

The Anglican Historical Society of New Zealand

Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mīhinare ki Aotearoa

Giving a Voice to Women: Equal Rights for Women in the Anglican Church (Part Two)

A Māori Voice

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Waiapu Diocese and Synod

The diocese of Waiapu was constituted in 1858. The first bishop William Williams (former Archdeacon of Waiapu) was consecrated on 3 April 1859 and lived at Waerenga-a-Hika mission station near Gisborne. The diocese, which did not include Hawke's Bay, was inhabited almost entirely by Māori with only a few European missionaries, traders, and whalers. The General Synod of 1868 changed the diocesan boundaries to move Hawke's Bay from Wellington to Waiapu, the bishop having already moved his residence to Napier. This changed the nature of the diocese by including the considerable number of Europeans settled in Hawke's Bay. The same General Synod also established the three Māori Church Boards of Heretaunga, Turanga and Tauranga, to have control of Māori church affairs. These Boards consisted of Māori clergy, English clergy ministering to Māori, and laymen representing the Māori parishes, with the Bishop or his Commissary as chairman. The diocesan Synod ceased to concern itself with Māori affairs and became almost totally Pakeha in membership. Māori clergy had a right to their seats, but seldom attended. Māori laymen were excluded, and Synod proceedings were no longer bilingual but conducted in English only. Around the end of the century an increasing number of Māori clergy began attending Synods and in 1898 the Synod gave seats to Māori laymen by allowing the Māori Church Boards one

representative each. This increased the number of Synodsmen to thirty-five. The first Māori Synodsmen took his seat in 1900 representing the Heretaunga Church Board and another was present in 1903, but that was all until after World War 1. In 1921, the number of laymen in Synod was increased to forty-one, with two Māori members instead of one for each of the Māori Church Boards. At the 1922 Synod all six lay Māori representatives were present for the first time. Apirana Ngata, who outside Synod was one of a number of leading Māori urging the appointment of a Māori bishop, was elected to the exacting task of Chairman of Committees. Also taking her place was a Māori laywoman. In his opening address Bishop Sedgwick referred to this, saying 'It is significant of the progressiveness of our Māori people that the first female representative of our Diocesan Synod should be a Māori.' He did not name this woman or comment on the fact that this was the first Synod in New Zealand, and probably in the world-wide Anglican church, to have a woman member. **Mrs Hera Munro** (née Stirling) from Rotorua, representing the Tauranga Māori Board, attended all four sitting days. Who was Mrs Munro?

The Stirling Family

Sarah Mary Catherine Stirling was born at Riverton in 1876. She was also known as **Hera** or

Heta Terana, names which reveal her bicultural ancestry: Scottish/Ngai Tahu/Ngati Moemoe.

Sarah's grandfather was Captain William Stirling, an early New Zealand whaler.¹ He was allegedly of Scottish descent though according to his son he was born in England in 1812 (see below). He went to sea as a young boy, possibly in the navy, and after sailing in Australian waters for some years came to New Zealand around 1830 to take up whaling. After whaling for a few years at Otago Heads in 1836 he started a whaling station at Bluff, and then shifted to Stirling Point where he made a splendid boat harbour. Dr Shortland, who visited the Bluff in 1843, paid a high tribute to the conduct and general organization of the community and Stirling appears to have been successful in managing his fellow countrymen. He also established friendly relations with local Māori and Tuhawaiki, a local chief, gave him a daughter in marriage. She died childless and following Māori custom of finding another wife from the same family he was given as his second wife a woman called Te Huikau or Hiwikau, daughter of Makere Te Whanawhana, a great fighting chief. After the marriage Makere gave Stirling land at Tiwai Point (later the site of the Bluff smelter) and he also bought land from Tuhaiwiki. William Stirling and Te Huikau had one son, John, born in 1840. Another child died young soon followed by Te Huikau. In 1844, William Stirling was married by Bishop Selwyn to Mary Parker, daughter of an Englishman and a Māori woman. She had one still-born child. When the smelter was being built at Tiwai Point a bulldozer uncovered an elaborate Māori burial of a European man, which included a button from a naval uniform. This was excavated by Southland Museum staff in the early 1970's and is thought to be William Stirling's grave since early surveys showed this at the highest spot on Tiwai Point. The grave is now marked by a plaque:

William Stirling

Born 1810 Kent, England

Died 19th December 1851, Tiwai.

