

Maori communities grasped the intellectual, religious and economic opportunities provided by European colonization in order to grapple with the problems in Maori society that were caused by that colonization. Thus literacy was seen as a means of mastering the mystical knowledge that seemed to be the key to the Europeans' superior technology; and the messianic message of the prophets as providing political as well as religious inspiration to unite the Maoris against Pakeha encroachment over their lands and lives. It is notable that only Te Kooti, of the nineteenth-century prophets, was able to provide an established church that would survive his charismatic inspiration. The essays do not provide a full examination of the topics; indeed they need to be read alongside the publications based on history theses by Owens, Binney and Clark. This is not to suggest that the theses of the anthropologists or the historians are derivative, but rather that both disciplines have gained from a cross-fertilization of ideas.

The four remaining essays deal with contemporary topics: B. F. Pierce with Maori work behaviour; P. H. de Bres with Maori religious affiliations in a new suburb; R. J. I. Walker with voluntary associations in the same suburb; and D. R. Chapple with aspects of race relations among workers in a timber town. I found these essays less satisfying than the others, perhaps because some of the findings of de Bres and Walker have already been published elsewhere; because Chapple's study is based on fieldwork carried out as long ago as 1960; and because Pierce's samples were too small for him to reach any very positive conclusions.

Nevertheless the book will be a useful text for students of history and anthropology; and it deserves a wider public. It is held together by a distinguished essay from Professor Kawharu who supervised all but one of the original theses.

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Misi Gete: John Geddie Pioneer Missionary to the New Hebrides. By R. S. Miller. The Presbyterian Church of Tasmania, Launceston, 1975. xx, 368 pp. N.Z. price \$12.50.

THE FIRST biography of John Geddie was published in 1882; the Reverend Miller's book attempts to provide 'the second major study'. The author assumes, correctly, that Geddie's life and work in nineteenth-century Melanesia provide the ingredients for both a perceptive biography and a fascinating account of some of the more dramatic events in the story of pioneer-evangelical endeavours in the Pacific. But although claiming to be a 'fresh assessment' of Geddie the man and of the formative years of the Presbyterian Mission in the New Hebrides, the book is not adequate as a biography, nor as a history of this mission.

The Foreword and Commendation set the tone for much of what follows — Geddie's writings are seen as a 'mirror of those *times belong darkness*' and of 'that grateful change which ushered us into a new world of decency and light' (xv). The author then devotes twenty-eight pages to Geddie's early life and sets the Pacific scene. There is much ethnocentricity (we hear of the 'spiritual con-

quest' and the 'triumph of the Cross' in the Pacific). There are numerous errors (Bougainville's ship is called the *Bondeuse* instead of *Boudeuse*; the Reverend John Williams is described as the European discoverer of Rarotonga in 1823, though Fletcher Christian saw it in 1789 and other Europeans made visits years before Williams). Recent Pacific studies have been completely ignored (the hoary old myth that sandalwood traders in Melanesia were unscrupulous murderers appears yet again). The next 200 pages reproduce Geddie's MS journal, which he kept from his first arrival on Aneityum in the southern New Hebrides in 1848 until 1857. The text, it is claimed, 'is as Geddie wrote it' although to make for 'easier reading, the *Journal* has been divided into years, titled and summarised, subtitled, and paragraphed' (p. 29). It is not too difficult to find what Geddie wrote amidst the plethora of these 'subtitles' (e.g. Exciting Travel, A Great Cannibal, Good News from Tanna, The Death of Mary Ann etc). Pacific historians may find it useful to have these journals in such a readily available form, but the general reader is likely to find the going somewhat heavy.

Reverend Miller spends the remaining hundred pages of this book outlining Geddie's work and related church activity in the New Hebrides from 1857 until Geddie's death in 1872. Tedious narrative and reproduction of innumerable resolutions passed at innumerable missionary meetings spoil what should have been a very dramatic story, for these were years of considerable turbulence for missionaries and New Hebrideans alike, with raging epidemics, murders and bombardments. The author finally comes to the real stuff of biography in his eight page final chapter where he assesses Geddie's life. Six of the pages reproduce Dr Inglis' tribute published in 1887; the final two pages begin with the author declaring 'What more can we add?' and then twenty-one 'Facets of Dr Geddie's life and work that appeal to, and impress, us' are listed, including such comments as 'His amazing achievement single-handed, with the blessing of God, in breaking the back of heathenism on Aneiteum [sic] in his first four years' (p. 342).

The book is useful for its edition of Geddie's journals. As a biography, as the promised 'fresh look' at the founder of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides, it does Geddie a disservice.

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