



*HopeProject*  
nz

200 Years of the Gospel in Aotearoa

# The New Zealand Story

— then & now —



BOOKLET #3 of 5

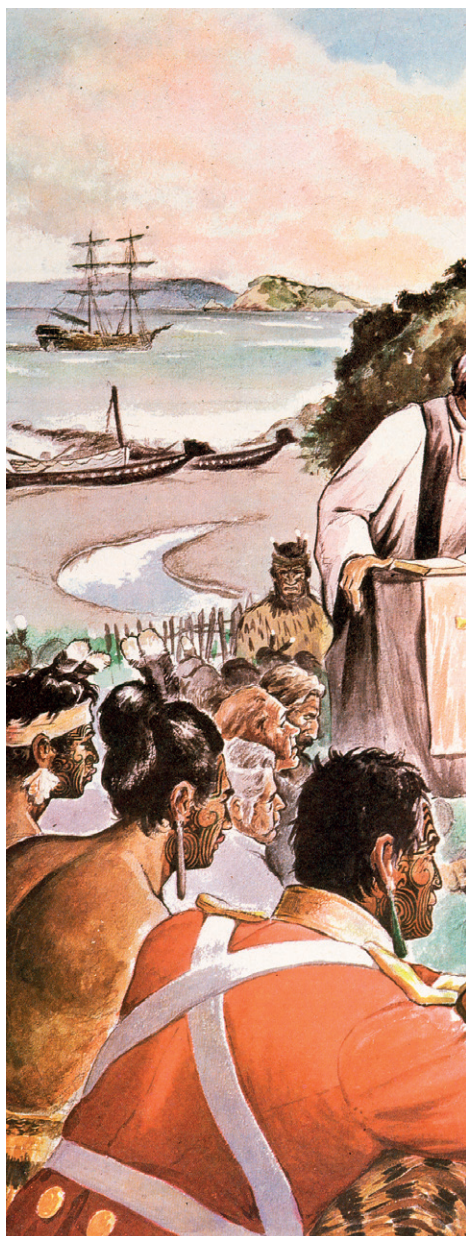
# PART ONE

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN NEW ZEALAND

### A MOST REMARKABLE EARLY NEW ZEALAND MISSIONARY VISION

One of the most admirable and unknown efforts made by our nation's early missionaries was the battle to protect New Zealand's native people from colonisation.

Many of our early missionaries came from the same evangelical (Christian) tradition in England as the great humanitarian leader William Wilberforce, who led the charge against slavery. After their success in stopping the slave trade in 1807, those standing with him looked for a new evangelical fight. Some turned to the protection of the rights of aboriginal ('native') peoples in colonised lands. This is the evangelical tradition that our own Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries came from. As a point of interest, Samuel Marsden was sent to lead the mission to New Zealand by William Wilberforce, who was also a member of the Church Missionary Society. Our early missionaries held radical views in their time, and achieved considerable influence — but sadly only for a time.







For example, when proposals were made in British Parliament in the 1830s to open up New Zealand for colonisation one writer (Duncan Roper) explained how the most vocal resistance to the proposal came specifically from the Church Missionary Society missionaries. The CMS missionaries petitioned parliament against the bill to colonise New Zealand, citing the “disastrous consequences to the Aborigines [natives]..” of all the nations that had been colonised thus far “...in their rights, in their persons, their property, and moral condition.” Such consequences “... uniformly followed European Colonisation in every country...”.

Christopher Lethbridge explains how a ‘Protection of Aborigines Bill’ was proposed in Parliament in 1836, which promoted new ideas such as “... Trusteeship for native peoples, their lands, customs and human rights...” — however it failed to pass. This response reflects accurately what the majority thought at that time about such ideas.

When the New Zealand Association (later named the NZ Company) published a prospectus in 1837 for the settlement of New Zealand, CMS launched a strong campaign against it in Britain. Mr Dandeson Coates of CMS wrote, “Only let New Zealand be spared from colonisation...” proposing a scenario that might enable, “...the complete preservation of the Aboriginal

[Maori] race, and of their national independence and sovereignty.” However, most

Europeans still had a 'colonising world view'. Just as the evangelical battle against the slave-trade had taken a generation, so this new battle would need time — but there wasn't time!

To consider the wider scenario, in the 1830s Aborigines in Australia were being literally slaughtered, and such violence continued there for another century. The New Zealand Company was already pre-selling land in New Zealand in the late 1830s, and had made significant land purchases before the Treaty was signed in 1840 because they already had land orders to fulfill. Settlers were coming and — unlike the early missionaries — they did not have a worldview that valued native cultures or greatly considered native rights. This made the missionaries highly motivated, because they knew what was coming! New Zealand was one of the last nations to be colonised by England. To the early missionaries, this was a chance to try to stop or limit the evil that had repeated itself many times already in the other colonised nations.

