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# **Breaking the Barrier: Māori Religious and Spiritual Entanglements at Aotea**

A Thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
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by

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## **Abstract**

In 1889, Ngāti Rehua converted en masse to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). This surprising conversion is remarkable for various reasons. Māori across the country had not only converted to Christianity several decades earlier but by the late nineteenth century had already established their own religious denominations that renegotiated Judeo Christian teachings in new ways. The proximity of Aotea to the Bay of Islands and their own converted kin on the mainland made this very late conversion all the more remarkable. This was the first time that any Christian organisation found any meaningful success with native peoples on the island, despite the widespread impact of Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan, and Presbyterian missionaries throughout the region. With so many converted iwi at their doorstep, and the widespread influence of early missionaries and Māori agents of conversion, why did Ngāti Rehua take so long to convert to Christianity? While other iwi were converting in large numbers to Christianity or renegotiating Christianity on their own terms, Ngāti Rehua remained isolated and aloof for much of the nineteenth century, maintaining traditional beliefs and practices that had disappeared or been significantly modified in other tribal regions. This thesis explores this question in three main chapters. Chapter One explores early Aotea history, beliefs and practices and examines how those on the island remained elusive from the onslaught of missionaries during the formative years of the establishment of Christianity. Chapter Two highlights the many Aotea inter-tribal connections, the ongoing isolated history of Aotea and early missionary influences. Chapter Three turns its attention to the arrival of Mormon missionaries in 1889 and discusses the ‘moments’ of conversion that have been maintained in successive generations.

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*This thesis is dedicated to the memory of*

*Winsome Darcy Light Grant*

*(1982–2018)*

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## Introduction

Aotea (Great Barrier Island) is the traditional name of a large island in the Hauraki Gulf. It is positioned within one of the busiest highways of early tribal and settler traffic, one hundred kilometres northeast of Auckland. Aotea is associated with many other outer islands also occupied by Ngāti Rehua people up to the present day. Ngāti Rehua claim an unbroken occupation of this landscape since the arrival of our founding ancestor, Toi te Huatahi, from Hawaiki around 900 years ago. The iwi established mana tangata through the raupatu in the seventeenth century of Rehua and his son, Te Rangituangahuru, and their intermarriage with the hapū that had been the earlier occupiers of the whenua.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although there are other hapū names, such as Ngāti Wai ki te Moana, Te Uri o Rangihokaia, Te Uri o Papa, Ngāti Rehua Ngāti Wai ki Aotea, and Ngāti Wai ki Aotea, for the purpose of this thesis I will use Ngāti Rehua to define those that were living on the island at this time. The earlier occupiers of Aotea were Tutumaiao and Patupairehe; the associations between these two will be explored in Chapter One. Mana tangata as explained by Cleve Barlow is 'the power acquired by an individual according to his or her ability and effort to develop skills and to gain knowledge in particular areas.' Cleve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 62.



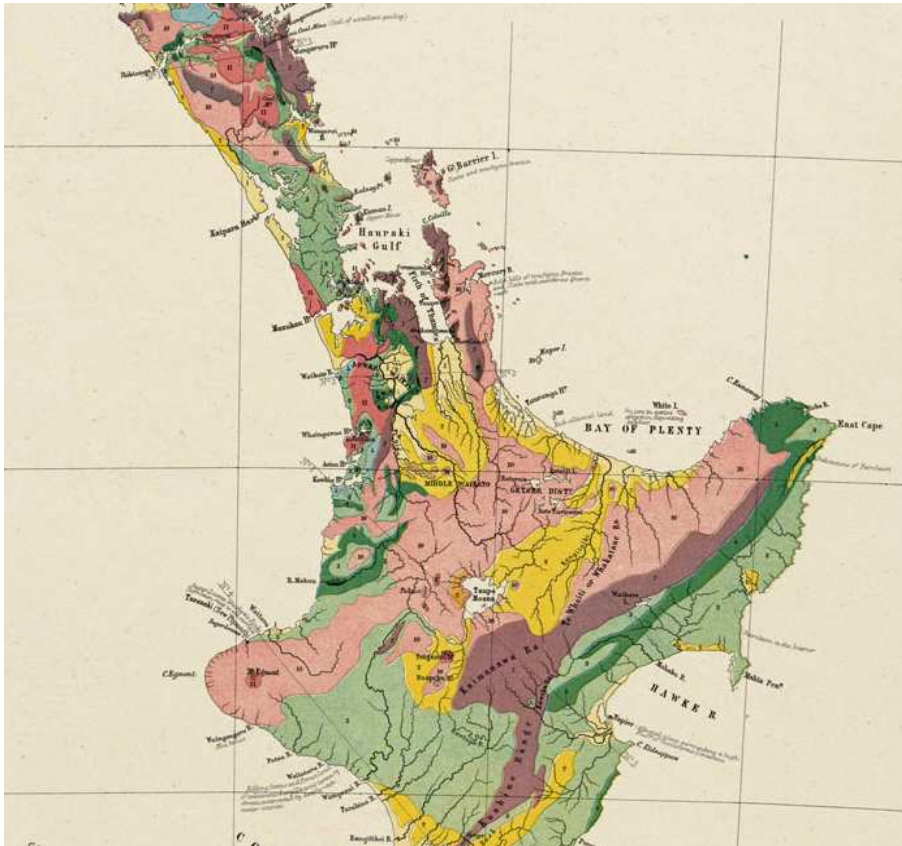


Figure 1: Mapworld

<<http://www.mapworld.co.nz/maps/nzhistorical/nzgeolmap1.jpg>>

[Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019]

In 1889, Ngāti Rehua converted en masse to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). This was the first time that any Christian organisation had found success on the island, despite the widespread impact of Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan, and Presbyterian missionaries throughout the mainland. This thesis asks the question “Why did Ngāti Rehua take so long to convert to any Christian denomination, particularly in a space so close to the Bay of Islands, the hub of early mission activity in the country?” While other iwi were converting in large numbers to Christianity or renegotiating Christianity on their own terms, Ngāti Rehua remained isolated and aloof for much of the nineteenth century, maintaining traditional beliefs and practices that in other tribal regions

had disappeared or been significantly modified.<sup>2</sup> This thesis explores this anomaly in Māori nineteenth-century conversion. It seems extraordinary, that while other iwi and Māori had converted or experimented with Christianity to varying degrees decades before Ngāti Rehua's conversion, the Aotea story begins so late after the arrival of Pākehā missionaries and Māori agents of conversion. This thesis is a history of this specific conversion process, but more deeply it is a history of Ngāti Rehua identity formation: it is also a personal narrative that has importance and meaning to my people, whānau, and future descendants.

This thesis sits within the growing body of historical scholarship in New Zealand mainstream religious history led by the work of John Stenhouse, and more recently Hirini Kaa's work on Māori prophets and nineteenth-century conversion.<sup>3</sup> Stenhouse has argued for a more attentive and sustained focus on the place of religion in New Zealand history. He states that 'New Zealand historians must engage more systematically with overseas scholarship that, on both Left and Right, recognizes religion's significance in eighteenth- nineteenth-century British culture'.<sup>4</sup> Stenhouse further argues that 'many New Zealand historians continue to write as

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<sup>2</sup> Ngāti Porou, for instance, converted in 1830s with the return of Piripi Taumatakura. *The Turanga Journals 1840–1850: Letters and Journals of William and Jane Williams Missionaries to Poverty Bay*, ed. By Frances Porter (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1974), p. 40. Ngāpuhi were already engaging with missionaries from 1810s, See, Eugene Stock, D.C.L., *The Story of the New Zealand Mission*, (Nelson: New Zealand C.M. Association Department, 1913), p. 8. Māori also imagined their own Christianity as evident in, rise of Papahurihia in the 1830s, and Ringtu and Pai Marie in the 1860s. Charles Ihaia Hita-Brown, *The Coming of Pakeha Religion: The Spiritual Significance for Māori New Zealand's Lost Legacy*, Revised Second Edition, (Auckland: Crystal Publishing, 2008), pp. 430–40.

<sup>3</sup> John Stenhouse, 'God's Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the Writing of New Zealand History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 1 (2004). Hirini Kaa, *He Ngākau Hou: Te Hāhi Mihinare and the Renegotiation of Mātauranga, c.1800–1992* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Stenhouse, p. 55.

though religion either vanished on the voyage south or soon after the colonists arrived'.<sup>5</sup> Complementary to this, Hirini Kaa's work focuses on the way in which Māori, and Ngāti Porou specifically, "re-negotiated" Christianity and were not simply passive victims of colonialism but rather active agents who adapted and experimented with religion. Kaa proposes that 'Christianity was also a space where iwi experts renegotiated mātauranga on behalf of their people, influenced by both internal tribal factors and the external intellectual environment'.<sup>6</sup> The present study connects with these ideas and arguments but explores more closely the problematic reality that Ngāti Rehua was probably the last iwi to convert in the country, made even more surprising that this occurred in a region where Christianity was already widespread and dominant.

