

Heeding the call

. . . Fahan . . .

It has always been the lot of Presbyterian ministers to answer the call of God, sometime that call allowed ministers to serve at home and in other instances it meant relocating to far flung places.

Fahan's first minister, Mr Ninian Cochran who joined on 3 February 1719 and served for almost 30 years, was a good example of the former being a farmer at Chrislaghmore. He resigned on 1748 and died in September 1751.

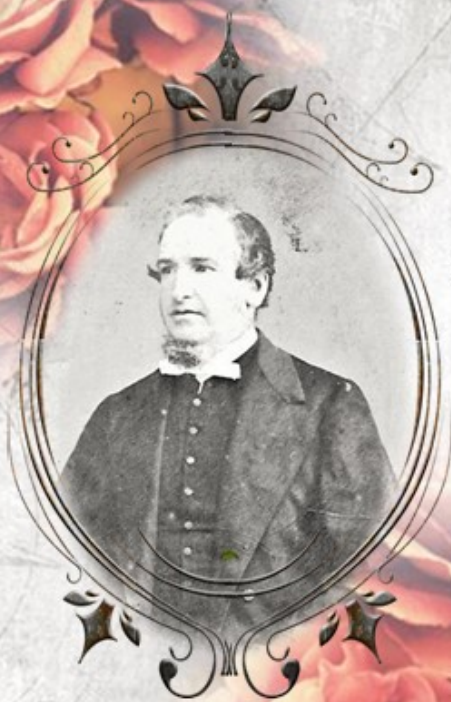
The second and fifth incumbents on the other hand, left Fahan for distant shores. Mr Joseph Reagh was ordained in August 1748 and emigrated to America in 1770, joining the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

Aside from an extended vacancy, the Church was served for the next 70 years by Mr John Ervin who retired with failing health in February 1796. He was replaced by Mr David Hamilton, who continued until his death in 1840.

Mr John Macky, who after being ordained on 7 June 1842, resigned on 5 April 1854 on being appointed as missionary to New Zealand. He went on to become the first moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1862.

*To my friends at Fahan—
congratulations on 300
years of fellowship*





Rev. John Macky



Rebecca Cochran
Macky

" . . . there is an urgent call from the country." "What we want is a minister whom the people will believe is a Presbyterian".

Thomas Macky, writing from New Zealand 1851

"I had no idea that the grief of the people would be so great at my leaving them. I trust in God I am not going contrary to His will in this matter. In many cases their grief is so great that I know not how to soothe and comfort them. Many families speak determinedly of going to New Zealand, but I am loath to advise, lest with their limited means they would have reason to regret the step they had taken.

For some Sabbaths now we will be having young men preaching and I think the most of the people would be willing to leave the choice of my successor to myself, but this is a responsibility which I do not wish to incur. A considerable number of young men have already been recommended and it is likely to be greatly augmented. To those at a distance who have no other way of judging Fahan, but by its recorded collections for missions, it appears even more eligible than it really is. **But after all there are few nicer situations for a young minister than it is at present."**

John Macky, 30th January, 1854

"I had often been grieved at home at the careless lifeless manner in which the psalms were sung and hoped that in our services on board this would not be the case, expecting confidently the assistance of my brother-in-law. However in this I was disappointed and the singing was so wretched that I was heartily longing even for the music of Fahan."

John Macky, 30th April, 1854

2 August 1854 This day also beautifully fine. Expected this morning to get a sight of land - towards evening all looked out very anxiously for that desirable object - I had gone over to the forecastle and pointed to what Mr. Carrington a second cabin passenger considered the 'loom' of land when John Ferguson my father's servant who had gone up to the cradle of the foremast called out land, land and sure enough he was right - it was the long looked for Mt. Egmont. During the continuance of daylight this was very partially visible - we all looking forward very eagerly to daylight of tomorrow to behold less dimly our adopted country.

3 August 1854 Egmont visible this morning in all its glory. What a magnificent cone with its resplendent snowy mantle shining in the light of the morning sun. Smaller mountain heights less distinctly visible and land on either side of the mountain falling away gradually till lost in sea still less distinctly visible.

4 August 1854 As we neared we could perceive the white houses of New Plymouth which appears a scattered town but very beautifully situated and surrounded by a country which I have no doubt will in a few years merit the appellation given it by Hursthouse - 'The Garden of New Zealand'.

