Most writers on the Maori response to missionary activity tend to see it in terms of three major questions: why was it so long before any apparent missionary impact was made on the Maoris? why did the impact begin to reveal itself when it did? and, finally, what was the nature of Maori Christianity when it evolved?

The delayed impact can be illustrated by the contrast between expectation and event. When the first missionary settlers landed at the Bay of Islands, the Rev. Samuel Marsden, on Christmas Day 1814, viewed the English flag as 'the signal for the dawn of civilization, liberty, and religion in that dark and benighted land'.¹ Yet it was not until September 1825, if we can ignore the case of Philip Tapsell's Ngapuhi wife who had been baptised before her marriage in 1823,² that the first Maori, Christian Rangi, was baptised by members of the Church Missionary Society.³ In 1830, seven years after their mission began, the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, with no converts to report from New Zealand, noted severely that 'the perverse levity and awful depravity of these savages appear to be unequalled in the history of man'.⁴ This was a great decline from

An earlier version of this paper was given at the 39th Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science at Melbourne, January 1967. In preparing it I benefited greatly from discussions with Professors W. H. Oliver and L. B. Brown of Massey University; Mrs. Mary Boyd and Dr. Joan Metge of Victoria University of Wellington; Dr. Niel Gunson of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University; and Mrs. Judith Binney of Auckland University. They are not of course to be held responsible for any of the contents of this paper. I acknowledge with gratitude financial help from my own university and from the University Grants Committee.


¹ The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden, 1765-1838, ed. J. R. Elder, Dunedin, 1932, p. 93.
² Marsden's Lieutenants, ed. J. R. Elder, Dunedin, 1934, p. 224.
⁴ Annual Report of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, Year Ending December 1830, p. 39. The first Maori baptised by the Wesleyans, appears to have been Hika, in January 1831. 'Journal of William White', 16 January 1831, T.T.C.
farmer Marsden's optimistic view that their minds were 'like a rich soil that had never been cultivated, and only wanted the proper means of improvement to render them fit to rank with civilized nations'.

Why then the delay in missionary impact? The most influential explanation at the moment is that of Harrison Wright. He sees the European impact on the Maori taking place in three stages: initial shock, cultural assertion (the 'Maori domination'), followed by confusion and cultural breakdown. The period when little missionary impact was made, was, he tells us, one of 'Maori domination'. The Maoris of the Bay of Islands quickly became used to and fascinated by their visitors. Until well into the eighteen-twenties, he argues, they maintained their identity and grew in assertiveness, not only in spite of, but to a certain extent because of the pressure of the Europeans. This period was marked by 'an increasing aggressiveness in the pursuit of traditional Maori goals'. He calls this 'cultural self-assertion'. They made war for traditional Maori reasons — not because they were imitating European models such as Napoleon. Before 1830, European vices such as drink, swearing, and promiscuity, had little influence on Maori life. 'Both wars and sexual promiscuity undoubtedly increased in degree in the 1820's, but the ideas behind them were the Maoris'.

This self-confidence before 1830 was, he argues, thoroughly justified: the Maoris could have wiped out the Europeans if they had desired. To survive in Maori society it was necessary to conform to Maori ways, whether you were a missionary or a Maori returned from foreign travel.

Wright minimises the view that the lack of apparent missionary impact can be explained from within the missionary ranks. The year 1823 saw the arrival of Henry Williams in the Bay of Islands and the beginning of the Wesleyan-Methodist mission at Whangaaroa. Wright largely ignores the Methodists and dismisses 'the new policies and personnel of Henry Williams'. The Maoris, he says, did not change in this period of self-confidence. 'While Williams may have acquired a certain amount of *mana* through his personality, this is hardly indicative of Maori change . . . . As long as the Maoris were confident and satisfied that what was happening to them was a matter of their own choice, as long as their culture could satisfactorily explain their experiences to them, they could scarcely be expected to change their habits of thought or ways of life.' Much the same explanation has recently been given by Eric Schwimmer.

A number of criticisms could be advanced against this interpretation; but it is simpler first to follow through Wright's argument on

---

5 *Letters and Journals*, p. 60.
7 ibid., pp. 138-40.
the second problem, why did the impact first begin to reveal itself when it did?

He argues that by 1830 the Maoris at the Bay of Islands were undergoing marked and rapid change, and this, combined with missionary effort, 'made Christianity, for good or ill, a part of the Maori way of life'. He lists a whole number of changes. Sometimes his footnotes indicate that the changes are not as clear-cut as his thesis would demand. For example, he says that the different accounts of the Bay of Islands written by Cruise (describing 1820) and Earle (describing 1827) 'show best the changes of a few years'. But then he adds that Earle 'does give examples of cannibalism, muru, and other Maori practices imposed on the Europeans in 1827'. Nonetheless, Wright concludes that 'cultural confusion ... did undeniably spread among the Maoris at the Bay of Islands before 1830'. He talks of Maori 'mental disorganization' and gives some reasons for this.

Firstly, there were Western diseases, against which Maori remedies were powerless. Hence the prestige of the tohunga and of certain patterns of behaviour declined; and Maoris noted the better health of white people. Secondly the adoption of Western articles caused cultural confusion — iron tools, for example, replaced greenstone adzes, muskets replaced spear and club, and hence methods of war changed. Many hill-top pa became untenable; hand-to-hand combat died out; and the fact that a slave with a musket could kill a chief weakened chiefly authority. Thirdly, the application of traditional attitudes to new methods of war caused greater casualties.9

He sums up the consequences. 'As a result of the sudden sicknesses and death, the constant threats of war, and the dawning realization of their inability to regulate their own lives, many of the Ngapuhi around the Bay of Islands in the late 1820's were ready to admit their increasing bewilderment. The confusion led to various reactions, which were later typical of other Maori groups, and which ultimately prepared the way for the first conversions.'10

Wright then proceeds to list some of the methods of the missionaries, saying that these, coupled with Maori demoralisation, are the reasons for the Maori conversion. The missionaries adapted Christianity to the New Zealand environment, using Maori words for Christian concepts and providing services in which Maoris could participate. They worked among slaves and children because these were more responsive than chiefs. They appealed to material interests — for example, giving away sugar and flour. They used the pressure of fear in hell-fire sermons. He emphasises their skill in medicine and their value as peacemakers.11

The missionaries then had a part in the process; but Wright's main emphasis appears to be on a major shift, as he sees it, in Maori

9 Wright, pp. 142-7.
10 ibid., p. 147.
11 ibid., pp. 149-57.
CHRISTIANITY AND THE MAORIS TO 1840

society. 'For the Maoris to turn to Christianity there had to be things happening which they could not explain in terms of their own culture and could not control by traditional means.'