It is important to note that Ngāti Rehua were a people of transit and movement, who moved on and off the island on a regular basis, thereby being less attractive and available to external Christian organisations. Thus, while Christianity was embraced and negotiated in other tribal communities across the country, those on Aotea remained strongly connected to pre-European spiritual identities and practices. As a consequence, Christianity never "settled" the island until the dramatic events of 1889, which are at the heart of the following discussion. Ngāti Rehua, as the evidence shows, were fervent adherents to traditional spiritual beliefs and practices before — and after — conversion in the late nineteenth century. This historical study, then, has significance to the way our people have made sense of our identity historically and continue to do so in the present. There can be no doubt that conversion came to have a deep impact on our tribal identity, loss of language and the erosion of our traditional beliefs and practices. But this thesis is not a conversation on the

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<sup>5</sup> Stenhouse, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Kaa, p. 14.

impact of colonial trauma: that study remains to be written. This thesis simply investigates why and how our people remained removed from religious conversion in a period where Christianity swept across other iwi communities like a tidal wave.

The dissertation is separated into three main chapters. Chapter One explores how Aotea was visited and occupied by early Māori and how this aided in the establishment and construction of the tribal grouping, Ngāti Rehua. It also examines the traditional lifeways prior to the arrival of Europeans and how Ngāti Rehua remained elusive from the pressures of missionaries during the formative years of the establishment of Christianity across Te Ao Māori. This chapter also surveys some of the traditional practices that governed Ngāti Rehua before and, to a much-reduced degree, after, the mass-conversion of 1889.

Chapter Two examines the inter-connections between Ngāti Rehua and other iwi during the turbulent years of the Musket Wars and beyond. It shows how Aotea remained a vital location for waka coastal traffic during this period. It will also look at early missionary influence in the North and how this affected, or did not affect, local iwi at Aotea. This chapter also explores how Māori engaged with missionaries and the mutual expectations held by both sides. With the introduction of the musket, old grievances were revisited and new opportunities escalated the scale and impacts of warfare throughout Aotearoa as inter-tribal conflict found more sophisticated interpretations driven variously by ambition, survival and new beliefs. This brought about major shifts in power. With the adoption of Christianity, many Māori began to demonise their own traditional cultural practices, such as kaitangata (cannibalism). Christian schools also started to emerge throughout the country, serving to further

indoctrinate those learning the principles and teachings of the Gospel. Once conversion started to take off within the Northern tribes, many iwi allowed their captives to return home where they took with them new Christian beliefs. The remoteness of, and seeming disinterest in, Aotea kept Christianity at bay and the residents of the island were able to continue to practice traditional belief systems until well after the new religion had taken hold throughout mainland Māori communities.

Chapter Three examines more explicitly the arrival of Mormon missionaries on the island in 1889. The arrival of President Angus Wright and Elder Davis, in particular, was associated with this transformation. At the same time, this chapter is concerned with the maintenance of some aspects of traditional culture into the twentieth century. The dismantling of Māori belief systems on Aotearoa was sometimes enabled by the activities of their own tohunga and matakite. One in particular, Pōtangaroa (a tohunga matakite of Ngāti Kahungungu), in 1881 prophesied the coming of a new religion for Māori.<sup>7</sup> This prophecy was then utilised by Mormon missionaries who adopted the narrative in their own discourse, thus attracting many Māori to their new religion.<sup>8</sup> Another practice that attracted Māori to the Mormon religion was the genealogical narrative that posited Māori as being descendants of the ancient Israelites, consistent with the Book of Mormon.<sup>9</sup> Through the use of matakite and emphasis on the Israelite connection, many Māori converted to the LDS faith, but it was not always a smooth transition.<sup>10</sup> Chapter Three shows that many found it hard to balance Māori beliefs and practices with the

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<sup>7</sup> R. Lanier Britsch, *Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church*, June 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Bronwyn Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Māori Prophets in New Zealand* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 1999), p. 252.

<sup>9</sup> Elsmore, p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> As defined as, 'Matakite — Seer, one who foresees an event; also, the vision' H.W. Williams M.A *The Dictionary of the Maori Language* (Wellington: Printlink, 2005), p. 188.

demands of the LDS church. Due to the remoteness of Aotea, missionary interactions were scarce for a period, but as interactions increased many Māori converts dropped their previous belief systems and adopted the new Mormon values. In particular, the use of te reo Māori was prohibited in church meetings, causing many Māori to adopt the English language in their religious life and by consequence in their everyday existence.

## Chapter One: Aotea as a Semi-Isolate

*Kia tūpato!*

*Ka tangi a Tūkaiāia kei*

*Te moana, ko Ngāti Wai*

*Kei te moana e haere ana;*

*Ka tangi a Tūkaiāia*

*Kei tuawhenua, ko Ngāti Wai kei*

*Tuawhenua e haere ana*

*Beware!*

*When Tūkaiāia calls at sea,*

*Ngāti Wai are at sea*

*When Tūkaiāia calls*

*Inland, Ngāti Wai are inland<sup>11</sup>*

The conversion process on Aotea was prolonged because the already established belief systems remained a well-practiced and common part of iwi life through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. This chapter argues that Ngāti Rehua, a hapū of Ngāti Wai, were a transient people, who were particularly difficult to convert because they moved so regularly to and from the mainland. Our people, as the proverb above asserts, are at home on sea and land. They were a people of constant movement, and thus were difficult to locate and convert. They held on to “traditional” beliefs and were not Christianised en masse until the late nineteenth century. This chapter also highlights the interchanging histories and genealogical intersections that merged to make up the population that lived on the island leading up to the arrival of the LDS Church in 1889.

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<sup>11</sup> Ngāti Wai Trust Board, Te Tūkaiaia: Te karanga o te iwi, November & December 2016 < <http://www.ngatiwai.iwi.nz/uploads/5/9/0/0/59002899/151216-ngatiwai-newsletter-december-2016.pdf>> [accessed 10th February 2019].

Prior to the arrival and disruption of Pākehā religious beliefs and life within their community, Ngāti Rehua had been firmly embedded and grounded in their own traditional spirituality. The impact of Christianity on Māori communities ushered in a silencing, renegotiation and sometimes demonizing of traditional tribal rituals and beliefs. Some of these tribal beliefs were renegotiated on Māori terms and were adapted and “indigenized” to maintain and reflect long-standing Māori beliefs and practices. It took some time before Ngāti Rehua were willing to allow religious ideas to find firm purchase on the island, yet they must have seen and known of the many communities, missions and missionaries that were increasingly mobile and active around the mainland.

In the Māori world, and within various hapū, there are contrasting accounts, narratives or kōrero tuku iho that recount when and who discovered our oceans and whenua. On Aotea we have our own kōrero that have been transmitted across generations, nurtured, maintained, delivered and held within contemporary spaces and by specific people. From 1993 to 1995 Ngāti Rehua were in the Māori Land Court opposing a mainland iwi Marutūahu and its claims to rights in our outer islands. This particular case investigated the ‘title to the offshore islands, islets rocks off the coastline of Aotea’.<sup>12</sup> Two of our leading speakers (kaitiaki kōrero) on Ngāti Rehua whakapapa and oral history were present and gave evidence to outline and present our customary rights and how we, as a people, identify within these spaces. One of our kuia, Whetu McGregor, gave testimony to the emergence and naming of the surrounding islands of Aotea with the following statement:

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<sup>12</sup> Whetu McGregor, Investigation of Title to the Offshore Islands, Islets and Rocks off the Coastline of Aotea (Great Barrier Island) Pursuant to Section 161 of the Māori Affairs Act 1963. Extract from Minute Book; 21 AT 242-247, Great Barrier Island, 12 March 1993.



[T]radition tells us that the North Island was fished up by the famous ancestor Maui or 'Maui's long fish'. Aotea and the islands and rocks that surround it are part of that fish. They are referred to in our traditions as 'Nga unahi me nga taratara o Te Ika roa a Maui' — the scales and the spines of Maui's fish'. This explains the existence of the many islands and the rugged nature of the mainland.<sup>13</sup>

We, as our ancestors have told us, are the scales and spines of Maui's fish, and this imagery is important to our identity as Ngāti Rehua. Like our predecessors in Hawaiki, we are seafaring peoples, and our home was spread out across several islands. Ngāti Rehua were not a neatly compact and easily accessible community either prior to or after the arrival of Europeans. While we resided on a stretch of water heavily used by others as a place of substantial transit, our islands were not busy trading stops for other iwi and European traders or whalers when they arrived.<sup>14</sup> When Christianity arrived it spread quickly to Aotea –*roa* and not so much to Aotea.<sup>15</sup> As islands easily bypassed by vessels destined for further ports,

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<sup>13</sup> McGregor, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Michael King asserts that ocean whaling begun in Aotearoa in the 1790s but peaked in the 1830s, with as many as 30 ships in the harbour of Kororāreka at one time. Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 122. The timber industry also played a part in Pākehā traders arriving and harvesting timber around the Coromandel Coast in the 1820s. King, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> What is important to note is the establishment of mission stations on other outer islands; for example, in 1843 Reverend J. Wohlers arrived on Ruapuke Island in the Foveaux Strait and established a mission station there; see in Margaret E. Major's thesis where she states, 'Wohlers selected Ruapuke Island in Foveaux Strait as the site for his mission because it was a meeting place for the southern Māoris'. Margaret E. Major, *Christian Missions in the South Island in the 1840's* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury), p. 87. On the Chatham Islands, Reverend J. Aldred, a Wesleyan missionary, arrived in 1842 and preached among the Moriori and Māori population. Major states, '[i]nformation on the first permanent mission to be established in the Chathams is confined to the reports of Selwyn, who visited the Islands in 1848. In 1846 a German Lutheran party, led by one, Scheiermeister had gone there and commenced the work of their Mission'. Major, p. 106. By the 1840s, a mission station had been erected on Waiheke Island, with many Māori converts. *Church Missionary Gleaner* 1842, Vol. II. (London: L. & G. Seeley), p. 93–4. The question must be asked as to why there was no mission station on Aotea in these early formative years when Christianity was already being consolidated to other island communities.

