



Edward Clisby, *Marist Brothers and Maori: 1838-1988*

Marist Publications, Auckland, 2001

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COMPTES RENDUS

Edward CLISBY, 2001. *Marist Brothers and Maori: 1838-1988*, Marist Publications, Auckland, 284 p., illustrations, maps, appendix, bibliography¹.

« Good wine needs no bush », so it is said. « Yeah, right », comes an ironic counter from the popular beer advertisement, for is that not being presumptuous? In any case should not credit be given wherever it is due, and merit always be affirmed publicly? Hence a reviewer, even a tardy one, has a duty to broadcast the quality and availability of Clisby's book on the Maori dimension of his congregation's work in New Zealand.

The enormous contribution of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (FMS) to Catholic education, and thereby to the growth of the Church and of its place in New Zealand society, is deservedly well known. The name Marist reverberates through the realms of pedagogy and of sport. Less well known is the story of the Brother's work among Maori people, yet it was this apostolate that first brought them from France to New Zealand. Now, with a solidly researched narrative, Edward Clisby FMS has filled that gap in a scholarly but readable way. His is a fine achievement, one that through its very objectivity honours its subject and does credit to those whose names bedew its pages.

In their first phase of operation, thirteen Marist Brothers came to New Zealand between 1838 and 1842. The last of them, Br Basile, died at Meeanee in 1898. Members of a congregation organised by St Marcellin Champagnat for the purpose of teaching, they were intended to be catechists, helping the priests of the Society of Mary (a distinct but related congregation) to instruct the Maori. Instead, they tended to be employed more in serving the temporal needs of the mission, thus having their role confused with that of the lay-brothers of the Society of Mary.

This aroused a measure of disquiet among them; but it did not impede their readiness to participate as variously as they could in the cause for which they had left home. As the field of mission operations spread southwards from Hokianga and the Bay of Islands the Brothers moved too. They experienced, and described in their letters (a freshly broached historical source), life in the front line of European settlement. Br Emery survived the Maori attack on Kororareka in 1845, but Br Euloge was killed by Hauhau near Wanganui in 1864.

The second phase of the Brothers' Maori involvement stems from the new – and English-speaking –

wave of them who came to operate schools of their own. Beginning in Wellington in 1876 and in Auckland in 1885, these were not missionary establishments but were designed to educate boys (mainly Irish) within the urban Catholic mainstream. A number of Maori boys, though, did attend them, including some who later distinguished themselves. One such was Sir James Henare, a Sacred Heart College old boy who commanded the Maori Battalion.

Meanwhile, in 1886 the Maori mission work in the Auckland diocese had been entrusted to the Mill Hill Fathers. To that end in 1928 they established a catechist and rural training school at Northcote. For the Brothers, phase three of *their* Maori work began in 1946, when they took command of the place and operated it as a normal secondary school. Re-branded St Peter's Maori College (since 1972 Hato Petera) it remained under them until 1984, when a lay principal was appointed. In a subsequent development, a number of Brothers, following their predecessors who had worked with Bishop Pompallier, returned as missionaries to rural North Auckland. In so doing they also supplied a fitting conclusion for a sesquicentennial record of an undertaking that has for too long lain in historical obscurity.

Besides, this is a story that casts an explanatory beam well beyond its immediate focus. It is also to be comprehended within the larger contexts of Maori-European contact and of the national education system. The publishers are to be commended for adding a fresh thread to the increasingly rich and intricate pattern that adorns the literary cloak of New Zealand history.

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Frédéric ANGLEVIEL, 2003. *Historiographie de la Nouvelle-Calédonie ou l'émergence tardive de deux écoles historiques antipodéennes*, Éditions Publibook Université, collection Recherches, Paris, 362 p.

Cet ouvrage, qui se présente comme un bilan historiographique de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, est la publication d'une bonne partie de l'habilitation à diriger des

1. \$100. Available from the publishers: 18 Budock Road, Hillborough, Auckland 1004.