Arrived Cuttle Cove, Preservation Inlet,

New Zealand 1830

Whaler, Headman, Mariner, Pioneer.

The First Pilot of the Bluff Area

John Stirling, said to be the first European child born and baptised at the Bluff, was married by the Revd J. Wohlers to Elizabeth Davis at Ruapuke in 1858. He was eighteen and she sixteen. Elizabeth was the daughter of 'Big George' Davis, a whaler from Scotland, and Kutamamoe (or Kutamaemae), an important woman of Ngati Mamoe and Ngai Tahu descent. They had three sons and two daughters. John Stirling and family lived first with his father-in-law, Mr Davis, at his farm at Waimatuku, moving after 14 years to Riverton where they lived on a portion of the Native Reserve allotted to his wife and where his children attended school. John Stirling was a well-known figure at Riverton, noted for his kindly, lovable, Christian disposition. One son, Duncan, became a qualified builder before moving to the East Coast where he built a number of churches, including those at Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay Te Horo, Tikitiki, and Te Araroa, and the Nga Tai meeting house at Torere. He married Mihi Kotukutu, a Māori woman of great mana, descended from three great chiefs: Paikea, Porourangi, and Apanui. They established a well-known branch of the Stirling family, one of their descendants being Eruera Stirling.

Salvation Army

At Waimatuku, John Stirling joined the Primitive Brethren but on moving to Riverton he joined the Salvation Army. He had the rank of sergeant and remained an active member until his death. In 1892 **Hera**, a girl of 16 who loved dancing, followed her father and joined the Salvation Army. She was commissioned as lieutenant in

1895 and after serving at Otaki attended the newly opened Gisborne Training Garrison for Māori Officers in 1897. Hera Stirling was promoted to captain, then in 1902 to ensign. It was during these years that she learned to speak te reo Māori which had been little spoken in her home.

Stirling served in a number of Corps appointments, mainly in Māori work in Otaki, Gisborne, Tauranga and Rotorua, and also in a number of special appointments. She had a fine soprano singing voice and in 1895-6 toured New South Wales and Victoria as a soloist with a Māori concert party, where her singing reportedly caused something of a sensation. In 1898, she travelled in a concert party with four other Māori on an extensive fund raising tour in the South Island. The party was led by Major Holdaway who played the fairy bells, zither, musical saucers and tumblers, and the banjo while the Māori members performed action songs, poi and haka. At Riverton, Captain Stirling sang and 'touchingly addressed her old friends and relatives . . . and appealed to them to give themselves to God's service.'² She also sang at the opening of the Salvation Army barracks in Gisborne in 1898 and at other special occasions. She was often named as one of the attractions in advertisements for Salvation Army meetings and newspaper reports consistently praised her fine voice, noting the enthusiastic response from audiences. Bandmaster Herbert Gladstone Hill wrote words and music of 'Abide with me', a very popular sacred solo, for her.

In 1900 the Māori concert party was in Dunedin. There also, were the first two government-sponsored Māori medical students, Peter Buck and Tutere Wirepa, both old boys of Te Aute College. They took an interest in the Salvationists, particularly in their social work, and Stirling got to know them well.

In 1903 Ensign Stirling travelled in Australia with Commissioner McKie, Australasian Commander

of the Salvation Army, as a soloist at his evangelistic meetings. At the Salvation Army Congress in Adelaide, singing to an audience of about one thousand, she received an ovation and the demand for an encore after her first solo.

In June 1903 an eighty-page pamphlet on social work in the Salvation Army included a special article on work among the Māori, written by Ensign Stirling. Events showed that Stirling was not however entirely contented with her life as a Salvationist.

