotearoa's history.

The journal shifts gear at this point: to the interaction between contemporary missions practice and the legacies of history. The next four articles comprise the voices of mission practitioners within CMS today. Paul Tester – manager for CMS Britain's work in South America – compares missions work by SAMS (South American Mission Society) in South America with CMS' involvement in Aotearoa New Zealand. While British missionaries arrived at a similar time in both these locations, the contexts were significantly different: in South America the mission work from the UK was not developed under British colonialism, nor the widespread use of English. Paul reflects on the differing impacts of these histories, especially in relationship to indigenous peoples, as well as on CMS Britain's involvement now through *Misión Indígena*, a "shared, co-created movement" of indigenous mission, led by indigenous Christians and supported by CMS Britain.

Eva Cayul, who is Mapuche from the Araucanía region of Chile, and Elvio Cabañas, who is Enxet from the Chaco region of Paraguay, are indigenous Christians who are part of

Misión Indígena. They weave together their reflections on attending the wānanga-symposium in Waitangi, with their knowledge and experiences of Christian mission work in South America, both past and present. Eva and Elvio then explore the connection between Māori culture and their own cultures, and their shared experiences as indigenous Christians. They also compare the stories of the arrival of Christianity in Aotearoa with the histories of Christianity in their own contexts.

Rev'd Rosie Fyfe shares from the perspective of her current role as National Director of NZCMS. She writes about how she is both inspired and confronted by history, drawing parallels with contemporary missions thought and practice. She concludes with the picture of mutuality in mission, drawn from Paul's description of *koinonia* (partnership) in the Gospel in his letter to the Philippians.

Rev'd Keri-Ann Hokianga addresses the same questions as Rosie on the inspirations and challenges of history, from her perspective as a Māori Evangelist with NZCMS and Te Pīhopatanga o te Tai Tokerau (northern bishopric of the Māori Anglican Church). This transcript of an interview captures Keri-Ann's heart for her people to know the saving love of Jesus. She describes the wrestling of her ancestors, as well as the people she ministers to now, with the word of God and the Christian faith. She honours the decisions her ancestors made to follow Ihu Karaiti, and she follows in the footsteps of the evangelists who have gone before her. She leaves us with a challenge to "roll up our sleeves," and to go and witness to the love of Christ and the power of the Gospel.

Guests from "outside" a particular context can bring a clarity of insight. The observations of Eva from Chile, and Elvio from Paraguay, recapitulate the key themes of this edition. We leave it to them, as indigenous Christians from South America, to reflect back to us in this country on the theme of "missions, culture and colonialism in Aotearoa and beyond":

Many Māori practices and beliefs became intertwined with Christian teaching, giving rise to unique expressions of faith that incorporated elements of both traditions. It is important to understand the deep connection of Māori to the land and how this influences their spirituality... We were struck by the integration of the creation story of Scripture and that of Maori culture in the decoration of Te Karaiti te Pou Herenga Waka Anglican Church in Māngere, where the meeting point between the two is their reconciliation in Christ Jesus... The fusion of Māori cultural elements with traditional Anglican liturgy created a unique space where diversity was celebrated and considered an integral part of worship...

The introduction of Christianity to New Zealand was associated with missionaries, many of whom were Anglicans. Initial contact between missionaries and Māori led to the conversion of some Māori leaders and, over time, the adoption of the Christian faith by entire communities. In this time of exchange, we note the courage and effort of Anglican missionaries both in our contexts and in Māori contexts. They came with sincere interests in sharing the gospel and we recognise that it has not been easy. They were human beings with their imperfections and in each context they failed in some areas. But we highlight their efforts which allowed that we could all know the Lord Jesus, and for that we are very grateful. Furthermore, in our culture we highlight their efforts to maintain our languages (especially in written form) and to defend our rights

regarding the land. Today, we and Māori are challenged to consider the past and define what our faith will look like in our contexts today.

The guest editors hope that this edition provides much food for learning, reflection, and action.

They also wish to acknowledge, with thanks, all the authors, peer-reviewers, and copyeditors for this edition. Special mention to Jannah Dennison for copyediting, and Anjali Kemp for formatting and final production.

Heoi anō, ka nui te mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa.

Forthcoming issues

Spring 2024 *Trauma, Abuse and Healing*

Editors: Rev'd Dr Miryam Clough and Prof. David Tombs.

Autumn 2025 *Practical Theology and Pastoral Issues*

Editors: Rev'd Dr Paul Reynolds and Rev'd Dr Miryam Clough.

Articles

The CMS Mission at Paihia, Pēwhairangi: An Analysis of Gospel and Culture in a Revolutionary Age

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Abstract

The Paihia mission settlement was a site of revolutionary change as Māori and missionaries forged a new culture at the intersection of British and indigenous worlds. This essay, the Selwyn Lecture of 2022, focusses on the “life-ways” of this mixed settlement, “thickly describing” how English missionaries, Māori rangatira, commoners and slaves, lived out a daily and weekly rhythm of worship, work and rest. Rather than emphasising doctrine, or debates over Māori conversion, “fatal impact,” or colonialism, the essay reflects on the intermingling of gospel and culture, English nonconformity and evangelical piety, along with their impact on conceptions of class and race.

Keywords culture, gospel, life-ways, thick description, nonconformity, evangelicalism, class, race

Introduction

A few years ago, the acclaimed Indian novelist, Amitav Ghosh, stated in an interview:

To inhabit a place is to be able to see it, to experience it through one's senses, to eat its foods, breathe its smells, rest one's eyes on its sights.¹

We may ask, then: if this can be said of the good historical novel, why not the closely observed cultural history?

But how can we imaginatively inhabit *the life, the culture* of the Paihia mission at a distance of 200 years? We have, in fact, detailed contemporary sketches, amazing first-hand observations, richly detailed institutional records such as the baptism registers (now housed digitally at the Kinder Library, St John's Theological College), and something historians call context. My analysis shows that mission life was filled with almost ceaseless prayer, translation work, printing, teaching and catechising, talking, hosting, eating, debating, counselling, building or repairing, going out and returning, writing and reporting, peace-making at home and mediating abroad. Such was the mad-cap (zany/wild) nature of mission life that Henry Williams lamented quite often at his inability to focus on any one task! And, as Tony Ballantyne has demonstrated, these were *not* islands of England behind white picket fences.² Missionaries and Māori lived in close proximity, usually prayed and worshipped together, often ate together – especially chiefs with the missionary families – and often worked alongside each other at gardening and in tasks of church, house, or boat construction.



Figure 1. Henry Williams, sketch of Paihia mission, 1845; ref. PH-CNEG-C1083, Auckland Museum Library.

¹ History of the Present, “An Interview with Amitav Ghosh in Response to Our Roundtable on *Sea of Poppies*,” *History of the Present* 2, no. 1 (2012), <http://historyofthepresent.org/2.1/interview.html>.

² Tony Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries, Māori, and the Question of the Body* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 90-96; cf. S. J. Goldsbury, “Behind the Picket Fence: the Lives of Missionary Wives in Pre-colonial New Zealand” (MA history thesis, University of Auckland, 1986).

My question in this essay reflects the complexities of culture and ideas, the *lived experience* of people in societies or communities. To understand culture, we need something like the approach of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who famously advanced the methodology of “thick description:” only by closely or thickly describing social practices and institutions can we see underlying patterns and presuppositions, namely “culture.” Culture, to employ another Geertzian metaphor, is those “webs of significance” in which people are suspended, along which they move; thus, the analysis of culture is *a search for meaning*, an interpretive exercise – rather than a description of power relations or materiality.³

Narrative Prologue

Some narrative is necessary to foreground this analysis. When the southern Bay of Islands (Ngāti Hine) rangatira, Te Koki, sent his son to stay with Samuel Marsden, in Parramatta, New South Wales, he set in train a series of events that were to change the history of the Bay of Islands and New Zealand. Like many Māori who went to stay with Marsden through the period of the 1810s-30s, Te Koki’s son was of chiefly lineage, and he went there to learn Marsden’s “arts of civilization” – agricultural and cropping techniques, artisan trade skills, and the new political knowledge and religion of the Pākehā.

Sadly, Te Koki’s son died in New South Wales. Some scholars have seen “the presence of Henry and Marianne Williams at Paihia as utu – a return – for the death of Te Ahara at Parramatta.”⁴ Certainly, Te Koki had requested a missionary, a request that was to become common among Māori leadership through the 1820s-40s period.⁵ (It is interesting to note that the exact site at Paihia was chosen while many of the leading chiefs were away on war campaigns, including Te Koki and Hongi Hika. Hongi’s base was Kororipo pā at Kerikeri, opposite the mission station there, and from Kororipo he had monopolised the first tranches of missionaries.)

The ship *Brampton*, carrying the Williams and Fairburn families, Samuel Marsden, and a wider contingent that included the Wesleyan missionaries, Rev. Nathaniel Turner and Rev. John Hobbs, arrived in the Bay of Islands in early August 1823. At this time, Henry was aged 31, Marianne 29, and their three children were all under 5 years old; and Marianne was expecting. Williams and Sarah Fairburn, with two children, were probably a similar age.⁶

Marianne and children stayed at Kerikeri while Henry and William Fairburn, a carpenter and catechist, went to arrange housing. There was an existing Māori kāinga (settlement) at Paihia, possibly a seasonal fishing site or gardens (although the soil in many places was poor); Williams and Fairburn ate their meals with the hapū around an open fire. In September 1823, Henry purchased the island Moturangi from Te Koki, and in a separate transaction acquired the 9 acres of “te Koki’s farm,” the land that became the mission

³ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” (1973) in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 3-30.

⁴ Angela Middleton, *Pēwhairangi: Bay of Islands Missions and Māori 1814 to 1845* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2014), 137.

⁵ Caroline Fitzgerald, *Letters from the Bay of Islands: the Story of Marianne Williams* (Auckland: Penguin, 2004), 62.

⁶ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 251.

settlement. (By the early 1830s, the CMS had acquired around several hundred acres in the greater Waitangi to Opuia area; at least, several hundred acres was granted by the Crown land commissioners in the early 1840s.⁷) While Te Koki was considered the patron – Marianne calls him “our head chief,” his wife Hamu, was a customary owner of Paihia in her own right.⁸

One authority suggests that the coastal lands from Paihia to Kawakawa were controlled by Te Koki.⁹ At this period, of the 1820s-40s, the iwi that was to later become known as Ngāpuhi was divided between a northern alliance, represented by Hongi Hika, and a southern alliance, of whom leading chiefs were Pōmare at Ōtūihu and Ngāti Hine chiefs around Kawakawa, including Te Koki. The northern alliance *only* was known as “Napuhi” by the missionaries at this period. These hapū alliances were to battle (literally) over control of the European trade, especially that trade centred on Kororāreka – home of a few respectable settlers but many more escaped convicts and ships’ crews, and local Māori. Pōmare and company lost out to the northern group, Ngāpuhi proper, in 1830, and re-settled at Ōtūihu, further down the harbour, where he established his own trading centre. (The Kororāreka dispute flared up in 1837, and was again decided, partly through missionary mediation, in favour of the northern hapū.)¹⁰

Before the Williamses arrived in Paihia, while at Rangihoua, little Edward Williams hongī’d – or “rubbed noses,” as his mother recorded – with “one or two tattooed heroes” and the three Williams children distributed raisins “among the little Newzealanders.”¹¹ It is necessary to pause here. “New Zealanders” simply meant the people native (indigenous) to New Zealand; the other common rendering was “the natives.” Māori – which was a later name or usage – was an extension of the idea of ordinary or natural, thus native to the country.¹² Marianne Williams account of the welcome she received on her arrival at Paihia is heart warming:

The beach was crowded with natives. With great glee they drew me up while I was sitting in the boat, exclaiming, “Te Wahine,” and holding out their hands saying, “Tena ra ko koe,” and “Homai te ringaringa” (How do you do, give me your hand). I cannot describe my feelings. I trembled and cried, but joy was the predominant feeling.¹³

Marianne had earlier recorded: “I felt a fervant thankfulness that we had been brought and had been permitted to bring our little ones to this scene of labour.”¹⁴ She also wrote that,

⁷ Paula Berghan, “Northland Block Research Narratives,” vol. 2, Wai 1040 (Waitangi Tribunal, Northland inquiry), #A39(a), 433-40.

⁸ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 71; Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 137-38.

⁹ Jeffrey Sissons, Wiremu Wi Hongi and Patrick W. Hohepa, *The Puriri Trees are Laughing: A Political History of Ngā Puhi in the Inland Bay of Islands* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987), 46.

¹⁰ See Sissons, Wi Hongi and Hohepa, 42-46, 89-112, 151-52.

¹¹ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 55; Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 136.

¹² This may explain how in later New Zealand parlance, say of the early 20th century, ‘natives’ became ‘maoris’, retaining the ‘s’ of natives; ‘Maoris’ of course is a linguistic form that strikes our 21st century ears as wrong and quite *passee*, but it may have a linguistic explanation.

¹³ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 66.

¹⁴ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 57.

from the stories she had been told by missionary wives, she did not consider there was “any cause for future personal dread, though there was the greatest need of missionary labour and earnest prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵

Te Koki’s people constructed the first house for the Williams and Fairburn families, a traditional whare known as “the Beehive” due to its appearance. The Williams’ portion was fitted out with a green tent canvas on the walls, and a white calico hanging from the ceiling. Marianne Williams, according to Angela Middleton, was focussed on establishing English domestic practices and routines, including the *ironing* of bed linen and clothing.¹⁶ On the Sunday after Marianne’s arrival, a raupō chapel, with sash window and a wooden floor, was reading for Marsden to preach in.¹⁷

Paihia was the third mission settlement after Hōhi/Rangihoua (1814) and Kerikeri (1819). Te Waimate, the mission farm, that also became the first site of Selwyn’s St John’s College, followed in 1831. (Between 1834 and 1840, mission settlements were established in the Far North, and in Waikato, Tauranga, Ōtaki, Tūranga/Gisborne and on the Kāpiti Coast.)¹⁸



Figure 2. Henry Williams, sketch of “The Beehive,” Paihia, 1820s; Auckland Museum Library.

¹⁵ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 60.

¹⁶ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 138.

¹⁷ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 140.

¹⁸ Michael Corby, *Between God and a Hard Place: A Re-examination of Church Missionary Society Evangelisation of Māori 1814-1840* (O’Corrbui, 2022), map, inside front cover.

Who was living here?

So who was living here, at Paihia? In short, there were ordained missionaries and catechists with their families, artisans such as blacksmiths and carpenters, Māori chiefs, their servants or slaves and various other Māori children and adults from the local hapū and from iwi further afield – many of these originally war captives. It is difficult to get the proportions of these accurately, but we know there were many persons of rank among their number.¹⁹

The Paihia mission grew into a sizable settlement. In 1831 the Paihia resident population was recorded as 238 – consisting of 155 Māori, 29 missionaries, and 54 missionary children – a ratio of Māori to Europeans of approximately two to one.²⁰ At school examinations, the population swelled to a thousand or more.

We know there were considerable slaves from Hongi Hika's campaigns who ended up at the Paihia mission (total numbers of captives numbered probably in the low thousands).²¹ Some of Te Koki's slaves from the wars were in the mission's employ, and other Māori who were in the settlement, who were people of rank, had their own slaves also.²²

There was perhaps a certain lack of definition over who was a slave, a redeemed slave, or simply a servant in the employ of the mission. But we should remember that everyone worked – there was no avoiding chores of some kind. Inside the mission, certainly, slaves had more chance of escaping the harsher punishments.²³

The treatment of slaves as concubines of chiefs also ran up against the mission's marriage sanctions. On one occasion, Henry Williams carefully "remonstrated" with a "native of rank" who had been accepted into the settlement; he was "ill-treating his wife" and had "brought two slave girls within the fence" – as his lovers, impliedly.²⁴

The laws of tapu (sacred/ceremonially restricted) were ever-present for rangatira, which sometimes presented basic conundrums over how to act. For example, in February 1824, Marianne recorded:

One morning at breakfast, Te Koki, having drunk a large basin of tea, requested that his kuki [cook] (servant to Mrs Fairburn) might never be allowed to drink out of the

¹⁹ Lawrence M. Rogers, ed., *The Early Journals of Henry Williams, 1826-40* (Christchurch: Pegasus, 1961), 138.

²⁰ Malcolm Falloon, "The Māori Conversion and Four Early Converts" (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2020), 73.

²¹ James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders, from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin, 1996), 168: states, during the 1830s, "thousands of prisoners were released to return to their homes," speaking of both Ngāpuhi and Waikato tribes as the captors.

²² See H. Williams, Journal, 30 June 1827 re sick "Lucy," whose brother and "a faithful slave" sit at her bedside; Rogers, *Early Journals*, 59.

²³ For example, a slave who robbed property is subjected at the mission to a type of jury trial and flogging (after much consultation among missionaries and Māori), rather than instant death: see Rogers, *Early Journals*, 107; slaves were often killed due to deaths, insults or other misfortunes occurring to chiefs, though sometimes the reasons seem more obscure or the occasion merely opportunistic: see numerous references, including Rogers, 112, 148, 291; in March 1833, Williams records that it used to be a common practice to kill some slaves when a chief died, but that this practice had "gradually ceased" in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga; in January 1835, Rewa, in a rage, struck two slaves with a piece of wood and they almost died, see Rogers, *Early Journals*, 408.

²⁴ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 106-107; H. Williams suggests the chief remained after his anger had subsided, although he had threatened to depart the settlement.

same; and Mrs Fairburn told us that if he knew such to be the case, and were afterwards taken ill, he would immediately kill the poor girl.²⁵

The mission was quick to perceive these social distinctions, while often in disagreement with the rules of tapu that supported them. Certain laws of tapu were observed – for example, the burial sites of chiefs were not interfered with; but such laws or tikanga were also resisted where they would lead to muru or plundering raids on mission property or persons. This was a fine balance to walk. Such tikanga also became Christianized; in an oft-quoted example, Hone Heke stopped a group of women carrying food through the mission settlement on a Sunday – presumably this was because it would break the tapu of the Sabbath, although whether this was because it was food and thus would make “noa” the tapu, or because such activity constituted work, is a little unclear.²⁶

In other respects, including assembly at worship and at schooling, the mission treated all alike. As Henry Williams observed in December 1827: “Men women and children the gentry of the different orders and their slaves all are on one footing with us and classed together according to their knowledge.”²⁷ This was the beginnings of a new type of society: both at prayer and in the classroom, there was equality of treatment and access to new knowledge and literacy.

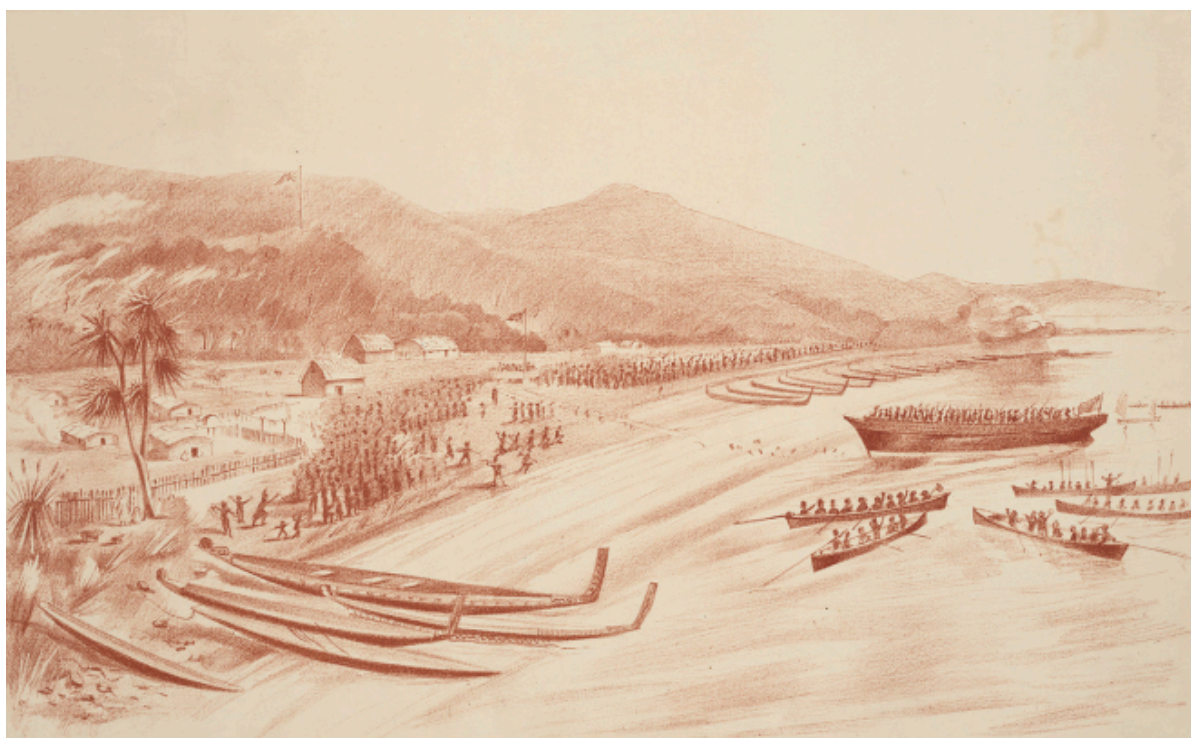


Figure 3. Sketch by Rev'd P. Walsh, based on one by Marianne Williams: launching of the *Herald*, 1826; Auckland Museum Library.

²⁵ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 81.

²⁶ H. Williams, Journal, Sunday 18 Jan. 1835; in Rogers, *Early Journals*, 407.

²⁷ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 94.

In sum, this was a revolutionary change. This is one reason why many high-born chiefs stood aloof from the mission for some time, because its beliefs and practices appeared to breach the sacrosanct norms of tapu which were intrinsic to their personal and spiritual mana (authority/prestige) and their socio-political status. In 1833, for example, Williams recorded Tareha's adverse reaction to statements in the liturgy that all persons were equally sinful and in need of God's salvation.²⁸ Thus, the gospel of salvation, and mission *practice*, by treating people as equally valuable human beings, had the effect of breaking down tapu rules and in time social distinctions of rank or class. To deprive chiefs of their rank or social standing was *not* the mission's intent, but it was an effect that has been noted by historians.

A Thick Description of the Paihia Mission

Sunday: Sabbath Rest – “peace with God”

The Book of Hebrews (New Testament) states that “there will be a Sabbath rest for the children of God.” The practice of the Sabbath points therefore both forwards to eternity and backwards, to the first Sabbath, when the Creator rested from creation labour.²⁹

The practice of the Sabbath was a key emphasis of missionary teaching; and it marked out the whole weekly cycle. It makes sense therefore to start our “thick description” with this fundamental feature of mission life. Sabbath observance was also one of the first Christian practices to be observed by the Māori community of the wider Paihia area.³⁰ Such observance may well have restructured the Māori sense of time, which was more seasonal in character.

The Sabbath was highly significant for evangelicals. William Wilberforce understood it as a time for “exercises of humble admiration and grateful homage” to God.³¹ The CMS, in 1810, instructed its missionaries to observe the Sabbath strictly, as “of utmost importance for the promotion of individual and national piety;” observance of the Sabbath, including singing, was to be publicly practiced and known by the natives around about.³² In the early nineteenth century, David Bogue, a Dissenter, noted how the Puritans were persecuted in Elizabethan England for, among other things, maintaining the holiness of the day when some Londoners were happier to attend bear baiting.³³ The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, of which the CMS was one expression, probably did much to restore the practice of Sabbath. The Victorians as a result were much influenced by a Sabbatarian movement and culture.

For the CMS missionaries in New Zealand, the idea and practice of Sabbath also appears central to the meaning of the gospel – that the *Sabbath rest* pointed to, perhaps even represented, that peace with God that had been made possible through Ihu Karaiti/Jesus

²⁸ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 278.

²⁹ See Hebrews 4:1–11, and various commentaries on this passage, including by Matthew Henry, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/hebrews/4-1.htm>.

³⁰ Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 129 (citing Williams to CMS, 10 Nov. 1823).

³¹ Cited Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 126.

³² Cited Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 127.

³³ David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters, From the Revolution in 1688, to the Year 1808*, vol. 1 (London, 1808), 65.

Christ – through his death and resurrection.³⁴ (This understanding is also supported by the text from Hebrews alluded to earlier.) This message of Sabbath rest and peace with God also shaded into the idea of reconciliation with enemies.³⁵ On a Sunday in March 1830, in endeavouring to assist mediation of a tribal conflict, Henry Williams recorded that he spoke to parties at Kororareka “upon their present state, and offers of eternal peace held out by Jesus Christ. All were inclined for peace. In the evening[,] service as usual. Rewa and W[h]arerahi came from the Pa apparently under much concern by the delay in making peace.”³⁶ The conjunction here of the ideas of eternal peace and temporal peace-making is evident.

Māori were fascinated early on by the practice of Sabbath. In January 1828, Williams recorded a visit to Kawakawa, where Māori “enquired when the sabbath was to see if their calculation was right. It was so at which they were much pleased. They said they understood when the sabbath arrived but they could not comprehend the nature of our religion.”³⁷

By 1833, chiefs not known for their Christian observance were beginning to observe the Sabbath; Titore, for one, declined to ship his goods on a European vessel on a Sunday because it was the Ra tapu. Williams recorded, with his language ironic, as it often was when critiquing an unexpected proposition: “Thus we find Heathens [the chiefs] preaching to a Christian [the European captain], calling his attention to the command of Heaven, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’ The reply of this Christian was, that they were not missionaries and did not regard these things.”³⁸ Through the 1830s, there would be a marked increase in attendance at divine service within the greater Bay of Islands region.³⁹

Judith Binney and others have noted that by 1840, biblical metaphors and rituals, notably the Sabbath, had been interwoven with Māori thought and community life.⁴⁰ They also suggest that the scriptural translations used existing Māori words such as tapu, karakia and atua in interesting ways and that this helped to indigenise the faith.⁴¹ This argument bears comparison to Lamin Sanneh’s argument that the act of translation into an indigenous language *is itself a process of indigenisation* in which scripture redeploys and remakes indigenous concepts but is also reshaped by them.⁴² Perhaps, to say this another way, the indigenous world of meanings and associations continues to act upon the understanding of the new scriptural concepts. Thus, a world structured by deep concepts of tapu, mana and utu was being remade through new practices of tapu – principally the Sabbath – *te Rātapu*, the Creator’s day of rest and a sign of his salvation peace.

³⁴ See also 20 June 1828, Rogers, *Early Journals*, 135: “the glad tidings of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

³⁵ Geoffrey Troughton, “Scripture, Piety and the Practice of Peace in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand Missions,” *Studies in World Christianity* 25, no. 2 (2019): 128–44.

³⁶ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 158–59.

³⁷ Thurs, 24 Jan. 1828; Rogers, *Early Journals*, 98.

³⁸ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 278.

³⁹ See for example, Oct–Nov 1834 (at Kawakawa); Rogers, *Early Journals*, 396, 399.

⁴⁰ Judith Binney, Vincent O’Malley, and Alan Ward, “The Coming of the Pākehā, 1820-1840,” in *Tangata Whenua: A History*, ed. Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney, and Aroha Harris (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), 167–77.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴² Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989).

Mediating and peacemaking: “peace with enemies”

Peace with God and reconciliation with enemies was perhaps the central message of the early missions. But the activity of peace-making itself still had to observe God’s order of priorities, including the Sabbath. A prominent example follows.

Hongi Hika died in 1828 and despite warnings from Māori and missionary fears, the mission stations were not plundered by taua muru in response to this significant unbalancing in the tapu order of things.

On 10 March 1828, the same day that Williams was able to confirm Hongi Hika’s passing, there were reports that the son of senior rangatira Pōmare was killed at Hokianga on a taua muru (or “stripping party,” exacting customary compensation or utu). As a result, five of the Hokianga people were “killed as a payment.” Further retaliatory engagements occurred and the high-ranking Bay of Islands rangatira, Te Whareumu, was killed along with others.

Senior rangatira from both northern and southern alliances of the Bay requested missionary assistance to mediate a peace with the Hokianga people. Williams recorded on 17 March 1828 that the tribes were “aware that much evil will befall them if they fight, and yet by their law they are required to avenge the death of Warehumu [Whareumu]. They cannot make peace of themselves but should we also go they may be able to accomplish it.”

Williams, George Clarke and others accompanied Ngāpuhi inland towards Hokianga where the peace was negotiated. The missionaries counselled delay until the Monday so the Sabbath could be kept, which it was. On the Monday, Williams and Clarke acted as go-betweens to bring the two sides together onto neutral ground marked by a white flag, the use of which was common in peace-making.⁴³

It is important not to overstate the role missionaries played in tribal mediation. There were often reasons in tikanga and whakapapa to make peace. To fight on risked more deaths, which would require additional utu to rebalance the situation. Yet the role of missionaries as neutral parties was often a key factor in enabling peace negotiations. In this Hokianga instance, the chiefs could make peace “in the name of the missionaries,” even though tikanga obliged them to seek further satisfaction. Historian Angela Ballara points out that the intermarriages between important whakapapa lines of Hokianga and Pēwhairangi was also a factor motivating resolution of this conflict.⁴⁴ And Māori peacemakers of rangatira lineage were also involved in brokering resolutions, here and in other instances, including the rangatira Te Wharerahi of the Bay of Islands.⁴⁵

The period following the death of Hongi Hika and Te Whareumu in 1828, and the Paihia mission’s protector, Te Koki, in the year following, was an unstable one. The mission even constructed a defensive fortification at the back of the settlement to ward off possible attacks – attacks from southern iwi were especially feared. Although the missionaries brought a gospel of peace, they were not going to risk being defenceless in the face of attacks from iwi outside the region with whom they had little relationship.

⁴³ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 109–117.

⁴⁴ Angela Ballara, *Taua: ‘Musket Wars’, ‘Land Wars’, or Tikanga? Warfare in Māori Society in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003), 110–11.

⁴⁵ Ballara, *Taua*, 159.

Daily prayer and hymn-singing

If the Sabbath was the defining marker of the weekly cycle, then daily prayer was the defining feature of mission life. Henry Williams' journal 1823–1840 mentions prayer three times more than it does the term Sabbath.

The daily rhythm seems to have involved at least evening prayer and often morning prayer. The Anglican Book of Common Prayer prescribed a form of service or liturgy for both morning and evening prayer. Translating these two services was a priority of the mission. No doubt the mission was using a translated version of these services before the printing in Sydney in 1830 (arranged by William Yate).⁴⁶

In the early period at Paihia, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the prayer services from family prayer. In fact, before the first chapel was completed in 1828, evening prayer seems to have been household or extended family prayer in the Beehive whare – with all the mission present, Māori and British. On one Sunday in February 1828, around 80 Māori plus missionaries crammed into the Williams and Fairburn beehive whare for family prayer.⁴⁷

Many of the English missionaries had low-church Anglican or nonconformist backgrounds; the latter included the families of both Henry and Marianne Williams (nee Coldham) as they were growing up. Family prayer among people of this background could be a serious business. Rev. David Bogue, the Williams family minister in the 1780s–90s, was an arch-exponent. He remained on close terms with the Williams family after they moved to Nottingham in the mid-1790s. When he stayed with Thomas Williams and family in 1801, he led family prayers twice a day, “delivered extempore.”⁴⁸ Unsuspecting visitors of the Williams family were caught up in these prayer observances, as uncle and organist-composer John Marsh recorded in his typical lively style:

... Mr Pearson [a local singer and music teacher] supt with us, previous to w'ch Mr Bogue said prayers, w'ch fixt the unwieldy Mr Pearson upon his knees for a longer time than I believe he was used to, as he told Mr W[illiams] the next morning he co'd have excused about half the Prayers.⁴⁹

The Dissenting practice of family prayer was often extempore rather than scripted. But there were many prayer books and hymnals available to be read aloud to inspire piety. It was recalled of Thomas Williams, Henry's father, that he used to read quite often “from the Bible, from Bishop Hall's *Contemplations* and other suitable books.”⁵⁰

It is perhaps difficult to appreciate what these new collective practices of prayer and hymn singing meant for Māori. In Christian prayer services, daily or weekly conducted, all

⁴⁶ No. 6 in H. W. Williams, *Bibliography of Printed Māori* (Wellington: A. R. Shearer, 1975), <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WilBibl-t1-g1-t1-body.html>; see also P. G. Parkinson and Penelope Griffith, eds., *Books in Māori, 1815-1900/ Ngā tānga reo Māori: an Annotated Bibliography/ Ngā Kohikohinga me ōna Wakamārama* (Auckland: Reed, 2004).

⁴⁷ See reference in H. Williams, *Journal*, 10 Feb. 1828; Rogers, *Early Journals*, 102.

⁴⁸ John Marsh, *Journal*, 8 Aug 1801, vol. 21, MS. HM 54457, Huntington Library (California, USA), 149.

⁴⁹ John Marsh, *Journal*, 12 Aug. 1801, vol. 21, MS. HM 54457, Huntington Library, 151; see also Brian Robins, ed., *The John Marsh Journals: The Life and Times of a Gentleman Composer (1752-1828)* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 738.

⁵⁰ [Fanny Marsh and E. L. Gardiner], “Records of Two Brothers,” MS. KIN 272, Kinder Library.

ages and sexes were involved. And something like the organ, which arrived in Paihia courtesy of uncle John Marsh in 1830, would surely have seemed other-worldly. So quite apart from the novel content of prayers and hymns, the daily, communal practice of prayer and hymn-singing was, I suggest, quite revolutionary. That said, Māori took to it with alacrity. Henry Williams recorded how he heard hymns from the mission hymn book put to original, “purely native” tunes; while he met kaumatua who could recite the Morning Service by heart after only a short period.⁵¹

Translating, catechising and baptising

Translation work became a priority of the mission, together with “the language work,” as Henry put it, that was its foundation. Alongside scripture portions, the catechism, hymns and the services of morning and evening prayer were among the first things translated.⁵²

Candidates for baptism were catechised and counselled to test their understanding. In simple terms, candidates needed to profess a saving faith in Ihu Karaiti before they were baptised. On Sunday 6 February 1831, Williams recorded:

After dinner had some very pleasing conversation with two boys belonging to the settlement relative to baptism. Their answers were good and clear. Concluded that they should be admitted to this holy ordinance in a short time.⁵³

The date 23 August 1829 witnessed the first baptisms of children, namely the children of Rāwiri and Māta Taiwhanga, baptised on same day as William Leonard Williams, child of William and Jane Williams.⁵⁴

Sunday, 7 February 1830, was a *red-letter day* for the mission. It saw the first baptism of an adult in the prime of life; a few had taken place previously of those nearing death. This time it was Taiwhanga, one of Hongi Hika’s war chiefs, a man of considerable rank, as his tāmoko proves (see image below). For some reason, his wife, Māta (of Te Arawa, who he took in battle), was not baptised until September of that year. Marianne’s journal testifies to the significance of the baptism of Taiwhanga, in Jane Austen-like tones:

I think I for one can say my feelings were never so powerfully excited... I saw him [Taiwhanga] advance from the other end of our crowded chapel with firm step but subdued countenance an object of interest to every native as well as every English eye, and meekly kneel where six months before we had at his own request stood sponsors for his four little children. I deeply felt that it was the Lord’s doing and wonderful in our eyes.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 453, 456: on the Kāpiti coast in 1839, which had not had the Prayer Book or scriptures for long.

