

The Anglican Historical Society of New Zealand *Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mīhinare ki Aotearoa*

A Notable Band of Ladies: some women workers for the Māori Mission in Waiapu.

Author: Janet Crawford

(AHS Newsletter 43, December 2009)

In 1902, the Church Missionary Society withdrew from work amongst the Māori leaving the Anglican Church no choice but to assume full responsibility for this work. In spite of 20 years notice, the church had failed to establish an adequate structure for its continuation. Over the next 60 years the General Synod made various attempts to set in place administration and finance for Māori mission work, but the dioceses generally preferred to act autonomously. This meant that Māori work was handled differently by each diocese although the general policy was for 'separate development', with Māori clergy ministering in Māori pastorates, under the supervision of a Pakeha Superintendent. After years of agitation the Māori desire for a Māori bishop was fulfilled by the appointment of Frederick Augustus Bennett as Bishop of Aotearoa in December 1928 — but he was suffragan to the Bishop of Waiapu and his episcopal authority was seriously limited. Difficulties in developing mission work among the Māori in the early 20th century included: the rejection by many Māori of Christianity and its churches after the New Zealand Wars; a resurgence of 'tohungaism'; the rise of Māori prophetic movements and the emergence of the Ratana church; the missionary work of new groups, especially Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists; the impact of first one and then another World War, with the Depression in between. Māori mission work was underfunded, and Māori clergy were few in number, responsible for very large pastorates, and very poorly paid.

Mission Houses

Mission Houses were founded as a way of supplementing the work of the Māori clergy. Situated in or near Māori communities, the houses were staffed by women workers whose primary task was to work with women and children, combining the roles of evangelist, teacher, and social worker. They conducted Sunday schools and Bible classes, visited and nursed the sick, prepared confirmation candidates, ran Mothers' Unions, and generally provided a pastoral ministry. The ideal was for each house to have a Superintendent and an assistant. Occasionally there were two assistants, sometimes one sole woman. Funding was always precarious; women workers were paid a pittance and usually lived and worked in difficult conditions.

Waiapu, the diocese with the largest proportion of Māori population and the greatest number of Māori clergy, also had the most Mission Houses.

Waiapu Mission Houses:

Te Hauke:	1905-1937
Whakarewarewa:	1906-1947
Ruatoki:	1907-1955
Tokomaru Bay:	1910-1956
Manutuke:	1918-1961
Whakatane:	1918-1926
Porangahau:	1923-1938
Nuhaka:	1925-1927
Tolaga Bay (Hauiti):	1926-1953
Tauranga (Hairini):	1933-1971
Te Araroa:	1936-1941
Te Kaha:	1939-1940

When the Rev. Canon W. G. Williams went to Waiapu in 1937 as superintendent of the Māori Mission, there were 18 Lady Missionaries in seven Mission Houses. By the end of the Second World War the beginning of the Māori migration to the cities together with better roads and health services meant that there was no longer such need for the Mission Houses, and it was increasingly difficult to find staff. By 1948 there were just five workers in four houses. In 1962 a Commission appointed by Waiapu Synod to go into the question of Māori Mission Houses reported that: 'the upkeep of Manutuke, Tokomaru Bay and Ruatoki Mission Houses is no longer justified and that in general the day of the mission house has passed.' In 1977 Bishop Paul Reeves paid tribute to 'Mission ladies [who] were a notable band of ladies who ministered to Māori communities, often in isolated situations.'

The focus of this paper is on **Te Hauke** and **Ruatoki**, two of the earliest Mission Houses in the diocese of Waiapu.

The third early house was established at **Whakarewarewa**. While most Māori Mission work was conducted in remote rural districts Whakarewarewa was part of the growing township of Rotorua and at the heart of an area already popular with tourists in the 19th century. The history of the Whakarewarewa Mission House needs a separate article. (See Janet Crawford's Paper: Self-Sacrificing Service: women workers at the Whakarewarewa Mission House)

Te Hauke

Te Hauke is situated in Hawke's Bay on the Heretaunga plains between Hastings and Te Aute, in what was the Waipatu pastorate. Mission work in this district was begun by William Colenso, assisted by Māori teachers. In 1905 Archdeacon Samuel Williams built a school and the Mission House at Te Hauke, a large and predominantly Mormon kainga. The first worker was **Miss Ethel Baker**, a daughter of the Rev.

