

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

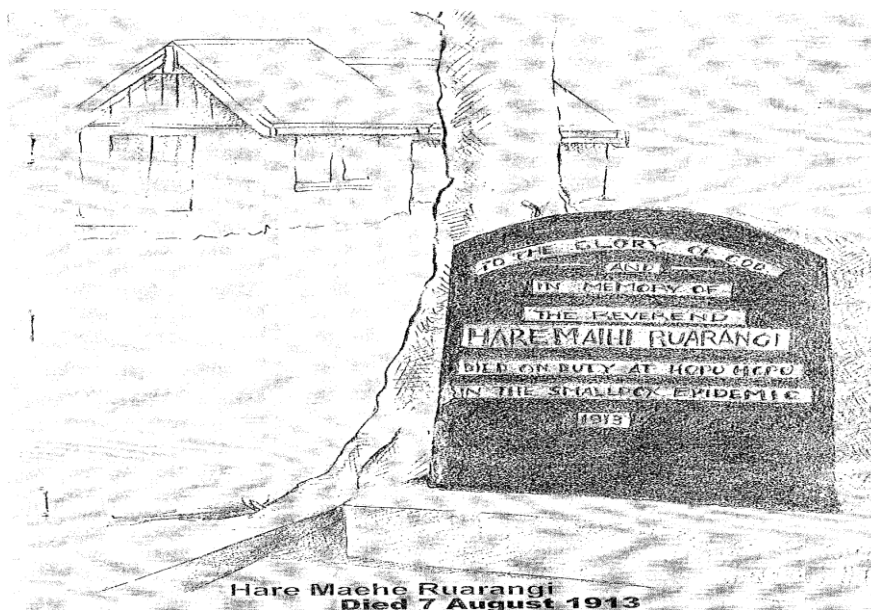
Hare Maehe Ruarangi

1872 - 1913

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(AHS Newsletter 67, March 2019)

(A draft of a Paper, written by the late Archdeacon Tony Clarke)



Beginnings

In the write up of the priesting of **Hare Maehe Ruarangi** in the Church Gazette, November 1899, Archdeacon Edward Clarke (no relation to the present writer) records that Hare Maehe Ruarangi was the son of Weneti Ruarangi, the old and well-tried licensed lay reader of Shelley Beach, Kaipara, and nephew of the Rev. W. H. Matete. Archdeacon Edward Clarke writes: 'He belongs to both the Ngati Whatua and Ngati Paoa tribes and is of good family. As a child he attended the Government school at Parkhurst (near Parakai / Helensville), and when 15 came to St Stephen's School, Parnell. After four years there, he passed on in 1892 to the Gisborne college, Te Rau

Kahikatea, where he completed his education and was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Waiapu on behalf of the Bishop of Auckland in 1896.'

In actual fact, the date of his being made Deacon was the 20th of January 1897. At that time, tribute was paid to the careful teaching he had received at the CMS College - Te Rau Kahikatea - under the direction of the Bishop of Waiapu, who says of him, 'I have known him well and I have a very high opinion of him, and he is likely to do very good work.'

On St Luke's Day 1899, he was ordained Priest by the Bishop of Auckland. At the time of his priesting his District was an extensive one as it included from North Manukau Heads to South Kaipara Heads, Mahurangi,

Orakei and Waiheke. Under his influence several parties of the different forms of Hauhauism renounced their errors and gladly received his ministrations. In fact, there were none to oppose him.

On February 3rd, 1901, his first wife passed to her rest and on 21st October 1901 he was among those who attended a Quiet Day at Bishop's Court. In December 1901, the Rev. H. M. Ruarangi was appointed to the charge of the District of Whangarei in place of the Rev. Wiremu Te Waha. In July 1902 he took part in a choral service at Christ Church, Whangarei.

