**POWER, PUBLIC ART & PARIHAKA**

**How do we deal with the hurts of history?**

***Peter Stuart***

**Michael Smither, *Ask that Mountain*, 1973, oil on board, 735 x 561mm, Collection of the Hocken Library, University of Otago, on long-term loan from Maarire Goodall.**

(Source of image: <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/>)

**Plus inscription: Do not be angry with your neighbour…**

A picture containing stationary, writing implement

Description automatically generated

Text: *Do not be angry with your neighbour for every offence, and do not resort to acts of insolence. Arrogance is hateful in the sight of God and man, and injustice is offensive to both. Because of injustice, insolence and greed, empire passes from nation to nation. (Ecclesiasticus 10.6-8)*

How do we deal with the hurts of history? How ***should*** we deal with the hurts of history? This is one issue our nation is dealing with, again. There’s the nervous debate about teaching our own history in schools; there’s the somewhat angry debate about celebrating the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook’s arrival. And there’s the latest Governmental step in healing the wounds of Parihaka.

History, it’s sometimes said, is written by the victors. That’s certainly true in the realm of public art, where the victors sculpt their stories in stone or carve them in wood or display them in paintings lining the chambers of power. But the stories of those who lost the battles for power are seldom acknowledged; layers of half-truths or outright lies build up in public culture. Meanwhile the stories of the losers go underground and fester; the hurts remain unhealed. However, sooner or later the knowledge of them usually comes to the surface, somewhere, somehow.

|  |
| --- |
| ***The Valley of the Fallen***, **Spain**  (Source of image: <http://miratico.com/worlds-largest-crosses-reach-high-for-the-sky/>*)* |

[](http://miratico.com/worlds-largest-crosses-reach-high-for-the-sky/)

This great graveyard in Spain commemorates and glorifies the Fascist victory after the 1936-39 Civil War – and was built by Republican prisoners.

**Francisco Carrasco Cedenilla, *El Torno: Mirador de la Memoria***

(Source of image: https://rootsandtoots.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/photo-11.jpg)

[](https://rootsandtoots.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/photo-11.jpg)

These statues, sculpted later by Francisco Cedenilla, honour the Republican victims of the Civil War and of the dictatorship of General Franco.

Statues get toppled or replaced – which often creates new hurts.

It doesn’t have to be that way. I’m moved by what happened between Poland and Germany twenty years after the end of World War 2. In that war, the Germans had killed six million Poles, one fifth of their population. Proportionally, Poland lost more people than any other nation. But Poland was - and still is - a deeply Christian nation. In 1965 it celebrated its conversion to Christianity 1000 years earlier. As part of that, Polish Catholic bishops sent a pastoral letter to their counterparts in Germany, and astonishingly declared: "We forgive - and we ask for forgiveness" (for the crimes of World War II). And thus started a journey of reconciliation. The German people fronted up to their Nazi past more fully. Face to face meetings between Germans and Poles began to happen, and quietly continue to this day. Slowly the trauma has begun to heal, though it hasn’t been easy.

The true heart of a nation is created by sharing and reconciling our stories, not avoiding or suppressing them. ‘Forgiveness means to remember, but without bitterness’.

***Boulcott Farm memorial***, Lower Hutt **Plus inscription: TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF MEN OF THE IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL FORCES WHO FELL IN THE HUTT VALLEY DURING THE MAORI WAR - 1846.** (Source of image: https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/boulcotts-farm-nz-wars-memorial)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF MEN OF THE IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL FORCES WHO FELL IN THE HUTT VALLEY DURING THE MAORI WAR - 1846. |

This morning we look at some New Zealand stories, mainly through the lens of monuments and symbols and public art.

