

1842 Part 1: *A Quiet Period in Between*¹ Jan Snijders sm

A hectic year

On all fronts the year 1841 had been a hectic one. In France, Father Colin and his administration discovered how badly things had gone wrong in Oceania. It threw the Superior General off balance to the point of wanting to resign. The mini-chapter of September dissuaded him and he accepted to stay on and withdraw for a lengthy period of rest in Belley where he was more at home and could work in a relaxed way on the Constitutions that the Society badly needed. Responsibilities within the administration were reshuffled whereby the new assistant Mâitre-pierre was to be the day-to-day manager in Lyon.² The sixth missionary team originally destined for the new mission of Central Oceania was redirected to New Zealand. The leader, Jean Forest, carried strongly worded letters for Bishop Pompallier and was appointed official visitator of the mission.³

On Wallis Island, during the whole year 1841, large numbers of Wallisians kept joining the ranks of the catechumens. Tensions repeatedly got near boiling point. At the height of them the *Lavelua* Vaimua gave in and left his people free to choose between the old religion and the Christian *lotu*. The whole year Bataillon and Chevron, supported by the Brothers Joseph Luzy and Attale, instructed catechumens and helped building village chapels. They waited in vain for the arrival of the Bishop who finally arrived shortly after Christmas.⁴

On Futuna the struggles between the Alo and the Singave people intensified and became entangled in the tensions between the old religion and the Christian *lotu*. The Singave people increasingly saw in the *lotu* a new chance for their political aspirations. Many Alo people, especially the youth, felt attracted to the *lotu*, but at the same time they feared a threatening alliance of Singave and Christian Wallisians. The conversion of Meitala, eldest son of Niuliki, and the subsequent murder of Peter Chanel by a leading Alo chief threw the island into political

¹ This article is the continuation of Jan Snijders, *Mission Too Far ... Pacific Commitment, 1835- 1841* (Hindmarsh: ATF, 2012). Further referred to as MTF.

² MTF, 326.

³ MTF, 328- 33.

⁴ MTF, 333- 36.

and religious chaos. The death of King Niuliki aggravated an already confused situation.⁵

On 23 July the Bishop left Kororareka on the *Sancta Maria* and Father Épalle carried on the administration. He kept regular contact with the missionaries in the field but, not having any money at all, he could do little to relieve their extreme poverty. On 13 September Perret, the lay missionary who had stayed behind in Cape Town, arrived in Kororareka. In November, Épalle heard of the death of Peter Chanel on Futuna, probably from a trading vessel. He notified Bishop Pompallier but kept it a secret for a few months.⁶ The Bishop had taken the Fathers Viard, Baty, Séon, Borjon and Rozet as well as the Brothers Justin and Euloge with him on the *Sancta Maria*. He dropped Séon in Matamata and sent Borjon to Rotorua. Baty got off at Tauranga. Borjon and Brother Justin were installed at Maketu.⁷

The Bishop continued to the South Island and stayed there with Viard and Euloge until, in mid-November, he got Épalle's letter informing him of the martyrdom of Peter Chanel. He immediately sailed for Wallis on the French naval vessel *Allier*.⁸ The *Sancta Maria* met with the *Allier* in Vava'u and the two ships reached Wallis shortly after Christmas. Viard visited Futuna on the *Sancta Maria* under the cover of the *Allier's* guns. The Futuna people rendered the remains of Peter Chanel and Viard carried them directly to New Zealand while Pompallier remained on Wallis.⁹

After that hectic year, the first part of 1842 turns into a quiet period. Father Colin works on the Constitutions in Belley although he does important correspondence himself. He stays in Belley until April 1842, when he receives the news of the death of Peter Chanel.

Father Forest is on the high seas until his arrival in New Zealand in May 1842 and Bishop Pompallier is on Wallis, out of contact with the rest of the world, busy receiving the entire population into the Church. By the end of May, the *Sancta Maria* arrives in Wallis from New Zealand.

Jean-Claude Colin

⁵ MTF, 336- 41.

⁶ MTF, 314- 5; 344- 5.

⁷ MTF, 342.

⁸ MTF, 348- 9.

⁹ MTF, 345- 52.

Colin had accepted the good counsel of his confreres in good grace and humility but things were moving and they kept him in Puylata for a few weeks. He first informed the Marists in Verdélais that the election for which they had sent their votes had not taken place and assured them that their votes had been destroyed unopened.¹⁰

Colin's presence was always of great importance when missionaries left for Oceania. It often was his joyful and manly determination that strengthened them in the painful moments of taking leave. Only Colin himself could write the appropriate letters of recommendation for Mgr. Bonamie, Superior General of the Picpus Fathers, and to Bishop Thomas Griffiths, Vicar Apostolic of London.¹¹ As he was wont to do, Colin wrote to each of the missionaries. This time he added a circular letter addressed to all of them. Many of these letters were not yet ready when, on 5 October Jean Forest and Jérôme Grange left as the first ones for Paris and London.

Writing to Bishop Pompallier already asked for a special effort of Colin's writing skills but it became extra difficult when, a few days after Forest had left, a parcel of mail arrived from Oceania with the Bishop's angry, even insulting letter of 17 May 1841 and Épalle's covering note.¹² Colin and Maître pierre must have worked long hours to get the mail ready before the rest of the sixth group could leave (23 October or shortly later).¹³ At the same time Colin became involved in an exchange of letters with an angry Peter Dillon in London. With one thing and another it wasn't until the end of November that Colin finally left for Belley and a well-earned rest.

New missions?

After the departure of the sixth group of missionaries in October 1841 Father Poupinel had drafted a letter for Cardinal Fransoni in Rome to inform him of their departure and to give him their names. He used the occasion to recall the letter of 20 May and the proposal of establishing a second Apostolic Vicariate, for Central Oceania.¹⁴ As an additional argument he mentioned Pompallier's insistence that all new

¹⁰ Gaston Lessard (editor), «*Colin sup*» *Documents pour l'étude du généralat de Jean-Claude Colin (1836- 1854)* volume 1, doc. 293. The four volumes under this title are referred to as CS 1, CS 2 etc.

¹¹ CS 1, docs 297 & 298.

¹² LRO 1, docs 91 & 92, MTF, 310- 2.

¹³ CS 1, docs 301, 302, 304, 305, 306, 307. MTF, 327- 33.