⁵² See Marianne Williams, Journal, 10 Aug 1823; Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 59; see Williams, *Bibliography of Printed Māori*.

⁵³ Rogers, *Early Journals*, 172.

⁵⁴ Frances Porter, “Williams, William Leonard,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1993, updated September, 2003. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2w24/williams-william-leonard>.

⁵⁵ Marianne Williams, Journal, 16 Feb. 1830; Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 177.

There were many other auspicious days for baptisms. On 9 August 1835, the following were baptised by Henry Williams: Himiona [Simeon] Aka, of Paihia, “Gentleman/native chief”; Hamuera [Samuel] Punaruku, of Waikino, [ditto]; Hoani [John] Heke, of Paihia, “Gentleman/native chief”; Riria [Lydia] Ono, of Paihia, “Lady/native chief.” On 26 January 1840, the high-ranking Hokianga rangatira, Patuone, was baptised by Williams with the named Edward (Eruera), his wife taking the name, Riria (Lydia). The name Riria (Lydia) is common in the baptismal records; it was the name of Henry Williams’ elder sister. It was common for Māori, especially those of rank, to take names from the missionary’s family, or from European figures of status, including governors.

Chiefs/rangatira were often baptised with their whānau and even wider hapū, and sometimes alongside their slaves or servants. We know this because of the column in the register quaintly headed “Quality, Trade, or Profession.” Unfortunately, this column is filled in only sporadically for most periods. It would have enabled wonderful analysis about the social world of the Bay hapū and iwi; however, what is there is still insightful. Thus, from c. 1833, descriptors appear such as “Native Chief”, “Gentleman”, or “Lady” and sometimes “Servant” or “Slave.”⁵⁶

By July 1840, the first Paihia baptism register recorded around 345 baptisms.⁵⁷ The last 40 of these baptisms appears to be the baptism of Pōmare, the chief of Ōtūihu, together with his people. Ōtūihu, to the south of Kororāreka, had a somewhat colourful reputation as a trade centre, including selling grog and operating houses of ill-repute.⁵⁸ He was baptised with the names Wiremu Parata – “Brother Williams” – apparently after William Williams.

By 1844, the 345 baptisms on the greater Paihia register at 1840 – which does not include the Kerikeri and Waimate baptisms – were added to by over 1000 new baptisms. Henry Williams performed nearly all of these baptisms – *almost one baptism a day on average*. Among this number there are quite a few missionary children and the odd Pākehā settler, whaling captain or tradesman. This includes the daughter of that infamous whaling captain, Captain Brind, together with his high-born Māori wife, Moewaka. By far the bulk, however, are Māori baptisms. There are numbers of missionary children in the period to 1840: Williams, Fairburn, Mair and Shepherd (for example) are interleaved with Taiwhanga, Heke, Hara and Patu.⁵⁹

These baptisms at Paihia should also be seen in the context of the total picture of Māori baptised in the decade, 1832-43, upwards of *11,000 baptisms* across all districts; this number represented perhaps one third of those Māori connected with the CMS mission.⁶⁰ Certainly, by 1843, the CMS counted or estimated that 35,000 Māori were attending public

⁵⁶ Note that added underneath some of these is “native chief,” apparently in a different hand.

⁵⁷ Reg. 1153, 1823-40, Kinder Library (Auckland Diocesan Archives).

⁵⁸ Angela Ballara, “Pōmare II,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p20/pomare-ii>; see also Jack Lee, *The Bay of Islands* (Auckland: Reed, 1996), 123. The first Pōmare died in 1826; he was succeeded by his son, Pōmare II; these were names borrowed from native monarchs in Tahiti.

⁵⁹ Paihia baptismal register, Reg. 1154, 1840-44, Kinder Library (Auckland Diocesan Archives).

⁶⁰ Falloon, “The Māori Conversion,” 78, including table.

worship in CMS-affiliated services around the country. (This represents perhaps half of the Māori population at the time, a simply phenomenal number.)⁶¹



Figure 4. Rawiri (Taiwhanga) at Kaikohe, William Cotton Journal; MS. 40, Dixson Library, NSW

Printing, distributing, teaching

William Colenso's print numbers from the little Paihia printing press are staggering. In 1835, he printed 1000 copies of the Gospel of Luke and 2000 copies each of the books of Ephesians and Philippians; in 1836-37, he printed 5000 copies of the New Testament. Between 1835 and 1842, he produced a whopping 53,000 copies of the Prayer Book (mostly the services of

⁶¹ Falloon, "The Māori Conversion," 82.

morning and evening prayer) and 5000 copies of the Psalms.⁶² No wonder, then, that Colenso complained of almost ceaseless work. He was to recall later: “I may truly say that for years I never knew a day of rest: Sunday and weekdays, day and night, it was work, work, work.”⁶³ Some things were obviously just too important to allow a Sabbath rest.

The Paihia mission was the effective distribution centre to the rest of the mission settlements around the country. Colenso’s print ledgers are a remarkable record of this process, by which the bulk of the country was saturated in scriptures and prayer books by the mid-1840s.

Printing the scriptures and prayer book, which included the catechism, was intrinsically related to education. Time does not permit an examination of how such education was conducted, but numbers of students at the mission schools indicate the popularity of education and its reach into the wider Bay of Islands hapū. Contemporary figures indicate that by mid-1832, 472 Māori children had been enrolled in the Paihia School (263 boys and 209 girls), perhaps 10-15 percent of the entire Bay of Islands Māori population.⁶⁴ Falloon also notes that by the early 1830s, many satellite schools of Paihia and other mission stations were located in the local kāinga (villages).⁶⁵ The story of these kāinga schools, staffed by Māori teachers or catechists of the mission is an untold story of the early mission period.

This schooling data points to a far bigger and significant phenomenon: *the indigenisation of the church by the mid-1840s*. Personnel figures demonstrate that the key task of catechising (preparatory to baptism) and teaching in general was mainly in the hands of Māori.⁶⁶ By 1845, numbers of Māori in these roles country-wide were a staggering 350, in the CMS mission, compared to a mere 32 on the European ledger – in other words, there were *more than 10 times as many Māori in ministry in the Anglican-affiliated missionary church as there were Pākehā*.⁶⁷

Hosting

The mission frequently played host, whether to local rangatira, ships captains, and in time, British resident, governor, and bishop. “Breakfast for 17” at the Williams’ residence was not unusual; stirabout – a mix of water and flour and sometimes sugar – was often sent outside to feed larger groups of visitors. Marianne and no doubt other women were often up beyond midnight with preparations.

Despite rivalry between northern and southern Ngāpuhi, Te Koki hosted Hongi Hika to tea with the Williams and Marsden in January 1824. Marianne recorded the occasion of Hongi’s visit, which occurred a few short weeks after the birth of Henry junior, their fourth child:

⁶² Samuel D. Carpenter, “The Reshaping of Political Communities in New Zealand: a Study of Intellectual and Imperial Texts in Context, c. 1814-1863” (PhD thesis, Massey University, 2020), Appendix B.

⁶³ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 159.

⁶⁴ Falloon, “The Māori Conversion,” 74.

⁶⁵ Falloon, “The Māori Conversion,” 74–75.

⁶⁶ Since ordination was a high hurdle due to Bishop Selwyn’s ordination requirements (including knowledge of the biblical languages), the role of catechist or teacher was practically a substitute.

⁶⁷ See table in Falloon, “The Māori Conversion,” 79.

I had just finished ironing about teatime: Henry helped me to wash the children; and overcome with fatigue, I did, as I had often done before, threw myself on the bed to refresh myself by a good cry, when a boat was announced, and I was aroused anew to exertion, to receive Mr Marsden, Mr Kemp and the celebrated Hongi, to get out blankets, sheets and bedding, etc.⁶⁸

The visiting party was accommodated in the Beehive whare: the three principal visitors in the sitting room, “5 native girls in the entrance room, 4 native men of the boats crew on account of the heavy rain, in Mrs Fairburn’s sitting room, all these in addition to the Fairburns, ourselves and the children, in a rush dwelling 40 feet long and 14 broad.”⁶⁹

In June 1844, the mission hosted Bishop Selwyn; this meant additional tasks for Marianne Williams, including starching the washed and dried “white bed hangings” in front of the fire.⁷⁰

In late January 1846, there was another interesting instance of a tea party. Only a few weeks after the last battle of the Northern War at Ruapekapeka, the Paihia mission hosted two of the contending parties to tea: Hone Heke and a Britain naval captain (Sir Everard Home). There was haka from and stirabout for the 100 men of Heke’s party outside the fence, and some joviality in conversation from Heke inside the Williams’ whare. Heke attended church and turned up for breakfast two days in a row; breakfast was typically accompanied by family prayers, as it was on this occasion.⁷¹

Training and releasing

The Paihia mission was not only the distribution centre for scriptures, prayer books and hymnals; it became a key departure point for both Māori and English personnel taking the message of peace around the country.⁷²

And released slaves increasingly became the emissaries of that Te Rongopai. In a high-profile case, a party of East Coast captives, many chiefs included, arrived in the Bay on an English whaler, the *Elizabeth*, in 1833 and were enslaved by Wharepoaka. They were released following persuasion by missionaries and returned to East Coast at the end of 1833 with William Williams and James Hamlin. Their departure had been delayed however by a storm; perhaps this was providential, for they spent 8 months at Paihia, receiving instruction.⁷³ They arrived back in Tai Rawhiti in early 1834 and were treated by their relatives as though returned from the dead.⁷⁴

One of the 1834 returnees was a war captive taken earlier in 1823 on one of Ngāpuhi’s southern campaigns. Although he does not figure much in missionary accounts, he was to lead a Christian revolution amongst Ngāti Porou, which, in the first instance, caused

⁶⁸ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 72.

⁶⁹ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 72.

⁷⁰ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 169.

⁷¹ Marianne Williams, Journals, 28–30 Jan. 1846, MS. 91/75, Auckland Museum Library.

⁷² See, for example, Rogers, *Early Journals*, 410.

⁷³ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 161.

⁷⁴ Monty Soutar, “Ngāti Porou Leadership – Rāpata Wahawaha and the Politics of Conflict” (PhD thesis, Massey University, 2000), 99-101.

major changes to the rules of war (no killing of war captives, no cannibalism etc). This man was Piripi Taumata-ā-Kura, who declared on his return to the Coast: “I have come from Keri Keri and from Paihia and I have seen Williams of the four eyes.”⁷⁵ By the time William Williams relocated to the East Coast to start the CMS mission formally in 1839, Christian belief had already spread through swathes of Ngāti Porou. Such was the transformation, without direct English missionary work, that Williams-*Te Parata* recorded his amazed observations: “the Word has only been preached by Native Teachers. We had literally stood ‘still to see the salvation of God’.”⁷⁶

Epilogue: ‘the Retreat’... mission continues, the Māori clergy

The year 1850 brought news of Henry Williams’ dismissal from the CMS for refusing to give up his family land claims; Bishop Selwyn had supported Governor Grey against Williams, but later did an about turn and supported his reinstatement. The Williamses retreated to Pākaraka, where their sons were farming. Middleton states of this apparent bookend: “Really, Paihia had been the Williams’ mission. During the 27 years of their occupation, Paihia had been transformed from a Ngāpuhi kāinga (village) to a Pākehā settlement.”⁷⁷

Does this statement hold water? The Williamses *were* at the centre of Paihia; but many others had made their mark, including the likes of Rāwiri and Mata Taiwhanga, Hone and Riria Heke, Ana Hamu, William Colenso, and a host of other English missionaries. And was it a Pākehā settlement? This shorthand is too easy, indeed misleading... it was a *mission settlement* in which Māori and missionary lived together, chiefs and slaves, ordained missionary and artisan, in a community relying on collective labour and structured by daily rhythms of prayer and mostly speaking te reo Māori. It housed more Māori for much of its existence than it did Pākehā. It even had the odd mixed-race marriage and offspring.

The Paihia mission became a village of over 200 people at its peak, a sizable settlement for that period; probably larger than most settlements in even the populous Bay of Islands. It had gardens for food supply, a church, a printery, other workshops, many Pākehā houses and Māori whare; a boat-house and, for a period, a sizable sailing vessel built on the foreshore.

Above all, it was a settlement built around an idea – an ideal of a Christian, missional community, living from the common stock, demonstrating hospitality to all-comers, meeting and praying and singing together daily. A remarkable entity, I suggest, even revolutionary, in the context of 1820s-40s Niu Tirenī – or, as we like to call it these days, Aotearoa New Zealand.

The settlement dwelt often amidst a veritable maelstrom of local intra- and inter-tribal tensions and occupied a sometimes-uncertain position. But as years wore on, it carved out an existence that provided a neutral zone for contending factions to meet and even worship together. Somewhat ironically, perhaps, the tenure of the Paihia mission was left more

⁷⁵ Apirana T. Mahuika and Steven Oliver, 'Taumata-ā-Kura, Piripi - Taumata-a-Kura, Piripi', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t19/taumata-a-kura-piripi> (accessed 27 October 2022).

⁷⁶ William Williams, *Christianity Among the New Zealanders* (London, 1867), 290.

⁷⁷ Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 170.

exposed in the era of British government and settlement after 1840: being a missionary in a tribal society was one thing; in a colonial setting it was quite another.

But the Paihia mission had an afterlife; it became staffed by important Māori clergy, including the Rev. Matiu Taupaki. Henry Williams recognised well before his death in 1867 that these clergy would be the hope of the church in the new era.



Figure 5. The 1876 memorial to Henry Williams at Paihia, photo 1939; ref. WA-10315-G, Alexander Turnbull Library.

For their part, these clergy understood the significance of the changes that had been wrought at Paihia and her sister settlements in the early mission period. When, in 1876, the Rev. Taupaki spoke at the unveiling of a monument from “the Maori Church,” he chose to highlight the spiritual changes ungirding all the rest.⁷⁸ In the presence of the aged chiefly

⁷⁸ The fullest account of the monument unveiling and speeches is in *Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani*, 21 Mar. 1876, 64-68: [Papers Past | Newspapers | Waka Maori | 21 March 1876 | Page 64 \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#); see also Matthew Taupaki to Bishop Williams, 22 July 1874, *Wananga*, 10 Nov. 1874: [Papers Past | Newspapers | Wananga | 10 November 1874 | Page 36 \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#); and [Papers Past | Newspapers | New Zealand Herald | 18 January 1876 | BAY OF ISLANDS.—ARCHDEACON WILLIAMS' MONUMENT. \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#); see an extended obituary for Matiu Taupaki in the *Church Gazette* of 1877; reprinted at [Papers Past | Newspapers | Waka Maori | 18 September 1877 | THE REV. MATTHEW TAUPAKI. \(natlib.govt.nz\)](#)

convert Rāwiri Taiwhanga, the Bishop of Auckland and nine Māori clergy, eight of whom were from Northland, he likened the first church built at Paihia to a palisaded pā and stated:

Ko tona pa ano tena i whakariterite ai ia i nga patu mo te whawhai hei whakahoro i nga pa kaha o te ao.

(*Contemp. transl: It was in that fortress he [Williams] forged the weapons of war wherewith to overthrow the strongholds of the earth.*)

Rev. Taupaki also concluded his address by pointing to the motive force of the mission, the great commission: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark xvi. 15.)⁷⁹

Analysis: Theorising the Narrative

Underlying my narrative and analysis have been questions over the meaning and interaction of gospel and culture. This relationship constitutes a critical tension in the history of Christianity, not just in Aotearoa, but throughout the millenia – a tension arguably more central than the institutional struggles between church and state, the ecclesia and the polity.

As John Stenhouse wrote some years ago, a secular nationalist historiography largely downplayed the role of Christianity in a project focussed on the rise of a secular nation-state.⁸⁰ Tony Ballantyne has recently conducted a more nuanced version of what was going on in the interactions between northern missions and indigenous society (*Entanglements of Empire*). Although with a different focus from this essay, he shows missionaries in similar ethnographic poses – observant, sometimes even analytical, in their appraisal of Māori culture. Of course, English missionaries themselves had a culture – “webs of significance” in which they were suspended⁸¹ – and it is this culture, which really became a hybrid Māori-Pākehā culture, that I have been concerned to understand through the analysis here.

So what was this culture, in summary? Simplistic, classist readings of English missionaries are still common, even with the rich primary sources and increasingly nuanced secondary literature at our disposal. Marianne Williams has sometimes been pictured in stick-figure caricature, as obsessed with domestic cleanliness, a strict disciplinarian in education, and who although she acknowledges the rank of her “Maori girls” treats them as social subordinates. Marianne – according to this pen-portrait – is only comfortable or happy when in the company of her social equals, which (apart from the odd exception such as her sister-in-law, Jane) does not really happen until the wives of Bishop Selwyn and Chief Justice Martin show up in the early 1840s.⁸² Aspects of this caricature are distorting, if not unfair or inaccurate. In such portrayals, we get hardly any of the colour and personal warmth of Marianne’s letters, her concern for Māori welfare, her astute observations of Māori customs

⁷⁹ *Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani*, 21 Mar. 1876, 65–67.

⁸⁰ John Stenhouse, “God’s Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the Writing of New Zealand History,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 38, no. 1 (2004): 52–72; writing especially of the 1960s-80s period of history writing.

⁸¹ Refer Geertz, “Thick Description.”

⁸² See Middleton, *Pēwhairangi*, 138, 168-69.

and ways. Readings of her in terms of class do not reveal her *heart-felt spirituality*, her *missionary purpose*. Now class attitudes were present, of course; sometimes a strong sense of cultural (though not racial or biological) superiority is evident; but *modern* conceptions of *class* per se remained muted in early nineteenth century Britain as industrialization and urbanization were still forming a new consciousness. In any event, to define missionary activity in terms of class, or, for that matter, race – rather than Christian faith or heart-religion – is to distort the reasons evangelical missionaries were *there* and what they were about.

Critiques of European (English) domesticity often also ignore Māori desire to obtain European things, both material and intellectual, as represented by the mission schooling. Māori parents sending their boys or girls to the Paihia (and other mission) schools *expected* their children to be both fed and clothed – doubtless in European clothing.⁸³ Mission education *was* gendered by different “practical arts” being taught to boys and girls,⁸⁴ but at the same time, overly gendered readings of missionary *modus operandi* are also questionable on a thick description of missionary-Māori interactions. Marianne Williams was addressed by her husband at their CMS commissioning as a missionary equal, though with domestic and child duties necessary for the time.⁸⁵ Remarkable instances of co-parenting and co-missioning are evident from early accounts, as when Marianne in early 1824 engages with host chief, Te Koki, over the meaning of Christ’s death as *utu* or payment for human wrongdoing. Marianne recorded the following striking observation, revealing her keen appreciation of CMS ambitions to raise an indigenous church:

Another time after a good deal of conversation, I told Te Koki, perhaps he would not be able to understand these things, but when he was dead, and I was dead, Edward and Samuel and Henry would tell them all to his children, and they would become missionaries and preach to the other natives...⁸⁶

In simple terms, the missionaries did not live behind the picket fences. Rather, Māori and missionaries moved in close proximity, with little segregation. There was an almost constant stream of chiefs, workers, missionaries, native teachers, and visitors through the gates of the settlements.⁸⁷ The size of the Paihia settlement and the dynamic tribal movements of Pēwhairangi (Bay of Islands) may have made Paihia a more interactive and dynamic space than at other mission stations – the Waimate farm being arguably more cloistered. But at *all* stations, missionaries and Māori worshipped in *te reo* Māori, worked, and ate together on a weekly if not daily basis. This was, moreover, a culture in which Māori Christians were more welcome than godless Europeans. In summary, class-ist or race-ist or, indeed, colonial-ist readings of the Paihia mission – and the early CMS mission in general – obscure and distort its missionary intent, its spiritual pulse, and its inter-cultural, inter-racial reality.

⁸³ William Williams to John Williams, 12 Apr. 1826, MS. 93/129, folder 15, Auckland Museum Library.

⁸⁴ Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 84–89.

⁸⁵ Church Missionary Society, *Instructions of the Committee of the Church Missionary Society, Delivered August 6, 1822: To the Rev. Henry Williams, Proceeding as a Missionary to New Zealand* (London, 1822).

⁸⁶ Fitzgerald, *Marianne Williams*, 83–84.

⁸⁷ Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 93–94.



Figure 6. Sketch of Karuwahā (Henry Williams) and Hone Heke at “The Korero,” by T. B. Hutton; William Cotton Journal, MS. 40, Dixson Library, NSW.

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Whatever Happened to Missionary Enthusiasm? The Transformation of Protestant Globalism Since the Late Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

This essay comprises the revised text of Professor Stanley's Selwyn Lecture 2023, delivered at St John's College, Auckland, on 20 November 2023. The waning of enthusiasm for foreign missions is one of the most striking transformations observable among Anglophone Protestants since Bishop Selwyn's day. How do we explain the trend? Theological change presents one obvious answer, yet the weakening of enthusiasm for global mission is increasingly apparent even among theological conservatives. Another plausible answer is that "overseas missions" no longer seem appropriate or necessary in an ostensibly (but only nominally) postcolonial world, in which indigenous churches in non-European contexts have grown when much of the former Western Christendom has declined. This lecture drew attention to other possible explanations: the impact of visual images on perceptions of non-European peoples, and especially of children; the role of the two world wars in bringing relief for refugees and orphans to the foreground of Christian consciousness; and the consequent rise of the development NGO as the dominating model of international humanitarianism. The lecture appealed for Christians from different contexts to explore together what a renewed theological focus on the universality of the Christian gospel might mean.

Keywords missionary enthusiasm, famines, NGOs, refugees, world wars, globalism, Selwyn, New Zealand

Introduction

On 26 November 1854, Bishop Selwyn delivered the last of a series of four sermons preached before the University of Cambridge on the theme “The Work of Christ in the World.” This final sermon was on the subject “The Work of Christ among the Heathen.” Its primary theme was that foreign missions had the potential to be a safety valve to relieve the schismatic pressure building up within the Church of England as a result of the Oxford Movement. He was quite sure that clergy whose “peculiar opinions lead them towards Rome, or towards Dissent” would be “the very salt of the earth, if they would but go out into the Mission Field.”¹ This might appear a rather eccentric rationale for overseas missions, but it should be remembered that Selwyn attributed his own call to New Zealand to a sermon preached by H.E. Manning at the launch of the Colonial Bishops Fund in 1841.² In 1857, six years after Manning had become a Roman Catholic, Selwyn mused with regret on what Manning might have achieved if only the Church of England could have given him free rein to indulge his ecclesiastical scruples in the fertile and crowded islands of the Pacific: “he might have been the [Francis] Xavier of the present age.”³ Selwyn ended his sermon with a reference to his imminent return to New Zealand, and a stirring appeal:

I go from hence, if it be the will of God, to the most distant of all countries – to the place where God, in answer to the prayers of His Son, has given Him “the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.” There God has planted the standard of the Cross, as a signal to His Church to fill up the intervening spaces, till there is neither a spot of earth which has not been trodden by the messengers of salvation, nor a single man to whom the Gospel has not been preached. Fill up the void. Let it be no longer a reproach to the universities that they have sent so few missionaries to the heathen. The Spirit of God is ready to be poured out on all flesh; and some of you are His chosen vessels. Again, I say, Offer [*sic*] yourselves to the Primate of our Church. The voice of the Lord is asking: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” May every one of you who intends, by God’s grace, to dedicate himself to the ministry, answer at once:

“Here am I; send me”.⁴

One undergraduate, Henry Barclay Swete, later Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was present to hear Selwyn and reported that “The crush at [Great] St Mary’s was tremendous: one man had his arm nearly broken, another was lifted off his feet, and a third was carried out in a fit.”⁵ Another of Selwyn’s hearers was Charles F. Mackenzie, fellow

¹ George Augustus Selwyn, *The Work of Christ in the World: Four Sermons Preached Before the University of Cambridge on the Four Sundays Preceding Advent in the Year of our Lord 1854*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Macmillan & Co., 1855), 62-3.

² David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: The Wilberforces and Henry Manning*, new ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 218.

³ H.W. Tucker, *Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn, D.D., Bishop of New Zealand, 1841-1869, Bishop of Lichfield, 1867-1878*, 2 vols. (London: William Wells Gardner, 1879), vol. 2, 332.

⁴ Selwyn, *The Work of Christ in the World*, 68-9. It should be noted that Selwyn, as a believer in the “church” principle in mission, urged students to make their offer of missionary service to the archbishop of Canterbury, not to a voluntary society such as the CMS.

⁵ *Henry Barclay Swete D.D. F.B.A. Sometime Regius Professor of Divinity Cambridge: A Remembrance* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 19.

of Gonville and Caius College, and curate of Haslingfield, the Cambridgeshire village where I lived for 13 years. Mackenzie promptly responded to Selwyn's appeal by accepting a prior invitation from Bishop Colenso of Natal to be his archdeacon. Five years later, following David Livingstone's equally impactful lectures before the University of Cambridge in December 1857, Mackenzie would be selected as head of the new Universities' Mission to Central Africa, being consecrated in 1861 as missionary bishop of Central Africa.⁶ Selwyn's sermons also had a remarkable effect on many junior members of the university, leading to the formation between 1856 and 1858 of the Cambridge University Church Missionary Union and the consequent departure for the mission field of fourteen young Cambridge graduates between 1859 and 1861.⁷

The flame ignited at Cambridge by Selwyn burned still more brightly after Livingstone's 1857 visit. Though it stuttered during the 1860s and 70s, it then revived, especially after the foundation of Ridley Hall in 1881. During the principalship of Handley Moule from 1881 to 1899, 117 of the 514 students who passed through Ridley Hall became foreign missionaries, and 76 more went overseas to serve as colonial chaplains.⁸ Although Cambridge, and to a lesser extent Oxford, were at the centre of the late Victorian explosion of Anglican missionary enthusiasm, the phenomenon was not restricted to the ancient English universities or to the established church. By the close of the century British mission agencies had approximately 10,000 missionaries serving overseas, about half as many as the total numbers of Anglican clergy. The aggregate annual expenditure of these agencies was about £2 million, as much as the entire annual cost of civil service salaries, and equivalent to almost 2 per cent of the gross yearly expenditure of the Westminster government.⁹ In terms of aggregate funding, Anglican support for foreign missions ranked a close third behind church extension and popular education.¹⁰

Obvious Explanations of the Decline of Missionary Enthusiasm in Western Churches

Today nobody in Britain or, I suspect, New Zealand, has their arm nearly broken forcing their way into an overcrowded missionary meeting, and certainly not in a university context. Rather, as I have on occasion told my students, if I find myself depressed by the evidence of my advancing years, the best tonic is to go to a missionary meeting, if I can find one, and discover that in such company, I am not so old after all. So whatever happened to missionary enthusiasm? How do we explain its substantial disappearance from the countries (with the notable exception of some parts of the United States) that supplied the hordes of missionaries who went overseas from the late Victorian period until at least the 1920s? I shall note briefly

⁶ A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *The History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa 1859-1909* (London: Office of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1909), 2-3.

⁷ Brian Stanley, "Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England, c. 1838-c. 1873" (University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 1979), 299-301.

⁸ F. W. B. Bullock, *The History of Ridley Hall Cambridge. Volume I to the End of A.D. 1907* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941), 332-3, cited in Andrew Porter, "Cambridge, Keswick and late nineteenth-century attitudes to Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 6, no. 1 (1976), 13.

⁹ Andrew Porter, "Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 3 (1992), 372.

¹⁰ Stanley, "Home support for overseas missions," 156.

the three most commonly advanced explanations, each of which carries some plausibility but falls short of being totally convincing. I shall then, at greater length, suggest some other possible explanations, which are rarely mentioned. Finally, I shall pose the question: what are the theological implications for the church in these countries of the decline in missionary enthusiasm?

The decline of hell

First, it seems reasonable to suggest that missionary enthusiasm has declined in step with the churches' progressive abandonment of the belief that those who do not put their faith in Christ are destined for eternal punishment in hell. At first sight, there is much to be said for that view. Bishop Selwyn's sermon resorted to the common trope that "There are five hundred millions of heathen still waiting for the Gospel."¹¹ Though not a member of the Evangelical party in the Church of England, he had no hesitation in his four sermons about using orthodox Christian vocabulary of missionaries being entrusted with the message of the "salvation" of the world in Christ.¹² Nevertheless, Selwyn was no preacher of hell fire, referring to hell in these four sermons only when citing the promise of Christ that the gates of hell would not prevail against his Church.¹³ Moreover, missionary advocates throughout the nineteenth century were not all as absolute in their views on the eternal destiny of the "heathen" as we sometimes imagine. Henry Venn, the immensely influential secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841 to 1872, pronounced himself in 1850 unable to come to "any firm conclusion in my own judgment either from scripture or reason" as to the final state of those who had not heard the gospel.¹⁴ Even James Hudson Taylor, despite his heart-wrenching slogan of "a million a month in China dying without God," was by the end of his life expressing regret that the eternal punishment of the wicked had been incorporated within the doctrinal basis of the China Inland Mission; it was not an issue, he eventually concluded, that should be given the same theological status as the divinity or atoning sacrifice of Christ.¹⁵ Conversely, what strikes me about present-day conservative evangelicalism in Britain is its resounding silence on this question. Sermons in my own Baptist church, whose theology is conservative evangelical, will from time to time warn of the eternal consequences of being outside of Christ, but in the five years I have been in membership there, I have never once heard such a statement being applied to people beyond Scotland or used as a motivator for foreign missions. Conservative theology no longer generates automatic enthusiasm for global missions.

Growing knowledge of world religions

There is a second and closely related common answer to the question of why missionary enthusiasm has waned. Surely nineteenth-century Western Christians supported foreign

¹¹ Selwyn, *The Work of Christ in the World*, 63.

¹² Selwyn, *The Work of Christ in the World*, 13-14, 34, 69.

¹³ Selwyn, *The Work of Christ in the World*, 21, 30, citing Matthew 16:18.

¹⁴ Henry Venn to J.S.H. Stewart, 23 Feb. 1850, in G/AC 1/8 (1849-50), 97-8, CMS archives, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

¹⁵ Christopher E. M. Wigram, *The Bible and Mission in Faith Perspective: J. Hudson Taylor and the Early China Inland Mission* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2007), 186-190.

missions because they had little or no understanding of what we now call world religions, whereas Christians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have known better? Since we no longer sing Bishop Heber's words, "the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone,"¹⁶ the compulsion to export Christianity to all nations has weakened. Again, the answer is plausible to an extent, but two qualifying comments must be made. The first is that increased knowledge and understanding of other religions did not result in an immediate waning of missionary enthusiasm. The World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 adopted a generally eirenic stance towards the world religions, notably Hinduism, but saw the sympathetic and scholarly study of other faiths as no reason for abandoning the missionary imperative. On the contrary, the conference insisted, Christ must be presented to Hindus as the fulfilment of their highest religious and moral aspirations.¹⁷ Many Protestants in the first two decades of the twentieth century defined the global supremacy of Christ in less confrontational terms than did their nineteenth-century predecessors, but the mainline Protestant churches of Europe and North America showed little sign of scaling back their commitment to foreign missions before the mid-1920s, which marked the peak of the western missionary movement. The second qualifying comment is that the reduction in financial support for foreign missions that became clearly evident from 1929 had more to do with the financial crash of that year than with theology.¹⁸

The postcolonial reaction

A third common explanation of the decline in western Christian enthusiasm for foreign missions notes that the late Victorian missionary boom coincided with the partition of the tropical world by the European powers, and conversely that the steady decline in western missions over the second half of the twentieth century roughly correlates with decolonisation and the postcolonial reaction against all forms of European intervention in the non-western world. Again, this is a reasonable case to argue. Nevertheless, we have to account for the fact that some of the most substantial contributors to the European Protestant mission force in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries were countries that had no overseas colonies to lose—Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. As late as 1963, the renowned Swedish mission scholar, Bishop Bengt Sundkler, could observe that "Norway is, more than any other country, a country of missionary zeal."¹⁹ Of course, the fact that Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss missionaries operated in territories colonised by nations other than their own does not necessarily imply that they differed significantly from British, French or German missionaries in their attitudes to imperialism. Like them, they tended to view European colonies with principled favour as providential frameworks for missionary operation, but to

¹⁶ This is perhaps the most famous line in the hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," written in 1819 by Bishop Reginald Heber of Calcutta.

¹⁷ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), chapter 8.

¹⁸ Brian Stanley, "Twentieth-century world Christianity: a perspective from the history of missions," in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Donald M. Lewis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 74-5.

¹⁹ Bengt Sundkler, *Missionens värld: Missionskunnskap och missionshistoria* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1963), 212, cited in English translation by Nils Bloch-Hoel, "Norwegian Mission to South Africa 1880-1920: colonialistic confrontation or apostolic approach?", in *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920*, edited by Torben Christensen and William R. Hutchison (Aarhus: Aros Publishers, 1982), 13.

be vigorous critics of colonial administrations when they failed to live up to their providential destiny. Missionary enthusiasm, like missionary imperialism, had relatively little to do with nationalism, and much more to do with global cultural perspectives that we now categorise as “colonial.”

It is undeniable that the apparent end of the colonial era in the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly compelled western missions to revise their missiological vocabulary and redefine their role, resulting in some major structural transformations in the western missionary movement. Some Protestant agencies abandoned the voluntary society model altogether, reinventing themselves as transnational ecclesial communities for the exchange of human and financial resources in order to promote a broader and more church-centred concept of Christian mission. The first of these was the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, founded in 1822, which in 1971 became the Communauté Évangélique d’Action Apostolique (CEVAA). Perhaps the most radical reinvention was that of David Livingstone’s society, the London Missionary Society, which in 1971 became the Congregational Council for World Mission, and then from 1977 the Council for World Mission. In 2011 the Council moved out of the former LMS headquarters at Livingstone House in London, and relocated to Singapore to symbolise its separation from the seat of British colonial and financial power. It was an ironic choice of location that would later be questioned, as the CWM has identified itself with a radically decolonial and liberationist position, and in consequence has attracted the suspicion of the strongly pro-capitalist Singapore government.²⁰

Less radical but still significant was the decision of some societies to tweak their name and vocabulary, such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which in 1995 became the Church Mission Society, whose transnational personnel are now termed mission partners rather than missionaries—a change of terminology that reflected the fact that they were now partners of indigenous churches whose members were now the primary agents of evangelism. It is interesting that the New Zealand CMS did not follow suit in changing its full title, though it too now speaks of mission partners.²¹ For branding reasons, most mission agencies have preferred to keep their original initials, but to give them new signification. The SIM provides a striking example: founded in 1893 as the Soudan Interior Mission, the meaning of its initials has changed on three occasions in recent times—to SIM International in 1980, to Society for International Ministries in 1992, reflecting mergers with missions operating in Latin America and Asia, and then in 2002 to Serving in Mission. The SIM provides a striking model of how interdenominational evangelical mission agencies have absorbed other missions in successive corporate mergers, and have gradually moved from being originally transatlantic in their personnel to being genuinely international. The SIM today traces its origins to at least nine separate mission agencies, and has some 4,000 mission personnel from 70 different countries, including many from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.²² More broadly,

²⁰ I owe this point to my University of Edinburgh PhD student, Victoria Turner, whose work on the transition from the LMS to the CWM is important.

