Christianity and the Maoris to 1840
A COMMENT

Anthropologists commonly hold that a native society must undergo social dislocation before it is ready for conversion to Christianity. Dr Owens contests this view. He denies that the occurrence of a relatively large number of Maori conversions within a short time indicates a loss of confidence in the indigenous culture, and that a primary reason for adopting the new religion was that it was a means of mastering the secrets of the imported culture, hitherto apparently withheld. Instead, he offers the simpler solution that a cumulative awareness of Christianity will itself lead, with no dramatic transitions and at no particular stage in the experience of contact, to the adoption of the new religion by the native population. As a choice of religion is largely a personal and sacred experience, it may not have much to do with "broad social processes". Such processes, he believes, are almost impossible to define because of the difficulty of tracing any predominant general attitude towards Europeans in any given decade. To argue that the Maoris turned to Christianity as a solution to the problems introduced into their lives is, he asserts, a negative approach and one which denies them the freedom of choice. The greater efficiency of the missions in the 1830s and the spread of literacy are the main reasons for the more rapid diffusion of Christianity in this period, in comparison with the lack of success in preceding years. There is no other significance in the religious history of the 1830s and early 1840s. Indeed Owens denies the inherent validity of the questions: why was there a delay before any missionary impact became apparent? and why did the response come when it did?

Yet in the history of the nineteenth century missions in the South Pacific there appears a common pattern. First, there is a long period in which the words of the missionaries seem to make little impact, a period in which they themselves often succumb, in one form or another, to the pressures of the alien environment. This period is followed by a

2 ibid., 30.
relatively sudden breakthrough: the resistance of the indigenous people, formerly shown by their confident denials of the relevance of the new religion, crumbles quite markedly. Regular attendances at church and school rise sharply within a few years. In northern New Zealand there also emerges, simultaneous with the beginning of ‘conversion’, the first of the rival religious movements or heresy cults: a Maori prophet sets up his own quasi-Christian sect in opposition to the Europeans. This development is of significance because it indicates both the degree of absorption — or rather partial absorption — of Christian ideas and also the growth of hostility amongst some Maoris towards Europeans. The orthodox converts are also, in their turn, seeking to come to terms with the God whom they see as responsible for the marked changes in their lives. It is the direct power of this God, as taught by the missionaries and as demonstrated by the permanent advent of the Europeans, which alone can explain any conversions, not the mere knowledge of the religion itself. Not until the 1830s was the relevance of the power of this God to the Maoris widely conceded.

It was certainly apparent to the Anglican missionaries at the Bay of Islands that Maori attitudes towards them began to change decisively about the middle or late twenties. The Wesleyan station at Hokianga first reported a noticeable change of attitude near the end of 1833, following upon a period of initial indifference. It is the purpose of this article to show that such a change of attitude was not due solely to the cumulative effect of missionary preaching and the improvement of their techniques.

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The first ‘phase’ of the Anglican mission was marked by the failure of the settlers to become in any way independent of those whom they were attempting to convert. The Maoris of the northern Bay of Islands believed, quite rightly, that they controlled the missions; they also believed that the missions were there to suit their own purposes, which had nothing to do with the Christian religion. Because the missions appeared to be manifestly at the mercy of their protectors, the settlers’ attempts to persuade the Maoris of their moral inferiority and religious errors were hardly to be taken seriously.

The site of the first mission station at Rangihoua had been chosen because of the physical protection offered by the chief Ruatara. This decision was to be crucial in shaping the future of the mission. The steepness of the land meant that agriculture was virtually impossible: the mission could not be self-sufficient. This situation created insurmountable problems. The patron tribe exercised a virtual monopoly

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over their tenants and charged exorbitant prices for food.\textsuperscript{4} The Maoris demanded, in exchange, iron instruments and, increasingly, muskets. This was the period in which the Bay of Islanders’ desire for guns reached its apogee: particularly in the years 1818-22, a period in which the gun became the only article that they would take in trade. The missionaries were forced into the arms trade; to get guns they had to barter secretly with the visiting ships. The alternative was certainly very real hardship and possibly even starvation. The ships visiting the Bay in these years could exhaust the food supplies available,\textsuperscript{5} and their crews had no scruples about dealing in arms. The mission settlers were, therefore, drawn into trade with the Bay of Islanders essentially on Maori terms. With the establishment of the second station at Kerikeri in 1819, the settlers drifted finally into the orbit of Hongi Hika. From about 1819 until about 1824 they were impotent. They all knew the reason why the most powerful chief at the Bay had extended his protection over them: their presence drew other ships and therefore made it easier for him to acquire muskets. As James Kemp, the mission blacksmith, put it in December 1824: ‘Their object in letting us live amongst them, is to get all they can from us, self interest is the motive by which they are actuated’.\textsuperscript{6} Or, as Dumont d’Urville noted wryly, the mission labourers and the smith were the only ones who knew how to repair both Hongi’s guns and his warriors, damaged in the musket wars.\textsuperscript{7} The Maori behaviour towards the missionaries in this period reflected their certainty that they controlled the mission: ‘The Natives have been casting Balls all day in Mr Kemps Shop — They come in when they please, and do what they please and take away what they please’.\textsuperscript{8} Major Richard Cruise similarly observed that the protection of the Kerikeri station was maintained at the expense of ‘forbearance and humiliation. The natives, knowing too well that the missionaries are in their power, commit extensive depredations upon them, not unfrequently aggravating their extortions by acts of gross insult’.\textsuperscript{9} This

\textsuperscript{4} Kathleen Shawcross, ‘Maoris of the Bay of Islands, 1769-1840’, M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1967, pp. 299-300. Irregular and inadequate supplies were sent by the Reverend Samuel Marsden from New South Wales, but, by and large, he refused to believe that the settlers were permanently unable to support themselves. At one stage, he vowed that he would not send any more flour to encourage their idleness: they should sow or starve. This prohibition he was, of course, unable to sustain.

\textsuperscript{5} Especially in the years 1819-22; ibid., fig. viii and p. 256.

\textsuperscript{6} James Kemp to Samuel Marsden, 31 December 1824, MS., Auckland Public Library.


\textsuperscript{8} Francis Hall, 3 September 1821, Journal, Church Missionary Society (CMS) Archives, microfilm, CN/O49, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

\textsuperscript{9} Richard A. Cruise, \textit{Journal of a Ten Months’ Residence in New Zealand [1820]}, ed. A. G. Bagnall, Christchurch, 1957, p. 52. Such behaviour by the Maoris was evident at both the Rangihoua and Kerikeri mission stations from the beginning. The missionaries’ reliance on Hongi’s personal protection at Kerikeri and their consequent fear that the perpetual turbulence would increase to dangerous levels during his absence in 1820 caused them to forget that their survival depended simply on their co-operation in trade. Consequently, Maori behaviour was governed not by the desire to destroy, but to extort.
violence was, however, controlled violence, for the Maoris had no intention of driving the settlers away. From the beginning, patrons such as Ruatara had made clear the reason for their acceptance of the settlers in their land: the desire for European trade goods.\(^\text{10}\)