Frederick Baker and granddaughter of CMS missionary the Rev. Charles Baker. The Anglican school was well-attended, and a dispensary run by Baker, a nurse, was in great demand. She also attended local emergencies and made regular visits to Waipawa and Pakipaki. Baker left in 1907, going to Melbourne to train for missionary work in China and the same year **Miss Hera Stirling** (of Ngai Tahu-Pakeha descent) came to the diocese, invited by Archdeacon Samuel Williams to work especially among Māori women and girls. She was to work all over the district, visiting, and organizing Sunday schools and Bible classes wherever possible. Stirling, a former Salvation Army officer, was experienced in Māori mission work, and soon after her arrival the Rev. Arthur Williams, Hawke's Bay Māori Missioner, commented that: 'Of Miss Stirling and her work it is almost impossible to speak too highly ... Her influence with old and young alike, with men, women and children is wonderful and seems unlimited.' Stirling took up the temperance cause, especially among women, resulting in the formation of branches of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) at Moteo, Pakipaki and Tangoio, with a total of about 100 members. In 1910 Stirling married the **Rev. Himipiri Munro**, and from then until they moved to Ohinemutu in 1917, was missioner at Te Hauke, her husband being responsible for the Waipatu pastorate. Prior to 1912, **Miss Iritaina Kainamu**, a Hukarere old girl with nursing training, who had trained for mission work at Whakarewarewa, assisted at Ruatoki for some time. She was then transferred to Tokamaru Bay

Hera Munro was replaced briefly (1918-1919) by **Miss Sybil Lee**, Lady Superintendent of the Tokomaru Bay Mission House 1910-14. During the First World War, Lee travelled to England at her own expense where she was an official, though unpaid, worker for the NZ War Contingent Association, visiting Māori soldiers in hospital in and around London. After her return to New Zealand, she went to Te Hauke but there

was little work for her as most of the Māori were away shearing and she accepted an invitation from the Bishop of Wellington to work among the Māori at Otaki.

In 1919 **Miss Hughlyn Aplin**, a trained teacher, took charge of the Te Hauke primary school which had re-opened after being closed for some time. While nominally she was responsible solely for the school, she and her assistant **Miss Thornton** were involved in mission work in the surrounding district, now with only a small population. The school, which was the only Anglican Māori Church School in the diocese, closed in 1929 as, with two state schools in the vicinity, it was no longer needed. Aplin stayed on, devoting herself to full-time mission work. In 1935 there was a Sunday school with 49 pupils. Adults and some older children attended a song service. A Saturday afternoon class that included singing and reading drew about 30 children. Aplin made regular monthly home visits to about 150 people, helping them if needed with food and clothing. A service of Holy Communion was held every three months, with 36 Māori communicants. There were four baptisms, and three women and a youth were confirmed. In 1936 she held a Monday social evening for those over 14, followed by a song service, and this was well-attended by young men. She also held fortnightly classes in sewing, mending and homecraft. In May 1937, after nearly 20 years at Te Hauke, Aplin transferred to Tokomaru Bay Mission House. There was no-one to replace her at Te Hauke and the Mission House was officially closed in 1939.

Ruatoki

Early in the 20th century **Rotu Numia**, daughter of Tuhoe rangatira Numia Kereru, won a scholarship to Hukarere where she was baptized and confirmed by Bishop Leonard Williams. Herself the first Ringatu convert, she left school with the ambition to go back as a missionary to her own Ringatu people. In 1906 she spent a year

working at the new Mission House at Whakarewarewa, established by **Deaconess Kathleen Doyle** from St Phillip's parish, Melbourne. In 1907 Rotu Numia and Deaconess Doyle went to Ruatoki North. There, on land given by Numia Kereru, they built a cottage with three rooms and added a big marquee in which they held services and Bible classes, gathering children from the local Native School which had opened in 1896. They taught the Scriptures as well as needlework and cooking and provided basic medical services to the community. By 1908 they had twelve converts, all young girls attending the Native School. Deaconess Doyle left in 1908 because of illness and was replaced briefly by **Miss Wi Repa**. Their work did much to heal the wounds caused by land confiscation and opened the way for the appointment of a resident priest, the Rev. Peni Hakiwai, in 1909. **Hakiwai's wife, Lucy**, was a daughter of Rewi Tamihana, a layreader who worked for the Māori Mission with Samuel Williams. Educated at Hukarere School, she was a goddaughter of Kate Williams. Lucy Hakiwai became Lady Superintendent of the Mission House, continuing in that role till 1917 and assisted by **Miss K. Whaanga**. In 1910 the Waiapu Church Gazette reported that the Rev. Peni Hakiwai lived near a large pa and Native school on the Whakatane River: 'He, assisted by his wife, carry on most successfully a boarding school for ten girls of the better class. They attend the Government school but are boarded, receiving Christian instruction and are taught domestic duties during the school terms, returning to their parents in the holidays.' Services were held in the mission house until a church was built on the marae in 1914. The Rev. Peni Hakiwai served as temporary chaplain to NZ forces in 1917-18 and after his return was appointed to Moteo Māori district.

Miss Irene Maud Hare became Lady Superintendent of the mission till 1925 when she died after an illness. Her colleague **Ella Newman** described her as one 'who worked and lived and

gave her life for the people she loved'. Hare had taught at a state school in Canterbury and then volunteered as a Mission worker at Pukiti in Wellington diocese, regarding this as a call from God. She spent four years at the Mission House at Whakarewarewa, before taking charge at Ruatoki where she faced hardship and loneliness with quiet fortitude. A new Mission House was built in 1920 with a chapel and modern conveniences. It served as a boarding hostel for as many as 20 girls who received daily religious instruction and attended morning and evening prayer in the chapel.