²¹ “NZCMS: About,” <https://www.nzcms.org.nz/about/>

²² “Who we are,” <https://www.sim.org/about>; <https://sim.co.uk/about/our-story/>; for an analysis of the internationalisation of the SIM see Alexandra Kate Douglas, “SIM – Strengthened through Diversity? An Examination of the Origins and Effects of Cultural Diversity within a Multi-national Christian Mission Agency 1975-2015” (University of Edinburgh PhD thesis, 2020).

we should note that the most recent annual estimate from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon Conwell Seminary computes that there are 425,000 foreign missionaries at work today, over seven times as many as the 60,000 estimated for 1900.²³ In global terms, therefore, missionary enthusiasm has *not* in fact declined, but rather been relocated to the growing Christian populations of the Global South and directed through a much wider range of institutional channels, both religious and non-religious. The question posed in this article is, therefore, unashamedly Eurocentric in its perspectives, but it remains a question that demands rather more careful historical explanation than simply evoking either the decline of belief in hell or the end of European colonialism. Moreover, for Christians living in the former mission-sending countries, the apparent collapse of a distinctively Christian vision of the condition of humanity calls for deep theological reflection. In the remainder of this article, I offer some suggested responses to this twin challenge.

Other Reasons for the Decline in Missionary Enthusiasm

First, a prefatory observation. The nineteenth-century missionary movement was concerned not just with the salvation of human souls, but also with the protection and transformation of suffering human bodies. Anti-slavery sentiment was intimately connected with missionary enthusiasm, not simply in the Caribbean or in Africa, but also in India, where it took the form of agitation on behalf of the depressed castes, and in the Pacific, where it fuelled Christian opposition to “blackbirding”, the forced labour trade from Melanesia to the plantations of Queensland, Fiji and Samoa. For most of the nineteenth century western global humanitarianism was driven by a close partnership between Christian missions and the anti-slavery imperative. By 1888, when Brazil finally abolished slavery, the battle against the transatlantic slave trade appeared to have been won, though in fact multiple and more subtle forms of slavery continue to this day. The transformations in western Christian humanitarianism that we are seeking to explain were closely connected with the waning of anti-slavery zeal. From the late 1870s, Christian perceptions of the bodily needs of humanity began to exhibit some different features, which I shall discuss in turn, though they frequently overlapped. Initially these features co-existed with enthusiasm for the missionary enterprise, and even heightened that enthusiasm. In the longer term, however, they would come to reshape the contours of western global philanthropy so fundamentally that missions found themselves marginalised.

The impact of photography

The first of these features was the impact of photography. Missionaries had taken occasional photographs of their work from the late 1850s, but it was the invention of the portable Kodak camera in 1888 that enabled the camera to become a regular item of missionary equipment. From the 1890s photographs began to feature regularly in missionary periodicals and, through the magic lantern, in slide shows in missionary meetings. Photographs had a unique capacity to bring home to domestic audiences the harrowing physical realities of human suffering. Over the next half century photography would be uniquely effective in highlighting

²³ Todd M. Johnson, and Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 942.

two categories of victim. The first were the victims of colonial brutality. In the Congo, missionaries began in the 1890s to take shocking photographs of victims of the rubber atrocities perpetrated by the agents of Leopold II's Congo Free State.²⁴ From 1903-4 these photographs were published in the Christian press on both sides of the Atlantic, and included in magic lantern shows. It should be noted that Alice Harris, the most prolific photographer of the atrocities, and Dr Harry Guinness, the leading British missionary user of atrocity lantern slides, were both associated with the Congo Balolo Mission, a theologically conservative body that formed part of the cluster of faith mission enterprises founded by Guinness's father, Henry Grattan Guinness.²⁵ The Congo Reform Association whose agitation brought Leopold's Congo Free State to an end in 1906 owed much to the outpouring of evangelical moral indignation provoked by Harris and Guinness. Missionary interest in the Congo benefited as well.

Images of mass famine

Of even greater long-term significance for the future shape of overseas philanthropy, however, was the transmission of photographic images of the catastrophic famines that afflicted large parts of the non-western world between 1876 to 1902 and again in the years after the First World War. Worst affected were north China and north India, owing to the repeated failure of the monsoons, but famines also afflicted other parts of the world, such as Russia, Egypt, and Brazil. Estimates of the aggregate death toll from famines in Asia between 1876 and 1902 are staggering in their magnitude, ranging from 19.5 to 30 million in China alone, and from 12.2 to 29.3 million in India.²⁶ The first wave of this series of drought-induced famines occurred too early for widespread communication via photographic images, though a few do survive.²⁷ By the early twentieth century, certain visual motifs, with which our generation has become all too familiar, started to appear. Missionary photography began to display, not Selwyn's 500 millions of heathen "waiting for the gospel" – how could it possibly have done so? – but rather the hungry waiting for handouts of food.²⁸

The role of missionary photography in times of famine was not merely to shock western audiences by images of emaciated bodies. It was also to highlight what the missions were doing in response to such catastrophic human suffering, particularly what they were doing for

²⁴ For the most famous photograph of the "red rubber" atrocities, showing Nsala of Wala gazing at the severed hand and foot of his murdered 5-year-old daughter, see "Nsala of Wala," <https://antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/2070>.

²⁵ T. Jack Thompson, *Light on Darkness? Missionary Photography of Africa in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 177-99, 229-38; Kevin Grant, "The limits of exposure: atrocity photographs in the Congo Reform campaign," in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, eds. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 64-88.

²⁶ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), 7.

²⁷ For a harrowing example from South Mahratta in 1876-7, see "Famished figures from the famine time 1876-77 in South Mahratta,"

<https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/Archive/International-Mission-Photography-Archive--ca-1860-ca-1960-2A3BF10L0UB?Flat=1#/SearchResult&VBID=2A3BXZ85ZP32E&PN=1&WS=SearchResults>, International Mission Photography Archive, Yale Divinity School Library.

²⁸ For an example from north China, c. 1905-10, see "Waiting for flour,"

<https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2A3BXZ859W2QW&PN=1&WS=SearchResults>, International Mission Photography Archive, Yale Divinity School Library.

children. Famines produce orphans, and orphans evoke compassionate action by even the most theologically conservative of Christians. In the North Indian context in particular, where missions had yielded only a meagre harvest of converted souls, famine served to reorientate Christian financial resources towards the care and elevation of orphans. Many of those orphaned by the Indian famines were taken into orphanages, and given a Christian education that sometimes included vocational training. The missions increasingly pinned their hopes for the future of the Indian church on children brought up in such Christian institutions. A notable example of such development-type initiatives was the cluster of institutions at Pune and Kedgaon in western India established in response to the devastating famine of 1896-7, not by a foreign mission agency, but by the high-caste woman convert, “Pandita” Sarasvati Ramabai. By the turn of the century Ramabai’s Mukti Mission at Kedgaon housed some 2,000 children orphaned by the famines, who were instructed in a range of craft, technical, and agricultural vocations.²⁹ For Ramabai, a devotee of Keswick holiness theology who would from 1905 to 1907 witness a Pentecostal-style revival in the mission, salvation – “Mukti” – was an all-embracing concept.

Graphic photographic images, whether of mutilated victims of the rubber atrocities in the Congo or of starving children in Asia, thus played a pivotal role in arousing the Christian humanitarian conscience in the West. From this point on, visual images reproduced in newspapers and magazines, and later through films and television, became the most powerful driver of transnational Christian philanthropy. In the nature of the case, images direct attention to bodies, rather than souls. Western Christian agencies soon discovered that the images that evoked the largest response were images of poverty-stricken or suffering children. The implications for the funding of overseas missions, ultimately even of conservative ones, were immense.

Photographs of the famines of the 1890s had an enduring impact on patterns of philanthropy in the West. This was notably the case in the United States, where reports of famine in Russia and India stimulated a remarkable convergence of missionary zeal and humanitarian compassion. The prime movers in these relief campaigns were Louis Klopsch, evangelical proprietor of the New York-based *Christian Herald*, the largest-selling American religious newspaper, and his pastor at Brooklyn Tabernacle, Thomas De Witt Talmage. Between 1896 and 1910 Klopsch and Talmage used the paper to raise over a million dollars for Indian famine relief and the orphan fund that followed.³⁰ They made use of recent advances in printing technology to reproduce halftone photographs of starving children. Earlier abolitionist literature on both sides of the Atlantic had frequently included illustrations depicting the predicament of the slaves, but the tabloid pictorial journalism employed by the *Christian Herald* was without precedent in the history of philanthropy.³¹ But the evangelical dominance of the genre was not to be repeated. The American Red Cross (ARC) collaborated

²⁹ Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India from Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 400-3.

³⁰ Heather D. Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 123-5; Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 112.

³¹ Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians*, 23, 29-30, 127, 155-9; idem, “Picturing pain: evangelicals and the politics of pictorial humanitarianism in an imperial age,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno, *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, 22-46.

with the *Christian Herald* in some of its early relief campaigns, but increasingly the ARC and the evangelical philanthropic efforts of Louis Klopsch followed divergent and rival pathways. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, it was apparent that the domination of American overseas relief campaigns by a single Christian newspaper was coming to a close. The ARC gained a crucial advantage in 1900 by securing congressional approval as “the official voluntary relief organization of the United States;” additional competition came from newly-established and extremely wealthy private foundations, such as the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations.³² Christian agencies were fast losing their virtual monopoly of western global philanthropy.

Global conflicts and the refugee problem

A second prominent feature of the global philanthropic landscape in the twentieth century was the devastating cost to humanity of war and ideological or ethnic conflict, particularly in creating unprecedentedly large movements of homeless and often stateless persons, those whom we call refugees. The term “refugee” originated in the late seventeenth century to describe Huguenots who fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to seek sanctuary (“refuge”) in Protestant nations. Only from the twentieth century did its meaning extend to all persons fleeing from war, persecution or natural disaster. Catastrophic upheavals such as the Armenian genocide of 1915-16, the Russian civil war of 1917-21, and the forced exchange of large numbers of Greek Muslims and Turkish Christians in the wake of the Greek-Turkish War of 1922, placed refugees at the centre of international humanitarian concern. “Relief” for refugees, and child refugees in particular, now attained the same sort of prominence in western global philanthropy that anti-slavery had occupied a century earlier. The Basel Mission, for example, became actively involved in care for Armenian orphans in Anatolia. American missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with the support of President Woodrow Wilson, established Near East Relief in 1915, which by its closure in 1930 had aided between 1 and 2 million Armenian refugees.³³ The League of Nations created a High Commission for Refugees in 1921. Save the Children Fund owes its origins to the courage of two formidable English Christian sisters, Dorothy Buxton and Eglantyne Jebb, who in 1919 founded a Fight the Famine Committee to protest against the disastrous effects of the continuing allied blockade of Germany and Austria after the end of the First World War. Eglantyne was the author in 1923 of “The Children’s Charter”, which the League of Nations adopted in 1924 as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.³⁴

³² Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians*, 231-27, 248-50, 262, 272.

³³ Inge Marie Okkenhaug, “Refugees, relief and the restoration of a nation: Norwegian mission in the Armenian Republic, 1922-1925,” in *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Unto the Ends of the World*, edited by Hilde Nielsen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and Karina Hestad Skeie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 207.

³⁴ It should be noted that Dorothy married Charles Roden Buxton, grandson of the evangelical abolitionist Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. On the Jebb sisters see Petá Dunstan, *Campaigning for Life: A Biography of Dorothy Frances Buxton*, (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2018); Brian Harrison, “Eglantyne Jebb (1876-1928),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34165>; Sybil Oldfield, “Buxton [*née* Jebb], Dorothy Frances (1881–1963),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/56643>.

New geographical patterns of Christian philanthropy and the rise of the NGO

A third important characteristic of the emerging new pattern of western Christian philanthropy was the geographical diversification of North American and British religious funding, which had hitherto been concentrated on the mission fields of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific (and, for Americans, Latin America). In the early twentieth century the convulsions created by the Russian Revolution, the First World War, and the collapse of the Ottoman empire turned the attention of British and especially American Christians to the Middle East, which had been the scene of some Protestant and Catholic missionary work, and still more to eastern Europe, which Protestant missions had mostly neglected.

The Second World War accentuated this trend still further, but it was now manifested in philanthropy targeted at western rather than eastern Europe, even including predominantly Protestant Germany. For mainline American Protestants and their British counterparts in the leadership of the historic churches, the crying need of post-war Europe, and devastated Germany in particular, was not evangelisation, but material relief and the longer-term economic development envisaged in the Marshall Plan launched in 1948. There was a political edge also. In the developing Cold War between the West and Soviet Russia, western relief efforts, alongside the economic reconstruction promised by the Marshall Plan, were necessary to shore up defences against the advance of communism. Most pressing was the unprecedented scale of the crisis of human displacement: in the wake of the war between ten and fourteen million persons (Germans, Ukrainians, and other nationalities) were displaced from their ordinary country of residence.³⁵ The enormity of the European refugee crisis necessitated the creation of new voluntary international aid agencies, or NGOs, a term which made its first appearance in a United Nations document in 1946.³⁶

Some of the new agencies, such as Oxfam, established as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief in 1942, were formally secular but had substantial Christian influence. Others were explicitly Christian. Lutheran World Relief began in 1945 as a response to the fact that an estimated 20 per cent of the world's Lutherans had been made homeless by the war.³⁷ In 1946 American denominations represented in the National Council of Churches formed the Church World Service (CWS) with the aim of co-ordinating American Protestant responses to the refugee crisis in Europe. In 1947 the Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, and the National Catholic Welfare Program created a joint community hunger appeal, the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP), which organized "Friendship Trains" and "Friendship Food Ships" to transport staple foods for the hungry in Europe. In Britain, what is now Christian Aid originated in 1945 as "The Christian Reconstruction in Europe

³⁵ Jan-Hinnerk Antons, "Displaced persons in postwar Germany: parallel societies in a hostile environment," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49:1 (2014), 92-144, at 92. Originally a distinction was drawn between "displaced persons" (those expelled from their homeland as a result of the Potsdam Agreement) and "refugees" (those who fled East Germany of their own volition to escape communist rule), but subsequently the term "refugee" became affixed to both categories; see James C. Enns, *Saving Germany: North American Protestants and Christian Mission to West Germany, 1945-1974* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 241, n. 51.

³⁶ "NGO," *Oxford English Dictionary* (2000- edn.), <https://www.oed.com/?tl=true>.

³⁷ "About Lutheran World Relief." <https://lwr.org/about-lwr>.

Committee”, a project of the British Council of Churches. New Zealand’s Christian World Service began in December 1945 when the National Council of Churches made its first Christmas Appeal for overseas relief in post-war Greece.³⁸ At the global ecumenical level, the “World Council of Churches in Process of Formation” established the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees in 1942.

The original focus of the new “NGOs” was to bring short-term “aid” or “relief” to refugees in continental Europe. Their emphasis was similar to earlier Christian campaigns directed at famine victims in Asia or Russia, but the geographical focus had changed. Their efforts were most strongly supported by the “mainline” or historic denominations, but evangelicals were not indifferent to the magnitude of the post-war humanitarian problem. In the United States the National Association of Evangelicals, formed in 1942, established a “War Relief Commission”, which in 1945 sent its first consignment of clothing to Belgium to be distributed by the Belgian Gospel Mission, a mission that originated in an American campaign during World War I to distribute evangelistic literature and humanitarian aid to Belgian troops.³⁹ As the geographical scope of the refugee problem and of Christian relief efforts broadened, the Commission was reconstituted in 1950 as an agency of global scope, “World Relief.” The United Nations designated 1959-60 as World Refugee Year, and in Britain in 1959 the Evangelical Alliance established its own Evangelical Alliance Refugee Fund. In 1967 the name was changed to the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, which was unfortunately abbreviated as EAR Fund. In 1968, at the height of the humanitarian crisis provoked by the Biafran War, which filled British television screens with images of starving children, the charity was re-launched with a new name making creative marketing use of the initial “T” in The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, which now became “Tearfund.”⁴⁰ Tearfund New Zealand followed in 1975.⁴¹ By 2022-3 Tearfund UK’s annual income was £85.4 million.⁴² By way of comparison, the most recent published accounts of the two largest British mission societies, CMS UK and BMS World Mission (the Baptist Missionary Society) reveal annual incomes of £8.8 million and £8.2 million respectively.⁴³

By the early 1950s the Marshall Plan was having its desired effect in rejuvenating the economy of West Germany. At the same time, the progress towards independence of first Asian and then African nations, and the simultaneous emergence of Marxian theories of neo-colonialism, were bringing the needs and political agendas of the “Third World”—a term

³⁸ “Who we are,” <https://cws.org.nz>.

³⁹ “Program of mercy starts in Belgium,” *United Evangelical Action* 6:3 (19 March 1945), Wheaton College archives; Aaldert Prins, “The History of the Belgian Gospel Mission from 1918 to 1962,” <https://www.academia.edu/10971154>. I am grateful to Emily Banas, Buswell Library Archives and Special Collections, Wheaton College, for assistance with sources on the origins of the War Relief Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals.

⁴⁰ Dena Freeman, *Tearfund and the Quest for Faith-Based Development* (London: Routledge, 2019), 42-3. The name of Tearfund was adopted at the suggestion of the evangelical media expert, Peter Meadows; see “Extra ecclesiam: conversations beyond borders,” YouTube Interview by Jason Clark with Peter Meadows, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_36SBoSVhdo.

⁴¹ “About us,” <https://www.tearfund.org.nz/About>.

⁴² Tearfund annual report 2022-3, https://www.tearfund.org/-/media/tearfund/files/about-us/our-impact/annual-reports/annual-report-2022_23-aw--web---print-friendly.pdf.

⁴³ “Church Mission Society,” and “Baptist Missionary Society,” <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search>.

originating in France in 1952—to the forefront of western consciousness. In response, the agencies established by the mainline churches in response to the refugee crisis in Europe now became the instruments of a wider form of Christian internationalism committed to the provision of humanitarian aid to poor nations outside Europe. Both the CWS and the CROP soon extended their ministry of compassion and relief to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁴⁴ Although the globalisation of humanitarian relief was not limited to the churches alone, Christians were at the forefront. At the second Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) at Evanston in 1954, the WCC Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees followed the general philanthropic trend by having its geographical mandate extended from Europe to the whole globe. It was destined to grow into the largest department of the WCC. Moreover, its expanded geographical mandate encouraged a crucial shift in emphasis from inter-church aid to *diakonia* (service) to the world: the task of assisting the churches in their evangelistic mission could be left to the International Missionary Council, or, after its integration into the WCC in 1961, to the Department of World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC.⁴⁵

The focus of American Christian philanthropy in the 1940s on relief to war-torn Europe was short-lived. In the course of the 1950s it moved to other theatres in which the Cold War was being fought out. Chief among these was Korea. Bob Pierce, an energetic Youth for Christ evangelist, conducted two evangelistic tours of China in 1947-8, where he witnessed the advance of the communist armies and Mao Zedong's persecution of mission Christianity. His subsequent service in Korea during the Korean War led him in 1950 to collaborate with a Korean Presbyterian minister, Kyung-Chik-Han, to found World Vision as an organisation dedicated to both evangelism and humanitarian relief, especially of orphans. Once again, the needs of orphaned Asian children played a pivotal role in redrawing patterns of Western Christian philanthropy. The power of photographs of suffering children was again crucial: Pierce was an enthusiast for the movie camera, and used it to great effect to produce films on China and Korea that conveyed to American evangelical audiences the message of the "Red Plague" of communism, but also the desperate plight of children orphaned by the war.⁴⁶ Over time World Vision progressively transformed itself from being an American evangelical missionary organisation with significant involvement in relief of orphans to being an international NGO, still confessedly Christian and still involved in child sponsorship, but now committed to a much broader range of long-term development goals. It has become the largest Christian humanitarian organisation in the world, with an annual budget of over 2 billion US dollars, and ranks in the top ten of all NGOs.⁴⁷ Another large international Christian NGO, Compassion International, similarly traces its origins to the initiative of an

⁴⁴ "CWS: a brief history," <https://cwsglobal.org/about/history/>.

⁴⁵ Mark T. B. Laing, "The calling of the church to mission and to unity: Bishop Lesslie Newbigin and the integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches" (University of Edinburgh PhD thesis, 2010), 150-76.

⁴⁶ David P. King, *God's Internationalists: World Vision and the Age of Evangelical Humanitarianism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 35-6, 39, 41, 49-50, 54; David R. Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 44-55; Helen J. Kim, *Race For Revival: How Cold War South Korea Shaped the American Evangelical Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapter 3.

⁴⁷ King, *God's Internationalists*, 8, and *passim*.

American Baptist, Rev. Everett Swanson, who visited Korea in 1952 to evangelise the American troops. Appalled at the plight of the Korean orphans he encountered, Swanson founded an orphanage and child sponsorship ministry which in 1963 assumed the name of Compassion International. Unlike World Vision, however, it has not diversified its original focus on child sponsorship.⁴⁸

Concluding reflections

In conclusion, I return to the theological question posed in the opening section of this article: what are the theological implications for the church in these countries of the decline in missionary enthusiasm? I am a historian, and not a theologian. Nevertheless, as a historian who professes Christian faith, I see it as part of my vocation to stimulate the churches to engage in theological reflection that is informed by historical awareness. Let me briefly suggest four themes that seem to me to arise from this survey:

1. *Relocating missionary enthusiasm*

We noted the estimate of the World Christian Database that there are more than seven times more missionaries in the world today than there were in 1900. That statistic would be a revelation to the vast majority of folk in British or, I suspect, New Zealand churches. Behind the statistic lies the reality of what a recent publication by the late Andrew Walls terms the “Old Age” of the missionary movement from the West.⁴⁹ It has been substantially replaced by a much more geographically and institutionally diverse phenomenon—the growth of a host of non-European churches with a passion for mission that is uninhibited by western Christian guilt over the colonial past. In that sense missionary enthusiasm *has* largely relocated, and Christians of European origin need to accept the fact with humility and rejoicing. But there remains a challenge to those of us of European heritage: why are our churches so relatively unenthusiastic—or perhaps simply ignorant—about the recent and continuing growth of the world church? And why do rich European churches generally find it more difficult to hold together passion for evangelism and passion for social justice than do the poorer churches of the majority world? The answer may lie in the terms in which I have phrased the question—in the contrast between our riches and their poverty.

2. *Holistic mission past and present*

That contrast leads us to the second theme for discussion. Protestants of evangelical inclination have since the mid-1970s progressively adopted the slogan of what C. René Padilla termed *misión integral*, a holistic understanding of mission that incorporates the full ethical imperatives of the kingdom of God within the core content of the gospel.⁵⁰ I wholeheartedly endorse that principle. Nevertheless, there is a twofold danger here. One is that we forget how closely traditional missionary enthusiasm in the European churches was

⁴⁸ “What is Compassion International?” <https://www.compassion.com/about/what-is-compassion.htm>; King, *God’s Internationalists*, 87-8.

⁴⁹ See Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement from the West: A Biography from Birth to Old Age*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2023).

⁵⁰ On this theme see David C. Kirkpatrick, *A Gospel for the Poor: Global Social Christianity and the Evangelical Left* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

linked to a humanitarian conscience—originally to campaigns against the slave trade and slavery in their various manifestations, and then from the late nineteenth century to massive fund-raising efforts for the victims of famine or war. Mission that seeks to address the needs of the whole person is not so new after all. But the opposite danger is that we imagine that holistic mission is simply about reacting with compassion to obvious physical suffering or need. Christian anti-slavery was animated by the compassionate anti-slavery slogan “Am I not a man and a brother?” (and sometimes sister!), but was slow to confront the institutional racism and economic self-interest that undergirded the entire slave system. Compassion is not enough.

3. The dangerous power of the camera

Compassion is not enough, but a professionally selected and edited visual image has extraordinary power to evoke compassion, and it is compassion that unlocks the purse strings. All mission agencies and humanitarian NGOs know this all too well. However, as my late colleague Jack Thompson argued in his final book, missionary photographs have often been constructed, even doctored for marketing purposes, to the extent that reality can be distorted.⁵¹ Mission agencies find themselves in an intensely competitive philanthropic market. Their chief executives strive nobly to cultivate in their organisations and supporting constituencies a theologically reflective and distinctive Christian ethos that is not satisfied with instinctive generosity in response to powerful images or doubly underlined sentences highlighting immediate human need. I do not doubt their sincere commitment to humble engagement in missional partnerships that encourage the growth of self-sustaining churches. Their marketing departments, however, may be less enthusiastic, or perhaps are simply stumped by the challenge of how to enthuse their supporters with longer-term goals where the return on their philanthropic investment is intangible.

4. The work of Christ in the world

Finally, let us return to Bishop Selwyn and his four Cambridge University sermons in November 1854. We should not idealise Selwyn, or any other missionary figure, but perhaps we should ponder what western churches have lost by the weakening of his vision that Christ was at work throughout the globe, in England and far beyond it, within and beyond the boundaries of European colonial rule. In their hymnody and prayers Christians regularly make theological affirmations about the unique salvific significance of Jesus Christ, but in my experience in Britain these affirmations have too often become internalised within personal spirituality or confined to local evangelistic contexts. They have become strangely disconnected from reflection about the vast mass of humanity whose insistent needs fill our television screens. I suspect that the problem is most acute among the now transnational networks of “new churches” created by charismatic renewal. These churches now account for some of the largest congregations in Britain. At least in some of them, reference to the spiritual, physical and social condition of the world beyond the worshipping congregation has virtually disappeared from what is sung, prayed, and preached. Indeed, if the congregations to which two of my own adult children belong are typical, intercessory prayers for the needs of

⁵¹ Thompson, *Light on Darkness*, chapter 5 and *passim*.

the world have disappeared entirely from the normal liturgical structure of these churches' Sunday worship.

These are generalisations made on the basis of very limited evidence, and I should be delighted to hear that such is not true in New Zealand, which contributed so much that is good to the renewal movement. Selwyn's fourth sermon confidently assured his mainly student audience that "The Spirit of God is ready to be poured out on all flesh; and some of you are His chosen vessels."⁵² Without wishing to replicate Selwyn's typically Victorian brand of racial and religious confidence, perhaps Christians of European heritage today need to listen with urgent and reflective attention to non-western Christians who have their own deep assurance that God has saving purposes for all of humanity, and that the Spirit is still calling all Christians to be part of those purposes.

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Whatever Happened to Missionary Enthusiasm? A Response to Prof. Stanley

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Introduction

It is my great privilege to respond to Professor Stanley's paper. Quite the surreal honour, since his work is well known to me, particularly his history of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference,¹ Protestant missions history,² and his efforts in promoting the study of World Christianity,³ which should swiftly become the central focus for all future missions studies and missionary training into the future.

As a researcher of what has, since the 1980s, been called "missions mobilisation,"⁴ I find myself returning time and time again to the question of motivation. What motivated people of the great two missionary centuries to "go"?⁵ Those centuries span 1790's-1990's, including the peak spread of the British Empire in the nineteenth century and subsequent European diaspora⁶ enabled by European colonial projects.⁷

One thing that Professor Stanley assumes but does not define is his understanding of global mission and overseas or foreign missions. This is important because the waning enthusiasm he

¹ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

² For example, Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 1992). As well as Brian Stanley and Kevin Ward, eds. *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity 1799-1999* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

³ For example, Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

⁴ The concept originated with Ralph Winter and most popularly promoted in this article: Ralph D. Winter and C. Hawthorne Steven, "Join the World Christian Movement," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009); see also Jay Matenga and Malcolm Gold, *Mission in Motion: Frankly Speaking of Mobilization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2016).

⁵ A concept drawn from Matthew 28:19.

⁶ By European I mean white people whose heritage predominantly stems from what is now known as the European Union and the United Kingdom; also including diaspora with this heritage in Latin and North America, Australia and New Zealand, and South Africa.

⁷ See Stanley and Ward, *The Church Mission Society*, among many other studies in the history of European colonialism and Protestant missions.

notices is specific to his understanding of mission/s.⁸ From my reading of Professor Stanley's paper (and his other works of church history), I suggest he is referring to activity by Christians in lands foreign to their land of origin in a general sense.

In world missions, two streams emerged in the 1960's when the International Missionary Council amalgamated into the World Council of Churches. Those that continued with the World Council of Churches are known as Ecumenical. Those that did not identify as Evangelical. The separation was more or less confirmed at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation, which aligned with the World Evangelical Fellowship, now known as the World Evangelical Alliance. The separation was prompted by an increasing politicisation of the International Missionary Council, which was dominated by denominational concerns, whereas the Evangelicals (many representing interdenominational missions and para-church outreach groups, led in large part by Billy Graham and John Stott) remained confident in and concerned for gospel-centred spiritual transformation (on the assumption that this would lead to the social change the Ecumenicals were seeking).⁹

Nevertheless, Professor Stanley's central concern is shared by both Ecumenicals and Evangelicals even if the meaning of missions differs between the two groups. A decline in enthusiasm happened in the Ecumenical movement decades before the decline we are now noticing in the Evangelical global missions community. Decline in the latter has only been acknowledged (if at all) in the past decade.

Because we are dealing with two streams of Protestant Christianity, the concerns and much of the history overlap, yet my response will draw from a different *taumata* (viewpoint) – the Evangelical perspective on the decline of missions enthusiasm – with appreciation for the prompts provided by Professor Stanley's expertise.

Dismissed Motivations

When it comes to investigating why people become involved in Christian activity beyond their country of origin, Professor Stanley quickly dismissed some motivators. He noted that appeals on the basis of heathen going to hell did not seem to have been a prime motivator for early missionary pioneers. However, it certainly became a motivator for Evangelicals influenced by North American fundamentalism, and it remains a central axiom within the Evangelical missions community. At the same time, younger participants in missions would likely hold the doctrine of hell loosely (unless they are heavily influenced by theological conservatism). Today, Evangelical attempts to promote missions service based on “rescuing people” from the fires of hell or even the “darkness” of their local religious beliefs is being met with diminishing returns.

⁸ My preference for the term missions (plural) follows missiological conventions developed by several scholars including David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991) and Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.), who distinguish between mission (singular) as God's loving self-revelation and engagement with the world, and missions (plural) as the missionary ventures of the Church, privileged to participate in the mission of God. My use of mission (singular) is rooted in the Latin term *missio Dei*, “mission of God,” from Karl Hartenstein who applied it to summarize Karl Barth's intra-trinitarian missiology: see Libertus Arend Hoedemaker and Marc Spindler, *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction; Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁹ In addition to Professor Stanley's perspective, see historical surveys by Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, and Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

Professor Stanley observed that the colonial impetus reason fails too. I would add that if a colonial agenda was a reason to engage in foreign missions (of any sort) it does not explain the missionary impulse that influenced the early spread of the gospel from the eastern Pacific to Melanesia and Papua New Guinea, let alone the indigenous inter-tribal spread within Aotearoa New Zealand.¹⁰ Furthermore, as Professor Stanley noted, missionary activity has grown rapidly among believers from non-colonising nations (increasingly known as the Majority World) since the 1980s – a significant shift.¹¹ His examples of missions institutions becoming ecclesial communities and financial conduits are somewhat unique to the Ecumenical experience and add to the reasons why the Evangelical missions community branched away from the 1960s. As regards the Evangelical agencies who remained voluntary societies and senders of foreign missionaries, and who tapped into new sources of funding (which is becoming increasingly difficult to find post-2010), I firmly believe that colonial values have and still do influence their theological rationale and methods of missions, but I agree that the objectives of colonisation are not a primary motivating factor.

Developmental Motivations

A significant early motivator is easily but perhaps erroneously conflated with colonialism. That is, a developmental impetus. Professor Stanley identified this as humanitarian – the compassionate desire to help others improve their living conditions and, for many early missionaries, to help underprivileged people adapt to European civilisation and participate more fairly in the benefits of global trade. That argument could fairly be made of missionary work in Aotearoa New Zealand, at least until the 1860s.¹²

I agree with Professor Stanley that missions activity was traditionally focused on the whole of life in a developmental way, responding to need with compassion rather than the false bifurcation of evangelism and social action that eventually led to the separation of the Ecumenical and Evangelical perspectives of missions in the 1960s. As Professor Stanley observed, with notable exceptions like World Vision, Tear Fund, and Compassion, most philanthropic missions were replaced by secularised non-governmental organisations. In concert with this shift, from the 1960s, aid and relief activity was increasingly invalidated as a missions' activity by the Evangelical global missions community, which prioritised evangelism in missions, with social activity, at best, playing a support role.

At the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974, and again at the Third Congress in Cape Town in 2010, attempts were made to balance evangelistic and social concerns within a missions theology with varying degrees of success.¹³ The two still need to be fused back together today. Teaching about integral mission (*misión integral* in Spanish) seeks to do that.¹⁴ But when I was asked on camera at a global evangelism event in 2023 to give an opinion of integral

¹⁰ Kalafi Moala, *Tonga: Tale of Two Kingdoms. The Impact of Christianity on Tongan Society* (Nuku'alofa: Taimi Publishers, 2011); Keith Newman, *Bible & Treaty: Missionaries Among the Māori—A New Perspective*. (Auckland, NZ: Penguin Group, 2010).

¹¹ Confirming evidence for this can be extrapolated from Gina Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "Status of Global Christianity," in *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 47, no. 1 (2023).

¹² Newman, *Bible & Treaty*.

¹³ In 1974 by John Stott, see: https://lausanne.org/statement/lausanne-covenant?gad_source=1#cov (last accessed 27 February, 2024). In 2010 by Christopher J. H. Wright, see: <https://lausanne.org/statement/ctcommitment> (last accessed 28 February, 2024).