Missionary in Waikato

In November 1903 it was announced that the Rev. C. Marsh (Ruarangi) would be appointed to the mission staff at Taupiri and in December 1903 an appeal was made for money to add a large room for the twofold purpose of affording accommodation for the holding of services and of providing for the proposed increase in mission staff to help the Priest-in-Charge of the Huntly-Ngaruawahia District, Rev. Nikora Tautau, who was a very popular Māori priest seen as doing splendid work in the face of great difficulties.

Māori in this District had been grossly neglected in the past and the majority were proselytised by the Mormons. Mr Tautau, however, by dint of hard and devoted work had already secured a large following. In December 1904, it was recorded that the former church at Taupiri would be provided for Hopuhopu and an appeal was made for a new roof.

Parawai

On 2 December 1905, Hare Maehe Ruarangi became minister at Parawai, a suburb of Thames. He ministered at the Parawai Church and on the Coromandel Peninsular until 1910, when he went to Kaikohe (see in

the obituary, some account of his work there).

Hopuhopu

In 1912/13 he returned to the Huntly area as a curate for Māori work to the vicar of Huntly, taking services in places like Taniwha and Rangiriri. At Taniwha it was recorded that it was the first service for 27 years. During that service he baptised eight children.

In the Trust Board Minutes of April and May 1913 there was some discussion about clearing the section occupied by Ruarangi of noxious weeds and there was a lease granted to a Mr Graham of part of the land occupied by Ruarangi at that stage. Ruarangi surrendered the lease of about 4½ acres at £1 per annum.

At this stage throughout New Zealand there was a smallpox epidemic. During the epidemic, the practice was to place those suffering from smallpox in camps. Hopuhopu was one of these camps for Māori sufferers of the disease. At the same time there were two or three other camps within the Hamilton Borough for the Pakeha sufferers.

In 1913, the Rev. Hare Maehe Ruarangi was stricken down in ministering to his people during the smallpox epidemic. He was buried beside the little mission church at Hopuhopu, a church that had been a recognisable landmark for many years. The grave was marked by a simple mound. In 1914, the house where Hare Maehe Ruarangi died was destroyed by fire on the recommendation of Dr Valentine. This was a standard precaution for any building where people had died of smallpox.

In 1917, a considerable monument was made to mark his grave more significantly. Both local and Māori people interested themselves in the matter, collecting money and arranging for the erection of a suitable

memorial. It was decided that the memorial should be as simple in form and as permanent as possible. A cross after the fashion of that erected on the spot where Bishop Patterson was martyred in Melanesia was designed by the Rev. J. L. A. Kayll and made locally by the Huntly Timber Company.

The Rev. J. L. A. Kayll, vicar of the parish, the Rev J. T. McWilliam, assistant superintendent of the Māori Mission, the Rev. Hari Raiti, Priest-in-charge of Māori work in the Waikato, Daniel Kerehoma and Mr F. Harris (whose knowledge of cement work made all the difference) repaired to Hopuhopu and erected the memorial. According to the report in the Church Gazette, November 1st, 1917, the grave was covered with concrete

with a concrete wall erected on the outer edge and the cross erected at the head of the grave. The top of the cross was between 17 and 18 feet from the ground and was painted black and had a very striking appearance.

When this memorial cross, together with a significant part of the surrounds of the grave was removed, I have not yet found out.

Extract from the Official Records of the 1913 General Synod

Clergy List 1913

The Reverend Hare Maihi Ruarangi

Te Rau College

Deacon: 1896 Wai. for Auckland

Priest: 1899 Auckland Minister

Parkhurst 1896 - 1901

Whangarei 1901 - 1903

Miss. in Waikato 1903 - 1905

Parawai 1905 - 1910

Kaikohe 1910 –

(No Record appears in the next General Synod Report)

CHURCH GAZETTE

March 1906

Church Work Among the Māori

Interesting Account of Work among the Māori in the Thames District

We have received from the Rev. H. Marsh Ruarangi, minister in charge of the Coromandel, Thames, and Paeroa districts, an encouraging and interesting account of the work being done by him in the Thames part of his large parish to which he was appointed last year. Mr Marsh has preached in many of the Pakeha churches of the diocese at different times, and we are sure that his account of his work will be read with pleasure by his many European friends scattered throughout the diocese.