missionaries were focused on those shores beyond our islands and not on the small numbers of our people.<sup>16</sup>

Our iwi hold many narratives that speak of our eponymous ancestors and their discovery and settlement. During these early periods, Aotearoa was not so much an isolated space than it was a potential home. Our hapū have nurtured and maintained kōrero tuku iho, which reveals early Polynesian migrations.<sup>17</sup> The naming of our island and its place in relation to Aotearoa remains an issue of contention for some. According to Te Rangi Hiroa, most kōrero tuku iho identify Kupe as the famed Polynesian discoverer of “Aotearoa”.<sup>18</sup> Michael King notes that early Pākehā scholars, such as ethnologist S. Percy Smith and William Pember Reeve, ‘all popularised and entrenched the notion that the Maori name for New Zealand had been and still was Aotearoa. After decades of repetition, Maori themselves came to believe that this was so’.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Elsdon Best suggested that when Kupe arrived, upon seeing what is now called

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<sup>16</sup> Māori population statistics that had been gathered and recorded by Pākehā differ from our own oral histories and whakapapa. The 1878 Census recorded thirty Māori living at Aotearoa, three of whom were under the age of fifteen. (See Appendices of the House of Representatives, *Census of the Māori Population 1878*, p. 14) It also recorded seventeen guests from Te Arawa, which revealed the ongoing relationships and connections with other iwi. This recorded data suggests inconsistencies within oral traditions and local whakapapa, which differ greatly, thus forcing the questioning of the census taken during this period. A census, taken only three years later in 1881, reveals twenty adults and sixteen children living on the island. (See Appendices of the House of Representatives, *Census of the Māori Population 1881*, p. 13).

<sup>17</sup> Life narrative interview with Beazley, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Interviewed by Kelly Klink. Tape held at Waikato University History Programme.

<sup>18</sup> Te Rangi Hiroa, *The Coming of Māori* (Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1958), p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> King, p. 41. See also, Beryl Woolford Roa, *The Long Dark Cloud Of Racial Inequality and Historiographical Omissions: The New Zealand Native Land Court*, MAI Journal, Volume 1, Issue 1 <

[http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz/sites/default/files/MAI\\_Journal\\_v1%2C1\\_Roa.pdf](http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz/sites/default/files/MAI_Journal_v1%2C1_Roa.pdf)> [accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019].

“Great Barrier Island” he named it Aotea and then in his subsequent voyages named what is now the “North Island”, Aotea-roa.<sup>20</sup>

These accounts, however, are not consistent with Ngāti Rehua kōrero. In a collection of Auckland Māori place names produced in the late nineteenth century, George Graham wrote that Aotea meant “dawn” and was named after the Aotea waka.<sup>21</sup> This explanation sits more in alignment with Ngāti Rehua kōrero. Although early writers like Best and Te Rangihiroa noted that Kupe was *the* discoverer of Aotearoa, in Ngāti Rehua kōrero Kupe never arrived at the island until around the fourteenth century, much later than the more notable explorer Toi te huatahi.<sup>22</sup> Our histories also reveal that Ngāti Rehua held various genealogical links that connected to various parts of the mainland. The important point here is that Ngāti Rehua were part of a wider array of tribal connections, and therefore by the late nineteenth century our identity, although specific to Aotea, was one that had strong ties to other mainland tribes through Toi, Kupe and others. More importantly, while nineteenth-century conversion occurred earlier for Ngāti Rehua’s neighbours and mainland kin and whānaunga, these historical bonds were not enough to see those conversions spread to Aotea.

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<sup>20</sup> Elsdon Best, *The Māori as he was: A Brief Account of Life as it was In Pre-European Days* (Wellington: Dominion Museum, 1934), p. 22. See also Margaret Orbell’s interpretation, ‘[a]nother story is that since Aotea is the traditional name of Great Barrier Island, the North Island, being so much larger, became known as Aotearoa’. Margaret Orbell, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend* (Canterbury: University of Canterbury, 1995), p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> D. R. Simmons, George Graham’s Māori Place Names of Auckland, Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum, Vol. 16 (1979), pp. 11–39.

<sup>22</sup> McGregor, p. 2.

There are conflicting kōrero regarding exactly which Toi came to Aotearoa New Zealand, Toi te huatahi or Toi kai rakau.<sup>23</sup> According to some, Toi te huatahi arrived around the twelfth century from Hawaiki and from this visit arose many traditional place names on Aotea.<sup>24</sup> The great sea to the west of Aotea is known as Te Moana nui o Toi te huatahi (the Great Sea of Toi). The many islands within this sea are known collectively as Nga poito o te kupenga o Toi te huatahi (floats of the fishing net of Toi te Huatahi). The traditional name for the Needles, which are located off the northern part of Aotea, is Nga taratara o Toi (Spines of Toi). Papakuri, a small rocky outlet just off from Rangiahua (Flat Island), also carries the tradition of Toi's visit, as does Hauturu o Toi, known today as Little Barrier Island (Appendix A). In an account written by A. W. Reed, it was said that

Toi remained for some time at Tāmaki, during which some of his men married local women. Pareira, a niece of Toi, settled in Henderson Valley and gave her name to Waipareira (Stream of Pareira). Failing to gather news of his grandson, Toi moved on to Aotea (Great Barrier Island). After a lengthy stay he went on to Tūhua, which he named after the island of Tūhua

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<sup>23</sup> Hiroa, p. 22–3. There are many debates about Toi te huatahi and Toi-kai-rakau and whether they are one in the same see S. Percy Smith, *History and Traditions of the Māoris of the West Coast North Island of New Zealand Prior to 1840* (Christchurch: Kiwi Publishers, 1999), p. 59. There are also varying accounts of why Toi te huatahi came to New Zealand; see George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of New Zealand Race, as Furnished by their Priests and Chiefs* (Auckland: H. Brett, 1885), pp. 76–81. See also Rosanna Whaanga, in *Turning the Hearts of the Children: Early Māori Leaders in the Mormon Church*, ed. By Selwyn Katene (Wellington: Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2014), pp. 48–61. In Ranginui Walker's book, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*, he offers another version of Toi stating, '[Toi te-hua-tahi] was born in New Zealand ... [h]e was also known by the name Toi Kai-rakau'. Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> There are varying dates on when Toi visited Aotearoa; however, in our kōrero we estimate the time to be around the twelfth century. See, Upoko IV, Te Kauwae-raro; Ara: Nga Korero tati o Nehe a Nga Ruanuku o te Whare-wānanga o te Tai-Rawhiti, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* Volume 22, 1913.

in Hawaiki. His final destination was Whakatāne where he despaired of ever seeing his grandson again.<sup>25</sup>

However, many of his crew remained behind and settled the islands of Aotea, Hauturu and some of the outer islands. The following traditional oriori given by Hōne Paama at the Hauturu hearings, confirms Toi te huatahi's presence at Aotea:

Me piki taua ki te tihi	Let us mount unto the summit
O Hauturumuia ao	of Hauturu wretched in clouds
Ki nga poitu o te kupenga seine	There we will view the net floats of the
o Toi Te Huatahi	of Toi te Huatahi
E Tama tangi kino e!	o child crying distressfully e! <sup>26</sup>

This oriori speaks of Toi's presence at Aotea and affirms his early occupation. It supports earlier kōrero that sit within our tribal basket. There is also an abundance of repositories of archaeological data that provide evidence of these early occupations of Aotea.<sup>27</sup>

Although Ngāti Rehua trace connection from Toi te huatahi, there are kōrero (accounts) that convey earlier occupations of Hauturu and Aotea by Tutumaiao and Turehu legendary "fair-skinned" peoples. Whetu McGregor, for instance, asserts that '[t]hrough wider and more ancient tribal connections, our relationship extends back even further to the first

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<sup>25</sup> A. W. Reed, *Reed book of Māori Exploration: Stories of Voyaging and Discovery*, revised by Ross Calman (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2006), p. 47–8. See also, Jeff Evans, *Ngā Waka o Neherā: The First Voyaging Canoes*, (Auckland: Reed Books, 1997), p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> Whaanga, p. 56–7.