These are exciting hypotheses. Anyone examining the same ground as this book does will go to it again and again for provocative insights. Many of his chapters — for example that on the Christian Maori — are likely to leave subsequent researchers with the feeling there is little of significance anyone else can add. But the argument just outlined is hard to accept.

The first difficulty is that other writers, considering Maori social change in terms of other problems, have suggested different phases in this period of European impact. If Wright was not seeking to explain a Maori conversion, his turning point in Maori social development (which he calls from 'dominance' to 'uncertainty') would probably not have been placed at about 1830. Raymond Firth, for example, puts the whole period from Cook to Waitangi (1769-1840) into what he calls 'the phase of initial impact'. Keith Sinclair, describing the 'wrecking' of the Maori social system, says: 'By 1840 they inhabited a disordered world.' The archaeologist Roger Green has written of the 'Early European Maori phase' of the first half of the nineteenth century in the Auckland province. But if we also decide to place our significant transition in the eighteen-forties or eighteen-fifties, the so-called Maori 'conversion' of the eighteen-thirties was not a consequence of it. In any case, any theory of chronological phases of European impact must allow for regional variation, and Wright does not always make clear when he is referring specifically to Ngapuhi, and when to Maoris generally.

But the next objection is that, although doubtless certain Maoris were converted, there was not a 'Maori conversion' in the eighteen-thirties. We need to distinguish between a general diffusion of Christian influence and conversion. Religious conversion has to be understood in theological terms and all three missionary groups — Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic — would have defined it closely. The Methodists, for example, would have followed John Wesley's view of conversion: 'God's own act in which a man is turned away from his former self, made to pass from darkness into light, delivered from the power of Satan unto God, made over in mind and spirit.' If all Maoris, or even a significant proportion of them, underwent this personal experience in the eighteen-thirties (and this is implied by writers such as Wright who talk of the 'Maori conversion') then profound social changes would be associated with it. But how many converts, 'made over in mind and spirit', were there?

12 ibid., pp. 143-4.
13 Raymond Firth, Economics of the New Zealand Maori, 2nd edition, Wellington, 1959, ch. XIII.
If we are looking for converts, we must ignore those who are simply listed as attending services. The significant statistics are Anglican 'communicants', Methodist 'members of society', and Roman Catholic 'neophytes'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1841</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.M.S. communicants:</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist members:</td>
<td>1,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic neophytes:</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is out of a population generally thought to have been about 100,000 at that time: which means that possible converts are no more than 3% of the population. But the more responsible missionaries would make no extravagant claims even among this small nucleus.

The Rev. John Waterhouse wrote on 8 September 1840: 'Great good has been done here but there is a painful mixture. Little, very little experimental religion, mere excitement has been too much the order of the day. They have class leaders but few, very few of them converted . . . . '  

At first sight this paucity of converts may seem surprising. Was there perhaps something wrong with the New Zealand missionaries, or some unusual cultural resilience among the Maoris? In fact this experience of superficial initial missionary impact is fairly common in most parts of the world. As Lanternari says, 'whatever the society and whatever the original traditions, nowhere does one find a pagan religion suddenly yielding to the impact of the white man or supinely accepting his doctrines'.

It should be added that although Wright frequently talks of 'the Maori conversion' and has a chapter with that title, he does tell us that over half the Maoris were still heathen in 1840 and that only a small number ever became communicants. His definition of this word 'conversion', essential to his argument, is never made clear. Furthermore, a degree of scepticism about statistics is desirable when


20 Wright, pp. 164-5, 183.
it is remembered that criteria for baptism varied; that the numbers of baptisms are evidence as much of missionary theology and strategy as of social or spiritual change among Maoris. C.M.S. missionaries often charged the Wesleyans with baptising too freely; and among Wesleyans there seemed to be varying views on the pre-conditions for baptism. John Hobbs seems to have had exacting standards, but the visiting senior missionary Joseph Orton advised William White in June 1833 that he need not expect those ‘emerging from the darkness of Heathenism’ to have such comprehensive views of the ordinance of baptism as those ‘favoured with a scriptural education and the light of a gospel era’; nor was it indispensible that heathen candidates should ‘really profess to enjoy a sense of forgiving mercy’.21

Was it entirely coincidence that White received a letter from his London headquarters in September 1830 talking of giving up the New Zealanders as an ‘incorrigible and irreclaimable race’; and from November onward began reporting that the mission prospects were improving?22 Nobody can now be certain; but the decision to make the first baptisms was difficult. It was a decision made by missionaries, not Maoris; and it could well have been delayed, perhaps unnecessarily so, until pressure to show results comparable with those of mission fields elsewhere tipped the balance.

Historians may, of course, differ in their view of the meanings which can usefully be applied to the term ‘conversion’. But the task of definition cannot be evaded. For it is very easy to apply the word ‘conversion’ to evidence of superficial conformity, and then to assume that the other meaning of complete transformation is applicable, and so move easily to the assumption that this (erroneous) complete religious transformation implies an associated complete, or at least major, social breakdown.

This confusion is obvious enough when stated, and it would be unfair to suggest that Wright completely falls into it. A careful reading of his chapter on ‘The Maori Conversion’, shows that, while he will sometimes talk loosely of ‘the Maoris’, as if they were an identical mass reacting in the same way all over New Zealand, at other times he is more careful, limiting his statements not only to the Bay of Islands Maoris, but also to ‘some’ or ‘many’ of them; and he also occasionally uses such phrases as ‘the partial dislocation of the Maori culture’. In this he shows a more commendable caution than many other historians in this field, who will often build bold generalisations on isolated examples.

Nonetheless, the necessary process of selection in an attempt to summarise a confused situation has its dangers, and Wright’s chapter on ‘The Christian Maori’, and his conclusion, arguing for continuity of Maori ways and concepts, fits uneasily with his chapter on ‘The

21 Joseph Orton to William White, Mangungu, June 1833, New Zealand I, 1819-34, file 1832-4, M.M.S.
22 The letter from England is referred to in W. White to Geo Morley, Mangungu, 9 September 1830. See also W. White to James Townley, Mangungu, 29 November 1830, both in New Zealand I, 1819-34, file 1829-31, M.M.S.
Maori Conversion’ which is emphasising all the evidence of cultural breakdown. When one analyses the way in which Wright’s ideas have been summarised by other writers, it is clear that instead of realising the basic difficulty of arguing that Maoris were at one and the same time ‘converted’ and yet little changed, most writers have simply accepted what Wright has said about ‘conversion’. They have neglected such statements as (p. 182) ‘the influence of Christianity was not Christianity as the missionaries understood it, but as the Maoris misunderstood it’ (or in other words, there was not ‘a Maori conversion’) and also (p. 201): ‘Except superficially, the Maoris of the 1840’s were still Maori in their thought and outlook . . . . ’ If we have to assume a correlation between religious change and social change, then an argument for limited impact fits more readily with an argument for limited social impact.