Here, for example, is the memorial stone to an early conflict between Maori and Pakeha, at ‘Boulcott’s Farm’ in the Hutt Valley, where it stands near Hutt Hospital. It reads: TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF MEN OF THE IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL FORCES WHO FELL IN THE HUTT VALLEY DURING THE MAORI WAR -1846. And their names are listed – but not those of the Maori who fell. Here history is written in stone by the victors, who elsewhere represent the Maori attack as an invasion from ‘outside’. Yet it was Pakeha who were the newcomers. A Scots-born great grandfather of mine, recently arrived, was in the militia. The one-sidedness of this monument sits uneasily with people today, including me, his descendant.

***Phyllis Mossman***

***Pou on Matiu/Somes Island,* Wellington**

(Source of image: https://historyaotearoa.com/2019/07/28/18-bringing-art-to-the-surface/)

[](http://historyaotearoa.com/category/podcast/feed/)

You may recognise this splendid pou, erected not so long ago on Matiu /Somes Island. A pou marks a significant memorial, or territory claimed by a particular Maori grouping. This one affirms the **kaitiakitanga** or guardianship which a group of Taranaki tribes exercise over Matiu’s natural resources. ***This*** guardianship is now recognised in law, and extends over most of Greater Wellington. You’ll find it on various public notice boards. (Matiu itself is now owned by Taranaki Maori, and managed by DOC.)

Map of “Taranaki’s” Kaitiakitanga in Wellington recognised today in law



Here’s a map of where that legally-recognised **kaitiakitanga** extends. Our parish lies within it.

Now how did those tribes get here? They arrived during the Musket Wars of the 1820’s and ‘30’s just before the Treaty of Waitangi and European settlement.

My own people, the Ngapuhi of North Auckland, were not only the first to be evangelised by missionaries but also among the first to get hold of European muskets. Intertribal war spread down New Zealand. A lot of iwi were pushed further south in a ripple effect.

***Pou marking canoe landing place on old Wellington foreshore*, now Cr Lambton Quay and Molesworth Street, Wellington**

(Source of image: <https://stephengibbsdms.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_29671.jpg>)

A large white building

Description automatically generated

These two pou were gifted to the City of Wellington by descendants of the Maori invaders from Taranaki who’ve erected that commanding pou on Matiu Island. It signifies to them the importance of this regular landing place for the canoes of their forebears. But where’s the story of the earlier Maori tribes around the harbour whom they forcibly displaced?

**Chathams statue of Tame Horomona Rehe (Tommy Solomon), the last full-blooded Moriori)**  (Source of image:

<http://zealand2010.blogspot.com/2010/11/chatham-islands-on-12-16th.html>)

[](http://zealand2010.blogspot.com/2010/11/chatham-islands-on-12-16th.html)

We turn now to another story. Two of the victorious tribes who now have **kaiti ‘akitanga** here in Wellington went on to invade **Rekohu** (the Chatham Islands) and subjugate its Moriori people. This is where things get complicated. The Moriori were Polynesian, but were they Maori? The Deed of Settlement between Crown and Moriori, initialled three months ago, clearly recognises that Moriori don’t believe they ***are*** Maori, but a separate people, who arrived directly from Eastern Polynesia. Historians and scientists differ. The Moriori story is a tragic yet inspiring one, and eventually interweaves with the story of Parihaka in Taranaki. Both involve the renunciation of violence. One is Christian, one is pre-Christian.

This statue, erected in the Chathams in 1986, is of Tame **Horomona Rehe**, or Tommy Solomon, ‘the last full-blooded Moriori’.

***Peter***

But note: not the last Moriori. (And interestingly enough, at St Alban’s some decades ago I officiated at the wedding of a part-Moriori. ) There are people with Moriori blood on both the Chathams and mainland New Zealand. Their traditions and culture are re-emerging.

Central to that culture is the abandonment of warfare and killing. Nunuku, their spiritual leader centuries ago, had come upon warring Moriori factions. Outraged, he cried out: “cease your fighting and lay down your weapons” and decreed that henceforth the people were to live in peace and share the bounty of land and sea - there was enough there for everyone. Moriori observed his decree for hundreds of years. It wasn’t until the arrival of outsiders in 1791, a British warship, HMS ‘Chatham’, that peace was shattered. Its crew killed a Moriori defending his nets - the first violent death since Nunuku.

