

HopeProject
nz

200 Years of the Gospel
in Aotearoa

**The
New Zealand
Story**
— then & now —



BOOKLET #4 of 5

PART ONE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN NEW ZEALAND

The spread of the gospel by Maori

THE NGAKUKU & TARORE STORY

Tarore was the daughter of the Ngati Haua chief Ngakuku, and had learned to read at the mission school at Matamata. In 1836 Ngakuku was given a copy of the Gospel of Luke that William Colenso had published in Maori earlier that year. Tragically, on 19 October, 1836, Tarore was killed during a raid led by Uita of Rotorua. She was only twelve years old.

Her father, Ngakuku, had become a Christian. Instead of vowing revenge, he did something radical. He preached forgiveness at her tangi! He said, "There has been too much bloodshed already. The people should trust in the justice of God."

BUT WAIT — THERE'S MORE!

Tarore had the Gospel of Luke with her, and it was taken by one of the raiders. This man could not read, but a released slave who had learned to read in a mission school up north came to the pa at Rotorua. Uita became a Christian. Then, with great courage, Uita did a very surprising thing: he went and made peace with Ngakuku, whose daughter he had murdered. Such was the transforming power of

Colenso and the printing press

ONLY 5000 AVAILABLE — GET YOURS TODAY!

In 1834, William Colenso brought the first printing press to New Zealand. He lived at Paihia, and by 1837 had printed 5000 copies of the first Maori New Testament, which William Williams, had painstakingly translated. A Book of Common Prayer was printed in Maori shortly after. Demand for these was high, and the mana of the missionaries increased.

the gospel and the Christian Scriptures — ending generations of war and bitterness, bringing reconciliation and peace.

Who had heard of such a thing? Indeed, it was discovered to be a book with power from God!

BUT WAIT — THERE'S MORE!

The released slave who could read returned to his people in the Kapiti area, where he was asked to read from the Scriptures again. His hearers included Katu (later called Tamihana) and Te Whiwhi, the son and nephew of the great Ngati Toa warrior chief, Te Rauparaha. With only a few pages of Scripture available, a messenger was sent back to Rotorua to ask for more. What came back was Tarore's little Gospel of Luke, with her father Ngakuku's name still on it!

BUT WAIT — THERE'S STILL MORE!

Katu and Te Whiwhi became convinced of the message of God's love. It led them to take the Christian message to the **South Island** — to the people they had previously attacked and dominated with Katu's father, the warring chief Te Ruaparaha. The message was accompanied by God's power. The message of Christ and the ways of peace were widely accepted by southern Maori.

In such ways, the message spread.

Clearly, the Bible wasn't just any old book. It had great spiritual power, and it introduced Maori people to the truth and grace of Christ in a deeply transforming way.

The Joy of Nga Puhi

While some talk of the Good News of God's love being brought here by Marsden, others talk of it as the joy of **Nga Puhi**, coming at the invitation of Ruatara — and correctly so.

While the Pakeha brought the gospel to New Zealand, it is rightly noted by many Maori that it was the Maori people who gave it to each other. Respected Nga Puhi Kaumatua, John Komene, declares, "My response [to the gospel] is not to the Pakeha word, but to the Word of God." The early missionaries were but messengers. The power was in the person and words of Christ!

In most parts of New Zealand (apart from the Bay of Islands, where the gospel was first brought by Marsden) the Christian gospel arrived independently of missionary

effort. In the **East Cape** area, for instance, a released captive called Taumata-akura, who had been in mission schools up north, came back to his own people in 1834 and preached the Christian faith, and established churches among his own Ngati Porou people.

A great success story in mission history:

These days, New Zealand's Christian story is not as well known as it should be. The New Zealand mission among the Maori was one of the most successful in mission history up until that point in time. Undeniably, Maori people encountered the power and love of God. It was instrumental in causing them to turn from violence, bringing significant improvement to their lives. Within four decades, a strong indigenous church was firmly established.

A national failure:

It is a tragedy of New Zealand history that, following the Treaty of Waitangi, the Christian humanitarian concern of missionaries to see justice towards Maori was swept aside by the flood of colonial settlers. When Maori were unjustly attacked by British military forces, missionary protests were ignored, and eventually fell silent. Many Maori felt betrayed. When Maori were widely dispossessed of their land, settlers (many of whom were also Christian) were unwilling to acknowledge the injustice.

Toward healing:

While many may feel there is not much we can do to right this wrong, it is not difficult to acknowledge that wrong was done. While this simple acknowledgement may seem a small thing, it is important to Maori, and does make a difference.

Closing thought:

Our nation has a strong Christian heritage. However many with a secular faith ignore that heritage, and work to remove its influence. Making these stories known is important. Let's start by doing this in our churches!

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/

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

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 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

Understanding courage and discouragement

The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart



While there are many reasons that most Christians struggle with the area of 'evangelism', the most significant may well be the 'left-over' effects of our past disappointments. When we are young in the faith we often have great vision. We feel great excited about all the things we believe are possible. However, when we've fought a few battles this sometimes changes. When things haven't gone as we hoped we start to lose hope. With time, we can't even remember the things we earlier believed for! We have stopped dreaming. We have lost faith that things can change. We have lost motivation to act differently.