It must be admitted that the social phenomena Wright describes were present in the Bay of Islands at the time when the response to missionary activity reached noticeable proportions — and nobody can now prove by creating a new situation that if that social phenomena had not been present the missionaries would still have succeeded. However, doubt about his proposition can be based on three main considerations: that cultural disturbance as a result of European contact was often more of a hindrance than an aid to missionary activity; that our criteria for defining the stages of cultural disturbance are arbitrary and lack precision; and that missionary activity was often more successful in areas where there had been little cultural disturbance. It will be noticed that a term ‘cultural disturbance’ has been substituted for such terms as ‘decline’, ‘disintegration’, ‘demoralisation’ or ‘confusion’, and the reasons for this will be given later.

Consider first the argument that cultural disturbance was more often a hindrance than a help to the missionary. Wright as we have seen takes the contrary view and, using such terms as ‘cultural confusion’ and ‘mental disorganization’, argues that these ‘ultimately prepared the way for the first conversions’.23 But if we take the examples he gives we see that this was by no means always the case.

Firstly, disease often worked against missionary influence. Maoris distinguished between their own and European diseases; missionary medicine often failed; and, as Wright in fact notes on p. 148, disease was often attributed to the vengeful European atua and the karakia of the missionaries, and sometimes utu was demanded.24 ‘They are very jealous of our God, saying Mr. Hall and Mr. Kendall and myself praying so much makes our God destroy them’, wrote John King in 1815. ‘About this time a great number has died here. Some say it is our God kills them, others the New Zealand god. They drop off very fast . . . . ’25

23 Wright, p. 147.
25 Marsden’s Lieutenants, p. 111.
Sometimes the missionaries were in fact unintentionally responsible for the spread of disease. On some occasions they indirectly caused considerable casualties among the chiefly class by giving them blankets as a humane substitute for the muskets they craved. But the blankets were worn in all weathers as if they were traditional water-resistant garments, and when the rangatira went down with respiratory diseases, the missionaries were blamed. When the chief George and his wife at Whangaroa found their youngest child afflicted with worms, hitherto unknown among them, they told the missionary Nathaniel Turner 'that either we have brought it among them, or that our God is afflicting them with it and that if the child dies they shall be very angry with us'.

Part of the problem was a simple semantic difficulty. Maoris generally attributed disease to an atua or departed spirit of a man; and the missionary decision to use the same word for the Christian God, coupled with a tendency of some missionaries to portray their God as a vengeful Jehovah, a jealous God who could send caterpillars to eat the potato crop of those who broke the tapu of the Sabbath, meant that it was very natural for Maoris to attribute new diseases to the missionary God. There were many possible results to this: it could, as Wright argues, aid 'conversion', but it could also lead to false conversion, or to a re-emphasis of traditional ideas, or to adjustment cults. The possible repercussions of disease were many.

Similarly, tribal rivalry may sometimes have been the motive for wanting a missionary, as Wright suggests; but on other occasions a tribe would reject a missionary because he was associated with their rivals; and the Maori adoption of Western articles, for example the musket, sometimes worked against the missionary. Occasional missionaries took part in the musket trade and supplied muskets to one tribe and not others. Most missionaries refused to trade. Whatever they did, they made themselves unpopular, much of the time. In general, the tantalising presence of European articles in the missionary's trading store, while it was a source of power and prestige and created a feeling of deprivation, also frequently made the missionary exceedingly unpopular. John Hobbs at one stage thought that 'sooner or later our lives will fall a victim to these savages in consequence of the Articles of European Trade we have brought amongst them'. His colleague James Stack was told once that the missionaries would be believed if they would lower the price of their blankets.

The second objection to Wright's argument is that our criteria for

28 Copy of 'Journal of James Stack', 25 September 1828, N.Z.I., 1819-34, M.M.S. This point is noted by Wright, pp. 78-80.
28 'Journal of John Hobbs', 2 April 1825, in letter to W.M.S. from Wesleydale, 10 September 1825, N.Z.I., 1819-34, M.M.S.
29 J. Stack, Journal extracts, Mangungu, 3 September 1830 to W.M.S., N.Z.I., 1819-34, M.M.S.
defining the stages of European contact are arbitrary and lack precision. If this is a legitimate criticism of Wright, it could also be applied to most historians who have chosen to talk of the 'breakdown', 'disintegration' or 'decline' of that seldom defined entity 'Maori society'. But if we confine our examination to Wright we find that he does not define very closely this crucial stage of social disintegration which he considers has to be reached before Christianity will make its impact. The argument is rather like Toynbee's 'challenge and response': there was a response, hence there was a challenge; Christian influence was diffused — hence there was social disintegration. Perhaps we could call it the 'decline and response theory'.

Wright's examples of confidence and uncertainty are not disputed. What is denied is that certain decades were exclusively or predominantly periods of confidence and that these were followed in neat chronological sequence by a period exclusively or predominantly one of decline. Instead it is argued that examples of both attitudes are to be found in all periods — as one would expect. For as Wright himself says on p. 179: 'No culture is entirely satisfactory to all its members. Every aspect of life is constantly undergoing some modification.' The dilemma of the historian is to know what weight to attach to the evidence he will find in any society of modification and dissatisfaction, and to know on what grounds he can decide that these have reached a significant stage for the purpose of his argument; and the reason for doubting those historians who so confidently assign the sole or predominant weight to their 'social' or 'economic' 'factor' can be illustrated by one example. If, when Marsden had preached his much publicised sermon in the Bay of Islands, his discourse had been followed immediately by mass conversion, historians who wish to argue that such events are determined solely or predominantly by social breakdown would have no difficulty in constructing their case.