Almost without exception, Maori tribes sought to acquire a missionary because of the trade they associated with him. At Hokianga, Patuone protected the Wesleyans because of the goods and prestige they brought,\(^\text{11}\) and he considered himself to be their sole overlord. Requests for missionaries were sometimes subtly couched: one group complained that they were "believing for nothing" and wanted a Missionary to reside amongst them.\(^\text{12}\) Once the missionary arrived, as the Reverend Richard Taylor soon found at Putiki, the tribe treated him as their personal property and his fortunes were identified with theirs.\(^\text{13}\) This was the normal relationship established between any resident European and the group in which he lived. The missionaries, initially, were treated as all other European residents were treated. But there was a crucial difference between the first stations established in the Bay of Islands and the later stations: experience had taught the missionaries that they must be economically independent of their protectors. Taylor, unlike the early CMS settlers, never had to trade on Maori terms to subsist.\(^\text{14}\)

In the north, the winning of economic independence was the first crucial step towards the settlers becoming effective as missionaries. Until this time, they existed in the Maori world on Maori terms. No motives of religion were behind Hongi's protection of the mission: he stated cheerfully that Christianity might be suited to a nation of slaves but was irrelevant for one of warriors.\(^\text{15}\) He succeeded in delaying the arrival of George Clarke in New Zealand for two years because, knowing Clarke was once an apprentice gunsmith, he made pretty clear what his tasks would be. Clarke stayed in New South Wales. When he finally arrived the chief gave him a cold welcome: 'It was a good workman I wanted, not another ariki. I have already too many of them.'\(^\text{16}\)

Certain factors were to modify the total dependence of the missionaries on their patrons. First was the decline of the demand for muskets at the Bay from about 1823.\(^\text{17}\) From this date probably every warrior

\(^\text{10}\) J. R. Elder, ed., The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765-1838, Dunedin, 1932, p. 69.
\(^\text{11}\) Augustus Earle, A Narrative of a Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand in 1827, London, 1832, p. 28.
\(^\text{14}\) ibid., p. 144.
\(^\text{15}\) Dumont d'Urville, Voyage pittoresque, II, 388.
\(^\text{17}\) Shawcross, pp. 256-60.
in this area had a gun. The decrease coincided with the arrival of the new leader, Henry Williams, who once more prohibited the arms trade. But the fact that this ban could be upheld, unlike earlier bans, was not due merely to stronger leadership within the mission. The reduced demand made it possible for the mission to find a more adequate basis for their trade. By the late twenties the blanket had become the alternative to the musket.

The second factor was the launching of the missionary ship Herald, which permitted trade with Maoris outside the Bay of Islands until wrecked in May 1828. She was soon replaced by the Active, the small cutter Karere, and, finally, in 1835, by a ship suited to coastal navigation, the schooner Columbine. In this way, the missionaries were able to break the economic monopoly. Consequently, the Maoris at the Bay, from the mid-twenties began to realise that too severe a ‘pluck’ of their Europeans was, as a long term policy, disadvantageous. This realization was strengthened by the missionaries’ use, for the first time, of the threat of withdrawal: a threat which nearly became a reality in 1827. The subsequent move inland to the ‘very heart of the Enemy’s Country’, which had been closed against them, to find the Waimate agricultural station, reflected the Anglican missionaries’ newfound confidence; this, in turn, at least in the early years, helped to increase their economic independence. It is quite apparent that the missionaries in the 1830s, with their own gardens well established and with more regular food supplies from New South Wales, were in a much stronger economic position. Less effort was devoted to manual labour, partly as a policy decision but largely because chores occupied less time as the missions became established and the number of settlers increased. They also gathered more Maori domestic servants: at Te Waimate, a separate little community of twenty-five Maori helpers and their families had grown up by 1833.

Once the settlers were relatively independent in the matter of foodstuffs, they could begin preaching in a wider area. Instead of being preoccupied with the problem of survival, they began to travel further and further from their stations in search of audiences. Once they showed their independence their words began to take effect. They ceased to be simply Europeans and became missionaries.

The missionaries themselves dated the change of attitude shown towards them fairly specifically and they argued specific causes for this change. The clearest exponent of this viewpoint is William Yate. He dated the ‘first successful interference’ in Maori society from about


\[19\] On the expectation that they would be plundered after the sack of the Wesleyan station at Kaeo, the Anglicans packed their belongings.

\[20\] William Yate, Missionary Register, February 1831, p. 113.

One of the reasons he offers is also put forward by Owens: that of the official change of policy from 'civilization' to 'Christianization' under Henry Williams's leadership. Williams argued that the missions would make no progress until they put the gospel first. Civilisation, he believed, would be the 'fruit of Christianity, for only Christianity would supply the motive for initiation into the new way of life. The objective is not changed: to assimilate the Christian Maori into a European way of life. The significance of this idea in itself will be examined later.

The stress Williams placed on the direct teaching of Christianity undoubtedly revitalised the waning enthusiasm of the Anglican settlers. From the latter part of 1826 the new policy was put into practice: increased preaching in wider areas, increased attention to the schools, increased efforts to master the language to make themselves more readily understood, the beginning of the systematic translation for publication of parts of the Bible into Maori. But none of these efforts alone created an effective rôle for the missionaries in Maori life. The decisive factor in the Bay area was the gradual alteration of the Maori attitudes towards the missionaries. What distinguishes the earlier period from the thirties is the lack of readiness to receive the teachings of the missionaries because the ideas seemed totally irrelevant to themselves and their way of life. As one Maori explained to William Yate, 'If we were to do as you say we must do we should not be able to keep up our native ways. — We believe what you say is right & good but it won't do for a N Zer. It is of no use your talking to us we shall never mind you. When I asked him the reason why he should never mind me — he said — because he was a native — and had got a native heart & his native heart would do very well till he died. I could obtain nothing more from him.' That Christianity became, to a certain extent, 'fashionable' in the later thirties in the north can only be understood in terms of the receptiveness and enthusiasm of the people.

The relationship between the Bay Maoris and the missions changed first when the settlers broke their economic dependence and when war-weariness created for them a distinct rôle in Maori society, that of peacemakers. The invitation to Henry Williams to mediate in a dispute between the Hokianga and Bay tribes in 1828 was critical because he was asked. William Yate believed that the missionaries' authority in the

22 Evidence given 12 February 1836 before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, William Yate, Journal 1833-1845. Microfilm of originals in the possession of the late Mr. K. A. Webster, ATL.

23 It is probable, as G. W. Shroff commented, with reference to James Kemp and George Clarke in particular, that the frequent inattention of the Maoris can be explained 'in part by a reluctance to listen to a halting unimaginative discourse, and pain at the tortures inflicted upon the Maori tongue by broad Norfolk accents.' ('George Clarke and the New Zealand Mission, 1824-1850' M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1967, p. 55.) Learning the language still tended to be relegated to wet Saturday afternoons or evenings after a long day's work, but both Kemp and Clarke realised that all the missionaries should learn Maori before they commenced any other activities.

24 Yate to CMS, 1 May 1829, Yate Letters, CMS microfilm, CN/O99a.
country dated from that intervention.\textsuperscript{25} In the same year Henry Williams and other missionaries were for the first time invited to \textit{hahunga} feasts,\textsuperscript{26} justifying Williams's claim that they had now acquired considerable influence with the Bay Maoris.\textsuperscript{27}

The request for Henry Williams to act as peacemaker is the first indication of the gradual spread of war-weariness among the Bay Maoris. For in Maori society there was no mechanism for creating peace; peace, rather, was simply an interval between two campaigns.\textsuperscript{28} The advent of the gun had destroyed the uneasy balance of warfare in Maori society. By 1828 the tribes of the Bay and Hokianga were armed to the teeth and both sides knew from experience that the outcome would be the loss of too many lives. Warfare had gone beyond control and beyond sanity.

