



The Bible's Early Journey in New Zealand

THE ARRIVAL

Towards the end of the 18th century, with the loss of America's 13 colonies in the American Revolution, Britain looked towards Asia, Africa and the Pacific to expand its empire. With Britain's overburdened penal system, expanding the empire into the newly discovered eastern coast of Australia through the establishment of a penal colony seemed like a decent solution. So, in 1787, six transport ships with 775 convicts set sail for Botany Bay, later to be renamed Sydney.

Thanks to the last minute intervention of philanthropist John Thornton and Member of Parliament William Wilberforce, a chaplain was included on one of the ships. The Reverend Richard Johnson was given the unenviable task of being God's representative in this brand new unbroken settlement eight months sailing time from home. The job of chaplain to the colony proved just as difficult as anyone might expect.

It was so difficult in fact, that six years later Johnson was joined by an assistant. The Reverend Samuel Marsden, later to be remembered by history as the Apostle to New Zealand, was studying at Cambridge University when he was convinced through the influence of William Wilberforce to become assistant chaplain to the penal colony at Port Jackson (by this time the original penal colony settlement at Botany Bay had been moved). Marsden jumped at the chance to put his faith into practice and boarded a ship bound for Australia. He arrived in Port Jackson with his wife in 1794.

Marsden established his house at Parramatta just outside the main settlement at Port Jackson. There he oversaw his 100 acre farm as well as consenting to serve as a magistrate and as superintendent of government affairs. It was as magistrate that Marsden gained a rather unfavourable reputation as the 'flogging parson' for his use of the cat-o-nine-tails in punishing those involved in the Irish uprising in 1804¹.

¹ Keith Newman, 2010

Despite this reputation, Marsden's skills as a businessman ensured his wealth and land increased. By 1807 he would own more than 3,000 acres of farmland.

In 1800, Johnson applied for a leave of absence to return to Britain. He never returned to Australia and Marsden subsequently became the senior Anglican Minister in New South Wales, a position he held until his death.

After failed attempts at evangelising Aborigines, Marsden began to look eastward to New Zealand. He had gained knowledge of Māori through contact with Māori who had come to Port Jackson on whaling and sealing vessels. He had often put them up in his own home at his own expense, teaching them, while also learning more about Māori society and culture. One of Marsden's visitors was Te Pahi and his four sons who arrived there in 1805 and met Marsden at church. It was from these initial contacts with Māori that started Marsden thinking about starting a mission to New Zealand. However, this was not a call that was his to make. So, in 1807 he travelled back to England to persuade the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to start a mission to New Zealand, and the CMS agreed.

He boarded the *Ann* in London in 1809 with William Hall and John King, and their families, and headed home. It was on the return journey that Marsden found the young Ngāpuhi leader, Ruatara whom he had earlier met in Sydney in 1805.

Ruatara's curiosity had led him to spend considerable time between 1805 and 1809 on various European sealing and whaling ships sailing to and from Australia, Norfolk Island and eventually London in 1809. Often treated poorly, Ruatara was finally put on board the *Ann* in London and sent back to Australia. Ruatara had failed in his plan to meet King George, and according to some accounts had become depressed and was suffering badly from the beatings he had received on his journey to London.

Several days into the *Ann's* long journey back to Australia, Marsden discovered the dishevelled and very ill Ruatara on board. Marsden, horrified at Ruatara's condition, spent the arduous return journey to Sydney nursing him back to health. It was also during this time that Marsden began learning the Māori language, culture and worldview, something that would prove an asset to his eventual mission in New Zealand.

² Raymond Rickards, 1996

³ Keith Newman, 2010

Before their arrival in Sydney, news reached the colony of the Boyd Incident in which as many as 70 European crew and passengers aboard the *Boyd* were killed at Whangaroa, an act of utu in retaliation for the poor treatment of the son of a Māori Chief. This incident would eventually delay the mission to New Zealand by another five years.