<sup>27</sup> See, PR Moore, Obsidian sources of the Coromandel Volcanic Zone, Northern New Zealand, *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 2013, 43:1, 38–57.

occupations of Aotea by the Tutumaiao and Maewao or Turehu people'.<sup>28</sup> The translation into English of these early settlers as "fairy people" can be misleading and conjure up mythical creatures that do not truly represent what they were. J. Macmillan Brown describes these early occupiers as 'a fairy or beneficent supernatural being'.<sup>29</sup> This is a typical tauwiwi (foreign) translation which is prevalent in early Pākehā discourses.<sup>30</sup> However, Brown further expands on his view of these early settlers by suggesting that

[a]ll the fairies are described as fair-headed and fair-skinned, like Europeans. They are, in fact, nothing more than some of the people who occupied New Zealand, when the Polynesians arrived in their canoes, with a halo of romance thrown round them by the mystery of their forest and mountain life after being driven back from the coasts.<sup>31</sup>

Given their relative isolation and reclusiveness, therefore, it is not surprising, then, that Ngāti Rehua have been connected to "Turehu". The elusiveness only seems to highlight how removed we were from outside contact, even after the arrival of missionaries and European un-settlers. Such descriptions accentuate the notion that our people were not always easily engaged with and is perhaps one explanation for why it took so long for our people to be connected with, and finally converted to, Christianity. Waka migrations to Aotea are rarely mentioned in arrival and origin historiography, and we as a people are fortunate to still maintain the traditions associated with these early arrivals. In *Ngā Waka o*

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<sup>28</sup> McGregor, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> J. Macmillan Brown, *Māori and Polynesian: their origin, history and culture* (London; Hutchinson & Co, 1907), p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Elsdon Best, *Māori Religion and Mythology: An Account of the Cosmogony, Anthropogeny, Religious Beliefs and Rites, Magic and Folk Lore of the Māori Folk of New Zealand Part 2* (Wellington: P. D. Hasselberg, 1982), p. 545. J. White, KUI, TUTU-MAI-AO ME TUREHU. In *The Ancient History of the Māori, his Mythology and Traditions* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 434–435. A. W. Reed, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Life* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1966), p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, p. 15.

*Neherā*, Jeff Evans offers an alternative perspective on the navigation of the Tainui waka. He states,

In one version, several waka including the Mataatua, Tainui and Te Arawa made first landfall at Ahuahu (Great Mercury Island). The Mataatua was guided to the island by two birds named Mumuhau and Takere-Tou (The birds were tieke, or saddlebacks, land birds). While at Ahuahu, Te Moungaroa is said to have had words with several of the chiefs of other waka, claiming that the Kurahaupo had been bewitched by some or all of them. From Ahuahu the waka are said to have explored Aotearoa independently.<sup>32</sup>

According to Evans, there were also suggestions ‘that the Mataatua first landed at Muriwhenua, then travelled south to Aotea (Great Barrier Island), Repanga (Cuvier Island) and Ahuahu’.<sup>33</sup> Ngāti Rehua also maintain kōrero that Mataatua waka called into the eastern coastline of Aotea.<sup>34</sup> In this way, Aotea was not simply isolated and bypassed by other Māori. Instead, it was known by Māori, who visited, named and traversed its currents and shores well before the arrival of Europeans and missionaries. Other prominent waka that made their way to the shores of Aotea, Rangiahua and some of the outer islands are Tainui, Aotea and Takitimu. Traditions that are associated with the Tainui waka lie in the north-western end of Aotea, such as Motairehe, which takes its name from this relationship with the Tainui waka. When it came up the harbour, navigators aboard the waka had to squint, hence the name Motairehe.<sup>35</sup> In the bay is a rock, Te Punga, the anchor stone to which the Tainui waka tied. When they landed at Motairehe those aboard built an altar to offer

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<sup>32</sup> Evans, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Evans, p. 93.

<sup>34</sup> McGregor, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> McGregor, p.5.

karakia. This is the kōrero *tuku iho* that has been embedded in Ngāti Rehua traditions. Our history tells us about this interconnectedness that our *iwi* have shared and maintained with other *iwi*.<sup>36</sup> While this thesis argues that Ngāti Rehua were in many ways isolated and difficult to access, our history shows us that our relationships were actually well known and kept by ourselves and by other *iwi*. We knew and engaged with others.

Tainui waka left people behind and we descend from them through Waipahihi (her story will be expanded on later in this chapter), who was Ngāti Tai.<sup>37</sup> Rāwiri Taonui also affirms this association, stating that 'Ngāti Tai descend from the Tainui ancestors Taihaua, Taikehu and Te Kete-ana-*taua*, who settled in Tāmaki when the Tainui canoe passed across the isthmus on its way to Kāwhia Harbour'. Taonui writes that '[t]he tribe was once part of an extensive coastal trading network between Tāmaki, the Coromandel, Aotea (Great Barrier Island) and across the Bay of Plenty to Tōhere Bay, where another Tainui related tribe, Ngāti Tai, live today'.<sup>38</sup> Significant to the arguments of this study, it is, therefore, important to note that the people on Aotea were not simply isolated but were, in fact, able to trade with other tribal groups on the mainland before and after the arrival of Pākehā. Why is it, then, given these ongoing relationships of trade and exchange, Ngāti Rehua conversion took so long, when so many other *iwi* had converted several decades earlier?

Turi, the captain of the Aotea waka, made his voyage to the southern end of the island, Rangitawhiri. This particular headland is named after him,

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<sup>36</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016

<sup>37</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016

<sup>38</sup> Rāwiri Taonui, 'Tāmaki tribes' in *Māori Peoples of New Zealand: Ngā Iwi o Aotearoa* (Auckland: David Bateman Ltd, 2006), p. 206.



Te Kurae a Turi (Appendix A). There is a mountain down the southern end named after Turi's granddaughter, Ruahine (Appendix A).<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Tamatea Arikinui, the captain of the Takitimu waka, circumnavigated the island and came ashore at O'Ruawharo (named after the priest on the waka). They too built an altar on top of one of the rocks on the beach.<sup>40</sup> There are no traditions of Te Arawa waka coming to the island; however, we know that Hei's descendants came and settled the island. These waka traditions demonstrate the close association Ngāti Rehua had with various tribes around the mainland. Rāwiri Taonui asserts that 'canoe traditions do not explain origins. They also express authority and identity, and define tribal boundaries and relationships. They merge poetry and politics, history and myth, fact and legend'.<sup>41</sup> But if there was obvious interaction and known relationships, then why were the people on Aotea so late to convert to Christianity when their settlement histories are similar to those on the mainland and they were engaging with other tribal groups in and beyond colonisation?

### **Pre-colonial Beliefs and Practices**

Prior to the arrival of Christianity, Māori had well entrenched belief systems that were brought with them when they arrived here in Aotearoa. Although the details are lost in today, we know that on Aotea they built altars to perform traditional and sacred karakia. In an article written by Lieutenant Colonel Gudgeon, his informant articulates 'that on some of the isles of the Pacific there were marae that were truncated pyramids,

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<sup>39</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Life narrative interview with Ken Forzer, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Interviewed by Kelly Klink. Tape held at Waikato University History Programme.

<sup>41</sup> Rāwiri Taonui, *Canoe Traditions in Māori Peoples of New Zealand: Ngā Iwi o Aotearoa* (Auckland: David Bateman Ltd, 2006), p. 58.

built in steps, platform on platform, and that it was thought that these structures were primarily built for religious purposes'.<sup>42</sup> He goes on to further explain:

... that the steps were for the accommodation of the various ranks of the priesthood ... and above all was the chief priest of the particular deity to whom the marae was dedicated, who took this elevated station in order to bring himself into more intimate communication with those gods who could not approach too near the common surface of the earth.<sup>43</sup>

Gudgeon suggests that 'we know something of the history, songs, and tradition of the Maori, but of their religion next to nothing'.<sup>44</sup> In explanation, he writes regarding a leading missionary authority on Māori customary life:

Mr Davis was a man very learned in matters Maori, and it may perhaps be thought that if he did not know, it was only because there was nothing to be learned. Mr Davis was, however, the exponent of a lachrymose species of religion of the miserable sinner type, and though the Maoris had faith in him politically, as the mouth-piece of those who initiated the King movement, they none the less recognized in him the extreme of Christian fanaticism, and would therefore decline to disclose the secrets of their ancient religion to him.<sup>45</sup>

Undoubtedly, as Christianity began to take hold within Māori society, parts of their old world began to dissipate. On Aotea, our people held fast to pre-European beliefs and it may be that these religious frameworks were a major reason why Christianity was unable to find purchase on the island for so long. On the island, these belief systems and practices include kaitiakitanga, kai tangata, tā moko, and mākutū.

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<sup>42</sup>Lieutenant Colonel Gudgeon, *Mana Tangata*, The Journal of the Polynesian Society, Volume 14 1905, p. 52.

<sup>43</sup> Gudgeon, p. 52.

<sup>44</sup> Gudgeon, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Gudgeon, p. 51

Of these early beliefs that remained deeply embedded in Ngāti Rehua practice, kaitiakitanga is an important long-standing part of our spirituality. Kaitiaki is a multi-faceted word that when conveyed in the English language can be disingenuous to its actual meaning. However, its meaning of kaitiaki has been explained by Cleave Barlow: '[K]aitiaki or guardian spirits are left behind by deceased ancestors to watch over their descendants and to protect sacred places'.<sup>46</sup> Barlow goes on to add that '[k]aitiaki are also messengers and a means of communication between the spirit realm and the human world ... the most common are animals, birds, insects, and fish'.<sup>47</sup>

In Ngāti Rehua traditions we have three prominent kaitiaki that protect our people on the land and at sea: tūkaiāia (eagle), tuatara (lizard) and te Mauri (one-eyed shark). In the 1960s anthropologist Eric Schwimmer conducted his field research within the Ngāti Wai district of Whangaruru. During his research he supervised many interviews with local kaumātua informants, leading him to conclude

[that] [i]n Whangaruru the guardians are always called *mana*. This term is not used throughout New Zealand; the Tuhoe tribe, for instance, describes the same type of deity as *kaitiaki* (guardians). The Whangaruru term *mana* expresses the belief that the guardians are the source from which human beings derive the power they call *mana*.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cleve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key concepts in Māori culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> Barlow, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Eric Schwimmer, 'Guardian Animals of the Māori', *The Journal of Polynesian Society*, Volume 72 (1963), p. 400.