Exhaustion, and a failure to achieve decisive victories, despite Hongi's orgy of killing in the earlier twenties, explain the appeal to the men of peace. Henry Williams's successful adjudication of 1828 was followed by requests for intervention elsewhere. Of course, he was not always asked nor always successful, but the peace movement gained in strength rather than declined in the next decade.\textsuperscript{29}

Owens has argued that war losses or indeed war itself, although accelerated by the gun, were not noticeably factors in Maori 'conversion' to Christianity. They were, however, noticeably factors in a new mood of despair, reported by almost every European commentator in the thirties. It has been estimated that Ngapuhi, the victor confederation of tribes in the twenties, lost about 19\% of their men in these battles.\textsuperscript{30} It is difficult to ignore this aspect, particularly in light of the

\textsuperscript{25} Evidence given 12 February 1836, Journal 1833-1845.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Hahunga} feasts were held at the disinterring and cleansing of the bones of the dead, before their final burial.
\textsuperscript{27} Shawcross, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{28} A. P. Vayda, \textit{Maori Warfare}, Wellington, 1960, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{29} Shawcross, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{30} J. Rutherford, 'Note of Maori Casualties in their Tribal Wars 1801-1840', Second draft, MS., History Department, University of Auckland. Rutherford's attitude throughout was one of caution. He worked on the basis of the following population estimates: c. 200,000 in 1769, c. 170,000 in 1800, dropping to c. 100,000 in 1840. The drop in the later eighteenth century is based on the assumption of the occurrence of disease and a bad epidemic in the nineties. This decline may well be exaggerated and accounts for his estimating a greater overall drop than H. M. Wright: c. 200,000 in 1769 to c. 125,000 in 1840. Rutherford suggests that the minimum Maori death roll in battle, 1801-1840, is 16 per cent, probably 20 per cent. These figures would represent about one-fifth to one-quarter of the male fighting population. He states that there are records of at least 633 battles in these years. The losses are unequally distributed, but even for Ngapuhi the price of victory was high. Rutherford estimates their losses at a minimum of 2,500 to a probable 3,000 out of a population of 17,000 in 1801; probable percentage killed, lost, and captured amounting to 19 per cent. Mrs Shawcross, p. 366, stresses that Ngapuhi losses probably grew between 1826 and 1830 as their enemies acquired guns; she estimates the Bay of Islands' population, less than the total Ngapuhi confederation, to be over 12,000 in 1820 (p. 257). Other tribes were variously affected: the Bay of Plenty tribes, suggests Rutherford, were terrorised by Ngapuhi guns, but once they became possessors of arms themselves they set on each other and Ngatikahungunu of the East Coast; Ngatiwhatua of the Kaipara area were decimated by Ngapuhi 1821-5 and, as a result, dispersed for a decade: their probable losses, 31 per cent. Under the
fact that the missionaries’ God of Peace, specifically rejected in that rôle by Hongi, became relevant for the first time in a period of marked lack of success in war. Owens has also argued that, south of the Bay, there is no evidence that disillusionment with warfare played a significant part in ‘conversion’. In support, he cites Janet Ross’s thesis on the work of Richard Taylor. But Miss Ross, in fact, demonstrated that at Putiki the desire for peace was one of the reasons the Maoris there accepted a missionary and accepted Christianity. In Wanganui generally, she states, a pattern emerged of adopting the peace terms arranged by the missionaries rather than fighting, abandoning war under missionary encouragement, and gradually turning towards Christianity. Taylor also discovered that Maoris who had been ‘self-converted’ were using Christianity as a justification for peace negotiations.\(^{31}\) The Christian Maoris of Putiki became pacifists and refused to support the government with arms when urged. Miss Ross also showed that the war at Wanganui in 1847 ushered in a large-scale movement towards Christianity, a movement which she compared with that of the thirties in Northland.\(^ {32}\) Peace was the major change that the Maoris associated with Christianity.\(^ {33}\)

The establishment of the new stations to the south had been, in part, a response to requests which were ‘not altogether that they may be instructed by us’, but which showed, said Henry Williams, ‘to say the least they know that the Missionary is the messenger of peace’.\(^ {34}\) From Tauranga, during 1836 and 1837, Alfred Brown observed that men were refusing to join in the ‘fights’ against Rotorua because they were ‘believing’. The Reverend John Morgan is equally definite in connecting the desire for peace with the spread of Christianity in the Tauranga, Matamata, and Rotorua districts. Morgan commented that it was of great importance to ‘prove ourselves persons uninterested in their quarrels . . . . and as opportunities offered endeavour to act as mediators between the contending tribes . . . . It was during these dark days, and while still casting our bread upon the troubled waters, that the Gospel worked its silent way and we found our labours in the Lord were not in vain’.\(^ {35}\) Every month, he added, they gained fresh converts

\(^{31}\) Ross, pp. 52-54.
\(^{32}\) ibid., pp. 67-68. In 1848, Taylor baptised 1019 Maoris, most of whom were from communities near Putiki, but who had previously refused to become Christians.
\(^{33}\) ibid., p. 69.
\(^{34}\) Letters of Henry Williams, II. Williams to CMS, 3 February 1834, typescripts, AIM.
\(^{35}\) Letter in the form of a diary to Thomas Morgan, November 1849. Letters and Journals of the Rev. John Morgan, II, 420, 426, typescripts, AIM.
on the return of each fighting party: the young men, he observed, were firm in the profession of war-weariness. After two years from the beginning of the wars between Matamata and Rotorua (1836) the ‘old’ chiefs could not raise sufficient forces: taua of 600 to 800 men were reduced to 200 or 300. In 1840 Morgan concluded that, in the ‘disturbed districts’ where many had grown sick of war, the ‘Gospel made rapid progress’ and even a few of the older men were beginning to join in the movement to Christianity. At a feast held at Rotorua in 1845, to which former enemies from Tauranga were invited as well as the missionaries, the Christian Maoris spoke: ‘Let us try if we [the Christian Maoris] cannot make a peace, the root of which shall be the word of God. This peace, so made, may stand’.

William Yate offered a third reason for the increased number of ‘converts’ in the eighteen thirties. In 1836, in reply to the question asked by the Select Committee of the House of Commons, ‘Have they not certain customs called tapuing which form a material obstacle to their civilization and improvement’, he said that they ‘still form a material obstacle in the southern parts of the island—but not in the north for they are nearly extinct’. Tapu, he believed, had been removed through the agency of the missionaries ‘all within the last six years . . . . It was so great an obstacle before that nothing could be done’. This confident assertion, although considerably exaggerated, reflects one of the primary reasons for the breakthrough of the missions. The settlers had made it their specific purpose to undermine belief in certain aspects of Maori culture as a precondition of being accepted as a Christian. To make converts, therefore, they intended deliberately to ‘interfere’ with Maori society and thereby pave the way for the acceptance of the Christian God and, then, European civilisation. A brief analysis of the mission purposes and techniques will also illuminate the effects they achieved: a disruption of tribal society where they worked, this being the precondition for the adoption of the new God.