Putiki Māori Mission

On her return to New Zealand in mid-1903 Stirling went on sick leave and returned to Riverton. For the next 18 months she was the subject of considerable concern to the Salvation Army leadership. Stirling maintained that her health did not allow her to take up the rigorous work of an Army appointment but, without any consultation, began teaching at a Māori school at the Anglican Māori Mission at Putiki. The mission, founded in 1885 by the Revd Richard Taylor of the CMS, was situated in a Māori settlement near the mouth of the Whanganui River, almost opposite the town of Whanganui. The head of the mission was the Rev'd Alfred Williams (a grandson of Henry Williams), who was Superintendent of the Whanganui District Māori Mission and a fluent Māori speaker. Stirling argued that the work was light and that she needed to earn some money. She was paid 80 pounds per annum for giving religious instruction to school pupils and preaching twice on Sundays. Her stipend was paid by Archdeacon Samuel Williams of Waiapu (Alfred's uncle and a great supporter of missions). The Army responded by extending her furlough and attempting unsuccessfully to get her some financial assistance from the Officers' Sick Benefit Fund. In March 1904, Ensign Stirling, from Putiki, was reported as leading a large party of Māoris who provided a musical programme at the end of the Salvation Army's Harvest Festival

in Whanganui. Two months later Stirling wrote to the Army authorities that she was thinking of resigning her position as officer. In spite of several letters encouraging her not to do so she resigned officially in August, giving as the main reason that God called distinctly her to work among the Māori and that her present work allowed her to live with them and give her whole time to them. Clearly reluctant to lose her, the Army did not give up immediately and she received letters and a personal visit asking her to reconsider. In October 1904 Alfred Williams reported that she was doing splendid work among the younger members of the community. In November it was noted by the Salvation Army that 'there appears to be no hope of saving her'³ and in December her name was removed from the Officers' Roll.

Interviewed with her husband by Lieut. Colonel Burton in 1935 the former Ensign Stirling, now Mrs Munro, stated that 'her withdrawal from the Army was due to the absence of definite effort on the part of the Salvation Army to help the Māori.'⁴ The Army was hampered by limited financial resources and changing leadership which did not always support Māori work. The Anglicans had well-established Māori missions which despite their limitations were able to provide greater opportunity for work among Māori.

After resigning from the Salvation Army, Stirling continued to work at Putiki. In his report on 1905 Alfred Williams noted that 'Putiki is perhaps our brightest spot owing largely to the work of Miss Stirling.'⁵ She continued to use her musical ability and in July 1905 was largely responsible for a performance in the Whanganui Opera House to raise funds for work on the church and graveyard at Putiki. This ambitious entertainment, devised by Stirling to illustrate the past and present of the Māori race, was attended by a full house and the Putiki Māori Choir, trained by her, received high praise. Stirling herself, this

'talented, highly-esteemed young lady', was greeted by a storm of applause for her singing of 'Home Sweet Home.'⁶ The Putiki Māori Choir sang at numerous other events in Whanganui and earlier the same month performed at a concert for the 25th anniversary of the Salvation Army, so evidently friendly relations were maintained.



International Exhibition

The New Zealand International Exhibition was held in Christchurch from 1 November 1906 to 15 April 1907. At a time when the population of New Zealand was less than one million it attracted nearly two million visitors. The Māori exhibition, Te Araiteuru Pa, occupied nearly two acres (one hectare). The Minister of Native Affairs, James Carroll, was responsible and it was given special government funding. Carroll put Augustus Hamilton, the Director of the Colonial Museum, in charge of the project with Gregor McGregor, a Pakeha farmer from the Whanganui River area, as site superintendent. Peter Buck was one of only two Māori members on the organising committee. The exhibit, designed largely by European ethnologists, represented the idyllic past of what was widely seen to be a dying race. Different groups of Māori formed the residents, with a total over the months of about 500 participants, always dressed in traditional costumes. The first group was from Whanganui and Rotorua.

