

Ma hea - which way? Mo te aha - what for?

Too many questions, not enough answers, for Maori on the March

Keynote address to the annual conference of the
NZ Psychological Society, 28 August 2004

E rau rangatira ma, tena ra koutou....

This presentation will be in four sections.

The first section will introduce two major issues, mana motuhake, and manatangata, then we will consider some proposed legislation, the Seabed & Foreshore Bill and the Civil Union Bill.

We will then consider strategic Maori response to political pressure over the last three decades, and then note two recent and dramatic examples. They are the Hikoi Takutai Moana, April 2004, and the Enough is Enough Rally, August 2004

In the final section, we will consider the implications for psychologists and psychologists working today in Aotearoa.

We encounter the first major issue. What is mana motuhake?

*Kaore te po nei morikarika noa
Te ohonga, ki te ao, rapu kau noa ahau
Ko te mana tuatahi, ko te Tiriti o Waitangi
Ko te mana tuarua, ko te Kooti Whenua
Ko te mana tuatoru,
Ko te mana Motuhake!*

Na Te Kooti Rikirangi

This is about self determination, about tino rangatiratanga, which has become the more widely used term today. Unlike that term, it is not cited in a colonial document, rather it is cited in the compositions of Te Kooti, and also in the 1870 Coat of Arms of the Kingitanga movement. The motto on this crest is Ko te Mana Motuhake; it was commissioned by Tawhiao Matutaera, the second

Maori King. The phrase remains a rallying cry for Maori solidarity, a vision of independence, affirming cultural integrity and our rights as an indigenous people. This is the issue impacted severely by legislation currently proposed, and in select committee now.

Te Takutai Moana, the Foreshore and Seabed Bill, will be discussed first.

The next questions asked, is what is mana tangata?

The second bill that has stimulated much discussion is about mana tangata; human rights, and human dignity. Being a human being.

As the words of this chant illustrate....

What is mana tangata?
He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Maaku e kii atu,
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata, e!

But to return now ki nga ngaru pakarekare o te tai, and the Foreshore and Seabed issue.

This bill is now regarded as the precursor to bitter struggle. Faced with the mockery and cynicism of Don Brash, the opposition's new leader, and his scathing commentary on Maori supposedly favoured in today's world, the government has been seriously challenged. Rather than look to soft, squishy and accommodating, they have decided to go hard. And an opportunity presented itself; this was the disputed ownership of the foreshore, as described in a flyer below

Foreshore and Seabed - the Challenge

- The Court of Appeal found the Maori Land Court could hear claims to the foreshore and seabed.
- The test the MLC would have to apply was intended for dry land only & could not recognise a property right which did not lead to fee simple title.
- The policy of successive governments has been to prevent further private ownership in the foreshore and seabed.

How did the government react to this potential resolution?

In a reactionary and regressive way, by proposing confiscation of foreshore held in Maori title, whereas ANY property held in fee simple or freehold title, whether by Maori, pakeha or absent overseas investors, remained unaffected. Excerpt and secure, thus another flyer summarises

The Government's Response

- To protect public access by vesting full ownership in the Crown in perpetuity.
- To recognise the ancestral connection of Maori to particular areas of foreshore and seabed
- To allow for the exercise of customary rights and where this cannot be fully expressed, to provide opportunity for redress.

The "customary rights" issue has been eloquently argued by most of the current Maori members on the government benches; they insist that food gathering rights will continue, as will such ceremonial circumstances as the launching of waka. So much for mana motuhake.

And now to mana tangata, which I consider to include the right to love.

The visual/sculptural and historical record establishes beyond doubt that. Like other Pacific societies, Maori enjoyed same sex erotic contact and relationships. The boundaries between male and female, masculine and feminine, were often extended or obscured...but that is another paper for another time. Same sex partnerships occurred and flourished; they were recognised. Land inheritance has been known to occur, honouring the partner as much as one would honour and provide for a wife, a husband.

Such provisions are made, in contemporary Aotearoa, by the proposed Civil Unions Bill, outlined in the following flyer

Civil Unions Bill

- Same sex couples are formally recognised under a new definition of de facto relationship.
- A same-sex partner's income will count for benefit entitlements.
- People in civil unions will be treated the same way as married couples in a will.
- Same-sex couples will gain next-of-kin status.
- The definition of stepchild will include children from a civil union, not just a marriage.

