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This booklet was written by Dave Mann, the Hope Project Coordinator,  
for free use by Christian Churches in New Zealand

# Hope Project nz

200 Years of the Gospel in Aotearoa

## The New Zealand Story — then & now —



Booklet #1 of 5

## PART ONE

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN NEW ZEALAND

#### **THE GOSPEL ARRIVES IN AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND**

##### **The Maori invitation to bring the Gospel in 1814.**

It was 1814. At the invitation of a young Maori Chief named Ruatara, the 'Active' set sail for New Zealand. On board were ten Maori — including Ngapuhi Chiefs Ruatara and Hongi Hika — as well as the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who was based in Sydney. There were people from several other nationalities also on the ship.

When they arrived at Ruatara's Pa, at Rangihoua (now more commonly known as Oihi), they were welcomed with a powhiri (welcome) as they came ashore.

The next day was a Sunday. Ruatara made preparations for his friend Samuel Marsden, to speak about God's good news for all people. A crowd of 300 to 400 Maori came, some of them coming in waka from the other side of the Bay of Islands, or from the Kerikeri area. Marsden preached from the Gospel of Luke, on "Behold, I bring you good news of great joy". Afterwards, Ruatara explained what was said. Maori then performed a haka as a celebratory response, and as an indication of their welcome.



## WHAT IS NEEDED NOW

1. Please pray for the Hope Project, that God will use it — and the conversations that spring from it, to draw many to investigate and better understand the Christian faith.
2. Please give generously. If we all give a bit, the full amount can be raised. 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. Why not practice the three questions you have read today in a few conversations this week?

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

May God use us all to show and share his love every day!

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.

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



## THE MAORI INVITATION TO MISSIONARIES TO SETTLE IN 1814

Marsden did not stay in New Zealand, but over the years he made seven extended visits to the country. However, from 1814 three families did stay on, living at Oihi. They were the King, Kendall and Hall families. These settlers had been invited by Chief Ruatara, and were hosted by his people. They formed the first permanent European settlement in this land.

In what other nation where Europeans went, do you find such an amicable beginning as this? Our bicultural partnership in New Zealand began to take shape at Oihi.

### Samuel Marsden — a mix of a man

This industrious farmer was also a visionary leader and a preacher, and became a local magistrate in the prison colony of New South Wales. His rulings, in that very harsh environment, earned him a hostile nickname, the 'flogging

parson'. While strict in justice, and a little grumpy and stubborn at times, Marsden was also a compassionate man. One ex-convict who wanted to murder Marsden

pretended to be drowning, for he knew Marsden was the kind of man who would risk his life to save another! Marsden jumped into the water, and they did fight. However both survived, and it is said they became friends.

Marsden was a man with some faults, but also a man with heart.

### 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 THREE

### CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT

#### SEEING THE GOAL

New Zealanders are a spiritually interested people — which means there are opportunities all around us to encourage faith. Sometimes helping a person is as simple as asking a question with a listening ear. However, there is a skill-set involved. Non-church New Zealanders do not want to be preached at. Conversations must be two-way, and non-threatening. The key to great conversations is great questions. The great news is this; we can learn how to ask great questions!

#### SEEING THE OPPORTUNITY

Prior to Easter 2016 people will see the Hope Project's ads and third booklet. This is your opportunity! The project depends upon people like you to engage the conversation — and it can be very easy: "Did you get a booklet? Did you read it? What did you think?"



## FOR MORE SEE...

### VIDEO EQUIPPING & SMALL GROUPS: 'Because we care' video series

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

- Free online concise tutorials, with optional discussion guides for small groups.
- Videos 6, 7 and 8 are about the conversational approach.
- The series is also available on DVD from [BigBookPublishing.co.nz](http://BigBookPublishing.co.nz)

### FOR THE PULPIT AND SMALL GROUP

Sermon outlines with matching studies can be found via the 'Resources' page at [AllTogether.co.nz](http://AllTogether.co.nz)

- This includes a 4-week series titled 'Conversations that connect'

### TO READ: 'Because we care' — the book.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 explain the conversational approach.

- Available from [BigBookPublishing.co.nz](http://BigBookPublishing.co.nz)

## PART TWO

### THE EFFECTIVE 21ST CENTURY WITNESS

#### THE BENEFITS OF A CONVERSATIONAL APPROACH

Times have changed, and in Western societies we can no longer expect to go out and tell people about Jesus and see many respond immediately. There has been a growing resistance to the idea of religious truth in our culture. This has resulted in a general disinterest in the Christian message. However, while many have felt at a loss as to what to do, all is not lost!

The majority of New Zealanders are still spiritual people. For example, about 77% (according to a 2007 study) believe in God or a Higher Power. There is also a timeless method for Christian witness that can work in all cultures. It is simply called



conversation! Look at Jesus' example. Consider His approach. When Jesus talked with people He usually began by asking a question! He showed us a 'method' for evangelism and discipleship that works in all cultures at all times: He (1) talked with people (2) with an ear open to the Spirit!

What if we were to adopt this 'method' again? Instead of trying to tell people things, we could become proactive in seeking to ask them good questions, at which point we listen — like Jesus did. With the doors for conversation then open, we could master the art of encouraging people toward faith through the use of questions, suggesting different ways of seeing things and asking what they think. Indeed, it is a timeless method. It's powerful, and it's easy!

### Here are six benefits of a conversational approach

(in which we ask questions more than we talk)

1. It creates space for us to listen to others before we speak
2. It creates space to listen to God before we speak
3. It potentially opens an ongoing conversation
4. If they have criticised our beliefs, it returns the onus of proof to them.
5. It is non-threatening — we can disagree without ever disagreeing.
6. It can cause them to re-evaluate their beliefs — which is our desired outcome.



### Here are three great questions that can turn a conversation to good purpose

- i. What do you mean by that?
- ii. Where did you get that idea from?
- iii. Have you considered...?

### The three questions illustrated

If someone hints that they think all religions are the same, don't argue! Instead be bold to investigate exactly what it is that they are saying (because they are making a religious truth claim).

- i. What do you mean 'all the same'? In what ways?
- ii. Where did you get this idea from? What makes you think this is true?
- iii. Have you ever noticed that the world's major religions actually say majorly different things in the major areas? For example, there can't be a God, and also not be a God, can there? Which do you think it is?

Through a conversation like this a person can be enabled to see a different perspective. The above conversation would have caused them to consider the possibility that religious truth might exist, instead of dismissing religious truth as being unknowable. If they were interested, the conversation could go further. If they were not, it remains that they might be a step closer to Jesus than they were before.

This is what a conversational approach is about: helping people every day and in every way to take steps closer to Jesus. It's also achievable for the average Christian, who is not an 'evangelist', and it is very practical because it's about how we conduct ourselves in the conversations that take place every day.