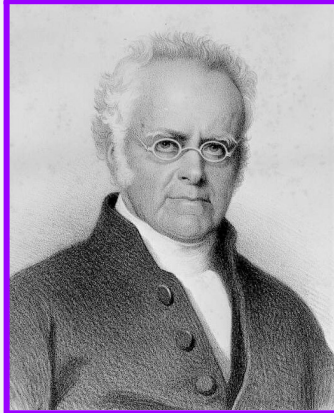


On a beautiful summer's day in Waitangi in 1840, the man responsible for translating the most important document in New Zealand history was explaining the wording of the treaty to the assembled Māori chiefs. The religious missionary, Henry Williams, spoke of the different clauses, of the approval of the various missionaries and the act of love extended by the Queen. What he did not explain were key differences in the English and Māori words used in the treaty. Why had he deliberately mistranslated the treaty? Was it out of an act of love or was it intended to deceive Māori?



Williams had been in the country since 1823 as a missionary, spreading religious teachings of his God to Māori. To do so he had learned **te reo**, translating the bible and his sermons into Māori as early as 1828 - he spoke Māori fluently. How did he get key words in the translation so wrong twelve years later? Historians that are kind to Williams argue that he wanted to convince Māori chiefs to sign so he made the language of the treaty more acceptable to them. Historians feel that Williams believed that the treaty was an important protection for Māori from other foreign powers such as France and the USA. And that it would also protect them from unethical land buyers such as the New Zealand Company.

Whether his wording was an act of 'parental' love or an act of trickery, the mistranslation has at times divided the people of New Zealand.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi

Produced by Paul Tucker@Orewa College (2022)

Questions (look in the text for highlight clues!)

- 1) What is the 'most important document' from the story?
- 2) What was William's 'job' in New Zealand before 1840?
- 3) In what year did Williams translate the treaty?
 - a) 1823
 - b) 1828
 - c) 1840
- 4) How does the reader know that the missionaries were in favour of the treaty?
- 5) What were two (2) reasons why historians think Williams may have deliberately mistranslated the treaty?
 - 1)
 - 2)
- 6) Historians that are kind to Williams argue he used the wrong words on purpose to:
 - a) Enable the British to take Māori land.
 - b) Get Māori chiefs to sign the treaty.
 - c) Demonstrate an act of love from the Queen.
- 7) What did the New Zealand Company do?
- 8) What two (2) pieces of evidence from the story that show William's knew **te reo** Māori very well?

Word Salad

Find the meaning of these words and put each of these words into a sentence.

- 1) unethical
- 2) sermon
- 3) parental

Describing Verb Words (Adverbs)

For each sentence find the word that describes an action word.

- 1) Henry Williams stood proudly.
- 2) The chiefs listened with excitement.
- 3) William Hobson spoke slowly in te reo.