It is likely that Stirling, who knew Peter Buck and probably knew McGregor also, worked full-time at the Exhibition. She was there in December 1906, acting as interpreter when Premier Sir Joseph Ward visited the pa with his wife. The same month she was one of the sponsors when the daughter of one of the first residents was baptised at the pa by Bishop Julius. The service, conducted in te reo Māori, attracted a large number of visitors and was reported in a number of newspapers. In February 1907 she acted as interpreter with a group of Māori from the Exhibition who attended the Salvation Army Congress in Christchurch. When Carroll visited the Exhibition pa, shortly before it closed in April 1907, he thanked Miss Stirling, Dr Buck, and Mr G. McGregor for their valuable services.

Te Hauke Māori Mission

Before his death in March 1907 Archdeacon Samuel Williams invited Stirling to work for the Māori Mission in the Waitapu Māori pastorate of Waiapu diocese. She went there after the closure of the Exhibition and was based at the mission house at Te Hauke, in Hawke's Bay on the Heretaunga plains near Hastings and just three miles from Te Aute College. Mission work in the district was begun by William Colenso, assisted by Māori teachers. In 1905 Samuel Williams built a school and mission house at Te Hauke, a large and predominantly Mormon kainga. The first worker was Miss Ethel Baker, a daughter of the Revd Frederick Baker and granddaughter of CMS missionary the Revd Charles Baker. She left in 1907, going to Melbourne to train for missionary work, and was replaced by Hera Stirling. As missioner, Stirling visited Māori homes, organized Sunday schools and Bible classes, and generally engaged in pastoral work with Māori women and girls. Soon after her arrival the Revd Arthur Williams, Hawke's Bay Māori Missioner (and brother of Alfred), wrote 'Of Miss Stirling and her work it is almost impossible to speak too highly ... Without her help it would have been practically impossible to initiate, carry on, and build up what has been accomplished. Her influence with old and young alike, with men, women and children is wonderful and seems unlimited.'⁷

As well as working for the Māori mission Stirling acted as its advocate. In January 1908 she spoke at a students' conference on missions, giving an excellent description of the causes that led to estrangement of Māori from Pakeha and emphasising the importance of native colleges. Later in the year Stirling spent over two months in the Urewera, relieving Deaconess Doyle, the lady missioner at Ruatoki, and holding a number of successful meetings. This cannot have been her first visit for in February 1907, while in Christchurch, she spoke at a large meeting of the

Gleaners' Union (the youth branch of the CMS). The theme of the meeting was Māori mission work, with the other speakers being Dr Peter Buck and the Revd F. Chatterton.⁸ Stirling gave an interesting address on missionary work in the Urewera country, saying the field was ripe for labour. She referred to the noble work done by several young native girls and stressed the urgent need for more women workers. During the Waiapu Synod in October 1910 the Napier Athenaeum Hall was crowded for a missionary meeting. Among the speakers Miss Stirling and the Revd F. Bennett⁹ represented the Māori Mission.

Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

The New Zealand Alliance (founded 1886,) the WCTU (founded 1885) and other groups had a long history of promoting temperance among Māori, and the cause was supported by many Māori leaders, including Apirana Ngata and the Revd F. Bennett. Many Māori women, concerned about the effects of alcohol on their communities, supported temperance.

Stirling's first recorded involvement with the WCTU was in March 1905 when she and Miss Davis invited Miss Hughes, superintendent of Māori work for the WCTU, to speak at a meeting at Pukiti. This was attended by Māori and Pakeha, women and men, and resulted in the formation of a WCTU branch with Stirling as secretary. Later that year the WCTU annual conference was held in Whanganui. Visiting delegates were entertained by members of the local Māori branch and Miss Stirling sang.

In her role as missioner at Te Hauke, Stirling was active in the temperance cause, especially among women, resulting in the formation of branches of the WCTU at Moteo, Pakipaki and Tangoio, with a total of about 100 members. At the 1908 WCTU convention the president commented that the state of affairs among the Māori described by Miss Hera Stirling was most

distressing and regretted that no funds were available for a Māori superintendent. It is likely that Stirling sent a written report as there is no mention of her presence at the meeting in Wellington. In 1909, a successful mission and temperance meeting was held at Te Kuri by the Misses Stirling and Te Tau, the Revd F. Chatterton, principal of Te Rau College, and students of the college. A great number signed the temperance pledge. The two women went on to visit Te Arai and other Māori settlements and addressed some large meetings, with a majority in favour of abstinence. Branches of the Temperance League were formed at Te Kuri and other places. At the 1909 WCTU convention greetings were read from Miss Stirling, 'organiser among the Natives.'

