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A Dissenter in the Ranks: Barzillai Quaife's Mission to New Zealand

The arrival of the Congregationalist minister Barzillai Quaife in New Zealand in 1840 casts a new light on the established historiography on the role of missionaries in the colony at this time, revealing substantial (imported) divisions between Anglicans and Dissenting sects, resulting in a level of antipathy that (ironically) exceeded that which existed between Protestants and Catholics in the country at this time. Quaife's presence also illuminates the overlapping roles of the Anglican mission as a branch of state polity as well as a distinct religious entity in the colony, how this othered Quaife's Congregationalist mission, and the potential for misconstruing individual personality traits with strongly-held theological opinions.

Introduction

Among much else, the first three decades of missionary activity in New Zealand (commencing in 1814) reveal the degree to which some of the denominational chauvinism that existed in Britain at the time was mirrored in this new mission field. Not only did the more obvious doctrinal conflicts between Catholics and Protestants manifest themselves in New Zealand later in this era, but even among Protestants, there were occasional (although less pronounced) differences, centred mainly on doctrinal nuances between the two principal Protestant denominations: the Anglicans and the Wesleyans. The historiography of missionary activity in the country in this period addresses these distinctions, and how they sometimes intersected with "external" factors, such as evolving British policy on the territory.

It was into this setting that the Congregationalist missionary and minister Barzillai Quaife arrived in 1840. Quaife's presence in New Zealand, as a Nonconformist/ Dissenter/ Congregationalist (these designations overlap and although they are sometimes used interchangeably by various writers on the topic, they represent distinct phases in the evolution of Congregationalism),¹ provoked a variety of reactions from officials and other missionaries that exposed both the territorialism of some of the missionary movements in the colony at this time, and the extent to which the conflation of religion and politics could have a bearing on the success of a mission.

This article commences with a review of the evolution of missionary activity in New Zealand from 1814 to 1840 (the year of Quaife's arrival in the country), followed —

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1. D. Bebbington and D. C. Jones, "Introduction: Evangelicalism, Dissent and their Historians," in *Evangelicalism and Dissent in Modern England and Wales*, ed. D. Bebbington and D. C. Jones (London: Routledge, 2020), 1–27; S. Orchard, "Congregationalism and Catholicity," *International Congregational Journal* 8, no. 2 (2009): 104–5.

by way of providing a contextual setting — by a survey of the doctrinal tenets of his denomination and the status of its followers in Britain at this time. The work then examines Quaipe's missionary activity and political involvement in New Zealand, and the response from both the Anglican mission and British officials to his activities. What emerges is a refining of the contours of the established perceptions of missionary rivalry in this period and the partiality with which officials in the colony regarded certain denominations in a way that hitherto has garnered comparatively little attention. It explores what until now has been a comparatively little-researched area of division among missionaries in this era, and considers how the relatively slight number of missionaries who were active in the country in the early 1840s elevated the potential for these rivalries to be exaggerated, particularly is it allowed for individual personality clashes to be (mis)interpreted as theological divisions.

Missionary Activity in New Zealand to 1840

Historians dealing with this period in New Zealand's religious history have rightly been attentive to the nature of the interaction between the three main Christian churches represented in the country at the time. Generally, the relationship has been depicted as one of cooperation between the Wesleyan and Anglican missionaries (interrupted only occasionally by comparatively minor disagreements over points of doctrine). And from 1838, with the arrival of the first Catholic missionary to the country, it has become commonplace for their relations with the Protestant missions to be depicted as frosty. There were practically no examples of shared missionary undertakings between Catholics and Protestants in this period, and an emphasis instead on those things that divided them, such as forms of Church government, Scriptural interpretation, and rites and rituals.² This was broadly in keeping with the experience common to encounters between these two churches in many other mission fields around the world in the nineteenth century.³

Another aspect of the way that the history of missionary presence in New Zealand has been depicted, as Allan Davidson observed, has been tendency to view their activities in the country during the colonial period either with “[n]egative stereotyping,” or “uncritical adulation,” both of which generalise and to some extent simplify what were often more intricate relationships.⁴ Even the use of the term “missionaries” without being prefaced by the specific denomination arguably contributes to this perception of them as a single, generic group.

Concerns have also been expressed over the way in which the critical contribution that the missionaries made to New Zealand, particularly during the early decades of British settlement, has subsequently been diminished by some historians.⁵ Less attention to the causes and effects of missionary undertakings necessarily reduces the attention given to the

2. J. M. R. Owens, “Christianity and the Maoris to 1840,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 2, no. 1 (1968): 18–40; T. Ballantyne, “Humanitarian Narratives: Knowledge and the Politics of Mission and Empire,” *Social Sciences and Missions* 24, nos. 2–3 (2011): 233–64; S. A. Harman, “The Struggle For Success: A Socio-Cultural Perspective on the French Marist Priests and their Māori Mission 1838–1867,” (PhD thesis, University of Waikato, 2010), 88–134.

3. J. Wolffe, “Protestant–Catholic divisions in Europe and the United States: An historical and comparative perspective,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 12, no. 3 (2011): 241–56.

4. A. K. Davidson, “The New Zealand Overseas Missionary Contribution: The Need for Further Research,” in *With All Humility and Gentleness*, ed. A. K. Davidson and G. Nicholson (Auckland: St John's College, 1991), 41–50; J. Stenhouse, “Church and State in New Zealand, 1835–1870: Religion, Politics, and Race,” in *Church and State in Old and New Worlds*, ed. H. Carey and J. Gascoigne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 233–59.