Hare was assisted for two years by **Miss M. Lawson** and was then on her own till **Miss Hilda Kenworthy** from Christchurch was appointed in 1922. Kenworthy left in 1925 to go to the Whakarewarewa Mission House, then from 1927 to 1937, supported by the NZCMS, worked for the Wellington Māori Mission.

After Hare's death in 1925, **Nurse Jones**, who had trained at Deaconess House in Christchurch, came to Ruatoki but unfortunately had to leave after only two years. She was assisted by **Miss Miria Paul (Paora)** from Whakarewarewa, who had spent a year at the Mission House there. Paul later spent many years working for the Māori Mission in Wellington diocese.

In 1927 **Miss Irene Bartrum** became Lady Superintendent, transferring from Manutuke Mission House where she had been assistant for three years. Bartrum was a nurse, an indefatigable worker, and 'the rougher the district, the happier she was.' She left Ruatoki for Tolaga Bay in 1930 and remained with the Māori Mission for many years, serving at a number of the Mission Houses. In 1927 she was assisted by **Miss Nini Waaka**, a trained welfare worker. In 1928 Bartrum became ill and two voluntary workers came to help **Mrs Claud Brown**, wife of the Whakatane vicar, so that the boarding hostel could remain open. **Miss Maud Goddard** assisted during 1929-30. Goddard went on to serve the

Māori Mission for a number of years at the Tolaga Bay Mission House, beginning as assistant to Miss Bartrum and then as Superintendent until her health broke down in the 1950s.

Rotu Numia married Wharetini Rangi, a lay-reader who was later ordained and served in many parts of the diocese, including over 25 years in the Ruatoki-Whakatane pastorate (1926-27, 1931-1935, 1938-58). Mrs. Rangi served as Superintendent of the Ruatoki Mission House 1931-35. In January 1931 the Waiapu Church Gazette reported that 'It has been decided to re-open the Ruatoki Hostel for its original purpose, which was to find a home for girls from the Urewera country who wish to attend Ruatoki School. It was for this that the Māoris gave the site. It has lately been used as a Mission House, but, on the recent visit of the Bishop, the Māoris asked that it remain among her own people, while her husband will be in charge of the parish.'

In 1935 with the introduction of the school bus service there was no longer a need for the boarding hostel. **Miss Ella Newman** took over at Ruatoki. Daughter of an early pioneer family in Poverty Bay, Newman was trained at St. Mary's by **Deaconess Esther Brand** and served in the Melanesian Mission 1916-1918, but had to leave for health reasons. A fluent Māori speaker, she worked for 23 years in the Waiapu Māori Mission, doing pioneer work at Manutuke Mission House before transferring to Ruatoki. Nurse Bartrum returned as her assistant and they worked together for five years, with a number of different women assisting for short periods. In 1935 there were 12 girls, aged from 6 to 15, in the boarding hostel. Sunday schools were held weekly at Ruatoki (48 pupils) and Waikirikiri (35), and monthly at more distant Paroa (20) and Poroporo (25). Religious instruction was given every week to 120 children at the Ruatoki Native School and daily classes for about 18 boys and girls were held in the Mission chapel. Nurse Bartrum did nursing and medical work, including home visits and a weekly class in hygiene at the

Native School. She treated 270 outpatients in 6 months, providing medicines from the dispensary. The purchase of a car in 1936 extended their work with three new Sunday schools and weekly classes in four Native Schools. A visitor in 1936 wrote of being impressed with the atmosphere of the Mission House, 'a real natural home where one feels the children are natural and not cramped or affected little prigs' and where Newman combined 'cheerfulness, firmness and love for the family.'

During the war years there were a number of staff changes but the usual pattern of work continued. In 1945, **Miss Grace Bargrove** spent a year as assistant and then became Lady Superintendent 1946-55. Originally from Christchurch, Grace Bargrove was accepted by the CMS in 1930 as a candidate and sent to St Hilda's House, Melbourne, for training. She hoped to become a nurse and follow her older sister Violet, a CMS missionary in North China, but

developed bronchial trouble and was declared unfit for foreign service. She then applied to the NZCMS for Māori Mission work but there was no vacancy until 1938 when she joined Miss Lee at Otaki. Grace Bargrove worked for 5 years at Ruatoki, most of the time on her own where once there had been as many as four women. Then in 1950, while on holiday in Christchurch, she became ill. Her brother wrote to the NZCMS secretary that she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown caused by her time of life and the strain of work which was disappointing in the results. **Violet Bargrove**, who with other missionaries had been interned by the Japanese, had returned to Hangchow in 1947 but China was now closing to missionaries, and she returned to New Zealand to work with Grace at Ruatoki from 1951 till 1955. The Rev. and Mrs. Rangī at the Ruatoki vicarage took a kindly interest in their work. The sisters retired in 1955 due to Grace's health and after 50 years the Mission House was closed.

The history of the Whakarewarewa Mission House needs a separate article. (See Janet Crawford's Paper: Self-Sacrificing Service: women workers at the Whakarewarewa Mission House)

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