In 1839, the year before the Treaty, Lord Normanby, an evangelical Christian in parliament in England, gave Governor Hobson this mandate, knowing he was being sent to New Zealand to forge a treaty with the Maori people: "Several hundred persons have recently sailed from this country to occupy and cultivate these lands... Unless protected and restrained... they will repeat unchecked in that quarter of the globe, the same process of war and spoliation under which uncivilised tribes have almost invariably disappeared... To mitigate [soften] and, if possible to avert [avoid] these disasters... is the principal object of your mission."

The lines of battle have been explained this way: There were the Maori at the centre of the stage, with most of the missionaries standing close by. Then off to one side were the whalers, sealers and traders — here for a profit. Then on the other side there was the 'New Zealand Company' — whose express ambition was to make a hefty profit from the colonisation of New Zealand and all its lands. And then there was the newly formed colonial (New Zealand government) office, with the power to define and enforce what would, and would not, be considered legal.

With the battle lines drawn, the real question was who could swing the Colonial Office their own way. It was Evangelical Christians, including our early missionaries, who managed to swing it initially toward the protection of Maori rights. However, there simply wasn't yet the depth of support in British culture to sustain such an effort. To understand the scenario, by the time the Treaty was signed, ships of settlers were already on their way from England. The settlers were coming for a better life, and with the promise of land.

**In summary:** The missionaries and their counterparts in England (including also the Aboriginal Peoples' Society which started in 1837) could not gain sufficient government backing to sustain their quest to stop or ease the effects of militant colonisation. Their opponents purposefully undermined the reputations of those who were defending the Treaty in New Zealand (the early missionaries, such as Henry Williams), and they succeeded in their goal.

The efforts of the early CMS missionaries and their counterparts in England should be applauded. They were men and women with cultural views that were well ahead of their time. They are heroes, and these stories should be known.

### For more see...

#### DVD:

##### **Te Rongopai: 200 Years of the Gospel in New Zealand, 1814-2014**

A DVD documentary written and narrated by Dr Stuart Lange. Available from [nzchristiannetwork.org.nz/te-rongopai-dvd/](http://nzchristiannetwork.org.nz/te-rongopai-dvd/)

#### CHILDREN'S STORIES:

##### **The Chronicles of Paki — SERIES I & II**

This first series of five illustrated stories (for ages 8+) tells of the coming of the gospel to Aotearoa, and its early influence. The second series tells of its spread at the hands of both Maori and missionaries, and the significant implications of this. The third series will be about the Treaty of Waitangi. Available from [BigBookPublishing.co.nz](http://BigBookPublishing.co.nz)

#### BOOKS:

There are many, including 'Bible and Treaty' by Keith Newman, and 'The Years Before Waitangi' by Patricia Baldwin.

#### HERITAGE Q&A VIDEOS ONLINE:

At [HopeProject.co.nz](http://HopeProject.co.nz) click on 'Christian hope' and you will find the 'Heritage Q&A' series of concise video answers to some important questions about Christian faith in our roots as a nation.

*Acknowledgements: In writing these historical summaries, Dave Mann acknowledges the use of numerous historical sources, and the helpful suggestions on some aspects by historian Dr. Stuart Lange.*

## PART TWO

### THE EFFECTIVE 21ST FIRST CENTURY WITNESS

#### THE SIMPLE INVITATION THAT COULD CHANGE A PERSON'S LIFE

Did you know that in the 1950s about 80% of all children in New Zealand went to a Church Sunday School? While church attendance in New Zealand has never been particularly high (at it's highest 25% attended weekly), it has declined (currently about 15% attend monthly). In particular the connection that non-church people have with churches is more distant than ever.

A young schoolboy who recently caught a ride with a friend of mine, looked out the window and asked her, "What are all those buildings with the letter 't' on top?" Things have changed! We can no longer assume that the average New Zealander knows even the most basic of Christian stories. This needs addressing — but it will take all of us working together to accomplish.



## The simplest thing you can do to help:

Nothing is easier than extending an invitation to a friend to come to a Christian social gathering, seminar, or church service — and more people might come than you'd think. Generally it is suggested that 30% of people would visit a church if a friend invited them. A church in Palmerston North did a survey on the streets, and 70% of those surveyed said they'd visit a church if invited by a friend. Invitation is an open opportunity. We overlook it too often!

## Using wisdom:

The real question is, what is the best thing to invite our friends to? Wisdom is needed. As shown above, many people aren't overly scared of visiting a church, so we could invite them to a Sunday service — but selecting a suitable occasion or speaker might help.

If you feel that the whole 'church thing' might be too much for a particular friend, then why not initiate some fun activities that your church small group could plan together, to which you could invite your friend? Also, if your church has courses that might interest a friend, such as on marriage, parenting, financial freedom or overcoming career challenges, invite them to go along with you. Such things build relational bridges, provide opportunity for some great conversations, and open doors to doing other things together also.

