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The Hope Project is an initiative of the Shining Lights Trust

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

HopeProject nz

200 Years of the
Gospel in Aotearoa



The New Zealand Story

– then & now –



BOOKLET #5 of 5

PART ONE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN NEW ZEALAND

The need for heroes

Every nation needs its heroes. It is a shame that in our own nation the injustices of the land wars have overshadowed positive stories from the years before the Treaty, such that they are not widely known. The prejudice of some also leads them to avoid or misrepresent our history.

However, in reality we have numerous early missionaries and Maori who did truly honourable things. While the injustices most certainly need recognising and addressing, knowing these other stories from our history could benefit the strengthening of a positive national identity, as well as our appreciation of our Christian heritage.



- What do you mean by that?
- Where did you get that idea from?
- That's a great thought! Have you considered...?
- Could I tell you a story?
- Would you like to come visit our church with me this Sunday?

The exciting thing about a conversation is that, when you start one, you never know where it will go. Questions like the above can help us get started.

However, if we do get stuck for words, we can easily ask if we could share a story — in which case we share a 2 minute story that encourages faith, after which we invite them to a Christian service or occasion that might interest them. It's not really that hard, and begins by simply asking a question.

WHAT IS NEEDED NOW

In these five publications we have discussed:

1. The benefits of a conversational approach
2. The power of our stories
3. The simple invitation that could change a person's life
4. The heart of the matter – our hearts
5. How to journey with those who are considering Christian faith.

What remains is for us to put this into practice!

However, let's not forget to pray. We must work with the left hand and the right. God's way is one of hard work combined with faith and full dependence upon him.

Please pray. Please give, and please prepare for the conversations. The time is at hand! May God use us all to show and share his love, every day!

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



Make the most of it!

If someone you know or meet does choose to follow Christ or expresses interest in understanding our faith better, view it as a rare opportunity, and make the most of it. Following the principles given above, along with the resources, give your best effort to being friendly and social, intentionally guiding conversations to the viewing and discussing of the various media, so that you can grow in faith together.

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

An example of a conversation at the time of the Hope Project

- Did you see that TV ad? Did you read that booklet? (You should. It's really good!)
- What did you think?

HENRY WILLIAMS AND THE FLYING BULLETS

Henry Williams was a navy man. Having seen enough bloodshed for two lifetimes he committed to mission work in New Zealand. He ventured into the midst of battles, with bullets flying, to bring peace. He sailed into fleets of waka on their way to battle to turn them back. He not only taught, but modeled Christian teachings such as those on peace, loving your neighbour, and forgiving your enemy. He helped translate the Treaty, and stood up to protect it when it was later being compromised or ignored. As a result he was slandered and wrongfully dismissed from his position on the basis of false charges made against him, because in speaking up for truth and justice he was a thorn in the side of an unscrupulous pro-colonial governor.

WILLIAM COLENZO AND THE MAORI LANGUAGE

Starting our first school in 1815 on a dirt floor, Colenso taught Maori and English to both Pakeha and Maori students. He laboured at length to create and formalise the written Maori language, which was quickly recognised by Maori as a great taonga. Colenso did much more for Maori — but he is sadly also remembered for his moral failures. He remained in New Zealand his whole life, serving Maori.

PATUONE — THE MAN OF PEACE

His father had prophesied over him that he would become a man of peace — and it came true. A warring chief, Patuone heard the gospel of peace and began to tire of the ways of war and violence, of utu and death. He showed mercy, protecting missionaries who would otherwise have been killed. He sought to persuade chiefs to choose peace over war. He even 'hijacked' traders' ships to confiscate all their rum, which he poured into the sea, such was his disgust of the negative effects that alcohol was having upon his people.