The missionary purpose had always been deliberate interference in Maori society—a purpose based on very questionable assumptions about the connection between Christianity and civilisation. The initial settlers came with the intention to ‘excite a spirit of trade’ amongst the Maoris. They set out to create ‘artificial wants to which [the Maoris] had never before been accustomed, and which [they] knew must act

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36 ibid., pp. 440, 451-2, 454. William Yate, writing in 1834, gave similar evidence of the strength of the desire for peace. On a journey through the Thames district, he described two incidents: Te Horeta of Kaweranga asked: why have the missionaries ‘“come to dwell with us for? They are come to break our clubs & to establish peace here”’. A European visiting Kaweranga from the Waikato districts told Yate that in those parts they were ‘“mad for Missionaries & all their talk is about where they are to live, & their willingness to go anywhere to fetch them[“]”. He describes them as being tired of fighting, but that they cannot cease their warfare till the Missionaries interfere, & bring the various chiefs together & make peace between them.’ Journal, 3-4 January 1834.

37 Evidence given 12 February 1836, Journal 1833-1845.
as the strongest excitement to the exercise of [Maori] ingenuity. In response to these new needs the missionaries would teach new skills which would turn the Maoris into civilised and godly 'mechanics'. Their purpose was ultimately the reconstruction of 'the whole system of their internal and external economy'.

The missionaries succeeded in making themselves indispensable to the Maoris through trade. It was in order to maintain and increase trade that the Maoris at the Bay modified their behaviour towards Europeans, missionary and non-missionary, about 1824-6. Trade was the 'Trojan horse' which carried in the 'otherwise unacceptable ideas into the Maori camp'. It was this desire for the apparently neutral skills and techniques which aroused many Maori communities to ask for a missionary for themselves. In the teaching of that missionary Christianity and 'civilisation' were never in practice separated.

As well as attempting to create an ascendancy based on trade—an ascendancy effectively begun about the mid-1820s—the missionaries sought to attack Maori social customs. Believing in the superiority of civilised man, they set out to rescue the 'ignoble savage' from the bondages of sin (Maori culture) and Satan (the Maori gods). One approach was to make the Maoris realise that Christian society was the result of God's favour: that the material prosperity of the Europeans was directly connected with their religion. As Henry Williams put it: 'Once we were as you are, clad as you are, living in houses similar to yours, but you see now we possess all things'. The 'whole emphasis' was not changed with the change of policy. One direct sequel was the insistence that school pupils wear European clothes instead of 'their own filthy raiment'. The gradual and more general adoption (rather than adaptation) of European clothing in the thirties, while not directly the result of missionary teaching, reflects the spread of such ideas. Christianity was not presented to the Maori 'divorced from a European framework'; it was specifically taught in connection with the stressed inferiority of Maori culture and the superiority of European culture. The 'depravity' of Maori culture was considered the result of the sinfulness of the people. Amazed to find that the Maoris lived unaware of the 'just' torment of guilt the missionaries set out 'to make

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39 ibid., p. 17. William Yate asserted similar premises in An Account of New Zealand, p. 247.
40 Shawcross, pp. 296-7, 302.
41 Owens, 37.
42 loc. cit.
43 Conversation of the missionaries with the chiefs Shunghee, Rewa, Titori, Hihì, Uduroa, Pakido, Tenama', Kerikeri, 15 November 1825, CMS Mission Books, IV, 48, microfilm, ATL.
44 Owens, 33.
45 The description is Thomas Kendall's, School roll for August 1816, MSS Vol. 56, item 23, Hocken Library, University of Otago.
46 Owens, 40. I use the phrase in a different context: see below p. 164.
them feel their bonds. There is no seeking after Christ till the fetters of sin and satan gall the Spirit.—I do not think at present that there is a native in the whole island who knows what it is to feel the burden of iniquity.—Though they are all pressed down with a weight more tremendous than I can describe they are unconscious of it.47

Obviously, the missionaries cannot be held responsible for every aspect of cultural change in the nineteenth century; but they have acquired their ‘inflated’ importance48 because their policy was one of total cultural change. As the first Maori Grammar stated, ‘Ka ore kau toa te anga iwi pakeha. The white men deny every thing.’49

Maori religious beliefs were deliberately attacked in order to establish the veracity of Christianity. Yate commented on the belief in a spirit land to which all souls went after death, ‘I think if we can dive to the bottom of this we shall have some good ground to break up & work upon.’50 Samuel Marsden denied the validity of tapu—God ‘would never be angry with them for making use of their own hands to eat their provisions . . . if He had not intended that they should use them for all purposes He would not have made them any hands’—but taught that the European social prohibitions were inviolate. It was useless, he said, to expect tapu to heal wounds, preserve from danger, restore to health, or save from death, but God could do all these things.51 There are early instances of the deliberate defilement of tapu to test the previously unquestioned, before there are many indications allowed, or rather demanded, the death of the Maoris. The missionaries preached the idea of a God who intervened directly in men’s affairs at a time when disease and war were rampant among the northern Maoris.

It has been shown that, although respiratory diseases came in epidemic proportions in the twenties and earlier, the greatest wave of epidemics occurred in the thirties: cholera, influenza, and later still smallpox.52 V.D. also took its toll. The Maoris died while the Europeans lived: it would seem that the God of the white faces protected his people and allowed, or rather demanded, the death of the Maoris. The missionaries did nothing to dissuade them from this belief: sickness, they said, is the result of sin.53

In 1820, the Maoris’ reply to this argument was that ‘our God and theirs were different. They said that I might violate their taboos, eat in their houses, or dress my provisions upon their fires—their god would not punish me, but he would kill them for my crimes.’54 It was a logical initial response to cultural and physical differences. But by the

47 Yate to CMS, 14 April 1829, CN/O99a.
48 Owens, 38.
51 1820 Journal, Marsden, Letters and Journals, p. 274.
52 Shawcross, p. 368.
53 For example, James Shepherd, 3 June 1822, Journal, CMS microfilm, CN/O765.
54 1820 Journal, Marsden, Letters and Journals, p. 286.
thirties, numbers of Maoris were saying that the Pakeha god had sent the lizard of death, ngarara, to devour the entrails of his enemies.\textsuperscript{55} It is estimated that by 1840 the population of New Zealand had declined by two-fifths.\textsuperscript{56} While it is undoubtedly true that the possible repercussions of disease were many, that some individuals would be angered\textsuperscript{57} rather than seek out the god blamed for the diseases they called mate pakeha, the cumulative effects of recurrent epidemics can be associated with the movement towards Christianity simply because many Maoris were afraid.

There were some who chose to reject the missionary teachings altogether, but because of the changes in their lives they could no longer rely on the old gods. Papahurihia, like all the cargo cults, adapted the European religion of rewards (and punishments) in the most direct way. The heaven proffered to the followers of the seer specifically excluded the Evangelical missionaries, but contained all the goodies of the Europeans' civilisation: "Everything is found in plenty, flour, sugar, guns, ships; there too murder and sensual pleasure reign."\textsuperscript{58} At the same time, the need to mollify all potential enemies was recognised by the prophet: "You who pray to the god of the missionaries, continue to do so, and in your praying see you make no mistakes . . . . It is good to have more than one god to trust to."\textsuperscript{59}

By 1840 another cause for uncertainty had emerged: during the discussions around the treaty of Waitangi, the fear of the loss of land was voiced. In the previous year there had been an abortive attempt at Kaikohe to form an anti-land selling compact under the direction of the Anglican missionary Richard Davis,\textsuperscript{60} while six years earlier George Clarke had reported the depression which had overtaken some of the Bay Maoris: "they very often with the most unaccountable apathy . . . tell us they shall leave their country to us and our children".\textsuperscript{61} This fear was not only confined to the northerners: in 1835 an old chief told Brown that the land he was selling him 'would remain for ever to produce food . . . while the payment he asked would soon come to an end.' Brown commented, 'Poor man! He seems to entertain correct views of the . . . transient nature of earthly riches, but yet his heart grasps after them.'\textsuperscript{62}

Owens has, however, laid his stress not on the Maoris but on the missionaries; he has argued that the new policies, the greater efficiency of the missions, and probably the quality of the men themselves made them more effective in gaining 'converts' in the thirties in the north.

