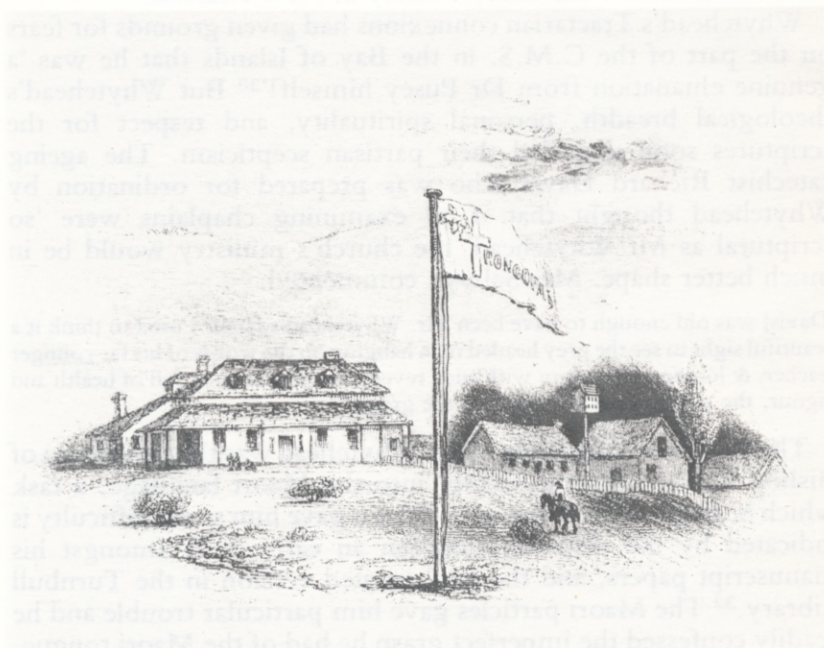


Part of the tragedy of Thomas Whytehead's early death is that amongst Selwyn's pioneer clergy he alone seems to have possessed that amalgam of mental ability and creativity combined with deep spirituality. The Bishop's principal gifts lay in other directions, and he needed an able critic and counsellor to evaluate his mission, and help relate it to the needs of both Maori and colonial society. Whytehead was to be Selwyn's 'stationary man' commanding the home base as archdeacon, guiding the 'collegiate institution' as principal, and imparting theological direction to the whole enterprise.³⁴ Small wonder that when his tenuous hold on life was revealed upon his arrival at Waimate, Sarah Selwyn should write: 'there is nothing I do believe which George would more feel than the removal of his counsel, & the loss of his society.'³⁵ Whether Thomas Whytehead could have fulfilled these expectations must remain doubtful, for he too was short on practical experience. But that he was better qualified for such a role than any other of the Bishop's clerical colleagues in the first crucial decade, few would dispute. As his wife Sarah so aptly commented, Selwyn had indeed lost 'his right hand'.



'The Mission House, Waimate', by S. Williams, drawn in the early 1830s and published in William Yate's An Account of New Zealand (London, 1835), facing page 197. Whytehead's room was on the extreme left, off the Bishop's study (see Michael Standish's Waimate Mission Station (Wellington, 1962), plan opposite p. 27).