WCTU Temperance Pledge taken by Māori

'He whakaae tene naku kia kua ahau e kai tupeka, e inu ranei I tetahi mea e haurangi ai te tangata, kia kua hoki ahau e whakaae ki te ta moko. Ma te Atua ahau e awahina.'

I agree by this pledge, not to smoke tobacco, not to drink any beverages that are intoxicating, and also not to take the ta moko. May God help me.

The 25th annual convention of the WCTU, with upwards of fifty delegates, was held in Invercargill in February 1910. A special feature was the prominence given to Māori work. Stirling led the group of Māori delegates and spoke of the beneficial influence of the WCTU. At the end of the convention Stirling, described as 'a most gifted, earnest, half-caste Māori girl who speaks fluently and well' was appointed as Māori organiser 'as far as consistent with her other duties.'¹⁰ This seems to have formalised her role. Her responsibilities as organiser would be to strengthen, by her advice and help, those unions recently formed, and to initiate new ones.

In June 1910, a big public meeting was held in the Wellington Town Hall to discuss the liquor question from a Māori perspective. The Revd F.

Chatterton, President of the Gisborne No-License League, presided and on the platform with him were the Revd F. Bennett and the Revd L. M. Isitt (Methodist), organiser for the New Zealand Alliance. Stirling made a stirring appeal for the Māori race, saying that younger Māori were doing useful work and she believed they would win the battle. She also sang a song in Māori.

Young Māori Party

The Young Māori Party was not a conventional political party, but a group of like-minded Māori dedicated to improving the position of their people. Founded in 1909, it grew out of the Te Aute Students' Association. Prominent members were Apirana Ngata, James Carroll, Maui Pomare, and Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck), all of whom were eventually knighted. At a conference held in Rotorua in 1909, Miss Stirling 'of Te Aute' gave a paper on the influence of women. She described this as generally exercised for the benefit of the human race and referred to the work of Deaconess Doyle and Rota Numia (mission workers at Ruatoki Mission House) and the formation of women's associations in the Hawke's Bay to prevent the sale of liquor to Māori. Whether she had a continuing connection with the YMP is not known.

Marriage

In November 1910, Hera Stirling married the Rev. **Himepiri (Humphrey) Te Wharekauri Munro** (usually known as **Piri Munro**), a prominent member of Te Arawa. Born about 1886 and educated at Te Aute College and Te Rau Kahikatea Theological College, Munro was ordained deacon a few months before he married and priest the following year. The grandson of the last Te Arawa tohunga, Munro was active in mission against 'tohungaism' and Mormonism. The marriage ceremony in Napier cathedral was performed by Bishop Averill, assisted by Bishop Williams and the Revd F. Bennett. The bride, wearing a handsome silk

gown, was given away by the chief Mohi Te Atahikoia of Pakipaki and had two Māori bridesmaids. The best man was from Te Aute College and the principal of Te Rau College, the Revd F. Chatterton, played the organ. The reception was given at Bishop's Court by Bishop and Mrs Averill. The whole event was reported as news in the Poverty Bay Herald, showing that this was a significant occasion. At the Waiapu Synod shortly before the wedding Piri Munro was presented with a valuable case of table cutlery and plate and the WCTU sent a wedding present to Miss Stirling in appreciation of her services.

From 1910 to 1915, Munro served in the Waitapu pastorate in which Te Hauke was situated and was then appointed to Māori work in the Hawkes Bay archdeaconry, replacing the Revd Arthur Williams. **Hera**, now **Mrs Munro**, continued her work as missionary at Te Hauke. They had two sons, Makere Te Wiremu and Pango Stirling. In 1917 Munro became Māori missionary in Rotorua, replacing the Revd F. Bennett; the family moved to Ohinemutu, and Mrs Munro ceased her work at Te Hauke where she had served for ten years. In 1922, the Revd Piri Munro was appointed to the combined Māori pastorates of Wairoa and Nuhaka.