\textsuperscript{55} For example, Kemp to CMS, 6 November 1827, MSS Vol. 70, item 24, Hocken.
\textsuperscript{57} Owens, 25.
\textsuperscript{59} Maning, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{60} Shawcross, p. 373.
\textsuperscript{61} To CMS, 13 September 1833, MSS Vol. 60, item 43, Hocken.
\textsuperscript{62} I, 3 July 1835.
All these points are worth making. One should not, nevertheless, believe uncritically in such hyperbole like Richard Davis's—'a spirit of love and unity' has replaced 'discord and contention'—especially if one has read the journals. The most important aspect brought out by Owens is that of the association of Christianity with the spread of literacy. What is also clear is that literacy became fashionable because of the desire to master the secrets of the European world, which, it was assumed, were contained in the ritual words. Recent anthropological studies show that societies which have known only oral communication will use language functionally, to bring about actual effects. This context of action will be extended to the use of the written word when it is introduced into a non-literate society. The Bible was adopted by the new literate leaders because they considered the words themselves contained the power. They believed that by an exact recitation of the texts the desired goal, communication with the supernatural, would be achieved. Hence one may find that books are viewed as 'objets trouvés': their power is seen as intrinsic, they are symbolic objects, and the actual content may well be irrelevant. This is not to argue that the Christian Maoris did not read and debate the theological issues; indeed they relished such disputes and would hold up the Bible as the absolute authority against the 'old believers', who had no texts. The Bible was considered to provide the means of access to the Christian God. What they expected to gain is most blatantly revealed in the heretical cults: material wealth, power, and the knowledge of the Europeans, which were given by God.

Consequently, it is to be expected that early converts would include chiefs. As Harrison Wright pointed out, if they were intelligent individuals, their attitudes would be 'determined by whatever seemed most

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63 Davis, 1827, cit. Owens, 34.
64 It is noticeable that the Roman Catholic missionaries were at a disadvantage because, as they considered themselves to be the sole interpreters of the Bible, they had no texts to distribute. Nor were they allowed to barter in trade goods of any kind. Rather, the Catholic missionaries found that their popularity tended to be related to anti-British or, later, anti-government sentiments; their followers saw themselves as political rivals of those who had accepted the English missionaries and were often outspoken critics of government policy. Rewa, of Kerikeri, a man who was noted for his considerate attitude towards the CMS settlers but who refused to become a convert of theirs, became a Catholic and spoke savagely against the treaty of Waitangi: 'Send the man away; do not sign the paper; if you do, you will be reduced to the condition of slaves, and be obliged to break stones for the roads. Your land will be taken from you, and your dignity as chiefs will be destroyed'. (Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers Relative to New Zealand [G.B.P.P.], 1841/311, p. 8.) The Catholic missionaries also discovered that their image of the straight tree, from which the Protestant branches had spread, was helpful in persuading doubtful pupils as to which sect to choose in all the confusion.
65 Michael Jackson, 'Literacy, Communications, and Social Change: The Maori Case, 1830-1870', M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1967, pp. 96-99. Jackson argues that symbolism in non-literate societies is used quite differently than in literate societies: in the former the symbol and effect are one. Hence speakers will use imagery, where the two are conceived as one, but not metaphor (ibid., p. 106).
66 ibid., pp. 177-9.
likely to maintain their own high status'.\(^{67}\) And, if, as Yate believed, serious inroads were being made on the efficacy of tapu, then those whose prestige, personal sanctity, and political powers depended on tapu, must seek an alternative or supplementary protective force to sustain their authority. The 1830s saw the emergence of the first new literate leaders, men who, in adapting themselves to the changing situation, attained (or recovered) status within their own society.\(^{68}\) One would also expect that there would be a disproportionately high number of younger men among the new 'converts'. There would be a gap between generations: the new ideas would tend to be associated with the irrevocably changing world, the world of the younger men. Missionary journals bear out these expectations.

One of the premises of missionary teaching was the conviction that it would be preferable to isolate individual Maoris from frequent contact with their own society. At Te Waimate, cottages were built for the Maori domestic servants in the hope that the village would become a model community. It was amongst these settlement Maoris, constantly 'exposed both to the material wealth and the religious convictions of the missionaries that the first significant progress' was noted in this district.\(^{69}\) In a similar way, but on a more ambitious scale, the 'enquiring' Maoris in the Wanganui, Matamata, and Tauranga districts were encouraged to form themselves into separate communities. This development was associated not only with the rejection of the pursuit of war, but was also an attempt to find new social controls for the believers. The first of the separatist communities at Matamata was devised by Tarapipipi, the future King-maker. He attracted some four hundred followers and drew up a tentative set of moral prescriptions from the Ten Commandments. These were to be the required code of behaviour for residence in the pa.\(^{70}\) Tarapipipi was one of the new charismatic leaders, whose authority was partly founded on his ability to master the knowledge of the Europeans. Some twenty years later, as a political figure whose life was directed to sustaining Maori identity through inter-tribal organisation, he was still described as one who based his case on religious maxims, seeming to find the laws of Leviticus best suited 'to the wants of an uncivilized nation'.\(^{71}\)

Isolation could be used in other ways. The most vulnerable members of the Maori communities were the sick and the slaves, each in different ways cut off. Preaching amongst slaves was deliberately pursued because the missionaries knew that thereby the knowledge would be carried to other tribes.\(^{72}\) All this is not to argue that such men were the only, the

\(^{67}\) Wright, p. 156.

\(^{68}\) Jackson, pp. 177-9.

\(^{69}\) Shroff, p. 153. In the years when the 'status' of the baptised was fairly regularly recorded at the Waimate station, 1830-1834, it is noticeable that those baptised from Te Waimate and Kerikeri were predominantly mission workers and domestic servants. Waimate Registers, microfilm, AIM.

\(^{70}\) Brown II, 16-17 February 1839.


\(^{72}\) William Yate, evidence given 13 February 1836, Journal 1833-1845.
major, or necessarily the first groups from whom converts were drawn. Nor was the mood of the 'enquirers' a despairing one: enthusiasm is quite evident. Literacy and religion seemed to offer access to new ideas and the means of adjusting to an altered world. The importance of the missionaries is that they made the Maoris aware that there was a choice.