His chief church is situated at Parawai, a suburb of the Thames, and was in need of repair when he took charge. Writing of this church, he says: 'We have now finished painting the Church of the Holy

Trinity, and have thoroughly repaired it inside, and have added a font, prayer desk, credence table, and a cross for the altar. The latter was kindly presented to us by the Vestry of St Alban's Church, Mount Roskill. We have also procured a new altar cloth, and a new linoleum for the sanctuary. The Vicarage also has been painted and renovated. The repairs to the church and Vicarage have cost over £20, the whole amount having been collected by the Māori, and we still have a small surplus in the bank.

At Kirikiri, a settlement about two or three miles from Parawai, there is also another church of ours, which is sadly in need of repair, requiring, first of all, a new iron roof and a coat of paint. Having repaired the principal church, viz., that at Parawai, we are now making efforts to do the same for that at Kirikiri, and in order to obtain funds towards meeting the expense, there will be a combined English and Māori concert held in Thames on the night of March 23rd. Many Europeans of the Thames have kindly offered their services, and the Orchestra String Band, and possibly the Hauraki Brass Band, will also help us. The Māori items will consist of poi dances, songs, and physical drill by several old St Stephen's boys and others.

The Lord Bishop of the Diocese will visit us in April, when we hope to have at least forty candidates to be confirmed. Most of these have been under instruction since November. One pleasing feature about these candidates is that ten couples that have been married according to Māori custom will, in March, be married according to the rites of the Church.

We have now a properly organised choir in connection with Holy Trinity, Parawai, consisting at present of fourteen voices, singing the four parts. In the training of the choir, we are receiving great help from Piripi Pou, an old St Stephen's boy, who is working in the Thames Post Office.

At the request of the Europeans living at Parawai, and with the consent of the Rev. Dr O'Callaghan, Vicar of St George's. Thames, when I am at home on a Sunday evening, we have a combined English and Māori service at 7 p.m. It is unusual for Māori to have evening service at night, they always having their evening service at 3 p.m., and so we have had to provide new lamps for the church. So far, the services have been very well attended by members of both races.

'In all these things which God is allowing us to do' we render to Him the glory.'

The following letter has been sent to all the clergy within easy reach of the railway. If any of our lay friends feel moved to send a contribution, it will be most thankfully received:

St Paul's Vicarage,
Huntly,
February 12, 1906

Dear Sir: - It is intended to repeat the Sale of Work (as held last year) in aid of the Māori Mission, on March 17th, at Ngaruawahia - the date of the annual regatta - and in connection with the same there will be a refreshment booth. I am therefore repeating my appeal to all parishes and parochial districts (within rail communication) to assist in the object by contributing either a parcel of work for the Sale, or a hamper for the refreshment booth, or, if you can manage it, both.

I may point out that light fancy work, such as tray cloths, doily's, etc, find a readier sale than heavy articles, and the Māori buy good articles, such as pinafores and children's clothes, etc., nicely made, more readily than the inferior make of articles. Small dolls (dressed) also find a ready sale. Sweets,

cakes, fruit, etc., will be most useful for the booth.

Will you kindly let me know if your parish will contribute to the above, and what you will contribute. I make this request so that we may know what to expect, e.g., a parcel for the sale, or a hamper of cakes, or a case of fruit for the booth.

Last year the 'tent' realised something like £30. Will you do your best to make it £60 this year?

Any goods sent must be forwarded from Wednesday, 14th, to Friday, 16th, not later, and consigned to the Rev. Kerehoma, Ngaruawahia.

Relying on your co-operation and support.