TE PAHI — WHO UNDERSTOOD MERCY

Te Pahi travelled to Australia and became a friend of Samuel Marsden. As he came to understand the gospel, he visited a court and saw a man sentenced to death for stealing food to eat. In Maori culture food was corporately owned, not individually, so this was an easy scenario in which to see the need for Christian mercy. He challenged Governor King to reverse the sentences, appealing to Christian beliefs, but to no avail. Then one day, while at the governor's table, Te Pahi sat opposite a ship captain who had stolen potatoes from his Pa. He challenged the governor again, stating that logically this captain also deserved to die. The governor relented, and the man who had stolen food to eat was not executed. Te Pahi invited Marsden to bring the gospel to New Zealand, but this never eventuated as Te Pahi was killed in New Zealand soon

after by a group of sailors who wrongly believed that Te Pahi was responsible for the deaths of the crew of the *Boyd*.

OCTAVIUS HADFIELD — THE MAN WHO WAS ALWAYS ABOUT TO DIE

Octavius became a missionary because he was so unwell that he was expected to die young. He wanted to do some good while alive, but somehow he kept on living (through many significant sicknesses) for sixty-six more years. An expert in Te Reo, and a good friend of Maori and Pakeha leaders alike, Hadfield battled injustices toward Maori in the New Zealand land wars (and was thus almost accused of treason). He has been called the 'conscience of the nation.' Greatly admired by all, Hadfield later encouraged Maori to vote, and in 1890 became the third Archbishop of New Zealand.

WIEMU KINGI — DEFENDER OF JUSTICE AND MAN OF PEACE

Kingi was paramount chief of the Ngati Awa tribe (Taranaki). He embraced the ways of peace when he started to follow Jesus, but was forced to defend his lands at Waitara when they were sold without his permission. This precipitated the first Taranaki land war. Having lost his lands, Kingi's strength was apparent when he had the grace to return and make peace with settlers living on his land in Taranaki, causing them no trouble. While the extent of his Christian convictions later in life is not known, it would be hard to find a better example of Christian grace in the face of personal loss.

TE WHITI AND TOHU — THE 'MARTIN LUTHER KINGS' OF NEW ZEALAND

Faced with overwhelming grief at the unjust loss of their lands, these men led a peaceful resistance movement from a settlement at Parihaka in Taranaki, following the teachings of Jesus to the letter regarding peace and forgiveness. Working for justice during the land wars, they led with courage, vision and great humility. When Parihaka fell, its occupants sat silently, and never fought. The claim, later discovered to be false, was that their land had been legally confiscated. When released from prison two years later, Te Whiti and Tohu immediately returned to their work, and were the voice of God to many Maori who were lost as to how to respond to the encroaching Pakeha.

...The list could go on. We have heroes, and the gospel of peace is a surprising partner to a great many of them. These stories need telling!

However, the core content via the home page is the 10 Day Challenge — which is about a challenge to go through 10 tutorials ('discipleship lessons') to understand the basics of the Christian faith better. You'll see this on the left of the homepage.

- The beauty of this is that it works on your computer or smart phone — so you have it with you wherever you go!
- It can work for an individual doing it by themselves, or for you and an interested friend over a coffee in a cafe or your kitchen, or with a small group of 6 to 8 people in someone's lounge.

Each tutorial consists of

- (a) A 5 minute tutorial video followed by a Scripture and some open-ended discussion questions. Then for group use there is also:
- (b) An extra 'video of interest' for groups who use this resource, to help provide an additional 10 to 15 minutes of open and diverse conversation around the topic, and
- (c) A 2 minute summary video followed by a prayer, purposed to bring the conversation back to a closing focus on the topic at hand.

This is about making 'discipleship' easier, and more intuitive and accessible than ever.

Then, when completed, other series become available via the 'progress' page. There are some amazing resources here to be discovered that will empower

Any sincere follower of Christ could use these resources with others. They are free — and requires very little preparation time other than viewing the video and questions beforehand so you know what you are discussing.

3. www.AllTogether.co.nz

This is a resourcing website specifically for churches (not for wider public interest and discussion). It is a resource centre on evangelism and discipleship that will serve our nation's churches for many years to come. It offers a combination of perspectives, strategy, resources and optional support in a way that is unique at this time. Check it out.

