

No overall publication ever came out of the decision of the 1844 synod. As much as the launching of the project reflects Selwyn's strong vision of the importance of the issue of Māori health, the fact that it does not seem to have been seen through to completion may also reflect one of Selwyn's personal weaknesses as head of the Church in New Zealand – an excess of ambition relative to the resources at hand.

The missionary information, however, was summarised and used to provide indicators of the size of the Māori population in the 1840s. An anonymous writer observed that '[a] very careful census is now in progress under the guidance of the Bishop of New Zealand. At the commencement of 1848 it had extended over half of the northern island, and contained an enumeration – family by family and individual by individuals – of about 40,000 persons'.²⁷

In 1857 Bishop Selwyn also referred to this work: 'Having a census in my possession containing the names of 35,000 men, women, and children in the tribes south of Auckland, I know that this [ascertaining individual claims to land] can be done', suggesting a motivation additional to the humanitarian was creeping into the rationale for a census.²⁸ Presumably drawing on this missionary demographic information, Selwyn also observed that, 'The population of New Zealand was about 80,000 ten years ago [1847]'.²⁹

Some may question Selwyn's contemporary claims as overblown. Indeed, there is no extant documentary list, which I have been able to find, of all the 35,000–40,000 names he claims to have gathered. However, there is existing documentary evidence in the shape of Selwyn's diaries of his journeys, where names, sex and family relationships of Māori in various areas of his travels are meticulously recorded for at least hundreds of people. Basil Howard has already published Selwyn's efforts in the Muruhiku area.³⁰ Such information was also collected by missionaries for over 1,700 people in the Waikato in 1844 and again published (see below). There is a surviving list of names for parts of the Golden Bay, Nelson, Porirua, Kāpiti and Horowhenua areas in the Turnbull library.³¹ Thus, even what remains suggests an impressive effort, going well beyond fighting-man estimates and even head counts. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that Selwyn had some genuine basis for his claims, and 35,000 names does not seem implausible.

Despite the absence of an overall publication drawing the project together, various other parts of the missionary census have survived in the record. A partial summary version seems to have survived.³² The most detailed summary data provided is for the East Coast area, which was taken by William Williams during 1846. On his trips around his region Williams took censuses of the villages he stayed in or passed through, recorded the name of the local tribe and hapū, and recorded the number of males and females therein. The data collection ranges in