Diocesan Affairs

As Mrs Munro, Hera played an active role in diocesan affairs. She was bilingual, familiar with both Māori and pakeha culture, and married to a priest, all of which must have given her an unusual status and helped make her acceptable in the pakeha church.

During their years in Hawke's Bay Hera Munro was involved with her husband in at least two missions to Māori, in 1913 in Dannevirke and in 1916 at Morere, near Nuhaka. A series of missions was held in Dannevirke for Māori who had moved there from Hawke's Bay. The Revd F. Bennett praised the preparatory work for the first of these, carried out by the Revd Piri Munro

and 'his able wife' together with the Revd A.F. Williams. No doubt it was owing to her that 12 members joined the Mothers' Union. Bishop Averill reported that at the Morere Māori church 'there is revived life due to the visit of the Rev. and Mrs Piri Munro. Their visit has had a wonderful effect and has won back to the Church several who had lapsed into Mormonism.'¹¹

At the annual meeting of the Gleaners' Union in 1913 both the Reverend and Mrs Munro gave 'exceedingly helpful and instructive addresses' on the work amongst the Māori.¹² They probably spoke individually and together at many other meetings which have not been recorded.

In addition to her mission work, Mrs Munro acted as a representative of Māori women in the diocese. In 1914 she represented 'the Māori' at a meeting of 15 women chaired by Mrs Sedgwick, the bishop's wife, to discuss setting up a women's home to be run by a deaconess from England. When St Mary's Home, Napier, was established she served on its Central Committee for some years.

The Mothers' Union, founded in England in 1876, was begun in New Zealand in 1886. By 1897 every diocese had a branch but on the whole Māori women did not join until the 1930s. In Waiapu diocese a special meeting of the Diocesan Council of the Mothers' Union was held at Bishops court, Napier, in February 1915. Its purpose was to discuss and adopt a draft constitution for the diocesan body. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Sedgwick and those present were his wife, fifteen other ladies and 'Mrs Munro of Te Hauke, present by invitation to talk about work among Māori women.' She had already spoken on this to several of the parish MU groups. At the end of the meeting Mrs Munro was admitted as a member. It was hoped that this 'would be the beginning of Mothers' Union work among our Māori sisters, several of whom ... have desired admission for some time past.'¹³ In view of this

interest, it was decided to hasten the translation of Mothers' Union literature into Māori. Council membership was to include a representative of work among the Māori, appointed by the Bishop. Not surprisingly the first representative was Mrs Munro.

Temperance Work

Piri Munro was, like his wife, a temperance advocate. In December 1910, soon after their wedding, they both spoke at a WCTU meeting chaired by Mrs Sheppard in Wellington. He spoke on the importance of Māori secondary schools while Mrs Munro in a speech on 'The influence of the WCTU on Māori life' described the splendid work of the Hawke's Bay schools for Māori girls and stressed the importance of giving Māori a vote on the liquor question. Together they sang, in Māori, 'Lead kindly light' and she sang 'Home sweet home.'¹⁴ They also spoke at a WCTU rally at Trinity Church, Newtown. The same month they both spoke in the WCTU rooms in Christchurch on temperance work among Māori.

The WCTU held its annual convention at New Plymouth in 1911 and about a fortnight later the first Māori conference of the WCTU was held at Paki Paki, under the capable supervision of the Revd Piri and Mrs Munro. Seven Māori unions were represented and there was a small delegation of Pakeha women. It was decided that the Māori unions would not seek to form an independent organisation but would act as a district convention of Māori workers to control administrative matters. Mrs Munro was elected president. There is a lack of information about the activities of this group after its foundation and there is no public record of the Munro's being involved in further temperance work until 1922.