## Enabling teamwork:

All of this is a part of teamwork in the church. A preacher of the gospel is only as effective as the team he or she stands with. You and I are that team, and our pastor/vicar the preacher. No matter how good they might be as communicators, no one will hear their message unless we invite them to come so they hear!

## An encouraging story:

A guy in my previous church invited his non-believing parents to a Christmas celebration their church small group had. At that celebration someone shared the basic Christian message, and he was taken by surprise when his parents indicated afterwards that they'd said the prayer and would now be followers of Christ. Mid way through the next year he invited a colleague and her husband to a parenting course. Then at Christmas, on the afternoon of a Christmas Eve service, he thought to send her a text to invite her along. To his surprise she responded enthusiastically, came along, brought her brother and mother, and both she and her brother (both in their thirties) responded to the message that very night.

We never know what God is doing in a person's life, and we won't know until we take the risk and ask.

## **Extend an invitation. You might be surprised!**

### **For more see...**

#### **VIDEO EQUIPPING: 'Because we care' - the video series**

These 'Equipping for members' videos can be found via the 'Resources' page at [AllTogether.co.nz](http://AllTogether.co.nz)

- Video 10 is about the power of an invitation.

#### **FOR THE PULPIT AND SMALL GROUP**

At [AllTogether.co.nz/resources/sermons-studies](http://AllTogether.co.nz/resources/sermons-studies) there is a 6-part sermon series (with studies) for the lead-up to the Hope Project.

- The fourth message and study are about the power of an invitation.

#### **TO READ AND STUDY: 'Unlocking the growth' by Michael Harvey**

Michael Harvey has conducted ten years study on what it takes to create a culture of invitation across 17 countries, 5 Continents, impacted 25,000 participating churches and multiple denominations and streams with an estimated 1 million accepted invitations. When we invite we make a difference! See [unlockingthegrowth.com](http://unlockingthegrowth.com)

*Painting on cover and p2-3: 'Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A1818'. Used with permission.*

*Back cover picture: Jack Morgan, Marsden's first preaching at Oihi Bay, 1814. Auckland, Weekly News, 1964. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Used with permission.*



# PART THREE

## CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT

### ***SMALL THINGS COUNT***

We're all scared of rejection, but sometimes what we fear isn't real. In today's world people are trying to sell us things on the left and right. The way we sift our way through these ads is to ignore all except for (a) the ones we're personally familiar with (like a shop we frequent) or (b) the ones a friend recommends to us. In other words, in a media-drenched society we commonly decide what to pay attention to on the basis of relationship.

This is why it is so often noted that Christian outreach has to be 'relational' — just as marketing has to be relational. In a media-drenched society it's just the way it is.



This is why your invitation to a friend is so important — because they are very unlikely to accept the same invitation from someone they don't know. Very simply, we each need to reach out to those we know!

Please consider the things you could invite friends to, and which kinds of occasions might best suit them. Then go put those occasions on your calendar so you can protect the dates for when they do accept your invitation.

Nothing is easier in Christian outreach than extending an invitation (though asking a question isn't very hard either). Why not try it? It is through simple things like this that God uses ordinary people like us!

'Our Church has a special service this weekend (or this Easter or Christmas) talking about the importance of faith. Would you like to come?' It's that easy — and it could change someone's life!

## WHAT IS NEEDED NOW

### As a reminder

1. Please pray for the Hope Project, that God will use it to draw many to investigate and better understand the Christian faith.
2. Please give generously. The needs are significant. If we all give a bit, the project can easily be covered. More details at the back of this booklet or at [www.alltogether.co.nz/donate](http://www.alltogether.co.nz/donate)
3. Please prepare yourself for the conversations.

This update is one of a series of five. There might be benefit in keeping it so as to review its content at a later time.





## For more information:

**WEB:**

[www.alltogether.co.nz](http://www.alltogether.co.nz)

**POST:**

The Hope Project  
PO Box 6078, Brookfield  
Tauranga 3146

**BANK ACCOUNT FOR DONATIONS:**

The Hope Project (BNZ) - 02-0466-0307987-001

**PHONE:** Office: (07) 576 9083

**EMAIL:**

Project Coordinator:  
Dave Mann – [dave@shininglights.co.nz](mailto:dave@shininglights.co.nz)

Office Manager:  
Naomi Cowland – [Naomi@shininglights.co.nz](mailto:Naomi@shininglights.co.nz)

**Accounts:**

Sharyn Weeks – [accounts@shininglights.co.nz](mailto:accounts@shininglights.co.nz)

The Hope Project is an initiative of the Shining Lights Trust

This booklet was written by Dave Mann, the Hope Project Coordinator,  
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