

Te Rongopai 1814 'Takoto te pai!'. Bicentenary Reflections on Christian Beginnings and Developments in Aotearoa New Zealand. Edited by Allan Davidson, Stuart Lange, Peter Lineham and Adrienne Puckey. General Synod Office of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, Auckland, 2014. 328pp. NZ price: \$55.00. ISBN: 9780473280093.

Pushing Boundaries. New Zealand Protestants and Overseas Missions 1827–1939. By Hugh Morrison. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2016. 326pp. NZ price: \$45.00. ISBN: 9781927322178.

These two books contribute to the historiography on Protestant missionaries, those who came to and those who went from New Zealand. Both books engage in the re-evaluation of the role of religion in shaping New Zealand society which historians began to embark on some years ago.

The substantial body of writing on the work of missionaries within New Zealand takes a variety of forms: stories of conversion, culture contact, collective experience, biography, nation-building, and conflict and scandal. Domestic missionary activity has stimulated debate about motivation, engagement and impact. The history of outgoing missionaries has, on the other hand, produced little research or debate.

Te Rongopai 1814 is a collection of essays which, with one exception, were originally presented at a conference at Waitangi in 2012. The conference 'aimed to stimulate critical reflection on missionary beginnings in New Zealand and the formative influences of Christianity in early inter-relationships of Māori and Pākehā' (p.7). The papers were revised and published in 2014 to mark the bicentenary of the arrival of Samuel Marsden and the CMS mission at the Bay of Islands.

Some essays in *Te Rongopai* provide broad reflections on questions central to understanding early missionary endeavour. Introductory and overview essays by Peter Lineham, Allan Davidson and Adrienne Puckey locate the missions in their historiographical, theological, geographical, social and economic contexts. These essays appear alongside detailed examination of specific episodes and aspects of mission interaction with Māori. For instance, a chapter by David Pettett attempts to recover the message delivered by Marsden on that first Christmas Day from a study of his extant sermons. Pettett takes issue with Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins¹ that the Māori world had no understanding of a sermon being delivered, arguing that Marsden's and Ruatara's combined language skills enabled communication and understanding. Te Pihopa Te Kitohi Pikaahu discusses the meaning of the dance and song performed by Ngāpuhi as they left Oihi following the sermon.

Two essays deal with missionary attempts at institution-building: Marsden's relatively short-lived seminary for Māori boys at Parramatta, and Selwyn's attempt to create a college akin to St John's at Porirua. Māori agency is a theme of both these essays. Indeed, essays throughout the book, such as Moeawa Callaghan's on the mission at Wairoa, usefully explore how Māori shaped and participated in missionary work and life. Other essays recreate missionary experience imaginatively. Angela Middleton and Ian Smith use archives and archaeology to explore daily life at Hohi, as they argue the place should be called, and Vivien Caughley uses samplers made by the King women to look at family life. Grant Phillipson's essay examines the ways that missionary records have been used in Treaty claims.

Connections into the wider world run through these essays. The earliest missionaries were part of an international movement as much as were those later

missionaries discussed by Hugh Morrison in *Pushing Boundaries*. Morrison's book is not a history of New Zealand's overseas missionary activities, although he calls on parts of this history to illustrate his arguments. Rather, he is asking how overseas missionary activities have contributed to the history of New Zealand and New Zealanders, and what significance do they have in this history?

Morrison deals with the activities of a thousand Protestant missionaries who left New Zealand between 1827 and 1939 to work in missions in the Pacific, China, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America. Denominations developed their own geographic sites: Baptists in East Bengal, Presbyterians in South China and Presbyterians and Anglicans in the Pacific. In Part One of his book, 'Local Contours', Morrison examines the theological underpinning of missionary activity, international connections at the institutional and personal level and the motivation of those who went into the mission fields. Part Two, 'Global Connections', uses a case study of the Bolivian Indian Mission to argue that New Zealand was 'integrally linked to a set of "world systems"' (p.137) and explores some international aspects of the missions, including the involvement of children, before speculating on their impact at home and their historical significance.

Morrison contextualizes mission work within historiographical constructs such as 'transnationalism', 'webs of empire', 'reflex impact', and 'spatial and discursive sites'. These ideas are discussed repetitively as he explains how they provide ways of locating missionary activity in New Zealand history and assessing its significance. In searching for the relevance of overseas mission engagement, he asks a number of questions: was it derivative or home-grown? How did it relate to global mission movements? What influences came from Australia? North America? How does mission activity manifest gender roles, patterns of child socialization? How was 'missionary support and involvement' 'historically linked' to the 'isms' of the time — nationalism, globalism, internationalism, feminism, racism?

The empirical data are thus made to do some heavy lifting, and I am not sure that there is enough to do this successfully. The conclusion that the major impact of the overseas missions was at home, on the 'sending communities and churches', seems thin in relation to the questions asked. The paradox of this book is that it uses an exploration of missionaries abroad to write them into the national history.

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NOTE

1 Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins, *Words Between Us – He Kōrero: First Māori-Pākehā Conversations on Paper*, Huia, Wellington, 2011.