Although Whangaruru is situated on the mainland, Ngāti Rehua have close whakapapa connections there and it was a place that our people would visit often. Schwimmer notes that 73% of the population of Whangaruru were Mormon. He further adds that

[o]ne of the few features of Maori religion to have survived is the belief in guardian animals ... Even this is to some extent involved with Mormon belief, for some guardian animals punish offenders by causing demonic possession and the cure against this has for the last two generations been a Mormon blessing carried out by two elders, usually tribesmen. In spite of these new techniques for dealing with spirit possession, the basic pre-European conception of the guardian animals have remained'.<sup>49</sup>

Schwimmer's observation highlights this intersection between two worlds and the convergence of two religions. But, most importantly, it notes the embeddedness of traditionally held beliefs. On the island, our people held fast to many of these old practices and belief systems. Ngāti Rehua kōrero *tuku iho*, which has been cherished within our tribe, refers to one of our *kaitiaki*, *te Mauri*. Warren Pohatu has said that the '[s]hark is Tangaroa's fiercest warrior and when in his own element he is far too potent for even the bravest men ... Many coastal tribes have sharks as guardians. One such tribe is Ngai Tamanuhiri of the East Coast'.<sup>50</sup> This particular *kaitiaki* was used when our people needed assistance and guidance on the water. Our everyday life, living off the ocean and engaging with our environment, remained entrenched in those who lived on the island before and after the arrival of Europeans. These beliefs persisted through into the nineteenth century and were still strong even after conversion in the late 1880s.

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<sup>49</sup> Schwimmer, p. 397.

<sup>50</sup> Warren Pohatu, *Māori Animal Myths: Mōkai Rangatira* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2001), p. 10.

According to kōrero, in the middle of the twentieth century one of our kuia called for Te Mauri when her husband died at sea, and she was not able to find her way home in the middle of the night.<sup>51</sup> It is remembered among the family that she used karanga to call for the shark to come and assist her and that Te Mauri arrived and guided her safely home back to Aotea. She is the last person within Ngāti Rehua who had the ability to karanga to this particular kaitiaki. Thus, although Māori on Aotea had converted to Mormonism in 1889, they still maintained and utilised some pre-colonial beliefs and practices, demonstrating the grappling of these two worldviews well into the twentieth century. However, there were other traditional beliefs and practices Ngāti Rehua relinquished prior to their conversion.

Unlike the belief in kaitiaki, the ritual act of kai tangata is silenced in Ngāti Rehua oral histories. This could be attributed to the demonisation of this practice with the impact of Europeans. G. Forster, who travelled with James Cook in the late eighteenth century, noted the following regarding the etiquettes of tribal kai tangata:

[T]hey never eat their adversaries, unless they are killed in battle; they never kill their relations for the purpose of eating them; they do not even eat them if they die of a natural death, and they take no prisoners with a view to fatten them for their repast.<sup>52</sup>

These “etiquettes” demonstrate the ritual practice of this particular belief system. Although when Reverend Samuel Marsden arrived in Aotearoa, kai tangata and its negative connotations were still prevalent amongst visiting Pākehā. Marsden stated the following in his journal:

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<sup>51</sup> Beazley, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in, Ian Barber, ‘Archaeology, Ethnography, and the Record of Māori Cannibalism Before 1815: A Critical Review’, *Journal of Polynesian Society*, p. 258.

I knew that they were cannibals--that they were a savage race, full of superstition, and wholly under the power and influence of the Prince of Darkness--and that there was only one remedy which could effectually free them from their cruel spiritual bondage and misery, and that was the Gospel of a crucified Saviour.<sup>53</sup>

This statement by Marsden is indicative of the time and demonstrates the Judeo-Christian ideology that was widespread during this period of early Māori colonisation. Marsden reflects on his interpretation of the ritual acts of kai tangata, by stating that

the New Zealanders are all cannibals. They did not appear to have any idea that this was an unnatural crime. When I expressed my abhorrence at their eating one another, they said it had always been the custom to eat their enemies. I was unable to ascertain whether they ever ate human flesh as a meal, or from choice, or in cool blood; but it strikes me to be only from mental gratification and in retaliation for some great injury.<sup>54</sup>

Although kai tangata ritual practices have been silenced on Aotea, there is evidence to indicate that they were adherents to this traditional belief system. James Cowan's observation of Paratene Te Manu: '[T]his grim old cannibal-warrior, who lived on the Little Barrier Island ... was one of the Ngāti Wai warriors who joined with Ngāpuhi in the cannibal raids along the coast a century ago.'<sup>55</sup> Cowan's observation provides an interesting insight into Ngāti Rehua's stance on kai tangata through the nineteenth century.

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<sup>53</sup> Samuel Marsden, *Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden* (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, Ltd and A. H. Reed, 1932), p. 60.

<sup>54</sup> Marsden, p. 130.

<sup>55</sup> James Cowan, *Pictures of Old New Zealand: The Patridge Collection of Māori Paintings by Gottfried Lindauer* (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, 1930), p. 78.

It is believed that in the 1850s, the ancient practice of tā moko on Aotea drew to a close. Raihi Miraka, the daughter of the captured Ngāti Porou toa, Kewene Tamakotore, and of Takaau, a woman of high rank within Ngāti Rehua, was the last to receive the moko kauae.<sup>56</sup> The fact that moko kauae was not practiced on Aotea beyond this point is interesting, as Christianity had not yet found purchase on the island, but Ngāti Rehua obviously were engaging with Christian thinking.

It was a custom that was fading out due to European contact and missionary influences, which deprecated such Māori traditional practices. Early missionary Samuel Marsden recorded in his diary his perception of this ancient ritual with the following account:

Tooi informed us that his brother Korro Korro wished him to be tattooed. We told him that it was a very foolish and ridiculous custom, and as he had seen so much of civil life he should now lay aside the barbarous customs of his country and adopt those of civilized nations. Tooi replied that he wished to do so himself, but his brother urged him to be tattooed as he could not support his rank and character as a gentleman amongst his countrymen unless he was tattooed; without this mark of distinction, they would consider him timid and effeminate.<sup>57</sup>

It is evident from the above statement that Marsden was insistent on the removal of these traditional customs. Thus, while conversion did not take place on Aotea until the late 1880s, aspects of religious Christian belief had seeped into tribal practices and understandings so much so that it had led to the cessation of tā moko on the island. In *Where it all Began: The Story of Whangaruru Taking in from Mimiwhangata to Whangamumu*, author Madge Malcolm narrates a story of a young Irish girl who found her way to the people at Aotea. She came to be known by different Māori names —

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<sup>56</sup> This is expanded on in Chapter 3.

<sup>57</sup> Marsden, p. 167

‘Moko Mere’, ‘Pākehā Mere’, etc — but her birth name was Mary Ann Lyons. She arrived in New Zealand with her family in 1865, and her mother died soon after. Her father then placed her in St Mary’s Convent in Ponsonby.<sup>58</sup> When she was around fourteen years old, Mary Ann ran away on a fishing boat where she was abused. When they reached Rangiwhakau Bay on the East Coast of Aotea, and she went ashore to wash, she fled over to the West Coast to the home of Raihi Miraka. It was there that she recounted her story to Raihi, who had sympathy for Mary and offered her a job as a nursemaid.<sup>59</sup> I estimate the arrival of Mary on the island to have been in the late 1870s. In order to protect Mary Ann from any further mistreatment from her own community, Raihi called for the tā moko experts to come and place her personal moko on this young Irish girl. Malcolm further adds:

It was not until after Mary Ann was tattooed that the Catholic people and the police discovered where she was and went to Katherine Bay to take her back to the Convent. Miraka Kino [Raihi Miraka] challenged both the Police Force and the Catholic Church and told them there would be a big upheaval if they took Mary away from her as, because of her moko, she was recognised as one of the Kino family. So the Catholic people and the Police left matters in abeyance as they were aware that Mary Ann had been accepted into a foster home of rank and that there would be trouble if they tried to remove her.<sup>60</sup>

The story of Mary Ann highlights the importance of tā moko within Ngāti Rehua up to this point. This was during a time when Christianity was becoming firmly implanted on the mainland. Through this placement of the moko kauae on Mary Lyons, Ngāti Rehua showed that they believed

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<sup>58</sup> Madge Malcolm, *Where it all Began: The Story of Whangaruru Taking in from Mimiwhangata to Whangamumu* (Hikurangi: M. S. Malcolm, 1986), p. 138.

<sup>59</sup> Malcolm, p. 140.

<sup>60</sup> Malcolm, p. 140.



their culture superseded both Colonial law and Christian institutions. Clearly, there were some processes of change happening on Aotea prior to the mass conversion of 1889, but the hold of customary values and practices were prominent aspects in Ngāti Rehua society.

