

Articles



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

Samuel Carpenter

Laidlaw College / St John's Theological College | scarpenter@laidlaw.ac.nz

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 Opua 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 *passe*, 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

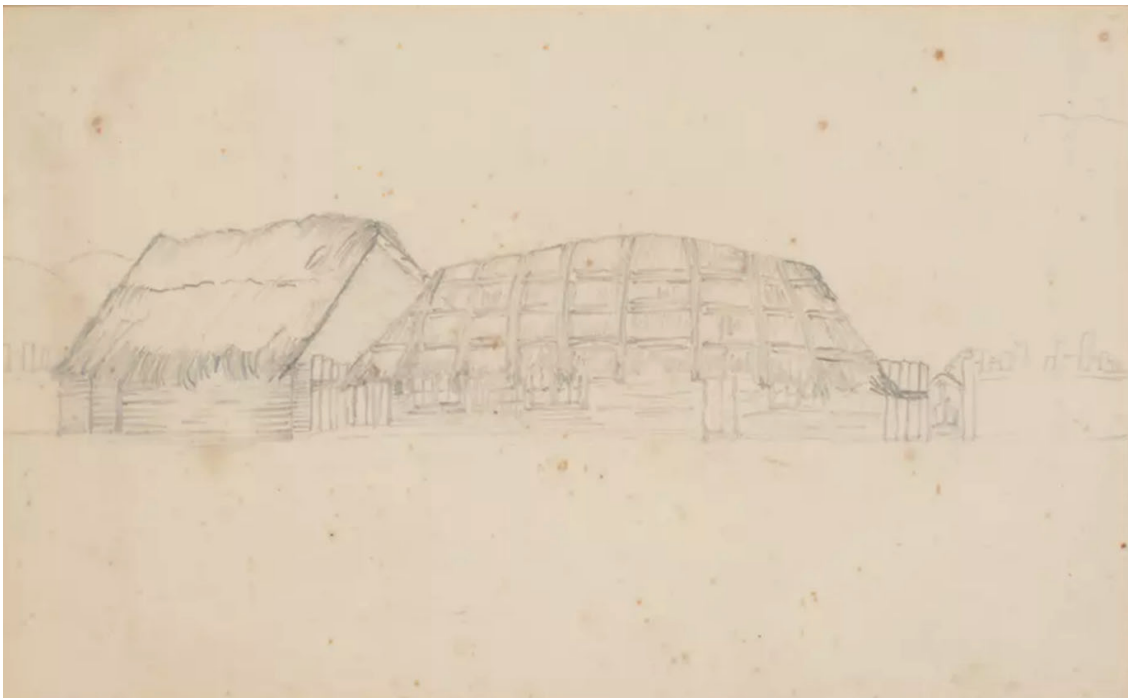


Figure 2. Henry Williams, sketch of “The Beehive,” Paihia, 1820s; Auckland Museum Library.

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.

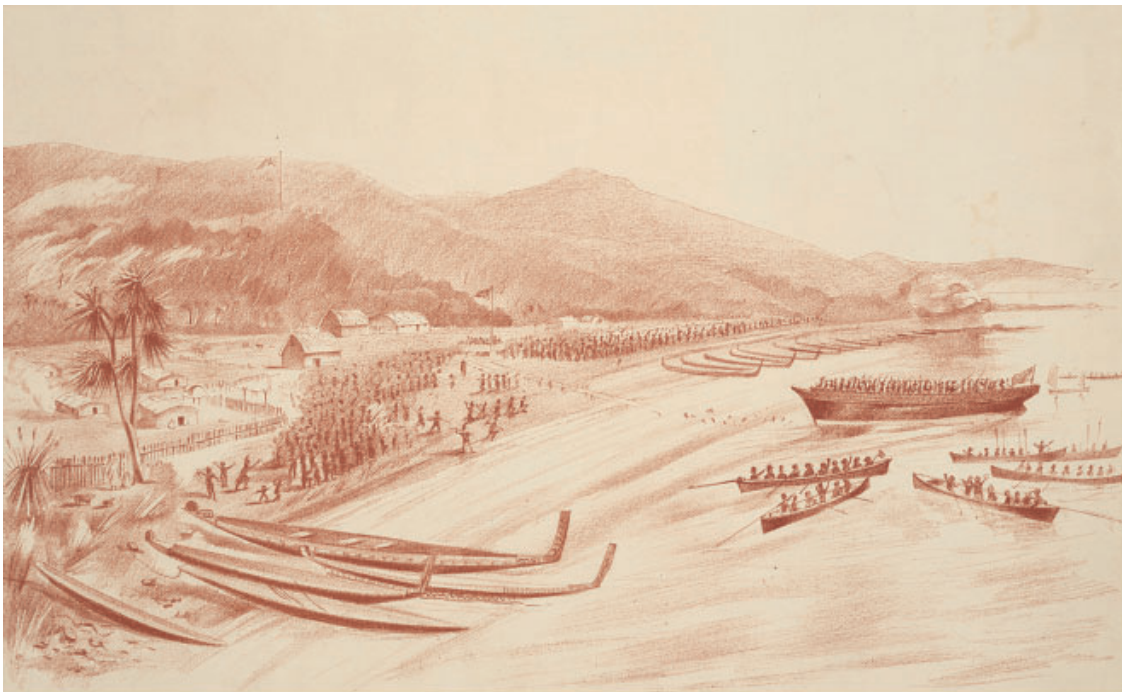


Figure 3. Sketch by Rev'd P. Walsh, based on one by Marianne Williams: launching of the Herald, 1826; Auckland Museum Library.

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 Kaiakohe, William Cotton Journal; MS. 40, Dixon 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 Kōki 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 Karuwhā (Henry Williams) and Hone Heke at “The Korero,” by T. B. Hutton; William Cotton Journal, MS. 40, Dixon Library, NSW.

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Dr Samuel Carpenter (Ngāti Pākehā / Ngāi Te Tiriti) is Research and Professional Teaching Fellow at Laidlaw College and scholar-in-residence at St John’s Theological College. His PhD focussed on early political thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. He is a founding trustee of Karuwhā Trust, and previously worked in the Wellington Treaty sector. He writes on nzhistorian.com.