5. S. Lange, “Christian Beginnings in New Zealand: Some Historiographical Issues,” *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 21, no. 2 (2014): 8; J. Stenhouse, “God's own silence: Secular nationalism, Christianity and the writing of New Zealand History,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 38, no. 1 (2004): 52–71.

character of inter-missionary relationships. The anthropologist Anne Salmond, for example, tends to confine the distinction between missionaries in the early colonial period in New Zealand to Catholicism and Protestantism,⁶ while most historians covering this era have tended to exclude the Congregationalist presence in the country altogether, thus obscuring differences in the theological cultures of the churches operating in the country.

Furthermore, in the historiography dealing with this era in New Zealand, anomalies to the general depiction of denominational coexistence and occasional confrontation seldom appear. And while other branches of historical analysis of the missionary movement have grown in recent years (such as feminist and cultural assessments)⁷ the consideration of how various missionary groups adhered to their specific rites and forms of belief has garnered less attention. It is as though there is an unspoken presumption that the social, cultural, economic, and even psychological challenges of labouring in an alien mission field somehow softened a few of the more rigidly held tenets of belief that defined denominational differences back in Britain.

The Anglicans, in addition to being numerically dominant, and the first denomination to establish a mission in New Zealand (in 1814), were also the Church of the colonising power. The Wesleyans were more recent arrivals (in 1823), and in most instances were supported by the Anglicans (whose regional mission leader, Samuel Marsden, even assisted with the formation of the Wesleyan mission in New Zealand).⁸

The Catholics, by contrast, were relative outsiders, not only doctrinally and numerically, but also because the first Catholic mission (founded in 1838, and therefore a much later arrival) was led by a French Bishop, who was regarded by his Protestant counterparts as a heretic in competition with them to obtain Māori converts,⁹ and potentially even a political threat to British dominance in the territory¹⁰ (even though there was no real threat of France usurping British influence in New Zealand, especially after 1840).¹¹

As the missionary presence grew in New Zealand between 1814 and 1840, so too did the relationship between missionaries and the British state evolve. Obviously, there were no connections between British officials and the French Catholic mission, partly because by 1840, the latter was still a recent and diminutive presence in New Zealand, but mainly because since the Restoration of the British monarchy in 1660, restrictions had been placed on Catholics entering the public service, armed forces, universities, and the law in Britain, and had only recently been repealed, despite which, anti-Catholic sentiment in the workings of the British state remained heavily entrenched.¹²

The relationship between the British Government and Protestant missionary groups, on the other hand, could be characterised as much more collaborative — something which was evident in both formal and informal connections between the two. When it came to

6. A. Salmond, *Tears of Rangī: Experiments Across Worlds* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017).

7. H. Morrison, "Antipodeans abroad: Trends and issues in the writing of New Zealand mission history," *Journal of Religious History* 30, no. 1 (2006): 77–93.

8. J. R. Elder (ed.), *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden, 1765–1838* (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, 1932), 425.

9. T. Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries, Māori, and the Question of the Body* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2014), 13, 68, 102; J. Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996), 135; Lange, 4–13.

10. J. Thomson, "Some Reasons for the Failure of the Roman Catholic Mission to the Maoris, 1838–1860," *New Zealand Journal of History* 3, no. 2 (1969): 166–174.

11. A. Ward, *A Show of Justice: Racial 'Amalgamation' in Nineteenth Century New Zealand* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 33, 44.

12. Act of Uniformity 1662; Test Act 1873; Bill of Rights 1689; Act of settlement 1701; Catholic Emancipation Act 1829; A. Porter, "Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780–1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 3 (1992): 370–90; E. G. Tenbus, "'We Fight for the Cause of God': English Catholics, the Education of the Poor, and the Transformation of Catholic Identity in Victorian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 4 (2007): 861–83; D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2.

the development of colonial policy with respect to New Zealand, Protestant missionary organisations were one of the chief sources of intelligence on the territory. This is consistent with the branch of historiography which places religion in or near the centre of imperial culture¹³ — a centrality that was accentuated in the decades leading up to the establishment of British rule in New Zealand.

The first permanent European settlers in New Zealand were missionaries from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) — an evangelical Anglican mission formed in 1799 in London to spread the faith “to Africa and the East,”¹⁴ but which quickly broadened its scope to encompass anywhere in the world where an opportunity for proselytising might arise. Although on a much smaller scale, and formed fourteen years after the CMS, the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) similarly sought to establish missions wherever circumstances and budgets allowed, and followed in the wake of the CMS in New Zealand.

The first CMS mission to New Zealand was established in the Bay of Islands in 1814, and was initially staffed with missionaries who were tradespeople rather than ordained ministers — enabling its personnel to offer temporal as well as spiritual services to the Māori communities in the vicinity. By 1830, there were four CMS mission stations in the country, all in the vicinity of the Bay of Islands, and in the following decade, additional outposts were established, and consciously located in more remote parts of the country from the Bay of Islands in an effort to extend the geographical reach of the mission.¹⁵

The first Wesleyan mission was founded in New Zealand in 1823 (with its inaugural missionaries having arrived in the country in the previous year, where they were hosted by their CMS compatriots). Just how much denominational collaboration was occurring in missionary activity in New Zealand at this time can be seen and the fact that the CMS provided some support on the ground for the Wesleyan mission because the WMS was bereft of funds at this stage, and was lacking in sufficient logistical support to carry out some of its work. And in another example of the support the missionaries affiliated to different churches received from each other, the head of the Wesleyan mission, Samuel Leigh, sought and received funding from the London Missionary Society (LMS)¹⁶ which had been of the more active missionary organisations operating in the South Pacific at this time, and which had been founded by a Congregationalist in 1795,¹⁷ (and which although ostensibly non-denominational in its constituency, was very much Reformed in its theological leanings).¹⁸

Given the enormous cultural, financial, linguistic, and logistical challenges that the fledgling Protestant missions in the country faced in the 1820s, it was probably inevitable that the different denominations cooperated closely with each other. Often, this was a matter of sheer survival,¹⁹ but in the following decade, as the missions grew in size, and became more established, interdenominational tensions sometimes surfaced over the desire

13. T. Ballantyne, “Christianity, Colonialism and Cross-Cultural Communication,” in *Christianity, Modernity and Culture: New Perspectives on New Zealand History*, ed. J. Stenhouse (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2005), 24; J. Gascoigne, “Introduction: Religion and Empire, An Historiographical Perspective,” *Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 2 (2008): 159–78.