They would point to the fact that European weapons, diseases, crops, animals, and artefacts had all been diffused among Ngapuhi for more than a decade; that Pakeha-Maoris had lived among them; that Maori women had cohabited with European and American whalers and sealers; and that young Maori men had returned from world travel on these ships. Such episodes as the attack on the Boyd and the whaler's attack on Te Pahi's island would be seen in a context of social disorder and inter-tribal warfare in which muskets were used: and if such things cause 'mental confusion' we would surely expect it in the first two decades, rather than in the third and fourth, by which time such things as European diseases and the musket had become part of a way of life.

The historian wanting to stress breakdown might also point to evidence that, even before 1814, Christian concepts were being blended with Maori religious concepts. J. L. Nicholas, for example, offers evidence suggesting that by 1814 the Biblical version of the creation of man had been incorporated into the mythology of the Bay of Islanders and that they had 'some confused ideas of a Supreme
Both Governor King, describing the visit of the Bay of Islands Chief, Te Pahi, to New South Wales in 1805 and Dr. John Savage, describing a visit to the Bay of Islands in the same year, asserted that Maoris had the idea of rewards and punishments in a future state. Almost certainly this was a diffused Christian concept. It is true that King and Savage may, by unskilful questioning, or by errors in translation, have read more Christianity into Maori statements than in fact was there; but unskilful questioning can itself be a means of spreading new ideas, and from the first contact of Cook Maoris had the chance to pick up European ideas of religion. Not all visiting Europeans were rollicking atheists, hell bent on women and rum and nothing else. Marsden, in New South Wales, discussed religion with a succession of Maori visitors. We know that the idea of the Sabbath as a holy day begun to creep in before 1814; there are occasional examples of Maoris who had begun to question the power of the tapu.

Thus the stage is set for the Miraculous Conversion by Mr. Marsden on Christmas Day, 1814. But it never happened; and as there is nothing in the 1814 situation to tempt historians to uncover their great determinants, social and economic disintegration, nobody has bothered to do so. Perhaps it will be argued there was not enough disintegration to cause a conversion; but if we ask what constitutes 'enough', the answer will in the end prove to be 'whatever is present when a conversion occurs', and this is not satisfactory.

Yet another example of the pliability of historical evidence can be given. If we wanted to turn Wright's period of the Maori 'dominance' into one of uncertainty we would have no difficulty. He argues that Hongi's aggressive wars demonstrate confidence; others could argue that aggression is evidence of inner uncertainty; certainly that Hongi's victims were not feeling very dominant (a point which illustrates the danger of talking of 'Maori society' as a monolithic entity). Anyone wishing to prove that Maoris were not dominant in their relations with the Europeans could advance at least three arguments: Maori fear of European punitive massacres, such as occurred after the attacks on Marion du Fresne's party and on the crew and passengers of the Boyd; the knowledge that Europeans would avoid a hostile tribe and take their supplies of powder and muskets to rivals; and finally the missionary tactic of a threat to withdraw in face of unwelcome behaviour.

The third objection to Wright's hypothesis is the view that missionary activity was often more successful in areas south of the Bay of

31 King Papers, 2 January 1806, Historical Records of New Zealand, Wellington, 1908, I, 267; John Savage, Some Account of New Zealand, London, 1807, Hocken Library Facsimile No. 1, Dunedin, 1966, Chapter V.
32 Such fears were expressed at Whangaroa, for example; see Hobbs, Journal, 20 May 1824, T.T.C.
33 Hugh Carleton, The Life of Henry Williams, ed. and revised by James Elliott, Wellington, 1948, pp. 73-78.
Islands where there had been little European contact and associated cultural and social disturbance. Wright himself tells us that ‘the South turned Christian almost overnight’.

However one interprets the phrase ‘turned Christian’ this is an overstatement, but certainly the response was more rapid than in the North.

The 1838 report of the Committee of the House of Lords on New Zealand enables us to examine the situation of the C.M.S. as at 1 May 1838, three or four years after the missions to the south had begun, and this should enable us to discover what had happened ‘almost overnight’. Dandeson Coates in this report also quotes a letter from the Rev. William Williams dated 10 February 1834, giving his estimates of the Maori populations in the areas served by the missions. These estimates are only rough approximations and there may have been some variation in population between 1834 and 1838: but they at least make possible a tentative picture of the proportions of population affected by the missionaries. Williams thought the population of the North Island did not exceed 106,000. The northern district, where missionary activity had begun in 1814, and where the bulk of the C.M.S. staff lived, had 176 communicants, 1,630 in congregation, 936 scholars in thirty-seven schools, out of a population estimated at 16,000.

The southern district had mission stations at Puriri, Mangapouri, Matamata, Rotorua, and Tauranga, formed either in 1834 or 1835. The total number of communicants given in the 1838 Report was two; in congregations, 846; scholars, 495; attending seventeen schools. Williams’s estimate of the population served by these missions was 33,600; and only a dozen out of the thirty-five C.M.S. staff were in this area.

It is not possible to give detailed population figures for areas served by the Methodists, but statistics for membership for the year quoted for the C.M.S. enable us to compare north and south. This gives us 747 members for the north, where activity had been going on for ten years (or fifteen years if we include the abandoned Whangaroa mission) and 516 members for the south where intermittent missionary activity had been going on for only five years.

These figures, two Anglican communicants and 516 admitted to Methodist membership, show that while the south did not ‘turn Christian almost overnight’, nonetheless even this was a more rapid initial response than in the northern part of the North Island. This surely presents a difficulty for Wright’s view (p. 145) that for the Maoris to turn to Christianity there had to be things happening which they could not explain in terms of their own culture and could not control by traditional means. A careful reading of pp. 157-8 suggests that,

---

34 Wright, p. 157.
35 Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the present state of the Islands of New Zealand, 1838. See also Missionary Register, 1840, XXVIII, 384-5 for further statistics.
while he gives us the evidence he has found, he still tries to retain the hypothesis which conflicts with it. He describes admirably the lack of impact Western culture had made on this southern area (in contrast to the Bay of Islands), which at the very time it was responding to missionary activity was still (if one follows his terminology) at the phase which in the Bay of Islands he has called 'the Maori domination', the phase of cultural self-confidence and assertion. He argues that in the eighteen-twenties 'the first serious stages of a culturative ferment in the interior began. Cultural self-consciousness, and the other obvious manifestations of Western contact, which had begun at the Bay of Islands decades before, slowly started to take their characteristic shape.'