One of the other traditional practices that remained was the practice of mākutū. In the 1980s, when the people of Aotea gathered to build the Kawa Marae, the puriri grove adjoining the marae block was considered to be very tapu. This was due to our people burying whenua [placenta] there over many generations. Also, from the 1820s, Mere Tiaho, a noted tōhunga mākutū and “gifted woman” to a Ngāti Rehua man from the Ngāti Nau Nau hapū of Hauraki, had occupied the same puriri grove, adding to its tapu nature.<sup>61</sup> Her home had been in front of where the new Kawa Marae is situated. One of Mere Tiaho’s descendants, Keatley Te Moananui, offers an interesting perspective on his ancestor’s life and death.

According to Keatley, the reason that Mere Tiaho had been gifted to Taukōkopu was in recognition of his warning given to the people of Hauraki at Ngāpuhi’s attack on Te Totara pā.<sup>62</sup> Taukōkopu, along with his first cousins Kau Te Awha and Tuatai, were considered leading fighting chiefs of Ngāti Wai at that time. In te ao Māori this would be described as Tatou Pounamu — strategic alliance making. Mere Tiaho was a woman of rank in her own right; such a union would not only recognise Taukōkopu’s deed but would strengthen future ties between the two tribes. Testament to this is the subsequent union of their daughter Mata Te Kura and Parata Te Mapu, a leading figure in the Hauraki iwi of Ngāti

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<sup>61</sup> Beazley, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Personal Correspondence with Keatley Te Moananui.

Maru and Ngāti Whanaunga, and in the wider Kingitanga Movement (he was Kingi Tawhiao's Finance Advisor and Minister). Mata Te Kura was also a member of Te Runanga Wahine o Ngāti Maru — a group that contested the selling of Ngāti Maru lands.<sup>63</sup>

This very respectful kōrero by Mere Tiaho's descendant is quite different to how she is remembered here on the island. The puriri grove where Mere Tiaho lived in the 1980s was still seen as an area of great tapu, and it was decided by our old people to make it a wāhi tapu (sacred site) to ensure the safety of the community. It must be noted that the tapu nature of this particular area was not merely because of Mere Tiaho, but because there were whenua and koiwi buried there. In the stories passed down through Mere Tiaho's descendants, it was her job to tiaki (care for) this area; it was not merely her kainga. The kōrero remembered by Ngāti Rehua today are very focused on her status as a tohunga mākutu, especially the fact that when she died in the late 1800s she was buried upright in an urupa for outsiders, but upside-down to signify the community's formal rejection of mākutu.<sup>64</sup>

A century after Mere Tiaho's death, at a hui in the 1990s, Church members of Ngāti Rehua discussed lifting the tapu on the puriri grove. Subsequently, a group of about twenty LDS Priesthood holders formed a prayer circle to lift this particular tapu. Michael Beazley, a priesthood member who was there, remembers 'the wind whistling in the trees whilst the prayer was being given and when the prayer was over it went very quiet and a warm feeling came over us'.<sup>65</sup> It was then that they knew the

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<sup>63</sup> Personal Communication Keatley Te Moananui.

<sup>64</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

tapu had been lifted, and today many people enjoy the puriri grove where Mere once lived.

### **Summary**

This chapter shows that the ancestors of Ngāti Rehua established themselves on Aotea back around the twelfth century and maintained continuous occupation through to the present. In traditional times, the island was located on one of the main coastal highways so that its people were in regular contact with other iwi. During the conversion of the northern mainland tribes in the 1830s, however, Aotea remained a distinctly isolated Māori community, steeped in traditional beliefs and practices, including mākutu, tā moko, and kaitangata. They also maintained their customary pattern of moving off and on the island, largely on a seasonal basis. In this way, Ngāti Rehua enhanced their separateness and remained a particularly difficult target for European missionaries.

## Chapter 2: Christianity Comes to Aotearoa

*Ko ngā mana katoa o Ngāti Wai kei te wai,*

*i ngā taniwha me o ratou manawa.*

*All the mana of Ngāti Wai comes from the sea,*

*From its guardian taniwha and their spiritual force.<sup>66</sup>*

The above whakatauki highlights the traditional and spiritual kōrero of Ngāti Rehua as a hapū of Ngāti Wai. It emphasises the importance of water, our islands and the seafaring lifeways of our people. Our people's existence was never totally isolated, as Aotea is located amidst one of the busiest maritime highways of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Aotearoa. This stands as a reminder that our people were not waiting for conversion to Christianity but rather were elusive and diverse in their many connections with other hapū and iwi and with the surrounding ocean. The chapter accentuates the connectedness that Ngāti Rehua enjoyed with other iwi prior to, and especially after, the arrival of tauiwi. Particular attention will be paid to the solidity of our traditional lifeways and belief systems which, while affected by Pākehā influences through the mid-1800s, remained entrenched in our cultural world up to and even after conversion to the LDS faith in 1889. Thus, while the geographical isolation of the island largely accounts for the slow movement of Ngāti Rehua towards Christianisation, their regular interactions with Ngāti Wai and other mainland iwi also have to be factored in. This discussion begins with reflections on the arrival of, and encounters with, early Pākehā.

### First Encounters

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<sup>66</sup> Witi McMath, Investigation of Title to the Offshore Islands, Islets and Rocks off the Coastline of Aotea (Great Barrier Island), p. 10.

Although James Cook sighted Aotea during his travels in 1769, naming it “Big Barrier”, reports from the *Endeavour* indicate that he did not land or attempt to land.<sup>67</sup> Brenda Sewell asserts that ‘the earliest known vessel to visit Aotea was the whaling ship *William and Ann*, which she claims ‘was dismantled in 1796, but made it into Tryphena Harbour, where four replacement kauri spars were obtained’.<sup>68</sup> However, in *Early Port Fitzroy*, Cyril Moor states that the first ship to arrive at Aotea that same year was *The Mermaid* — though there is no firm evidence of its visit. Clearly, it would not have been uncommon for foreign vessels during this period to have sighted Aotea on their way in and out of what would become Auckland harbour. Most importantly, however, there were no Pākehā living on the island during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Aotea was particularly unavoidable for those early European explorers, whalers, sealers, traders, and eventually settlers, who travelled from the Bay of Islands down to Tamaki Makaurau, the Bay of Plenty and the East Coast. Because of its geographical location, the island undoubtedly was well known to these early travellers, yet records of visits are scarce.

As Pākehā settlers unsettled Aotearoa, Māori were forced to navigate a new worldview that was drastically different to their own. Māori at Aotea were not exempt from this intrusion. They, too, were forced to move within, and negotiate with, a world that was very different from their own. Of such encounters, Michael King asserts that Māori were largely welcoming of European settlers:

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<sup>67</sup> Cited in Cyril Moor, *Early Settlement of Port Fitzroy Great Barrier Island* (Orewa, 1987), p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Brenda Sewell ‘Human Settlements and Sites’, in *Great Barrier Island* ed. By Don Armitage (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2001), p. 27.

Because of the persistence of tribal competitiveness, chiefs saw Pakeha as a source of protection and a means of consolidating local power; they would be a source of muskets, trade goods and useful advice and a factor to enlarge the mana of the sponsoring chief and his hapu and kainga.<sup>69</sup>

Pākehā were certainly not protectors of native language, traditional beliefs or cultural practices and during the nineteenth century moved to “civilise” their heathen hosts, albeit with a sometimes self-congratulatory benevolent humanitarianism that barely masked their desire to remake their New Eden — and its peoples — in their own image. Nevertheless, Māori and iwi welcomed the opportunity to live with, and benefit from, these encounters. Missionaries were important allies, as were traders, but as Dorothy Urlich Clothier writes with respect to the northern mainland:

Protection for the missionaries was to come at a price though. Hongi was prepared to provide it for the sake of his people, not because they loved the missionaries but because they valued them. Protection was an exchange for the advantages accruing from their presence, namely, access to new technology, trade, and enhanced understanding of the English language – a necessary means for achieving the first two.<sup>70</sup>

While missionaries served a purpose, Māori were facing an emerging and dangerous colonial reality and sought to take and use what they could from the presence of traders and missionaries.<sup>71</sup> Trade and exchange in the Hauraki Gulf, as Paul Monin notes, included shipbuilding at The Barrier

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<sup>69</sup> Michael King, *Nga Iwi o te Motu: 1000 years of Māori History* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2006), p. 36.

<sup>70</sup> Dorothy Urlich Clothier, *Hongi Hika: Warrior Chief* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 96.

<sup>71</sup> Ranginui Walker also states, ‘[A]s early as 1842 a bank manager in Wellington estimated Māori wealth to be upwards of 150,000 [pounds]’. Walker, p. 100.

and 'the extraction of copper at Katherine Bay' by 1842.<sup>72</sup> Early Pākehā visitors and settlers brought with them technologies that were foreign to Māori, and the most destructive perhaps was the musket.