Once back in Sydney, Ruatara lived with Marsden and worked on his farm gaining new agricultural skills. Ruatara believed would greatly benefit his country. Towards the end of 1810, Ruatara desired to return to his homeland and Marsden arranged for him and some other Māori men to work their passage back to New Zealand. However, because of what happened at Whangaroa with the *Boyd*, Europeans were not permitted to travel back with Ruatara.

Marsden was desperate to start the mission but no captain was willing to risk life and ship in New Zealand, so he purchased his own ship, the *Active*. In 1814, Marsden directed missionaries Thomas Kendall and William Hall to proceed to the Bay of Islands to reignite communications with Ruatara. The trip was a success and Kendall and Hall were well received. Ruatara and a number of other Māori including the chiefs Hongi Hika and Korokoro travelled back with Kendall and Hall to Sydney where upon their favourable report, Marsden proceeded in preparing for his first mission visit to New Zealand.

Late in 1814, the cautious New South Wales Governor Lachlan Macquarie finally granted Marsden four months leave from his chaplaincy role in order for him to travel to New Zealand. Complete with three "mechanic" or artisan missionaries and their wives and families, eight Māori, two sawyers, one smith along with two mares, one bull, two cows, some sheep and goats and chickens², the *Active* weighed anchor from Sydney Cove on 28 November 1814³. The crossing was long and stormy, and Marsden, who had never been a good sailor, was very ill. Calling at different places along the coast, the *Active* arrived in the Bay of Islands on 22nd December and anchored at Rangihoua, in sight of Ruatara's pa.

On the morning of Christmas Day, which fell on a Sunday, Marsden awoke to see the colours of the Union Jack flying atop Ruatara's Pa. The previous day, Ruatara had enclosed about half an acre of land with

a fence and a pulpit in the centre. Uprturned canoes would serve as seating for the Pakeha on either side of the pulpit. At about 10am, Marsden went ashore to conduct New Zealand's first Christian church service. Ruatara and two other leading Ngā Puhī chiefs, Korokoro and Hongi Hika, were dressed in the regimentals Governor Macquarie had given them before departure from Sydney.

A large crowd of around 300 Māori and about 25 Pakeha had gathered and began the service by singing the Old Hundred Psalm led by Marsden.

“All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.”

Marsden later described the moment the service began in his journal, “I rose up and began the service with singing the Old Hundred Psalm; and felt my very soul melt within me, when I viewed my congregation and considered the state that they were in.”

“It being Christmas Day,” writes Marsden, “I preached from the second chapter of St Luke’s Gospel, and tenth verse, ‘Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy.’”

(Read more of Marsden’s Journal and his account of the first service in *The Christmas Day 1814 service* online at www.biblemonth.org.nz)

It is possible that Marsden, who had gained some knowledge of Te Reo Māori preached at least part of his sermon in Māori⁴.

After Ruatara had explained as best he could to the crowd what Marsden had meant, the crowd left the enclosure, surrounded the Europeans, and performed a rousing haka.

“In this manner, the Gospel has been introduced into New Zealand, and I fervently pray that the glory of it may never depart from its habitants, till time shall be no more,” Marsden concluded in his diary.

Two weeks later, a large temporary raupo building had been erected to act as a church and a residence for the King, Hall and Kendall families and their support party. A few days before Marsden was due to return to Sydney in March of 1815, Ruatara fell seriously ill. Marsden was not allowed to see Ruatara because the “...superstition of the natives allowed of no interference.”⁵ Marsden eventually was allowed to see Ruatara, but by this time he was not far from death. Marsden was obliged to depart on February 26th, just a few days before Ruatara died. It is not known as to whether Ruatara ever became a Christian, and some accounts of his death bed put him at a loss as to how to reconcile his traditional beliefs with the Gospel message his new found friends had brought to his people.