Wright appears to offer three reasons why the Maori to the south began to accept Christianity while still at the stage which he has argued prevented the Bay of Islands from accepting Christianity earlier. One of his reasons can be rejected: his view that disillusionment with warfare predisposed them to Christianity (p. 159). There are too many examples of tribes responding to missionary activity while still enthusiastic warriors, cannibals and polygamists, and abandoning these cultural traits later.

His second explanation can be accepted with reservations: 'The conversion of the Maoris at the Bay of Islands greatly facilitated the conversion of the rest of the North Island; for once Christianity had penetrated the shell of Maori resistance it spread rapidly.' A possible objection to this is the fact that Ngapuhi under Hongi in the eighteen-twenties had been the terror of tribes further south and, as Wright himself tells us (p. 159), missionaries were sometimes reproved for having lived in the north and for having provided the northern tribes with muskets and powder to slaughter tribes to the south. But in general the point is true; and it leads on to Wright's third point, the role of Maori teachers. This was most important. The success of the Wesleyans at Kawhia and Whaingaroa (Raglan) can to a large extent be attributed to the Maori teachers who accompanied the missionaries and presented a Christian message in a form that made sense to other Maoris. The first few converts, as in any missionary activity in an alien culture, were vital.

These two suggestions of Wright offer the nucleus of an explanation of the problems posed at the beginning of the paper: an explanation which is as relevant for the Bay of Islands as for the area to the south: namely that once Christianity 'penetrated the shell of Maori resistance' it spread rapidly, and that Maori teachers were of great importance.

But this is not a complete answer; and if it is, as I have suggested, impossible to accept Wright's explanations in full, we need to go

37 Wright, p. 158.
38 This point has been stressed in several theses: for example, B. T. Smith, pp. 31-32; J. E. Ross, 'The Missionary Work of the Rev. Richard Taylor at Wanganui', M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1965, p. 52.
39 Wright, p. 157.
back and look critically at the problems posed initially. An explanation based simply on a reaction against an existing interpretation is likely to be distorted.

Why was it so long before any apparent missionary impact was made on the Maoris? why did the impact first begin to reveal itself at the period it did? and, finally, what was the nature of Maori Christianity when it finally evolved? Alternative answers to these three questions could be attempted: but the objections so far made to existing answers have made it necessary to abandon the questions themselves.

For, if it is agreed, there were no dramatic transitions — no given period when the Maoris moved from 'dominance' to 'uncertainty', no given period when there took place a 'Maori conversion' — and if, instead, the problem is seen in terms of constant social and cultural adjustment, accompanied by a diffusion of Christian concepts, sometimes spreading slowly, sometimes more rapidly (as in the early eighteen-thirties), and reaching different stages in different regions at any given moment, it does not make sense to ask why the Maori response was so long coming, or why it came when it did. The response began with Captain Cook, was still going on at the time of the Treaty of Waitangi, and did not stop then.

This approach has not yielded any clear-cut formula with which to replace the ideas attacked. It may be that a formula awaits the incisive thinker who can piece the evidence together afresh; and an untidy situation is ideal for stimulating further research. Or it may be that the situation was complicated beyond the pattern-making activities of tidy-minded historians: there were all manner of influences, many different kinds of missionaries and Maoris, all manner of responses. So all that will be attempted here is to emphasise certain aspects of the problem of missionary impact which historians can usefully go on investigating.

Harrison Wright's analysis placed great emphasis on social change. It is true that whatever else it may be, religion is a social fact. As J. G. A. Pocock has said, in traditional society, religion may be regarded as 'an imaginative extension of a pattern of living into the realm of the sacred and the spiritual'.


Wright's argument is so often simplified into the proposition that 'the Maori conversion' (so called) was the direct result of social breakdown that it is worth stressing the theoretical inadequacies of this concept. E. E. Evans-Pritchard has argued that while religion is a social fact this does not mean that it is 'merely an epiphenomenon of society, as the Marxists would have it. Once brought into existence by collective action, religion gains a degree of autonomy, and proliferates in all sorts of ways which cannot be explained by reference to the social structure which gave birth to it, but only in terms of other religious
is with a study of the dialogue between Maori religious concepts, with which Wright dealt briefly, and nineteenth-century Calvinistic and Wesleyan Evangelical Christianity of the C.M.S.-W.M.M.S. variety, which, apart from occasional references to hell-fire sermons, he largely ignored.

As far as Maori religious concepts are concerned, neither Wright nor anyone else has yet been able to build on firm ground: as James Ritchie has said, 'the sum total of nonsense already written in this field is embarrassingly large'. Most of the hitherto standard studies of the subject have lacked an adequate theoretical framework, have been very uncritical of sources used, and, in particular, have assumed that evidence taken from well into the Christian era will automatically show us pre-European Maori religion. However, the recent work of Eric Schwimmer and of J. Prytz Johansen has greatly enlarged our understanding, and the next few decades will yield a great deal more. All the piecemeal references scattered in missionary letters and journals could well prove a major source of information. There is a myth that apart from a few enlightened men such as the Rev. Richard Taylor they recorded very little; but when all their evidence is put together and critically interpreted, we will know a great deal more than at present.

There has been a similar gap in our knowledge of the ideas of the missionaries. For years there has been much pontification about the 'missionary factor' by people who knew little and cared less about what the missionary sought to convey. This situation has now very largely been rectified by Dr. Niel Gunson's thesis on South Pacific missionaries and by several recent New Zealand M.A. theses.

As we develop a greater understanding of the religious outlooks of Maoris and of missionaries we will appreciate more clearly the intense intellectual and emotional activity that accompanied the diffusion of Christian concepts. We will stop thinking that all missionaries or all Maoris were of one stereotyped pattern, and we will recognise that while religion is a social phenomenon, it is also an individual experience; that the range of possible reactions to Christian concepts is wide, and in the individual case may have


42 James E. Ritchie, *The Making of a Maori*, Wellington, 1963, p. 120.
43 See in particular, J. Prytz Johansen, *The Maori and his religion in its non-ritualistic aspects*, Copenhagen, 1954, and *Studies in Maori Rites and Myths*, Copenhagen, 1958, both reviewed by E. G. Schwimmer in *J.P.S.*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (September 1960); for Schwimmer's own writings, see *The World of the Maori*, and also 'The Cognitive Aspects of Culture Change', *J.P.S.*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (June 1965), 149-81.
little to do with broad social processes. Instead of talking loosely about 'conversion' or 'turning Christian', we need a theoretical model of the range of possible reactions to the new religion, ranging from complete rejection, through occasional social conformity, to actual conversion in the theological sense.