¹⁴ Building on the work of Latin American Evangelicals, René Padilla and Samuel Escobar, arguably the clearest articulation of the need for what is known as integral mission is Wright, *The Mission of God*.

mission from my indigenous perspective, I noted that the concept is likely to make little sense to indigenous followers of Jesus – simply because most indigenous believers would argue that the purposes of God cannot be separated in the first place. Life is life. It cannot be disintegrated. But of course, due to European rationalism and the Enlightenment project it enabled, an illusion of separation is entrenched in the Western psyche. So we now tend to respond to physical need in one direction, political need in another, and spiritual need bizarrely divorced from both.

Marketing Motivations

Missions mobilisation is an activity that might be thought of as missions marketing by another name – using means to encourage participation in global missions. From my research and 30 years' experience of this, I concur with Professor Stanley's observations about the significance of imagery in amplifying engagement. Photos and videos of exotic objects in dire need can powerfully trigger moral indignation from the heights of our ethnocentric superiority.¹⁵ At best, they move people to sacrificial response in support of what they understand to be a solution. While ethnocentrism affects people from all cultural backgrounds, people who enjoy privilege are particularly prone.¹⁶ As the history of the modern missionary movement reveals, the norm is of white people caring for brown (or black) people.¹⁷ And sadly, at times it was white people caring for brown people as a result of atrocities caused by white people, or at least the systems of power white people have brought into the societies of people of colour – exploitative trade, capital "acquisition," cultural appropriation, exotic diseases, foreign moralities, inequitable systems of government, and culturally insensitive laws backed by punitive force. For example, Professor Stanley noted the significance of images of famine. The 1876-79 El Niño-Southern Oscillation affected many parts of the world. The resulting famine was especially severe in China, India, and Brazil, as Professor Stanley noted, where many millions died. Yes, the devastation was photographed, but it was also entirely avoidable. According to the source material Professor Stanley quoted, these nations had stored surpluses that could have alleviated the suffering. Instead, a significant reason why famine occurred in these places was due to European insistence that cash crops should be sold on the global market so that colonial companies could make a profit from famine elsewhere, leaving the supplying nations starving.¹⁸ If foreign missionary service is motivated by justice, there is ample evidence here that Westerners wanting to work for justice overseas need to begin their work at home, the source of much injustice elsewhere.

One final comment on the promotion of missions. I serve as secretary of Interserve's International Council – a mission whose historic roots are similar to the Ramabai Mukti Mission to which Professor Stanley refers. In both organisations, the pioneer heroines of each mission's founding were Indian women. But, as highlighted at the 2022 Interserve Leaders Consultation, the role of locals in the mission's narratives was too easily eclipsed by Western advocates who leveraged emotive media like photography and reports (including books) from the perspective of

¹⁵ I use the term objects intentionally because artefacts intended to promote the needs of people in less fortunate situations easily objectifies them.

¹⁶ Ethnocentrism refers to the posture of viewing reality and judging differences from the perspective of one's own culture with little appreciation for the cultural perspectives of others. Ethnocentrism might be thought of as a basis for prejudice and racism.

¹⁷ Any thorough history of Christian missions will reveal this tendency. Since it is already mentioned, I will point again to Walls, *Missionary Movement*.

¹⁸ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London, UK: Verso, 2001).

expatriates on location to raise awareness, personnel, and funding required for their philanthropic cause of choice.¹⁹ Professor Stanley mentioned the origin story of World Vision, but that is similar in this regard. Only recently has the Korean version of World Vision's origin story come to light, with Kyung-Chik Han playing more of an honourable lead role than that of being Bob Pierce's native sidekick.²⁰ The truth of a narrative, it seems, depends on who holds the power to promote their side of a story.

Shifting Motivations

In spite of all of the changes in missions theory and practice, I agree with Professor Stanley that the “waning enthusiasm for global mission among Anglophone Protestants” is predominantly influenced by the English-speaking world's individualistic self-obsession. The answer to his question about our situation in Aotearoa New Zealand is that it is not different. We were once a model contributor to global missions per capita compared to other Western nations, and the largest sender of missionaries per capita as late as the 1970s; but since the turn of the century our missionary force has declined by 1,000 workers, from 1700 in 2000 to just 700 active in 2023.²¹ Waning enthusiasm is also perhaps accelerated by affluence, but it is much more than that. It is the deeper social, psychological, and philosophical shift happening within the Western context that is diminishing a missionary passion in followers of Jesus. It is not primarily a theological shift, not in the Evangelical and Pentecostal community anyway.²² For example, the theology and hymnody of Majority World churches that send the most missionaries is almost indistinguishable from that of their Western Evangelical/Pentecostal influencers, yet missionary sending from the Majority World now far exceeds those sent from the West. Their social, psychological, and philosophical contexts are different. Even so, the volume of missionaries sent from the Majority World is showing signs of slowing as well, especially as their middle class is under stress, and socio-political concerns turn their attention to local issues (increasingly legitimised as missions activity too).²³

For all but the most singularly focused followers of Jesus, foreign missions can seem too difficult, with little perceived return on investment. The calls to serve in foreign contexts are, therefore, not nearly compelling enough to motivate movement. There are those within Evangelical churches who still respond to the call to go, but these singularly focused ones are often deeply influenced by their doctrinal dogma and unaware of their ethnocentrism. They can fail to appreciate that only an indigenous gospel, emerging from within the local culture, has the most potential to

¹⁹ I was present at the Interserve Leaders Consultation, held in Kavaje, Albania, 2 – 8 October, 2024.

²⁰ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/april/world-vision-kyung-chik-han-forgotten-founder.html> (last accessed 27 February 2024).

²¹ Patrick Johnstone considered Aotearoa New Zealand a “model contributor” in P. Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993). Former Missions Interlink NZ Director David Jenkins made the per capita claim in D. Jenkins, “New Zealand,” in *Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements* (World Evangelical Fellowship, 1999). The decline has been tracked by Missions Interlink NZ's annual census of missions and outreach organisations (unpublished).

²² Within the World Evangelical Alliance, Pentecostalism is viewed as a subset of Evangelicalism.

²³ In conversations with colleagues from the Korean World Mission Association, the number of missionaries sent from South Korea was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and is not rebounding. Toward the end of 2023 Korean missions influencers all agreed to refocus their missions strategy on helping indigenous churches to develop a missions vision, to spread Christianity to communities near them who otherwise have little access to the (whole) gospel. A case can be made for foreign missions being made possible because of a growing middle class in societies. When that middle class begins to diminish, as it shows signs of doing so in the West, so too does the vision and discretionary income available for use in foreign missions.

positively impact society.²⁴ It remains all too common for missionaries, whether from traditional or new-sending nations, to impose a foreign understanding of the gospel upon people in another cultural context. As Professor Stanley noted, missionary enthusiasm may have relocated to the Majority World, but in its Evangelical expression it is still largely informed by the biases of Eurocentric Evangelical theology and missiological assumptions formed in the context of colonialism.²⁵ The critical deconstruction of these assumptions in the West in recent years is likely to influence the Majority World before long, negatively affecting enthusiasm for cross-cultural missionary service from those locales too.

A narrative of the “impoverished exotic other” might still release pennies from purses for Non-Government Organisations, but it is no longer compelling enough to move Westerners from the comforts of their own homes to the world’s needy. In my experience, visual stimulus no longer elicits active engagement, especially now that images can be as fictional as any narrative in the new age of Generative Artificial Intelligence. Add to that the fact that increasingly secularised (and nationalising) generations are more aware of the chequered missions history of the West, the complexity of equitable intercultural exchange, and the need for expatriate visitors to be much more sensitive to the beliefs and values of local hosts, and you have many headwinds pushing against traditional missions participation and resourcing. The so-called white man’s burden (a condescending attitude of altruism toward poor non-whites), which may have been a motivating factor in the past, has been superseded by post-colonial sensitivities. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but missions have not yet tapped into new motivations to encourage the release of resources (people, pesos, and prayer) by congregations to be invested in what God is doing in the world beyond the direct control of church leaders. In other words, with shifting motivations, we are in dire need of a new imaginary for how we are to participate in God’s mission.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it can be helpful to reframe the history of Protestant missions to better identify the era that we currently find ourselves in. In this way, new possibilities emerge for participating with God in spreading the gospel and serving the world beyond our own borders (or at least beyond the borders of our churches). To this end, I identify three stages of Protestant missions history. Missions At – from the late eighteenth century right through to the 1940’s: 150 years of high Eurocentric superiority and colonialism. Missions To – from World War II through to the late 2010s: 70 years of great developmental focus, with increasing cultural sensitivity and concern for the local ownership but still far too much condescension. And now, Missions With – 220 years after the start of the so-called modern missionary movement. Missions work now simply must have a greater appreciation for global collaboration within a gloriously diverse, increasingly indigenising, world Christianity working together to co-create New Creation in local contexts; it must be

²⁴ There is ample evidence for this claim from studies in World Christianity, but the most readily accessible would be Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

²⁵ For further reading about Eurocentric theology and colonially-informed assumptions see: J. Mātenga, “The blessing of diversity: Benefits of the emancipation of Indigenous theologies in light of the emergence of World Christianity,” in *Anvil Journal of Theology and Mission* 39, no. 1 (May 2023), <https://churchmissionsociety.org/anvil/the-blessing-of-diversity-jay-matenga-anvil-vol-39-issue-1/> (last accessed 15 March 2024).

inseparably integrated and ministering where the gospel and its impact is least known and experienced, in such a way that it results in significant social transformation.

Our internal spiritual growth, individually and collectively, counts for little if it is not amplifying our witness to the world through our “good deeds” (James 2:14ff, 1 Peter 2:12)—concern for the poor, justice for the marginalised, healing for the sick and traumatised, inclusion for the outcast (refugee), care for the widows and orphans, nurture of creation, and so on. Therein, the shalom Kingdom of God—New Creation—is made manifest, and every culture, generation, and person has a unique role to play in co-creating it. A renewed imaginary of God’s purpose for the world such as this could motivate new generations to participate further afield. Perhaps then, John Stott’s aspiration in Lausanne 74’s Lausanne Covenant will be realised, with “the whole church, taking the whole gospel, to the whole world.”²⁶ May it be so.

Arohanui ki a koutou e haere ana ki te ao (love to you all as you go into the world).

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Three Voices at Waitangi: a Sacred Public Square

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Abstract

On 6 February 1840, at Waitangi, there were three representative voices at the Treaty table: the British Crown, Rangatira Māori, and the Church. Each of the three voices operated within an assumption that the occasion, the document and the place was sacred. Almost a century later, in 1934, the then Governor-General of NZ, Lord Bledisloe, gifted the Waitangi Treaty grounds back to the nation. He stated: “Let Waitangi be a tatau pounamu for us all, a symbol of peace and unity.” He then prayed: “O God....grant that this sacred compact then made in these waters may be faithfully and honourably kept for all times to come.” It was language both covenantal and sacred. In the fading sacred public square of his day, Bledisloe proposed to the nation that the Treaty of Waitangi still provided a pathway of reconciliation. Here I argue, however, that in order to be reconciled by the treaty, we need to further reconcile the treaty with its context. A contextual interpretation invites the listener into a historico-theological space of *karakia* (prayer), metaphor, biblical neologisms, and covenantal ontology. This paper proposes that viewing the treaty as a theological document helps to reconcile the treaty to its context, add depth to the national conversation, and enhance the treaty’s original reconciliatory intentions.

Keywords Treaty of Waitangi, covenant, colonisation, reconciliation, theology, public square

Introduction

It happened at a meeting between an Indian community in northwest British Columbia and some government officials. The officials claimed the land for the government. The natives were astonished by the claim. They couldn’t understand what these

relative newcomers were talking about. Finally, one of the elders put what was bothering them in the form of a question. “If this is your land,” he asked, “where are your stories?” He spoke in English, but then he moved into Gitksan, the Tsimshian language of his people – and told a story. All of a sudden everyone understood ...

At the heart of this paper lie some of our stories.

In 1934, the then Governor-General of NZ, Lord Bledisloe, utilised a reconciliation metaphor from te ao Māori. Upon gifting the Waitangi treaty¹ grounds back to the nation, he stated: “Let Waitangi be a tatau pounamu, a sacred doorway for us all, a symbol of peace and unity.”² He then prayed: “O God...grant that this sacred compact then made in these waters be faithfully and honourably kept for all times to come.”

In the fading sacred public square of his day, Bledisloe proposed to the nation that the Treaty of Waitangi still provided a pathway to reconciliation. Further to the reconciliatory theme, Judge Sir Eddie Taihakurei Durie addressed fellow Māori leaders at Waitangi in 1989, saying:

We must not also forget that the Treaty is not just a Bill of Rights for Māori. It is a Bill of Rights for Pākehā too. It is the Treaty that gives Pākehā the right to be here. Without the Treaty there would be no lawful authority for the Pākehā presence in this part of the South Pacific...we must remember that if we are the tangata whenua, the original people, then the Pākehā are the tangata tiriti, those who belong to the land by right of the Treaty. To honour our forebears, then, we as Māori must never challenge, threaten, compromise, or prejudice the rights of Pākehā to be here. We cannot claim our own rights if we do not first respect those of others.³

I support Bledisloe and Durie’s assumption that fundamentally the treaty is a reconciliatory mechanism. Here I offer, however, that in order to be reconciled by the treaty, we need to further reconcile the treaty with its context. A contextual interpretation invites the listener into a historico-theological space of Te Paipera Tapu (Holy Bible), karakia (prayer), metaphor, biblical neologisms, and covenantal ontology. I shall argue that not only is Waitangi a sacred place but that the treaty is a theological document which speaks with a unique voice that requires careful hermeneutical consideration. Such consideration will add nuance to the national conversation, and enhance the treaty’s original reconciliatory intentions.

¹ I shall adopt the following protocol re spellings: Treaty = English version; Tiriti = Māori version; treaty = combined versions.

² Tatau Pounamu is a metaphor which refers to a traditional protocol of reconciliation or peace-making in te ao Māori.

³ Sir Eddie Taihakurei Durie, Speech at Waitangi 1989, cited in The Nathaniel Centre’s “Ethics and The Treaty of Waitangi,” *The Nathaniel Report*, Issue 1 (Wellington, August 2000): 1.

The Church and the Treaty

Professor Paul Moon wrote in “Originalism and the Treaty of Waitangi”: “Since 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal has been primarily responsible – along with the courts, politicians, and academics – for interpreting the meaning and the application of the Treaty of Waitangi.”⁴ Within the cast of academics, I assume, reside historians, legal scholars, political scientists, and linguists – to nominate a few. However, largely absent from this inferred list are the tangata tiriti theologians from within the Church. I add the tangata tiriti descriptor because I assume that most tangata whenua interpreters of Te Tiriti will be using a theological framework, founded upon a mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) worldview.

In a paper by the Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner Judge David M Arnot entitled “Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant,” he said, “In order to implement the treaty relationship and fulfill the promise of the treaties, there needs to be revitalisation based upon four pillars of reconciliation: political, legal, socio-economic and spiritual.”⁵ This four-pillar model echoes Mason Durie’s *Te Whare Tapa Whā*,⁶ which describes health and wellbeing as a wharenuī/meeting house with four walls. These walls represent taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing, taha hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing, taha tinana/physical wellbeing and taha whānau/family and social wellbeing. We can prophetically imagine, perhaps, that not only is the treaty a doorway into a whare of reconciliation, but that the treaty itself is akin to a four-sided whare; and that while three sides of the whare have been attended to, the taha wairua (spiritual well-being) has been under-emphasised.

There were three groups of signatories (including witnesses) at Waitangi on February 6, 1840: the Crown, rangatira Māori, and the Church.⁷ Over the past two centuries, two of these groups – the Crown, and te ao Māori (the Māori world) – have proffered their views as to the intent and meaning of the treaty. Moana Jackson has eloquently reminded us that Māori have treated mai rano (from time immemorial), and that the idea of a treaty was not new to them; hence te tatau pounamu (a sacred doorway of peace).⁸ The Crown, following historical British practice, also has a long treaty tradition. Both of these entities have frequently outlined their understanding of what took place at Waitangi.

However, the Church, the third leading character in the treaty drama, has until recently been relatively silent. In the 1980s and 90s this began to change. An example of this shift is seen in the Sesquicentennial release of The Church Leaders’ Statement, which followed the wide-reaching restructuring of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa into three Tikanga. The general lack of the Church’s public witness is the more regrettable given that community’s significant mediatorial role in the treaty’s formation and signing. This relative

⁴ Paul Moon, “Originalism and the Treaty,” *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 24 (2017): 2-14; 2.

⁵ David M. Arnot, *Treaty Implementation: Fulfilling the Covenant* (Saskatoon: Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2007), vii.

⁶ Mason Durie, <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>.

⁷ Note: The term “Church” refers broadly to those who at the time identified publicly as Christian, including Church Missionary Society missionaries and its lay leaders (for example, William Martin), Wesleyan Missionary Society missionaries, and other dignitaries who expressed an allegiance to the Gospel/Te Rongopai in their dealing with Māori and the treaty. The term “Church”, as used in this essay, also includes the “spiritual descendants” of that party present at Waitangi.

⁸ Interview with Moana Jackson on *He Tohu*.

<https://natlib.govt.nz/he-tohu/korero/interview-with-moana-jackson>.

silence not only reflects poorly on the Church, but has also meant that an important interlocuter has been missing from the national conversation, creating a vacuum to be filled by others – especially historians and lawyers.

The Treaty as Theological Document

It is into this lacuna that this paper is offered. I propose that not only is Waitangi a sacred public square but also that the treaty speaks with a unique voice that requires careful hermeneutical interpretation. This implies that a biblical worldview contributed to the treaty's development both politically, anthropologically, and cosmologically. In short, the treaty is among other things a theological document and needs to be understood as such.

Waitangi has always been a sacred space. Te Tou Rangatira, an area next to Te Tii Marae – the tuakana (senior) marae of Waitangi – was a traditional place of karakia and wānanga (learning and discussion) for Māori. It was there that Henry Williams met with rangatira on the evening of the 5th February to discuss Victoria's offer of a treaty.

Waitangi was the place in 1833 where James Busby, the newly appointed New Zealand Resident, established the Crown's presence. The *Sydney Monitor* referred to the Crown appointee as “this religio-politico self-sufficient young man.”⁹ While not necessarily a proselytising evangelical, he was certainly an admirer of that worldview, creating an important link with the CMS missionaries in neighbouring Paihia. A visitor from Australia commented that there were “Too many prayers at Why-tangie”, referencing the atmosphere at Busby's residence. He is recorded as saying that Busby was “rather too formal, and Religious for me”.¹⁰ By extension, Waitangi was too Christian for him. The public square at Paihia and Waitangi – in stark contrast to Kororāreka, where “Satan had his dominion” – was decidedly religious. Heaven, as opposed to “a Hell-hole” – for on the western side of Pēwhairangi, the name of Jesus was invoked in the midst of the colonial project. It was into this sacred public square of prayer and religious observance that the treaty was proposed and framed as something tapu; something holy.

Perhaps the most obvious theological turn with regard to the treaty has been the current interest in its status as covenantal.¹¹ The word is used in a variety of quarters and has also attracted recent academic attention. What was the genesis of the covenant concept, in this treaty context? Hōne Heke Pōkai, the influential Ngāpuhi chief and the first to sign Te Tiriti at Waitangi, persuasively maintained in front of his fellow rangatira in February 1840 that Te Tiriti “Was even as the word of God”. Heke accorded the agreement a unique mana (authority), comparing the tapu or sacred quality of Te Paipera Tapu to the document that lay before him. The Paipera Tapu consists of He Kawanata Tawhito and He Kawenata Hou, or the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

⁹ Ned Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2022), 135.

¹⁰ Fletcher, *English Text*, 135.

¹¹ See Alistair Reese, “Reconciliation and the Quest for Pākehā Identity” (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2013); M.E. Andrew, “Treaty, Land and Covenant” (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1990); Hamish Maclean, “Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Covenant Relationship in Aotearoa New Zealand” (MA thesis, University of Otago, 2022).

Where did Heke get this idea from? Quite probably from the explanations of his biblical mentor and baptiser: Karuwahā, as Henry Williams was otherwise known. Williams, who later referred to the treaty as New Zealand's Magna Carta and as a sacred compact, was almost solely responsible for describing to northern Māori the nature and meaning of the treaty.

This covenantal idea has withstood the test of time, and continues to be referred to in sacred terms by many. Perhaps the covenantal whakapapa begins with Williams, and was then given an indigenous imprimatur by Heke and his whanaunga Te Ruki Kawiti. The tapu claim was continued into the 20th century by Mere Rikiriki and Wiremu Ratana, and later reiterated by Bishop Manuhua Bennett, Professor Manuka Henare, Bishop Whakahuihui Vercoe, and many others, including recently by Dame Cindy Kiro.

The concept of political covenants as a biblical idea requires further explanation. The Jewish political scientist Daniel J. Elazar, in his *Covenant in Politics*, states that polities come into existence through conquest, organic development, or covenant. He states that covenantal polities are those that seek to emphasise a “deliberate coming together of humans as equals to establish a body politic”.¹² In all of its forms, he says, the key focus of biblical covenant is on relationships, and the covenant is the “constitutionalization” of such bonds. In his view, this gives the relationship an authoritative basis in objective truth, which is an alternative to an authority rooted in one person's – or one party's – ability to accumulate and control power between individuals. Elazar defines a political covenant, in contrast to a divine covenant, as:

[a] morally informed agreement or pact based on voluntary consent, established mutual oaths or promises, involved or witnessed by some transcendental higher authority, between peoples or parties having independent status...¹³

Similarly Perry Huesmann, a Dutch political theologian, in his *Covenant as Ethical Commonwealth*, described societal covenants in the following way:

Covenant is a structuring of human relationships, rooted in relational ontology, by means of the promise of free, equal and consenting persons, which establishes a bond of reciprocal respect and loyalty, witnessed by a transcendent or higher authority, for a mutually predetermined good.¹⁴

These covenantal agreements, which reflect God's covenanting practice, appear as treaties, legal transactions, international political declarations, and most commonly as the societal institution of marriage. Huesmann maintains that this almost universal use of covenant:

[i]mplies that humans are meant for and find their flourishing through human relationality....Covenant also implies that there is a normative side to this relationality, one that leads free humans not to pursue freedom as autonomous

¹² Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Civil Society: The Constitutional Matrix of Modern Democracy* (Volume IV: *The Covenant Tradition in Politics*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 81.

¹³ Elazar, *Covenant and Civil Society*, 22.

¹⁴ Perry Huesmann, *Covenant as Ethical Commonwealth* (Martesana: IPOC, 2010), 11.

subjects merely in search of objects to conquer, consume, or control, but to use freedom responsibly in the form of consent and promise making for a common good greater than self.¹⁵

If we consider the treaty in light of Elazar's and Huesseman's elements, the 1840 accord displays many of the characteristics of his model, including the assumption of a transcendent witness, and the idea of relationality.

Firstly I shall consider the concept of a "transcendent witness". I offer that any hui within a te ao Māori context assumes the presence of the divine. Further evidence can be drawn from the karakia of one of the signatories – by Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Kaharau rangatira, Ngāmanu. Hapū memory recalls his karakia after he signed at Waitangi:

Haeremai e te Tiriti o Waitangi. Haere mai ki tēnei ao. Haeremai me ngā hua kei roto ki a koe. Tū mai ki tō mātou taha. Takiri a Nuku. Takiri a rangi. Te Manawa tī, te manawa tā. Tēnei te kare kau. Te kare a roto e!

(*Translation: Welcome Treaty of Waitangi. Welcome to this world. Welcome to the fruits you have in you. Stand by our side. Sit by our side. Proceed along the land. Proceed along the heavens. 'Tis the enduring breath. The breath of life. Here are the ripples. The ripples of passion and emotions within.*)¹⁶

Karakia invokes the divine presence. To Māori rangatira at Waitangi, that was a sacred space with a transcendent presence. However, the treaty was signed at about 50 other locations. Manuka Hēnare, a Ngāpuhi scholar, noted that many of the 512 chiefs who signed Te Tiriti did so with "a representation of their facial marks or moko, others with crosses and other marks, and 72 with their personal signatures".¹⁷ Thus, the Commission Report writes that: "[T]here are two key ideas which for Māori mark out the Treaty as more than a legal contract. First, it is a 'kawenata', a covenant, or sacred compact with obligations on both sides. Secondly, because of the ancestral *moko* markings on the Māori language version, the Treaty is a *taonga tapu*, a sacred treasure".¹⁸

To cite Orange again:

The role of the English missionaries in determining Māori understanding, therefore, was crucial through the way explanations were given. It determined that Ngāpuhi would understand the treaty as a special kind of covenant with the Queen, a bond with all the spiritual connotations of the biblical covenants; there would be many tribes, including the British, but all would be equal under God.¹⁹

Given the English constitutional arrangements, whereby Queen Victoria was also the head of the State Church, it is also arguable that from the Crown's side, the Christian God was

¹⁵ Huesmann, *Covenant as Ethical Commonwealth*, 135.

¹⁶ Personal communication from Bishop Kitohi Pikaahu.

¹⁷ M. Hēnare and E. Douglas, "Te Reo o Te Tiriti mai ra anō", in *The April Report: Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy*, cited in Human Rights Commission Draft Report, http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc/_new/hrc/cms/files.doc, accessed 3/03/2023.

¹⁸ Hēnare and Douglas, "Te Reo o Te Tiriti mai ra anō".

¹⁹ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1987), 57.

assumed to be a transcendent witness. This perspective can be seen in the various declarations made by Lt. Gov. Hobson about the treaty. For example, in an official communication that preceded the treaty, Governor Hobson signed off his proclamation:

Given under my hand and seal, at Kororareka, this 30th day of January 1840, and in the third year of Her Majesty's reign.
William Hobson,
Lieutenant-Governor.
By His Excellency's command. **God save the Queen!** [emphasis mine].

Also, in his introductory speech, Hobson declared, “Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland wishing to do good to the chiefs and people of New Zealand ... the people of Great Britain are, **thank God!** Free ... [emphasis mine] Hence, God was invoked in various ways and at various times by both Māori and Pākehā before and during the signing.

These early 1840 covenantal understandings were carried forward into the 1860 Kohimarama conference convened between the Crown and Māori. Again, according to Orange: “While the attendees were divided in their opinion on various current issues, such as the King Movement and Taranaki land grievances, they were generally united in their view of the Treaty as a sacred cornerstone of Māori-Crown relations.”²⁰ And, “[T]he final resolution of the conference, in effect a ratification of the treaty, came to be known as the Kohimarama covenant”.²¹ She said that particularly Ngāpuhi:

[t]ended to refer to the Waitangi agreement as the covenant (te kawenata) rather than the treaty (te tiriti), indicating an understanding that had been evident in their 1840 negotiations. It seems that they had continued to regard the treaty as a sacred compact, in one sense uniting all Māori tribes and, in another, acting as the bond of union between the races. The final resolution of the hui, which was passed unanimously, stated: [t]hat this Conference takes cognizance of the fact that the several Chiefs, members thereof, are pledged to each other to do nothing inconsistent with their declared recognition of the Queen’s sovereignty, and of the union of the two races, also to discountenance all proceedings tending to a breach of the covenant here solemnly entered into by them.²²

However, it was not only Māori that referred to the treaty as a covenant at Kohimarama. Both the Native Secretary Donald McLean and Governor Gore Browne used the term covenant in preference to the term treaty. Browne, during his opening address to the Conference, referred in Māori to the treaty as a “kawenata” or “covenant”. He said, “So the chiefs who signed their names to that document, the Covenant of Waitangi, were intending it as the price for the benefits they received.”²³

As I indicated above, the missionaries played a pivotal role in presenting the treaty in quasi-religious terms. However, their involvement in the treaty debate did not cease at the

²⁰ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 147.

²¹ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 147.

²² Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 148.

²³ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 148.

time of signing. Despite opposition from some political quarters that clergy should refrain from involvement in “political” matters, many church leaders, including Octavius Hadfield and Henry Williams, participated in the post 1840 treaty discussions. They claimed a “right of remonstrance” because of their role in the 1840 negotiations. Williams, in a letter he wrote in the 1840s, said: “Feeling as I did, that the terms of the treaty were a sacred compact between the British Government and the chiefs of New Zealand, I was able to speak with confidence as to the integrity and honour of England.”²⁴

Finally, Sir William Martin, a CMS advisor and the first Chief Justice of New Zealand, was a strong proponent of the treaty, and he appealed for it to be honoured by the Crown, as much upon moral grounds as upon legal grounds. The following quote summarises some of Martin’s understanding of the place of the treaty in the New Zealand context. His views combine the ideas of a jurist and a churchman:

We have undertaken to acquire these islands for the Crown and for our race, without violence and without fraud, and so that the Native people, instead of being destroyed, should be protected and civilised. We have covenanted with these people and assured to them the full privileges of subjects of the Crown....The compact is binding irrevocably. We cannot repudiate it so long as we retain the benefit which we obtained by it.²⁵

Reading the Treaty in Light of Scripture

Before I leave the theme of covenant, there remains another perspective which may offer insight into an often-debated intention of the treaty. I refer to the contentious phrase of Lt-Gov Hobson when he declared to each signatory at Waitangi, “He iwi tahi tātou/We are now one people”. Some modern commentators have argued that this phrase of Hobson implies that Māori autonomy had been subsumed into the Crown’s sovereign rule, seeing the “one” as an homogenous “one”. My kaumatua friend from Tauranga, the late Huhikakahu Kawe, used to say ironically, “Yes, but whose one?”

However, it is possible that, Henry Williams, the probable creator of the phrase “he iwi tahi tātou”, drew upon a New Testament example of “whakakotahitanga” (two being becoming one). In Ephesians 2:14, the writer declares: “Ko ia hoki tō tatou maunga rongo, nāna i mea ngā mea e rua kia kotahi, whakahoroa iho e ia te pātū e ārai ana i waenga”: “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one, and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us”. Here is described two people groups, the Jews and the Gentiles, becoming one new nation through a covenantal union, while still maintaining their original identities. With reference to Waitangi, Hobson – under the tutelage of Henry Williams – understood that the treaty as covenant created a structural unity that allowed the two entities of Crown (and by implication Pākehā) and hapū Māori to maintain their unique identities whilst being unified within the treaty space. Unity in diversity; former enemies now at peace.

²⁴ H. Carleton, *Life of Henry Williams, Archdeacon of Waimate*, vol. 2 (Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1874), 89.

²⁵ Carleton, *Life of Henry Williams*, 154–155.

Further, to illustrate the covenantal scope of the treaty and its meaning for Māori-Pākehā relations I suggest that Hobson's "he iwi tahi tātou" (we are one people) is analogous to another covenant: the covenant of marriage. That is, marriage refers to two people who retain their autonomy and identity being brought together in an interdependent union. Viewed in this way, the treaty is a locus of reconciliation, and one that continues to provide for Māori and Pākehā a covenantal security that also yields a concomitant relational ethic.

To comprehend the treaty as covenant not only broadens our understanding but also contributes to the national conversation. This conversation might include some of the following questions: Is it a covenant of works or a covenant of grace? Thus, who belongs to the treaty covenant? How do they qualify? How long does a treaty covenant endure? Is the treaty simply an important historical artefact or does its covenantal quality suggest more? If marriage is an appropriate metaphor could the treaty be annulled? If a partner repeatedly abuses the treaty, might the abused one legitimately demand a divorce? Conversely, what social advantage does a faithful covenantal ethic render for our society? These are just a few of the issues that emerge from viewing the treaty as covenant.

However, the theological characteristics of the treaty reach beyond its covenantal qualities. To trace the historico-theological whakapapa (genealogy) of the treaty from an English perspective would be a long journey. It would certainly include the Magna Carta and the eighteenth-century Whitefield/Wesleyan revival; also the Clapham Sect and the various institutions over which that Anglican movement exercised its influence – namely, the Church Missionary Society and the Colonial Office, especially in the person of the Permanent Under-Secretary Sir James Stephen, the step-nephew of William Wilberforce. Stephen's humanitarian influence, for example can be seen in Normanby's instructions to Hobson, and ultimately in the interpretation of Henry Williams, who not only translated the English draft of the treaty but also was its most influential interlocutor.

I shall limit my comments to Williams' involvement, whose influence upon Heke and Hobson I have already acknowledged. The Māori language of the treaty has been described as "missionary Māori,"²⁶ an acknowledgement of the neologisms within Te Tiriti. These new words were a cooperative creation of Henry Williams, his son Edward, James Busby, and Ngāpuhi leaders.

In Article One, Henry Williams translated sovereignty as *kāwanatanga*. In the second article, Williams has translated "the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession" as "te tino rangatiratanga".

Some historians who have entered the domain of theologians and biblical scholars have exegeted various Lukan passages to explain these neologisms – *rangatiratanga* and *kāwanatanga* in particular. These two words are two of the most crucial words in the treaty document, and as such demand careful scrutiny. Regarding our present deliberations re treaty interpretation and application, hermeneutical principles are important. Whether we argue for

²⁶ Ruth Ross, "Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Texts and Translations," *New Zealand Journal of History* 6, no. 2 (1972): 136; personal communication with Dr Roger Maaka and Brad Haami, 30 Nov. 2023.

an agonistic, originalist approach or – to borrow the Canadian phrase – a “living tree” approach, understandings of context will be crucial. To paraphrase the New Testament scholar Gordon Fee: “A text cannot mean what it could never have meant for its original readers/hearers.”²⁷ What Henry Williams brought to the treaty with his translation and explanation, and what rangatira heard and understood, should not be disregarded.

Unfortunately, since the influential scholarship of Ruth Ross in 1975, Te Wiremu has been vilified and sidelined for the quality of his translation of the English draft into Māori. He has been accused of being a “very poor translator” at best, or “a deceiver of Māori,” who deliberately misled rangatira in order that they would sign Te Tiriti. Here I acknowledge Ned Fletcher’s ground-breaking work, which has critiqued those assertions and, by a contextual analysis of the 1830s Colonial Office, has argued that Williams’ translation of sovereignty as *kāwanatanga* is an accurate interpretation of the Crown’s view of the treaty at that time.²⁸

There is one contextual theologian, however, who sheds light on the important relationship between sovereignty and *kāwanatanga*. Nōpera Panakareao of Te Rarawa was an influential baptised Rangatira of the Far North who signed Te Tiriti in Kaitaia. The night before the signing, Nōpera went to the home of the Anglican missionary William Puckey to discuss the treaty and particularly the meaning of the terms sovereignty and *kāwanatanga*. Puckey was a renowned te reo Māori speaker who helped translate the New Testament. He was present at earlier signings and had heard the interpretations given to rangatira about the content and implications of the treaty. The Rev. Richard Taylor, a witness to the treaty at Waitangi, was also present. The next day Panakareao expressed his support and influenced 45 other Northern chiefs to sign. Panakareao understood that Māori would retain their rangatira (chiefly) status amongst their people and that the British Crown would exercise a limited sovereignty through the motu (islands): a governorship/*kāwanatanga* over the new settlers, a control over land sales, and a restriction over some traditional Māori practices such as *kaitangata* (cannibalism). This understanding inspired his famous maxim: “A shadow of the land will go to the Queen, but the substance will remain with us” / “Ko te ātārangi o te whenua kua hoatu ki te Kuini, ko te oneone i mau”. An eyewitness, the Colonial Surgeon John Johnson, described Panakareao’s aphorism as follows: “[T]he elegant figure [of speech] by which he expressed the word Sovereignty showed that he had ponder’d deeply on his conversation of the previous evening.”²⁹

In this *whakatauki* (proverb), therefore, sovereignty equates to a shadow of the land, and *rangatiratanga* equates to the substance of the land. It is possible that Panakareao, a lay theologian, borrowed the metaphor from the Scriptures. Biblical metaphors were frequently employed by Māori at that time to describe the nation’s political state, an example being Naboth’s Vineyard.³⁰

The term shadow/*ātārangi* appears frequently in both Testaments. For example, the writer of the New Testament letter to the Hebrews talks about the priestly role and authority

²⁷ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How To Read the Bible for all its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993).