When our hearts are discouraged even the simplest things we do in outreach begin to take a lot of effort. The invitation that once was so simple to extend is somehow now more difficult to say. Do you relate to this? Is getting yourself to do anything in outreach difficult? What are you to do? Many of us struggle with this. Understanding what might be going on in our hearts, is a good place to start.

Understanding discouragement

There is a difference between disappointment and discouragement. We all feel legitimately disappointed at many things. However discouragement only takes place when we let our disappointments sink to our hearts. Once in our hearts

disappointments can 'infect' our core beliefs. The word 'discouragement' simply means the loss of courage! We have lost the will and desire to act in certain ways because we have been entertaining a doubt as the result of a disappointment — or have even now accepted that doubt as a fact. The courage we once had to initiate conversations about faith with our friends is gone — because we lost hope or faith that our efforts were worthwhile or that our friend's response was possible.

It is important to consider what changed during this process. The gospel didn't change. The spiritual interest and hunger of the average person didn't change (most NZers consider themselves spiritual people). The potential benefits of hearing and responding to the gospel message didn't change either. It was our thinking that changed — and it changed what we will believe for and do! Recognising this effect is a powerful step toward restored freedom in outreach. At the root of our spiritual discouragements there is usually a deception or a doubt of some kind. If we can identify it, we can take responsibility for it and address it. (What disappointed us? If what we did before didn't work — why? What could we do differently? How could we think differently?)

What the Bible says regarding overcoming discouragement

It is interesting to note that the Bible never tells us how to overcome discouragement. It simply says to not be discouraged (e.g. see Joshua 1). This is because the opposite of discouragement is courage and faith.

When circumstances discourage us, God's Word can provide courage, because God's promises do not change.

God's will — our hope

God is willing that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9). He has commissioned us to make disciples and establish his good ways (his Kingdom) on earth.

He has given us authority for this, and the promise of his



presence as we do it (Matthew 28). Some encouraging points are these: God does not call us to do things that are impossible. Also, God has not only sent us to accomplish a task — he is working with us to ensure we ultimately succeed in it!

Conclusion:

If you struggle to be active in outreach (as a great many of us do), why not stop for a moment to consider why it is that you struggle. The heart of the matter is quite often a matter of the heart. There is value to be found in retreating from busyness to reflect upon the attitudes and beliefs of our hearts — especially after a big disappointment. Maybe we need to face some of our past disappointments again to identify the thoughts that caused us to lose our hope for a brighter future — and to choose again how we will respond to them. This is worthy of reflection.

God is with us to do something in our nation. Every home is hearing of Christ. This is an amazing opportunity. Let's do all we can to make the most of it!

For more see...

Monthly prayer updates

Subscribe to receive the 'All Together' monthly prayer updates at the bottom of the page at AllTogether.co.nz

VIDEO EQUIPPING: 'Because we care' — the video series: Session 12 on teamwork

These 'Equipping for members' videos can be found via the 'Resources' page at AllTogether.co.nz

- Video 12 is titled 'Becoming part of the team'. Most Christians will never have the strength to sustain their focus in outreach while working alone. There is a lesson to learn here!

FOR THE PULPIT AND SMALL GROUP

At AllTogether.co.nz/resources/sermons-studies there is a 4-part gospel equipping series (with studies)

- The fourth message relates to overcoming discouragement. It is titled 'How to stand tall together'.

IDEA: Why not rally people to prayer

While God works through our hands and our mouths — he also works through our prayers. When did your church last rally everyone to prayer? When did the churches in your town or city last rally together to pray for God to work through you, and to draw many to himself?

PART THREE

CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT

Making God's will our way

The Hope Project is about to again share the Christian hope with 1.4 million homes through booklets, plus other media. Evidence suggests that the booklets are being read more than we realise. New Zealanders are spiritually interested — but they are also spiritually shy. If we do not initiate a conversation, a conversation it is unlikely to happen!

The opportunity is great — and if you believe in a God who touches hearts as his Word goes forth, then this is a very good time to be praying!

It is often said that we must 'work as if everything depended upon us, yet pray as if everything depended upon God.' While we must be diligent to prepare our hearts, minds and hands so we can engage those around us in conversations about faith, it is also necessary that we knock unrelentingly on Heaven's 'doors' through prayer! It is through such an approach, and no other, that our nation will again be impacted by the gospel message in the way that so many Maori were in the mid 1800s.

Having prayed, let's then get out and engage the conversation through asking good questions, encouraging people, telling interesting stories and extending invitations. In ways like this God works through people like us.

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. If we all give a bit, the full project can easily be covered.
3. Please prepare yourself for the conversations.

This update is one of a series of five. There might be benefit in keeping it so you can review its content at another time.

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.





For more information:

WEB:

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

Office Manager:
Naomi Cowland – Naomi@shininglights.co.nz

Accounts:

Sharyn Weeks – accounts@shininglights.co.nz

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