At this point, it is relevant to consider a definition of the term 'conversion'. Owens rightly pointed out the need to distinguish between conversion in the full theological sense and 'conversion' in the sense of a general turning towards Christian ideas. But, by limiting his discussion to 'members', 'communicants', and 'neophytes' in the three churches, he shifted the basis of Wright's argument. Wright stated that by 1840 'certainly not even half the Maoris were nominal churchgoers', but that by 1845, on Clarke's evidence, about two-thirds of the Maori population, or about 64,000, were attending Church services. Owens denied the validity of including the 'mere' attendants in the assessment, for he argued that they were not 'converts'. By limiting his numbers to those who had undergone a valid religious experience, who had been 'made over in mind and spirit', (which definition would not necessarily correlate with the numbers of the baptised nor with communicants), he denies the significance of the wider interest in Christianity. By resting his argument on this premise, he dismissed a large proportion of Maoris who identified themselves as Christians. The attendance figures at the schools and services are far greater than the baptismal figures. Many of last year's enquirers had not undergone the requisite spiritual 'rebirth' to make this year's baptismal lists. But the former still considered themselves 'missionary Maoris'.

**TABLE I.**

The Maori baptismal figures from the Kerikeri, Kororareka, Paihia, and Waimate Registers, covering the Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, and Kaikohe districts, are small, as compared with the attendance figures at the schools and services. Apart from the exceptional year at Te

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73 Wright, pp. 141, 164-5.
74 Owens, 21. As Owens admits, the missionaries themselves had different criteria for 'acceptability'.
75 Nevertheless, the baptismal figures are the only reliable statistical indications of the impact of the missionaries in their respective districts. Unfortunately, the baptismal figures for all the CMS stations have not yet been collected, but Table I, p. 158, gives totals of their baptisms, 1823-42, compiled from the records kept at the Bay of Islands. Wright, p. 162, cites the overall estimates given in the Church Missionary Record for attendants, scholars, and communicants at Anglican institutions for the years 1836-42. Mrs Mabbett, in the April 1969 issue of this Journal, pointed out that Owens misinterpreted the CMS figures for their new communicants in 1841 (as cited by Wright) as being a cumulative total. During the years 1836-41, the CMS, it would appear, admitted to communion 1388 Maoris. Wright's annual totals may be compared with Table II, the same details for the separate stations in July 1840, as estimated by the CMS Secretary, and Table III, a list of communion services and communicants kept at Waimate, 1840-42.
Waimate station in 1840 (a celebratory year?), they show a pattern of irregular though not spectacular rise and reflect the fairly careful control the CMS maintained over baptisms, as well as the limits imposed by the presence of only a few ordained men. In 1838 Henry Williams, contrasting the Wesleyans’ willingness to baptise large numbers of candidates with the Anglicans’ strictness, commented that they had only four ordained clergy, who were authorised to baptise, although they had twenty-two lay members: ‘It is too evident that our hands are tied in these respects’. (Letters, II, Williams to CMS, 24 September 1838.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Waimate Registers</th>
<th>Pahia Registers</th>
<th>Kerikeri Registers</th>
<th>Kororareka Register</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>173 (+10)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2125 (+10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 1279 637 711 (+10) 221 130 48 5 2 2125 (+10) 908

(Kerikeri Register, Mr. A. E. Kemp, Kerikeri; Waimate Registers, Bay of Islands Registers, microfilms, AIM.) It will be noticed that the baptism of the old chief Rangi, before his death in 1825, is not recorded on the Pahia Registers. There are probably other omissions. The published Anglican yearly estimates are often higher: see Wright, p. 163.

TABLE II.

CMS Schools, Congregations, and Communicants, July 1840.

‘NORTHERN DISTRICT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>When formed</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Sexes Mixed</th>
<th>Youths &amp; Adults</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Congregations</th>
<th>Communicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tepuna</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerikeri &amp; Wangawa [sic]</td>
<td>1818 [sic]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahia</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waimate</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiaia</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>2,815</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOUTHERN DISTRICT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>When formed</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Sexes Mixed</th>
<th>Youths &amp; Adults</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Congregations</th>
<th>Communicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotorua</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauranga</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauraki</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manukau</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern District</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>2,815</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>1,444</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>2,562</td>
<td>4,644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(G.B.P.P. 1840/582, p. 182.) It is presumed that, as the total for communicants was apparently compiled from the 1839 figures for the newly admitted candidates to communion at each station, the other figures also represent the regular attendances in that year. Compare these details with Table III.
TABLE III.
For the years 1840-42, the CMS kept a record at Te Waimate of the communion services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of services</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Largest number of Maori communicants at one service</th>
<th>Total number of Maoris taking communion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kerikeri, Waimate</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Waimate, Whangaroa</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kaitaia, Kerikeri, Mangakahia, Okau, Toutoka, Waimate, Whangaroa.</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>2,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(These figures are totals not individuals.)

Whatever interpretation or meaning these 'Christian' Maoris derived from Christian teachings, clearly they were now treating seriously what before they had generally ridiculed and rejected. If there is to be debate about the validity of the use of the term 'conversion', because of the problems of the nature of the conversions, it might be better to adopt, as Mrs Shawcross has done, the Maori term 'going mihanere'.

A Christian Maori of the 1830s, she suggests, might best be defined as one who considered himself a mihanere Maori, who attempted to follow the prescriptions and codes of behaviour as laid down by his mihanere, and who regularly attended the church services. Many Maoris did misunderstand Christianity, asking for example whether food and tobacco were available in heaven and adding the Three-in-One God to the existing pantheon. But to argue that because of such misunderstandings one cannot talk of a 'Maori conversion', since there has not been a fundamental change of ideas, seems to be very arbitrary. Owens cites the superficiality of the changes to prove the lack of real comprehension of Christianity; from that point the argument is extended through a false equation—that is, that a limited religious impact indicates a limited social impact. Rather, the Maori misunderstanding of Christianity is explicable in terms of what they sought in the religion. Further, what they sought is explicable only in the light of the newly revealed and newly created limitations in their traditional

76 Augustus Earle described the reaction of one group of Maoris to a certain 'reverend gentleman' who was preaching the hellfires and torments to which all men would be condemned: the 'savages all burst into a loud laugh, declaring "they would have nothing to do with a God who delighted in such cruelties; and then (as a matter of right) hoped the missionary would give them each a blanket for having taken the trouble of listening to him so patiently"' (p. 155). From a less biased writer (in this respect): 'when they heard that our message was from Heaven, and that it concerned the welfare of their immortal souls, they nearly all walked away, one by one; and the few who remained, either fell fast asleep, or began to talk about the work which they had left, to come to listen to us.' William Yate, 1827, Account, p. 214.

77 Shawcross, pp. 360-1. Owens, p. 32, suggests the need for a model to distinguish possible reactions to the new religion, ranging from complete rejection, through social conformity, to actual 'conversion'. Such a model would be exceedingly difficult to construct.

78 Owens, 24.
pattern of life. The inadequate comprehension of the new religion does not in itself indicate an equivalent lack of social ‘impact’ on the native society.\textsuperscript{79}

Certainly Maori society did not yield suddenly ‘to the impact of the white man’ nor ‘supinely’ accept ‘his doctrines’.\textsuperscript{80} That syncretic beliefs developed, within and outside orthodox Christianity, is an indication of the reasons for conversion: as the traditional beliefs of the people were ‘rendered obsolete’ by the European intrusion, so there grew up new religious patterns which retained direct connections with older beliefs. Men who had refused to listen to the missionaries might later be ‘self-converted’, as their lives were affected by the repercussions of contact with alien forces.\textsuperscript{81} The new religion acquired its relevance. Consequently, one would expect to find a ‘time-lag’.

