



## **The Bicentenary of the First Proclamation of the Christian Gospel in Aotearoa New Zealand at Oihi, Bay of Islands, on Christmas Day 1814**

### *Initial Information about Commemorative Events in 2014*

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### *Greetings to members of Christian communities throughout New Zealand*

It is less than 1000 days until the beginning of 2014, the bicentenary year of the coming of the Rev'd Samuel Marsden with Ruatara to Oihi, where the Christian Gospel was first proclaimed in this land on Christmas day 1814. Already an ecumenical group, the Marsden Cross 2014 Bicentenary Committee, has been formed with a view to planning appropriate commemorations of that event in 2014.

A programme is envisaged that will include events throughout the nation and throughout the whole of 2014, culminating in a Christmas Day bicentenary event at Oihi. There are three streams in the planning process so far:

- *Events throughout NZ in 2014:* worship, seminars, public presentations, a hikoi, information kits for schools and churches, and whatever else local groups might consider. (Contact: Bishop Richard Ellena or Glyn Carpenter)
- *A History Group* preparing historical material is proposing a conference in the Bay of Islands 27-29 November 2012 (Contact Allan Davidson)
- *Events surrounding Christmas Day 2014 at Oihi:* we envisage an occasion where leaders of both Church and Nation will be present.

***How you can play a part:*** it is our hope that in every part of the country local groups will get together to organise appropriate ways of commemorating this significant event in the life of both the Christian community as well as the nation as a whole.

The planning group is ecumenical, fully inclusive, open to ideas, and undertakes to provide resources to support local programmes. It is chaired by Bishop Te Kitohi Pikaahu (Tai Tokerau) and Bishop Ross Bay (Auckland).

***For further information:*** The committee secretary is Mrs Lesley Anderson, who may be contacted as above. Please get in touch if you would like to know more, contact any of those listed above, contribute ideas, or be part of a local planning group.

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