Yours very truly,

A. J. BECK

Vicar and Chairman

We would ask Church people who attend the regatta to visit the Mission tent, both during the day and in the evening too. In the evenings there will be a short service held, and after that magic lantern exhibitions, singing, etc. This will be mainly for the Māori, who will be there for several days, but, of course, all will be welcome, whether Māori or Pakeha.

CHURCH GAZETTE (April 1907)

'Results of the Māori Mission' by the Rev. H.M. Ruarangi

A Notable Utterance

It is now nearly a hundred years since the first Christian sermon was preached in New Zealand; and I wonder how many in this hall tonight have thought of the far-reaching effects of that event? A hundred years ago, we see a land where scarce a white man has set foot - a land inhabited by a people of whom it might be truly said that their pastime was the making of war - a people numbering some hundreds of thousands, the people to which I have the proud privilege to belong.

We look back to the days of our ancestors and perhaps one of the first things that strike us when we compare them with ourselves, their descendants, is, that in numbers they were very much greater, and in physical health and strength they were, as a people, much superior. This, of course, is due to the fact, which has been so often pointed out, that the following of war and the necessity of living in high places, produce a hardy and healthy people.

One is often asked the question, 'Do you think that Christianity has done any good to the Māori people?' In answering this question, one lays aside the obvious reply, which, I take it, all of us here tonight believe, that necessity is laid upon us to preach the name of Jesus Christ to all people, the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. One would lay aside this reply and would ask you to think of what the position of us Māori was before that name was preached to us.

In Olden Time

Think of how each man went in fear of his life. Think of the bloodshed, when sometimes whole settlements would be blotted out of existence, and man often ate his fellow man. Or think again of

the spiritual state of the people, when a man might at any time be killed by makutu or by having broken through some rule of tapu. Think of these things, and how, by faith in Jesus Christ, war has been abolished, and the fear of death from makutu and such like things no longer enslaves the heart of the Christian Māori; and then you will not wonder that we Māori thank God that the name of His Son has been preached to us; the name through which so much good has come to us.

There are many Māori in New Zealand, in this very diocese, who, because of want of faith in Jesus Christ, are still in bondage to the fear of makutu, of tapu, and of tohungas. It is our privilege and duty to try and lead them to the faith, that they may be saved from these things which enslave their souls. I know that we are not as numerous or as healthy as our ancestors were; but I also know that this is not due to Christianity.

With the influx of the Pakeha into New Zealand, which, remember, was only made possible by the fact that Christianity had been accepted by the Māori before you Pakeha could come in numbers here at all, with that influx came also many things which have not been a blessing, and it is to these things, and not to Christianity, we must look, if we wish to find the causes of the errors and weaknesses which affect my people. Christianity and civilisation sometimes do not mean the same thing.

Work of the C.M.S.

When I hear some people asking what good Christianity has done to the Māori, and asking the question in a sneering way, I often think of a story I heard of some men who were wrecked on one of our coasts many years ago. They knew that the Māori were supposed to be cannibals, and they were therefore in great fear that they would be eaten. They began to journey inland, and, on reaching the top of a hill, they saw a Māori settlement on the other side. Their knees shook under them with fright, and they felt they were already as dead, when one of them noticed that one of the buildings in the settlement was a Christian church. Then their hearts were glad, for they knew they were safe, and they went down into the settlement with joy and confidence. If you had asked those men, 'Has Christianity done the Māori any good,' don't you think they would have said 'Yes'?

Thus far I have spoken of the general result which has followed from the work begun by the Rev. S. Marsden in the year 1814, and carried on until recent years, as far as the Church of England is concerned, by the Church Missionary Society.

Present Work

Let us now look at the position which confronts us of this day and generation in this diocese. As doubtless many of you know, the Church Missionary Society some three or four years ago withdrew from this colony and handed over the work among the Māori to the Church in New Zealand. This responsibility has been undertaken by us, and, at the last meeting of General Synod, a bill was passed appointing a Māori Mission Board, representative of the whole of New Zealand, whose duties are, shortly, to assist the work financially in each diocese. What is the nature of the work that is being done, and what are the problems that we have to face in this diocese?