To establish the inadequacy of the approach to the problem of conversion through emphasis on cultural dislocation, Owens set the stage for the ‘Miraculous Conversion’ of 1814. This ‘failure’ led him to conclude that the so-called determinants, social and economic disruption, cannot be defined with sufficient accuracy. Owens says simply: the ‘response began with Captain Cook’,\textsuperscript{82} but this is to say nothing. We can be more precise about the sequences of change than he allows.

It is apparent that about 1814 the European goods which were being absorbed into Maori usage were at this stage only those which had direct indigenous counterparts and specific uses. The most obvious example is that of iron cutting tools,\textsuperscript{83} which produced a remarkable efflorescence of carving, demonstrating a positive and confident reaction by the indigenous culture. It is, however, inaccurate to talk of a general diffusion of muskets, diseases, and professional prostitution at the Bay in 1814. Only in the 1830s did the Maoris adopt European articles which had no direct counterpart in their own society, and only then did they begin to ape Europeans, wear their clothes, smoke pipes, taste alcohol, and cook in iron pots. Muskets, superior to their own weapons but equivalent, did not come into favour until about 1810, and it was not until about 1815 that the Bay of Islands people showed a decided

\textsuperscript{79} Owens cites (p. 37), to show the little real effect which the missionaries had achieved, a comment by the Rev. John Waterhouse. But this statement must be seen in the context of the missionaries’ unrealistic ideas about rapid change, believing as they did that Christianity (or total spiritual rebirth) and its ‘fruit’, civilisation (or total cultural rebirth), would be possible to achieve. The comment is, however, suggestive of the considerable degree of disruption which had actually occurred. Maoris who are called ‘universal smokers—selfish—dirty’, however these phrases are interpreted, are not Maoris of the immediate contact period. Nor would ‘line upon line on experimental and practical Christianity’ solve such problems, which derive from culture contact.


\textsuperscript{81} Lanternari, p. 316. Owens quotes Lanternari’s remarks, but ignores the context.

\textsuperscript{82} Owens, 30.

preference for them over iron tools. The latter date coincides with the slow return of the ships after the Boyd massacre; perhaps it was simply a case of supply creating demand. Until 1802 it appears that no ship had called at the Bay since the murder of Marion du Fresne, and surprisingly few ships are recorded after that date. Limited, indeed uneven and irregular European contact, before the permanent settlement of the missionaries, characterised the Bay area, rather than a massive infusion. From 1814 numbers of whalers returned, but there was no large increase until 1820 and from that date the numbers remained roughly constant until a further marked rise in the thirties.

It is the latter decade which can more correctly be called the age of the whalers and, as a consequence of steady contact, trade goods were far more widely dispersed than before.

Discussing Harrison Wright’s ‘period of confidence’, Owens cites as evidence for a ‘decline’ of confidence the repercussions arising from the murder of the crew of the Boyd: the attack on Te Pahi at the Bay served to warn both the Whangaroa and Bay of Islands tribes not to attempt further wholesale slaughters. But a policy of controlled violence was adopted: behaviour which was ‘bad’ enough for the Maoris to get their way—petty theft and threats of physical violence, which occasionally became real—but not bad enough to drive the Europeans out. The subsequent further moderation of tactics, still for purely secular motives, is perhaps an indication of a growing receptiveness to the European presence, aroused by the desire for trade. In the Bay of Islands, the period 1824-8, characterised as it was by a moderate attitude towards Europeans, is a phase of transition; the Maoris knew that they were numerically dominant and could decide how Europeans were to be treated, but their behaviour had been modified by the growing need to maintain a reasonable relationship with Europeans so as to secure what they provided. This modification of tactics in part caused the gradual breakdown of resistance, conscious or not, to European ideas and to goods which had previously had no relevance to the Maoris.

84 Shawcross, p. 172.
85 ibid., figs iii, iv, viii, and pp. 125-6, 147-50.
86 ibid., p. 249.
87 It is nonsense to argue that there is no period in which certain attitudes are predominant over other attitudes. Of course, individuals react individually; of course, there are men like Rewa of Kerikeri, who constantly pursued a policy of moderation towards the missionaries when others were tormenting them to distraction; but it is quite clear from the CMS records that the general behavioural patterns manifest towards the settlers underwent change: the period 1815-23 is marked by indifference, merging into numerous incidents of outright bullying. The Rangihoua Maoris were pretty consistently insolent and this behaviour was intensified in the period 1819-23, the years in which the gun was most avidly sought after. It is equally apparent that Hongi himself, having incited worse behaviour after his return from England, became less turbulent in the last two years of his residence at the Bay and that after his final departure in 1827 the aggressive behaviour did not recur. The quarrel over the possession of James Shepherd and his forcible removal from Whangaroa in 1823 is a good example of patronage in action.
The areas of immediate contact became the centres of dispersal for the outlying areas. Owens’s argument that Wright’s thesis—Maori ‘confidence’ or ‘domination’ giving way to ‘conversion’—does not hold good for the southern areas may be approached by reconsidering the sequence of cultural impact there. Maoris who had never seen a European might nevertheless have traded consistently in European goods. Cook, on his first voyage, was asked for nails by people who had never before seen Europeans or handled nails. Dumont d’Urville found that in isolated Tolaga Bay muskets and powder were the most sought-after article of trade in 1827. The Tuhoe of the Urewera country, the most remote group of all, the tribe upon whom Elsdon Best based his studies in the belief that they, until the 1890s, had lived almost entirely unaffected by Europeans, are now known to have been trading in European goods since the 1820s. The problem of direct and indirect impact is still not fully understood. It has been suggested that Maoris living in areas which have not been in direct or sustained contact with Europeans may, in fact, be less in control, being unable to choose the innovations which will nevertheless touch them indirectly. Certainly, the missionaries first went south partly because of the ‘desolating effects of war’ and the advent of European traders. The musket was to force substantial changes not merely in the methods of defence but in social organisation and in the demands placed on leaders. Such structural changes were not unique to the tribes in the areas of direct European contact. It was primarily the desire for trade goods which led southern tribes to take missionaries, when they were first offered them in the thirties. Trade not only brought missionaries and their persistent and constant attacks on the validity of Maori culture, it also gradually and irrevocably altered the economic and, therefore, the socio-religious patterns of life. The missionaries had been quite correct when they set out with the intention of creating needs ‘to which [the Maori] had never before been accustomed’. Similarly, while it is true that it is not a prerequisite to conversion to have been defeated in war, it would seem that those tribes south of the Bay, who had suffered at the hands of Ngapuhi in the twenties, were ready to acquire their Europeans and, at the same time, had been made vulnerable to the new ideas. Hongi’s mana and power had grown by the accident of European settlement at the Bay of Islands; his victims undoubtedly hoped to recover mana by similar means—through the acquisition of Europeans and their goods. The four Church Missionary stations, established at Tauranga, Matamata, Rotorua, and Mangapouri in 1835, had all to be abandoned directly or indirectly because of the spate of inter-tribal wars, in which exag-

89 Voyage de la corvette L’Astrolabe, II, 105.
90 Information from Mr W. Shawcross, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland.
91 Jackson, p. 91.
92 Henry Williams Letters, II, Williams to CMS, 16 April 1833.
93 Jackson, pp. 39-40, 91.
gerated brutality was as marked as it had been in the wars of Ngapuhi. In a society dominated by war, as Maori society was, initial reactions to the acquisition of bloodier weapons were overt aggressiveness and cruelty. As the southern tribes acquired sufficient guns they set on those who were still waiting. But by 1838 the war fever in the centre of the North Island had passed by, as it had in the north. Brutality brought its own aftermath—exhaustion. The lapse of time is condensed as the process is quickened; guns had reached Tauranga before the missionaries. By 1838 war-weariness was the predominant mood and in this context the missionaries made their impact. Such wars as occurred in the next decade, both in North Auckland and at Wanganui, were anti-European in their focus.