14. K. Ward, “Introduction,” in *The Church Mission Society*, ed. B. Stanley and K. Ward (Oxford: Routledge, 2019), 1.

15. E. Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* vol 1 (- London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 204–13, 358–60.

16. P. Moon, “Wesleyan Wives: The Role of Women in the Wesleyan Mission to New Zealand in the 1820s,” *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 22, no. 2 (2015): 23.

17. S. Thorne, “Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Imperialism: British Congregationalists and the London Missionary Society, 1795–1925” (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1990), 72–81.

18. R. H. Martin, “The Place of the London Missionary Society in the Ecumenical Movement,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31, no. 3 (1980): 283–300.

19. J. G. Turner, *The Pioneer Missionary: The Life of the Rev. Nathaniel Turner: Missionary in New Zealand, Tonga, and Australia* (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1872), 76.

for exclusivity in particular geographical areas, along with the more traditional liturgical or doctrinal differences that were beginning to prise apart the former unity that had existed between the Wesleyans and the Anglicans.²⁰ But despite these intermittent displays of denominational jingoism, on the whole, relations between the Wesleyans and Anglicans during the 1830s were reasonably good, with both groups generally aware that they were serving a greater common purpose and both prepared to cooperate to that end.

Missionary Associations with the British Government

Through the 1820s and 1830s, connections between both the Anglican and Wesleyan missions in New Zealand and branches of the British Government emerged and solidified. These links were both formal and informal, and contributed to a symbiotic relationship evolving between the church and state, as colonial officials in London drew on intelligence received from missionaries on the ground to refine their policy on New Zealand, particularly during the 1830s, while missionary organisations in turn sought tacit state sanction for their plans to expand their operations in the territory.

One example of the informal nexus between state and church involves the Rev. John Venn, who was Rector at Holy Trinity Church in Clapham from 1792 to 1813. Venn presided over the meeting in 1799 at which the CMS was formed. Venn's second daughter, Jane, married Sir James Stephen, who from 1836 was Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, and was actively involved in what became known as the Clapham Sect — a group of evangelical Anglicans associated with Venn's church, and who were strongly committed to the Abolitionist movement.²¹ It was Stephen who formulated British policy on New Zealand from the late 1830s and was instrumental in organising a treaty of cession with the colony.²²

This cross-pollination of personal religious faith and religious-inspired causes among senior officials and politicians involved in British colonial policy²³ could appear to modern readers as representing a conflict of interests for all the parties concerned, but this was a period of great evangelical revival in Britain,²⁴ which had “infiltrated many areas of life in Britain and pervaded British thinking”²⁵ from the late-eighteenth century, and which had laid the groundwork for the emergence of this web of unofficial and often informal connections between the apparatus of the state and various religious movements. Andrew Porter has observed that the frequent bouts of collaboration between state and churches at this time was regarded as entirely normal among officials, church leaders in the British public generally.²⁶

Another dimension of this overlap between religious and official activities and policies was the fact that the two principal missionary movements operating in New Zealand prior to 1840 were among the chief sources of intelligence about the territory for the British

20. T. Williment, *John Hobbs: 1800–1883; Wesleyan Missionary to the Ngapuhi Tribe of Northern New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1985), 167.

21. J. Venn, *Annals of a Clerical Family: Being Some Account of the Family and Descendants of William Venn, Vicar of Otterton, Devon, 1600–1621* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1904), 105; D. Spring, “The Clapham Sect: Some Social and Political Aspects,” *Victorian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1961): 35–48; W. R. Shenk, “Henry Venn's Legacy,” *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 1, no. 2 (1977): 16–19.

22. T. Williams, “James Stephen and British Intervention in New Zealand, 1838–40,” *The Journal of Modern History* 13, no. 1 (1941): 19–35.

23. A. G. L. Shaw, “James Stephen and Colonial Policy: The Australian Experience,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 1 (1992): 11–34.

24. E. E. Cairns, *Saints and Society: The Social Impact of Eighteenth-Century English Revivals and Its Contemporary Relevance* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021), 29–43.

25. A. Middleton, “Missionization in New Zealand and Australia: A Comparison,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14 (2010): 173.

26. A. Porter, “Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780–1914,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 3 (1992): 370–72.

government. Missionaries' letters and reports were often published, becoming influential on public opinion, and contributing to state policy on aspects of British intervention in territories where missionaries were active.²⁷ At the same time, the British Government was directly funding some CMS missions, on the basis that the missionaries' aims with respect to their "civilising" programmes in certain territories aligned with its own.²⁸

But nowhere was the influence of missionary intelligence more evident than in the submissions that Anglican and Wesleyan missionaries made to select committees in the second half of the 1830s, during the period when official British policy on New Zealand was beginning to take a more definite shape. In 1837, the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements was convened to examine what measures could be adopted by Britain when engaging with indigenous populations in its colonies. Among the list of imperatives for those politicians who appointed this select committee was to ensure that state policy led indigenous peoples "to the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian Religion."²⁹ The leaders of the CMS and WMS made among the single biggest contributions to the committee in terms of the volume of evidence³⁰ — contributions which by late 1839 had led to a synthesis of interests between these Protestant missionary bodies and the British government.