Synod 1922

In 1922, the Tauranga Māori Board appointed Hera Munro as a lay member of the Waiapu Synod. Her bicultural background, bilingual

ability, Salvation Army training, experience as a Māori mission worker and in Pakeha women's organizations, all meant that she was unusually well-qualified for the position. She was widely known in the diocese and used to public speaking in English.

In spite of being the only woman and one of only six Māori at the Synod Munro was not afraid to speak. In fact, the longest debate took place on her motion in favour of Prohibition 'as the only immediate available remedy' for the evils of the liquor trade. The prohibition movement, combining moral fervour with political action, had been very narrowly defeated in two national polls held in 1919. In 1922 Prohibition was still a major political and social issue, with prohibitionists and the liquor trade fighting to gain a majority in another a poll to be held in December. Several speakers spoke in warm support of the motion, the main gist of their argument an appeal to Pakeha to vote Prohibition for the sake of the Māori 'younger brother.' Mrs Munro in her reply introduced 'a serious innovation' by singing a solo in Māori – presumably the customary waiata at the end of a speech. The reporter in the Waiapu Church Gazette, revealing something of contemporary attitudes to Māoritanga, hoped this was not the 'thin end of the wedge.' The motion was carried by a large majority.¹⁵

Later that year in November Mrs Munro, representing the Anglican Māori Mission, participated in the Anglican Church's efforts in support of the prohibition vote. She spoke on prohibition and sang at a meeting at Seatoun. About ten days later 'New Zealand's Prohibition Melba' spoke briefly and sang several songs at an Anglican Church Prohibition Rally in the Wellington Town Hall.

Post-Synod

Mrs Munro was not reappointed as a Synods-woman after 1922. Whether or not this was by

her own choice is unknown. There is little information about her life until her death nearly 40 years later. Her husband's health was poor, and he retired from full-time ministry in 1925. The Munros then moved back to Ohinemutu where he farmed for a time and then became a partner in a local business.

Link with Ratana

In 1921 the Revd Piri Munro acted as chaplain to Māori prophet and faith healer T.W. Ratana and his party as they toured the North and South Islands. Munro, who was regarded as a friend of Ratana, addressed a number of meetings and actively supported Ratana. It is not known when this relationship began but Mrs Munro had a link with Ratana through her brother Duncan. Late in 1919 Mihi Kotukutuku, Duncan's wife, became ill with breast cancer and with her husband made the long journey to Ratana's pa near Whanganui. Ratana was at the time at the height of his reputation as a faith healer. The lump disappeared and Mihi believed herself cured. Ratana visited Waiapu diocese in 1921 and Munro was asked by Bishop Sedgwick to accompany him as he went to Māori congregations. Ratana was warmly praised for his work at the Synod that year though in 1925 he and his followers were to be excommunicated by the Anglican bishops.

Shortly before the opening of the temple at Ratana's pa in December 1926, the Munros, with three others, went for a visit of more than a week. Munro later criticised the movement for belittling Holy Scripture and tending to make Ratana a second Christ.¹⁶

Deaths

In January 1938 the Revd Himepiri Munro died at Manurewa after a long illness. The tangi was held at Tamatekapua meeting house, next to St Faith's church at Ohinemutu. Many clergy, Pakeha and Māori, were present together with a number of leading people from Hawke's Bay. Archdeacon

Simkin travelled from Auckland. In an obituary Canon W.G Williams, Superintendent of Māori Work, praised Piri for his great gifts as a mission preacher, noting his special study of Mormonism, and affirming that 'In all his mission work he was earnestly and ably supported by his wife.'¹⁷

In December 1944 Captain Pango Munro, Hera's 29-year-old son, a member of the 28th Māori battalion, was killed in action in Italy. A former teacher, he was unmarried. His elder brother later moved with his family to Australia.