The intrusion of the musket into Māori society ushered in a new and more effective way to combat old enemies, and it decimated the Māori population at an alarming rate. Judith Binney writes that 'it has been estimated that Ngāpuhi, the victor confederation of tribes in the [eighteen] twenties, lost about 19% of their men in these battles'.<sup>73</sup> Michael King states that

it was Hongi Hika in particular who equipped an army with muskets for battle and potatoes for supplies and who, in a succession of expeditions, laid waste his tribal opponents on a scale that was unprecedented. In adopting this strategy, Hongi was doing something that Maori in general accomplished with flair: making use of European technology to strengthen Maori values, practices and institutions.<sup>74</sup>

These new technologies that Pākehā brought with them assisted Ngāpuhi in the destruction and devastation of opposing tribes. The formidable Hika led fierce raids on neighbouring tribes, particularly around the North Island, with his new acquisition of muskets.<sup>75</sup> During these turbulent years, because of the close connections

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<sup>72</sup> Paul Monin, *This is My Place: Hauraki Contested 1769-1875* (Auckland: Bridget Williams Books, 2001), p. 130.

<sup>73</sup> Judith Binney, *Christianity and the Māoris till 1840: A Comment*, [http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1969/NZJH\\_03\\_2\\_03.pdf](http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1969/NZJH_03_2_03.pdf) [accessed 20th September 2017] p. 149. Binney further adds, 'After two years from the beginning of the wars between Matamata and Rotorua (1836) the 'old' chiefs could not raise sufficient forces: taua of 600 to 800 men were reduced to 200 or 300'. Binney, p. 151.

<sup>74</sup> King, p.11.

<sup>75</sup> Ranginui Walker writes that "Hongi protected the missionaries because he hoped that their presence would attract more ships to the Bay of Islands, thereby increasing the chances for trade." Walker argues that when Hika travelled to London, his "hidden" agenda was focused on acquiring muskets to avenge previous Ngā Puhi grievances with other iwi. Walker, pp. 81–83.

between Ngāti Rehua and Ngāpuhi, would often be called on to assist Hika's campaigns. In the words of Paratene Te Manu of Ngāti Rehua from the 1890s, 'I fought in a number of battles with the Ngāpuhi of the north, under Hongi and other chiefs against the tribes of the Thames and the East Coast.'<sup>76</sup> He further adds, 'My first fight [whawhai tuatahi] was at the Tamaki, where in those days many people lived. I and my elders went with a great army of Ngāpuhi, under Hongi, to the pa Mauinaina on the Tamaki.'<sup>77</sup> This statement by Te Manu reveals Ngāti Rehua's allegiance with Ngāpuhi, but also highlights that through this alliance they would have been exposed to missionary influence.

With Hika's acquisition of muskets, in 1821 he gathered an ope tauā of over 2,000 men which would leave a terrible aftermath of destruction and kai tangata. The ope tauā arrived at Marutūahu pā, Te Totara, Thames, but Ngāpuhi and its allies could not penetrate their defences. He therefore devised a plan to make peace with the people of Marūtūahu, which he had no intention of honouring.<sup>78</sup> The Ngāti Rehua authority Witi McMath states:

At Te Totara, Ngati Maru were humiliated during whaikorero, and were forced to conclude peace by gifting precious taonga to Ngapuhi. Once peace had been concluded Hongi and his allies then withdrew to the north and camped at Taruru. Hongi then intimated to the taua that he intended to return under the cover of darkness to attack Te Totara. Pomare felt that Ngāti Maru had been sufficiently humiliated and opposed this proposal being forward by Hongi stating 'me haehaetia koi ate rau i peke i te matangi'. Taukōkopu of Ngāti Wai ... also opposed the plan ... When Hongi

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<sup>76</sup> Cowan, p. 79.

<sup>77</sup> Cowan, p. 79.

<sup>78</sup> McMath, p. 29.



decided to proceed with his attack on Te Totara, Pomare and Ngāti Manu withdrew from the taua and returned with Taukōkopu and Ngati Wai to Aotea.

This statement from McMath highlights the deceptive tendencies Hika deployed during the Musket Wars and the close association Ngāti Rehua had with Ngāpuhi, especially Pomare's hapū, Ngāti Manu. After the slaughter at Te Totara pā, great animosity continued between Marutūahu and Ngāpuhi. This hatred between the two tribes seriously impacted the people of Aotea because of their close whakapapa connections to both iwi. It may also help to explain why Ngāti Rehua were forced to become even more elusive. This will be shown in two significant events, firstly one in 1827, and secondly the last musket war in the Hauraki Gulf in 1838.

In 1827 a Marutūahu rangatira, Te Maunu, his wife, Kahukaka (Ngāti Manu), and their son, Ngahua, were visiting Aotea at the same time as Pomare II and his raiding party from Ngāti Manu.<sup>79</sup> The island was a place where many on such expeditions visited to replenish supplies and maintain whakawhānautanga with its inhabitants. It was during one of these visits that Te Maunu, Ngahua and Kahukaka became friendly with the visiting Ngāpuhi party. Pomare II devised a plan to take Te Maunu and his son Ngahua on board their waka to show him where the whapuku (hapuka) fishing grounds were. Once Te Maunu and his son were on the Ngāpuhi waka, they were killed and eaten by Pomare II and his people.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Pomare I was closely related to the people of Ngāti Wai not only through Ngāti Manaia but also Kawerau. 'His Kawerau tupuna Te Korotai had in fact assisted Te Rangituangahuru in the conquest of Aotea'. McMath, p. 29.

<sup>80</sup> Crosby, p. 189. Also, McMath, 30–33, Geo. Graham, Te Aotea (Great Barrier Island) The Happenings there, Leading to the Last Intertribal Wars of Hauraki in The Journal of the Polynesian Society Volume 54 1945, p.193. S. Percy Smith, *Māori Wars of the Nineteenth*

Kahukaka was so grief stricken at the death of her husband and son that she composed a lament (Appendix B). This lament highlights the contempt she now held for the treachery of Ngāpuhi, her own iwi, and reflects the depth of rivalry that continued between these two iwi for some time after.<sup>81</sup>

This context of intertribal conflict through the 1820s and into the 1830s enveloped the people at Aotea in waves that demanded careful negotiation. As the traffic of raiding parties, either going to war or returning with captives, flowed through and around the island, there is no doubt that it impacted on Ngāti Rehua life, politics and even spiritual experiences. While muskets and Ngāpuhi imperialism were part of that experience, it also makes sense to assume that — like those captives who converted to Christianity while in Ngāpuhi custody — the people of Aotea must have been privy to, and aware of, the growing impact of the new religious discourse. Early missionary William Williams, who was instrumental in the conversion of many Māori during these formative years, noted:

Where a disposition to restless warfare has given way to peace, and a murderous treachery to Christian simplicity – where quarrels are settled by arbitration, and a power to resent injury gives way to amicable adjustment – where restitution is made for injury done, and where heathenish rites give place to Christian worship.<sup>82</sup>

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*Century: The Struggle of the Northern against the Southern Māori Tribes prior to the Colonisation of New Zealand in 1840* (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, 1910), p. 394-6

<sup>81</sup> These grievances between Marutūahu and Ngāpuhi were instrumental in the assistance from Marutūahu to the people of Aotea in 1838, during the last musket war in the gulf.

<sup>82</sup> Williams, p. 287.

This is further supported by an article from the *Illustrated London News*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1844, which described the following:

A correspondent from New Zealand reported there is some difficulty in giving what may be considered a general description of the natives, they being at present in a state of transition from barbarism and hereditary love of war, to peace and the art of civilised life. Tribes exist in the interior, which from their little intercourse with Europeans remain in a savage state; others by the exertions of missionaries experienced a complete change in their habits and disposition.<sup>83</sup>

These comments reveal the colonial mindset of the time, the ideological conviction that if missionaries converted Māori to Christianity they would become “civilised” and assimilated into a Westernised society. The colonial evangelical mindset also included the belief that such conversion should enable the local indigenous peoples to “naturalise” Christianity in their own way. This was part of the legacy of “evangelical philanthropists” like Rev. Henry Venn who, as Hirini Kaa points out, was an ‘influential power broker in Britain’ at the time, was in ‘a strategic position to make decisions on the shaping of the political empire’, and emphasised ‘both spiritual and social freedom through Christianity.’<sup>84</sup> While European missionaries were dispersed in small numbers throughout Aotearoa, proselyting among Māori communities, it was Māori agents that were primarily responsible for rapid and widespread conversion in iwi and hapū spaces. Kaa points out that Māori “Native

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<sup>83</sup> Cited in, Clifford Roy Simons, “Military Intelligence in the New Zealand Wars, 1845-1864” (Unpublished PhD thesis, Massey University 2012), p .61.

<sup>84</sup> Kaa, 2014, p. 37. William Williams who worked among East Coast Māori stated, 'It was not through the labours of missionaries, for the Word had only been preached by native teachers. The missionaries literally stood "still to see the salvation of God"'. Cited in Kay Sanderson, Māori Christianity on the East Coast 1840-1870 < [http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1983/NZJH\\_17\\_2\\_05.pdf](http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1983/NZJH_17_2_05.pdf)> [accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018] p. 167.

