

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

Edward Bloomfield Clarke

Second Archdeacon of Waimate (1871-1900)

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Te Waimate (today known as 'Waimate North' in the Bay of Islands) was the first inland mission station of the Anglican Church, being established in 1830. The man who was to go on and be the successor to Henry Williams as second Archdeacon of Waimate was **Edward Bloomfield Clarke**, born at Waimate in 1831. His father, George, was 'Protector of the Aborigines', and with his mother Mary were missionaries at Waimate. Edward grew up living among Māori, became familiar with their customs, and especially became fluent in their language.

Waimate was a centre at which the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was prominent, and Edward came under their influence. He was taught at school by the Rev William Williams (later, first Bishop of Waiapu). In 1854 he went to England and was ordained in London in 1856. He returned to New Zealand via Sydney, where he met and married Susanna.

Working first at Tauranga then at Gisborne, he returned to Waimate in 1867 after the death of the Rev Karl Volkner.

In 1871, the Rev Edward Clarke met the recently appointed Bishop Cowie, who had succeeded Selwyn in Auckland. Cowie wrote 'He is a man of wide sympathies and much common sense, and is universally respected in the Waimate', so the Bishop appointed Clarke as the second Archdeacon of Waimate.

Living in Te Waimate, Clarke's ministry until 1884 was primarily among the northern Māori, journeying on horseback between Te Kao in the

far north to Dargaville and Whangarei in the south. He was responsible for overseeing the 'Native Church Boards', and, at a time when there were only a few Māori ordained, assisting and instructing the Māori clergy in their work.

He was present at the Waimate in April 1871 for the opening of the present Church of St John the Baptist. The following day he went with the Bishop to Ohaeawai for the opening of St Michael's Church. This Church is on the battle site of 1845 and is also still there to this day. Bishop Cowie wrote: 'Eliza and I rode there after breakfast accompanied by Archdeacon Clarke and a great many other horsemen and horsewomen, European and Māori. On the road others joined us, and before we arrived at Ohaeawai the party resembled a regiment of irregular Indian cavalry.' Edward Clarke was also present at Bishop Cowie's first episcopal visit to the Hokianga. (Bishop Selwyn did not go there but left it to the Methodists). They went down the Taheke river at night, and Archdeacon Clarke who was steering went to sleep and 'steered' them into the bank. After leaving 'Herd's Point' (today Rawene) they crossed the harbour in a Māori canoe for a service in a raupo dwelling. In 1874, Edward Clarke was present at the opening of the present church of the Holy Trinity at Pakaraka, on the site of Henry Williams' old home. In 1876, he was at Paihia when the Māori Church unveiled a memorial to Henry Williams, which is still there in the churchyard of St Paul's Church.

The following indicates the difficulties of traveling at the time. Clarke made a journey from Te Waimate to Te Kao in 1879, traveling by horse along the 90 Mile Beach. 'Crossing the high sand hills severely taxed the endurance of the ponies, as they frequently sank over their knees. One was in constant fear of being bogged in dry sand.' On the way back to Waimate, he stated that he had journeyed 'more than 40 miles a day since leaving North Cape.'

At a meeting of the Northern Native Church Board in 1880 it was determined by Māori that they wanted their own Māori Bishop. Bishop Cowie and Archdeacon Clarke took the subsequent petition to General Synod, asking for a 'Suffragan Bishop' of the Diocese for Māori work. That was supported by a special committee, but when voted upon, the Bishop of Nelson moved an amendment, stating that because of 'the oneness that exists between Māori and European portions of the Church ... it would not be desirable' to have a special bishop just for the northern Māori. So, the appeal failed, largely through the opinions of the southern dioceses. The matter did not rest there, however, for in 1886 the Northern Native Church Board asked that Archdeacon Clarke be appointed as a suffragan bishop. That too failed to win support in General Synod. Then, in 1901, the Auckland and Waiapu Dioceses sought membership for Māori on General Synod. That was again defeated by the southern dioceses. It was not until 1928 that the Bishopric of Aotearoa was tentatively established, with the Three Tikanga Church finally being formed in the 1990s.

In the 1880s and 1890s a much bigger and daunting challenge was given to Archdeacon Clarke. Since the Wars of the 1860s many Māori had become disillusioned with Pakeha and had withdrawn to what became known as the 'King Country.' Many Māori were antagonistic to the Church, which was seen as 'Pakeha' and too strongly associated with the Government. A plan

to meet with the Waikato/King Country Māori was decided upon, and Clarke was moved from Waimate to Auckland the better to meet his wider sphere of operations.

The name 'King Country' was only coming into existence in Edward Clarke's time. It was the place in the centre of the North Island where the supporters of a Māori 'King' became what was hoped to be a unifying force for all Māori.

When Clarke went to the Waikato/King Country, his intention was simply to bring people back to Christian observance. It is doubtful if he was fully aware of the many reasons for the separation of Waikato Māori by the political involvement of the Government at that stage. The situation has only become clearer with later hindsight. In 1883, Clarke had a successful meeting with Rewi Maniapoto at Kihikihi. Bishop Cowie had asked the northern Māori pastorates if anyone could spare their clergyman 'for a month or two' to minister in the Waikato, and the Revs Renata Tangata and Wiki Te Paa agreed to go. They went with the Archdeacon to Whatiwhatihoe, just south of Pirongia, the headquarters of King Tawhiao, returning to Kihikihi to meet with Rewi Maniapoto. Rewi's parting words were 'Return, my sons, to the friends who sent you, and tell them that Waikato appreciates the tone of love from Ngapuhi.'