In the same way an accurate terminology to indicate the stages of social change is needed: until we have this, the whole question of whether there is any correlation between the social change and the adoption of Christian concepts must remain undecided. But social change is important; and among the topics opened up for us by Harrison Wright, the changing rôle of Maori leadership and the impact of European diseases and weapons in this period are particularly important.

As far as leadership is concerned, Wright is surely fully justified in emphasising the role of the Ngapuhi chief Hongi, both in protecting missionaries and in delaying their influence. A full-scale biography of Hongi is needed, but it is no accident that the significant baptisms only came after his death. Wright's references to the role of chiefs and tohungas are tantalizingly brief. It was generally true that, if the traditional leaders were convinced, the others followed. This would justify Wright's emphasis on social influences; but if the traditional leaders still had this key rôle, it weakens his case for Maori social breakdown. His earlier statement that missionaries directed their principal efforts at first towards 'the slaves and children' is misleading. Certainly the missionaries had slaves and children in their schools, but in their reports of preaching expeditions, or of religious discussions, they almost always mentioned the presence of chiefs by name. In Methodist areas, baptized chiefs frequently preached at services; and men much as Simon Peter Matangi or Tamati Waka Nene went on missionary tours, sometimes among former enemies. Maori leadership was crucial in the diffusion of Christianity; and this point is worth much more investigation.

Similarly, if someone would piece together all the missionary evidence on the medical side of their work, we would be able to analyse more effectively the relevance of disease to missionary impact. When one reads the missionary records, there are times when they appear to perambulate among their people with 'opening medicine' in one hand and the Bible in the other, both of these blessings of Western civilization apparently highly appreciated by their flock. But in the absence of a thorough study we can only guess at the social consequences of European diseases. This is a profoundly important topic which will throw light on many other problems.

Much also remains to be discovered of the social consequences of musket warfare: whether it was more destructive than natural disasters and warfare in the pre-European period. Percy Smith, for example, questioned whether the introduction of firearms led to a

greater loss of life, and he may have been correct. Certainly the European observers to whom we turn for evidence had no means of telling whether the miseries they described were worse in extent than those of the pre-European period. As we have seen, Maoris proved receptive to Christianity when unsuccessful in musket warfare — and when successful: and so it is difficult to argue that any coincidence in time is of any great significance. It is true that Maoris to the south often argued that Ngapuhi only turned to the missionaries in the late eighteen-twenties because their enemies were acquiring muskets. But as will be seen, other developments were at work in the Bay of Islands at that time which also seem to be present and of importance when other areas responded to Christianity. Perhaps warfare — and not simply disillusionment with warfare — hastened existing tendencies: it did not decide the moment when a tendency to Christianity would be revealed.

When we turn from social developments among the Maori to developments in missionary methods and resources, we find that Wright is far less alert and interested and a great deal is played down or left unsaid. It has already been suggested that the diffusion of Christian concepts began before the missionaries arrived and that we should not talk in terms of delayed response. Nonetheless, the response that took place was very meagre for some years and this can very largely, perhaps wholly, be explained by considering missionary resources and methods.

First there is Marsden’s theory of missions, that the Maori should first be taught the arts of civilization (as that word was understood in New South Wales) and that Christianity should follow in its wake. While the C.M.S. were predominantly engaged in planting wheat, shoemaking, blacksmithing and carpentering, Christian influence was minimal. When Henry Williams arrived in 1823 the whole emphasis changed. The main effort now was in learning the language and in preaching, even though practical skills were still taught. There are still many who will argue that Marsden’s theory of missions was a correct one for the Maori, and that if missionaries had offered nothing but the gospel they might not initially have been accepted. It is difficult to be sure of this as it was not tried; but certainly while the emphasis was on ‘civilization’ we do not have to look far to explain a meagre Christian impact. Bishop Stephen Neill, himself an experienced missionary, writes in the Pelican History of Christian Missions that the ‘civilization first’ approach has been tried in many countries and has proved a failure: ‘acceptance of the Gospel invariably comes

46 S. Percy Smith, Maori Wars of the Nineteenth Century, Christchurch, 1910, pp. 17-19. Some figures of Maori casualties, presumably interpretations of oral traditions, are to be found in T. W. Cudgeon, The History and Doings of the Maoris from the Year 1820 to the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Auckland, 1885.

47 Te Wherowhero, first Maori King, for example, expressed this point of view. ‘Journal of James Stack’, 16 November 1834, A.T.L. See also Wright, pp. 146-7.

48 Carleton, pp. 126-7.
before civilization, and not civilization before acceptance of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{49}

Secondly, although there are powerful criticisms of the quality of missionaries throughout this period,\textsuperscript{50} it is possible to detect an improvement in the quality and morale of the C.M.S. in the mid-eighteen-twenties, as new men with new ideas came in to give a vigorous lead on the spot. Wright gives no evidence to disprove the view that all the changes associated with the coming of Henry Williams were important. Two quotations will illustrate that the change was within the missionary ranks, not without. The Wesleyan, the Rev. Samuel Leigh, wrote to Marsden in 1822: ‘The discontent of your missionaries does not arise from what they meet with from the natives, but from what is among themselves.’\textsuperscript{51} Five years later Richard Davis of the C.M.S. wrote: ‘The New Zealand mission was never in the state before in which it is in now . . . Instead of discord and contention, a spirit of love and unity is manifested. The Missionaries are now going forth preaching the gospel and with their present acquirements they are enabled to preach, fluently in the native language, the unsearchable riches of Christ.’\textsuperscript{52}

Not only do we have a change in methods and an improvement in the quality and morale of C.M.S. missionaries, we also have a gradual increase in the amount of money spent on New Zealand missions. In round figures, the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society spent about £10,000 on the New Zealand mission in the decade before 1830 and about £23,000 in the decade after.\textsuperscript{53}