It is significant, too, that literacy and Christian ideas spread very rapidly in areas peripheral to direct missionary contact. The activities of the Maori preachers offer the most obvious explanation for the rapid conversion of the southerners. The missionaries fully recognised this fact and had made it the basis for their work among slaves. As Henry Williams commented in 1839: 'Thus had instruction been conveyed from Tribe to Tribe and many have been taught to read . . . and had the Word of God conveyed to them who never saw a European'. It is also noticeable that, at the Bay of Islands, converts tended to be drawn not so much from the first ‘patron’ tribes as from their neighbours and from those out of direct contact with European shipping. It may be that for these men the need to ‘understand’ Europeans seemed more

94 ibid., p. 135.
95 12 December 1839, The Early Journals of Henry Williams, ed. Lawrence M. Rogers, 1961, p. 464. Miss Ross has shown that, for Taylor at Putiki, the way was paved by the Maori preacher Wiremu Te Tauri, who worked there in 1836, although it is not irrelevant to note that two earlier preachers had been eaten.
96 When the missionaries planned to go inland to Te Waimate many of them anticipated that they would have increased disciplinary problems with the school pupils, but, in fact, they had fewer. It was William Williams who noticed that the areas where they were particularly gaining attention were the interior districts: consequently, he had urged the founding of the Waimate and Kaitaia stations. Fairly complete records were kept at the Waimate of the areas from which the baptised came, 1823-42. From a total of 1916 Maori baptisms (with only 36 for whom no place was recorded) a fifth were from Waimate itself (407); the other areas from which large groups were baptised were Kaihohe (223), Mawe (164), Mangakahia (102), Maungakawakawa (92), Waitangi (88), Toutoka (81), Otauaw (75), Ohaeawai (65), Whangaroa (64), Rangaunu (47), Pukenui (46), Urupa (39), and Kerikeri (35). At the Paihia station, which primarily served the coastal settlements, the areas from which the baptised came were less regularly recorded, but it would appear that, from a total of 942 baptisms in the same period (with 231 for whom no place was recorded), the largest numbers were from Kawakawa (198), Paihia (94), Tepuna (50), and Kaihohe (47). Mangakahia had an additional twelve and Ohaeawai another twenty-four. At the Kerikeri station, from a total of 178 baptised in the years 1839-1842, only sixteen were from Kerikeri itself, the largest single group being from Waiaua (52); there were an additional five from Whangaroa. From the later thirties, whole villages began to accompany their chiefs to Christianity; for example, at Maungakawakawa, near the eastern shore of Lake Omapere, the 77 Maoris baptised in 1840 were from two distinct tribal groups resident there.
urgent,97 and they were less hardened by experience of aberrations in European behaviour. Certainly, the Maori preachers in the south would introduce Christian ideas in a simplified and selected form, and based as their knowledge was on the already simplified and selected teachings of Calvinist preachers, one wonders just what it was that they taught! In this specific sense, Owens is correct in his view that the religion was introduced ‘divorced from a European framework’,98 and that this fact goes a long way towards explaining its acceptability. It is, however, probably equally correct to say that as the Bible contained a considerable amalgam of non-European ideas, particularly the Hebraic tribal sagas, the story of Exodus, and the emphasis on a wandering chosen people dispossessed of their land, it acquired relevance and new interpretations. Its varied appeal may well have lain in such parallels, together with the real needs answered by it, particularly its introduction of the Saviour, the ‘Prince of Peace’, and Jehovah, the ‘God of Vengeance’.

In attempting to account for the relative rapidity of the conversions south of the Bay, Owens, surprisingly, accepts Wright’s general thesis that once Christianity had ‘penetrated the shell of Maori resistance it spread rapidly’.99 By adopting this view, he adopts the idea of breakthrough and thereby adopts also the idea of previous opposition. But the question still remains: why does a new set of beliefs, of whatever form, become acceptable? Is it simply the stimulus of new concepts or is it that the need exists? If the latter, then the need can only be explained in terms of a newly created dissatisfaction with the older beliefs. This dissatisfaction would not have occurred without the impact of European culture. In this sense, the Maoris were not free to choose. They were forced to change their ways of life and beliefs more rapidly and probably in directions which they would not otherwise have chosen, had they continued to live in isolation. But inevitably they modified those beliefs which they adopted. Raymond Firth has shown that each ‘item, whether it be artefact, technical method, form of social grouping, or type of religious belief will only be introduced if it fulfils some definite need, and in the very process of its introduction it will become modified, moulded into conformity with the complex set of ideas, material equipment, institutions, and traditional observances already dominating the life of the people’.100 Whatever the missionaries expected, the Maori response to Christianity would only be partial, and would also be uniquely modified.

Men were to experiment with the new ideas. They tested them for spiritual sustenance, material benefits, and lasting peace.101 Where enthusiasm waned it would be because the religion did not provide

97 Jackson, p. 135.
98 Owens, 40.
99 Wright, p. 157.
100 Raymond Firth, Economics of the New Zealand Maori, Wellington, 1959, p. 436.
101 Ross, p. 225.
what they had sought in it. Then it would not be possible to rekindle the fire in the same hearth.

Owens quite validly argues that although religion is a 'social' phenomenon it is not simply an automatic reflection of the society which develops it and that, therefore, its appeal to others also must be seen ultimately in spiritual terms. Nevertheless, Christianity in itself, as a body of belief, would not have replaced Maori beliefs until the society which was governed by those beliefs was challenged. When disruption which is inexplicable in the old terms occurs, only then will the new religion acquire any relevance. It is only because the people become receptive, as once they had not been, that the ideas spread. The actual ideas of the religion itself did not make the people initially receptive to it.

The northern Maoris, who experienced continuous if sporadic contact with Europeans from the later eighteenth century, reacted at different times in different ways. Early fear of the demon-gods gave way to confidence that these were men. Marion du Fresne died because the people thought that he had come to stay. There are no undertones here; he was killed because they wanted the iron tools he brought but they did not want him; he was killed because the people had the will and they calculated that they had the power. The crew of the Boyd died, as had others before them, because they had violated Maori codes and therefore incurred Maori punishments. But in the face of the overt power of the Europeans with their guns, evidenced most particularly in the unjust attack on the Bay of Islands chief Te Pahi in 1810,\(^{102}\) the violence declined although the confidence that they controlled the European settlements remained. From the later twenties, in place of bullying, threatened aggression, and open abuse, particularly directed against the missionaries as the small permanent community in their power but not exclusively directed at them, the Bay of Islanders adopted more conciliatory policies. As European numbers grew and contact became regular, confidence that they could manipulate the whole situation declined. By 1840 the Kororareka Maoris were outnumbered. The trade which they had sought had brought the permanent settlement of white colonists. Over sixty years after Marion’s death converts to Christianity increased in numbers because they too believed that the Europeans had come to stay.

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\(^{102}\) The French retaliation was as severe, but thirty years passed before Europeans returned to the Bay. Nevertheless, it was not forgotten: in 1831, thirteen major northern chiefs petitioned William IV for protection against ‘strangers’ and ‘the tribe of Marian’.