

Samuel Leigh to Josiah Pratt

New Zealand

October 16. 1823 –

Revd and dear Sir

I beg leave to lay before you, the following observations which occurred to me relative to the Missionary Settlements &c in the Bay of Islands, during my residence there.

The oldest Settlement of the Church Missionary Society in the Bay is at Rangeehoo. It is near a large and populous native Town, called Tapoonah, within distance of seven miles from this Missionary station, there are eight, or ten villages all of which a Missionary may visit by a pleasant walk, and in every village a number of Children, and Adults may daily be collected together for instruction. This place I consider to be a grand Station for active, and extensive Missionary Operations.

The natives about this Settlement have made considerable advance in civilization. It is four years since I first saw this place, in which period a change for the better is, to me, quite visible. I consider Rangeehoo a very suitable place for a School for civil and Religious Instruction.

The Second station is at Kiddee Kiddee, but is called on the Map in the Missionary Register Gloucester, it is on the West side of the Bay of Islands, within twelve or twenty miles of this Settlement there are several very extensive and populous native towns, and villages, in which are Hundreds, and Thousands of Inhabitants ready to receive useful instructions and I hope even the word of Life from the Servants of God, indeed it may be truly said

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with respect to this place and the Bay of Islands in general that the fields are white already to Harvest, indeed double the number of missionaries your Society has hitherto sent to New Zealand, may be fully, and usefully employed in the Bay alone, and I have no doubt but the natives will by and by be brought to a knowledge of the living, and true God.

A number of Native Youths in these Stations can repeat the Creed, The Ten Commandments, The Lords Prayer, and several Hymns in their own tongue, and can unite in singing the praises of the Lord. Any [f] person visiting these places may soon perceive that civilization has made considerable advances. And that they are stations which hold out great prospects of usefulness to the Christian Missionary.

The third station in standing is called Pihee this settlement is lately commenced. I consider it quite as important as either of the above within ten miles of this Missionary post are ten or twelve large and extensive villages in which hundreds of natives reside who are not only willing that Missionaries should visit them but think themselves honoured by the presence of a Missionary. Indeed I consider the Bay of Islands as holding out to the Church Missionary Society the greatest encouragement for continued exertions and perseverance in their benevolent and pious undertakings for the present and eternal benefit of these poor but noble race of Heathens.

There are two more stations lately commenced in the Bay but I have not had the pleasure of seeing them, however I have no doubt but they

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are well situated to effect through the Blessing of God the grand object the Society has in view.

The situations of all the settlements in the Bay of Islands are such as do great credit to the person who first fixed the Standards; and prove at once that he could look forward and see the safety and prosperity which would by the Blessing of God attend the Establishments. I have no doubt but these Christian Settlements will stand for ages to come as a proof of the Charity and Liberality of the Church Missionary Society and the British Public. May the Inhabitants of New Zealand never want a friend to plead their cause in the Christian world—

The Servants of the Church Missionary Society have had many trials to endure in the prosecution of the work but they have not laboured in vain the Society has had discouragements but the cloud has in a measure disappeared, and now greater light begins to dawn. The Lord is giving the Heathen of New Zealand a spirit of enquiry after, Divine things and I have no doubt but the Society will have to sing with converted natives from this Island of mercy and love. [f]

I might have observed that the Kiddee Kiddee station resembles a neat little Country Village, with a good School House lately erected in the centre when standing on an eminence near the Settlement - may be seen Cattle, Sheep, Goats, Pigs, Horses. Land covered with Wheat, Oats, Barley, Gardens likely fill'd with all kinds of vegetables, fruit trees and a variety of useful things. In the Yards may be seen Geese, Ducks, Turkeys and in an Evening

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Cows returning to the Mission Families by which they are supplied with good milk and butter indeed it altogether forms a pleasing object, and especially in our Heathen Lands.

The Shipwreck we have experienced will I have no doubt prove favourable to the character of the New Zealanders. For several days we were in their power and they might have taken all we had with the greatest ease; but instead of oppressing and robbing us, they actually sympathized with us in our trials and afflictions. Mr Marsden, myself and Mrs Leigh were at a Native Village for several days, and nights without any food but what the poor natives brought us, and what they had they gave us willingly and said "Poor Creatures you have nothing to eat, and you have not been accustomed to our kind of food." I shall never forget the sympathy, and kindness of these poor Heathens.

I do hope that the Rev "Samuel Marsden will be successful in his plans and proposals to put an end to the frequent Wars in New Zealand/ I have heard many Natives and Chiefs say that "It is no good to go to fight and eat Men, we wish to cease from war and retire to some peaceful place." I pray God that this object may be soon effected among his people.

The Christian World and especially the Church Missionary Society will never be able to appreciate the valuable labours of the Revd Sam Marsden, his fervent zeal his abundant labours and his extensive charity in the cause of missions are beyond estimation. May he live long as a burning and shining light in the Missionary world.

MS. 498/304

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Through affliction I am obliged to return to New South Wales for a time. I hope the Lord will soon restore my health sufficient to return to my labour in the cause of our Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. [f]

Wishing your Society every Blessing in the best of Causes

I am

Revd and dear Sir

Yours in affliction

Samuel Leigh

To,

The Revd J. Pratt B. D

Church Missionary House

Salisbury Square

London —

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Metadata

<i>Title:</i>	Letter: Samuel Leigh to Reverend Josiah Pratt, 16 October 1823
<i>Author:</i>	Samuel Leigh
<i>Receiver:</i>	Reverend Josiah Pratt
<i>From Location:</i>	Bay of Islands, New Zealand
<i>To Location:</i>	Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, London
<i>Date Written:</i>	16 October 1823
<i>Date Received:</i>	19 June 1824
<i>Size:</i>	322x202mm, 2 leaves, 4 pages
<i>Content Type:</i>	Letter
<i>Notes:</i>	<u>Hocken Collection Title:</u> Reverend Samuel Leigh, New Zealand, to Secretary
<i>Terms:</i>	Settlement; Native; Children; Civilization; School; Hope; Life; God; Missionaries; Christian; Heathens; British; House; Cattle; Goats; Pigs; Horses; Fruit Trees; New Zealanders; Afflictions; Plans; Fight; Missions; Health
<i>Reference Numbers:</i>	MS_0498_304, Trimble 53, CMS Number 63
<i>Permanent Link:</i>	https://marsdenarchive.otago.ac.nz/MS_0498_304
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