Since my ordination I have worked in districts to the North, and in districts to the South of Auckland, in the Kaipara, in Whangarei, in Waikato, in the King Country, in the Thames, and on the Coromandel Peninsula, and it has been my experience that in some districts, as for instance, in all those to the North of Auckland, the work to be done is that of building up the Christian

congregations

The duties of the clergymen are purely pastoral. On the other hand, the work in many places, such as in the King Country and in Waikato, is more of a missionary nature, being amongst people that, owing to various causes, have thrown over their faith in Jesus Christ as their only Saviour, and in many cases are not glad to have missionaries amongst them. In the North of Auckland, you would not hear the remark which was made to me in Waikato some little time ago. I had visited a settlement, and in the evening, I said, 'We will now have service.' 'All right,' called out a man, 'but cut your sermon short.'

The work in Waikato, in the King Country, and in the Thames and Coromandel districts, is very difficult, owing, first, to the large extent of country to be covered, and, secondly, to the scarcity of clergy. If you look at the map of this diocese, you will notice that these districts make up nearly half the Māori population of the diocese, and yet there are only four of us clergy at work there. The amount of country each of us has to cover, and the very large number of settlements to be visited, make us feel that if the Church wishes the foundations of the Faith to be well laid, and the after building to be sure, our number must be increased.

In my own district, if I wish to take a circular trip around it, it means a journey of two hundred and fifty miles, some of which have to be done on horseback, and there are about forty settlements to be attended to. And yet my district is by no means the largest, two of my fellow clergy having charges very much more extensive, containing many more settlements, and being far more difficult to work.

But though the difficulties may be great, the work is steadily progressing and in settlements where, a few years ago, it was difficult and sometimes impossible to have a service, the people now willingly hear us. In places many have been baptized, and gradually they are being led on to Confirmation, and Christian marriage is being reinstated in the place of the Māori marriage.

Results

Recently, in one settlement, I had the joy of baptising thirty-four people, adults and children, at one time. In another settlement I married three couples at once, while a little time back I married eight couples before their Confirmation. I may here say that these people had already been married according to the Māori method of marriage, but that we always marry them according to the rites of the Church before they can be confirmed.

What I find happening in my own district is also true of the districts of my fellow clergy to the south of Auckland, so that we may say that in every part the doors are standing wide open; but there are so few of us that we cannot take full advantage of the opportunities that await us.

Native Generosity

To touch for a moment on finances. It is interesting to note that the Māori congregations throughout the diocese collected a sum of over £600 towards the Church's work amongst themselves during the year ending March 31st, 1906. Over £150 of this money went towards increasing the stipends of us Māori clergy, so that our former stipend of £60 each per annum was slightly increased. Of course, the greater portion of this money was collected by the Christian congregations in the North.

Education

Here in Auckland, you have another department of the Church's work amongst us Māori. In Parnell, you have the boys' school of St Stephen's and the Queen Victoria School for Māori Girls. I have heard people say that they do not believe that the Māori should be educated, for they all go back to their settlements, and lose all the good that they have received at school. I know that some do not get much benefit from their education, but to say that this is true of all of them, or of the greater number of them, is a mistake.

I have the honour of myself being an old St Stephen's boy, and if it were true that our education does us no good, well I would not be speaking to you here tonight. In this diocese there are seven of us Māori clergy who were educated at St Stephen's, and the Bishop has not yet taken our licenses away because our education has done us no good, or because we are all failures.

