

Bicentenary Nativity Play for Aotearoa New Zealand 2014

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Cast:

Teacher

2 Narrators (NZ and Traditional)

2 children – 1 boy, 1 girl

Mary & Joseph

3 chiefs

Mr & Mrs Marsden

Rahu

Crowd

2 Children – 1 Maori 1 Pakeha

Shepherds

Angels

Teacher: Welcome to our 2014 Traditional Nativity Play. Once again we present the story of the first ever Christmas, that happened 2,000 years ago, far away in Israel, in the city of Bethlehem

Whetu: Do we have to hear that old thing again? Every year it's the same story and it never changes.

Elsa: But I LIKE the traditional play! I've been waiting to be in the year 6 Christmas play for ages! I asked Mrs Crosson if I could be an angel.

T: What about you Whetu?

W: Huh, you won't catch me putting those wings on. And I'm not putting a stupid towel on my head neither. All this stuff – what's it got to do with us here? Israel is such a long way from New Zealand – I don't know anyone who has been there. And it's such an oldy worldy story –all that stuff about donkeys and inn keepers and 3 kings. Weird.

T: Hmmm I see what you mean. Well, in that case, would you like to see what happened on the first Christmas Day in New Zealand?

W (surprised) Oh well, that's more like it. I guess...

E: *looks doubtful.* OhhhK

N1 OK, first of all, you will need to put these on (*gives them t shirts and caps*)

W: That's better than a tea towel! But why does it say 1814?

E: And what was the good news? And where are my angel wings?

N1: well, perhaps we can tell both stories –as you will see, they have a surprising amount in common.

W&E: How come?

N1 You will see! Now, we need 2 narrators, and some actors – is everyone ready?

All: Yes we are. (*Maori crowd incl 3 chiefs come to the front.*)

N1 In those days a decree was issued by the emperor Augustus for a census to be taken of all the Roman world. This was the first registration of its kind, and took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

N2 200 years ago, a Maori leader, Chief Ruatara sent an invitation to some missionaries to come and settle in his country, Aotearoa. The missionary's name was Samuel Marsden & his wife was called Elizabeth. Then 3 leaders

(Maori messenger goes to back of the church with a letter)

E: Wasn't there an Elizabeth in the first Christmas story too>?

N1 YES that's right Elsa, the first Elizabeth was Mary's cousin, and she had a baby just before Mary had hers. Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem on a donkey as it was a long way from where they lived in Nazareth.

(Mary & Joseph come up the aisle and start looking for somewhere to stay. Everyone shakes their head and pushes them away gently, then they sit down by the crib)

W: You aren't going to tell me the Marsdens came to NZ on a donkey!

N2 *(patiently)* No, Whetu. Donkeys hate surfing. Instead, Ruatara and 2 friends went to Australia on a ship to fetch the Marsdens. *(The 3 chiefs go to the back of the church with the cardboard ship)* They all made the journey back here together, on a sailing ship named the Active, in 1814

E: That's the date on our t shirts! That's exactly 200 years ago this Christmas!

W: Cool...

N1 When Mary & Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, they didn't know anyone, and they couldn't find anywhere to stay.

N2 But when the Marsdens arrived at Oihi Bay, they were brought here by their friends. Chief Ruatara and 2 other chiefs, Hongi Hika and Korokoro all brought the Marsdens and 4 other families back to Aotearoa with them.

(the chiefs and the Marsdens come to the front of the church, carrying a cardboard ship, and stand with Mary & Joseph)

W: Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable. What about the Marsdens? Where did they stay when they got here?

N2 – Not in an inn! But the Maori community welcomed them on to the beach, and provided upturned wakas for the Marsden family to sit on. They even built a wooden pulpit for Te Matenga (the Maori name for Samuel Marsden) to speak from.

E: So the Maori people made room for them from the start! That was friendly. But what about the shepherds and the angels ?

(she picks up her wings, hopefully, and holds out the tea towel to Whetu who pushes it away. Meanwhile, 5 angels stand with 3 shepherds in the aisle)

N1: You remember the first Christmas story – how there were shepherds in their fields, tending their flocks? Well there were none of those in 1814

W: Cos there weren't any sheep in NZ then! No shepherds !

N2 But in fact there probably were sheep there on the first Christmas day here. Samuel Marsden rode his horse, and the sailors unloaded cows, and the children brought the chickens too. All the animals that we see in the paintings of Jesus's birth in Bethlehem. And while there weren't yet any shepherds, we know that hundreds of people from all around the area came to greet the new arrivals, and to welcome them to Aotearoa on that first Christmas Day 200 years ago this month.

(Mary puts Jesus in the crib and 3 haka group members come to stand nearby, together with the shepherds and angels)

E: But what about the 3 Kings?

W: *(watching the 3 chiefs talking to Samuel Marsden)* - I suppose there were 3 kings that day – Ruatara, Hongi Hika and -

N2: Korokoro! Yes that's right Whetu –and in fact Chief Ruatara's wife Rahu had her own mana when she married Ruatara. She was really important.

E: But the 3 kings brought presents for the baby Jesus. What about presents on our first Christmas Day?

N2 There were lots of gifts exchanged on that first Christmas day 200 years ago –just watch... The first Christmas present was given by Elizabeth Marsden *(Mrs Marsden gives a red dress to Rahu who puts it on.)* She gave a beautiful dress to Rahu, who was very pleased. Watch for the other gifts...*Marsden and Kendall give soldiers jackets to Ruatara and HH & KK who put them on. One of the children gives a hen to a Maori child)* but the most important gift was the story that the families brought –*(Samuel Marsden holds up a large Bible)* about how God loves the world so much that we were given Jesus, God's Son, who came for all of us, everywhere, in Bethlehem and here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

E: *(sadly)* So there weren't any angels?

N2 well, Samuel Marsden didn't write in his diary about seeing any that day in Oihi Bay – but the Maori people welcomed the new arrivals with an awesome haka (just like the one we watched outside just a few minutes ago).

W: OK so, I admit that is quite cool. I didn't know any of this. And it really happened here in New Zealand? For real?

Teacher: Yes Whetu, it really did.

W: Wow..... Can we keep the t shirts, please?

Teacher: Yes- and the caps – they are a gift for both of you.

W&E: Awesome! Thank you so much! Ok everyone – are you ready?

ALL: We wish you a merry Christmas from everyone at Kaikorai School

E: Isn't there a song about the first New Zealand Christmas?

N2: you are quite right – there is – and we sing it every year – and we are all going to sing it now.

All sing Te Harinui

Bishop Kelvin – Final words and blessing