But of all the developments in the missionaries’ methods which made for a greater Maori response, probably nothing was more important than their gradual mastery of the Maori language and the translation and dissemination of the Bible and other religious works. Harrison Wright refers to the coming of literacy,\textsuperscript{54} but in the context of Maori misunderstanding of Christianity. It is of far greater significance than this. It is no coincidence that the great leap forward in missionary influence comes in the period when Maoris are learning to read and write in their own language and are being provided with books for the first time.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51}S. Leigh, to Samuel Marsden, 4 April 1822, Marsden, Correspondence and Letters, 1819-38, Vol. IV, H.L.
\textsuperscript{52}Richard Davis, to Rev. D. Coates, Davis, Letters and Journals, 1824-63, H.L.
\textsuperscript{53}‘Gross Annual Expenditure of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society on Account of New Zealand, since the commencement of the Mission’. Wesleyan Mission House, 8 February 1848, N.Z. II, 1835-40, Extracts, 1839-47, M.M.S.
\textsuperscript{54}Wright, pp. 174-6.
\textsuperscript{55}For details see C. J. Parr, ‘A Missionary Library. Printed Attempts to Instruct the Maori, 1815-1845’, \textit{J.P.S.}, Vol. 70, No. 4 (March 1961), 429-450; and ‘Maori Literacy, 1843-67’, \textit{J.P.S.}, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 1963); also...
There are many possible reasons for the enthusiasm for literacy which was everywhere apparent among Maoris. This universal response needs to be stressed — for if Maoris at every stage of European impact from the minimal to the considerable responded to literacy, then this response could have occurred in any decade. It occurred at the moment it did simply because the missionaries were at last producing the printed word in quantity. If it can be accepted that the spread of Christianity was very largely the consequence of the diffusion of literacy, and if it can also be accepted that this diffusion would have occurred whenever the missionaries perfected their knowledge of the Maori language and translated and printed enough religious works, then the attempt to analyze social changes among Maoris as our major explanation of the acceptance of Christianity is largely a vain pursuit.

Certain other points help to explain the effectiveness of literacy in establishing missionary influence. No other ideas were available to the Maori printed in their own language; and naturally enthusiasm for literacy spilled over into enthusiasm for the ideas conveyed by that means. This dominance of religious ideas meant that for a time energies which might have found expression in political or economic activity found their vent in the exercises of religion.

Even more important, the coming of printed materials meant that religious influences were at work regardless of the missionary. There are many instances of missionaries arriving in areas for the first time and finding their work already prepared by the printed word; and in 1835, when the work of the Wesleyan missionaries in the Hokianga was virtually suspended for the moment because of internal strife, John Whiteley recorded that God's influence seemed to be 'working amongst the people in a great measure independently of us'. Books printed by the C.M.S. and distributed in the Hokianga were being read until they dropped to pieces.56

Missionary activity in the South Island began at a later date, but Margaret E. Major's thesis argues that the coming of five hundred Testaments was the turning point for Watkin's mission at Waikouaiti and that there were similar results for Ironside's mission at Cloudy Bay.57 On 9 May 1839, James Buller commented in his journal that many who would not come to service would read books.58 This suggests that it is worth attempting to compare the results of the two


56 John Whiteley to J. Beecham, W.M. House, 5 January 1835, New Zealand II, 1835-40, File 1835, M.M.S.
58 James Buller to Secretaries, W.M.S., 5 June 1839, N.Z. II, 1835-40, File 1839, M.M.S.
main forms of the missionaries’ activity — through the religious books they prepared and, more directly, through personal influence.

Obviously there was great variation among missionaries: some, such as Henry Williams and Octavius Hadfield, had great mana, which went beyond matters of religion; at the other end of the scale were those who probably did more harm than good. Only rare individuals had the temperament to be successful mediators of European ideas in a Maori environment. But quite apart from this, there was much in the whole Protestant approach to missions which hampered influence. There was, for example, the missionary dread of committing ‘fornication among the heathen’; they would not, as would a Pakeha-Maori, take a Maori woman as a wife and live among the tribe. They had to be married to a European woman; this meant the first essential was to build a comfortable European home and to put a large fence around it. Maoris might become part of such a household, but only as ‘domestics’ or pupils. In order to support such an establishment they needed large supplies of trading goods, kept under lock and key, all of which created a feeling of deprivation among Maoris which was a significant part of the psychological framework in which the missionary message was interpreted.

Most missionaries had large families; for many, the onset of childbirth — ‘the time of nature’s sorrows’ — came almost every year; and it meant the stopping of missionary activity, sometimes for several months while the father tended his wife and family. As the children grew there were worries about education, about the consequences of their children growing up in a Maori environment; and, among the C.M.S., about buying Maori land to set up their young men in farms, practically the only opening available to them.

The pattern of missionary activity which followed from this was that of the ‘respectable’ middle-class Victorian who went slum visiting when time permitted. The points of contact were necessarily limited. Here as elsewhere much of the pattern of New Zealand race relations was foreshadowed by the class divisions of English society. It is true, as Wright says (pp. 133-7), that at times some missionaries, notably Thomas Kendall, made considerable concessions to Maori ways. But his picture of the mission station as ‘a small island of Western culture in New Zealand’ (p. 133) is more generally true of the period as a whole: and reading missionary journals one is soon impressed that for some years after their arrival they were still mentally in England. The gap between the two worlds was wide.

Yet for all this, missionary influence was profound. The paradox is explainable by considering the influence of the Maori teacher and the printed word. C. J. Parr has argued that ‘reading acquired great prestige from its association with the forms and ceremonies of the missionaries’ religion’. It would be more accurately expressed the other way round, that Christianity acquired great prestige from its association with literacy. Protestant missionaries naturally placed

50 Parr, ‘Maori Literacy’, 212.
great emphasis on the Bible; but they and Maori Christians also soon learnt that an appeal to ‘The Book’ was a telling point in argument. For example, a missionary wife recorded a Maori preacher saying: ‘Some of you old men there — who do you say made the world? You tell us Mawi, but where is your proof? Where is Mawi’s sacred book?’

Arnold Toynbee has expressed the point more generally in arguing that in the meeting between the World and the West there has generally been far less initial resistance to apparently neutral skills and techniques than there has been to ideas, especially religious ideas, associated with an alien culture. Literacy was the Trojan horse which introduced otherwise unacceptable ideas into the Maori camp. The Bible no doubt appeared strange, but there were aspects, especially in the Old Testament, which the European had sub-consciously played down as he moved into an urban civilization, but which had far more significance in a tribal, pre-industrial world. Hence the Maori interpretation of Christianity, as Wright has convincingly demonstrated, was very different from missionary expectations, whether that interpretation was found among the missionary following, or among the adjustment cults, which, as Ormond Wilson has shown, were early on the scene.

At first sight the appearance of an adjustment cult at the same time as missionaries are beginning to baptize in significant numbers presents a problem. The same society is apparently manifesting simultaneously acceptance and rejection of European influence. If, however, it is possible to stress that a Christianity largely absorbed through the written word and the ‘native’ teacher has its own distinctive emphasis, then the contrast between Maori cult and Maori Christianity may not be so considerable. For this reason a parallel study of the two movements and of the bearing of religious literature on Maori nationalism would be particularly rewarding.