How did the Moriori do it? They entered into a covenant with their gods by placing weapons on an altar. Power over life and death was removed from the hands of man and placed into the hands of the gods. Fighting became ritualised into duels with sticks, and at the first drawing of blood, fighting ceased.

The peace covenant was handed on from father to son by a rite of passage for young men. Old weapons were taken from the altar, and the father handed them to his son, explaining that once these were used for killing other human beings. By replacing the weapons back on the altar, the son symbolically renewed the covenant.

Picture of Kopinga marae, Chatham islands

(Source of image: http://education-resources.co.nz/moriori/)

*A house with bushes in the background

Description automatically generated*

And this ceremony was performed at the opening of Kōpinga Marae in 2005, involving all the children present and their elders. Moriori have continued to honour that covenant to this day, despite huge provocations.

170 years earlier, in 1835, people from two of the Taranaki tribes newly settled in Wellington, left these new settlements and coerced a British ship into taking them to the Chathams. Their goal was to take possession of the land, knowing the Moriori peace tradition. The Moriori welcomed the newcomers with traditional hospitality. But the Maori soon began to seize the land. Some Moriori thought of resisting, but the elders persuaded the people to obey Nunuku’s law of peace. Maori immediately attacked Moriori, massacring about one-sixth of them. Those who survived the invasion were then enslaved – and forbidden to marry or have children. Genocide.

Then in 1842 the British government joined the Chatham Islands to New Zealand. Though slavery had been gradually abolished in most British colonies, Crown officials here in New Zealand made no attempt to free the Moriori slaves. When Māori Anglican teachers arrived, Moriori began to be treated somewhat better - cannibalism and the wide-spread killing of Moriori soon ceased. But their enslavement continued. Many died of despair.

19th Century British settlers (and even pakeha today) have sometimes misused the Moriori tragedy for their own purposes. The Polynesian Moriori of the Chathams were represented wrongly as Melanesians and as the original inhabitants of the New Zealand mainland, ‘inferior’ to Maori who displaced them – until another race, the British, in turn displaced the Maori. ‘We’ve simply done to you what you did to the Moriori’. Curious moral reasoning - essentially ‘might is right’.

***Phyllis***

And now back to mainland New Zealand.

**New Plymouth, St Mary’s Church (now Cathedral) – rearrangement of military colours** (Source of image: https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/84751584/army-colours-removed-as-cathedral-undergoes-repairs)

[](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=&url=https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/84751584/army-colours-removed-as-cathedral-undergoes-repairs&psig=AOvVaw2vxC_fzSFTsKfgMgTq1-hf&ust=1572325516826165)

Last Tuesday 5 November was Parihaka Day. And on the next day our Anglican Church Calendar commemorates Te Whiti o Rongomai, one of the two prophetic leaders of Parihaka in Taranaki. What’s the link between the Moriori story and the Parihaka story? There are three links, actually: peaceful response to invasion; religious leadership; and several Taranaki tribes.

The Taranaki tribes themselves had an increasingly harsh path to walk in the 19th Century. First come the Musket Wars, when they are invaded by Maori from further North. Then comes the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and an immediate influx of land-hungry British settlers. Fast forward to 1860 when armed conflict breaks out at Waitara where local Maori resist a dodgy sale of land to the Crown. The conflict escalates throughout the 1860’s, with the British colonial government serving the interests of the British settlers and pouring troops into Taranaki, cheered on by the settlers. However, not all Europeans approve. Some protest against the land-grab, including Anglican leaders like Octavius Hadfield, missionary and later Bishop of Wellington.