¹⁴ CS1, doc. 263; MTF, 319- 22.

missionaries and all mission goods be first sent to him in New Zealand. Interestingly he adds New Caledonia, New Britain and the ‘many neighbouring islands’ which leads him to broaden the proposal to not just one but two new ecclesiastical circumscriptions. What had attracted Marist attention to Melanesia in the second half of 1841 is not clear. The mention of New Caledonia is still understandable, it being the first major island one meets when the finger on the map moves north from New Zealand, but why Poupinel then skips entire archipelagoes and picks New Britain, half a world further, is not clear.¹⁵ No action was taken on the draft but Colin took it with him when he went to Belley.

Colin had barely left Lyon when a letter arrived from Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, *Propaganda*, in Rome. It was promptly forwarded to Belley. The Roman letter contained the copy of a letter Fransoni had received from Bishop Patrick Griffith of Cape Town who had shown great hospitality to the large group of Marist missionaries passing there in February and March of the same year 1841. The two lay missionaries, Dausse and Perret had stayed in the Bishop’s house for weeks after the Marists had sailed on for Sydney. Dausse took so much interest in the country that he wrote a report on Kaffraria which eventually reached Colin. The Marists must have made a good impression on Bishop Griffith because, writing to Rome, he offered the ‘Order of the Brothers of Mary’ (*Ordine Fratrum Mariae*) the large mission of Kaffraria. Fransoni did not insist but simply asked Colin if the Marists had the personnel and would be willing to accept.

Colin used Poupinel’s draft to answer the Cardinal. He left out Pompallier’s insistence on having everybody and everything come to him first. He took over the mention of New Caledonia and New Britain which shows they were more than just a casual idea of Poupinel’s. As an added argument Colin added that the North Island of New Zealand by itself would warrant already a second Vicariate, an idea that we know Colin had played with already.¹⁶ Of the threatening conflict between the Vicar Apostolic and the Society, not a word! On the African mission Colin asked for time to pray, or as he put it, ‘to recommend this important matter to the Lord’.¹⁷

¹⁵ CS1, doc. 313.

¹⁶ Cf. MTF, 284. CS1, docs & 329.

¹⁷ Fransoni to Colin, CS 1, Doc 311. Poupinel’s draft, CS 1, doc. 313, 1-5. Colin to Fransoni, CS 1, doc. 313, 6-8. Because of the respective texts themselves we prefer this sequence of events in spite of the dates they carry: 29 December 1841

The Cardinal wasted no time answering. On 29 January 1842 he wrote a most gracious letter to Colin, heaping even more praise on Colin's head and on the Society of Mary than the usual curial style demands. At the same time he cleverly dissected Colin's somewhat vague suggestions into two precise projects. Where Colin had written of the Polynesian Islands and Melanesia in one confused sentence, Franson took up Melanesia as a separate destination for a band of missionaries he presumed Colin had ready and pushed the project by enclosing a letter of appointment for the Prefect Apostolic to lead the group, leaving the place for the name open so that Colin could appoint whomever he wanted. As to Central Oceania he repeated his earlier intention to wait for the answer of Bishop Pompallier before taking action. He left the way open for even other divisions of the vast mission – as Colin had hinted at – if the Bishop and Colin were to suggest it.¹⁸

In contact with the Picpus Fathers

Even though he had carefully avoided touching upon them when writing to Cardinal Franson in December, the difficulties in Oceania kept haunting Colin. Evidently unsure of how to handle things he wrote to Bonamie, the Superior General of the Picpus Fathers. Bishop Rouchouze (of the Eastern Pacific) had arrived in Paris in September and would have brought Bonamie up to date with the situation in Oceania.

Bonamie opens his answer by saying: you have put two questions to me. The first one is: what can a religious superior do to ensure that his missionaries are always two together and to avoid that lay-brothers are put on places where there is no priest? Bonamie agrees a missionary should never be alone. The superior must stipulate this whenever a new missionary is assigned to the mission. If the superior just expresses a vague wish but does not nail it down by way of a formal condition, the Bishop will easily think that he is entitled to make exceptions. In our

on the draft and 28 December on Colin's letter. Either or both must be wrong. Nothing indicates that Poupinel went to Belley. Colin organised a campaign of prayers for that intention in the Society (CS1, doc. 314, 1 & 315, 9). In fact, Colin accepted the mission of Kaffraria while in Rome later that year, but 'political events prevented implementation of the decision.' Cf. Jean Coste (editor), *A Founder Acts*, (Rome: Marist Fathers, 1983), doc. 215, 1, n. 1. Further referred to as FA. Cf. Yvan Carré, 'Le projet de mission mariste en Cafrerie' in *Forum Novum*, 8- 9 (2007), 20- 36.

¹⁸ CS 1, doc. 320.

Congregation, writes Bonamie, this point is laid down in our Constitutions and approved by Rome.

Colin's second question seems to have been, does the religious superior have the right to withdraw personnel from the mission? On that point Bonamie quotes from a decree of Propaganda of 1622 that forbids missionaries to leave the mission without permission of the Bishop. Bonamie adds that it does not really answer Colin's question as it seems to apply only to a missionary wanting to leave on his own accord. The safest thing would be, he says, to ask the Holy See for a ruling. However, he adds, in our own statutes, approved by Rome, we have a religious superior, distinct from the ecclesiastical superior, and he is competent, with the advice of his council, to withdraw a missionary from the mission and return him to the sole obedience of the Congregation.¹⁹

Bonamie's letter reads like a piece of fraternal admonition, with just a touch of impatience perhaps. Whatever Colin had written will have confirmed what Bonamie must have suspected already. The upbraiding of a Picpus religious in Valparaiso by Pompallier because he did not address him with the formal *Monseigneur*, would sooner or later have become a joke in the Congregation. When the second band of Marists had passed through Valparaiso, the Picpus men had discussed with them the advantages of having a religious superior distinct from the Bishop. That too would have become known in the Picpus head-house. Then there was the sale of the schooner that Marists and Picpus had bought together only to have Pompallier sell it a few months after it arrived in New Zealand. To top it off, it had taken two years before the Picpus got their share back, and then not the full amount!²⁰ Bonamie, himself an Archbishop, must have seen the weakness of the Marist administration.

Did Colin get the point? Seemingly not. He stuck to his one-sided focus on the spiritual value of blind obedience to Bishops. Neither the entreaties of his own missionaries, nor the evident inability of Pompallier to cope with the two functions together, nor even the well-meant admonition of another Superior General could convince him of the wisdom of general Church practice.

In contact with Rome

¹⁹ Colin's letter has not been found. Bonamie to Colin, 14.03.1842, CS 1, doc. 328.