THE LANGUAGE

Ruatara’s death dealt a massive blow to the New Zealand mission. In the first few years after the historic launch of Christianity in the country, the missionaries Hall, King and Kendall struggled to make headway. Māori spiritual beliefs and customs seemed to prevent the Gospel’s message from cutting through. Add to this the infighting among missionaries, and the fact that they were effectively landlocked at Rangihoua, fearing for their lives from the surrounding tribes, the mission began losing its way.

Kendall, the most educated of the European settlers, had established the first Māori school at Rangihoua in 1816 and began teaching the children from the nearby Pa. However, due to problems in his marriage with his wife

A LIST OF FIRSTS

The first Christian sermon wasn’t the only first at Oihi. The site, known as New Zealand’s first permanent European settlement also saw New Zealand’s first land sale, the first European style school and the first recorded birth of a child of European parentage. On Monday, 12 August 1816 New Zealand’s first school opened at Oihi with Kendall as the schoolteacher and an attendance of 33 Māori and European pupils. The school was one of the clusters of buildings on the high ground on the north side of the creek behind the Marsden cross. The subjects taught were mainly handiwork and the language used was exclusively Māori. Source: Dept of Conservation

⁴ Stuart Lange, 2014

⁵ J.R. Elder, ed., *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765-1838*, Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, 1932, pp.93-94.

Jane, and the continual arguing among the missionary team, he became increasingly introverted. He spent more time with Māori than the other Europeans, determined to learn more about their culture and spirituality and gain a better grasp of the language. His dedication led to him publishing the first ever book in Māori after only a year at Rangihoua. This book was *A Korao, 'The New Zealander's First Book; Being An Attempt to compose some Lessons for the Instruction of the Natives'*. Kendall sent the manuscript to Marsden in Sydney, along with a brief message, "There are undoubtedly many defects in it; but it is a good beginning."⁶ Kendall used this book in his little school at Rangihoua⁷.

A beginning it was, for although the Māori used in Kendall's first book would be largely unrecognisable today, his work represented the very genesis of the difficult and long process of taking what was an oral language into a written form. This work was significantly advanced by Kendall, Hongi Hika and Waikato when they visited England in 1820 and worked with Professor Samuel Lee on preparing a second book, *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand*.

Now, with a good grounding of written Māori and the humble beginnings of a school system, the way was clear for a strong visionary leader who would see the crucial next step in helping Māori understand the Gospel message – being able to read the Bible in their own language.

TRANSLATION BEGINS

In 1823, 31 year old naval trained Henry Williams arrived to take up the position as leader of the CMS mission in New Zealand. It was through his influence that the CMS began to recognise the importance of Māori having access to the Bible in their own language. Williams strongly believed Māori could be transformed by literacy, and that its principle literature should be the Bible⁸. This represented a strategic change for the CMS mission, from Marsden's 'civilise first' approach to one focused more on education. Where Marsden had instructed the first missionaries to teach Māori in "horticulture, agriculture, trade, European manners and morals, and then seek to make them Christian,"⁹

Williams would focus more on teaching Māori literacy and numeracy. Despite the difficulties the early missionaries faced, the relationships they built with Māori and the fact that significant advancements particularly in the Māori language by Kendall made the education focus more feasible. Williams therefore began encouraging missionaries to learn the Māori language to a point of fluency and to teach literacy to Māori.¹⁰ By 1830, George Clarke wrote that, "...now many of them can read and write their own language with propriety, and are complete masters of the first rules of arithmetic."¹¹

Early work on translating the Bible was uncoordinated. Various missionaries including the Wesleyan John Hobbs began the work, but it wasn't until Henry Williams recognised that some coordination was necessary that the missionaries started meeting together to plan and prepare translations. In 1826, CMS missionaries began meeting every morning in Paihia to pray and work on translations. Also in 1826, Henry's younger brother William arrived. William had a more gentle disposition than his brother, and was a gifted linguist, providing further grunt to the translation team. The missionaries remarked at how quickly William learned the language and said that it seemed to roll off his tongue in some natural and almost unfair way.