Caught between Maori and Europeans, the Christian Church was being asked some hard questions about justice, and mostly failed the test. In New Plymouth, St Mary’s Church (seen here) became the home of British regimental colours, and until recently was a stone symbol of the British settler triumph in Taranaki. Maori were deeply alienated. Finally the Anglican Church was embarrassed into radically rearranging the symbolism a few years ago, after much respectful diplomacy involving all parties.

***Peter***

(**L) map of the ‘boundaries’ of the 8 Taranaki iwi today, as recognised by local government.** (Source:<https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/working-with-iwi/iwi-contacts/>)

**(R ) Map of Colonial Government land confiscations in Taranaki in 1860s**

(Source:<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0105/S00278/ngati-ruanui-background-history-map-qa.htm>)

[](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjjqMrLsbnlAhWKbn0KHTciAz0QjRx6BAgBEAQ&url=https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/working-with-iwi/iwi-contacts/&psig=AOvVaw2IgeMZNFWtSAvdsHij96Sr&ust=1572160687776986) [](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj-oMmJtLnlAhVMb30KHbfgAAAQjRx6BAgBEAQ&url=http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0105/S00278/ngati-ruanui-background-history-map-qa.htm&psig=AOvVaw2joMO1lNqoLEAKPVMIKn-5&ust=1572161369603968)

These two maps help tell the story. The one on the left shows the ‘boundaries’ of the eight Taranaki iwi, as recognised by local government today. Before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, the tribes owned all of this – with more than a bit of pushing and shoving among them. The one on the right shows what happened to that ownership after the NZ Wars or Land Wars of the 1860’s. Taranaki tribes lost virtually the lot, confiscated by the Crown for ‘rebellion’ – that is, for trying to retain their traditional land. Once surveyed, the land became available to European settlers (who included soldiers rewarded with some of it).

All tribes within these confiscation boundaries became legally landless, apart from a few ‘Native Reserves’ which were slow to materialise. The land was bit by bit settled by Europeans, buying it from the Crown. Maori were left disorganised and impoverished, clustering together as best they could on what land was - as yet - unoccupied by European settlers. Taranaki Maori suffered more than any other iwi in this country. The wounds are deep, and shamefully inflicted.

And so we come to Parihaka. It was established in 1866, on confiscated land, due west of Mt Taranaki.

**George Clarendon Beale (1856–1939), *Parihaka*, 1881, watercolor on paper, 295 x 420mm, Collection of Taranaki Museum**

(Source of image: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/parihaka-painting>)



Today it’s only a small village, but during the 1870’s Parihaka came to be the largest Maori settlement in New Zealand. Landless Maori gathered from around Taranaki. Some were from Ngati Tama and Ngati Mutunga, the same tribes who had invaded the Chathams thirty years earlier. The community was led by three men, Te Whiti-o-Rongomai, Tohu Kākahi, and later, Tītokowaru.

Here’s a painting from 1881 based on a contemporaneous photograph.

For ten years the community was left alone, but then the government began surveying the confiscated southern Taranaki lands for European settlement. Parihaka men responded by going out to reclaim this land, ploughing and fencing it and tearing up survey pegs. Non-violence did ***not*** mean lack of resistance. A decade earlier my wife Julia’s great-great-grandfather was a surveyor in the Waitotara Block further south in the confiscation zone, and was captured by Titokowaru. David Porter was given a stern warning, and told to stop his survey and leave Maori land ‘or else’. He promptly did.

Te Whiti and Tohu were unambiguously Christian, and consistent in their rejection of violence. When the Colonial Government decided to invade Parihaka in 1881, they were attacking an unarmed community. Parihaka was not a fortified pa but an open settlement. In many ways it was a model village, its layout carefully planned, its resources efficiently managed, its children’s education attended to, sanitation and health measures enforced, and alcohol forbidden.