²⁰ 7.500 Francs instead of the agreed 50% of the original purchase price of 22.000.

No sooner did Colin receive Bonamie's letter than he sat down to write to Cardinal Fransoni. Reassured by Bonamie he now speaks of Pompallier's harsh treatment (*les duretés*) of the missionaries to the point of opening their mail to and from the Superior General. He explains that he had made him Religious Superior, 'granting him the authority their superior had acquired through their vow of obedience'. Colin rejects the Bishop's accusation that he had delayed the sending of missionaries and money. Had he received the letter of 18 May 1841 earlier, Colin says, he would have held back the last group and asked the Holy See for instructions. Without naming him Colin quotes Father Épalle saying: 'Had he known that the Bishop would consider him no longer subject to the Superior General, he would not have gone to the missions.' Other missionaries, says Colin, feel the same.²¹

Colin adds that the Bishop is borrowing money on Promissory Notes against the central administration in Lyon. Admitting that the Bishop was in considerable difficulty because of the bankruptcy in London, he complains it could get the Society and the mission into serious trouble. He asks the Cardinal for advice and guidance.²²

In contact with the Association for the Propagation of the Faith

On 11 January 1842 Dominic Meynis, the secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, reminded Colin of his promise to supply the Association with letters from Oceania. Rumours in town had it that Colin had recently received an important parcel of letters, which indeed he had, in October.²³ There had not been much on Oceania in the *Annals* for some time.²⁴ In March 1842 the *Annals* published excerpts from a long letter that Father Petitjean had written to his family. Colin probably forwarded it.²⁵

In mid-January Colin made a short visit to Lyon and used it among other things to thank the Propagation of the Faith for the allocation it had just then paid out. He recalled the loss of 30,000 Francs in the bankruptcy and the enormous costs of running the Oceania missions. He asked Poupinel to write the report that the Association asked for.

²¹ Épalle to Colin, 21.05.1841, LRO 1, doc. 92.

²² Colin to Fransoni, 18.03.1842, CS 1, doc. 330.

²³ Cf. CS 1, doc. 300, note 1.

²⁴ CS 1, doc. 317, footnote 1.

²⁵ Petitjean to Paillasson, 07.03.1841, LRO 1, doc. 87. *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 14 (1842) 205.

Poupinel wrote a draft that Colin had Claude Mayet copy with minimal corrections.

The report gives the numbers of missionaries and their whereabouts as well as general indications of the relative success of their work in New Zealand as well as on Wallis Island. It underlines the extreme poverty of the missionaries which it ascribes mainly to the expenses of travelling to the mission and within New Zealand. The missionaries are desolate to the point that the Bishop may have to sell mission property in order to pay for their sustenance. Not a word about failing financial management! Colin avoids mentioning the *Sancta Maria*, the expensive ship that Pompallier had bought and that according to the missionaries was the main cause of the financial collapse.

Interestingly, Colin already mentions the mission to New Caledonia and New Britain as firm propositions for which he mentions that eight to ten missionaries are being readied but no mention of the more imminent new vicariate of Central Oceania! Had Colin realised that he had been a bit too talkative about it? The mission to Kaffraria is recommended to the Association's generosity as well as the plan to establish a transit house in London for the Pacific missions: the first mention of a project that would become of crucial importance.²⁶

The secretary of the Association must have reacted by asking Colin for a more specified request. In April Colin put in a detailed application. For New Zealand he asked for an allocation of 134.000 Francs, including among other things 1.000 Francs as living allowance for each of the 36 missionaries in Oceania, 45.000 for the next group of ten missionaries (kit, travel and living allowance first year) and 18.000 for the upkeep of the *Sancta Maria*. He now cannot avoid mentioning the new vicariate of Central Oceania for which he needs 60.000 Francs to allow a Vicar Apostolic to go there with four or five missionaries. For New Caledonia he foresees five priests and five Brothers to be given a small ship as well as fares at a cost of 100.000 Francs. For the new mission of Kaffraria with a Marist House in Cape Town he needs 107.000 Francs. Finally he formally submits to the consideration of the Association to advantages of a Marist house in London, solely for the support of missionaries and mission goods in transit. Not including the London house, he asks for no less than 401.000 Francs. The Association

²⁶ Colin to Propagation of the Faith, 24 February, 1842, CS 1, docs 323 & 324. Cf. *Annexe 5-1: Budgets et Allocations de la Propagation de la Foi, de 1836 à 1846*, undated and not numbered document of the Archives of the Documentation Centre of the Pontifical Mission Works, 12, rue Sala, Lyon.

allocated 120.000 in the beginning and later granted another 146.200, to a total of 266.200 Francs in 1842.²⁷

The rest Colin was to have in Belley had turned into a busy one!

The sixth group under Forest

Just before the retreat of 21- 28 September 1841 a new group of six missionaries priests had been assigned to Oceania with Jean Forest (37) as superior. Already an experienced superior, he had been a Marist since 1831. With him went two Marist priests, Jérôme Grange and Euloge Reignier. Grange (34) had entered the novitiate as a priest of the diocese of Grenoble in June 1841. Reignier (30), coming from Nantes, joined in January 1841. Both made their profession on 25 September. With them went a seminarian, Jean Lampila (33), a former sergeant in the French army who had entered the novitiate in June 1840 and was professed also on 25 September. He needed another year of theology before ordination. The group counted two Brothers, Luc Macé (28) from Anjou, who made his profession together with the priests, and Déodat Villemagne (27) from Saint-Étienne, who had made his profession two years earlier in the Hermitage.

Colin had originally intended to send them not to New Zealand, but directly to Central Oceania but then Cardinal Fransoni had written that he preferred to wait for Pompallier's reaction before acting on Colin's request of a new apostolic vicariate. In the end, probably at the insistence of Jean Forest, who had been a good friend of Pompallier, it was agreed the group would go to New Zealand after all, and Forest was appointed a visitator to report on the problems of the mission. Forest was to leave immediately for London with Jérôme Grange. The rest was to follow as soon as passage to New Zealand was arranged.²⁸

On the way

After the retreat Colin wrote to Dillon in London to announce the arrival of Forest and Grange but they left without waiting for an answer.²⁹ Things must have been rather chaotic in Puylata, the Marist

²⁷ CS 1, doc. 335.

²⁸ MTF, 322- 4.