Rev. John Macky, 1854



Early morning, off Taranaki , Artwork of the Rev. John Kinder, 1873 *The Fletcher Trust Collection*

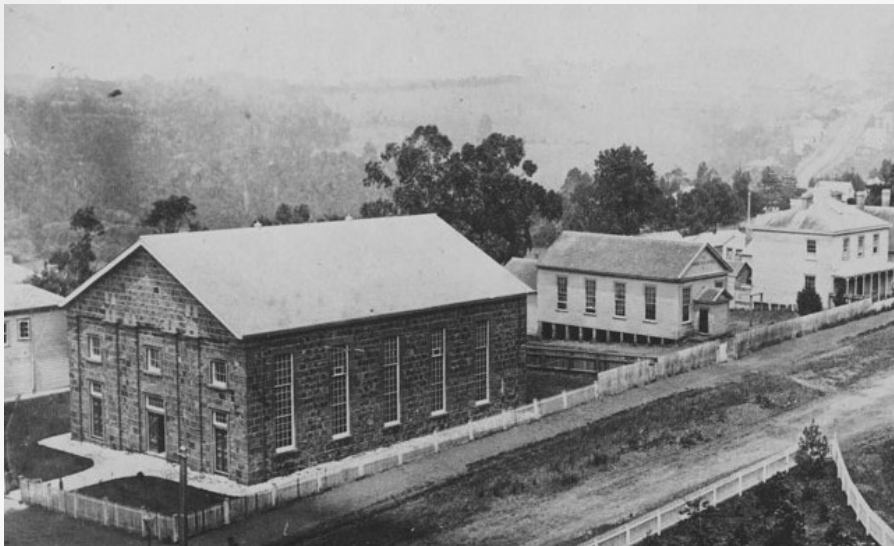
. . Auckland . .

*“Arrived in Auckland being Sabbath heard Mr Bruce preach
... brother Thomas accompanied me ... found all friends well ... my
feeling meeting them I will not attempt to describe.”*

John Macky, 20/8/1854

BELOW: An early photograph of **St Andrews Church**, Symonds St, Auckland where John Macky's brother, Thomas, married Catherine Cochrane in 1852, and where he would preach his first sermon in New Zealand, just over two years later.

Ref. War Memorial Museum., PH-ALB-2



Over a period of 150 years, many Presbyterians left the old world in search of religious freedom and a better life. The Rev. John Macky and his family found both in New Zealand.

When Thomas Macky wrote to his brother John that the Irish Presbyterians would like to have a minister of their own country, John received the blessing of the board of mission directors of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland the Presbyterian Church of Ireland to undertake this mission. He was sent to New Zealand to take charge of the Tamaki district, an area of over 100 square miles.

Pioneering life was not in any way, easy. In a colony of less than twenty years since its foundation, the land was generally undeveloped and communities were often very isolated. However, despite these apparent shortcomings, they forged ahead in an attempt to make peace with their new surroundings and create a place in New Zealand's European settlement.

Besides Otahuhu (Papatoetoe), John Macky preached every Sabbath either in Onehunga, Panmure or Howick, and made more distant excursions during the week conducting services at Slippery Creek and Wairoa.

His pioneering ministry required much time in the saddle, so the first lesson for a colonial clergyman was to learn to ride and to shoe a horse. John Macky's horse, Jack, a gift from his brother William's wife, was to serve him faithfully for 27 years.

One of the Rev. John Macky's major achievements was his appointment as the first moderator of the Presbyterian Church in NZ at its founding assembly, in 1862. He resigned from active duties of the ministry, in December 1889.

There can be no doubt that Rev. Macky served the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand well, not only in his capacity as a revered elder, but as a compassionate and dedicated pastor. However, mention should also be made to his family and extended family who offered their support, and their belief in him, throughout his long career.