The following year, a House of Lords select committee reported on New Zealand. It was similarly dominated by missionary testimony, and likewise revealed the extent to which missionary objectives for New Zealand matched those of the British government. The Committee concluded that official British intervention in New Zealand would have to go hand in hand with, "the rapid Advancement of the religious and social Condition of the Aborigines of New Zealand."³¹ The CMS at this time had come to be seen by British officials as a de facto arm of its colonising plans,³² and two years later, would be drawn on to play an official role in the inaugural colonial government set up in the colony.³³

The immediate consummation in New Zealand of this relationship between missionaries and the colonial state took the form of the inception of the office of Protector of Aborigines in 1840. This was, in effect, a government agency, staffed by a CMS missionary (George Clarke), and charged among other things with promoting the "religious, intellectual, and social advancement" of Māori.³⁴ The connection between Anglican missionaries and the colonial government in New Zealand was rendered practically seamless by Clarke's appointment to this role, with each partner having a vested interest in ensuring the success of the other.

27. P. J. Wetherell, "The Foundation and Early Work of The Church Missionary Society," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 18, no. 4 (1949): 351–3; F. Jenz and H. Acke, "The form and function of nineteenth-century missionary periodicals: Introduction," *Church History* 82, no. 2 (2013): 368–73.

28. Stock, 55–6; J. Woolmington, "The Civilisation/Christianisation Debate and the Australian Aborigines," *Aboriginal History* 10, nos. 1–2 (1986): 90–98.

29. House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)* (London: House of Commons, 1837), ii.

30. House of Commons, 481–542.

31. House of Lords, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords Appointed to Inquire into the Present State of the Islands of New Zealand and the Expediency of Regulating the Settlement of British Subjects Therein* (London: House of Lords, 1838), iii.

32. T. Williams, "James Stephen and British Intervention in New Zealand, 1838–40," *The Journal of Modern History* 13, no. 1 (1941): 20.

33. A. Lester and F. Dussart, "Trajectories of protection: Protectorates of Aborigines in early 19th century Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand," *New Zealand Geographer* 64, no. 3 (2008): 214.

34. Normanby to William Hobson, 14 August 1839, in Robert McNab (ed.), *Historical Records of New Zealand I* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1908), 734–5; P. Moon, "The Rise, Success and Dismantling of New Zealand's Anglican-led Māori Education System, 1814–64," *Studies in Church History* 55 (2019): 426–40.

Congregationalism

Until 1840, one of the denominations that was yet to establish a presence in the colony was Congregationalism. This was hardly surprising, given that its number of adherents was smaller than other Protestant denominations, and that being outside the orbit of the established Church in Britain, it lacked the sort of political patronage that the Anglicans could rely on. In addition, unlike the Wesleyans, Congregationalists have been described as being “on the left wing of the evangelical spectrum,” in that they were “opposed to state intervention ... [and] to colonial expansion.”³⁵

Congregationalists (previously known as Independents, and before that, part of the cluster of denominations labelled as Dissenters) emerged in England in the sixteenth century. Doctrinally, they were opposed to all hierarchical structures within the Church, and had a deep suspicion of secular authority more generally. To this end, they believed in the autonomy of each individual congregation — that the fulness of the Church was present in each gathered Christian community — and the complete separation of church and state although this did not preclude Congregational churches from working together — cooperation which became more formalised with the founding of the Congregational Union, which set up the Colonial Missionary Society in 1836.

Congregationalists also held the view that the Church “was answerable to no other earthly authority” apart from the self-governing congregation of each church.³⁶ or as one nineteenth-century historian of the denomination put it, the “elementary principles” of Congregationalism included “struggling with ... despotic powers,” and rejecting “all the ecclesiastical laws.”³⁷ This, coupled with its longstanding disdain for the monarchy,³⁸ left Congregationalism with an anti-establishment complexion that persisted (although in a diminished form) into the nineteenth century — a sentiment that was no doubt hardened by the Test Acts passed during the Restoration that excluded Nonconformists from holding public office (as they had Catholics).³⁹

Admittedly, by the nineteenth century, perception of Congregationalists had shifted from being dangerous rebels (after all, Oliver Cromwell and John Milton had been among their fold) to denominational anomalies.⁴⁰ However, given the previous formal and enduring informal barriers to employment and education that being a Congregationalist entailed in the early 1800s,⁴¹ belonging to the Church remained to some extent an act of doctrinal and political defiance, and brought with it challenges that would have been foreign to Anglicans in particular.

By the 1830s, though, after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828) and with increasing prosperity and respectability, Congregationalists were no longer identified as republicans and religious radicals; their “antiestablishment” attitude was directed against continuing civil disabilities experienced by non-Anglicans and against the privileges of the

35. S. Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 19.

36. E. S. More, “Congregationalism and the Social Order: John Goodwin’s Gathered Church, 1640–60,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38, no. 2 (1987): 210–14.

37. G. Punchard, *History of Congregationalism: From about AD 250 to the Present Time*, 3 (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), 1, 5–6.

38. A. Taylor, ‘Down with the Crown’: *British Anti-monarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 24; A. J. Thomas, *The Nonconformist Revolution: Religious Dissent, Innovation and Rebellion* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword History, 2020), 133, 158.

39. D. C. Sparkes, “The Test Act of 1673 and its Aftermath,” *Baptist Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1973): 74.

40. T. Larsen, ‘Congregationalists’, in *The Oxford History of the Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Vol. iii: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. T. Larsen and M. Ledger-Lomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 39–56.

41. D. A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity, 1825–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

State Church. It was into this religious milieu that the Congregationalist Quaife commenced his evangelising career.