Edward Clarke found the Hauhau worship, 'the most miserable farce I ever witnessed. There was a prayer for protection through the day and night, which was followed by repeating portions of the English multiplication tables in a monotone, and a sort of ascription in which the words 'honour' and 'glory' were frequently repeated.' At another settlement, everyone was lying down as Clarke spoke, so the Archdeacon amused them by suggested he read the burial service 'just in case.' After receiving Tawhiao's blessing, the team were known as 'the King's messengers', so Clarke said, 'May the

designation bear a higher import and we prove ourselves the successful ambassadors of the King of Kings, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.' Later in 1884 King Tawhaio met in a spirit of reconciliation with Archdeacon Clarke and Bishop Cowie at Bishops court, and in November Clarke returned to the Waikato to continue the work. King Tawhaio was, by his own admission, a Hauhau, but seemed strongly of the opinion that, somehow, a peaceful solution had to be found.

As well as King Tawhaio, one of the key and influential figures in the conflict was Rewi Maniapoto who had fought at Orakau. Archdeacon Clarke had several meetings with Rewi at Kihikihi, where a memorial to Rewi still stands. By that stage, Rewi genuinely sought peace, and came to Bishops court to meet with the Bishop. Bishop Cowie told how he asked Rewi to look out the window at the view. Rewi remained seated, looking instead at the Bishop's 14 year-old daughter who had long red hair, saying, 'I can see a view any day, but not a head of hair like this.'

A peaceful resolution had to be found to the sad consequences of the War, and Clarke worked long and hard until his death to achieve that.

One other event involving Archdeacon Clarke was in March 1887. He became a player in what became known as 'the Parnell Poisoning' which was described as a 'profound sensation' by the New Zealand Herald. Anglicans had been at Thames for the ordination of Hone Papahia who is remembered in a stained-glass window in St Mary's-in-Holy-Trinity Parnell. Returning to Auckland from Thames, Edward Clarke invited four Māori to his home for dinner, accompanied by three Pakeha clergymen. Poor Mrs. Clarke, shocked by the short notice from her husband to cater for such a large group, had some beef steak, to which she hurriedly added some tinned corned beef left over from the night before. That

she quickly made into a pie. Unfortunately, the corned beef had become contaminated, and three of the Māori died.

The leading Māori clergyman of the Diocese, the Rev Renata Tangata, together with the Rev Rupene Paerata and a leading layman, Ihaka Te Tai were the victims, although the Rev Somerset Walpole of Parnell and Mrs Susanna Clarke were also deeply affected. There is no mention in the reports of the Clarkes reaction to the consequences of what had happened at their place, but Mrs. Clarke in particular must have felt dreadful. The Archdeacon reported that Renata Tangata was 'a model pastor, so wise, so gentle, yet so firm; an eminently spiritual man and endowed with considerable preaching power.' Tangata is buried at Peria near Kaitaia, while Rupene and Ihaka are interred in the Bay of Islands.

The last decade of Edward Clarke's life makes rather sad reading. His wife Susanna had been ill at various times, and she died in December 1890, aged 56 years. Her husband placed a memorial cross in the Church of St John the Baptist Waimate, which remains there on the Altar to this day.

The comments about Clarke in the Church Gazette of the 1890s indicate a tired man. Comments at a Māori gathering such as, 'following a tedious amount of hand-shaking' and, 'I do not consider the condition of the Native Church in this Diocese to be satisfactory' appear, and one wonders if he was tired, or ill, or just missing the support of his wife. However, a lengthy report was written to the Church Missionary Society in England in 1893 in which he described the Māori Church as, 'not altogether satisfactory, though far from anything approaching despondency.' He felt Māori were finding 'the transition from barbarism to civilisation a terrible ordeal and a distraction from more important matters calculated to

promote their social and moral advancement.' It was not a positive time for Māori.

Perhaps because of his declining health, there is little reference to Archdeacon Clarke in the late 1890s in the old records. Yet at Synod in September 1900, he was appointed to lead a committee 'to frame a statute providing for the nomination of two or more persons of the Māori race as synodsmen.' Even at that stage, Māori were not represented in Synod. He did not live to chair that Committee, as he died on 21 October 1900. Some months previously, Edward Clarke, 'had shown symptoms indicating the existence of a cancer in his throat. A long period of suffering was, however, spared the venerable clergyman as he was unconscious since being stricken with paralysis on 18 October, and his death was painless.' He is buried in St Stephen's Churchyard, Parnell, to the left of the sanctuary, alongside his wife.

Following Clarke's death, a letter from the Rev Nikora Tautau states, 'That was the falling of a totara tree, the sound of which would be heard. All places of the Diocese have heard of that tree, standing in the Waonui-a-Tane, and alike are grieved.' Another letter from the Rev Taimona

Hapimana says, 'Leave us, your children, whom you have left to sorrow in spirit for you. Go to your Father in heaven. Go, the encourager of the Māori Church. Go, the umbrageous rata tree. There is no one that can make himself like a Māori - live like a Māori - sleep like a Māori - you could do all these things, prompted by your great love for Māoridom.'

The life of Edward Bloomfield Clarke covered the period from 1831, when it was expected that the missionaries would see the creation of a 'Christian Māori State.' It proceeded through the Wars of the 1860s and the attempt at recovery from that, ending in 1900 with concern over the whole future of the Māori race. The major impact of the period was the growth of European settlement, the huge effect of the Wars of the 1860s, the devastating effect of European disease, how people viewed them, and the significant decline of the Māori population by 1900.

Through all those years, Archdeacon Clarke remained faithful to God and His Church, with the assurance of Christian hope for Māori. In the final words of Taimoana Hapimana: 'Let the memory remain in the heart.'