²⁹ Before actually sailing, Forest wrote eleven letters to Colin and one to Poupinel. Reignier wrote two to Colin and one to Girard. All these letters are in the Archives of the Marist Fathers, Via Alessandro Poerio 63, 00152 Roma (henceforth APM), 1405/20051. During the same period Dillon wrote five letters to Colin, APM

headquarters in Lyon. The two left without the usual letters of recommendation. Some were sent on after their departure, others were never written at all. Letters were put into the wrong envelopes, and mistakes were made in writing down the addresses of people they had to see.

Forest and Grange made a stop in Sens where they had friends. They stayed with the Vincentian Fathers at the Major Seminary and were very well received by the Archbishop. Benefactors gathered around them and an entire convent started knitting clothes for the heathen women and children of the Pacific.

The two continued to Paris by coach and stayed at the *Missions Étrangères* as usual. They were full of praise for the kindness and assistance of the superior Fr. Dubois. For lack of a letter from Father Colin, Mr. Vigneti who had introduced earlier groups to government ministers and officials, resorted to a few discreet questions to make sure they really were Marist missionaries on their way to Oceania. They visited the head-house of the Picpus Fathers to present the superior general, Mgr Bonamie, with a cheque for 7.500 Francs to reimburse him for the Picpus share of the *Reine de Paix* that Pompallier had sold. When Bonamie opened the envelope he found with the cheque a letter for the Bishop of London! Forest could do little else than return the envelope addressed to the Bishop of London that probably contained the letter for Bonamie that Colin ended by writing: ‘You can be sure we shall never forget the efforts of [your] holy missionaries who are our models and who opened for us the gates of Oceania.’³⁰

When rumours had it that several French Navy vessels were being readied with abnormal numbers of troops for the Pacific, Forest tried to get free passage on one of them but was refused for vague reasons. It later turned out to be an expedition sent to take possession of the Marquesas Islands as a first step in the French expansion in the Pacific.³¹ They met with Dupetit Thouars, now a rear admiral, and noted his high regard for Bishop Pompallier whom he had visited in the Bay of Islands.³²

2276/11653. CS 1 has two letters from Colin, one to Cooper and one to Dillon, docs 300 & 310. There must have been other letters that have not been found.

³⁰ Cf. CS 1, docs 297 & 298.

³¹ Jore, *L’Océan Pacifique au temps de la Restauration et de la Monarchie de Juillet* (Paris; Besson & Chantemerle, 1959), volume 1, 206, & volume 2, 133.

³² Cf. MTF, 145.

On 19 October Forest and Grange reached London where Dillon and Cooper, on account of a letter from either Colin or Poupinel - that nobody had told Forest about! - claimed that they had to arrange a ship for the missionaries. Forest became even more suspicious when Cooper was somewhat reluctant to show him the ship. It turned out to be an old 150 ton brig, that had never carried passengers before and on which carpenters were busy nailing together a few make-shift cabins for the missionaries. As he walked off in disgust, Forest saw a new 450 tonner, the *Indemnity* that offered tickets straight to Port Nicholson (Wellington) for 65 guineas. There were still a few berths available and Forest dropped a note to Cooper to the effect that he would not make use of his offer.

No sooner did Dillon get the note than he shot off a very angry letter to Colin about the ingratitude of the Marists after all that he and Cooper had done for the missions. Instead of letting Maître-pierre handle things as arranged, and instead of trusting the judgment of the superior on the spot, Colin intervened. His letter to Forest - not found - must have been a real roasting because the poor man took two closely written pages to explain his actions, but he stood his ground: 'You would not have sent us on that ship had you seen it yourself.' Bishop Polding of Sydney who was staying in London, Heptonstall and others had agreed with his decision. Cooper and Dillon, Forest wrote, were busybodies who felt entitled to push the missionaries around. They wanted to take charge of their money. Cooper's ship would have taken them only as far as Sydney while the *Indemnity* went all the way, and directly, to New Zealand, avoiding loss of time and extra expenses. As to the great services Cooper has rendered to the Society, Forest wrote to Colin, 'your letter was the first time I heard about them.'³³ Briefing his men was not Colin's *forte*.

In the meantime Forest had seen both Cooper and Dillon and he made a copy of Dillon's letter for Colin, showing Dillon's main interest was claiming compensation for expenses allegedly made and the work done on the ship. Forest refused to pay. Dillon wrote three angry letters in as many days but in the end he was put at ease when Colin sent him a friendly letter and the black silk tie from Lyon he had asked for. Forest restored good relations by taking out a travel insurance with Cooper and entrusting him with £ 500 (12.500 Francs), nearly half of the money for the mission. The rest he carried in cash.

³³ Forest to Colin, 01.11.1841.

By the time Reignier arrived in London with Lampila, and the Brothers Luc and Déodat, it was no longer possible to get cabins on the *Indemnity* and they changed to the 600 ton *London* of the same company where they were the first to book and could choose their own cabins. The confusion in Lyon at their departure pursued them to the end. They could not find the keys of their cases and had to break them open for inspection by the Customs. It then became clear that the contents did not agree with the lists provided by Poupinel. As a result the suspicious Customs officers had them open and unpack the lot.

In his last letter Forest asked Colin to notify Bishop Pompallier that he could expect them in four to five months. Father Grange, Forest added, had at first shown a self-willed fellow who did things on his own, but by the time they left he had improved considerably: 'He will still make a good Marist'. A pity, Forest sighed, that he had not done a longer novitiate first, which, he added in the next letter, applied to all of them.

The voyage

The captain of the *London* was an older man but so kind, Forest wrote, that he would make a good Catholic! They shared their table with an Anglican priest, and were invited in turns to sit at the Captain's table. 'One would be quite at ease on English ships, if only one could speak English and the dishes were less peppered.' Setting aside his prejudice against English cooking Forest in the end admitted that the food on board was excellent. Apparently unaware of everything written on the subject already, Forest urged Colin to make sure missionaries in the future learned English before leaving.

The *London* sailed with 148 passengers on board, not counting the women and children, but had such a terrible time in the English Channel that the Captain took the battered ship into Falmouth to repair the damage and rest the crew and the passengers. Three ships that had left at the same time with a few hundred passengers on board had gone down. The Brothers Deodat and Luc were so sick that Forest took them to stay at a little hotel in the town to recover. On 10 December the *London* tried again but had to return to Falmouth. It took another week before a favourable wind allowed them to start on the long voyage to New Zealand.