Quaife before New Zealand

Quaife was born in Kent, England, in 1798, and around the age of 21, had a conversion experience that led him to work as an itinerant preacher, a distributor of religious tracts, and a Sunday School teacher. By 1838, he was an ordained Congregationalist minister and was appointed as pastor in St Leonards-on-Sea in Sussex.⁴² However, at least three years before he took up this role, he had already expressed an interest in becoming a missionary. He had approached the LMS for a position, and although he alluded to some medical condition he suffered which might have been regarded as an impediment, he mentioned in a letter to a colleague in June 1835 that “at the moment of my writing this, it is probable that I shall have an appointment in the New Colony of [South] Australia, now in progress of formation.”⁴³ His aim was “to provide the New Settlement of South Australia with the means of Religious instruction on the Congregational principles.”⁴⁴ It was not until 1839, however, that Quaife’s ambition to leave for Australia as a missionary was fulfilled. Under the auspices of the Congregationalist-led Colonial Missionary Society (originally the “Congregational Missionary Society,” formed in 1836),⁴⁵ and not the LMS, he departed England, arriving in Adelaide in September 1839. (The Colonial Missionary Society was formed initially to provide ministers from the denomination to communities in Canada and North America, but it soon restricted its role to servicing mission fields in British colonies).⁴⁶

Already, though, there were hints of future confrontations based on certain views he held. His attitude towards the close relationship between the Church of England and the British state confirmed his commitment to the Dissenting tradition that he had become a part of. “State-paid denominationalism,” he insisted, “is utterly and criminally wrong, involving as it does a radical denial of Christian truth.”⁴⁷ His position on this matter could not have been clearer. It was against this background that Quaife entered the ministry and subsequently sailed to the South Pacific to serve as a minister and missionary. On arriving in New South Wales, Quaife soon opened a religious bookshop in the settlement, and began preaching (mainly in Wesleyan churches to start off with), but continued to suffer from the same unspecified sickness that had afflicted him in England.⁴⁸ His areas of interests began to expand once in Australia, and he started teaching more regularly, including topics in philosophy (which resulted in him becoming the colony’s first philosophy teacher), and involved himself in writing and publishing⁴⁹ in addition to preaching (even

42. Quaife, *The Vindicator, A Correctional Narrative of Personal Wrongs and Misrepresentations* (Sydney: G. R. Addison, 1865), 38–44.

43. Quaife to John D. Lang 30 June 1835, in L. Lockyer, “Barzillai Quaife 1798–1873”, *Transactions: The Congregational Historical Society* 21, no. 1 (June 1971): 11.

44. Quaife, in Lockyer, 11.

45. J. D. Bollen, “English Christianity and the Australian Colonies, 1788–1860,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 28, no. 4 (1977): 361–85.

46. Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, 62; Bollen, 361–85; A. Peel, *These Hundred Years. A History of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1831–1931* (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1931), 98–9.

47. Quaife, in *Christian Pleader* (20 August 1859), in D. Morris, “Henry Parkes and the Development of Public Education in New South Wales, 1850–1890” (MEd. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1962), 38.

48. Lockyer, 11.

49. M. W. Davies and S. Helgeby, “Idealism,” in *A Companion to Philosophy in New Zealand and Australia*, ed. G. Oppy and N. Trakakis (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2010), 226–28; G. Melleuish, “The Theology and Philosophy of John Woolley,” *Journal of Religious History* 12, no. 4 (1983): 418; B. Quaife, *The Intellectual Sciences: Outline Lectures* 1 (Sydney: Gibbs, Shallard, and Co., 1873).

though he “failed to exercise a pervasive influence” as a minister in Australia commented).⁵⁰

It was his work in book-selling, though, that brought him into contact with the publisher and Wesleyan local-preacher Archibald MacDougall. MacDougall commissioned Quaife to write for one of his publications,⁵¹ and then managed to convince Quaife that the latter’s skills would best be put to use by establishing a Congregational mission in New Zealand. Part of their agreement would be that MacDougall would supply Quaife with a printing press, supplies of paper and ink for this new mission, but he failed to pay for the shipment of these provisions, forcing Quaife to do so out of his already very limited funds. The situation was made worse when, on reaching the Bay of Islands in New Zealand, Quaife discovered that the paper stock had been ruined by sea water during the voyage, and that the printing press was not in working order.⁵² Quaife and his family landed in Kororāreka, the main British settlement in the Bay of Islands, and capital of the fledgling colony, on 19 May 1840.

Quaife’s New Zealand Mission

Just over three months before Quaife’s arrival in the country, Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson had obtained the first signatures of Māori chiefs for the Treaty of Waitangi, which secured British sovereignty over the colony. However, the process of gathering signatures from other chiefs around the country was ongoing at the time Quaife reached New Zealand, with the Crown’s claim to sovereignty still very much a work in progress.⁵³ The Crown’s hold on the country remained fragile at this time, which is significant because it provides some context to its subsequent reactions to the criticisms that Quaife levelled against it. Even the basic institutions of government had yet to be fully formed, and when it came to the press, there was just a single newspaper in the country at this time — the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* — based 670 kilometres to the south in Wellington (the main European settlement of the private land-trading New Zealand Company).

Quaife’s initial impression of the country was unfavourable. “With regard to the white people of this part of New Zealand,” he wrote about the Bay of Islands, “they are certainly for the most part without God in the colony. I am labouring here for somewhat less than a dozen people, and the Church [of England] minister has not more in a population of 3 to 400.”⁵⁴ Significantly, Quaife betrayed practically no interest in ministering to the indigenous population. His expressed focus remained on the European settlers in the Bay of Islands. It is ironic that the missionary who perhaps had the least engagement with Māori, who did not publish in the Māori language, and who appears to have had negligible day-to-day contact with Māori, ended up being one of the strongest advocates for Māori rights in the new colony. As an example of how this set him apart from some of the Anglican missionaries, it is worth noting that Clarke (as Protector of Aborigines) and Henry Williams (who frequently worked on behalf of the embryonic government in the colony) were heavily involved with Māori — both in their capacities as missionaries and government

50. M. Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835–1851* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), 128.