***Phyllis***

**Black and White Photographs of the Government forces 1881 (1) assembled outside Parihaka (2) and (3) Armed constabulary and militia prepare to move against Parihaka**

(Source of images: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/occupation-pacifist-settlement-at-parihaka>

<https://natlib.govt.nz/collections/a-z/alexander-turnbull-library-collections>)

 A picture containing sheep, herd, outdoor, building

Description automatically generated



Native Minister John Bryce assembled a force of more than 1500 men, and on 5th November 1881 marched in. They found the fences pulled down to allow them in, women dancing and singing with children in welcome, and offering them freshly baked bread. The settlement’s key figures, including its three leaders, were arrested without resistance, most of its inhabitants expelled, and the village largely destroyed.

**Photographs of Te Whiti and his co-leader Tohu in their later years**

(Source of image: <https://parihaka.maori.nz/te-whiti-o-rongomai-tohu-kakahi/>)



These are photographs of Te Whiti and his co-leader Tohu in their later years, Europeanised, ‘safe’, drinking tea.

Memorial stone on Te Whiti’s grave in Parihaka

(Source of image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/domino_nz/348491180>)



This is Te Whiti’s grave. See the front of the pew sheet later for the inscription on the memorial stone.

**Michael Smither, *Ask that Mountain*, 1973, oil on board, 735 x 561mm, Collection of the Hocken Library, University of Otago, on long-term loan from Maarire Goodall**

(Source of image: https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/)

*A picture containing stationary, writing implement

Description automatically generated*

Te Whiti said, ‘Go put your hands to the plough, look not back. If any come with guns and swords, be not afraid. If they smite you, smite not in return.’ His teachings are symbolised by the raukura, the white (albatross) feathers of peace, seen in this painting by Michael Smither.

**Christopher Perkins (1891–1968), Taranaki, 1931, Oil on canvas, Auckland Art Gallery**

(Source of image: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/taranaki-christopher-perkins>)

A house covered in snow

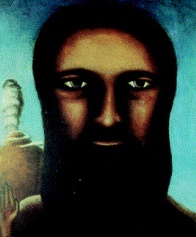
Description automatically generated

Right until their deaths in 1907, Te Whiti and Tohu led their people in their non-violent struggle to retain their land, culture, and independence. Their vision of peacefully providing a refuge for Maori was not realised. Nearly all Maori land was confiscated; Taranaki became Pākehā farmland.

Much of this history was submerged in the 20th Century. This painting, ‘Taranaki 1931’, by newly arrived British artist Christopher Perkins was a highly regarded portrayal of the region. We see a dairy factory as a sign of ‘progress’, in front of the sharply stylised mountain. But where is the imagery relating to Maori and their land and symbols?

**TONY FOMISON *Untitled (Te Whiti)* c. 1962, Oil on canvas, 905 x 620 mm (Private collection, Wellington)**

(Source of image <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/>)



Nevertheless, the spiritual legacy of Parihaka lives on, becoming stronger with time as more New Zealanders recognise the need to address the hurts and grievances of the past. In 2000 Wellington’s City Gallery held a ground-breaking exhibition, “Parihaka: the Art of Passive Resistance”, bringing together writing and music and art, all about Parihaka.

Here’s one image from it: Tony Fomison’s compelling portrait of Te Whiti as a prophet of God - ‘God’s vessel’. Te Whiti had strongly gripped Fomison’s imagination, as he continues to grip our collective imagination. Somehow the Parihaka story has engaged our creative artists and writers (pakeha and Maori) to a greater degree than any other event in our history.

**Colin McCahon, Parihaka triptych, 1972, synthetic polymer paint on 3 canvas panels,** [**Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth**](http://www.mccahon.co.nz/browse/collection/govett-brewster-art-gallery%2C-new-plymouth)

(Source of image: <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/>)

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

Colin McCahon’s Parihaka Triptych (‘my cross for Pakeha’) was also painted for the exhibition and to honour Te Whiti. McCahon gifted it to the people of Parihaka.