Not only did the missionaries, as we have seen, bemoan that there were few conversions as they understood the word; many regretted also that their social impact was small. ‘They have given up their sanguinary wars’, wrote the Rev. John Waterhouse in 1840, ‘and the revolting scenes of cannibalism. They are remarkable for honesty but vagrant in their habits — universal smokers — selfish — dirty — and delight to herd together. They need line upon line on experimental and practical Christianity.’

60 Mrs. Eliza White, Journal 8, 25 October 1835, T.T.C.
63 John Waterhouse, Hobart, 8 September 1840, Missionary Register, 1841, XXIX, 238.
deserving poor in England, resisting the sermons that would transform them into godly mechanics.

Yet if missionaries sometimes doubted their influence, a modern writer, Eric Schwimmer, says of them: 'the transformation of Maori culture they caused was quite spectacular. They firmly established the image of Christ as the Prince of Peace. They also impressed deeply the image of the Jews as the Chosen People, their exile, their years in the wilderness, their guilt and atonement and their continuing closeness to God. These images were henceforth inseparable from all Maori religious thought even where it parted company with orthodox Christianity.'

But no last word will ever be said on the social consequences of missionary activity in New Zealand. The missionaries claimed much for themselves; and since they left voluminous records (far more than Pakeha-Maoris, traders and settlers), histories, even those with a hostile frame of reference, have continued to inflate their importance. If we are to assess their social influence, it must be in the context of all the other European influences at work before and throughout the period of missionary activity. This will always be a difficult task; but it will be rendered simpler if historians can devise an accurate terminology to describe the processes of social change in the early stages of European impact. Earlier objection was made to the use of the words 'decline' and 'disintegration' with regard to Maori culture. On this point the general theories of Evans-Pritchard are relevant: 'Some have tried to wriggle out of the difficulties involved in the study of primitive societies in process of rapid transformation by extending the organic analysis and saying that they are then in a pathological condition, but though there may be a means of discovering what is normal to societies of a certain type in the sense of what is general in, or common to, them, one cannot speak of 'normal' in the sense of the physiological analogy, because what is normal in a certain type of society may be abnormal in the type of society into which it is developing, and vice versa.'

In New Zealand, historians have generally assumed that eighteenth-century pre-European Maori society was normal; what occurred under European contact was decline and disintegration. This is probably a common New Zealand view, although L. M. Groube’s Auckland thesis ‘Settlement Patterns in Prehistoric New Zealand’ (1964) is evidence that the process of revision is under way. It is curious that we take no such nostalgic view of the Pakeha’s loss of his eighteenth-century heritage. There are obvious defects to both the ‘decline’ view and the contrary interpretation that what occurred was ‘progress’. Both views inject an unnecessary value judgement into the analysis, and the decline theory saddles the Maori with the idea that he is inferior, having been deprived of his heritage; and the Pakeha with the idea that he is guilty, having caused the deprivation. Not only

64 Schwimmer, The World of the Maori, p. 106.
65 E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Anthropology and History, Manchester, 1961, p. 11.
is it a bad basis for race relations, it is also a false way of describing social change.

Furthermore, a concept of 'Maori decline' generally lands missionaries in the rôle of scapegoats: for example, Keith Sinclair's *A History of New Zealand* uses a phrase about missionary activity: 'ideas were as destructive as bullets'. It is becoming common for New Zealand histories, following the pattern of reacting against earlier histories, to stress the negative social consequences of missionary activity. But while much of this is true, its significance will alter if it is placed in a different context. There are various lines of thought which would suggest a difference of emphasis.

Firstly, there is the view that we can too readily attribute to the missionaries changes which were the consequences of much wider influences, which were under way before the missionaries began, and which they could not have halted even if they had wished. Secondly, there is the view that the decision to accept or reject aspects of European culture rested finally, not with the missionary, but with Maoris themselves; to blame missionaries alone for what Maoris decided to adopt is to assume Maoris were incapable of making their own adjustments in the light of changed circumstances. As we have seen, Maoris did not always adopt the habits and values the missionaries thought they should; they were not dominated by the missionaries.

Finally, there is the view that contemporary historians judge missionary activity in a context of ideas totally alien to that of the missionaries themselves. This frequently happens when writers in one age consider the activities of another: but it is worth reflecting on the point of view expressed by Mircea Eliade who has said that 'a religious phenomenon will only be recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level, that is to say, if it is studied as something religious. To try to grasp the essence of such a phenomenon by means of physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, art or any other study is false: it misses the one unique and irreducible element in it — the element of the sacred.'

Earlier it was argued that, while religion is a social fact, religious ideas, such as those among the Maoris before 1840, are not simply an automatic reflection of social situations; they have a dynamic of their own. So the essence of the religious experience of the Maori is not to be explained simply in socio-economic terms, nor was the missionary simply a social worker, to be judged today by whether or not he played a constructive rôle in the process of acculturation.

This essay can be briefly summarised. It has rejected the view that there was a 'Maori conversion' in the eighteen-thirties and the view that 'social disintegration' would have been an essential pre-condition

66 Sinclair, pp. 41-43.
if such a conversion had occurred. It has rejected also the view that there was no response to Christian ideas in the period before missionary baptisms began. Instead it has argued that at every period there was great variety in the Maori response to Christian ideas, that to a certain extent both ideas and reactions were present even before formal missionary activity began and certainly before baptisms occurred. It has agreed that far greater missionary impact was evident in the eighteen-thirties than before; but as this impact was evident in areas at varying stages of acculturation, the explanations are sought, not so much in social conditions, as among missionary techniques. Considerable, but not exclusive, emphasis is placed on the missionary monopoly of the printed word, both as an explanation of the greater impact of Christian ideas and of the fact that a distinctive Maori interpretation was often placed on ideas which arrived divorced from a European framework.

J. M. R. OWENS

Massey University

THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND HISTORY

Volume XIV, No. 1

Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, July - December, 1967
Aspects of Australian Elections
Secretary Stimson and the First Pearl Harbour Investigation
Australian Federalism and National Development
The Naval Defence Agreement, 1887
The Birth of the Eight Hour Working Day Movement in New South Wales
Jefferson and James

A. Burns
David Butler
Warren U. Ober and Paul S. Burtness
A. J. Davies
Meredith Hooper
John Niland
J. R. Flynn

Price $1.50
Published Three Times Yearly
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS
St. Lucia 4067