As the missionaries' grasp of the language improved, the need for Scriptures in Māori became more pressing. The earliest translations included those they regarded as the 'foundation of true religion', Genesis 1-3, John 1, Exodus 20:1-17 (Ten Commandments), Matthew 5:1-30 and the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6.¹² Together these passages made up the first publication of the Scriptures in Māori. Four hundred copies were produced on a press in Sydney in August of 1827. The publication cost £41, which was funded by the New South Wales auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.¹³ This monumental publication meant that finally, Māori had, at least some part of the Bible in their heart language.

Early publications of Māori Scriptures were riddled with errors and misprints, but proved to be very popular among Māori.¹⁴ Henry Williams tells the story in his journal in 1834 of encountering one of his

6 Dominion Monograph, 1924

7 <http://literacynz.wordpress.com/page/71/> accessed April 9th, 2014

8 Peter Lineham, 1996.

9 Michael King, 2003

10 Peter Lineham, 1996

11 Church Mission Record, vol 1, 1830, p184 in Peter Lineham, 1996.

12 Herbert Williams, 1924 and 1928 (Bibliography and Supplement)

13 Peter Lineham, 1996

14 Peter Lineham, 1996

students lying on the ground reading the Scriptures. This struck Williams, as the man had been blind for several months. In the conversation that ensued, the blind man explained to Williams that he needed a complete book of Scriptures so that he could let others read to him until “he should see it with his heart.”¹⁵ In his diary, Williams writes, “By this I learnt an important lesson never to hesitate in giving the Word of Life to an earnest enquirer, though it might appear as bread cast upon the waters.”¹⁶

Attention soon turned to translating the whole New Testament. But despite the generosity and willingness of Australian and English based organisations and printers to print the Scriptures in Māori, the lengthy delays and high cost of doing so, created probably one of the most significant barriers to progress. The solution – a printing press for New Zealand.

PRINTING IN NEW ZEALAND

William Colenso’s large and heavy Stanhope Press was not the first printing press to come to New Zealand. A smaller press had arrived with William Yate in 1830 but proved relatively useless, probably because there was no expert operator. Yate did manage to produce some hymn sheets and attempted a six page catechism, but results were ‘very rough’ and the press was abandoned to be enshrined in cobwebs.¹⁷ On 30 December 1834, William Colenso and his assistant William Wade arrived aboard the *Blackbird* with the much needed press and large boxes of heavy type.

Twenty one year old Colenso was immediately disappointed upon unpacking the cases to find critical parts missing. Not to mention that the CMS had neglected to include any paper. In what was perhaps one of the earliest recorded instances of ‘kiwi ingenuity’, Colenso was able to get the press working

with the help of a joiner to fashion some stop gap parts with wood and stone.

It wasn’t long before he had published a 16 page edition of Ephesians and Philippians which is known in history as the first book published in New Zealand.^{18 19}

The paper problem was overcome by donations from the private supplies of missionary wives in the area.²⁰ Once several more reams of paper were discovered at the Mission House in Kerikeri, a total of 2,000 copies of this pioneering publication were produced.

Although Colenso struggled constantly with the poor supply of paper and lead for type, he managed to print 1,000 copies of the *Gospel of Luke* by the end of 1835, which had been translated by William Williams. Meanwhile, work continued on translating the remaining books of the New Testament. The press at Paihia was then engaged from March 1836 through to December 1837 in printing 5,000 copies of the 356 page New Testament in Māori. It was an enormous and inefficient use of such a small press and one printer, and binding problems led to most of the copies being bound with curtains from Paihia.²¹ But the milestone had finally been achieved, no doubt to the delight of the missionaries, CMS and the British Bible Society.