MEDIA TO HELP YOU

THREE WEBSITES AND YOUR 'FOLLOW UP' TRAINING

1. www.HopeProject.co.nz — To facilitate an open conversation

This site exists to facilitate an open conversation online. It is an interactive website with a Facebook page. Topics for discussion include:

- (1) ...the hopes of NZers for our nation, their families and their own lives
- (2)the hope of Christian faith — with a series of 'real stories' videos, and also 'Heritage Q&A' videos to discuss

If a person is interested to investigate the Christian faith more, they will easily find links to the second website for the project which is...

2. www.10DayChallenge.co.nz — A gospel & discipleship website

Across the top you will find the 'extra' pages. These include:

- (1) The gospel message — a video with response options.
- (2) 'Faith Q&A' — a series of videos providing concise answers to common questions about the Christian faith.
- (3) 'Stories' — a collection of stories of how faith in Jesus enabled people to find hope in difficult circumstances.
- (4) 'Connect' — two maps on which a person can find either a church near them, or a discussion group near them.

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 TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIAN



The need for disciples, not converts

Too many times we've preached 'half-baked' gospel messages that have attracted people to respond to Jesus, but have failed to successfully communicate the necessary change of allegiance that comes with that decision. God's invitation through Christ is not merely to receive forgiveness so we can go to a place called heaven. The central purpose of Christ's forgiveness is that we be restored to a relationship with Creator God (and relationships take time and effort)! It is out of this relationship that we are restored to our purpose in this broken world, and because of that relationship that we continue to be with God beyond the grave.

What is 'conversion'?

A couple of decades ago an international Christian gathering (The Lausanne Congress) defined Christian conversion as a 'considered decision.' It is like in Jesus' parable in Luke 14 where a man who is building a tower considers before starting whether or not he has enough money to complete the tower so he doesn't make a fool of himself. One of the key reasons many supposed 'converts' do not follow through with their supposed decision is because they have not really understood the whole gospel. To put that differently, we have failed to communicate it clearly within our current multi-religious culture.

How to continue a discussion with a sincerely interested person

The content: The early content of our discipleship is quite simple. We learn about what it means to have a *relationship with God* — which includes talking to God

(prayer) and how God talks to us (the Bible and the Holy Spirit). We learn about the importance of our *relationship with other followers of Christ* (the purposes and functions of the church and our fellowship with other Christians) and about our *relationship with the world around us* (the reason we remain here on earth / our mission of making disciples of non-disciples). The question is how we communicate these lessons, because many have found first conversations with an interested person, or new follower of Christ, to be awkward or difficult.

The 'methodology': In short, it's about people skills. To illustrate, in the past to evangelise we might have seen our role as to 'tell' people the gospel — but today we'd do better to converse with them about spiritual things (not 'tell'), with the gospel being shared in the midst of that conversation. The methodology is conversational. Effective communication is no longer so much about a teacher telling the student the truth. It's about two people, as equals, having a conversation in which they respect each other's views, and yet are true to their own views, and work toward conclusions one step at a time.

In the same way we might once have defined the 'follow up' of new believers as 'Bible studies with new converts'. We're suggesting it might be beneficial if we could now view it as 'a continued conversation with those who are interested.' Such conversations are more likely to take place over a coffee in a café or kitchen than in a school classroom — or over a meal in the church, rather than a lecture in its main auditorium. Establishing relationship and trust is a highly significant factor in a media-saturated world, because it seems that everyone wants to sell us something. A person who is interested in the Christian faith will want to know that we are more interested in them than in their possible conversion, and also that we're going to engage in some open conversations, with room for different views to be expressed and discussed without things getting too awkward. The approach that achieves this is called 'conversation'.

In summary

In today's world it could be said that evangelism is about having conversations with people with the gospel in mind — while discipleship is about having conversations with the teachings of Jesus in mind (Matthew 28:18-19). The content has not changed, but in a post-Christian, multi-religious, multimedia world the methodologies need to adapt. The graceful relational manner is more important, and having tools in a variety of media is helpful.