Mana motuhake has been threatened since Cook's landing in 1769; mana tangata since Marsden's in 1814. Currently, these issues converge.

For many Maori, these two issues appear to be threatened by the proposed legislation. There are differences - forceful and distinctive.

But in an already unsettled social environment that seems at risk, in crisis, the differences are difficult to make out, to tell apart.

And for thousands of Maori, everyday regular people at the supermarket at the movies at the sportsclub at polytech varsity or wananga, there is no difference at all. These issues are related. The message is clear and simple. The government is out to get us, in an alliance of the racist and the unholy. Threatening our future, and our children's future.

Through legislation.

To protect and defend mana motuhake, mana tangata, what do Maori do?

They walk the talk, and have been doing that for a few decades now.

One is the spectacular and salutary example of the walking strategy which unseated the government of the day; the Maori Land March led by the inimitable Dame Whina Cooper.

Their slogan, "Not One More Acre of Maori Land!"

In November 1975 Dame Whina Cooper led Te Roopu Ote Matakite from the Taitokerau to Parliament House. Over fifteen thousand Maori arrived in the pouring rain, and the Rt Hon Bill Rowling meets them on the steps, and received the Memorial of Rights. It was a gracious but intense occasion.

Although outvoted just a few weeks later, this government was the same one which legislated official status for Te Reo Maori, and also established the Waitangi Tribunal, an effective means of reconciliation, resolution, and compensation for Maori people. What irony.

Yet that was not enough.

Takaparawha - the police siege of Bastion Point - seared the nation's consciousness, and conscience, followed by the high drama of the 1981 Springbok Tour. Hundreds of thousands of caring commonsense New Zealanders marched for human rights in South Africa.

And hundreds supported the Hikoi ki Waitangi in 1984, led by Tuaiwa Eva Rickard. And another government fell. The slogan then was "Honour the Treaty!", and that February, Tuaiwa Hautai Rickard led te Hikoi ki Waitangi from Ngaruawahia to Waitangi. Songs were composed as they walked along the highway. Here is a section of one

For a treaty without honour
has brought grief & disharmony
So let's unite change wrong to right
Hikoi ki Waitangi...

The diverse crowd were stopped at the bridge, and refused entry to the Treaty House grounds.

All this is background for what we have been watching, or participating in, this year. And the most spontaneous, creative and chaotic theatre of confrontation outside Parliament House on 5 May 2004.

Ritualized and righteous, it was a display of passionate commitment and protest. Maori and nonMaori took leave, risked government jobs, travelled hundreds of miles to be there. Many turned up simply to show the govt and its leader that they were NOT wreckers and haters, nor were they bleating and dreadlocked sheep.

They were simple people, church people, commonsense people. And people of mana and prestige - we sighted five former presidents of the Maori

Women's Welfare League, and one certainly can't get more mainstream and respectable than these fine ladies.

So we followed the pae arahi and manutataki, splendid in fibre and moko and feathers, taiaha and mere flashing and slicing, Te Matarae I Orehu opening a path, confronting the kaupapa of the day.

Between 20,00 to 30,000 people marched from Te Papa Museum to Parliament House to protest the Foreshore & Seabed Bill.

Most, but certainly not all, were Maori. The Prime Minister declined to meet them. Senior Maori ministers waited on the steps. They faced up to the rage of their people.

And the issues were clear. For Maori there was no confusion, no contradiction, no compromise of mana motuhake, and identity.

Unless you were one of the Maori tight five on parliament steps that day.

Many pakeha extended support, deploring the horror of contemporary raupatu - land confiscation - by government edict. They walked with us.

As we, Maori, issued a serious warning, to the nation, and its leaders. And the stage was effectively set for another theatre, another spectacle.

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This came from the pani and the rawakore, the oppressed, aggrieved and deprived, in the voice of Destiny New Zealand, the new political wing of Destiny Church, bellowing "Enough is Enough." This occurred less than a week ago, in this city, heralded on their internet sites thus .

Enough is Enough!
Stand Up for the Next Generation

Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
Psalm 94:16

Who will take care of the future, they cried?