The missionaries could not have known how popular this edition would be. Already the Scriptures had had an impact, something that the 73 year old Samuel Marsden had noted on his final visit to New Zealand earlier that year. Landing at Hokianga, a ‘weak and feeble’ Marsden was carried by Māori the 20 mile journey to Waimate.²² In his previous visits after establishing the mission at Rangihoua, Marsden despaired at the continuing conflict between ‘light and darkness’ within Māori culture. But now, on his seventh and final visit, Marsden was permitted to see a “large body of Christians in every locality he came to, while

FROM SHIP TO SHORE

With no jetty at Paihia, the tricky task of getting the heavy press off the *Blackbird* and onto the shore was solved by strapping two canoes together and building a platform in between. The press was then carefully placed on top. Such was the precarious nature of life in New Zealand that the press, after travelling more than 24,000 kilometres from Britain, was almost lost overboard as they paddled it into the shore at Paihia.

15 Raymond Rickards, 1996

16 Rogers 1973, in Raymond Rickards 1996

17 Keith Newman, 2010

18 Tolla Williment, 1985

19 <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/colenso-william> accessed May 23, 2014

20 Raymond Rickards, 1996

21 Peter Lineham, 1996

22 William Williams, 1867

the New Testament was coming into circulation, and accomplishing that sure and certain work which God had appointed.”²³

Samuel Marsden died within a month of returning to his home in New South Wales in May of 1838.

THE BIBLE SPREADS

There was a huge demand for Māori New Testaments, with missionaries now finding themselves in possession of a highly prized asset other than blankets or tools. Four editions of the New Testament were produced to cope with demand in the seven year period between 1837 and 1845. Copies couldn't be bound quickly enough by Colenso and so a further 10,000 copies were printed by the British Bible Society in London, which allowed for a much larger circulation²⁴.

The first print run of 5,000 was mainly distributed in the North and Waikato areas and soon became a taonga, or treasure among Māori. According to Colenso, many Māori chiefs sent messengers to him to obtain copies of the book. Rotongia from the Waikato walked 400 kilometers to get his copy. He said upon receiving his copy, “One thing only do I desire; it is not a blanket, it is not anything that will pass away, but this is my great desire – the Word of God.”²⁵ Another man walked a 12 day journey to get his. Some missionaries even felt that the demand for the New Testament had outstripped the demand for muskets.

It is estimated that about one copy for every two Māori in New Zealand was distributed. The book had in some respects become “prized as a charm, and reading a novelty or a game.”²⁶ But many Māori did have a

strong incentive to learn to read through possession of the sacred book, and by the time the second print run arrived from London, the missionaries felt confident that they could restrict distribution to only those Māori that could read.

What is certain is that Māori gained intense familiarity with the Bible, to a point in the 1880's when missionaries complained that they were finding it difficult to find something new in the Bible to talk about.²⁷ In 1833, William Yate had written: “Whenever they sit down to rest, all take out their sacred Scriptures, and begin to read. I have actually been kept awake, in my bed, till after midnight, by the natives outside reading the sacred Scriptures and asking each other questions, or passing comments.”²⁸

There is evidence the Gospel message was getting through, with author Keith Newman describing its spreading like “wildfire in dry bush.”²⁹ Children who were being taught at mission stations would go home at night and read to their parents. Freed slaves who were literate shared the Gospel message wherever they went. Increased literacy brought economic and social benefits to communities. Newman argues that gradually, less acceptable customs and beliefs like infanticide, polygamy, cannibalism, and the burning of crops to starve out enemy survivors were being set aside. There were fewer outbreaks of violence and the practice of receiving of facial tattoos (moko), often associated with war parties, was fading. Women began to play a more important role in tribal life, not just to replenish tribal numbers but also because life was becoming increasingly agricultural based.³⁰

Across the country, attendance at church services swelled, with some estimates putting Sunday

THE BEGINNINGS OF CATHOLICISM IN NEW ZEALAND

The first ever Catholic Mass on New Zealand soil was held at the house of Thomas Poynton at Totara Point in the Hokianga. The Catholic mission, led by Frenchmen Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier and including Father Louis Catherin Servant and Brother Michel, had arrived in 1838. Keith Newman, in his book *Bible and Treaty* mentions a letter that Louis Servant wrote, describing the first ‘Cathedral’ of New Zealand – a room in the house where they were living. There was an altar, a few paintings and a statue of the Holy Virgin. Servant also mentions that 15 people had been baptised, including children and the chief of a tribe. William Williams later remarked that the Catholics were surprised at how knowledgeable Māori were about the Scriptures.