A strong north-easterly carried the *London* rapidly as far as 36° W, past the north-west coast of Brazil, before they could turn east. They passed close to where Claude Bret had died and were happy to be able

to say Mass there. They crossed the equator on 16 January 1842 and were dispensed from the usual ceremony because the sailors said: 'priests are not like ordinary people.' On 17 January, in view of Saint Helena, Forest baptised a dying little girl on request of its Protestant father. When the girl recovered against all expectations, the father and the other children were received in the Church; mother was a Catholic already. Forest listened well to what people could tell him of New Zealand and even before arriving he was able to give the Superior General a good summary of the relevant facts.

They got along well with the passengers, most of whom were Protestants but who showed more respect for the priests - all the time wearing cassocks - and for their religious ceremonies than, writes Forest, they could have expected in France. They were unaccustomed to dealing with a mixed population and when a mixed couple first asked the Protestant minister to baptise their dying child and then asked Forest to do the funeral, he refused but felt guilty afterwards.

In the Indian Ocean they had to avoid a tornado and several icebergs, one as high as 200 meters above sea, probably, as Forest writes, the remains of a glacier broken off Antarctica. None of the sailors had ever seen icebergs as far north (45° S). Apart from a few bad days they had reasonable seas all the way. They used their time well, learning English and teaching French and were so faithful to their pious exercises that Grange admitted he had never prayed that much. Lampila later grumbled he had found the whole voyage extremely boring.³⁴

On 3 April in Cook Strait they met a ship just out of Wellington, on its way to Sydney. Forest quickly finished his letter and had it transferred to the other ship.³⁵ They spent five days of fruitful ministry among the Catholic people in Wellington, many of whom were in tears to have a priest after a long time. The 200 odd Catholics, mostly Irish soldiers, begged the priests to stay and Forest was moved to tears as he had to refuse. They found that Pompallier had left a written authorisation with a Catholic layman to conduct basic services, including funerals, which rather surprised Forest and Grange. They left for Auckland on 11 April. After a very long and rough trip they arrived there only on 28 April and found that Father Baty was appointed there, but that had not yet arrived. Again they were able to minister to the Catholic people and were pleasantly surprised to learn that in Auckland

³⁴ LRO 2, doc. 141, 2.

³⁵ LRO 2, doc. 140.

as well as in Wellington the British government had set aside land for a Catholic church. They sailed on 3 May and reached the Bay of Islands the next day.³⁶

New Zealand: the South Island

In mid-November 1841 the mission ship *Sancta Maria* lay for anchor in Akaroa Bay, on the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand. Bishop Pompallier was living aboard the *Aube* as the guest of Captain Lavaud with whom he planned to sail for France. When he got the news of the massacre of Peter Chanel through a letter from Father Épalle he immediately told the confreres and changed his plans.³⁷ On 19 November Pompallier and Viard left on the *Sancta Maria* for Vava'u and Wallis, followed a few days later by the faster *Allier* under Captain du Bouzet.³⁸

The departure of the Bishop was a relief, not only for the missionaries ashore but also for Captain Lavaud who, as Tripe wrote to Colin, expressed to the remaining missionaries his disdain for the Bishop, first buying an expensive ship on the grounds that he needed it to visit the missionaries in the Islands only to have it lie idle in Akaroa, first for several months in 1840, then again recently for six weeks.³⁹

A few days later Lavaud took the *Aube* north. He visited Wellington and then went to see Governor Hobson who had recently moved to Auckland. From there the *Aube* sailed to the Bay of Islands where Lavaud stayed from 5 to 13 December and met with Épalle and the other missionaries. Petitjean ministered to the sailors when some of them suffered poisoning after eating some local fruits, and two of them died.⁴⁰ Lavaud stayed longer than planned in order to calm down the local Europeans after the murder of Mrs Roberton and her children.⁴¹ He returned to Akaroa in time to receive the *Allier* returning from Wallis and Futuna.

In early March the *Comte de Paris*, the ship of the *Companie Nanto-Bordelaise* that had brought the French settlers, set sail for France. It gave Fr. Comte a chance to write directly to Colin and forward the detailed report that Captain du Bouzet had written on his visit to Wallis

³⁶ LRO 2, doc. 166, 1-6.

³⁷ LRO 1, doc. 117, 2 & 9.

³⁸ MTF, 348- 50.

³⁹ LRO 1, doc. 117, 9, a letter evidently not submitted to episcopal censorship!

⁴⁰ LRO 2, doc. 160, 5, note 1.

⁴¹ LRO 1, doc. 118, 32-38. The murder had taken place on Saturday 20 November.

and Futuna. Comte has lost all interest in the South Island. He intends to leave Akaroa. There is no future here. The South Island is very sparsely inhabited and the French settlers are considered to have become British subjects. Comte urges Colin to appoint a proper provincial (*un provincial en forme*), otherwise the Marists in Oceania will grow away from the Society. Like the Jesuits the Marists need a Provincial to link them to the Society in Europe.⁴²

On 16 March the *Aube* went again to Auckland and Father Comte took the opportunity to leave the South Island for good but when, in mid-April, he arrived at the Bay of Islands he found that the *Sancta Maria* on which he had hoped to leave for the tropical islands had sailed already. It gave him a time to rest and to finish notes he had written on the South Island.⁴³ Tripe and Brother Florentin had agreed to his departure on condition that there would be a replacement, but in fact they did not mind too much as they did not intend to stay in Akaroa either. Six weeks earlier Tripe had written two letters to Colin in which he asked for permission to return to France. He is disappointed in what he sees the futility of his ministry among settlers entirely devoid of religious interest, people who have frozen all fervour out of the priests who have known them (*ils ont glacé tous les prêtres qui les ont connus de près*).

In an observation that is truly remarkable for the time he adds that the few Maori people might just as well be Protestants. They are in good faith and only materially heretics. The Protestant ministers confer valid baptisms and in fact the Maori people who have been baptised in the Catholic Church have so far not been admitted to the other sacraments either. Tripe was not the only Marist missionary to have come to such considerations. Jean-Baptiste Petitjean says the same. Protestants may not belong to the Body of the Church but they are members of the Soul of the Church. He administered the sacraments of the Church to Protestants in danger of death without talking to them of 'catholic' and 'protestant'.⁴⁴

Tripe writes he has personal reasons for wanting to return to France. He feels misunderstood, falsely accused of all sorts of things and out of favour with the superiors.

⁴² Comte to Colin, 05.03.1842, LRO 2, doc. 136, 11. Report of Du Bouzet, LRO 2, docs 134 & 135.