51. G. H. Pitt, *The Press in South Australia, 1836 to 1850* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1946), 14–30; Lockyer, 12; B. Quaife, *The Vindicator – A Correctional Narrative of Personal Wrongs and Misrepresentations* (Sydney: G.R. Addison, 1865), 31.

52. Lockyer, 12.

53. N. Cox, “The theory of sovereignty and the importance of the Crown in the realms of the Queen,” *Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal* 2, no. 2 (2002): 237–55.

54. Quaife in P. Kennett, *Unsung Hero: Barzillai Quaife* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1991), 36.

assistants. However, closer entanglement with Māori did not equate to these missionaries emerging as stronger advocates for Māori rights. On the contrary, their ties with the colonising state contributed to them seeing the need for Māori to be assimilated politically and culturally into the new state, rather than retaining any vestiges of significant political or cultural independence.⁵⁵

However, despite the challenges of ministering to a largely uninterested settler community, along with the struggles with equipment, supplies, and diminished capital, Quaife immediately made preparations to publish his own newspaper in New Zealand. The fact that the colony's capital was still without a newspaper seemed to present him with an ideal opportunity, particularly as the government would almost certainly pay for its notices to be published in it. Making the best of the materials and equipment at his disposal, on 15 June 1840, Quaife issued the first edition of the *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* [*Advertiser*] (and continued with it until its final edition on 10 December 1840).

He balanced his newspaper publishing with efforts to establish a church in Kororāreka, where he preached regularly. The congregation was comprised mainly of settlers who were members of Protestant denominations other than Anglicans, which may well have caused some slight irritation among those ministering in other Churches in the settlement. Quaife claimed that he endured “persecution” from the other denominations in the colony,⁵⁶ and although there is evidence that he also received donations from these same groups, a CMS committee in Sydney resolved to pay for Quaife to leave New Zealand,⁵⁷ which can be construed as being indicative of the way in which his presence was regarded as counter-productive to CMS ambitions in the colony.

While in New Zealand, Quaife had managed to secure enough funding, through the assistance of the Colonial Missionary Society, to pay for a printing assistant — Geoffrey Eager — who joined him in the Bay of Islands within a month of Quaife's arrival. On 12 June (around the same time as Eager's arrival) Hobson announced that Quaife's newspaper would be the publication through which official government announcements would be published.⁵⁸ Without such patronage, it is highly unlikely that the newspaper would have been financially viable.⁵⁹

The first edition of the newspaper laid out something of Quaife's vision for the publication. “We shall exert ourselves to promote the interests of the community by every possible means,” he wrote, adding that he and the *Advertiser* would be “upholders of every Institution by which the moral and physical well-being of mankind may be promoted.” Then, in a slightly more cryptic tone (and one that soon proved to be an indication of Quaife's view of Britain's colonisation), he advised readers that “[w]e wish to do good as far as our power extends, *to the whole Population*” (original italics).⁶⁰

For the next few months, editions of the *Advertiser* contained a succession of government notices, usually relating to announcement of ordinances, official appointments, and proclamations. When it came to editorials, though, the principal subject of interest to Quaife, and presumably his readers, was land ownership. And just six weeks after the inaugural issue of the newspaper, there were signs that Quaife's position on this topic was departing from that of the government's. On 23 July, he informed his readers that prior to February 1840, “the power of the Chiefs or Tribes was the only Law,” and so the Crown

55. P. Moon, “‘Continue to be a Parent’: The Influence of Colonial Trusteeship Principles in New Zealand, 1833–1839,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 54, no. 2 (2020): 39–56.

56. Quaife, *The Vindicator*, 32.

57. Lockyer, 13.

58. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (15 June 1840), 1.

59. R. Salmond, *Government Printing in New Zealand, 1840 to 1843: Sources for the History of Print Culture in New Zealand* (Wellington: Elibank Press, 1995), 9–10.

60. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (15 June 1840), 3.

was in no position to deny the rights of parties to land transactions concluded in that period.⁶¹ This was a direct challenge to the Crown's efforts to assert its jurisdiction in this area, and was a risky assertion to make in a publication for which the Crown was the primary source of revenue.

Quaife was not unique in his anxiety about the adverse effects of colonisation, but what made his position distinct was where he attributed blame. Rather than condemning the New Zealand Company, or unruly settlers, as others had,⁶² Quaife singled out British officials for criticism. On one occasion, he accused any official who failed fully to recognise Māori land rights as being "very unfit to be entrusted with the fate of the Aborigines."⁶³ Not being an Anglican, and not being affiliated with the colonial government in the way that the Anglican mission was in New Zealand (with Clarke as Protector of Aborigines, Henry Williams as an official translator and de facto civil servant, and so forth), Quaife felt unfettered by any denominational allegiance to British officials in the colony or elsewhere, and this gave him both the freedom and confidence to speak his mind in his editorials.