²⁸ See Ned Fletcher, *English Text*.

²⁹ Barry Rigby and John Koning, *Toitū te Whenua E: Only the land remains, constant and enduring*, (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, Muriwhenua Land Claim, Wai-45, 4 December 1989), 56.

³⁰ See Alistair Reese, “Truth, Repentance and Naboth’s Vineyard: Towards Reconciliation in Aotearoa-NZ” (MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008).

on earth as being a derived authority. The earth, the realm of that lesser authority, is described as a shadow of heaven, or “he ātārangi nō ngā mea rangi.” Heaven is the place where ultimate sovereignty is exercised, and earth is a shadow of that – the place of human governorship, or stewardship. Another example of “shadow” is found in Paul’s letter to the Colossians. In Col 2:17, referring to the Sabbath and other days, he said, “These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ”. The concept also appears in the Lord’s Prayer: “let your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven” – “kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga kia meatia tāu e pai ai ki runga ki te whenua, kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.” “Rangatiratanga” here refers to a heavenly and supreme authority – the term Henry Williams chose to describe the autonomous status of rangatira. It is not possible to be absolute about the biblical inspiration for the chief’s aphorism, but the similarities between the biblical metaphors and Panakareao’s metaphor seem too close to be simply coincidence.

We might say that Panakareao understood the treaty to mean that his authority as a chief was the *substantial authority in the land*, while the Crown sovereignty was a *shadow* of that authority, to reflect the mana of Māori leadership. Within a few years, Panakareao concluded that he had been misled, and revised his expression. Now, the Crown assumed the ultimate authority/substance in the land, and rangatiratanga had become the shadow. This revision came not because of the loss of land, but from seeing – as did his fellow Northern chief Hone Heke, of flagpole fame – how the new colonial presence had usurped his mana and his tino rangatiratanga.

There was another church voice which was present at the treaty table. On the morning of the 6th February, rangatira gathered again on Busby’s lawn to continue deliberations. The proceedings were interrupted by Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, the French Catholic Bishop, with this request: “[t]hat the natives might be informed that all who should join the Catholic religion should have the protection of the British Government.”³¹

Henry Williams consulted with Hobson, who responded “Most certainly”, and expressed his regret that Pompallier had not made known his wish earlier, as his “desire should have been embodied in the treaty”. Williams then inquired whether the same protection would be afforded to all. Upon receiving an affirmative response from Hobson, he took some paper and wrote in Māori. Williams then read out:

E mea ana te Kawana, ko nga whakapono katoa, o Ingarani, o nga Weteriana, o Roma me te ritenga Maori hoki, e tiakina ngatahitia e ia.

(*Translation*: The Governor says the several faiths of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also the Māori custom, shall alike be protected by him.)³²

This is the addition to the treaty known as the fourth article. It was agreed to by Governor Hobson, drafted and read out by Williams, then verbally accepted by Pompallier and the assembled Rangatira. What does this commitment by the Crown to protect ritenga Māori (indigenous spiritual protocol) and the Church say about our public square? Perhaps it is not

³¹ W. Colenso, *The Authentic and genuine history of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand, February 5 and 6, 1840* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1890), 31.

³² Colenso, *The Authentic and genuine history*, 31.

as secular as some declare. Perhaps the increasing use of karakia within a variety of public spaces, rather than being an anomaly, is an *ad hoc* outworking of the oral article, and an activity which reflects the spiritual assumptions of our founding document.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the above leads me to describe the treaty as a divinely inspired covenant, a Tatau Pounamu. This reconciling and social ordering mechanism acknowledges and protects the prior rights of Māori; it facilitates a just entry into the land for later settlers, and lays the foundation for a moral nation. The treaty covenant is analogous to a “marriage” between tangata whenua and tangata tiriti – a protocol which carries concomitant rights and responsibilities, enabling two autonomous peoples to co-exist as one.

As well, the above examples of karakia, covenant, biblical imagery, and neologisms all contribute towards the concept of Waitangi as an embryonic sacred public square in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the treaty itself as a theological document. These important perspectives will enhance the wider narrative, as the three voices at the treaty table – in the words of Bishop Whakahuihui Vercoe at Waitangi in 1990 – “... sit and listen to each other”.³³

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A Humanitarian Treaty: the Role of Christians in the Formation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

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Abstract

In recent decades, the involvement of Christian missionaries in the translation, interpretation, and promotion of the treaty of Waitangi has been thoroughly critiqued. Such critiques have often been driven by inaccurate assumptions about the meaning of the English version of the treaty – notably its view of British sovereignty – and the motivations underlying its formation. In response, this essay explores the humanitarian concerns of the Church Missionary Society – both on the ground in New Zealand, and in Britain – to protect Māori from unlawful British colonisation. It then explores the definition of British sovereignty espoused by both Capt. William Hobson and Henry Williams, and how this definition informed Williams’ translation of the treaty resulting in some common understandings between Māori and the Crown of the relationship that the treaty proposed. The essay shows that Christian involvement in the treaty reflected an intense concern to protect the flourishing of Māori society.¹

Keywords Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi, Christianity, Church Missionary Society, James Stephen, Henry Williams

¹ Note that this essay is an edited version of one originally written for the level 600/700 course at Laidlaw College, “Te Harinui: The History of Christianity in Aotearoa.”

Introduction

The treaty first signed at Waitangi was once described as the Magna Carta of New Zealand.² It was to play a foundational role in New Zealand society, as Europeans and Māori explored their developing relationship with one another. Yet in recent decades, the involvement of Christian missionaries in the translation, interpretation, and promotion of the treaty has been thoroughly critiqued. In response to these critiques, this essay will analyse aspects of the work involved in making the treaty. The first half of the essay will primarily explore the political and social landscape that led to the treaty's formation, and the political influence of the wider Church Missionary Society (CMS) in its conception. The latter half of the essay will then explore Henry Williams' translation of the treaty into Māori, and his subsequent interpretation of it. Through both of these avenues, we will seek to uncover the genuineness of Christian involvement in te Tiriti o Waitangi, recovering a perspective often neglected in modern historiography.³

A Humanitarian Response

Growing Tensions

Both the missionaries on the ground in New Zealand and their respective constituents in Britain came to see the necessity of formal British intervention in New Zealand. Over the course of the CMS mission, the number of British settlers had increased significantly. Naturally, these emigrants required land and so would purchase various lots from Māori. Yet the missionaries on the ground became alarmed by this, as the rate of European expansion was growing and could lead to destructive effects on Māori society. They observed that settlers and traders were deliberately taking advantage of the lack of European governance, acting in an exploitative manner towards the Māori. Henry Williams, the leader of the CMS in New Zealand, would come to conclude: "It is high time that something be done to check the progress of iniquity committed by a lawless band daringly advancing in wickedness and outrage, under the assurance that 'there is no law in New Zealand'."⁴

The CMS struggle was simultaneously taking place in Britain: "The New Zealand Association, in which a number of members of Parliament were prominent but in which the controversial Edward Gibbon Wakefield was a driving force, was formed to promote systematic British settlement in New Zealand."⁵ Under the guise of humanitarian concern for the Māori, the Association would begin to lobby the British Parliament for official support to regulate settlements in New Zealand. Their initial proposal, *A Statement of the Objects of the*

² Henry Williams to Bishop Selwyn. Paihia, July 12, 1847. In Hugh Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams*, vol. 2 (Auckland: Upton & Co., 1877), 156.

³ Following recent protocols, this essay will use "the treaty" to refer to the agreement or compact itself, "the Treaty of Waitangi" to refer to the English text or draft; and "te Tiriti o Waitangi" to refer to the Māori language version, signed by most chiefs. This usage does not necessarily imply fundamental differences between the two texts.

⁴ Henry Williams to the Reverend E. G. Marsh, Paihia, 28 Mar 1837. In Hugh Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams*, vol. 1 (Auckland: Upton & Co., 1874), 205.

⁵ Ned Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2022), 205.

New Zealand Association (May 1837),⁶ was replaced by a second, more explicitly colonial plan, *The British Colonization of New Zealand*.⁷ The Association denied the pursuit of past European colonial efforts. Instead, they sought to “protect” the Māori by assimilating them into European society and “civilising” them. This would result, they argued, in the eventual cession of the whole country to the British but in a form inherently different from previous moves of colonisation.

The CMS would provide a firm political response and opposition to the Association. Their view was that any act of colonisation in other parts of the Empire had led to disastrous and unjust consequences for native populations. Though the Māori were uncivilised, they had formed an independent state (by declaration in 1835) and therefore should be dealt with accordingly in international law. Any intervention by the Crown in New Zealand to hinder the lawlessness of European settlers must be “on the principle of maintaining inviolable the national independency and rights of the Natives, and exclusive altogether of Colonization.”⁸ That is, any British intervention should focus on law and order, and prevent organised colonial ventures.

Formal British Intervention

After a series of political manoeuvres from both sides, the Colonial Office decided in 1838 to appoint a British consul in New Zealand who would establish an official treaty between the Crown and the Māori – what would eventually become the treaty of Waitangi. Several important factors led to the decision by the British Government to intervene.

Firstly, a letter sent from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office on 12 December 1838 explained that the New Zealand chiefs wanted British protection, as was demonstrated by the Declaration of Independence.⁹ This mention of the Declaration of Independence reveals a concurrence with the CMS’ recognition of Māori sovereignty, as well as the Office’s appreciation of the true nature of the situation in New Zealand.

A second likely motivator of the decision was a letter sent by New Zealand CMS missionary George Clarke urging British intervention in opposition to the New Zealand Company's plan for colonisation.¹⁰ He argued that the Māori had no way of preserving their land claims, as they had no organised means by which their sovereignty could be legitimated and enacted.¹¹ The protection of the Crown would offer Māori the necessary means of establishing the capacity to create and enforce laws of land ownership. Clarke’s strong views

⁶ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Statement of the Objects of the New Zealand Association: With Some Particulars Concerning the Position, Extent, Soil and Climate, Natural Productions, and Natives of New Zealand* (London: Black and Armstrong, 1837).

⁷ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *The British Colonization of New Zealand: Being an Account of the Principles, Objects, and Plans of the New Zealand Association Together with Particulars Concerning the Position, Extent, Soil, and Climate, Natural Productions, and Native Inhabitants of New Zealand* (London: John W. Parker, 1837).

⁸ Dandeson Coates, *Principles, Objects and Plans of the New-Zealand Association Examined, in a Letter to the Right Hon Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies* (London: Hatchards, 1837), 29.

⁹ Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 237.

¹⁰ The New Zealand Company was the successor organisation to the New Zealand Association.

¹¹ Clark to the Home Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society, 1 March 1838. Referenced in Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 236.

agree with Williams' earlier conclusions and reflect a common feeling of anxiety among the New Zealand missionaries.

Thirdly, we can note the immense influence of James Stephen – Colonial Office Permanent Under Secretary – in the guidance and execution of government decisions. As an evangelical Christian, and a man whose family retained deep ties to the Clapham Sect and the abolitionist movements, Stephen would show a strong humanitarian concern for the Māori population. His role in the Colonial Office would allow him to see the disastrous result of British colonisation on indigenous populations in other parts of the empire, strengthening his efforts to “improve and protect the position of weak and oppressed peoples.”¹² Though he “believed in the benefits of western civilisation for native peoples, he took the view that they should be ‘civilised’ with their own consent.”¹³ So, where the Colonial Office was unswayed by the New Zealand Land Company's political manoeuvres, it was largely Stephen's influence that stood behind this.

Whatever the exact reasons for the decision to appoint a Consul and to form a treaty, it is evident that “the government's crystallising objectives were congruent with the CMS's own aspirations.”¹⁴ This congruence does not, admittedly, mean that the CMS was the sole determiner in the events leading to the treaty. But it does mean that they were a significant factor in influencing the *nature* or *intent* of the treaty, as a means of securing protection for Māori from settlers – that is, retaining rightful possession and authority within their tribal territories. Though it is impossible to precisely describe the potential alternative paths of history, we may logically surmise that if the CMS were not active in promoting the humanitarian protection of Māori within the British Government, the resulting British intervention would have tipped in favour of the New Zealand Company. Christian political involvement (undoubtedly informed – as it was in the antislavery movement – by strong biblical convictions about the equality of humankind) would therefore set the initial trajectory for the Crown's involvement in New Zealand, and directly influence the construction of the treaty of Waitangi.

Te Tiriti: Hobson and Williams

A core component of this treaty was that it required the cession of “sovereignty” to the Crown in terms of European concepts of “the law of nations” (international law). Modern commentators conclude that this would be an unfavourable outcome for the Māori, and therefore required the Treaty's direct mistranslation to gain their allegiance. As Moon and Fenton comment: “There is little doubt that the chiefs who signed the Treaty [te Tiriti] would never have done so had they known that it would have entailed sacrificing their sovereignty.”¹⁵ But this interpretation assumes that the meaning of “sovereignty” was equated with chiefly authority in New Zealand and was therefore at odds with it; it also assumes such (British) sovereignty was absolute, and would automatically lead to colonialism and the

¹² Angelene Goodman, “God's Own Silence? An Analysis of New Zealand Historians' Treatment of the Evangelical Background to the Treaty of Waitangi,” *Stimulus* 23, no. 1 (2016): 7.

¹³ Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 109.

¹⁴ Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 233.

¹⁵ Paul Moon and Sabine Fenton, “Bound into a Fateful Union: Henry Williams' Translation of the Treaty of Waitangi into Maori in February 1840,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 111, no. 1 (2002), 60.

oppression of Māori. However, we have shown above that the British Government wanted to exclude, or at least limit, organised colonial settlement (or “systematic colonisation”). How, then, was British “sovereignty” understood on the British side? Before commenting on Williams’ translation, it is important to first explore this.

British Sovereignty before 1840, and Hobson’s Task

Sovereignty was a concept imbued with English views of the monarchy. Rather than being a totalitarian, absolute power, the British monarch's sovereignty necessitated the preservation of “English rights of personal security, personal liberty and private property.”¹⁶ This can be described as a “constitutional monarchy,” as distinct from an “absolute monarchy” where the sovereign was above the law. This view was consistent with many of the Crown’s dealings with indigenous populations throughout their diverse and widespread colonies – though, admittedly, not all. “Native systems of government were tolerated and even supported in many British territories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”¹⁷ British governance (or sovereignty) was therefore often pluralistic, in that it made space for the continuance of “local law and institutions as a distinct system independent from the municipal law system introduced for settlers.”¹⁸ There was a gradual shift away from this view throughout the empire after 1840.¹⁹ But such changes are by no means indicative of the original understanding of sovereignty shared by the framers of the Treaty-te Tiriti. In this framing, the pluralistic view of constitutional sovereignty was central, and would therefore fundamentally shape British intervention in New Zealand.

The instructions sent to Hobson, which were drafted by James Stephen and then approved by the Secretary of State for the Colonies – the Marquess of Normanby – reflect this. Hobson’s primary objective was to establish governance over any British settlers living in New Zealand already, or subsequently emigrating there. He was thus “to treat with the Aborigines of New Zealand for the recognition of Her Majesty's sovereign authority over the whole or any parts of those islands which they may be willing to place under Her Majesty's dominion.”²⁰ This primarily meant the establishment of a *civil government*, as the preamble of the English text states; that is: “a national form of governance with enough civil muscle, and military muscle if necessary, to maintain internal ‘peace and good order’ and prevent foreign interference or invasion.”²¹

Normanby recognised the hesitancy that the Māori might express, as their lack of technical understanding of the arrangement, and their sacrifice of national independence, would likely make them “averse” to the proposed treaty. To overcome this, Hobson was to

¹⁶ Samuel D. Carpenter, “Te Wiremu, Te Puhipi, He Wakaputanga me Te Tiriti: Henry Williams, James Busby, a Declaration and the Treaty,” report commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal, November 2009, Wai 1040, A17, 189.

¹⁷ Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 84.

¹⁸ Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 29.

¹⁹This can be seen in the American influence on the New Zealand government’s espousal of alternative understandings of sovereignty in the decades following 1840. In particular they were influenced by “Vattel’s sovereignty and Locke’s wastelands theory.” See Peter McKenzie, “Public Christianity and Te Tiriti o Waitangi: How the ‘Clapham Sect’ Reached Down Under,” *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 18, no. 4 (November 2010): 29).

²⁰ Normanby to Hobson, 15 August 1839. In Ned Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 273-74.

²¹ Carpenter, “Te Wiremu,” 139.

point out to them the dangers of a settler population ungoverned by laws, and “the impossibility of Her Majesty’s extending to them any effectual protection unless the Queen be acknowledged as the sovereign of their country...”²² In advocating for their cession of sovereignty, Hobson was to highlight that the Crown was primarily concerned for the welfare of the Māori people. All other motivations were secondary. From this brief historical survey of the events and motivations leading to the treaty, we can now begin to properly understand its meaning, and explore Henry Williams’ role in its translation.

An Overview of the Treaty-te Tiriti

The Treaty of Waitangi – the English text that was drafted by Busby and Hobson and then translated by Henry and Edward Williams – contains a preamble and three articles: article one describes a Māori cession of sovereignty to the Crown; article two guarantees to Māori the full possession of their lands and properties but yields to the Crown the right of pre-emption – the sale of land exclusively to the Crown; and article three grants Māori the protection of the Crown and “imparts to them all the rights and privileges of British subjects.”

There is little dispute around the third article. Most commentators share an agreed understanding of its meaning. However, the lack of robust understanding amongst many modern historians as to the meaning of the English text has resulted in criticism of Williams’ translations of the preamble and the first and second articles. In particular, these criticisms centre around two key terms: *kāwanatanga* and *tino rangatiratanga*.

Kāwanatanga

Kāwanatanga was a biblical term. It is a derivative of “kawana” (governor), used in the Māori translation of the Bible to describe Pontius Pilate (Matt 27:1-26), consul of the Roman Empire in Judea. Moon and Fenton criticise this choice, arguing that “not only was this word only partially familiar to the few Maori who had undergone missionary education, its context bore no direct relation to the notion of sovereignty.”²³ Orange, too, charges Williams’ choice as ambiguous: “The single word ‘kawanatanga’ covered significant differences of meaning, and was not likely to convey to Maori a precise definition of sovereignty.”²⁴ These propositions can themselves be critiqued.

As Governor of Judea, Pilate “was ruling as a representative of the Empire which claimed an absolute jurisdiction within the lands of Judaea (though with jurisdiction over religious and moral matters exercised by the Jewish Council of priests and elders).”²⁵ Whatever the precise nuances of *kāwanatanga* in te reo Māori, it is clear that Williams equated it with the establishment of Hobson’s civil government. Because this biblical example of Pilate’s governance functioned in much the same way, it can be seen how Williams’ choice of *kāwanatanga* drew on strong parallels between Pilate and Hobson’s role. It also implied the pluralistic form of sovereignty described above, as Jewish leaders exercised forms of authority over Jewish custom and practice (or law) under Roman rule.

²² Normanby to Hobson, 15 August 1839. In Fletcher, *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*, 275-76.

²³ Moon and Fenton, “Bound into a Fateful Union,” 58.

²⁴ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin New Zealand, 1987), 40.

²⁵ Carpenter, “Te Wiremu,” 158.

It is also unlikely that only a few among the Māori chiefs had an awareness of this concept. The decade preceding 1840 was largely one of success for the missionaries. “It was mainly due to the dedicated, unselfish service the missionaries rendered to the Māori people” that they came to effect large changes in Māori community life.²⁶ From medical care to education, alongside their teachings and role as peacemakers, the missionaries were actively involved in the Māori world. This growing influence can be seen in earlier uses of *kāwanatanga*. Under *te Tiriti*, *kāwanatanga* was supposed to function in much the same way as the Māori government suggested in the CMS missionaries’ March 1838 letter: “They [Māori] will form a mutual support to each other[,] a protection to those who do well & dread to evil doers and gradually rise in the scale of Nations.”²⁷ The biblical allusions in this letter indicate the biblical worldview of the missionaries, which is not appreciated by many of Williams’ modern critics.²⁸ His use of *kāwanatanga* was also likely understood by many chiefs, since the New Testament in Māori had been printed and distributed in the thousands since 1837. Furthermore, the consistency between uses of *kāwanatanga* in the biblical translations and in *te Tiriti o Waitangi* suggests that Williams’ translation choice was an accurate representation of the nature of Hobson’s authority. *Kāwanatanga* was not ambiguous, but rather was deeply embedded in the biblical worldview that was increasingly influential among Māori.

Tino Rangatiratanga

Yet this cession of sovereignty did not mean that governance would be exercised by the Crown alone. In the British constitution, “there were many other powers exercised at the local level, including the powers of local corporations, magistrates and landlords.”²⁹ The consul was not the single ruler in the land – they worked in tandem with other authorities. For Hobson, this was the influence of the *rangatira* over their *hapū*.

“*Tino Rangatiratanga*” (full chieftainship) describes this Māori authority – one that functions in correlation with the Crown’s *kāwanatanga*. Orange argues that *rangatiratanga* “was a better approximation to sovereignty than *kāwanatanga*,” and therefore should have been used in article one in place of it. “Although both words implied an exercise of power, authority and jurisdiction, *rangatiratanga* was of Maori derivation, with connotations of chiefly power that were familiar to Maori.”³⁰ Their rights as chiefs were related both to the communal ownership and cultivation of land, and the regulation of society. Land could only be sold by first consulting the *rangatira* – a notion that most Europeans understood. Māori tribal life was therefore regulated both by customary law and the authority of chiefs, though with *hapū* members exercising collective decision-making power in many cases.

²⁶ Lawrence M. Rogers, *Te Wiremu: A Biography of Henry Williams* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1973), 155.

²⁷ Clarke (Corr Sec Northern Ctee) to Coates, 1 Mar 1838, encl in Williams to Coates, 4 June 1838, CMS/CN/0 101, reel 65.

²⁸ The language used in the letter is derivative from Romans chapter thirteen, which describes the Christian vision of the relationship of the church to civil government: The Monarch or ruler has been appointed as a 'higher power' by God (Rom 13:1); as a "terror to bad conduct" and is therefore "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom 13:4 KJV).

²⁹ Carpenter, “Te Wiremu,” 144.

³⁰ Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 41.

Orange is correct in stating that rangatiratanga retained these strong cultural connotations for Māori. However, kāwanatanga is not in tension with rangatiratanga, for they hold differing functions. The Crown's kāwanatanga would “avert the evil consequences which must result from the absence of Law”³¹ – civil disputes – whereas the rangatira would exercise chieftainship in hapū affairs. Williams understood that this rangatiratanga was expressly protected in the treaty: it “recognised the existence of Tribes and Chiefs, and dealt with them as such,” as Sir William Martin argued in 1860.³² Williams' translation therefore “implied that rangatira had retained chiefly authority and only surrendered ultimate sovereign authority.”³³

Though Williams' translation was not necessarily a “literal” translation, it was an accurate transmission of the “spirit and tenor of the treaty.”³⁴ Indeed, clarity was a sentiment Normanby, Hobson, and Williams shared. The stipulation that Williams intentionally manipulated the translation of the treaty to secure Māori loyalty simply does not stand. A historical, contextualised understanding of “sovereignty” means that the use of kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga in te Tiriti together conveyed the establishment of a monarchical civil government that would protect chiefly authority. Yet even if any discrepancies remained in the written form of the treaty, the ceremony at Waitangi provided ample opportunity for Williams to clarify its meaning.

The Treaty's Interpretation

As the lead translator and a man of considerable mana amongst Māori, Williams was requested by Hobson to act as an interpreter of the treaty at Waitangi. Williams recounted: “I told all to listen with care, explaining clause by clause to the chiefs, giving them caution not to be in a hurry, but telling them that we, the Missionaries, fully approved of the treaty, that it was an act of love towards them on the part of the Queen, who desired to secure to them their property, rights and privileges.”³⁵ Williams explained to them the meaning of the establishment of the Crown's kāwanatanga, showing “the advantage to them of being taken under the fostering care of the British Government, by which act they would become one people with the English, in the suppression of wars, and of every lawless act; under one Sovereign, and one Law, human and divine.”³⁶ That is, the treaty sought to establish a civil government to stem the injustices caused by European settlers.

It was understood that this interpretation was entirely appropriate: “There was some criticism at the Waitangi discussions that Williams was not translating appropriately, but never any indication that the issue concerned the translation of sovereignty.”³⁷ Yet once the ceremony had commenced and the chiefs requested time to deliberate, Williams was sought out to further clarify the meaning of the document. This undoubtedly gave him ample

³¹ Sir William Martin, *The Taranaki Question* (Auckland: The Melanesian Press, 1860), <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-MarTara-t1-front-tp.html>, 10.

³² Sir William Martin, *The Taranaki Question*, 9.

³³ Carpenter, “Te Wiremu,” 148.

³⁴ Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams*, vol. 2, 12.

³⁵ Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams*, vol. 2, 12.

³⁶ Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams*, vol. 2, 14.

³⁷ Carpenter, “Te Wiremu,” 156.

opportunity to make sure that the Māori grasped the full extent and nature of the proposed treaty.

The extended time given for further clarification and deliberation led to the acceptance of the treaty by most chiefs present at Waitangi on 6 February 1840. From Henry Williams' point of view, it seems evident that he had successfully interpreted the English draft treaty into a Māori text and had explained that text in the various hui. Through his work, Māori and British officials and missionaries shared a common understanding of what was being proposed in the treaty, including the full protection of chiefly authority over their lands and hapū: "When the subjects contained in the Treaty were under consideration, the subject of Tribal rights and *the full power of the Chiefs over their own tribes and lands* was fully explained to the natives, and fully understood by the Europeans present," stated CMS missionary George Clarke in 1861.³⁸ This does not mean that the rangatira were unanimous in their support of the treaty.³⁹ Nor does it mean that how the Crown's civil governance would coexist with rangatiratanga had been fully worked out in every possible dimension. There was likely a range of understandings and expectations across iwi and hapu about how this was to be implemented. But it would be unfair to lay the blame for the Crown's latter injustices upon Williams' shoulders, as modern commentators often seem to do.

Conclusion

From its earliest conception, the treaty of Waitangi received direct involvement from Christians. In the wake of unchecked European settlement and land speculation, CMS missionaries on the ground began to petition for formal British intervention. In correspondence with their missionaries, the humanitarian concerns of the CMS in Britain resulted in their lobbying against the New Zealand Company's plans to colonise New Zealand. The Crown's decision to appoint Hobson as a consul was intended to ensure the dual protection of both Māori land and authority.

This was because of the pluralistic form of sovereignty that was reflected in te Tiriti o Waitangi. From Normanby to Hobson, then finally to Williams, we see a consistent understanding that the English and Māori versions of the treaty established a formal British civil government *and yet* simultaneously retained full Māori possession and protection over their land and hapu. Williams' translation, therefore, created an accurate (yet naturally imperfect) mediation between British and Māori worldviews and languages. This was then strengthened by his role as the Crown's interpreter at Waitangi and his subsequent explanations of the treaty to the rangatira during their deliberations.

³⁸ George Clarke, *Pamphlet in Answer to Mr James Busby's on The Taranaki Question and the Treaty of Waitangi by Sir William Martin (Late Chief Justice of New Zealand)*, 1st ed. 1861, reprint (Auckland: A F McDonnell, 1923), 11.

³⁹ For instance, Colenso's account of the signing of the treaty at Waitangi describes how several chiefs were skeptical, and even initially hostile, towards Hobson's ability to enforce the proposed British governance amongst the European settlers. See William Colenso, *The Authentic and Genuine History of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand, February 5 and 6, 1840: Being a Faithful and Circumstantial, Though Brief, Narration of Events Which Happened on That Memorable Occasion: With Copies of the Treaty in English and Maori and of the Three Early Proclamations Respecting the Founding of the Colony*, vol. 69, The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington Library, 2012), <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm//tei-Stout69-t3-body-d2-d1a.html>, 19.

We may conclude that the Crown and the Māori shared certain common understandings of what the treaty was proposing, although exactly identical understandings were probably impossible given the culture and language gap. Regardless of any misunderstandings that may have ensued, what is certain is that Christian involvement in the treaty was meant to have positive effects for Māori. Though their humanity betrays their imperfections, the missionaries' love and concern for the Māori was the result of their deeply held Christian beliefs. It was evidenced by their decades of striving for the flourishing of Māori society, including in their promotion, translation, and interpretation of te Tiriti o Waitangi.

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Reflections on Māori Religious Movements in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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Abstract

This article examines the independent Māori religious movements of Ringatū, Rua Kēnana, and Rātana within the context of Christianity's history in Aotearoa New Zealand. It explores their origins, leaders, historical contexts, and core beliefs. These movements emerged as responses to the oppression and challenges faced by Māori, and sought to combine elements of te ao Māori with Christian theology. Te Kooti's Ringatū combined elements of Māori and Christian worship, while Kēnana's movement embraced pacifism and sought to restore Māori land through unconventional means. Rātana's movement, founded in spiritual experiences and prophetic claims, evolved into a political force advocating for Māori rights. The article highlights the shared themes of prophetic lineage and social justice while acknowledging differences in theological interpretations and practices. These movements provided hope and a sense of identity during times of uncertainty and colonisation, and they reveal the complex relationship between indigenous spirituality and Christianity in Aotearoa's history.¹

Keywords Māori prophets, Ringatū, Rua Kēnana, Rātana, indigenous theology

Introduction

Throughout the history of Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand, a number of independent Māori religious movements have arisen. This essay will seek to explore and compare Ringatū, Rua Kēnana, and Rātana. Special consideration will be paid to the historical

¹ Note that this essay is a revision of one originally written for the level 600/700 course at Laidlaw College, "Te Harinui: The History of Christianity in Aotearoa."

contexts and wider historiographical issues that surround each movement, and reflections will be offered regarding the common features that are shared and the points of difference. The essay will conclude with a brief appraisal of how “Christian” the beliefs of each movement are.

Te Kooti and Ringatū

The first independent Māori religious movement to be considered is Ringatū. Ringatū is the religious movement started by the Māori prophet, Te Kooti, and so to more fully grasp this movement, we need an understanding of Te Kooti’s life and the context in which he lived.

Te Kooti (named Arikirangi at birth) was born to his father Hōne Te Rangipātahi and mother Tūrākau,² probably in 1814 (however there is some debate around this, as at his time of arrest in 1866 his estimated age was listed as about 35 years). The prophet Te Toiroa prophesied over Te Kooti’s birth and foretold a series of events which, if they ended in Te Kooti living, would signify that evil was coming to the land.³ As such, during Te Kooti’s childhood, his father made attempts to kill him. These attempts failed; and when Te Kooti was old enough, he received an education from their local Anglican church.⁴ By 1852 Te Kooti had gained proficiency in understanding the scriptures and had hopes to become a lay preacher. But some bad decisions made as a young person led to him making several enemies amongst both Māori and Pākehā.⁵

On the 21st November 1865, Te Kooti was arrested at Waerenga-a-Hika on the false suspicion of being a spy and a member of the Māori religious movement Pai Mārire. Te Kooti was later released due to a lack of evidence but was arrested again in March 1866 and taken to a prison in Napier. Here Te Kooti petitioned for a trial, but his pleas were ignored and he was exiled and imprisoned on the Chatham Islands.⁶ While imprisoned, Te Kooti was visited by te Wairua o te Atua (the Spirit of God) and told to make the name of God known to his people who were living in this land in captivity. Te Kooti was told that he was to be the mouthpiece of God, and was given a number of signs to reveal to his people.⁷

In July 1868, Te Kooti and about 300 other men, women, and children escaped the Chatham Islands and landed just south of Māhia. They gave thanks to God by raising their right hands, which is where the name Ringatū comes from.⁸ Upon their arrival back to the North Island, Te Kooti and many others found that in their absence their land had been confiscated, and the Crown demanded that they immediately surrender their arms. This order was refused and so Crown troops were sent after them. This resulted in a number of

² Byron William Rangiwai, “A Kaupapa Māori Study of the Positive Impacts of Syncretism on the Development of Christian Faith among Māori from my Faith-World Perspective,” (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2019), 22; Judith Binney, “Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki,” *Te Ara the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t45/te-kooti-arikirangi-te-turuki>

³ Byron Rangiwai, “The Critical Theory of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki,” *Te Kaharoa* 10 (2017): 200.

⁴ Rangiwai, “The Critical Theory of Te Kooti,” 198.

⁵ Binney, “Te Kooti.”

⁶ Athol Anderson, Judith Binney and Aroha Harris, *Tangata Whenua: A History* (Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books Ltd, 2020), 234, 247.

⁷ Anderson, Binney and Harris, *Tangata Whenua: A History*, 247.

⁸ Anderson, Binney and Harris, *Tangata Whenua: A History*, 247–48.

skirmishes and battles, and following a defeat at the Ngātapa Pa in 1869, Te Kooti retreated into Tūhoe land.⁹

In March of 1869, Tūhoe entered into a covenant with Te Kooti. As Crown forces continued to pursue Te Kooti, the Crown implemented a policy of burning as many homes and crops as they could throughout Tūhoe territory.¹⁰ It is also important to note that during this time period, Te Kooti did seek utu (payment and balance for the wrongs that were perpetuated against him) in 1868 by attacking Matawhero, a small Pākehā village near Gisborne, and killing all 60 residents.¹¹

The beliefs of Ringatū were a combination of traditional Māori practices and Christian beliefs.¹² For example, whareniui (traditional Māori meeting houses) were used as places of worship instead of European-style churches, and the ministers within the movement were known as tohunga (traditional Māori experts or priests). The Ringatū faith expressed or reflected several Christian beliefs and practices: the Sabbath was observed (on Saturdays), and the Bible played a prominent role in guiding the movement's theology.¹³ Te Kooti drew much of his inspiration from the Old Testament and, in particular, the stories from Exodus and Joshua.¹⁴ In these narratives, Te Kooti saw a likeness with the struggles that Māori were then facing in Aotearoa, especially the unjust confiscation of their land.¹⁵ It does not require much reflection to notice the parallels that Te Kooti would have made between the Israelites and Māori. Both groups faced unjust oppression and were involved in battles to reclaim their land. Within these narratives, Te Kooti would have observed the God of the Bible standing alongside those who were oppressed, and empathising with their pain and struggles. Davidson also notes that Ringatū used a series of collects, prayers, and psalms from the Anglican prayer book as a foundation for their Saturday services.¹⁶

Rua Kēnana

The second independent Māori religious movement to be explored was led by the prophet Rua Kēnana. Kēnana was born in 1868-69 to his mother Ngāhiwi te Rihi of Tūhoe and (posthumously) to his father Kēnana Tūmoana of Ngati Kahungungu. Kēnana's father died while fighting for Te Kooti at Mākaretu, and as Kēnana was raised between both of his parents' iwi, he grew up learning about Te Kooti, his prophecies,¹⁷ and Ringatū. One prophecy that Te Kooti made was that there was a person coming after him who would be the one to help restore their lands to them. Upon Te Kooti's death in 1893, Kēnana claimed to be

⁹ Binney, "Te Kooti."