⁴³ LRO 2, doc. 151.

⁴⁴ Tripe to Colin, 31.03.1842, LRO 2, doc. 137, 2. Petitjean to Colin, 11.12.1841, LRO 1, doc. 118, 12.

In the long letter that Tripe writes to the Superior General there is not even one mention of his companion, Brother Florentin. Florentin himself had in February written to Colin: ‘The bishop loves the Brothers. If only all the priests were like that! The Brothers are left without daily rule. Priests find it not necessary for them to have time for daily meditation and some seem to consider them as of no use, if not criminals.’⁴⁵ Relations between the two must have been very icy indeed!

Épalle in charge

From the day Pompallier left on the *Sancta Maria* (23 July 1841), Jean-Baptiste Épalle was in charge at mission head-quarters. With him was Antoine Garin as ‘Provincial’. Most of the time Jean-Baptiste Petitjean was in Kororareka too, looking after the parish even though he remained officially in charge of Whangaroa mission to the North. Also in Kororareka were at least three Brothers: Pierre-Marie Pérénon who pursued his theological studies and was sacristan as well as prefect of the children at the mission school, Michel Monchanin who was at the same time cook, butcher and baker as well as cobbler and Emery Roudet, tailor and printer. Occasionally two more Brothers were for short periods in Kororareka as well: Marie-Augustin Drevet and Colomb Poncet. With the Marists were the lay-missionaries Jean Yvert and, as of September 1841, Louis Perret. In the letter Épalle wrote to Pompallier in November, he must have complained that it was a large group to feed. Pompallier answered from Akaroa that some Brothers could perhaps move to outlying stations where the food was cheaper. He also gave Épalle permission to sell part of the Kororareka properties if necessary, provided he maintained a minimum foothold.⁴⁶

In early January an American arrived in the Bay of Islands who carried a letter from Bataillon⁴⁷ and claimed to have been on Futuna at the time of the murder, in fact, so he said, he had been living quite close to Chanel and had seen things happening. He knew details that Épalle had not heard before and that were not mentioned in Bataillon’s letter. On 19 January 1842 Épalle used the opportunity of a ship leaving for Sydney to forward Bataillon’s letter to Colin and to pass to Colin the details of the death of Peter Chanel that the American had given him.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ LRO 2, doc. 132.

⁴⁶ 15.11.41, APM 1487/21201, 3.

⁴⁷ Probably the one he wrote on 31.05.1841, LRO 1, doc. 98, cf. MTF, 342.

⁴⁸ LRO 2, doc. 127. Cf. MTF, 362- 5.

Épalle unburdened to Colin his worries about the mission. ‘You will ask me: what are your sufferings? Are you hungry?’ Yes, my Father, the Catholic missionaries in New Zealand are hungry. The mission has been reduced to utter misery and the people of this little town know it: the priests have nothing to eat. Here in Kororareka we are not the worst off. People often let us have things on credit, but for three months only. After three months we pay 12 to 15% interest. (...) Father Rozet suffers of the diet of potatoes with pork and asks for flour and rice. (...) Father Borjon’s house has been broken into and he has lost everything. (...) His travelling in the bush is extremely difficult and he asks me for some solid food. I had to answer him: I have nothing. Same for the Fathers Pezant, Séon and Servant.⁴⁹ Épalle had once sent Henry Garnett to beg from Anglican missionaries but he had got next to nothing.⁵⁰

Garin too wrote by the same occasion. He confirmed what Épalle had written, adding: in spite of all ‘we do not let sadness get the better of us. We are happily (*avec gaieté*) at work for the good of the mission.’⁵¹ As Religious Superior Garin was embarrassed by the Bishop’s rule that all letters must go unsealed through him or Épalle. He has taken the initiative to tell the confreres they are free to write on anything and send him the letters that he then will forward if he thinks opportune. His feels bad about what is to some extent disobedience and asks Colin for instructions. He asks Colin to send a real Provincial; he could live in a residence of his own that could at the same time be a Marist Procure.⁵²

By the middle of February 1842 Viard arrived from Futuna on the *Sancta Maria*, carrying the remains of Peter Chanel. On 16 February he reports at length to Colin on his visit to Wallis and Futuna.⁵³ On arrival he found that there was no money to pay off the captain and the crew. It took him until 2 April before he could return to the tropics, taking with him Mr. Hall and the Fathers Servant and Roulleaux, who Épalle thought the Bishop might want to send to Pohnpei.⁵⁴ Both were happy

⁴⁹ LRO 2, doc. 127, 6.

⁵⁰ LRO 2, doc.127, 8.

⁵¹ LRO 2, doc. 128, 3.

⁵² LRO 2, doc. 128, 4.

⁵³ LRO 2, doc. 133, 16 & 19.

⁵⁴ On Pohnpei and earlier plans, cf. MTF, 89. Léonce Jore, *L’Océan Pacifique*, volume 2, 154, writes that Pompallier had given Épalle instructions through Viard to send him Servant and Roulleaux with a view of appointing them to Futuna. It could be but no documentary evidence has been found to support this claim. Tripe

to leave for the Islands where, as Roulleaux wrote the day before leaving, they hoped to have more success than in New Zealand.⁵⁵

Épalle and Garin seem to have formed quite a good team.⁵⁶ The men in the outlying stations liked and trusted them as is clear from the many letters they wrote, reporting on their whereabouts and their work as well as asking for things they needed. Épalle was the sort of superior they had lacked so far. He showed interest in their work, encouraged them in difficulties and rejoiced in their successes. All the letters are written in a fraternal and trustful tone, as they would never have written to Pompallier. Épalle showed deep concern at their deprivations even though he could do little to help them.⁵⁷

The financial mess

Because of the bankruptcy in London Father Séon had brought only little money when he arrived in New Zealand in June 1841.⁵⁸ Pompallier must have taken most of it with him when he left for the South Island on 23 July. That left his Vicar General in a very uncomfortable situation. Not surprisingly, the prolonged absence of the Bishop from Kororareka led to unrest among creditors in the Bay of Islands. Rumours spread that he might not come back at all. It became more and more difficult for Épalle to raise more loans as Viard found out when he had to pay off the crew and ready the *Sancta Maria* for the return to the tropics. It is a bit unfair of Pompallier's biographer, Ernest Simmons, to say that Épalle was certainly no better administrator than Pompallier. True, lacking the 'prestige and the personality of

writes that the Bishop sent letters to New Zealand from Wallis; if so, they have not been found. Cf. Tripe to Colin, 31.03.1842, LRO 2, doc. 137, 5.