23 William Williams, 1867

24 Peter Lineham, 1996

25 Peter Lineham, 1996 and Keith Newman, 2010

26 Peter Lineham, 1996

27 Peter Lineham, 1996

28 Peter Lineham, 1996

29 Keith Newman, 2010

30 Keith Newman, 2010

attendance at 30,000 (this figure doesn't include Wesleyan services). William Williams reported that he was surprised at the level of knowledge many Māori had off the Scriptures, often rebuking church leaders when their teachings seemed contrary to what the Bible said.³¹

Surely the most pleasing aspect to the Gospel's spread for the missionaries must have been the reports of Māori evangelising Māori, sharing the Gospel and promoting change throughout Māori society. Māori were sharing the message with each other, pushing against tribal conflict and brokering peace. One such case is the story of Tamihana Te Rauparaha, the son of the great Ngāti Toa chief, Te Rauparaha.

Tamihana and his cousin Mātene Te Whiwhi had become Christian through Ripahau, a former slave who had been educated at a mission school. Ripahau taught them to read and write using a few pages of Scripture. Later they sent for more resources, and among the newly arrived literature was part of Tārore's *Gospel of Luke* (it had Tārore's father, Ngakuku's name in it)³². Thus the influence of Tārore's *Gospel of Luke* had made its way down the North Island.

In 1839, Tamihana and Mātene decided they'd had enough of warfare and became determined to end the fighting. They travelled to the Bay of Islands to ask Henry Williams for a missionary to come to their people in Kapiti. Williams, impressed with their zeal offered himself but was later convinced by his fellow

missionaries that he was needed most in the north. Instead, recent arrival Octavius Hadfield volunteered and went south. Tamihana and Te Whiwhi became trusted teachers for Hadfield, and in December of 1842, they were sent as missionaries to the South Island when Hadfield was unable to go himself.³³ Tamihana travelled the final part of the journey to Stewart Island alone. The Ngai Tahu chiefs there were anxious about Tamihana's father, Te Rauparaha, paying them a visit to attack them.³⁴ Tamihana reassured them, "No he will not come, for I have brought peace with the words of the Lord." Peace was made between the two tribes which marked the end of Te Rauparaha's plans to attack them. The following year, Tamihana guided Bishop Selwyn on his first South Island journey, taking Selwyn to all the places he had visited on his mission the previous year. Tamihana and Te Whiwhi later advocated for the recognition of the Wellington region as a peace zone.³⁵

Tamihana's story illustrates that by the beginning of a new decade in 1840, the Bible's message had already spread the entire length of the country and most places in between. From a humble arrival at Rangihoua in 1814 aboard a European ship in the hands of a foreigner, the Bible's message had been passed from hand to hand, in many cases through Māori evangelists and missionaries. There is no question of the importance of the foundation work the many European missionaries laid, but once Māori began to adopt Christianity for themselves, it could be said that the Bible was a significant contributor in bringing peace to Aotearoa.

THE WESLYANS ARRIVE

In 1823, the first Wesleyan mission station in New Zealand was established at Kaeo, near Whangaroa Harbour. It was established by Samuel Leigh and William White. Thanks to the Leigh's friendship with Samuel Marsden, the Church Missionary Society and Wesleyan missionaries worked closely together, with the Wesleyans concentrating on the East Coast of the Far North.