The exhibition’s catalogue states, ‘McCahon set out not so much to mourn the deaths of the Taranaki leaders as to wake up those who knew nothing of the story of Parihaka. That included the vast majority of his viewers. To tell them what Tohu and Te Whiti had lived and stood for (the words in the painting are mostly theirs), and thereby to discover what a living memory of them had to offer a present still unprepared to confront the pains and difficulties of the past’.

Parihaka art and writing speak powerfully to me also. I have a foot in both camps – I’m both Maori and Pakeha. My Pakeha heritage comes partly from the first Quaker to settle in NZ –William Trusted. Coming from a long line of English Quakers, in 1836 he settled in the Hokianga (where I come from). Quakers have contributed greatly to the Christian ministry of peace-making.

***Peter***

**Shane Cotton (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Rangi, Ngāti Hine, born 1964), *Te Whiti* (first in the series of ten), 2000, oil on canvas, 200 x 200 mm, Gifted by the artist to Parihaka Pā**

(Source of image: <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/>)



This work, entitled Te Whiti o Rongomai, is by Upper Hutt born Maori artist Shane Cotton. He responded to Parihaka in ten paintings featuring an albatross There’s a famous story told by the prophet Tohu about an albatross flying into Parihaka ‘sanctioning the spirit among the people and symbolising peace’.

In 1882 a comet was seen in the sky over Parihaka - you can see it here over Mt Taranaki, bottom left. But the comet perhaps refers to Te Whiti o Rongomai the prophet, whose name has been translated as, ‘the flight across the sky of the shining one Rongomai, the god whose visible form was a meteor’.

Our national stories often clash with one another: Maori with Moriori, Maori with pakeha, Missionaries with Church, Imperial Government with Settler Government, Settler Church with Maori Christianity, Christian with secularist. There’s imbalance and contradiction. Some narratives triumph for a time, while others are neglected, then the pendulum swings. Three things which seem reasonably clear are that:

1. historians and the Waitangi Tribunal hearings are steadily bringing the pieces together
2. the full extent of the real wounds and injustices is being revealed
3. moral responsibility for both the infliction and the healing of those wounds is complex. All parties – Maori, pakeha, Crown, and Church - share both those responsibilities.

In particular, pakeha need to listen carefully and respectfully to Maori stories, and Maori to Moriori. But we also need to reclaim the ***Christian history*** of New Zealand and break out of the secularist version which distorts or submerges it.

We Christians should ***celebrate*** the Parihaka story. Parihaka was a community led by Christians (Te Whiti and Tohu) and built on Christian principles. They espoused non-violence; a third leader, Titokowaru, over the years swung back and forth between non-violence and war, and between traditional Maori religion and Christianity.

Te Whiti was influenced by the pacifist German missionary Johann Riemenschneider. On the day after Parihaka Day (5 November), our Prayer Book celebrates Te Whiti as ‘prophet’. Parihaka belongs to the New Zealand Christian story, part of a Christian response to armed conflict and to injustice, within and beyond this country. You could call that response the ‘peace testimony of New Zealand Christianity’. It begins with the peace-making ministry of the missionaries (both British and Maori) in the Musket Wars; they proclaimed Jesus as ‘Prince of Peace’ and helped reconcile warring tribes. It includes Parihaka, and some Christian leaders’ brave championing of the Maori. It becomes a strong strand of non-violent resistance to injustice, which has lasted to today. Many in the ‘Settler Church’ found this difficult to stomach at the time of Parihaka. But it was Te Whiti and Tohu (and yes, Titokowaru) who continued to travel up and down Taranaki in the latter years of the 19th Century speaking of ‘peace’, while European settlers were building their farms on confiscated Maori land and putting military flags into St Mary’s Church in New Plymouth.

***Phyllis***

Let’s turn now to ‘healing the hurts of history’.

**Gautam Pal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, 2007, Wellington Railway Station forecourt**

(Source of image: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/9994/Man-of-the-people-in-bronze?rm=m>)



Do you recognize whose bronze likeness this is? Do you know where it is? Yes, Mahatma Gandhi, and it’s outside Wellington Railway Station.