⁵⁵ LRO 2, doc. 138.

⁵⁶ LRO 2, doc. 127, 9.

⁵⁷ From the period that he was in charge of the mission, the Roman Archives of the Marist Fathers have the following handwritten letters addressed to Épalle: two from Séon in Matamata, two from Borjon in Maketu, from Rozet two in Opotiki and one in Maketu, three from Pezant in Tauranga, one from Élie-Régis in Whangaroa, one from Florentin in Akaroa, one from Tripe in Akaroa and two from Petit in Purakau. It is difficult to explain how these letters got into the Marist central archives unless Épalle himself took them along when, in May 1842, he returned to France. And why would Épalle take those letters away that were addressed to him as vicar general, unless he did not want Bishop Pompallier to read them? The letters show the fraternal and trustful attitude of the missionaries that Pompallier yearned for but never got because of the way he treated them.

⁵⁸ MTF, 288 & 312.

Pompallier', he did not get away with things as easily as the Bishop usually did, but it was the Bishop's management that left Épalle in dire financial straits and forced him to borrow money all the time.⁵⁹ The Bishop had authorised Épalle to get money from the bank on promissory notes against the Marist Fathers in Lyon. He already had done so on 3 August 1841 for an amount of £ 349.6.7.⁶⁰ On 19 January he wrote to Colin that several promissory notes had been issued against the Marist Fathers in Lyon, amounting together to £ 2,152.6.7. The Pro-Vicar at least kept the books meticulously and he warned the superiors in Lyon - with apologies - of claims that would come their way. Things that cannot always be said of his Bishop!⁶¹

Reinforcements

On 4 May 1842 Father Forest and the Fathers Grange and Reignier with the Brothers Luc Macé and Jean Villemagne and the seminarian Jean Lampila were met, not as they expected by Bishop Pompallier but by Father Jean-Baptiste Épalle holding the fort as Vicar General and Father Garin as 'Provincial', appointed by the Bishop.

The presence of Father Forest as an official visitator on behalf of the Superior General allowed the leadership team in Kororareka to come to decisions.⁶² The warm welcome Forest had received in Wellington and the ministry he had been able to provide, led to the decision to ask Father Borjon to leave Maketu and go with the newly arrived Brother Jean Villemagne to begin a new mission in Wellington. Comte was assigned to take his place in Maketu with Reignier. Brother Luc who had the reputation of being a very able builder stayed in Kororareka to speed up the work. Father Grange was to join Maxime Petit at the Hokianga mission to replace Servant and Roulleaux who had left a month earlier with Viard for the tropical islands.

For more than half a year Épalle had thought of going to France to report to Father Colin in person. It was agreed that even with the arrival of an official visitator it was necessary to go ahead with that project. Bishop Pompallier had in fact agreed to it already. Forest would make a first report for Épalle to take to the Superior General. He interviewed

⁵⁹ Ernest R. Simmons, *Pompallier, Prince of Bishops*, (Auckland: PC Publishing, 1984), 65- 6.

⁶⁰ LRO 1, doc. 106.

⁶¹ LRO 2, doc. 127, 6.

⁶² It seems that everybody took part, including Maxime Petit who happened to arrive from the Hokianga. LRO 2, doc. 171, 1.

the men who were at the Bay of Islands, intending to leave as soon as possible for the outlying stations.

Forest must have brought about 24.000 Francs, approximately £ 960. To restore some level of credibility in the Bay of Islands Épalle must have paid off some of the debts. To further alleviate the financial distress Petitjean was to try raise a substantial loan - up to £1500 stg - in Sydney on conditions more favourable than could be hoped for in Kororareka. The Bishop being absent they all signed a letter of authorisation on behalf of the mission.⁶³

The visitor reports

Jean Forest wasted little time. The first couple of weeks were full of meetings and interviews but as soon as possible he sat down to report to Father Colin. His last letter had been the one he wrote 3 April 1842 from the ship in Cook's Straits and that he entrusted to another ship just on its way to Europe. After recounting the adventurous month it had taken them to reach the Bay of Islands he shares with Colin his first impressions and whatever he had learned from talking with the missionaries.⁶⁴

[7] I am writing from Kororareka, the station that has done so much harm to rest of the mission. (...) Here I found Father Épalle Pro-Vicar, Father Garin, Provincial, Father Petitjean looking after the parish (...) and Father Comte who has recently come in from Akaroa (...). We also found Mr Yvert, busy with the printery that will take another six months to get into action. There is Mr Perret who does a bit of medical work, but is bored stiff and wants nothing more than return to France. Three or four Brothers are busy with two lay workers to put up a rather large building in clay bricks (*pisé*), not too solid and not needed for the time being. The Bishop has been away a long time, in the tropical islands, afraid to return to the Bay of Islands for fear of being detained and having his ship confiscated. The mission is in the most ghastly misery (*la plus affreuse misère*). Its situation is so critical that if its creditors were at all evil men they could bring it down at any moment. Our poor priests have suffered a lot and I know that some went to foreign ships to beg for a few biscuits like the Maoris do. In this

⁶³ LRO 2, doc. 168.

⁶⁴ The letter is undated but the editor of the LRO estimates around 22 May 1842. LRO 2, doc. 166.

dismal situation the Bishop spends a hundred francs a day on his ship. I have not been told how high the debts are, but they must be enormous and the interest to be paid stands at 14 to 15%.⁶⁵

[8] How have things come to this point? First of all through bad management. We know from the banks with which business is done that the English people here say: ‘Catholic priests are fine men, well instructed in religious matters, but they are children in practical things.’ There is not one man really able to handle things. Epalle seems to be the best, but he too needs help.

[9] The second cause of the malaise is the Bishop himself. He is good at heart, will not say no to anyone. He borrows big sums of money at 14 and 15% to buy clothing for the natives he goes to visit. He wants to win their hearts, but makes promises he cannot possibly keep. Now people turn away from him in large numbers. That is how the many conversions come about we have been told of in his letters. He travels through even the most remote tribal villages, the natives rush up like children for a coat or a handkerchief, they call him *mio picopo* (i.e., I am for the Bishop) and that is enough for the Bishop to think they are converts. They get a few days of instruction, a few are baptised and with the promise of getting a priest they are left to fend for themselves. When no priest comes, most of them go to the Protestants saying the Bishop is a liar. The mission has tried to do everything at once, but nothing solid. On only two or three stations there is handful of good Catholics. Only one convert has ever done his first communion.