Ma wai e kawe taku kauae ki tawhiti?

Behold, the Warriors of the Lord, and their march on Parliament, to protest against what they believe to be a government-supported erosion of values and Christian morality.

Striding in military formation, neatly uniformed in black trousers and branded t-shirts, they punched the air with fists raised, and chanted in one voice, "Enough is Enough!!" Most of them Maori men in their prime, with a noticeable scattering of enthusiastic young boys and small children.

This anticipates the Destiny NZ party's Defence Policy, to introduce a third battalion, and the rebirthing of the Maori Battalion, as part of education and career pathways for young Maori. Their message to government was this -

VALUES MATTER

The message to Parliament.

V alue our children & future generations

A cknowledge God

L eave parental rights & responsibilities alone

U phold our nation's founding values and high moral standards

E steem families & the institution of marriage

S top, talk and listen to the people

Considering the ironies of sparing the rod, and the indulgences of Reverend Yate with young Maori boys in the 1820's, this reeks of hypocrisy.

They also outline a Treaty of Waitangi policy, in which they claim God as an ally, and then focus on fatherlessness.

Destiny New Zealand : Treaty of Waitangi Policy

This generation of leaders has a responsibility to achieve full and final resolution on Treaty issues for the benefit of future generations.

Fatherlessness & family breakdown is the significant hallmark of the Maori whanau today - addressing this concerning trend is a priority of Destiny NZ policy.

And the pastor Brian Tamaki himself, looking appropriately sartorial, continues to pronounce, "This bill undermines the sanctity of marriage! It promotes the unnatural and abnormal! It must be stopped! Human rights become human wrongs when they violate the word of God! It's not a right! It's a wrong!"

Always media conscious, he was no doubt delighted by the following overseas press report

THE AUSTRALIAN MAORI CHURCH'S WAR DANCE ON GAY MARRIAGE

The Destiny demonstrators were accused of trying to intimidate their rivals, a 2000-strong group of gay protestors, but church leader Brian Tamaki, a gleaming-toothed Maori man wearing large gold rings, said his group was supported by "all commonsense New Zealanders".

Reported 24 August 2004 (excerpt)

They could only be the same "commonsense New Zealanders" who supported Don Brash's infamous Orewa speech, exhorting divisiveness, anxiety, and the corrosive self doubt, in which this nation has wallowed throughout the year.

A counter demonstration was hastily organised in response to the lavishly funded (black shirts and free buses from far away) Destiny Church orchestrations. It was a Rally for Human Rights. It was dynamic, cheeky, and flamboyant, colourful and varied. For many, it was a site of confrontation. And reflection, on being Maori. And being there.

As one demonstrator observed

Puawai

It was utterly appalling how they're hiding their bigotry behind this flashy veneer of Maori tradition and culture. DC had this haka where they lined up all their babies and Maori Battalion looking men (short back and sides with lots of brylcreme) and it

was awful. It was very weird though, standing with mostly Pakeha dressed in outlandish and gorgeous outfits facing down a black-clothed brown wall of my own people (who looked like bloody Italian fascists!) and us chanting for the rights for others to live and love as they want to, the irony was smacking me about the head...

email from a Maori supporter at Human Rights March

This young woman was supporting her friends and her gay whanau, yet by the values of the tshirted masses, whanau as she understood it had no value. Whanau for DC only means Dad, Mum, and the kids. As Pastor Brian proclaims, "It's a crime that we, as a society, should allow our children to contend with such abnormality. We must stand up for them!" The children were also encouraged to stand up for themselves, to confront the self confessed sinners of the Campaign Against Conservative Fundamentalism, the Christians for Civil Unions. Imagine. Clusters of little boys, some just into primary school, with faces distorted with fury, howling at the camera, their small arms flaying in the haka.

Questioned by a television reporter about the presence of small children at such a volatile event, the pastor replied, "They are where they should be! Here! With their parents!"

And what about the little girls who like to play rugby, or the little boys who like mummie's frocks? Where were they? What becomes of them?

Do they have a safe place in the next generation?