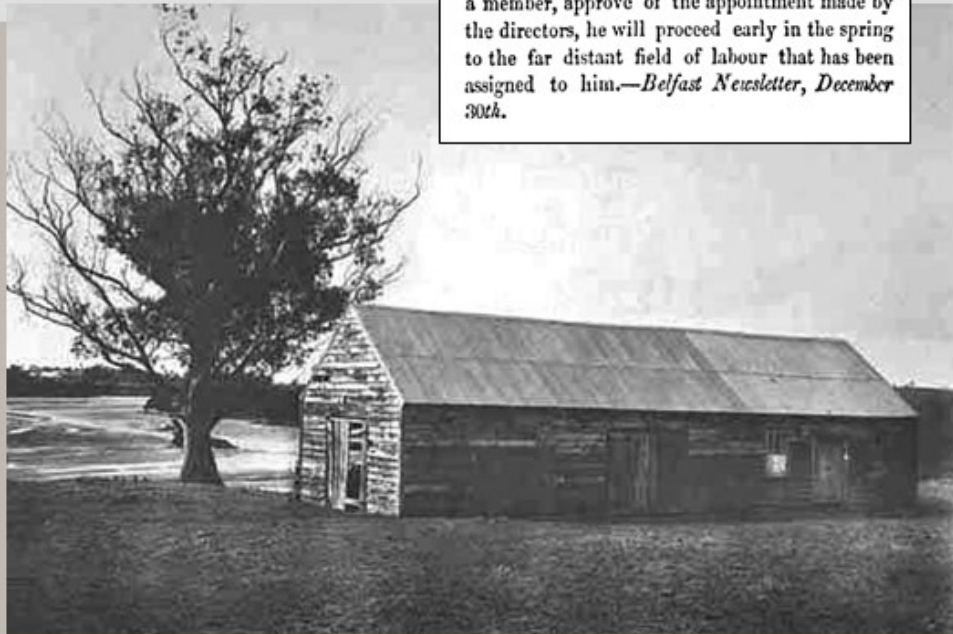
*"The horse Jack which has hitherto been my faithful servant
in all my journeyings was a present from my sister-in-law."*

John Macky, April 1856

“... in the afternoon
commenced my ministry in
Otahuhu by preaching from
Acts 10. 29. The service was
conducted in Mr. Baird's
Store beside his wharf”.

John Macky 27/8/1854

ASSEMBLY'S COLONIAL MISSION.—A memorial from a number of Presbyterians, resident in the district of Tamaki, near Auckland, in New Ulster New Zealand, was presented to the directors of the Assembly's missions, at their meeting on Wednesday, setting forth the religious destitution of the district, and praying that a minister from the Irish Church might be sent out to them. The directors unanimously resolved to appoint the Rev. John Macky, minister of Fahan, in the county Donegal, to this important sphere of usefulness, the strongest testimonies having been borne to his faithfulness and efficiency. It is hard to deprive a prosperous congregation of the services of such a minister, but the claims of the colonies must be attended to, and they require missionaries of first-rate energy and talent. In case the Presbytery of Derry, of which Mr. Macky is a member, approve of the appointment made by the directors, he will proceed early in the spring to the far distant field of labour that has been assigned to him.—*Belfast Newsletter, December 30th.*



1854

Baird's storage shed on the shores of the Tamaki River, Otahuhu, where the first Presbyterian services in the area were held in 1854. This photo was taken in the 1920s. The owner, Thomas Baird, was John Macky's uncle by marriage.

Ref. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A11809

"We have now to chronicle the arrivals of Revs. J. Macky, T. Norrie, and R. McKinney. The Church in them received a considerable addition to its ministerial strength. Three ministers in three years was then an unwonted and welcome event. Ireland and Scotland united in sending of their best to the Auckland field. The Rev John Macky, a graduate of the Glasgow University, brought with him much wisdom, gentleness, and grace from Fahan, County Derry, Ireland, where in his native land he laboured for some time as minister. He is one of the fathers of the Auckland district whose memory is to-day greatly revered. During his long and faithful ministry of thirty-six years, he endeared himself to all and was distinguished for his wise counsel in Presbytery and Assembly."

Taken from The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand by Rev. John Dickson (1899)

1856

BELOW: The original St. John's Presbyterian church in Otahuhu.





LEFT: Built on land donated by Thomas Baird, the school began its life as the Otara Presbyterian Day School in 1856. Initially based in the first Otara Presbyterian Church (later St Johns Church), it became a non-denominational school known as the Otara Day School in 1870. This photograph was taken in 1884, during the lifetime of the Rev. John Macky.

Ref. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Footprints 01429



LEFT: An early photograph of the **Presbyterian Church, Howick** formally opened by the Rev. John Macky in 1873. This photograph shows the church in its original state before the addition of the vestry in 1885.

Ref. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Footprints 01789

1873

“He was a man of high culture, and a minister who discharged the duties of his office with great fidelity.”

A Lamented Death, Auckland Star, 4/2/1891



LEFT: The gravesite of the **Rev. John Macky**, born in Co. Londonderry 1821 and his wife **Rebecca Cochrane Macky**, St Johns Presbyterian Church, Papatoetoe, Auckland.

Photograph from the Macky family website, www.macky.net



Written and researched by *Wanda Hopkins and Robin Moran*

