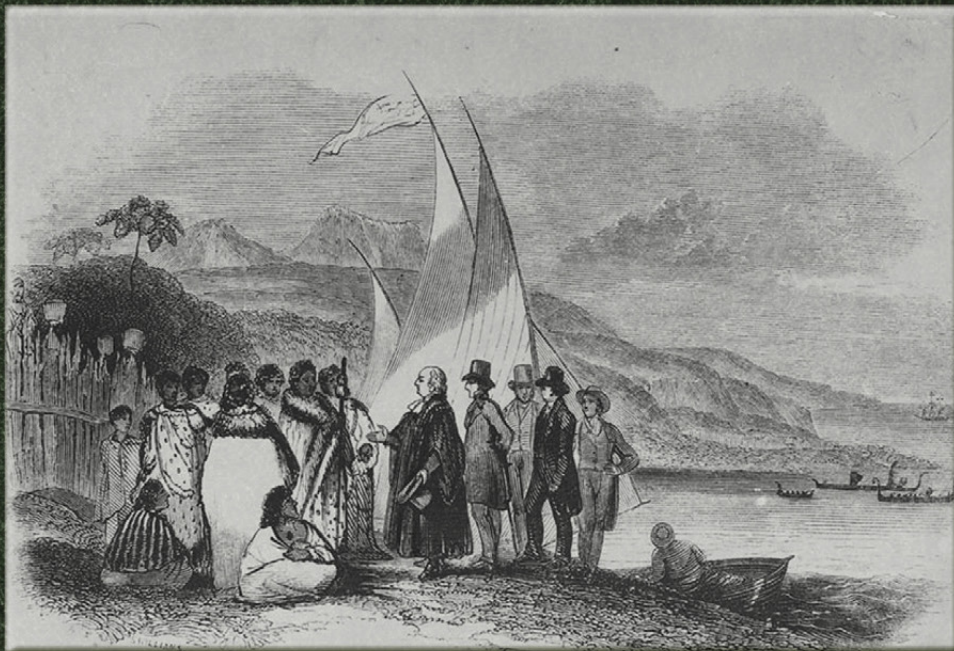


Between God and a Hard Place

A Re-examination of Church Missionary
Society Evangelisation of Māori 1814-1840



Michael Corboy

Kei waengarahi i te Atua me te wāhi uaua

MICHAEL CORBOY has spent a huge amount of time researching the early missionary period. This is not *PapersPast* territory. There are few digital aids to the pre-1840 period. Rather than offering generalisations that lack sufficient evidence to be credible historiographically, Corboy has exhaustively researched the correspondence, the diaries and the reports of those early missionaries. The result is an account for the period from 1814 to 1840 that is neither pro-missionary nor anti-missionary. This fills a gap between those extremes. He has carefully examined the arguments of decades of scholars trying to push an edge in favour of or in criticism of the missionaries. This is a most detailed account of the period.

In particular Corboy has carefully looked at the Anglican missionaries. He examines how and when they expanded their mission from the Bay of Islands/Ipipiri. There is a detailed examination of issues of inter-missionary relationships, the nature and effectiveness of Henry Williams's leadership, and the differing opinions and actions in relation to Samuel Marsden's missionary principles. In exploring the nature of Māori conversion to Christianity before 1840 Corboy argues that the Anglican missionaries considered that those who were baptised were indeed Christians and concludes that Anglican missionaries were not as rigid as some historians have made them out to be.

As a retired Bishop of the Anglican Church I have, over the years, had to try to answer accusations and questions about the role of the missionaries and of the church in the colonial period. Some of these charges are reasonable and some are not. I have often had to do my own research because accurate, well-researched information was not readily available. In my view, Corboy provides a narrative that will be useful for church members who care about the truth and for those who seek a thorough and reliable account. I commend this book to all such readers.

George Connor, *formerly Regional Bishop in the Bay of Plenty in the Diocese of Waiapu, and latterly Anglican Bishop of Dunedin (Southland and Otago).*

MICHAEL CORBOY was born in New Plymouth but grew up in the Kihikihi/Te Awamutu area where his great grandfather had been a trader in the 1850s and many of his descendants had lived from the mid 1860s. Michael's education was at St Patrick's Primary and Te Awamutu College. He graduated with Distinction from Hamilton Teachers' College (1968), and B.Ed. (1970), M.Ed. (1973) from the University of Waikato.

In 1975 Michael and his wife Judy travelled to London where they lived for 22 years. Michael became Head Teacher of North Harringay School and later Inspector of Primary Education for the London Borough of Haringey. They returned to Aotearoa in late 1997. They live at Ohiwa Beach, near Opotiki.

Having graduated in History and Education Michael has been interested in pre 1840 Aotearoa since carrying out research into the 1847 Education Ordinance for his M.Ed. Dissertation. On returning home Michael continued his interest in 18th and 19th Century history of Aotearoa and began researching *Between God and a Hard Place* in 2014. He has felt that mainstream history had not given sufficient space to missionary history, considering they were one of the main groups of Europeans to interact with Maori prior to 1840.

It is impossible to tell the story of New Zealand without telling the story of its missionaries, mediators between the Māori and European world, mentored by men and women of mana, and critical in the early interface between Māori and European ideas, faith and skills.

Although criticised for their ideas to change the Māori world, their presence and the ideas were welcomed and were fundamental in determining the nature of Māori rights before and after the Treaty of Waitangi.

Michael Corboy's grand vision and attention to detail provides an essential overview of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand, shedding light on both its religious mission and the Māori communities who engaged with it at a time of dramatic change. It will prove an immensely valuable source for anyone trying to understand the early contact period.

Michael Belgrave, *Professor of History, School of Humanities, Media and Creative Communication, Massey University.*

There have been a range of recent studies of the CMS and the Māori and each has its own particular value. The distinctive feature of this one is that the author, writing from a secular rather than a religious interest, has provided a compelling study, alert to the enormous significance of these events for Māori and for New Zealand society.

Michael Corboy has worked from the primary records in the correspondence of the missionaries - all of them. This in itself is a huge achievement, but he has also produced a very well structured study, which does not reduce the story to personalities or character assassination. It provides the tool for Māori in local iwi to explore their own stories, and its thorough referencing means that individual stories can be explored.

It is a much larger work than anything else available on the subject. In some ways this is the book that should have been written many years ago and would have ensured that subsequent writers would have had no excuse for getting details wrong. I think that this book will have a very particular value in the present generation with all the necessary debates Māori, Pakeha, Christians and secular people have about the first missionaries.

Peter Lineham, *MNZM Professor Emeritus Massey University.*

COVER: Landing of Samuel Marsden at Bay of Islands, 19 December, 1814. *Engraving, 1913. Artist unknown.*