¹⁰ Anderson, Binney and Harris, *Tangata Whenua: A History*, 247–48.

¹¹ "Te Kooti Attacks Matawhero," Ministry of Culture and Heritage, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/te-kooti-attacks-matawhero>

¹² Binney, "Te Kooti."

¹³ Rangiwai, "The Critical Theory of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki," 229.

¹⁴ Murray Rae, "The Subversive Theology of Rua Kēnana," in *Mana Māori + Christianity*, ed. Hugh Morrison, Lachy Patterson, Brett Knowles, and Murray Rae (Wellington New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2012), 223.

¹⁵ Rangiwai, "The Critical Theory of Te Kooti," 198-199.

¹⁶ Allan Davidson and Peter Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity* (Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press, 1997), 109.

¹⁷ Judith Binney, "Rua Kēnana Hepetipa," *Te Ara the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3r32/rua-kenana-hepetipa>; "Rua Kēnana," Ministry of Culture and Heritage. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/rua-kenana>

this person.¹⁸ The bulk of Kēnana's support came from within Tūhoe, and this support grew once he completed a series of tasks in 1905-06. One task that he completed was finding the diamond of Te Kooti that had apparently been hidden on top of Maungapōhatu. Kēnana claimed to have had an angelic vision that revealed the location of the diamond to him and so, along with his wife Pinepine, he went to collect it. For many, these events proved Kēnana's claim to be Te Kooti's successor.

In 1907 Kēnana began working on establishing a community at Maungapōhatu, and during this time the government began to keep an eye on Kēnana.¹⁹ The Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 was introduced mainly because of him. In Parliament, Sir Apirana Ngata described him as practicing a "bastard" form of "tohungaism" and as trading on the mana and sayings of Te Kooti.²⁰

At the beginning of WWI, Kēnana came under more government scrutiny, as he held pacifist beliefs and was against the conscription of Māori into the armed forces. He was accused of sedition and of selling illicit alcohol at Maungapōhatu. He was summoned to court but declined to go due to the harvesting of his crops. The government then sent two police officers to arrest him and Kēnana refused to go with them. A warrant for Kēnana's arrest was issued and in April 1916, 50-60 heavily armed police officers descended upon Maungapōhatu.²¹ Police reports at the time state that Māori tried to ambush the officers and, in response, police returned fire and killed two people, one of whom was Kēnana's son, Toko.²² Later evidence showed that police manipulated evidence, opened fire first, and that the arrest warrant issued was highly questionable if not outright illegal.²³

Kēnana faced trial at the Supreme Court and was found not guilty of sedition and the illicit selling of alcohol, but guilty of "morally" resisting arrest. He was sentenced to one year of hard labour, to be followed by 18 months of imprisonment. Following the trial, eight jury members publicly protested against this harsh sentence.²⁴ In 1918 Kēnana returned to Maungapōhatu, where in his absence a Presbyterian school had been established. Kēnana maintained a good relationship with Rev John Laughton and the school teachers there.²⁵

The beliefs of Kēnana and his followers were founded upon the beliefs of Ringatū, though there are some differences. Kēnana's group saw Te Kooti as John the Baptist, preparing the way for Kēnana to come after him. But there are some differing reports concerning who exactly Kēnana saw himself as. In some reports, he sees himself as the brother of Jesus and the Messiah for Māori. At other times he makes claims to be Jesus. Rae notes, however, that these claims lessened over time, which he attributes to Kēnana's ongoing relationship with Rev Laughton.²⁶

¹⁸ Rae, "The Subversive Theology of Rua Kēnana," 229.

¹⁹ "Rua Kēnana," Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

²⁰ Davidson and Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, 111.

²¹ Rua Kēnana," Ministry of Culture and Heritage..

²² James Cowan, and F.R.G.S, *The New Zealand Wars: A History of the Māori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period: Volume II: The Hauhau Wars (1864-72)* (Wellington, New Zealand: R.E Owens, 1956), <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cow02NewZ-b12.html>

²³ Rua Kēnana," Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

²⁴ Rae, "The Subversive Theology of Rua Kēnana," 239.

²⁵ Hone Te Rire, "Hihita me ngā Tamariki o te Kohu," in *Mana Māori + Christianity*, ed. Hugh Morrison, Lachy Patterson, Brett Knowles, and Murray Rae (Wellington New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2012), 211.

²⁶ Rae, "The Subversive Theology of Rua Kēnana," 234-35.

At Kēnana's trial, he was questioned about his beliefs and religious practices. Kēnana reported that they had no formal prayer book, as they believed that they did not need one to worship God and that each person was able to offer their own prayers. They did, however, use Psalms 84 and 97 as their hymns and set these to old Māori tunes.²⁷ Similarly to Ringatū, Kēnana and his followers observed the Sabbath on Saturdays, and drew inspiration from the Old Testament narratives found in Exodus and Joshua.

Rātana

The last Māori religious movement to be explored is Rātana, which was founded by Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana in 1918. Rātana was born in 1873 to his father Wiremu Rātana and his mother Ihipera Korua Erina.²⁸ Early on in life, Rātana was exposed to a wide range of religious and political beliefs. His grandfather, Rātana Ngāhina, was an Anglican and pro-government loyalist, while his aunt, Mere Rikiriki, was a faith-healing prophetess who was at Parihaka with Te Whiti.²⁹ Mere had prophesied, in 1912, that Rātana was the person about whom prophets like Te Whiti and Te Kooti had spoken, and was the one that was going to lead and unify his people.³⁰

Another event that impacted Rātana was the influenza epidemic of 1918, where Māori were five times more likely than non-Māori to die, and during which Rātana lost 18 family members.³¹ At the time of the influenza outbreak Rātana was working on the family farm, and when not working could often be found drinking heavily at the local pub.³² One night, while Rātana was at the pub, he received word that his son, who was sick at the time, had taken a turn for the worst. Rātana rushed home and on his arrival prayed for his son and then went outside to sit on the veranda. While outside he saw a small cloud forming from the ocean, which grew larger as it raced towards him. A voice from the cloud spoke to him and let him know that he was anointed as the mouthpiece of God, and was to help unite the Māori people and turn them towards God.³³ Initially, his family thought that he was drunk or crazy, though they changed their minds as Rātana began to see people healed after he prayed for them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Word of this began to spread, and by 1919 hundreds of people were visiting the Rātana family home, seeking healing for themselves or loved ones.³⁴

Rātana brought hope to Māori at a time when many were displaced from their ancestral lands and had suffered under decades of sickness, warfare, and the unjust actions of the crown.³⁵ So while the Rātana movement started off as a religious movement, it began to

²⁷ Davidson and Lineham. *Transplanted Christianity*, 111.

²⁸ Eric Bullard, "Rātana (Movement)," *Salem Press Encyclopaedia*, EBSCO Publishing, 2022.

²⁹ Angela Ballara, "Rātana, Tahupōtiki Wiremu," *Te Ara the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3r4/ratana-tahupotiki-wiremu>; Ans Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church," *Te Ao Hou* (Mar 1963): 35.

³⁰ Ballara, "Rātana, Tahupōtiki Wiremu."

³¹ Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church," 35–36.

³² Aaron Smale, "Rātana: Church, State and Whānau," *New Zealand Geographic* Jan-Feb (2009): Online ed. <https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/ratana/>

³³ Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church," 36–37; Smale, "Rātana: Church, State and Whānau."

³⁴ Keith Newman, "Rātana Church – Te Haahi Rātana," *Te Ara the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/ratana-church-te-haahi-ratana>

³⁵ Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church," 36.

take on political overtones, particularly in 1923 when Rātana and his delegation travelled to England to present King George V with a petition regarding breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori land confiscations. In 1936 the Rātana church began an alliance with the New Zealand Labour Party, and members of the church stood for election.³⁶

The Rātana church has two main parts: Ture Wairua, piki te kaha (Spiritual Works, seek faith) and Ture Tangata, kī kōpū (Material Works, fill the stomach). Here I will explore some of the beliefs that underpin these two parts of the Rātana church.

The original church covenant stated that members were to be obedient to Rātana's message, to be baptised, and to have faith in the Christian God. These beliefs were also expanded upon in the church's creed, where they express their belief in God the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit; and in the authority of the Bible.³⁷ The Rātana church also placed a big emphasis on encouraging Māori to leave behind superstition and their faith in tohunga. The stated beliefs of Rātana align fairly well with orthodox Western Christianity, though it is important to note that there was a period of time within the church where some of their beliefs were less orthodox and this was one reason why other churches ceased interactions with them.³⁸ For example, despite Rātana's attempts to prevent members of the church from deifying him, the church did begin to include him as part of the Godhead – during the 1930s there are records of church members identifying Rātana as the saviour, and ceasing to pray for people in the name of Jesus.³⁹ Rātana's rejection of monogamy also caused fallout with other churches, as in 1925 he took a younger second wife and in later years is reported to have had affairs with other women.⁴⁰ In the 1960s the church began to embrace more of their original beliefs and practices, and at this time also renewed their relationships with other churches.⁴¹

Reflections on Theology and Context

I will now move to address and reflect upon the similarities and points of difference between the three movements. The first point of similarity is that each movement has a connection to the prophetic, most particularly to the Māori prophets that had come before them. These movements all have a deep history and connection to the land and the people of the past; none of them came from a place of isolation. The whakapapa (genealogy) of these movements stretches across time. They do not just begin with their founders.

For example, Te Kooti's birth was prophesied over by Te Toiroa, who was the prophet that foretold the coming of Europeans and Christianity to Aotearoa.⁴² Te Kooti then prophesied about someone else who was coming after him, who would help to lead and unify people. Kēnana claimed this prophecy was about him, and embraced and adapted the sayings and practices of Te Kooti in his community.

³⁶ Bullard, "Rātana (Movement)," EBSCO Publishing, 2022.

³⁷ Davidson and Lineham. *Transplanted Christianity*, 112–13.

³⁸ Jeff Wallenfeldt, "Rātana Church: Māori Religion," Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ratana-church>

³⁹ Ballara, "Rātana, Tahupōtiki Wiremu."

⁴⁰ Ballara, "Rātana, Tahupōtiki Wiremu."

⁴¹ Wallenfeldt, "Rātana Church: Māori Religion."

⁴² Jay Ruka, *Huia Come Home* (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Ministries, 2017), 25.

There is then Rātana, who was prophesied over by his aunt Mere, herself a faith-healer and prophetess. Mere believed that Rātana would inherit some of her mantle, and would also fulfil the prophecies made by Te Whiti, Te Kooti, and other Māori prophets (such as Aperahama Taonui of Ngāpuhi).⁴³ There is a common theme among these movements of their leaders inheriting some of the mana and mantle of prophets and leaders who came before them.

The second similarity that these movements share is that they were concerned with the oppression and injustice that Māori were facing. Te Kooti, Kēnana, and Rātana all witnessed the hopelessness that Māori faced as they were displaced from their ancestral lands through illegal confiscations, and as they faced decades of sickness and warfare.

One point of difference between the three is that they had different ways of dealing with this oppression, and of giving hope to their followers. For example, Te Kooti was willing to engage in fighting with Crown troops, while also encouraging his followers with stories from the Old Testament that demonstrated God's willingness to stand alongside and support Israel as they fought similar battles for their land and against their oppressors.

Kēnana, while he also encouraged his followers to draw hope from the same Old Testament stories, took a pacifist approach to dealing with the loss of land. Kēnana had wanted to raise money to buy back Tūhoe land from King George V; and then in later parts of his life he attempted to develop the land that they still had by building roads and other infrastructure that would allow his community to economically thrive. These plans in part failed to come to fruition because the government failed to uphold their agreement with Tūhoe.

Then there is Rātana, who aimed to provide hope, and address the oppression of Māori, by moving into political spheres. Rātana's alliance with the Labour Party gave the Rātana movement the opportunity to influence laws and policies that impacted the lives of Māori. The different approaches that the three movements took reflect both the social/cultural contexts that they found themselves in at the time, and theological differences over how to resist oppression.

A second point of difference between these movements is their views regarding traditional Māori religious practices. On one hand, Te Kooti and Kēnana embraced aspects of traditional practices, and had a more open-minded approach to *tohunga*. As mentioned previously, within Ringatū the ministers are referred to as *tohunga*, and it appears that they repurposed the traditional role of a *tohunga* to fit within their new Christian-based context. Rātana, on the other hand, required his followers to reject all aspects of "tohungaism" and the superstitions associated with traditional Māori beliefs and to have no association with *atua* Māori (Māori gods). The rejection of *tohunga* and *atua* Māori, however, was not a rejection of *te reo* Māori and other aspects of *te ao* Māori. Rātana services are held in Māori, and utilise other aspects of *tikanga*.⁴⁴

In reflecting upon the life and the wider context of each of these leaders, it is possible to see reasons for their distinctive beliefs. Due to Te Kooti's experiences throughout the New

⁴³ Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church," 35-36; Samuel Carpenter, "Christian Mission among the Māori, and Māori Responses, 1860 - 1900," 310.715: Te Harinui: The History of Christianity in Aotearoa (class lecture, Laidlaw College, Auckland, NZ, 13 March 2023).

⁴⁴ Westra, "T.W. Rātana and the Rātana Church."

Zealand Wars, he held a mistrust of missionaries and their way of practising Christianity. As such, it is possible to see why, when it came to establishing his own style of worship, he would want to use Māori names (like *tohunga*) and Māori places (such as *wharenuī*) as they were more familiar and comfortable for him and his people.

Kēnana, for the most part, followed the example set by Te Kooti. But Rātana was quite different again from the other two leaders: he watched as both *tohunga* and doctors alike were powerless to help his family and thousands of Māori who were killed in the influenza outbreak.⁴⁵

I will now offer a few thoughts on how “Christian” the beliefs of each movement are. I acknowledge that I am in no way qualified or knowledgeable enough to be making such an assessment, but my attempt to do so will be done with an open mind and the willingness to be corrected if my judgments are misguided.

Firstly, let us assess Te Kooti and Ringatū. Though Te Kooti used a traditional Māori style of worship, within Ringatū they did not worship *atua* Māori. Their worship was focused on the Christian God, and Te Kooti had a deep understanding of the scriptures – as mentioned previously, he drew upon them heavily in his teachings. In his earlier years, he focused more on the Old Testament, but later in life his focus switched to the New Testament.⁴⁶ My assessment of Ringatū would be that it is distinctly Christian in nature.

Next to be examined is Rua Kēnana. There are some aspects of his beliefs that align with Christian theology and some that do not. For example, Murray Rae, in *Mana Māori*, writes that in spite of questions or concerns people may have about Kēnana’s theology, the one belief that should not come into question is his certainty that, as seen in the Bible, God sides with the oppressed, and that Christianity should not be used as a tool of political control.⁴⁷ However, his belief that he was either the divine brother of Christ, or Christ himself, does not align with Christian theology.

Lastly, let us consider Rātana. The Rātana Church (Te Haahi Rātana) has a creed that was registered with the Registrar General in 1925, and within this document is a list of their beliefs. They believe in the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit; that humankind were in need of a Saviour; and that this Saviour is Jesus. They also believe in the Holy Bible and the validity of both the Old and New Testaments.⁴⁸ The Rātana movement considers themselves to be Christian, and I would agree with this assessment. Aside from the period of time in which Rātana was personally identified as either the Saviour or as part of the Godhead, the beliefs and practices of Te Haahi Rātana appear to align with Christian theology and thought.

Conclusion

Throughout the history of Christianity in Aotearoa, independent Māori religious movements have played an important role in helping Māori to engage with Christianity, especially in times where Western expressions of the faith were linked with the loss of land and oppression. Each of the movements discussed in this essay gave a voice to the oppressed and

⁴⁵ Ballara, “Rātana, Tahupōtiki Wiremu,” <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3r4/ratana-tahupotiki-wiremu>

⁴⁶ Brad Haami, Class Lecture: Laidlaw College, 28 April 2023.

⁴⁷ Rae, “The Subversive Theology of Rua Kēnana,” 239–40.

⁴⁸ Davidson and Lineham. *Transplanted* Christianity, 112–13.

offered hope for a people facing unprecedented political change and social upheaval. It is possible to observe how the contemporary events and the social and cultural contexts surrounding Te Kooti, Kēnana, and Rātana influenced the beliefs, theology, and worship within their movements.

A challenge for those of us who are immersed in Western Christianity is to keep an open mind when examining indigenous forms of Christianity. Though the styles of worship may differ, and emphasis is placed on different ideas, this does not automatically mean that such movements are an unfaithful expression of Christian faith. What is needed is an examination of the underlying theology and beliefs and a willingness for all involved to be guided by the Holy Spirit and by scripture.

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Reflections on a Comparison of CMS and SAMS Participation in God's Mission Together with Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand and South America

Learning to Walk Together Well with Indigenous Peoples in Contexts
of Differing Positions and Relationships with Colonial Powers

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Abstract

In 1814 the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand, beginning a long and developing relationship between Māori and the CMS. Soon afterwards, the first missionaries from the South American Mission Society (SAMS) arrived in South America, beginning a similarly long and developing relationship with Indigenous Peoples in the region. The relationship of the mission agencies with the colonial powers in each context has varied, which has shaped how the Indigenous Peoples and mission agencies have responded, and which has resulted in different experiences of learning to walk together well. With CMS and SAMS now integrated in Britain, this article will reflect on these different experiences from a perspective of mission agency experience in South America, and from listening to indigenous voices in both South America and Aotearoa New Zealand. Reflecting upon those differing experiences, and listening to other sources, this article will also explore some of the lessons that have been learned; how practices of mission have developed; how mission together is being developed now in one context in South America; and where further changes could occur as mission agencies and Indigenous Peoples learn to walk together well in the mission of God.

Keywords: mission, indigenous, CMS, New Zealand, South America

Mission work from the UK to South America has always been significantly different from mission work from the UK to many other contexts, as it has not developed either under the conditions of British colonialism nor the wide use of the English language.¹ The colonial powers in the region have been Spain and Portugal, and so Spanish and Portuguese are the most widely spoken languages – although there are hundreds of indigenous languages across the region.² Traditionally, mission work through the South American Mission Society (SAMS) has been focused on sharing the gospel of Jesus with Indigenous Peoples across the region, with evangelistic mission work amongst Latino and urban populations only beginning in a significant way in the 1960s and 70s.³

The beginnings of SAMS lie in the pioneering mission work of British missionary Allen Gardiner, whose service and sacrifice inspired a mission movement without him ever seeing the fruit of his labours. His zealous work in the first half of the 19th century, culminating in his death on a beach in Tierra del Fuego in 1851, led to the formation of the Patagonian Mission Society in Britain, which later became SAMS. The society then developed under the leadership of people like George Pakenham Despard and Waite Stirling. Communities of faith began to emerge amongst the Indigenous Peoples of Tierra Del Fuego (in what is now the very south of Argentina and Chile), the Gran Chaco (of what is now Northern Argentina and Paraguay), and Araucanía (Chile). There are now tens of thousands of followers of Jesus in the Gran Chaco and Araucanía who identify as Indigenous Christians, and who would attribute the roots of their Anglican Churches to the mission work of previous generations of missionaries in these areas.

The history of the Church Mission Society (CMS) mission work in New Zealand Aotearoa has been detailed elsewhere in this journal and in other publications.⁴ However, it is important that a number of key elements of that history are highlighted here. CMS mission work was first begun under the leadership of Samuel Marsden in 1814, but initially, little fruit was seen. There were many challenges in this initial period, many of which do not paint those first missionaries in a great light. Marsden saw it necessary to first civilise⁵ Māori before sharing the gospel with them, whilst there were also significant moral failures within the missionary team. Despite this, an explosion in Māori conversion to Christianity occurred in the 1830s and 40s, in significant part due to both the translation of the Bible to te reo Māori and also to the sharing of the gospel from Māori to Māori. After the Treaty of Waitangi, in which CMS missionaries played such a key part, Māori and missionaries alike felt betrayed

¹ Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chapter 6.

² World Bank, *Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century*, 2024, 26.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/145891467991974540/pdf/Indigenous-Latin-America-in-the-twenty-first-century-the-first-decade.pdf>

³ Church Mission Society, *South American Mission Society (SAMS)*, 2024.

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/about/south-american-mission-society-sams>

⁴ New Zealand Church Missionary Society, *Our Story Aotearoa - the story of mission in Aotearoa through the lens of the New Zealand Church Missionary Society*, Christchurch: NZCMS, 2014 [printed]

⁵ Civilise is a loaded term today, seen very negatively. Marsden's intention of civilising Māori was done out of genuine and well-meaning concern for the indigenous population (especially in a world where the European world was coming whether or not Indigenous Peoples wanted it or not) but it did also presuppose unnecessary steps be taken prior to the sharing of the gospel.

when the British government confiscated land, and the Anglican Church focused more on the European settlers, marginalising Māori as a result.⁶

A recent opportunity for the participation of two indigenous representatives from South America in the November 2023 Wānanga Symposium in Paihia, and for their connection with Māori Christians, offered a chance for reflection upon the similarity and difference of experiences through history and in the present day. Cayul and Cabañas shared their reflections as visitors to Aotearoa New Zealand, noting particularly the natural connection between Māori, Mapuche, and Enxet, despite huge geographical differences between their ancestral lands.⁷ Whilst differences between different indigenous peoples should not be minimised, their reflections showed deep points of communion through a shared sacred connection with land and nature, similar perspectives on the spiritual world, a shared commitment to preserve culture and traditions, and a continued struggle to maintain respect for their rights, ancestral lands, and the protection of natural resources.

More surprisingly perhaps, particularly given the interaction between British missionaries and British colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand, together with the mistakes made by missionaries, what also came across in these interactions was the “mana” (authority, status) afforded to those British missionaries by Indigenous Anglican Christians from both contexts. British missionaries have been, and continue to be, part of a complex web of relationships – particularly in relation to colonisation – which have always been difficult to navigate. This has left the missionaries as neither “goodies” nor “baddies” in history, but rather people (generally with a deep faith, and very well-intentioned) with blind spots, who can also point us to our blind spots today.⁸

Recognising that this will not be a universally held opinion, in Aotearoa New Zealand this mana is offered despite the horrors committed against Māori by representatives of the same nation from which the missionaries also came, and even when they were seen as complicit. In South America, that mana is more naturally understandable, given the history of SAMS/CMS missionaries standing on the side of Indigenous Peoples in the face of outside pressures. SAMS/CMS missionaries have, for instance, worked together with indigenous peoples for many years to help secure rights to ancestral lands.⁹ This respect for missionaries has also been highlighted more in other reflections offered from Indigenous Peoples in South America.¹⁰ This is not an uncritical reverence of missionaries from afar, but a recognition that amongst the imperfections of those who arrived on foreign shores there was a genuine passion to share the Good News of Jesus with the peoples they encountered and a gratitude

⁶ Allan K. Davidson and New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, (Wellington: Education for Ministry, 2004), 96.

⁷ Eva Cayul and Elvio Cabañas, “Reflections on the experiences of Indigenous Peoples with Christian mission work in Aotearoa New Zealand and in South America – An Enxet and Mapuche perspective”, *Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania* (Volume 2, Issue 2, 2024).

⁸ James Butler and Cathy Ross, “Octavius Hadfield: 19th Century Goodie or 21st Century Baddie? Learnings from the complexities of mission and empire”, in Anthony G. Reddie and Carol Troupe, *Deconstructing Whiteness, Empire and Mission* (London: SCM Press, 2023).

⁹ Church Mission Society, “Indigenous communities win court battle in Argentina”, 2024. <https://churchmissionsociety.org/blog/news/indigenous-communities-win-court-battle-in-argentina>.

¹⁰ Elvio Cabañas, Mirna Paulo and Joel Millanguir (compiled by Sarah Cawdell), “Reflections from three Indigenous Leaders in Latin America”, in Jay Matenga (ed.) *The Emancipation of Indigenous Theologies in light of the rise of World Christianity: Anvil Journal of Theology and Mission* (Vol 39, Issue 1, 2023).

from many for the sharing of that news with their people. Today, within such contexts, there is an opportunity for renewed connection and collaboration between indigenous peoples and CMS / SAMS, where those who come together in these relationships today do so as those who currently represent their intertwined whakapapa.

That said, engagement today does require reconciliation with the past and with mistakes that have been made. In Aotearoa New Zealand, there has been an ongoing process of repentance and reconciliation, with particular involvement of the Anglican Church of New Zealand and New Zealand CMS.¹¹ These acts have also been accompanied by work to bring restitution of land, and through that work, significant symbolic returns of land to Māori stewardship have been made. Such acts of reconciliation have resulted in an improved and strengthened relationship between Māori and the Church.¹²

At the root of many of the issues that have arisen over the years in Aotearoa New Zealand are the different understandings of what the Treaty of Waitangi actually meant. For Māori, it was a covenant made with the Sovereign of the British Empire that could not fully be captured in words. It seems clear that both Māori and the British Crown signed the treaty with very different expectations – the former believing a covenant had been made, the latter a contract. Here, in the midst of language difficulties, questions of translation, and more importantly a different understanding of what type of agreement was being entered into, worldviews collided – and perhaps inevitably, the results were not as either party expected.^{13,14} This provides yet another example and reminder, if it were needed, of the importance of engaging in cross-cultural activities in a way that seeks to listen and understand one another at a deeper, less superficial level.

As previously mentioned, the rapid growth in Māori accepting the Christian faith, which occurred around the same time as the treaty, was in great part the result of the translation of the New Testament into te reo Māori, and the work of Māori evangelists who shared the gospel with their own people. That “Indigenous Mission” work continues today in Aotearoa New Zealand, where there is great gospel impact found when the Christian faith is shared in a way that is inculturated by Māori and shared by Māori. New Zealand CMS, together with the Anglican Church, have a number of Māori evangelists serving with them who recount the impact of sharing the gospel message in such ways and contexts: ministering on the marae, and sharing the gospel of Jesus embodied in the culture and language of Māori¹⁵. “Indigenous Mission” is best.

¹¹ For example see General Synod Minutes,

<https://www.anglican.org.nz/News/General-Synod-Te-Hinota-Whanui-GSTHW/Minutes-and-Statutes-of-the-63rd-General-Synod-Te-Hinota-Whanui-held-in-New-Plymouth-4-10-May-2018> Minutes Thursday 10th May.

¹² Keri-Ann Hokianga, “Interview with Rev’d Keri-Ann Hokianga,” *Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania* (Volume 2, Issue 2, 2024).

¹³ Michael King, “A Treaty”, in *The Penguin History of Aotearoa New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Group, 2023), Chapter 11.

¹⁴ Whatever the understanding of the contract/covenant entered into, relatively soon after its signing the Treaty was broken/ignored; and, for example, land was taken by force from Māori.

¹⁵ New Zealand Church Missionary Society, “Māori Evangelists”, 2024.

<https://www.nzcms.org.nz/our-people/maori-evangelists>

CMS in Britain has been through a recent re-founding process, which is in essence a refocussing on its historic calling to the “more effectual”¹⁶ means of sharing the Good News of Jesus with those who are currently beyond the reach of the Church as it currently exists. As part of that re-founding, CMS has been asking this question: in today’s world, how should it engage in mission together with those indigenous peoples in South America with whom it has a long, shared story? Generations of missionaries from Britain and beyond have walked together with indigenous peoples in the Gran Chaco and Araucanía, and today that work stands at a crossroads.

In dialogue and deep listening with representatives of many different peoples, the verse from Jeremiah 6:16 has been key: “This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls”¹⁷. As this dialogue and reflection have progressed, there has been a sense of the need to draw upon the good of the ancient paths together, with a need to seek the good way and to walk in it into the future, recognising that the way may look different from the past.

What is emerging is a shared, co-created movement called “Indigenous Mission”, which is organised and led by Indigenous Christians who know their contexts best. They are supported and accompanied on the journey by CMS and others from outside the context who walk with them on “the good way”. The movement seeks to learn from and respond to the elements highlighted in this article.

Drawing upon the intertwined whakapapa of both the Indigenous Church and SAMS/CMS, Indigenous Mission is building upon the strengths of that historic relationship whilst continuing to address those elements of the past which require attention. There has been a significant period of listening and discerning together, seeking to avoid some of the pitfalls of colliding worldviews – although humility brings caution to any sense of having sidestepped those issues completely. Within this movement, there is a recognition that the culture, languages, and traditions of Indigenous Peoples need to be valued and encouraged within and beyond the Church.

This mission is holistic and includes supporting indigenous peoples in their calls for rights, ancestral lands, and the protection of natural resources. As a first step there is a recognition that in today’s world, where indigenous and foreign cultures interact on a daily basis, there is a need for indigenous missionaries and leaders to be prepared for this mission, which is simultaneously inculturated and cross-cultural. That preparation is an initial focus of the movement. But beyond this, there is a shared vision with that of Māori evangelists in Aotearoa New Zealand: that inculturated mission by those from the context – indigenous mission – is best. This means that indigenous missionaries are being prepared and supported to serve in God’s mission in their own contexts.¹⁸ Indigenous Mission also believes that there is much to be gained from learning from other contexts, and in sharing learning from South

¹⁶ John H. Pratt, *The Thought of the Evangelical Leaders: Notes of the Discussions of the Eclectic Society, London During the Years 1798-1814* Reprint (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978).

¹⁷ New International Version

¹⁸ Church Mission Society, “Indigenous People’s Declaration shows clear intent,” 2024

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/blog/news/indigenous-peoples-declaration-shows-clear-intent>

American contexts with others. In light of this, their interaction with the Māori Church is a significant step.

There is still much to be done, but steps are being taken to learn from a shared past, and from other contexts where there have been similar experiences. This enables us to build upon the good foundations that have been laid and to address mistakes of the past. In these contexts that are separated by large distances, and in contexts of different colonial pasts, –where missionaries have been both strongly associated with and diametrically opposed to colonial power – there are deep connections between indigenous peoples, and similar issues that those peoples face. Within these different contexts, Indigenous Peoples’ involvement in God’s mission appears to have many parallels, and learning from those different contexts strengthens those different peoples’ mission service.

From this limited comparison, it would appear that some helpful concepts can be taken for deeper consideration, reflection, and implementation. Those would include the belief that mission work in indigenous contexts should be led by Indigenous Peoples under the Spirit’s lead; it should build on what has gone before; and it should seek to bring reconciliation with past errors. Indigenous mission work can be supported by those from outside of the context, but safeguards should be in place to lessen the chance of that support becoming a new form of colonial control. Open dialogue and listening should be engaged in, to seek to understand one another in a way that humbly attempts to bring about a shared understanding between those who hold different worldviews. Through that unity and sharing of the gifts of God to the Church, Indigenous Mission might see more of the fruit that we have already seen.

In the Congress of Indigenous Peoples that launched Indigenous Mission, a poem called “Coloured weaving, united in Jesus” was offered by visiting Gunadule leader Jocabed Solano.¹⁹ It captures something of a vision of what the future of Indigenous Mission might look like from an indigenous worldview, as God weaves the indigenous peoples of the region together in the weaving of the Good News of Jesus:

*You come out to meet the indigenous peoples
In the beautiful lands of Abya Yala²⁰
You weave us into this coloured weaving with the good news.
You walk with the Tobas, you drink mate with the Wichí;
You offer a shout of hope with the Mapuches
You play with the Enxet children; you weave with the Chorote children.
We, women of these beautiful lands, were tender with the cry and the prayer.
Together with the Guaranís we pray for a land free of evil.
Woven in Abya Yala, together with the Gunadale people,
With grandmother sea (Muu Billi), we hear songs and sounds,
But you are speaking of your love for all the peoples.
You blow in the wind, we hear you dance in the earth,
And round the fire the Spirit moves.*

¹⁹ Church Mission Society, “Indigenous Mission Congress day by day,” 2024. <https://churchmissionsociety.org/blog/experience/indigenous-mission-congress-day-by-day>

²⁰ A Gunadule word to describe the lands often known as Latin America

*The Spirit dances with us, and shows us: a new song,
 A new story, a new dawn,
 So that, in these beautiful lands of Abya Yala, the crops produce fruit,
 Rain falls and rivers flow.
 So that on every table of my sisters and brothers
 There is always something to eat.
 May the blessed fruits feed the new generations
 And the seeds sprout with their hope
 In this land dreamt by the Guarani:
 A land with no evil.
 We look to the Gunadules for a Baluwala²¹ for everything and for all
 A new song, a new story, a new dawn
 We become part of the weaving of the good news
 We weave with the good story, into this new weaving
 Designed for all the indigenous peoples.
 The weaving of his love.*

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²¹ Good life

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Short Articles and Reflections



Reflections on the Experiences of Indigenous Peoples with Christian Mission Work in Aotearoa New Zealand and in South America – An Enxet and Mapuche Perspective

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Abstract

Eva Cayul Epulef (Mapuche) and Elvio Cabañas Rojas (Enxet) have recently visited Aotearoa New Zealand, visiting with Māori evangelists and participating in the November 2023 Wānanga Symposium exploring Christianity, te ao Māori, and colonisation. In this article, they draw upon their own experiences in the South American context, reflecting on the similarities and differences of the experiences of indigenous peoples with Christian mission, and how that shapes their participation in God's mission today.

Introduction

We, Eva Cayul Epulef and Elvio Cabañas Rojas, participate in Misión Indígena, a movement that seeks to promote the participation of Indigenous Peoples of the Anglican Church Provinces of South America and Chile in the mission of God. Eva is Mapuche, an indigenous people who traditionally live in south-central Chile and southwestern Argentina. She is from

the Araucanía region of Chile. Elvio is Enxet (Southern Enxet), an indigenous people of around just eight thousand, who mainly live in the Chaco region of Paraguay where Elvio is from.