[10] The third cause of the misery is the Bishop’s ship. By the most moderate calculation it costs about 100 Francs a day. In fact one does not need a ship in New Zealand. There are ships going in all directions every day. (...)

[11]. The fourth cause lies in the purchases of land, often ill-timed, even when there is no money in the till. One piece of land at the Bay of Islands has cost 15.000 Francs, another more than 160 English pounds. Once he bought an organ for the church for 1200 Francs when they were expecting one from France. (...)

⁶⁵ Perret estimates the debts at 150.000 Francs (± £ 6.000 stg) but nobody seems to have known how much! Cf. LRO 2, doc. 163, 3.

[12] The fifth cause is the money he has lent to all and sundry, and the money lost. I could go on and on. Father Épalle will tell you the details. My impression is he has a good idea of what is going on in the mission. He has a better idea of the state of the mission than the other confreres. The Bishop has had nasty quarrels with several confreres. Some of them he wanted to send back to France. He does not think much of the Society and some priests think that he would like them to leave the Society and join the diocese. In one meeting he said openly they were free to break with the Society and be directly under him and Rome (...). Fortunately, they all were appalled at the very thought, except one who is not really a Marist yet. For the rest it must be said that the Bishop has a great reputation with strangers. He is well liked among them. All the more regrettable that one must say these awful things about him.

[13] As to myself, I could not be in a worse position. I cannot possibly do what you sent me to do. First of all because the Bishop will never allow me to visit the confreres. (...) He fears to lose what he calls his authority. (...) This appointment of a visitor will be like a thunderbolt. I can either do nothing at all, or just join the rest of the priests. To avoid a clash I shall leave here before he comes back, see the confreres and stay with each for as long as I can. I shall write him a nice letter when I hear he has returned. (..) He will surely refuse me the money I need to travel. It costs twenty pounds just to travel to Port Nicholson! (..)

Because of Épalle's imminent departure for France, Forest was unable to meet the men on the outstations before writing this first report. He could put down only what he heard from the men in the Bay of Islands and he found Épalle a little naïve.⁶⁶ But Épalle was in regular contact with the men out in the field. From their letters he sometimes saw signs of hope. They told him in detail how they were faring and as a result he was more appreciative of the trailblazing work that Pompallier had done and that probably nobody could have done as well. It is understandable that the tales of Pompallier distributing gifts, making unrealistic promises and claiming converts, were what most impressed Forest initially. The Bishop's claims of numerous converts

⁶⁶ LRO 2, doc. 174, 3.

were boastful and his promises to the Maori villages imprudent but he had achieved a good deal in a short time. He had a great way with Maori people, he spoke their language well and he got them to accept his missionaries in their midst. That the slow uphill work for the missionaries still lay ahead was obvious. But that they were welcome at all among the Maori people, was thanks to Bishop Pompallier who could rightly tell the Superior General he never sent them anywhere unless he had broken the ground himself.

Shortly after writing his report Jean Forest fell ill and he was unable to finish his report. On 23 May 1842 the Pro-Vicar of Western Oceania sailed for Europe via Valparaiso, Chile, carrying a first report from the visitator and a letter co-signed by the Fathers Garin, Petitjean and Petit confirming his disheartening message.⁶⁷ Épalle also carried personal letters for the Superior General or the Procurator from the Fathers Garin and Petitjean and the Brothers Colomb, Pierre and Luc. Comte contributed a report on the South Island as well as letters to various people. Yvert had written down his view on the state of the mission and Perret wrote to announce his return to France.⁶⁸

The Pro-Vicar himself would be able to confirm and illustrate, with all the useful background as well as the necessary nuances, what had gone wrong with the mission that the early Marist missionaries had so valiantly begun only four and a half years before. He could also assure the Superior General that in spite of everything the missionaries, once having put their hand on the plough, did not look back.⁶⁹

The Polynesian Islands

Bishop Pompallier remained on Wallis from the first days of January 1842 until Viard returned on the *Sancta Maria* at the end of April. Because Forest reached New Zealand only after the *Sancta Maria* had left for Wallis, Pompallier did not know of the reinforcements that had arrived. Viard did not even bring Pompallier the letters Colin had written to him in June and in November 1841.⁷⁰ The proposal of

⁶⁷ LRO 2, doc. 167.

⁶⁸ In LRO 2: Garin: doc. 149, Petitjean: to Colin, docs 144, 145 & 159 and to Girard doc. 160, Brothers Colomb & Basile: doc. 150, Brother Luc: doc. 165, Comte: on the South Island doc. 151, Comte: to Poupinel doc. 154 and to Colin doc. 155, Yvert: docs 152 & 170, Perret: doc. 163, Henry Garnett: doc. 169. Petit began writing but his letter missed the ship! Doc. 171.

⁶⁹ Lk 9: 62.

⁷⁰ MTF, 321 & 331.

Cardinal Fransoni to divide the Vicariate with the request of giving his views and eventually proposing someone to be the Vicar Apostolic did not reach him either which left the Cardinal wondering why he did not get a reply from the Bishop.⁷¹ Had Colin used the London route, or any other one for that matter, the letters would surely have been in New Zealand when Viard left for Wallis on 2 April 1842. Mailing letters was very expensive at the time and, as Garin pointed out to Colin, it made the missionaries put letters aside for long periods to wait for a less costly opportunity.⁷² It looks very much as if, in France, Colin had done the same and that he did not dispatch the letters written in June (his own and the Cardinal's) but had kept them until the sixth group under Forest left in November!

All the time the harvest on Wallis Island kept Bishop Pompallier busy. With the help of Bataillon and Chevron and the Brothers Joseph and Grimaud he received all the catechumens in solemn baptism ceremonies all over the island. Finally, on 23 May 1842, he received the King, the *Lavelua* Vaimua into the Church with his close relatives and the followers who had waited in order to take the momentous step together with their King.

All that time, as far as we know, there was no contact with Futuna, two hundred kilometres over the south-western horizon.

⁷¹ MTF, 321. Had Colin used the London route, or any other one for that matter, the letters would surely have been in New Zealand when Viard left for Wallis on 2 April 1842. Mailing letters was very expensive (Cf. LRO 2, doc. 149, 9) but it looks very much as if Colin did not dispatch the letters written in June (his own and the Cardinal's) but had kept them until the sixth group under Forest left in November!

⁷² Garin to Colin, 07.05.1842, LRO 2, doc. 149, 9.