I was text messaged and cell phoned during this event; it became rather like a counselling session. And also a strangely mortifying long distance way of being there myself. Another close friend wept into her mobile

It was horrifying, all under the guise of tikanga Maori, about whanau and empowerment and even their shirts looked like the tino rangatiratanga tshirt. They did karanaga and haka, and it was stage managed with the men in front, the rangatahi in the middle, the women at the back, all howling "Enough is enough!"

I asked the kids what they meant - mo te aha? - they said "We're out to get the bad guys." Or "It's about whanau." or they just didn't know!

Maori lesbian at Parliament grounds

And one middleaged Maori male who'd enjoyed rugby in his time, and many of the players as well, said this

It was like the Nation of Islam and Hitler Youth and Mussolini's fascists and the KKK and what totally freaked me out is that they were Maori! My own people! And they hated me. I felt that. They hated me. They wanted me dead.

Gay Maori at Parliament grounds

So who are they standing up for? By manipulating and stage managing Maori ritual and theatre, what are they saying? Who are they appealing to? As Treaty conscious people with a sense of mana motuahake, for them is there only one form of mana tangata?

And I would be correct to assume that they have adapted, if they use the phrase at all, the nineteenth century notion that tangata no longer means person or human, but means only this - man. The father, the leader, the cornerstone of the family, the patriarch of the microcosm.

With woman as his handmaiden. There can be nothing, no one, in between. Which is why they sling vicious curses, insult people who are different, and indirectly or brazenly menace and intimidate. They were a sinister and effective statement, and at the 5 May march, they were a warning.

Who is their "next generation"? And how many children, adolescents, young and older adults will have their lives destroyed by these attitudes?

One iconic image, never to be forgotten was the magnificence and rage, the man ngangahu style, the courage and majesty of the MP for Wairarapa, who charged into the fray snarling

How dare you use the cloak of Christianity when you are imparting to your children more prejudice and discrimination towards people like me?

Georgina Beyer, MP for Wairarapa, confronting the protest rally at Parliament House steps

Did this eloquent counter opinion, the warning of danger and distress, the call for tolerance and diversity, aroha and manaakitanga, inclusion and open communities, reach the Maori media?

Sadly, significantly, it did not. Only the scenes of costumed warriors, and the paramilitary glamour of superfit men marching in blackshirt formation, made it to that night's Te Kaea MTS news. With awed commentary about the vastness ("kua rau ika nei"), of the crowd and how it was "mo te whanau" for the family, the reporters repeatedly chimed, "Ko te whanau he taonga tuku iho", family is our greatest treasure, as chubby cheeked boy children with contorted features performed their perfect haka. With their uncles and fathers and brothers and cousins framed on screen.

So we ask this question; what is happening here?

- The reconfiguring of a sense of Maori-ness and God-lieness by opposing what is perceived or defined anti-Maori and the anti-Christ.
- The reinforcement of these attitudes as a "cornerstone" of whanau, and Maori identity.
- The active rejection of anyone who does not conform; this is a zero tolerance environment.
- The pani and the rawakore - the helpless, voiceless, jobless, landless - are offered leadership, structure, and direction in their lives.

And we come back to mana motuhake, and mana tangata. There are threatened realities for Maori. So it is sanguine for us to consider the discipline of regimented Maori marching, arms aloft, purposeful and proud,

and to reflect on this event. Particularly when we consider an excerpt from a recent media report on the Foreshore and Seabed Submissions to the Select Committee at the Ellerslie race course in Auckland. Margaret Mutu, an Auckland university professor spoke on behalf of her people from Ngati Kahu

If you are in any culture in the world and assert that you are going to take over another culture's territory, that is a declaration of war.
NZ Herald 26 August 2004 page A3

Obviously we have some problems here in Aotearoa. But I am basically an optimist, and for me, and the world I live in, hope does spring eternal!

So, what are the implications?

- Whatever happened to aroha, kotahitanga, and manaaki tangata?
- Who are the haters and wreckers now?
- Suicide, denial & isolation
- More social dysfunction and despair
- Who will pick up the pieces?

Every one of you needs to think about and answer these questions.

For your profession, for yourselves, for the country, and most of all, for the next generation. For whom we are all standing up.

He mana motuhake, he mana tangata!

Kia ora tatou katoa.

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku

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Sources

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