We received the opportunity to participate in an exchange visit and the Wānanga Symposium in Aotearoa New Zealand. During this time, we had the opportunity to observe similarities and differences between our contexts and that of Māori, and also reflect on what we could learn in our participation in God's mission. We recognise a great natural harmony between us and the Māori people and believe that there is much that resonates between our experiences. Here we share our reflections on the experience, which we hope will enrich the dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and the Christian faith. We do this through three key points:

- 1) *The connection with Māori culture*
- 2) *Māori spirituality and history*
- 3) *Learning at the symposium*

Reflections

1. Connection with Māori culture

During our stay in New Zealand, we had the opportunity to be introduced to Māori culture through direct interactions with Māori evangelists, bishops, pastors, and families. These experiences provided us with a significant connection to the understanding, worldview, and spirituality of these particular indigenous people.

Interacting with Māori evangelists was essential to understanding their evangelistic approach and how they integrate the Christian faith into their unique worldview. Through rich conversations, we were able to explore their perspectives on spirituality, connection to the land, and the importance of community in the expression of their faith. Our meetings with Māori evangelists were not only a spiritually enriching experience, but also revealed their generosity and dedication as Māori leaders. We shared with them in a very open way, listening not only to their triumphs, but also to their personal and family struggles. This authenticity created an environment of trust and openness in which we could learn from and share with each other. Despite the physical distance of our home countries, and our cultural differences, the conversation flowed spontaneously and harmoniously.

The conversation highlighted how God has not only opened doors of opportunity to share the Gospel, but also doors to people's hearts. The transformations that have occurred are testimony to the redemptive and restorative power of God. These exchanges with Māori evangelists inspired and challenged our own faith, reminding us of the universality of the message of hope in Christ. The meetings were not only a learning opportunity, but a powerful reminder of the continuous work of God in all cultures and communities whether Māori, Mapuche, or Enxet.

Despite not knowing each other previously, the spiritual connection between us was evident. The conversation was more than an exchange of words: it was a sharing of experiences of God's grace that transcends borders. Establishing a connection with Māori

families was a unique experience that provided direct insight into their everyday and family life. Observing how they live the Christian faith in the context of their homes provided a better understanding of the integration of spirituality into daily life, and the transmission of traditions from generation to generation. They were spiritual and cultural encounters – not just acts of generosity, but an enriching experience that transcended linguistic and cultural barriers.

From the moment we walked through the door of their home, the family greeted us with a warm Māori welcome. Their hospitality knew no bounds, and their willingness to share their life and faith with us was genuine and moving. We shared a dinner that was not only a feast for the body, but also an expression of the culinary and cultural wealth of their people. Through flavours and aromas, we began to understand the importance of food in Māori life. The generosity and openness of Māori families highlighted the importance of hospitality as a cultural bridge. The act of sharing food and space transcended differences, creating an atmosphere of unity and love.

Despite linguistic differences, we were invited to participate in moments of praise and prayer. We sang hymns and praises to Christ together, finding in music a common language that transcended spoken words. Although our languages were different, our shared faith in Christ became the bridge that united our hearts. The spiritual communion we experienced during prayers demonstrated that, in the spiritual realm, there are no language barriers that cannot be overcome. It was a profound exchange that left an indelible mark on our journey and in our heart. The communion we shared demonstrated that, in the family of Christ, we are one despite external differences: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 (NIV).

2. Spirituality and history

Many Māori practices and beliefs became intertwined with Christian teaching, giving rise to unique expressions of faith that incorporated elements of both traditions. It is important to understand the deep connection of Māori to the land, and how this influences their spirituality. Our participation in the symposium provided rich learnings about Māori cultural resilience, the adaptation of Christianity to the Māori worldview, and the importance of intercultural dialogue.

The harmonious adaptation of Christian elements and Māori rituals highlighted the richness of a faith that grows in diversity. Māori have been developing a contextualised theology that integrates Māori spirituality and worldview with Christian doctrine. This includes a unique understanding of the relationship between the land (whenua) and spirituality, as well as a wider Māori interpretation of Christianity.

God showed us that he has given Māori a tremendous creation in the lands and islands they inhabit, and over which they exercise stewardship. The close relationship with the land is something we also share. In our cultures, we recognise that we cannot live without land, and our fight to protect it and to have the right to exercise this stewardship continues as well. This connection with creation was emphasised in a desire of ours to touch the water of the ocean during the visit to the Marsden Cross site, something that was recognised by our Māori companion, who even said “and why didn't you get into the water as well?”.

The desire to connect with creation exists in our cultures and that of Māori. The Enxet culture maintains its recognition of the spirituality of all creation, and a spiritual world. Originally through shamans and healers, we interacted as people with this world, but now we see it through the lens of Jesus. We preserve the good of our cultural experiences – for example, in the use of medicinal plants in our traditional medicine – recognising the providence of God the Creator in everything. Something we also noticed most deeply in Māori culture was the importance of the whakapapa (genealogy) of each Māori person and family. This connection with the past enriches and places each one within a greater story, and within the story of God's creation.

Māori churches emerged within mainstream Christian denominations, such as the Māori Anglican Church. These churches have played a central role in preserving Māori cultural identity while participating in the Christian faith. Liturgy, music, and other aspects of worship often reflect Māori heritage. A contextualised Māori theology has developed, one which integrates Māori spirituality and worldview with Christian doctrine. This includes a unique understanding of the relationship between the land (whenua) and spirituality, as well as a Māori interpretation of Christianity. We were struck by the integration of the creation story of Scripture and that of Māori culture in the decoration of Te Karaiti te Pou Herenga Waka Anglican Church in Māngere, where the meeting point between the two is their reconciliation in Christ Jesus. In Jesus we recognise that every culture will have parts that are affirmed, and other parts that are confronted. We know that equally in our own cultures there are areas that are affirmed in Jesus and other areas that we need to change. The value of our cultures is something that we continue to want to see more recognised in our churches.

We participated in a service led by a female Māori priest, and many of the attendees were Māori, with some Pacific Islanders and also some Pākehā brothers and sisters. At the beginning of the service, the priest expressed: "This morning we praise the Lord, all honour and glory be to him. The praise that we have just sung is a recognition of the first person who receives all the praise from this place, which is God. Welcome home to all those who are here every Sunday, and welcome home to our visitors." We were struck by the words and the feeling of being at home, even though it was our first visit there.

Our experience in the Māori Anglican Church strengthened our appreciation for the beauty of diversity in the expression of faith within the Anglican community and the global Christian community. We noticed the leading role that women have in the Māori Church, both as evangelists and leaders of a congregation. We recognise that women have an important role in our contexts as well, and we seek an awakening of a greater contribution of their leadership and evangelism in the life and mission of the Church.

The richness of Māori cultural expressions was integrated into worship, providing an authentic and meaningful spiritual experience. The diversity in the expression of faith within the Māori Anglican Church was evident in the way liturgical aspects were approached. The fusion of Māori cultural elements with traditional Anglican liturgy created a unique space where diversity was celebrated and considered an integral part of worship.

3. Learning at the symposium

Our participation in the Wānanga Symposium was an experience that provided valuable insights into crucial aspects of the history, culture, and faith of the Māori people in New

Zealand. Presentations and discussions addressed key issues, especially in relation to colonialism, the Māori world, and the interactions with Christianity in Aotearoa, “land of the long white cloud”.

The symposium featured an impressive diversity of speakers, each bringing a unique perspective to the conversation. We received a message that encouraged everyone to have the confidence, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the strength of God, to explore new paths of mission and ministry. Presentations focused on key issues such as the Treaty of Waitangi, its historical context, and its impact on the legal and constitutional life of New Zealand. Mission and colonisation, as well as Christian-Māori identity in the 21st century, were areas of rich discussion. The inclusion of panels added additional layers to the conversations. These panels provided opportunities to explore the intersection of Christian faith and cultural diversity from global perspectives.

In a panel we were able to share a brief testimony about the Church in the Paraguayan Chaco. The arrival of the first missionary in 1889 was mentioned, which marked the beginning of the knowledge of Christ in the region. Despite difficulties, such as lack of roads and a challenging climate, the missionaries demonstrated courage in preaching the Gospel. In the year 1900, an indigenous evangelist began to work to accompany the missionary work. Working with Enxet – culturally nomadic, and hunter-gatherers – this church plant at Makxawaya had a significant impact, baptising 1,500 indigenous people soon after its beginnings. Over time, the Anglican Church became a pioneer in evangelistic work in Paraguay. The testimony highlighted how the missionary effort transformed lives and communities in the Paraguayan Chaco, leading to the translation of the entire Bible into Enxet Sur. Now, the community strives to send their children to study and become Bible teachers, to preserve and share faith among indigenous peoples.

The introduction of Christianity to New Zealand was associated with missionaries, many of whom were Anglicans. Initial contact between missionaries and Māori led to the conversion of some Māori leaders and, over time, the adoption of the Christian faith by entire communities. In this time of exchange, we note the courage and effort of Anglican missionaries both in our contexts and in Māori contexts. They came with sincere interests in sharing the Gospel, and we recognise that it has not been easy. They were human beings with their imperfections, and in each context they failed in some areas. But we highlight their efforts, which allowed that we could all know the Lord Jesus, and for that we are very grateful. Furthermore, in our culture we highlight their efforts to maintain our languages (especially in written form) and to defend our rights regarding the land. Today, we and Māori are challenged to consider the past and to define what our faith will look like in our contexts today.

The various presentations about mission history, languages and practises of colonisation, and the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the legal system, enriched the theological and cultural understanding of participants. Rarely do you hear a Supreme Court judge, such as Justice Sir Joe Williams, encourage the Church to work for such justice; at least in our contexts, that does not happen. Bishop Te Kitohi’s presentation on Christian-Māori identity in the 21st century offered valuable insight into the evolution of the faith in the contemporary Māori context, highlighting the vitality and continued relevance of Christianity in the Māori community.

This symposium not only expanded our knowledge of New Zealand history and culture, but also provided a platform to reflect on the complex intersection between colonialism, the Māori world, and Christianity. The diversity of perspectives and depth of discussions have left a lasting impression on our global understanding, and our continued commitment to cross-cultural understanding.

Conclusion

1. The connection with Māori culture

We were able to appreciate both the similarities and differences of the cultures of Mapuche people in Chile, and Enxet of the Paraguayan Chaco, with other indigenous cultures. Although each culture has its own unique traditions and historical contexts, we found points of connection that allowed us to better understand the diversity and richness of indigenous experiences around the world.

All of these peoples have a deep connection with the land; nature is sacred and is traditionally represented through gods and living beings. These peoples have also maintained a strong emphasis on the importance of preserving their cultural identity and ancestral traditions. They also share a history of resistance and struggle for recognition of their rights, including respect for their territory and the protection of their natural resources.

Furthermore, both the Māori culture and the Mapuche and Enxet cultures value the oral transmission of knowledge and the importance of the community and family in the preservation of their cultural heritage. Both peoples have also actively sought to recover and revitalise their languages and cultural practices, which have been threatened by colonisation and globalisation.

By exploring these connections between Māori culture and Mapuche and Enxet cultures, we were able to deepen our understanding of the diversity of indigenous experiences around the world and strengthen our commitment to the preservation and respect of these ancient cultures.

2. Spirituality and history

Māori experiences of colonisation were in some ways unique but in other ways like other colonised peoples. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and Māori leaders. However, interpretations and perceptions of the treaty differed between Māori and European settlers, and these differences continue to have implications for contemporary New Zealand society.

For Māori, the Treaty of Waitangi represents an agreement between two sovereign parties that establishes a relationship of equality and guarantees the protection of their rights and lands. They consider that the treaty gives them rights over their natural resources, and recognises them as the original inhabitants of New Zealand. On the other hand, European colonisers, for the most part, interpreted the Treaty of Waitangi as a tool to ensure British sovereignty over New Zealand, and to establish a legal framework that would allow them to acquire land and resources. Many of them did not fully recognise Māori rights to land and natural resources, leading to subsequent conflicts and tensions. The Treaty of Waitangi has

been the subject of debate and controversy in Aotearoa New Zealand politics and society. In recent decades, there has been greater recognition of the importance of the treaty, and an effort by government and society to address historical injustices and work towards reconciliation and greater equity for Māori.

Exploring the north of Aotearoa New Zealand gave us the opportunity to learn about the spirituality and history of the region. We visited historical sites such as Marsden Cross, where we were able to learn about the first encounters between European settlers and the Māori, as well as the introduction of Christianity to the country. These experiences led us to reflect on the complexity of Aotearoa New Zealand's history, and the interaction between different cultures and spiritual beliefs. They left us with a greater understanding of the forces that have shaped the country to this day.

3. Learning at the Symposium

The symposium provided a space for intercultural dialogue between representatives of the Anglican Church and Māori leaders. It also promoted greater recognition of the shared history between the Anglican Church and Māori, including moments of collaboration and conflict. We recognise within this experience, once again, the importance of contextualising the Gospel message within the Māori cultural and spiritual context, and indeed in any other culture.

In summary, the Wānanga Symposium on Christianity and Culture provided an important platform for reflection, dialogue, and engagement between the Christian faith and Māori culture in New Zealand, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding, reconciliation, and social justice.

This visit has been a transformative experience that has expanded our intercultural understanding and strengthened our commitment to diversity in the Church. It has also enriched our perspective and strengthened our commitment to cross-cultural understanding and Christian service.

We recognize the divine providence that has brought us safely to our destination. Every experience, every encounter, and every lesson learned are testimonies of God's faithfulness and care. It has been a gift from God. May this experience serve as a constant reminder of the abundant grace that surrounds us and the infinite love of our heavenly Father. We give thanks for the journey, for the meaningful connections, and for the spiritual growth that has come through this journey. To God be the glory in everything!

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6 (NIV).

Thanks

In this moment of reflection and gratitude, we wish to express our deep gratitude to God, our Saviour and Redeemer, for having guided and protected us during our journey from Araucanía, Chile, and the Chaco of Paraguay, to Waitangi, Aotearoa New Zealand. The experience has been enriching and full of blessings, and we recognise the loving hand of God every step of the way.

We want to thank the CMS of New Zealand and of Great Britain for the opportunity to participate in this exchange trip, and also “Indigenous Mission” and the Dioceses of Araucanía and Paraguay for their support.

We also want to give a special thank you to all the people who offered their time and their great hospitality to welcome us to Aotearoa New Zealand and share their stories with us. We are deeply grateful.

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Elvio Cabañas Rojas is Enxet and from the Chaco region of Paraguay. He is currently a Pastor in the Anglican Church of Paraguay as well as serving in the Ministry of Education in the supervision of education in Indigenous Communities. Elvio accompanies community leaders in their work in community development and is a member of the Coordinating Community of the inter-provincial Indigenous Mission team.



Walking on Together: Reflections from NZCMS Today

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Abstract

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) has a long history in Aotearoa New Zealand. The first missionaries to arrive on these shores were sent from England by the CMS. The New Zealand Church Missionary Society (NZCMS) was subsequently established in 1892 with the purpose of sending missionaries globally from New Zealand. Five years ago, NZCMS returned to its roots of ministry amongst Māori through supporting Māori evangelists, whilst continuing to send missionaries globally. NZCMS now partners with two Māori dioceses, supporting evangelists to share the Gospel of Jesus in Māori contexts. In this article, NZCMS National Director Rev'd Rosie Fyfe reflects on her role in the light of the history of Christianity in this land. She describes how she draws motivation and inspiration from those who have gone before, and reflects on the challenging and difficult aspects of this history which hinder ministry now. In the article that follows Rosie's, Rev'd Keri-Ann Hokianga, Māori Evangelist with NZCMS, reflects similarly on her role.

Introduction

Like many who have lived overseas for an extended period, coming back to Aotearoa New Zealand and re-discovering my identity here took some time. I had spent five years immersed in the Arab world as an NZCMS Mission Partner serving under the Anglican Church in Egypt, and then three years studying theology in the USA. During this time of transition back to Aotearoa New Zealand, I started a new role as National Director of NZCMS. As I stepped into this role, I was mindful of stepping into the whakapapa of an organisation with a long and significant history in New Zealand. Like many in the church, I have been on a steep learning curve concerning the history of Christianity in this land. This article is a reflection

on aspects of CMS history written from my perspective of leading NZCMS in the present day.

Walking on Together

As a young nation, we wrestle with questions of identity and how our past shapes how we live now. When we come to these questions as Christians, we bring an additional lens: we know that our human stories are caught up with a bigger God story, and we are called to see the world through a theocentric lens.

One theological stance that institutions like NZCMS can take in relation to our history is a posture of repentance. The history of the church in New Zealand is inextricably linked to the history of colonisation. The arrival of the missionaries was followed by the corporate colonialism of the New Zealand Company, the establishment of colonial government, and the subsequent pressure on land driven by the flood of settlers arriving. For the most part, the CMS missionaries sought to counteract the worst aspects of colonisation, but CMS and the church has, at times, also been complicit in the agenda of colonialism, including injustices related to land.

In the Anglican tradition, we kneel and repent of the “wrong we have done and the good we have not done.”¹ One example of this posture of repentance lived out is the formal apology made by the Anglican Church, and involving NZCMS, to Tauranga Moana iwi in 2018. The Church apologised for the actions of the nineteenth-century CMS missionaries who yielded to pressure from the Crown and sold to it the Te Papa block, a large piece of land that was originally given to CMS in trust for the benefit of tangata whenua.² I attended the subsequent hui, and witnessed the deep significance of such acts of repentance and the clear link between past and present.

Another theological stance that we can take as we look to history, and to our role now, is knowing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is genuinely good news for all people today. This conviction, and the impetus to share the good news of Jesus with others, is at the heart of the Church Missionary Society. CMS was founded in 1799 in England to share the “treasures of the Gospel more valuable than silver and gold...the offerings of spiritual peace and Christian freedom.”³ The wider context of its formation was the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival, where people “rediscovered the Gospel as a power in their own lives.”⁴

While the emphasis of this revival was on a personal, saving relationship with Jesus, this was not an overly pietistic or individualistic faith. Humanitarian work and spiritual ministry were both viewed as central to being a Christian, and thus it was no coincidence that the same group of people who formed CMS were also involved in the ending of slavery in

¹ The Anglican Church of New Zealand, Aotearoa, and Polynesia. *A New Zealand Prayer Book: He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, 2020.

² “The Apology to Tauranga Moana Hapu,” 7 November 2018, in *Anglican Taonga*.
<https://www.anglicantaonga.org.nz/features/extra/moana>

³ Account of a Society for Missions to Africa and the East Instituted by Members of the Established Church (1799), quoted in “Setting the Scene: The Creation and Inspiration of the Church Missionary Society,” Roshan Allpress, *Our Story Aotearoa: The Story of Mission in Aotearoa through the lens of the New Zealand Church Missionary Society* (Christchurch: NZCMS, 2014). [printed]

⁴ *The Church Missionary Society: A Manual Outlining Its History, Organization and Commitments* (London: Highway Press, 1961), 2.

England.⁵ I am inspired by those who have gone before, and their passion and sacrifice for the Gospel. Their emphasis on both evangelism and bringing transformation in the world is a conviction that NZCMS continues to seek to live out: both proclaiming and embodying God's love in practical ways.

Indigenous mission is a key focus in the discourses on, and practice of, missiology in the 21st century. In some respects, the missiology expressed by CMS two hundred years ago was remarkably forward-thinking. Henry Venn, honorary secretary of CMS from 1840 to 1873, was the most influential figure in CMS mission strategy in the nineteenth century. He emphasised the goals of developing indigenous leadership of churches and the eventual withdrawal of foreign missionaries.⁶ Venn famously promoted the “three-self” model for these indigenous churches: that they would be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating (that is, sharing the Gospel amongst their own people). In the New Zealand mission, this expressed missiology was slow to be enacted in terms of ordained Māori, although many lay teachers were released into the mission field. The arrival of increasing numbers of settlers, and the establishment of churches focused on their needs, also diverted mission energy away from the Māori church.

An inspiring aspect of New Zealand's mission history was the mass movement of Māori who accepted the Gospel and were baptised. While there was little fruit in the early years of the CMS mission, the 1830s and 1840s saw many Māori baptised. By the end of the 1840s it is estimated that a significant majority of Māori were taking part in weekly Christian worship.⁷ One reason for the explosive growth in this period was the printing of the New Testament in te reo Māori, which was completed in 1837 by CMS missionary William Colenso. A number of missionaries worked on the translation, including William Williams, the brother of Henry Williams. Another cause of this growth was the work of Māori evangelists who took the Gospel to their own people. CMS missionary Richard Taylor noted that “the Gospel could not have made the progress it did, or have obtained such a permanent hold upon the native mind, had it not been for the agency of the native teachers.”⁸

The ways that the Gospel spread in New Zealand can be compared with what is described in current missiology as a Disciple Making Movement. These movements, also known as Church Planting Movements, are “a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”⁹ The common characteristics of these movements are that they are fast-growing, led by people from the local culture, and focus on discipling followers of Jesus who will evangelise and disciple

⁵ *The Church Missionary Society: A Manual Outlining Its History, Organization and Commitments* (London: Highway Press, 1961), 2. This history of CMS notes that it was both the same impulse, and “to a remarkable extent the same men”, that helped create other societies. At the heart of this movement in the London area was a group of influential laymen, neighbours in the parish of Henry Venn, Rector of Clapham, who frequently met to discuss wrongs like the slave traffic for which they felt a responsibility as men of their time.

⁶ C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Mission Strategy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), cited in Hirini Kaa, *The Hāhi Mihinare: The Māori Anglican Church* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020).

⁷ Malcolm Falloon, “The Māori Conversion and Four Early Converts,” (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2020).

⁸ Richard Taylor, *The Past and Present of New Zealand; With its Prospects for the Future* (London: Macintosh, 1868).

⁹ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 21.

others. When a cross-cultural missionary is involved, they are only ever a catalyst. The movement is led by local people, and this means that the indigenous churches planted are contextualised within their culture. A current NZCMS Mission Partner is part of one such movement overseas that has recently seen its third generation of disciples (that is, someone she baptised then baptised another woman, who shared the Gospel with, and baptised, a third woman). This movement has similarities to the way Māori responded to the Gospel in the nineteenth century: in the way these women are sharing the Gospel with each other, the catalytic role of outside missionaries, and the growth of this movement.

While NZCMS' current initiative of supporting Māori evangelists only recently commenced, it was proposed much earlier by Bishop Manuhuia Bennett, the Anglican Bishop of Aotearoa from 1968 to 1981. He encouraged NZCMS to return its roots in New Zealand of supporting ministry amongst Māori, writing to NZCMS in November 1978: "our basic need is for two or three full-time evangelists, who will both help with evangelisation amongst the Māori people, and to also help organise and run a department of evangelisation."¹⁰ He noted: "it is in my opinion that CMS pulled out of Māori work too early. The work was taken over by a Church geared to the needs of the settlers...the Church as it developed became a colonial church."¹¹ One reason Bishop Bennett approached NZCMS was the organisation's emphasis on proclamation of the Gospel. He also wrote at this time: "what I want from CMS is a bit of evangelical ginger."¹² While the NZCMS leadership responded positively to this request, no further action was taken. However, his vision came to pass fifty years later: NZCMS currently partners with two Māori dioceses supporting Māori evangelists.¹³

As we look back on our history, there must be areas of continuity and discontinuity: aspects that we commit to continuing, and others that we leave behind. One of the latter is the focus of the first wave of CMS missionaries, who saw themselves as being on a "civilising mission." In the early years of the New Zealand mission, the evangelical zeal to share Christian faith was closely tied to a desire to bring "civilisation" to Māori. Samuel Marsden, who established the CMS mission in New Zealand, understood the role of missionaries as introducing both "the Gospel and the arts of civilisation."¹⁴ Marsden declared to the CMS in England that "although the New Zealanders [were] very superior people in part of mental endowments," they were not yet ready to hear the Gospel.¹⁵ He believed that first the "arts of civilisation" needed to be planted before the Gospel could take root.¹⁶ This approach, however, was not universally agreed on at the time: CMS missionary and school teacher William Carlisle argued that "nothing will effectively change their hearts and...outward

¹⁰ Letter from Bishop Manuhuia Bennett to Rev Brian Carrell (NZCMS General Secretary) 10 November 1978 (NZCMS Records held in the NZCMS office in Christchurch)

¹¹ Letter from Bishop Manuhuia Bennett.

¹² Letter from Bishop Manuhuia Bennett.

¹³ Note that in the first decades after it was established in 1892, NZCMS provided some support for Māori clergy and sent a number Pākehā missionaries to serve in Māori communities. Kenneth Gregory, *Stretching out Continually: A History of the New Zealand Church Missionary Society 1892-1972* (Nelson: RW Stiles and Co, 1972).

¹⁴ Allan K. Davidson and New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand* (Wellington: Education for Ministry, 2004), 14.

¹⁵ Davidson and New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, 20.

¹⁶ T. E Yates, *The Conversion of the Māori: Years of Religious and Social Change, 1814-1842* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 20.

conduct but the spirit of God.”¹⁷ When Henry Williams arrived in 1823 to lead the CMS mission, he changed this “civilise first” policy, and placed the focus instead on preaching, teaching, and translating Scripture.¹⁸

Another troubling aspect of New Zealand’s mission history is the large movement of Māori away from the Church after the promises of Te Tiriti o Waitangi were broken. CMS missionaries were instrumental in the creation and signing of Te Tiriti: many Māori chiefs signed Te Tiriti because they trusted the good intentions of the missionaries.¹⁹ This meant, however, that the credibility of the missionaries became associated with Te Tiriti, and thus when it was violated, both the missionaries and Māori felt deeply betrayed.²⁰ The early missionaries’ work was severely harmed as a result of the violations of Te Tiriti. The situation worsened as the government continued to invade territories and confiscate land, especially from the 1860s onwards. As the settler church grew, Māori leaders and Māori language became increasingly marginalised within the Anglican Church. In response, many Māori joined new religious movements, or completely rejected Christianity altogether.

An honest assessment of the history of Christianity in Aotearoa includes aspects both deeply sobering and deeply joyful. As the Church today we inherit this spiritual whakapapa, and in response we can learn and rejoice, and acknowledge and repent. However, we cannot stay trapped in the past. We are called to walk on – to live as the Church now and live out *missio Dei* (God’s mission) in the here and now. As we walk on, we are called to live out mutuality. Mutuality in mission is a key theme in current missiology: we no longer live in a context of one-way missionary sending; rather, mission is from everywhere to everywhere. Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi gives a model for this mutuality in mission. Paul writes of his partnership (*koinonia*) in the Gospel with this church. He describes this *koinonia* as a friendship, rooted in the Holy Spirit with a shared purpose of mission. It is a friendship where there is a mutuality of both parties giving and receiving, and a deep sharing in both joy and suffering.²¹ As the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand today, we are called to live out God’s mission in a way that honours each other and embodies our *koinonia* in the Gospel. In this spirit, we can pray together:

God forgives us.

God sustains us.

We are being transformed by love

Peace and grace are here

We walk on.

We walk on together to more truth, more justice, more love.²²

¹⁷ Carlisle to Pratt, 10 January 1820, CMS C N/O 27, cited in Yates, *The Conversion of the Māori*, 21.

¹⁸ Keith Newman, *Bible & Treaty: Missionaries among the Māori; a New Perspective* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2010), 69.

¹⁹ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2011), 90.

²⁰ Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, 96. William Willams wrote that Māori “will be told that the Treaty was a form of words without meaning, and they will naturally think that the missionaries have deceived them for some sinister purpose.”

²¹ John Sherlock, “Mutuality in Mission and Paul’s Koinonia,” *MTheol*. Thesis Laidlaw College, 2022.

²² Ngatiawa River Monastery, *He Taro Mā Tatou: Daily Prayer*. Reikorangi New Zealand, 2017. [printed]

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An Interview with Reverend Keri-Ann Hokianga

Keri-Ann Hokianga

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Abstract

Rev'd Keri-Ann Hokianga is a Māori Evangelist with NZCMS, a position which carries a clear whakapapa. Her role of Evangelist necessarily involves navigating the history of Christianity in Aotearoa, a process that is not always straightforward. Here, in an interview with Jannah Dennison, Keri-Ann reflects on the ways in which she draws motivation and inspiration from Māori evangelists in the past; the ways in which aspects of the history of Christianity in this land hinder her ministry, and how to speak about this; and the ongoing need for evangelism amongst Māori.

Interview

How are you inspired by Māori evangelists in the past?

It is part of Māori culture to be informed by the past, and to remember those who have gone before us. In terms of evangelism by Māori, for Māori, I am blessed to know that there was this wrestling with the gospel by my ancestors who were taught the Word of God in te reo Māori. They knew for themselves and for their iwi, hapū – for their people – that the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, was transformative in many good ways.

This was tested and tried by Māori in the past. That is what inspires me: that we are people of challenge. We are people who will think not only of ourselves, but also those to come. When I think about the past, I am so encouraged that some of my ancestors thought of me as they took on this faith of Christianity, implemented it in their own ways, and allowed it to live and grow until I was formed today.

And here I am, in 2024, being the bearer of the same good news that my ancestors in the past took on. So that is really inspiring – that I come from a people who made decisions for themselves because I do the same. It is actually quite beautiful.

I am also inspired to know that partnership between some of those CMS missionaries, alongside my ancestors, allowed for there to be a flourishing of Māori in our faith as Christians, a faith which brought about healing, peace, and reconciliation. That is quite powerful for me to know: that God's intent was for Māori and Pākehā to walk together. God's Word brings Shalom (peace) and beauty in and between them. I am not reinventing the wheel. I am just living into something that has come before me.

Unpack your phrase “wrestling with the gospel”, in a Māori context, for us.

When I use the word “wrestle”, I mean that some of my Māori ancestors would not have lain down easy and accepted from the get-go what the missionaries were saying. They would have taken time to allow the Word of God to seep into their hearts, to test it: “is this for us?” I always think of the marae setting. When I step onto a marae, there is a process that takes place in order for there to be an openness from Māori to receive new people into our sacred meeting place, where you have our tamariki – our children, and our kuia kaumatua – our old people. You have our history, our stories in the form of carvings. You have our livelihood there; it is where our communities live and breathe.

So of course, we are not going to allow any person to waltz on in and help themselves. Instead, there is this testing and wrestling, so to speak, in the pōwhiri setting. I love thinking of a pōwhiri setting when it comes to thinking about the past, and about Māori ancestors who would have received the word of God, and how they would have allowed that to slowly be part of their world as they knew it.

Describe some of your feelings around early CMS missionaries and their posture towards Māori.

When I think about my feelings towards CMS missionaries and their posture towards Māori culture, there are a few examples that come to mind for me. Good and bad. We have to be honest. I remember one story, of the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who had come to bring the gospel to the shores of Oihi Bay. He had preached, and we know that there was a spontaneous response from Māori in the form of a haka. But I have also been told that he went from that space of preaching to Māori, and went back on board his ship, and he had Holy Communion on his own. And I thought, oh, I wonder why he withheld that from Māori. That's a tangible symbol of receiving the body and blood of Christ, and an opportunity to share that beautiful message of Christ's sacrifice for all people. So there is a posture that I am still puzzled with. I wonder. I have question marks around that.

History tells us that there were so many years of no fruit, so to speak; years of Māori not converting to Christianity. And I think, well, perhaps if they had stopped long enough to look and learn about the culture, and about how we move as communal people... We do not hold back anything for ourselves – we give the gift, and we share, and perhaps that may have made a difference in the beginning of mission work.

I do also think of William Williams, who helped to translate the Word of God into te reo Māori, and how many Māori ancestors were able to grasp the message of the gospel a lot sooner because of that. That is quite a beautiful picture of the missionaries' posture that helped the Māori people to latch on to the Word of God, and the person of Christ.

We are very blessed to know that someone like William Williams had the patience to learn our language, and to learn our tikanga (customs), in order for my people to receive the gospel in the way that they did, and to see the flourishing of Māori and Christianity – because of the posture that he held.

Tell us about aspects of the history of Christianity in Aotearoa that hinder your ministry. How do you respond?

There are things in the history of Christianity in this land that do hinder my ministry. I think one elephant in the room for me, as I am ordained in the Māori Anglican Church, is the issue of land being confiscated – taken not only by the Crown but by the Church. This has been one of the barriers that hinder my ministry.

I have been able to speak into those spaces by being under the leadership of Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu, here in Te Tai Tokerau, where we have taken accountability for the wrongs of the Church. There are interviews where Bishop Kito has said, yes, the Church must be accountable too for its wrongs to Māori.

What allows me to have hope, and to share that hope with Māori that I am called to minister to, is the fact that here in Te Tai Tokerau, where the Māori Church is concerned, we have given back the land in some areas that our churches are built on. One place that I can name in the far north is Peria. The Māori Anglican Church has worked alongside the local iwi in Peria to give back the land that rightfully belongs to them. This re-gifting has resulted in beautiful healing and blessing, and the people of Peria have decided to keep the church there. They worship there regularly. So that is what the gospel has looked like in Te Tai Tokerau, and that is how we have managed to speak into those things that hinder our ministry in parts of Aotearoa.

When I think about sitting in that space of tension, what is big for me is whanaungatanga (relationships). There are moments where I need to use discernment and wisdom as to whether or not to walk in with my collar. Most times I have walked into spaces with my collar, and often they are spaces where the gospel is contested. Those are the times where I learn the most, and where I grow the most, because it is so uncomfortable.

However, I welcome conversation around these really tough, tough things, where we talk about reasons why Māori might not see the gospel as good news.

I must say it is God's grace, as it was in the past too, that helps me to speak with our people in 2024, to retell the narrative of who Christ is. But also, it is important not to sweep under the carpet those things that we have to speak about, like the loss of land and the Church's part in it; colonisation; and the gospel – those are very real kaupapa (topics) for us to speak into.

What do you find most helpful in these spaces of tension?

I very carefully sit with Māori who want to speak about colonisation and the gospel, to try to encourage them, and I seek to retell the narrative of the gospel. The actions of the colonisers were never God's intention for our people. So weaving conversation carefully and with sensitivity is important.

When I can sit there and build whanaungatanga – working on relationship-building – a trust grows. That leads to an openness to hear a different perspective. It is not so much about forcing my ideas, my way of looking at things, on to anybody; but it is to say, “hey, I don't know if you are aware of these stories where Māori are concerned, where we have ancestors in our own whakapapa who knew that Christianity, the same gospel power I believe in in 2024, was good for our people? These are the results of our ancestors making decisions to say ‘we’re going to lay down the old, and take up this new faith.’”