By October 1840, Quaife's rhetoric was becoming more strident. In one editorial, he complained about the colonial government's "non-recognition of Aboriginal power over landed property," and went on to note that the government was attempting to override Māori rights when it came to land transactions.⁶⁴ A month later, Quaife's position on Māori land and sovereignty was beginning to take on a vaguely threatening air. In one editorial, he argued that Māori had not ceded their land to the Crown, and hinted that in any ensuing "quarrel" the Natives most likely would be victorious.⁶⁵ On 3 December, Quaife used his editorial in the *Advertiser* to make an impassioned plea for "[t]he free, absolute, uncontrollable right of the Natives to do what they will with their own,"⁶⁶ in direct defiance of the Crown's efforts to nullify some pre-1840 land purchases made by settlers.⁶⁷

In response to the *Advertiser's* persistent hostility to Crown policies in the colony, the Colonial Secretary, Willoughby Shortland, wrote to Quaife on 7 December 1840, suggesting that the content of the newspaper which was critical of the colonial government was in breach of the law. Quaife was invited to meet with Shortland on 12 December to discuss the matter. The meeting never took place (for some unknown reason, Shortland failed to attend) but Quaife's lawyer examined the statute that Shortland had cited, and concluded (correctly) that his client had not broken it.⁶⁸

Shortland's response was to suspend the newspaper and impose a bond on the publishers that was well in excess of their ability to pay.⁶⁹ Hobson backed Shortland's heavy-handed approach to the *Advertiser*, which ultimately forced the newspaper to close down. As much as it was convenient for the colonial government to have its announcements published in the *Advertiser*, the editorial content in the newspaper made the ongoing appearance of these announcements untenable. The consequent decision by the Hobson

61. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (23 July 1840), 3.

62. A. J. Harrop, *England and New Zealand from Tasman to the Taranaki War* (London: Methuen and Co., 1926), 15–16; Aborigines Protection Society, *On the British Colonisation of New Zealand* (London: Smith and Elder, 1846), 3–5; D. Coates, *The Principles, Objects and Plan of the New Zealand Association* (London: Hatchards, 1837), 16–24.

63. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (17 September 1840), 3.

64. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (1 October 1840), 2.

65. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (22 October 1840), 3.

66. *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* (3 December 1840), 3.

67. *New Zealand Land Claims Act 1840* (New South Wales); P. Adams, *Fatal Necessity: British Intervention in New Zealand 1830–1847* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1977), chapter 7.

68. G. M. Meiklejohn, *Early Conflicts of Press and Government: A Story of the First New Zealand Herald and of the Foundation of Auckland* (Auckland: Wilson and Houghton, 1953), 10, 16.

69. Kennett, 85–6.

administration in December 1840 to cease using the *Advertiser* made the newspaper unviable financially. On 15 December 1840, the *Advertiser* issued a short statement to its subscribers, accusing the government of wishing to suppress the free press in the colony. Quaife added that there should either be “a Free Press, or none at all.”⁷⁰ “[N]one at all” was what eventuated and the *Advertiser* ceased publication from that date.

The colonial government still had a need, however, for its notices to be printed and distributed. Hobson turned to William Colenso, a CMS missionary and printer to seek assistance in this area,⁷¹ and in the course of that request, commented on his fellow Anglican’s “laudable zeal [which] you have already displayed in the view of H. M. Government.”⁷² This congratulatory sentiment was reciprocated by Henry Williams, who emphasised the close relationship that existed between the CMS and the colonial authorities: “the Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society have had frequent occasion to take active measures in support of the Government, which have been duly acknowledged by the proper authorities.”⁷³ Quaife had no chance of matching this degree of political and denominational intimacy, and accordingly found himself completely sidelined.

Throughout this period of mounting opposition to the colonial government, Quaife had continued to lead his small Congregational church in Kororāreka. In doing so, the distinction between Quaife the newspaper editor and Quaife the church minister became almost indistinguishable, at least to the authorities in the country. It is also noticeable that throughout this period, neither Anglican nor Wesleyan missionaries were expressing the sort of sentiments about Māori rights to land that Quaife repeatedly was, and offered no overt moral or financial support to him when the government clamped down on the *Advertiser*.

This lack of empathy for Quaife’s stance, and the silence from his fellow missionaries as the state clamped down on his newspaper had the effect of creating a gulf between the Wesleyans and Anglicans on the one side, and Quaife’s embryonic Congregationalist mission on the other. Quaife was undoubtedly a contributor to this rift, which was at times as much a product of his personality as his denominational allegiance. Turning his attention to the CMS missionaries in the Bay of Islands, for example, he had written that “[t]hey [the Anglican missionaries] are as deeply involved in land speculation, farming, grazing, etc, etc, and more so, than any other persons,” before going on to detail their inefficacy: “their religious influence both among Mauries [sic] and white people, is correspondingly low. They even sell their Testaments to the natives at the enormous price of six shillings; they will not sell one to a white man, or let him have one at all.”⁷⁴ Although probably at least partly true, such comments were hardly likely to endear him to his missionary counterparts in the colony, and when he eventually needed allies, there was none to be found.

Given his belief that some of his fellow missionaries were acting with such little propriety, along with the injustices he felt he had endured personally, it was likely that Quaife’s dissatisfaction with the political and religious landscape of New Zealand would continue even after the *Advertiser* had ceased to exist. However, circumstances were changing considerably in the Bay of Islands where he was based, which presented extra challenges for him to contend with. By 1841, although was still ministering to his congregation at Kororāreka, the colony’s capital had since been shifted by Hobson from that settlement to

70. Quaife, in R. Taylor, *The Past and Present of New Zealand, With Its Prospects for the Future* (London: William MacIntosh, 1868), 307.

71. R. Salmond, *Government Printing in New Zealand, 1840 to 1843: Sources for the History of Print Culture in New Zealand* (Wellington: Elibank Press, 1995), 9–10.

72. W. Colenso to Hobson, 24 December 1840, in Kennett, 86.

73. H. Williams, *Plain Facts Relative to the Late War in the Northern District of New Zealand* (Auckland: Philip Kunst, 1847), 6.

