

# The Flogging Parson

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Dear Family and Friends!

Let's compare and contrast Christianity in the US and in Australia. America is often referred to as a Christian nation. We were founded on Christian principles and you can find statistics stating that 75% of Americans identify themselves as Christians. But identifying yourself as a Christian and being a follower of Christ are two very different things.

Australia on the other hand was founded as a penal colony. A good amount of its people brought over as convicts were protestant and catholic. This remnant of history is still a part of the fabric of Australia today. There were missionaries and clergy on the transportation ships as well. And just to be clear, as far as I can tell, the missionaries and clergy were not convicts themselves.

In this collection of clergy one name stands out, Samuel Marsden. He was an English Anglican well known for his pioneering literacy and community development work among the Maori who had come as sailors and visitors to New South Wales. Sounds like a great guy, right? Except, he is more famously hailed as "The Flogging Parson". His hatred of the Irish Catholics led to his most severe punishments in which those receiving the lashes were flogged so brutally that their "haunches turned to jelly". He was of course not the only one who ordered beatings as a form of punishment for the early colony, so to have his savageness so clearly recorded in history shows you just how harsh he was. If you were a Maori, you might have loved this man but there was no grace if you happened to be Irish Catholic.

Today, there are statistics that would lead us to believe that Australia became a Christian nation on the heels of the early protestant and catholic convicts. However, the reality is quite different. Christianity is received with skepticism and often outright hostility. More accurate statistics for Perth say that only about 3% of its people would claim to be evangelical Christians and only 1% of the aboriginal community know Christ.

Nevertheless, God's fingerprints are evident and certain places in the city have visible reminders of Christianity. For example, this sculpture of Jesus with the scripture Luke 23:44-46. Even so, there is still a compelling need for the light of the gospel to be proclaimed. Please help send me to Perth so that I may be a part of the church planting team that is working to be Christ's hands and feet in the city.



For the sake of the Gospel-

*Joy Candee :-)*

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