Traditional forms of utu and revenge in the Māori world shifted under Christianity. There are many examples where Christianity has helped us, because our ancestors had taken up the decision to follow Christ, and this brought about reconciliation between two rival iwi (tribes). One of those stories I love to share is Tarore, the 12-year-old who wore a copy of Te Rongopai a Ruka (The Gospel of Luke) around her neck. Her murderer Uita ended up coming to faith in Christ and learning about reconciliation. Uita went to face the music with Tarore's father, Ngākuku, expecting to die – because that was the way of the Māori world once upon a time, pre-Christianity. To Uita's surprise, Ngākuku was transformed by the power of the gospel, and he hugged his daughter's murderer instead of killing him. Just retelling these stories, true stories for Māori to consider, helps us sit in those spaces where there is tension around Christianity.

As you look forward in your role, what would you love to see?

I believe that in my going out as a Māori evangelist, there is still so much work to be done. As Christians, we have so much work to do in Aotearoa, and we have a responsibility, because we know how God's Spirit has moved upon this land in past times. There has been a suffocating of God's Spirit moving in this nation, for many different reasons. I get to sit in spaces with people to hear some of those reasons, and to unpack those feelings, those barriers that people may have toward the gospel now – to give them a narrative of hope.

But there are so many areas where I think Christianity or Christians need to be in order to bring about reconciliation, to bring about peace in Aotearoa. Why do I say that? Well, how many Māori evangelists are there in 2024? Once upon a time in this nation, there were many. If you look in the New Zealand prayer book on pages 154 to 156, there is a poi (song) composed by the late King Ihaka. It gives us the whakapapa and the names of those Māori ancestors who became evangelists and who spread the gospel from the top of the North Island right throughout this country.

So I long to see a raising up of more Māori evangelists. I long to see it, because we are a diverse nation now. We are no longer just Māori and Pakeha.

I would love to see the body of Christ working together, rolling our sleeves up, going into these places where the gospel is not good news, and showing through our lifestyle, the way in which we walk side by side with others, the love of Christ and the power of the gospel in Aotearoa.

Rev'd Keri-Ann Hokianga is a Māori evangelist within the Mihingare (Anglican) Church in South Auckland, in a joint partnership between NZCMS and the Te Pīhopatanga o Te Tai Tokerau. Her evangelistic focus is particularly on reaching Māori and those outside of the Church. Keri-Ann is interviewed here by Jannah Dennison, a freelance writer and editor based in Wellington.

Book Reviews



Book Review: Pacifying Missions: Christianity, Violence and Empire in the Nineteenth Century

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***Pacifying Missions: Christianity, Violence and Empire in the Nineteenth Century* ed. Geoffrey Troughton. Leiden: Brill, 2023. 209 pp. Studies in Christian Mission vol 58.**

The familiar concatenation of missions and empire has been studied as a general theme by a number of historians, but thematic studies as found in this volume are less common than global generalisations. The book arose from a colloquium which focused on African and Pacific examples, and there has been no attempt to force them into a specific framework in which other themes are suppressed. The book is a richly informative collection of case studies, which point in a variety of directions towards possible understandings of the attempts by missionaries to promote the theme of peace between indigenous peoples, and peace on colonial frontiers.

This diversity calls for commentary on each paper. Elizabeth Elbourne's study of the London Missionary Society and its work among the San people in southern Africa tells a compelling story of LMS endeavours to work among a people who were being systematically destroyed, and whose attempts to broker peace only showed how weak the tools of mission were.

Jane Samson analyses a rediscovered diary of a Māori catechist, Eruera Karaka Te Ngara who accompanied Bishop Patteson on a voyage to Melanesia in 1862. Samson explores the fascinating discrepancies in the Māori and the European account of the same journey, and in particular the ways in which Patteson accepted military support, and Ngara focused on the voice of Melanesian islanders, puncturing somewhat the mission's claim to be working for peace.

Norman Etherington explores a familiar story of the development of new forms of Māori Christianity during the land wars, which forced the compromised missionaries to evacuate from their stations.

David Maxwell's account of missionaries in central Africa touches on the work of the White Fathers and the Plymouth Brethren; he suggests that the narrative of peace as a theme of missions in the earlier part of the century was replaced in this era by a narrative of civilisation.

Esme Cleall reflects on the outlook of the LMS missionary John Mackenzie in Bechuanaland and his view that missionaries were partly the agents of empire, although he (Mackenzie) stands in contrast to Cecil Rhodes. Cleall notes how in Mackenzie's frequent references to peace, it usually was coupled with civilising words, such as stability, industry, prosperity and order. Cleall also notes the curious combination of humanitarianism and racial subordination.

The paper by Amy Stambuch on the CMS in Moshi-Kilimanjaro notes how an attempt by the CMS to create a mission station as a haven from slavery and exploitation faced a crisis when the missionaries were accused of inciting violence and German pressure led to their evacuation.

The final paper by Joanna Cruickshank and Bronwyn Shepherd analyses the ways in which colonial Australia failed to take any cognisance of Aboriginal traditional customs. Focusing on the cases of John Bulmer, an Anglican, and T.T. Webb, a Methodist, the authors argue that these Australian missions were significantly constrained by the presence of European governmental control. So, for example, Bulmer felt obliged to be a peacemaker, in the face of Aboriginal struggles to assert their customs against the exploitation of the settlers. The authors also note the influence on missions of evolutionary concepts which regarded aboriginal life as primitive and needing to progress; such concepts did little to help missionaries understand the deeper reasons for aboriginal violence.

These are very interesting papers, but they do not reflect a unified perspective on the nature of missionary advocacy of peace, and the editor in the introduction and conclusion can only point to limited areas of convergence. The studies do show that violence was a major disruption to missions, and that imperial violence frequently interfered with the work of the missions, but perhaps the volume needed to offer a theory to explain the very different experiences in different periods of the elusive search for peace. The editor's other work on the CMS and peace among the Māori in the early nineteenth century is set in a different political era, prior to large-scale imperial expansion and probably explains why earlier missionaries focused so much on peacemaking. The campaign of Richard Cobden and the International Peace Congress Movement (1840s-1850s) is not mentioned in this work, but surely this movement and its links with missions on the one hand and free trade on the other was critical in explaining the mid-century British focus on peace, in which the Aborigines Protection Society, Pacifists (and particularly Quakers) voiced concern at the consequences of imperialism.¹ The failure of this movement may have profoundly affected the vision of

¹ See David Nicholls, "Richard Cobden and the International Peace Congress Movement 1848-1853," *Journal of British Studies* 30, no. 4 (1991): 351-376; Alex Tyrell, "Making the Millennium: the mid-Nineteenth Century Peace Movement," *Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (1978): 75-95.

colonial missionaries, as Elizabeth Elbourne has argued in another context.² Perhaps the key theme is that missionary idealism and desires to bring peace were unable to restrain imperial violence once it was unleashed.

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² Elizabeth Elbourne, "Violence, Moral Imperialism and Colonial Borderlands, 1770s–1820s: Some Contradictions of Humanitarianism," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 17, no. 1 (2016).



Book Review: *The Forgotten Prophet: Tāmati te Ito and His Kaingārara Movement*

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Jeffrey Sissons, *The Forgotten Prophet: Tāmati te Ito and His Kaingārara Movement*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2023. 194 pp.

In this book, Jeffrey Sissons adds to his oeuvre of sensitive, interpretive histories – or historical ethnographies – of Māori prophetic leaders. An early, important example is his *Te Waimana, The Spring of Mana: Tuohe History and the Colonial Encounter* (Otago, 1991). The book also builds on his more recent interest in “the Polynesian Iconoclasm,” the destruction of previously sacred or tapu objects and places (including temples) in Eastern Polynesia beginning in Tahiti in 1815 (Sissons, 2011, 2014). It turns out that New Zealand has its own examples, as Christianised and baptised Māori rangatira (chiefs) and tohunga (priests/customary experts), usually of their own volition, burned or destroyed tapu objects in an effort to cleanse the land of old tapu and ward off colonial diseases and land loss. The book also builds on some earlier forays into this phenomenon occurring in Aotearoa (*Journal of the Polynesian Society* 2015, *Sites* 2016). Such iconoclastic activity was complex and multifaceted: a response to Christian beliefs, to external political and social pressures, and to sickness and death from European disease. All this makes a heady mix of factors to interpret and narrate with any clarity, but in Sissons we have an insightful anthropological imagination and an able narrator.

So why this particular book on a “forgotten prophet” named Tāmati Te Ito, of Taranaki lineage? The answer lies in a “ground-breaking” recent PhD thesis by Penelope Goode, in which she worked with a large collection of letters written mostly by Taranaki leaders in the dark and difficult period of the 1850s-60s (now held in the Turnbull Library, <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.9074>). The provenance of this collection is strange and colonial: they were passed on to Taranaki personality Arthur Atkinson after the destruction of Te Ito's pā in 1864 by colonial forces. This, at least, preserved them. It turns out many of these letters were written to Tamati Te Ito, while a few from Te Ito also survive. Even with these letters, Te Ito could remain a shadowy figure. Sissons, however, has pieced together a fulsome picture of this tohunga who became prophet.

If this complex narrative has a weakness, it is the lack of signposting or chapter summaries to open and close each chapter. And, sometimes, one feels Sissons is reaching to find Te Ito a little too eagerly amidst the haze of sketchy historical records. But these concerns do not detract from the work as a whole.

Sissons writes that Te Ito's role in the movement to resist colonial land encroachment in the wider Taranaki region in the 1850s-60s period especially, and his role as effective Christian priest or *tohunga* to the rangatira Wiremu Kīngi, has been either lost sight of, or not adequately realised, by previous histories. He argues, in fact, that the movement that Europeans called a "land league" – one which resisted land sales to Taranaki settlers – was in Māori reality a fundamentally spiritual campaign to maintain the spiritual and material integrity of the land as a source of sustenance for Māori hapū and communities.

This argument about spirituality undergirding political resistance is a convincing argument once we read the accounts of what Te Ito and followers did to burn old tapu objects in large fires throughout Taranaki. But the theological or religious import of such actions is hard to grasp without understanding how the pre-European tapu system worked. Sissons describes how Te Ito's learning as a *tohunga* was connected with old practices of expelling *ngārara* (lizards) that were thought to cause sickness. These *ngārara* were *atua* or spiritual beings ("gods") which assumed the form of lizards. *Tohunga* would cook and eat *ngārara* to break their tapu powers. *Atua* needed to be appeased, or states of tapu negotiated or managed through *karakia* and other ancient ceremonials. As Christian ideas of the sacred or holy became influential, *tohunga* such as Te Ito needed to reconfigure how they understood the sacred realm. Sissons argues that the concept of tapu as a sacred restriction imposed by a transcendent God or gods is a post-Christian idea. Thus, the Kaingārara movement drew on older, pre-Christian ideas, the name referencing "the movement's determination to combat a malevolent, uncontrolled multitude of *atua*, termed 'atua kikokiko', and their contagious, dangerous tapu." (81-82)

At the same time, these new, Christian *tohunga* also sought to replace these old, malevolent *atua kikokiko* or *ngārara*, with new tapu. Similar to phenomenon studied by Sissons in Polynesia, Māori built churches on old tapu sites in Taranaki. In some ceremonies, old tapu stones would be unearthed, and printed New Testaments buried in the ground instead. And then, in the most dramatic of scenes, old sacred stones, lizard *atua*, and other tapu objects would be destroyed in large fires. In the latter half of 1855, or early 1856, Te Ito and his *ope whanako* (tapu removers) "shattered the *taumata atua* (resting place) of the powerful Taranaki *atua Maru*" – that is, the *Maru* stone, brought on the Aotea canoe, was consumed by fire. (39) The old gods needed to be destroyed so that their vengeful acts in making people sick (including, ironically, from European diseases) would be cast down. By the late 1850s, the Kaingārara letters reveal the existence of Kaingārara-affiliated settlements dotted all over north and south Taranaki. (map, 47) European missionaries had mixed views on these tapu-breaking practices. The German CMS missionary, Johann Riemenschneider, was critical and saw Te Ito's activities as themselves devilish. The Wesleyan missionary, Rev'd John Whitely, showed more understanding. He saw the Kaingārara ceremonial as proof that Māori had abandoned their old gods, although he thought it "superstitious" that they considered these gods still alive and malevolent. This is perhaps evidence of the

Enlightenment rationalism of western missionaries; did they fail to draw parallels with the burning of books associated with magic arts in the New Testament? (Acts 19:18-19)

The Kaingārara movement, as Sissons is also concerned to demonstrate, was not simply a spiritual movement. Rather, the spiritual undergirded the material, political struggle. This struggle was about resisting land loss and forging a new pan-tribal identity across Taranaki. Te Ito was connected to many of the rising leaders of his generation, including Te Ua Haumene of Pai Mārire (who later distanced himself from Te Ito's fires), Te Whiti (foremost founder of Parihaka), and Wiremu Kīngi Te Rangitāke. Kīngi of course became embroiled in the debates over land sale with the colonial government and internally amongst Taranaki hapū. Te Ito was related to Ngāti Ruanui to the south of the maunga (mountain) and the Puketapu clan of Te Ātiawa to the north. He lived much of his time in the region just north of New Plymouth, and became closely associated with Kīngi, including in armed conflicts with other Māori over the mid-1850s sales, and then over the Waitara, once colonial troops invaded the block in 1860. Perhaps the most important contribution to the historiography of the New Zealand Wars, specifically the Taranaki wars, is Sisson's argument that southern Taranaki tribes so readily supported the cause of Wiremu Kīngi Te Rangitāke over Waitara because of Te Ito's close relationship with Kīngi, *and* because these southern iwi were themselves Kaingārara. (122-23) Te Ito, however, was not always supported by other contemporary movements, including Kīngitanga. Furthermore, his pā or kāinga at Mataitawa was destroyed by colonial troops in 1864. But the political struggle found new expression in the pan-tribal village of Parihaka, a concept already debated among Kaingārara affiliated people from the late 1850s. (73)

In terms of nineteenth century historiography in general, this book is a significant contribution to the literature on Māori prophetic movements. If we needed a further reminder, Sissons has underlined how the prophetic movements and leaders were intertwined with political opposition to colonial policy. He has effectively shown how the prophets cannot be understood without their missionary education in literacy and scriptural knowledge, which inspired new forms of cultural expression and protest against government policies. These were sad, dark days in Taranaki, as Sisson's pages reveal. The miracle is that prophets such as Te Ito maintained their hope, including through Parihaka community building – a community joined by Te Ito later in the 1860s. Te Ito was Taranaki's first prophet, argues Sissons, and we need to see how the prophets "formed a cluster" of leaders in the 1850s-80s period, rather than being leaders who claimed descent from each other, as Binney argued. (151) Ultimately, these are deep histories of spirituality in Aotearoa sourced in both te ao Māori and the Bible, which was not always interpreted according to the Protestant orthodoxies of its CMS translators. Truth may be stranger than it seems.

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Archives: A Dialogue with the Past

The Influence of Evangelical Theology on the Lifestyle of Wives of Early Missionaries to New Zealand, with Particular Reference to Marianne Williams (1793–1879)

St Hilda Prize – Winning Essay 1997

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Abstract

For the wives of the early missionaries travelling to New Zealand there was little preparation for what was to come. By English standards they could truly be labelled pioneers. The expectations and experiences of such women were shaped by a variety of things. This essay will explore the life of Marianne Williams in the years immediately following her arrival in New Zealand. It will offer some biographical details and will seek to identify ways in which her life and ministry were shaped by the theological and social understandings of the evangelical movement in Britain in the early nineteenth century.

When Marianne Williams descended into the hold of the *Lord Sidmouth*¹ five days into her journey she was to encounter for the first time the reality of her new world. The safe, comfortable, life she had known as the daughter of a prosperous Yorkshire man, who had been Mayor of Nottingham, was gone forever. Life could never be the same again. Battling

¹ The *Lord Sidmouth* set sail in August 1822. It was a convict ship carrying 177 convict women and 100 free women travelling to join their convict husbands.

her own sea sickness, she left her husband and three young children in their reasonably comfortable cabin and went to “comfort the prisoners.” Having accomplished this she visited the “free women” and the scene that greeted her was a horror that she could not have imagined.

Afterwards I staggered and stumbled into the place occupied by the free women. There the scene was ten times more distressing than in the prison. The numbers of children and the sick was far greater. The cockroaches were swarming in some of the berths where the poor women lay, too ill to notice them, and the water was so bad that those who were frantic with thirst could scarcely bear to taste it. Never have I regretted that I came but nothing short of our undertaking could support me ... I read to them some comforting passages from the Psalms.²

Marianne was born in 1793, the eldest of four daughters of Ann Temple and Wright Coldham. Her father, inspired by the mechanisation of the cotton industry, saw potential for lace making and set up a small factory in Nottingham. Rising through the ranks, he became Sheriff of Nottingham and later Mayor. The accompanying pomp and responsibility for such a role indicates that Marianne was raised in a household of privilege. At the age of sixteen, her mother died, and Marianne took on the responsibility of mistress of the house. This involved caring for her young sisters, overseeing the household management, and acting as hostess to the official functions.³ Marianne has been described as

a very accomplished young woman, her education was far above the average, she had a clear logical brain, an inexhaustible fund of humour, a very strong sense of the dramatic and could express it in writing and painting.⁴

On January 20, 1818, Marianne married Henry Williams, a naval officer who had seen active service, but now at the time of peace with America had taken retirement on half pay. At the time of their marriage Henry was contemplating a missionary career⁵ and in response to an article in the *Missionary Register*⁶ Henry volunteered to command a Church Missionary Society (CMS) ship going to New Zealand. The departure of this ship was delayed due to difficulties between existing missionaries and Māori, and the idea of abandoning the project altogether was seriously considered. The delay was to prove a useful one in terms of equipping for the new life ahead. Marianne learnt to cook, something that in her role as mistress of the house she had never before done. The household she ran had ample domestic staff for such tasks. She then undertook some training in midwifery and nursing. Such training was hardly the norm for daughters of the gentry and must have provoked some

² Journal of Marianne Williams, September 20, 1822, held in Library of the Auckland Institute and Museum, quoted in Sybil Woods, *Marianne Williams – A study of life in the Bay of Islands New Zealand 1823–1879* (Christchurch: PPP Printers, 1994), 20.

³ Sybil Woods, *Marianne Williams – A study of life in the Bay of Islands New Zealand 1823–1879* (Christchurch: PPP Printers, 1994), 11.

⁴ Woods, *Marianne Williams*, 14.

⁵ Henry's brother-in-law Rev'd Edward Garrard Marsh was a member of the Church Missionary Society and had interested him in the needs of New Zealand.

⁶ *The Missionary Register* was a magazine published monthly by CMS. It contained reports from all the overseas mission stations.

consternation in those around her. Later, Florence Nightingale's parents were to object to their daughter's desire for nursing training, citing "the danger and degradation of work that dealt with the most dangerous, unpleasant physical diseases and the lascivious desires of fellow workers of a low class."⁷

Aware that there would be no schooling for any children they might have, Marianne then studied the "Moravian methods of teaching and organisation." Henry meanwhile studied medicine and surgery and received instruction on boat building. Marianne and Henry were clearly doing everything they could to equip themselves for a life which would need to be self-sufficient. As well as addressing the practical needs of their new life they were also deeply concerned for spiritual needs. Henry received some theological training and was ordained deacon and priest in 1822 by the Bishop of London.

It is important to look briefly at the background to the mission that Henry and Marianne were entering, and to understand some of its difficulties. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) had been founded in England on April 12, 1799, by Anglican evangelicals. It was a voluntary society founded to "spread the Gospel on lines acceptable to the Church of England."⁸ The CMS though had no official status within the Church of England, but its vice presidents were William Wilberforce and Charles Grant, both leading public figures. The first resolution the CMS adopted was "That it is a duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen."⁹ The task of evangelising the "heathen" in nineteenth-century thinking also meant bringing "civilisation" to the non-Christian lands. The Mission to New Zealand then was approached this way, and the earliest missionaries were not priests, but skilled laymen chosen to share "the Arts of Civilised Life." They were encouraged to lay the foundations for the Word by modelling a "civilised life" and educating the Māori into new ways of life, thus moving them a step closer to becoming Christian. John Venn writing in 1804 said "Man cannot by education be made a real Christian: but by education, he may be freed from prejudices and delivered from the dominion of dispositions highly favourable to temptation and sin."¹⁰

John King, William Hall, and Thomas Kendall were chosen and with their wives Hannah King, Dinah Hall, and Jane Kendall, and their children, they arrived in New Zealand in December 1814 accompanied by Samuel Marsden and the Māori chief Ruatara. They brought with them cattle, domestic supplies, and tools of trade. A mission station was established at Rangihoua and it was hoped that the relationship with Ruatara would afford the missionaries some protection. For a variety of reasons, the mission to civilise the Māori and create a receptive environment for the proclamation of the gospel was a disaster. William Hall, writing to the CMS Secretary on August 22, 1816, declares, "I have used my utmost exertion since I came to New Zealand, in striving to establish an eligible settlement as means of supporting ourselves, but I find my designs all obstructed and have almost paid too dear for making the experiment."¹¹ There were attempts to revitalise the mission but by 1822 the

⁷ Nancy Boyd, *Three Victorian Women Who Changed their World* (Oxford: University Press, 1982), 173.

⁸ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 42.

⁹ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand* (Wellington: NZCMS, 1935), 5

¹⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 123.

¹¹ Allan Davidson and Peter Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity* (Palmerston North: Massey University, 1995), 28.

missionary efforts were suspended.¹² They were to be reorganised by Marsden later, and it was to this reorganised mission that Henry Williams came to offer strong leadership.

At his commissioning before leaving for New Zealand, Henry Williams made reference to Marianne and her part in the work of mission: “I beg to say that she does not accompany me merely as my wife, but as a fellow helper in the work.”¹³ This may well be so, but the records of that work are in official documents always recorded through the eyes of Henry. The relationship of the wives of missionaries with the sending society evolved during the nineteenth century but officially Marianne had no defined role other than of “helpmeet.” She fell into the category that Jocelyn Murray has called “the Invisible Women.”¹⁴ The Invisible Women were wives, sisters, or daughters of missionaries and as such were not recognised as being missionaries in their own right. The reality of their contribution to the work of mission is well hidden within the official reports and records of the mission societies. The women are often unnamed in these records and appear in such notations such as “wife survived him” alongside the record of a missionary’s death.¹⁵ Hidden among these records though is a glimpse into some of the suffering and deprivation that was the daily reality of many missionary women.

Marianne is an invisible figure whose life and contribution to the mission work has to be sifted through such official records. Careful reading of these texts reveals her physical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties, and the daily struggles of her life. One such example is found in a journal entry by Henry for December 20, 1827, which reads:

Concluded the building of an oven which was commenced on Monday morning by Mr Davis, my brother and myself. It called forth all our skill ingenuity and patience ... This is a valuable piece of furniture and as our family is now sixteen Europeans we shall find it of considerable relief to labour.¹⁶

The sheer effort involved in cooking for this number of people is enormous, even with today’s modern kitchen technology; so the relief for Marianne of having the luxury of a real oven can only be imagined. Bread formed the basis for their daily diet, and all cooking was done over an open fire away from the house. The Williams’ home was a two-roomed raupo hut nicknamed “the beehive” and there was a constant awareness of the fire risk for such a building. As protection against the rain Henry had erected a sail cloth shelter, but this offered little protection against the wind or the mud. In another entry Henry notes:

Sunday 13th January 1828. Mrs W called up in the middle of the night to attend to Mrs Davis who had been unwell all the evening. Mrs W was saluted with the cries of

¹² There were a number of complex issues involved in the decline of the mission, which included some volatile personality clashes, and the increasing tensions in Māori and European relationships.

¹³ Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, 18.

¹⁴ Jocelyn Murray, “Anglican and Protestant Missionary Societies in Great Britain: Their use of Women as Missionaries from the Late 18th to the late 19th Century.” *Exchange* 21, no.1 (April 1992): 1–28.

¹⁵ Murray, “Anglican and Protestant Missionary Societies, 5.

¹⁶ Lawrence M Rogers, ed., *The Early Journals of Henry Williams – 1826–1840* (Christchurch: Pegasus, 1961) 91.

an infant as soon as she entered the house. Our service did not commence till 9 o'clock and as Mrs W was much fatigued I was prevented from seeing Capn. Duke.¹⁷

The physical demands of baking bread, cooking for a large household, and caring for children would challenge even the most devoted wife, but add into that the intense isolation and loneliness of being thousands of miles from home in a foreign environment, and the stress was huge. What was it, then, that gave Marianne the strength to survive? What motivated her? Recording the day of her son Henry's birth, she writes:

I drank tea with the family, and with great difficulty washed my children and put them to bed and soon retired to my room. Henry summoned the family to prayers, before the close of which Mr Marsden arrived in the company of Captain Moore, in the boat of the latter. While Henry was getting tea for them, and giving grog to the oats crew, Mrs Fairburn was at the other end of the house putting her children to bed and attending her baby. I, left entirely to myself, did feel more justly my only aid to come from God, and did cling more closely to the only source of strength. As soon as the children had played themselves to sleep I made my preparations and went to bed. I gladly heard Captain Moore depart; and a short time afterwards, Mrs Fairburn arrived to my assistance just as the dear little one began to cry. I never felt so much joy before. Henry wrapped himself in his boat cloak to watch through the night. The children awoke and were shown the baby; it seemed like a dream.¹⁸

The awareness of her utter dependence on God in this situation, and in others, reflected the evangelical faith that she carried. Isolation, felt most keenly at the time of childbirth, is an experience common to the early missionary wives. Elizabeth Colenso, while seven months pregnant, travelled over 130 miles from Hawkes Bay to Tūranganui (Gisborne), in order to have the support of Jane Williams at the birth of her second child.¹⁹

Modern reflections on the evangelical movement have identified four distinct characteristics which were displayed in the work and witness of the evangelical Christians. These characteristics of conversionism, Biblicism, crucicentrism, and activism²⁰ form a "quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis for Evangelicalism."²¹ These priorities are apparent in the work of the CMS missionaries in New Zealand, and offer some explanation for the willingness to endure the difficulties and harsh realities of the life they chose. A fifth characteristic sometimes added to the list is the importance attached to the "outward and visible work of the Holy Ghost in the life of man."²²

The belief that conversion was vital to salvation undergirded the work of the evangelical missionaries. This stemmed from a belief that there needed to be a movement

¹⁷ Rogers, ed., *The Early Journals of Henry Williams*, 97.

¹⁸ Letter from Marianne Williams quoted in Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters – Women of the British Empire* (London: Pimlico, 1983) 37.

¹⁹ Having had a particularly difficult confinement with her first child, Elizabeth was desperate for the company of "her own white people." Miriam Macgregor, *Petticoat Pioneers – North Island Women of the Colonial Era. Book One* (Wellington: Reed, 1973), 41.

²⁰ A summary of these characteristics can be found in the preface to *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730–1860, Vol 2 K–Z*. Donald M Lewis, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), xix.

²¹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 3.

²² Elizabeth Jay, *Faith and Doubt in Victorian Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 13–15.

from estrangement from God into relationship. Each person needed to be brought into a personal awareness and conviction of their basic sinfulness before they could claim the salvation offered by the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Those who had had a conversion experience, and those who had not, were divided by the “sharpest line in the world”²³ – the one that separated the Christian and the Pagan. Evidence of this conversion, which was vital for true Christianity, was sought by the evangelicals. This was particularly so in the home as children were growing, and they were encouraged to seek their own faith. In a letter, Marianne records the reality of her son’s faith in the face of attack from the Māori chief Tohitapu, just months after the family’s arrival in New Zealand.²⁴

The dear children, sobbing and crying, fell on their knees, and repeated after me a prayer prompted by the scene ... Edward said, he liked to say, Jesus “thou our guardian be, Sweet it is to trust in thee.” He should like to say it for a month, and then ... he would pray the great God to make these poor creatures know him.

Such evidence of Edward’s developing faith clearly gladdened his mother’s heart in the midst of danger. The assurance that a conversion experience be a genuine one was vital, and was looked for constantly, in the work of mission. Recording the baptism of Christian Rangī, the first Māori to be “genuinely” baptised, Henry Williams reveals an almost intrusive level of interrogation to ascertain that the man was a “proper subject” for baptism.²⁵

The centrality of the Bible influenced the way the missionaries approached the task of converting the Māori to Christianity. Absolute supremacy was assigned to Holy Scripture, and it was strongly believed that through the reading of the Bible all things can be measured. The revelation of God in the Word was understood to be the only way to guide a Christian life. In order to make these Biblical truths available to everyone, priority was given to mastery of the Māori language by all the missionaries. With this knowledge of language could come the translation of the Bible into Māori. Alongside the translation work, there was a concentrated effort to achieve literacy skills among Māori. The women had a significant influence in this, the earliest schools being among the domestic staff of the missionary wives. Writing on 11 February 1824, Marianne states:

I am eager to begin my school. But female missionaries keep school in the succession of domestics they are always trying to teach. I have no time to learn the language otherwise than by conversing with my girls;²⁶

²³ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 5.

²⁴ Letter from Marianne Williams January 1824, recorded in *The Adventures of Pioneering Women in New Zealand* (Auckland: Bush Press, 1992) 15–19. Marianne describes in detail the attack which appears to have resulted from a misunderstanding over the chief having injured himself. He demands utu for the injury, but this was refused.

²⁵ This included questions on the nature of baptism and then, as the man was close to death, questions concerning the disposal of his body after his death. Allan Davidson and Peter Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, 41.

²⁶ Letter from Marianne Williams 11 February 1824, Alexander Turnbull Library, quoted by Allan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa* (Wellington: EFM, 1991) 75.

While education and Biblical literacy were seen as a way to conversion, the practical reality for the wives of missionaries was that there was limited time and energy available for much beyond the domestic sphere. The lessons were fitted around the daily tasks of cooking, cleaning, child-rearing, and training the young Māori girls in the “right” way to do things. Later in the same letter Marianne expresses these difficulties:

The missionary’s wife must for the sake of cleanliness and preservation from the multitude of fleas wash and dress her children ... and must superintend everything with regard to cooking. The best of them if she were not watched, strain the milk with the duster, wash the tea things with the knife cloth, or wipe the tables with the flannel for scouring the floor.²⁷

These comments about the energy expended on teaching the girls the domestic tasks, and particularly the correct way to do these tasks, reveal the degree to which Christianity was transplanted into New Zealand as part of a package. Alongside the Gospel message came a clear cultural message. In her thesis on the lives of missionary wives in pre-colonial New Zealand, S. J. Goldsbury highlights that “[w]ives of missionaries who came to New Zealand brought with them the values and attitudes of an insular, rural, English society,”²⁸ and in doing so they introduced domestic drudgery to a culture that had previously known none.²⁹

Central to the understanding of the scriptures was an awareness of the work of Christ on the cross in transforming humanity. Humanity was tainted by original sin but through Christ is justified by faith. The evangelical faith was crucicentric and this was reflected in the language of preaching and hymnody. By comparison to the suffering of Christ the suffering imposed by the missionary life seemed small in comparison. It was counted as a joy to suffer, and guilt frequently accompanied any expressions of difficulty.³⁰

The expression of faith in God following a conversion experience would show itself in a life transformed. It is this transformation which marks the fourth hallmark of an evangelical faith: activism. With the realisation of one’s own need for God comes the desire and urgency to bring others to that same knowledge. It is this motivation that led the evangelicals of the nineteenth century to an explosion of mission both at home and overseas, and led many into social activism. As well as on the mission fields of Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand, evangelicals were working for social reforms within British society. While the work of people like Lord Shaftsbury and William Wilberforce is well known, there were thousands of men and women who were joining mission societies and forming committees to organise schools and offer charitable assistance in the towns and cities. Hannah More, who with her sisters ran a number of schools, is quoted as saying “[a]ction is the life of virtue.”³¹ It would have been this desire to actively live out their faith which undergirded the faith and work of the CMS missionaries in New Zealand.

²⁷ Davidson and Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, 39.

²⁸ S. J. Goldsbury, *Behind the Picket Fence: The Lives of Missionary Wives in Pre-Colonial New Zealand* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1986), 4.

²⁹ Goldsbury, *Behind the Picket Fence*, 38.

³⁰ Davidson and Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, 39.

³¹ Hannah More, *An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World* (London, 1808), 322.

Whatever the motivation, it would appear that in her early days in New Zealand, the life of Marianne Williams was one of isolation and loneliness. In her reflections on the lives of the missionary wives in New Zealand Goldsbury makes the comment that

Missionary women were usually restricted to the fenced area of the mission station: they were confined mentally by their outlook on life, and physically by the amount of time spent on duties in the home ... As necessary duties took up all of her time, there was little opportunity for her to venture beyond the picket fences.³²

In the case of Marianne, the restrictions imposed were also theological ones. She was a product of her evangelical faith as well as her cultural heritage. The circumstances of her domestic life in New Zealand required that she questioned her past experience of domestic duties and instead “rolled up her sleeves” and got on with it. Practical realities meant that families needed to be fed. Families shared homes, and demarcation lines between gender roles were occasionally blurred. Although classified as invisible, and bound by the limitations of the picket fence, in many ways Marianne was freer than many women of her class. She had a measure of independence and leadership denied to the women at home. She ran the mission station when the men were away, often for weeks at a time. She efficiently managed her household and educated her own children as well as those of other missionary families. She was an educator and a gifted linguist, and established schools for the Māori children both within her household and beyond. Among the Māori of the north, she gained respect and social standing. She provided both an example for later missionary wives, and a support network for those who were to follow after her. Her self-giving came at a great personal cost but there seems to have been little word of complaint from her when later missionary families were called to share her home, or were housed in accommodation superior to her own raupo hut or mud cottage. By her example though, she was clearly an agent for social change, although some of the so-called improvements and civilising influences may well have been better left behind.

Marianne then, is an unsung hero. Her story echoes that of many missionary wives in new lands. In New Zealand, she appears to have set a standard which later wives were to follow. Her name rarely appears in the official documents, despite the fact that Samuel Marsden stresses the importance of the support of a wife for the husband in mission. A wife would, “if a prudent woman, prove the greatest comfort and protection to her husband, sweeten his trials and sustain his burdens.”³³ While the names of the men are recorded in official documents, the contribution of the women is frequently ignored. If, however, the women had not worked behind the scenes, freeing the men to travel for weeks, or even months, the mission stations could not have been sustained. Much outreach and cross-cultural contact occurred around the home base. As a support for Henry, Marianne provided the stable home life that Marsden thought so important. She raised a total of eleven children – six sons and five daughters – played host to numerous guests, was nurse, midwife, teacher, cook, and evangelist. She fulfilled these tasks, particularly in the early days, in isolation. She struggled to balance the restrictions imposed by nineteenth century class distinctions, domestic

³² Goldsbury, *Behind the Picket Fence*, 40.

³³ Jane Wordsworth, *Women of the North* (Auckland: Collins, 1981), 187.

standards, limited communications, and theology, with the need to shape for herself a life in a new world. The costs to her physically and emotionally can only be speculated upon, but there was one sustaining influence throughout her trials, and that was her evangelical faith in a God who was source of all and the reason for mission.

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