By the time the Treaty Of Waitangi was signed in 1840, there were Wesleyan mission stations all over New Zealand. A count at that time showed there were 170 CMS missionaries and their families and 69 Wesleyan missionaries in New Zealand. Unfortunately they were forced to abandon the Wesleydale mission station at Kaeo in 1827 when Māori ransacked it. The Wesleyans had failed to recognise the importance of local Māori patronage to provide security and protection, as Ruatara and his uncle Hongi Hika had done for the CMS at Oihi.

Sources: www.nzhistoryonline.net.nz and www.methodist.org.nz

31 Keith Newman, 2010

32 Keith Newman, 2010 and Raymond Rickards, 1996

33 Ken Booth, 1996

34 Peter McKenzie, 1998

35 Ken Booth, 1996

ADDENDUM

What happened next?

Our particular story ends in the early 1840s with the New Testament available and spreading rapidly, and the missionary work seemingly a 'success'. However, history reveals that this was really a plateau, and from this point, Christianity among Māori began to be adversely affected by various national events and personal conflicts.

In 1842 Bishop Selwyn arrived, causing conflict with the growing mission. The CMS had partly funded his position and planned to place the mission under his leadership. However, the missionaries distrusted Selwyn's religious values and challenged his leadership.

Things deteriorated even further when the Northern Wars began, demonstrating that even mission-educated Māori were willing to take up arms against the colonial Government. The arrival of Governor George Grey in 1845 led to further problems for the mission work with his accusations that Henry Williams had acquired large amounts of land west of Paihia by dubious means. This led to Williams' dismissal from the CMS in 1849. He would be reinstated five years later.

By 1860, almost all the mission schools were closed and many missions had been abandoned. The Land Wars in the 1860s brought a rising sense of betrayal and disillusionment among many Māori towards what they believed was a Christian Government acting in a manner contrary to their understanding of the Gospel.

The later stages of the Māori Bible story takes a different tone to the earlier events. Bible sales started to decline as early as the 1840s, partly due also to sheer saturation, with an estimated one in every two Māori having a copy of the New Testament.³⁶ Parts of the Old Testament had been available for some time, and the Wesleyan press were producing sections of the Old Testament while the CMS was printing the New Testament in 1837. The next phase of Bible translation was dominated by Robert Maunsell, who had a BA in Classics from Trinity College in Dublin. By April 1865, his team had completed the entire Old Testament, but Māori would wait for almost three years before the first full *Paipera Tapu* (Holy Bible) became available. The delay was in part due to problems with the revision of the New Testament and the New Zealand wars.

36 Peter Lineham, 1996

37 Peter Lineham, 1996

38 Peter Lineham, 1996, page 136

39 Peter Lineham, 1996, page 133

Despite the publication of the full Bible, demand wasn't nearly as high as the New Testament, with only 700 copies sold in the first three years of distribution.³⁷ Missionary disapproval of Māori integrating traditional spiritual beliefs with the Old Testament stories of creation, nature miracles and communal pilgrimage of the Jews caused problems. As did their cautioning against expecting miraculous healings as described in the Bible. "Decline in sales seems to stem from Māori realising that this was not a magical volume; from some disillusionment with the Christian message; and from significant decline in the number of missionaries."³⁸

Peter Lineham's summary of the place the Scriptures held in Māoridom in his book *Bible and Society* seems a fitting conclusion to the story:

"The missionaries, to some extent, misinterpreted the sudden enthusiasm for the Bible. Even at the height of its popularity in the late 1830s a much smaller group of Māori were regarded as true believers by the more demanding missionaries such as Richard Taylor. Nevertheless the translation was a moment of great significance for Māori culture, and the religious quality of subsequent Māori culture is unmistakable. The Māori Bible became commonplace as far as Māori spirituality was concerned, on the marae in particular. It soon became steeped in tradition, just as the Authorised Version was in English. How deeply it changed Māori spirituality is an issue much debated in the modern-day Māori world."³⁹

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