74. *The Patriot* (11 March 1841), 3.

Auckland, around 180 kilometres to the south. Consequently, Northland settlements such as Kororāreka, which just a year earlier had been a bustling commercial and administrative centre, were rapidly being reduced to remote outposts with declining settler populations. There were still members in his church, though, and enough of a demand for a group of locals to gather together to form a new newspaper: the *Bay of Islands Observer* [*Observer*]. The committee behind this newspaper (which included Quaife) established a set of guiding principles for it, which included the requirement that it be “free from political restraint,”⁷⁵ and Quaife was duly appointed as its editor.

The attitude to the colony’s indigenous people also made this planned publication distinct from any other in the country at this time. There was a commitment that the newspaper would “be rendered available by every means for the political, civil, moral, and social advancement of the Maori population,” and that “[t]he Maoris are to be on all occasions regarded as of equal civil and political rights with Europeans in the community.”⁷⁶ This was an even more overt assertion of Māori rights than Quaife had previously expressed, and once again would seem to have placed him on an ideological collision course with the colonial government, whose sympathies and first loyalty lay with the settlers.

One of the great ironies in Quaife’s advocacy for Māori constitutional rights (as he interpreted them in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi) was that his mission involved very little of the cross-cultural exchanges that typical of other churches in the colony at this time, Ballantyne’s analysis of the relationship between missionaries and Māori in the broader colonial period depicts it as one of “entanglements,” rather than more straight forward models of “encounters” or “meetings.”⁷⁷ Quaife, however, seems to have operated in a manner that avoided such entanglements. His engagement with Māori — at least as far as the extant evidence suggests — was slight. However, there is an accompanying sense that his entanglements with his fellow missionaries were correspondingly much stronger. This potentially introduces a new category of entanglement into the missionary field in New Zealand at this time — one that is intracultural rather than intercultural.

Quaife clearly intended for the *Observer* to pick up where the *Advertiser* had left off, and this soon came to pass. By March 1842, Quaife had returned to familiar territory, denouncing the “subjugation of the Maoris to the Crown” and the “evil” arising from it.⁷⁸

And there was much more in this vein, with Quaife describing the colonial government’s policies towards Māori as “mischievous” and directed towards denying Māori rights to their land.⁷⁹ Serving a much more depleted readership than the *Advertiser*, it is possible that the government might have overlooked some of the criticisms contained in the *Observer*. However, in May 1842, Quaife clearly overstepped the mark when he publicly accused the new Colonial Treasurer of financial misappropriation and unethical land purchases. The trustees of the *Observer* regarded Quaife’s comments as being in breach of their deed of settlement, and he was removed as editor of the newspaper straight away.⁸⁰ Matters were obviously brought to a head prior to this date as on 7 May, Quaife and his family had already arrived in Sydney,⁸¹ having left New Zealand for good immediately prior to the public announcement that his role as the *Observer’s* editor had been terminated.

75. *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette* (27 October 1841), 1.

76. *Bay of Islands Observer* (24 February 1842), 1.

77. Ballantyne, *Entanglements*, 351.

78. *Bay of Islands Observer* (10 March 1842), 2.

79. *Bay of Islands Observer* (28 April 1842), 2.

80. *Bay of Islands Observer* (12 May 1842), 2.

81. *The Australian* (8 May 1842), 2.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that neither any of the other missionary organisations operating in the colony at the time nor any of their individual members expressed even the slightest regret at Quaife's departure. This absence of a reaction to the de facto banishment of a fellow missionary offers some indication of how estranged Quaife was from the other Protestant missionaries in New Zealand.

Quaife's own assessment of his troubled period in the colony made no concession to the possibility that any fault lay with himself, but instead apportioned the bulk of blame with the failure of Hobson's government to protect the rights of Māori. Quaife outlined his earnest hope that, based on the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Normanby's instructions, New Zealand "would be an exception to the long catalogue of Colonial misrule, with regard both to Europeans and Aborigines." And in keeping with expectation, he explained how he "fully meant to make my paper in every respect auxiliary to the establishment of regular authority and good order."

However, within months of arriving in New Zealand in 1840, Quaife began to have serious "misgivings" about the state of colonial rule in New Zealand, and became even more alarmed by the potential implications of the 1840 New Zealand Land Claims Act, which had been passed by the Gipps administration in New South Wales. He saw this as one of those "schemes of oppression against the aborigines which had been adopted in the older colonies." Thus confronted with a policy he saw as objectionable to his Christian values, he regarded it as his "bounden duty to expose the real character of the measure."⁸² From this point, his criticism of Hobson's administration broadened in scope and deepened in intensity.

Given his intrinsic opposition to the form of colonisation the British were executing in New Zealand (which he saw as violating Māori rights and therefore being fundamentally unjust and un-Christian), coupled with his instinctively Dissenting stance (which was ambivalent to Anglicanism in particular), Quaife's brief tenure in New Zealand adds nuance to the historiography of Protestant missionary activity in the colony at this time. It reveals how the sorts of divisions that remained among Protestant Churches in Britain could be replicated in the colonies, and that the sorts of connections between the established Church and colonial officials were stronger than those with other denominations — the consequences of which could be considerable — ranging from denominational ostracism to what effectively amounted to be ejected from the colony. At the same time, though, Quaife's religious dissent cannot be separated entirely from his disputatious personality. The two overlap and were possibly mutually reinforcing to some extent. This overlap, though, was no doubt aggravated by the paucity of official backing and the similarly scant support he received from other churches in the colony.

Data Availability Statement

Research data are not shared.

82. Quaife letter (undated, c. 1842), Alexander Turnbull Library, ref: MS-Papers-0647-1-2.