Mrs Munro continued to live at Ohinemutu. She was an active parishioner of St Faith's, involved with the Mothers' Union, and also active in the Labour Party. She was a great supporter of the Māori girls' colleges: Hukarere, Turakina and Waipounamu. In 1949 Salvation Army Commissioner Astbury and his wife, on a brief visit to Rotorua, called on the former Ensign Stirling and 'found the happy warrior strong in faith and warm in friendliness.'¹⁸ The next year, in August 1950, Hera Munro died, aged 74. Hundreds, including many former Sunday School and Bible Class students came to her funeral at which she was described as a heitiki – most

valued prize. Telegrams came from Peter Fraser, E. T. Tirikatene, Mrs Iriaka Ratana and A. McDonald, national secretary of the Labour Party. The Labour newspaper published an obituary, noting that the next week she would have met with Te Aute old boys at the centennial celebrations for the college.¹⁹ Before she was placed in a vault on Sunday, 12 August, Hera Munro lay in state in St Faith's, the first woman to receive this honour.

At the Waiapu Synod held just two months after her death Hera Munro was not mentioned. Possibly this was because both Sir Apirana Ngata and Bishop Frederick Bennett had died recently, and the focus was on their deaths. The Anglican paper Church and People frequently published obituaries but made no reference to her death. The 2009 publication 'The Gift Endures: a new history of the diocese of Waiapu' refers to her only as a Māori mission worker. This paper is an attempt to redress the situation and to pay tribute to the remarkable contribution Hera Munro made to the life and work of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

One of the arguments used by opponents of women's rights in the church was that women would displace laymen on vestries and synods. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find information about women's membership of these bodies but from what is available it seems that it was a long time before women participated with men in anything like equal numbers.

In Auckland diocese in 1923 three women were elected to the vestry of St Alban's, Balmoral, and two to the vestry of St Columba, Grey Lynn. Miss L. Stevens, representing the Islands, was the first woman member of the diocesan synod in 1947. The first Māori women were appointed in 1974: Mrs Taha Browne from Parengarenga/Ahipara/Peria and Miss Ina Te Uira from South Auckland.

In Wellington in the 1960s 'a few courageous women had begun to serve on vestries, but it was a rare thing.'²⁰

After Mrs Munro the next Waiapu synodswoman was not appointed until 1958 when Mrs V. Tatana, another Māori woman, was elected.

The first woman member of General Synod was Mrs W. Elliott of Waikato, in 1972.

I would be glad to receive more information from readers.

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Endnotes:

- ¹Information about Captain Stirling is found on various websites and in several books, particularly *Eruera: The teachings of a Māori Elder* [Eruera Stirling], Auckland: OUP, 1985. These sources do not always agree.
- ² *Bruce Herald*, 22 July 1898.
- ³ Letter from the Field Secretary to Lt Colonel Gilmour, Christchurch, 8 November 1904. I am grateful to Harold Hill for sharing Stirling's Salvation Army records with me.
- ⁴ *War Cry*, 19 August 1950.
- ⁵ *Church Chronicle*, 1 February 1906.
- ⁶ *Wanganui Chronicle*, 25 July 1905.
- ⁷ Report to Waiapu Synod, November 1907.
- ⁸ Frederick William Chatterton was prominent in the work of the Māori Mission. He was principal of Te Rau Theological College 1902-1918, then vicar of Rotorua until his retirement in 1934.
- ⁹ Frederick Augustus Bennett served in a number of Māori Mission positions and was consecrated first Bishop of Aotearoa in 1928.
- ¹⁰ *Otatau Standard & Wallace County Chronicle*, 1 March 1910.
- ¹¹ *Waiapu Church Gazette*, 1 May 1916.
- ¹² *Waiapu Church Gazette*, 1 September 1913.
- ¹³ *Waiapu Church Gazette*, 1 May, 1915.
- ¹⁴ *Press*, 16 December, 1910.
- ¹⁵ See report in the *Waiapu Church Gazette*, 2 October 1922, p409.
- ¹⁶ For Munro's account of this visit see *NZ Evangel*, February 1927.
- ¹⁷ *Waiapu Church Gazette*, 1 February 1938.
- ¹⁸ *War Cry*, 19 August 1950.
- ¹⁹ *Southern Cross*, 16 August 1950.
- ²⁰ Brian Davis, *The Way Ahead: Anglican Change and Prospect in New Zealand*, Caxton Press, 1995, p18.