In my work in this diocese, and in the Diocese of Waiapu, I have found that very many of my best helpers have been old scholars of St Stephen's and Te Aute. In my present district my chief lay reader, and the teachers of the choirs in two of my churches, are old St Stephen's scholars doing good work for the Church and for the people in every part, and holding good positions, so that of St Stephen's it cannot be said, except in ignorance, that the work that has been done in the past, or that is being done at present, is a failure.

Work among Māori Women

The Queen Victoria Girls' School, as you know, has not been very long at work, so that we are not able to say much about the results of what it has done. But of those who have left the school, I do not know of any of whom it might be said that their education did them no good; while I do know of several whose education has already proved a blessing to themselves and to their people. To take only one instance: as you will see from our leaflets, two Pakeha ladies have recently gone into the Waikato to work amongst the Māori women and children there. With them has gone a Māori girl from the Victoria School, and already she has gained the love of the people and is doing excellent work.

And this is the kind of work that is so much needed amongst my people - the teaching of the mothers in matters connected with the care of their children as regards both their bodies and their souls. It is with deep thankfulness to God that we see this work begun, and we hope that in a few years we shall have scattered about the diocese other Pakeha lady missionaries helped by girls from the Victoria School.

In Conclusion

You have a Pakeha saying, 'Unity is strength,' and this applies in the Church's work as truly as in other things. I have tried shortly to tell you something about the kind of work to be done, and how we are seeking to do it. If an army is fighting, it cannot succeed unless it is helped and sustained by the people at home.

It seems to me that we who are working out in the field are like those who are fighting in war. If we are not backed up by you people, we cannot succeed. Remember, we are all members of the one Church, of the one body of Jesus Christ. The welfare and strength of any one part bring good to the whole. Unity is strength, and therefore we feel that if your sympathy and prayers are weak,

our work and the whole body must suffer. It is necessary in this matter that we should remember the words of St Peter, 'Be ye all of one mind'.

CHURCH GAZETTE (September 1913)

In Memoriam

H. M. Ruarangi

The writer of these notes had known Hare Marsh for some years, and more than once had had the privilege of having him staying in his house. Among the various incidents which he can remember, there is one which stands out as showing Hare's courage and force of character. Some years ago, while Hare was in charge of Parawai, the writer was spending a short holiday, on the coast, between the Thames and the Coromandel. One morning Hare appeared riding towards Coromandel. On being questioned by the writer, he said that he was going to a tangi near Coromandel. It was always his practice to follow his men up.

Some days later a large body of Māori appeared riding towards the Thames, and with them Hare. The party stopped at the hotel, about halfway between the Thames and Coromandel, and the laymen all went in for a drink. The priest did, likewise, having some ginger ale. When everyone had had a drink, Hare said, 'Now, you men, one drink is enough for anyone; come along.' The whole party followed him out and rode away towards the Thames. When they arrived at Shortland, some of the men wished for another drink, and hinted as much to Hare. He, however, expressed amazement at the idea of their wanting another drink, seeing that they had had one, only twelve miles back (!), and steering them safely past the hotels, led them home to Parawai.

During his last illness, which was contracted through his faithfully ministering to a Māori who was ill with smallpox, he was most patient. When his throat was so sore that speaking caused him intense pain, he never failed to say, 'Thank you, Nurse,' for anything that Nurse Wilks did for him. As is the custom in nearly all Christian Māori houses, daily prayers were said, morning and evening, and as long as he was able to do so, Hare joined in. When he became delirious, he was constantly praying, saying morning and evening prayer, and frequently was heard to say, 'Let us pray for the Māori Mission.'

His widow, who shared his spirit, has said that her greatest comfort in her sorrow is to think of the life he lived and the way he met his death. How full of meaning is the last clause of the Prayer for the Church, in the Eucharistic Office, in the face of such an example as this. One hopes that those of us who are European Priests in New Zealand would as naturally spend our time in prayer, under similar circumstances.

E.M.C.

Author's Note:

At the time of preparing this Paper,
I have been unable to ascertain the name of Hare Maehe Ruarangi's second wife.