

Thomas Kendall to Samuel Marsden

Bay of Islands Feby 26, 1822

Dear Sir

I freely agree with you in the opinion that the Evangelization of the New Zealanders will not be accomplished by carnal weapons. War and Bloodshed are also much to be deplored and will be so by every pious Christian, wherever such evils exist on the earth. Was I a Quaker, I should also say that the possession, or trade of a Gunsmith is an unlawful or unchristian one, and that bartering with muskets or selling them any where is incompatible with the principles of the Christian religion. But we are fallen men, living in a fallen world: and we well know that men, as they are tempted by the devil, and under his dominion, do take delight in tormenting and destroying each other. Hence even Christians are under the necessity of providing themselves with weapons of War. And they pray for victory and endeavour to obtain it Victory over their enemies, not indeed for their gratification but for their preservation, and they are also led to entertain every fair opportunity of checking their rising power. Why will you not argue fairly? I confess I am not a little surprised that you should as agent for this mission, take a view only of that side of the question, in debate, in which all good men must agree with you, and at the same time remain perfectly silent on the other side, where the propriety & practice of selling muskets and powder to the natives of New Zealand in preference to savage weapons can only be supported and justified. Namely "Weapons of war being almost the only "medium of exchange at present between

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Englishmen and New Zealanders, it "therefore must be desirable to dispose of such weapons, if any, in our necessary "bartering intercourse, if we barter at all, Amongst [f] the latter as one of a "merciful nature." If those who would after mature deliberation, allow muskets, are inconsistent, those whose fine feelings would not allow them, are much more so. I can mention a case in point. A person here who does not approve of the disposal of muskets amongst the natives, and for whom both you and I entertain, I am sure, the greatest respect, immediately on my return to New Zealand, enquired, if there were no small hatchets amongst the Societys Stores on board the Westmorland, adding "that small hatchets sold so well amongst the " natives that it would be desirable to write for a large quantity in order that we "might be well supplied." Now these hatchets are all of them used by the Natives as weapons of war. We all of us know this to be a fact. You know it to be a fact yourself. But as these hatchets are not used as weapons of war by the English, I suppose it was on the same account, that ~~you did not~~ the cries of the innocent children whose parents had been butchered by them, did not occur to you, as distinctly as those, whose parents had been shot. I say not too much when I assert that your observations and your tender feelings are not in unison. There may be men in tge world who could view with pleasure a human body cut up and mangled with a hatchet in preference to being dispatched with a musket ball, but not Mr Marsden— I am fully convinced that the New Zealanders will be in a savage State so long as they use savage weapons: and altho' Muskets will not

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convert them to Christianity, yet I believe they may on certain occasions use them even after they become Christians. It is only as we part with merciful weapons in preference to savage ones, and this as a means of exchange for the needful property and services we [f] require, that we have been led to part with them at all. My own conduct will bear me out, that I suffered many privations and suffered them a long time before I parted with a single musket. And could I now part with Dollars, prints &c as easy I would never part with another.

Your argument respecting agriculture is indeed very plausible, but for the above considerations you ought either to have settled the Missionaries here as free from the concerns of the world as the Moravian Missionaries are, or otherwise you ought not to have blamed us for making use of, as well as other men, the usual articles of exchange in order to encourage it.

The people at and near the Bay of Islands are bent upon subduing the natives of the whole northern Island. How can we help this? We do not persuade the people to go to war! It is perhaps an act of Providence and a mercy that we are under the protection of so strong a party of natives. We should in the event of their being weak have probably been subdued with them. Do we think that the natives at a distance are less inclined to war, or that they are less cruel than those around us towards their vanquished enemies. I beg leave once for all to observe, that we have nothing to do with the New Zealand Wars. There is not one of us in my opinion, but may remain secure at New Zealand, & also may be useful. For my

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own part, I have only one purpose in contemplation namely. Here I at present live, and here I wish to die. I know I have infirmities and great ones, & great sins too to be sorry for, but God is not to blame, and as far as he enables me to go on in his service, I am happy to say, I find that to be delightful.

I generally agree with you in your replies to my Letter as stated in your 1st 2nd & 3rd paragraphs. [f] The sentiments expressed in the 4th are much as I expected from you. I cannot object to your answers contained in your 5th 6th and 7th Paragraphs. And can only add with respect to the Mechanics that they have not much troubled me. I never had the use of a carpenter more than 5 days previous to repairing the School house. I then had Messrs Bean & Fairburn 5 Days. I now want a Church & after that a dwelling house, but who am I to look to to build them. I must depend upon you. I do not think that you can fairly accuse me of impatience respecting the mechanics.

I conclude, by repeating my former observation, that I do really and truly desire to obey and act cordially with the society, and I object to any insinuation which may lead the Society to think I desire to act otherwise. You are greatly mistaken if you suspect that I want to treat either the Society or yourself disrespectfully. The Society I am persuaded will not finally blame me for bringing the subject fairly before them and not hiding my measures from their view. I think I have said all that can be said either in excuse for, or as to the expediency of the conduct of the Missionaries in bartering Muskets & Powder amongst the Natives.

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The Society have a right to condemn me, and my colleagues, if they think we have done wrong, for we are their Servants. There is one observation which I must however ake to you. You seem to be more afraid of suffering in your good name and reputation respecting the above Question, than you are desirous of explaining the truth: putting the matter in its proper light, and cleaving to your New Zealand Colleagues. Have you forgotten already, your own [f] amendment of my answer to the Commission, namely "A "Musket has a greater tendency to give a civil feeling to a native mind than the "use of a savage weapon."!

The 75£ worth of Fish Hooks were equally divided between the two Settlements as soon as I returned home. Mr Butler knew this. I have not acted partially or selfishly, but fairly and kindly to all the Missionaries in those matters.

I am now glad I opened my mind freely to you in my Letter by the Westmorland & I thank you for your reply, altho' it is a sharp one. I believe if I always had you with me at New Zealand we should have agreed very well. You would then have known my wants & would have chearfully supplied them. Nor would any misrepresentations have occurred in which my name has ever been brought into question respecting those unpleasant transactions which have wounded your feelings so severely. I assure you I cordially esteem you for your pious and disinterested services in the cause of our common Lord and I fervently pray that it may please God to confer the richest blessings upon yourself and family. And am dear Sir

MS. 57/73

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Your very obed[ient] Serv[an]t

Tho^s Kendall

Rev. Sam^l Marsden