**Gautam Pal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, 2007, Wellington Railway Station forecourt**

(Source of image: http://www.sculptures.org.nz/tours/lambton/mahatma-gandhi)

A statue in front of a building

Description automatically generated

Gandhi did in the 20th Century India what Te Whiti and Parihaka did in the 19th Century here in New Zealand. Gandhi used passive resistance, non-violence, on a massive scale, to resist injustice. This statue of him was gifted by the Government of India in 2007. Hear the words of the Indian High Commissioner:

"On India's part, the gifting of the statue is an expression of our deep appreciation and acknowledgement of the commitment of the people of New Zealand for setting an example to the world of a tolerant, open and inclusive society."

Was he premature? Have the wounds of our history been healed, all the injustices been righted?

***Peter***

In the 1970’s I was at a powerful healing service which focussed on reconciliation, symbolised by the foot-washing ceremony. At one point, a Maori washed the feet of a Pakeha. And he wept as he did so, and said something like ‘I forgive you for any wrong you’ve done to me, but I can’t forgive you for my people’. That went deep into me. Pakeha differ from Maori (and Hebrews) in their approach to time. English speakers say the future lies ***ahead*** of us, the past ***behind*** us; in the Maori and Hebrew languages it’s the reverse: the ***future*** is ‘behind’ us (because we don’t know it yet; it’s the ***past*** we ‘face’ because we do know it and are part of its continuing story. I think they’re right. Another relevant difference (expressed at that foot-washing) is that Pakeha tend towards individualism, Maori towards the collective. Maori collectively face the past, pakeha individually face the future.

Healing the hurts of the past isn’t a matter of obliterating their memory; rather, it’s learning to remember them but without bitterness. It’s to face, respect and reconcile the clashing stories. It’s to seek and receive forgiveness for the past from one another, in the present. This is what that Maori was wrestling with as he washed the Pakeha’s feet. There had apparently not yet been any corporate penitence expressed, forgiveness sought and received, or understanding shown to his iwi. (We’ve made some progress since then.)

This is why the stories in Waitangi Tribunal hearings and Treaty settlements must be genuinely listened to by all of us, and shared with our children in our schools. It’s not enough to leave the Government to do the ‘healing’ work for us by a bit of financial compensation and by formal apology – though these apologies have been hugely important. We in this country all have to share the process, respectfully engage with the stories, honour those who tell them, seek reconciliation, and begin to weave them into a common history.

Rachel Buchanan, whose whakapapa links her to Parihaka, writes, *‘The Crown can keep saying sorry in Taranaki…but will people step up now and take the time to learn, know and feel the history of the places they call home?’*

The change in the interior of St Mary’s Cathedral in New Plymouth is one example of such listening, at least by the Church. We’re slowly shaping a national ***Church*** where the stories come together. And it’s important that we in this congregation learn to share our own stories and seek reconciliation when needed, if we are to be an authentic Christian community – let alone a ‘retreat parish’ for others.

***Phyllis***

**Michael Smither, *Ask that Mountain*, 1973, oil on board, 735 x 561mm, Collection of the Hocken Library, University of Otago, on long-term loan from Maarire Goodall**

(Source of image: https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/parihaka/)

*A picture containing stationary, writing implement

Description automatically generated*

Thank you, Lord, for Te Whiti - and Tohu - and Parihaka. May we all come to understand and celebrate what they stand for. It’s time we replaced Guy Fawkes Day by Parihaka Day on 5 November.

Thank you, Lord, also for Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu Leader, and for Nunuku, the Moriori spiritual leader, and ***their*** witness to peace.

Perhaps we should add a fourth feather to this now classic image – for Nunuku. Moriori, too, revere the white albatross feather – and they’ve worn it for centuries, and earned it.

Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God’.

***A presentation at the Eucharist in the Anglican Parish of Eastbourne on Sunday 10 November 2019 by Phyllis Mossman & Peter Stuart***