Agents” through the nineteenth-century conversion period vastly outnumbered European missionaries. He writes that by ‘1844 these numbers had “exploded to” 12 European Missionaries and 295 Native Agents, and by 1854 there were 23 European Missionaries, 1 Native Clergy and 440 Native Agents’.<sup>85</sup>

In 1833 European missionaries appear to have had their first tentative contacts with Aotea. Reverend Henry Williams was off the coast of the island when his party hit bad weather and found that their boat was unmanageable. Fearing that they would have to land at Aotea, he describes their anxiety: ‘Should we escape the fury of the sea, and obtain a landing; what then? There is no Christian hand to befriend us – none from whom we could obtain relief; should any Natives be near us, they would but add to our distress.’<sup>86</sup> Williams’ concern highlights the lack of Christian influence at the time of his arrival. Of his experience there, he further remarked that ‘as we approached we observed the people fled with all expedition, and it was not till they discovered that we were in boats not canoes that some ventured to come near us’.<sup>87</sup> Williams’ observation was also indicative of the caution prevalent amongst local Māori at that time; basically they lived in fear of attack. Williams observed further that ‘when they were convinced that we belonged to the mission they came forth with evident pleasure and began immediately to provide food’.<sup>88</sup> This hospitality tells us that local iwi at Aotea understood, to some degree, the broadly positive relations between Māori and missionaries in

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<sup>85</sup> Cited in Kaa, 2014, p. 44.

<sup>86</sup> Church Missionary Record, Detailing the Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for the Year 1833 (London: Richard Watts, 1833), p. 122.

<sup>87</sup> Henry Williams, ‘January to December 1833’, in *The Early Journals of Henry Williams: Senior Missionary in New Zealand of the Church Missionary Society 1826-40*, ed. by Lawrence M. Rogers (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1961), p.303.

<sup>88</sup> Williams, P.303.

the wider region, and likewise suggests that they were not opposed to Christianity per se.

Around the same period, however, especially around the Bay of Islands, there was an emerging disillusionment towards European-style Christianity and a desire to shape Christian ideas with local ideas and perspectives. This saw the emergence of the first Māori prophetic movement, '*Papahurihia*'.<sup>89</sup> Joel Samuel Polack, in his reflections on this topic, remarked that

[this] new religion which has sprung up, called Papahurihia. It has been said the captain of a ship first introduced it, but is impossible to believe it. They have made their Sunday on the Saturday, and work on a Sunday. There was a quarrel between those who had embraced the tenets of the Wesleyans and those new lights; there was skirmishing among them, and many lives lost<sup>90</sup>

Judith Ward, in her thesis on the subject, highlights an important aspect of the emergence of the Papahurihia movement:

Papahurihia is an important historical figure for a number of reasons. In the context of the literature of the Māori response to Christianity in the Bay of Islands in the 1830s, the emergence of his syncretistic doctrine has been treated as evidence of the missionary 'breakthrough' and the partial adoption of Christian ideas by Māori.<sup>91</sup>

Hirini Kaa also proposes that 'the missionaries were not by-and-large as interested in developing deep *Māori* faith, as much as a deep *English* one,

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<sup>89</sup> Angela Middleton, *Te Puna - A New Zealand Mission Station: Historical Archaeology in New Zealand* (Dunedin, University of Otago, 2008) pp. 105–8. See also Walker, p. 130. See also, Elsmore, pp. 21–22.

<sup>90</sup> Ward, p. 91.

<sup>91</sup> Judith Ward, "The Invention of Papahurihia" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Massey University, 2016), p. 1.

based on English concepts and ideas, and dismissive of mātauranga Māori'.<sup>92</sup> With the emergence of this new faith, which not only included mātauranga Māori but was also steeped in Christian principles, came a syncretism of two world views. Judith Binney adds another angle, that 'former converts were turning away from a religion that failed to provide what they sought in it: equal power and wealth with the Europeans'.<sup>93</sup>

Christianity had started to become embedded in the Māori psyche, being reworked and reimagined by Māori to serve their local contexts. Historian John Owens also suggests that 'missionary activity was often more successful in areas where there had been little cultural disturbance'.<sup>94</sup> The cultural disturbance that Owens discusses can be 'substituted for such terms as "decline", "disintegration", "demoralisation" or "confusion"'.<sup>95</sup> Christianity by the 1830s began to make its way to the East Coast where there was a large number of converts.<sup>96</sup> This process was facilitated by Ngāpuhi's freeing of captives who had been previously converted and returned home with the new belief system. Owens also argues that 'Maoris proved receptive to Christianity when unsuccessful in musket warfare'.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, as Owens alluded to in his idea of "cultural disturbance", Māori who had limited contact with Pākehā (or experiences of cultural disturbance) tended to be less exposed to the contradictory principles that European Christians professed. For example, the New

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<sup>92</sup> Kaa, p. 42.

<sup>93</sup> Binney, p.322.

<sup>94</sup> J.M.R. Owens, Christianity and the Māoris to 1840, *New Zealand Journal of History*, [http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1968/NZJH\\_02\\_1\\_03.pdf](http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1968/NZJH_02_1_03.pdf) [accessed 10th January 2018] p. 24.

<sup>95</sup> Owens, p. 24.

<sup>96</sup> Owens, p. 28.

<sup>97</sup> Owens, p.33.

Zealand Company, outlining the procedures needed to interact with Māori in the purchasing of land, stated:

You will take care that the servants of the Company show every mark of respect to the missionaries with whom you may meet, and also in conversation with the natives respecting them. This is due to their calling; is deserved by the sacrifices they have made as the pioneers of civilization; and will, moreover, be found of service in your intercourse with the natives, who, in the northern part of the North Island at least regard missionary settlers with the greatest respect. Except in cases of unavoidable necessity, the servants of the Company will perform no work on Sunday; and you will always assemble them for public worship on that day. You will find that the natives who have had much intercourse with missionaries, draw a marked distinction between those settlers who work on Sundays, and those who do not, regarding the former as inferior people, and the latter as rangatiras, or gentlemen.<sup>98</sup>

Historian Allan K. Davidson further adds that 'Maori did not necessarily reject Christianity, but many of them rejected missionary Christianity. The evangelical missionaries had little understanding of these [Maori prophetic] movements and treated them as heterodox and aberrant and in the process contributed to their continuance'.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Bronwyn Elsmore writes that 'Maori religious life was well developed; the problem was merely one of a difference in what made up religion in each of the cultures, with the missionaries seeing the other only from their own viewpoint'.<sup>100</sup> Although there was Māori resistance to, or syncretism of, Christianised faiths, these also coincided with the mass conversions that

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<sup>98</sup> Ward, pp. 125–6

<sup>99</sup> Allan K. Davidson, "The Pacific Is No Longer a Mission Field?" Conversion in the South Pacific in the Twentieth Century' ed. By Donald M. Lewis in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 139.

<sup>100</sup> Elsmore, p.3.

were happening throughout the motu. This included missionaries converting iwi on neighbouring islands; for instance, Waiheke and the surrounding areas of Hauraki.

During the 1830s, also, the Church Missionary Society started to establish itself within Māori communities in the Hauraki region, including a station at Puriri, near today's Thames. Paul Monin states that 'the new mission would be located centrally on the river system that linked Hauraki with the Waikato and Tauranga, providing access to a large Māori population. Once again water played its part in the human history of the region'.<sup>101</sup> During this period the sea and waterways played pivotal roles in the movements of both warring tribes and evangelising missionaries around Aotearoa.

### **Aotea and its Outer Islands**

With the increase in baptisms across the country from the 1830s, more missionaries began to arrive to convert and "civilise" Māori. On the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1842, Bishop George Augustus Selwyn arrived in Auckland aboard the brig *Bristolian*. Of his travels he remarked:

On my way to Wellington, I touched at the Great Barrier Island, Aotea; where I found a party of forty Natives in a deplorable state of ignorance, all their intercourse with the English having been confined to traffic with

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<sup>101</sup> Paul Monin, *Hauraki Contested: 1769 – 1875* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001), p. 78.



whale-ships. On my return to Waimate, I hope to send some books, and, if possible, a Native Teacher.<sup>102</sup>

Selwyn's idea that the 'natives ... intercourse with the English having been confined to traffic with whale ships', demonstrates his limited knowledge of Māori society. Interactions between iwi in the area reveal a much more entangled pattern of interactions between themselves and with Pākehā. Thus, the people of Aotea were not simply of the island but had connections to other iwi and other places. These connections would certainly have included engagement with missionaries and Pākehā traders, and most importantly with other Māori converts. What Selwyn's comments do reveal, with particular relevance to this study, is that Māori at Aotea were engaging and trading with Pākehā whaling ships, and thus were not simply isolated and undisturbed. However, during the same year Selwyn visited Aotea, a native teacher began the proselysation of Māori on Waiheke Island.<sup>103</sup> This resulted in many Māori there becoming proficient in the teachings of the gospel, as highlighted by Selwyn's account:

The school was conducted in the most orderly manner; grown-up men, in full English dress, standing round in classes, according to proficiency, and reading and taking places with all the docility and good humour of children. After the reading, they marched in perfect order into the Chapel; where they repeated by heart a chapter of the New Testament with great accuracy and were afterward questioned by Mr. Maunsell. All this was the more surprising, because this village is but rarely visited by an English

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<sup>102</sup> The Missionary Register for M DCCC XLIII, Containing the Principle Transactions of the Various Institutions for Propagating the Gospel: with the Proceedings, at Large, of the Church Missionary Society (London; R. Watts, 1843), p. 384.

<sup>103</sup> Church Missionary Gleaner 1842, Vol. II. pp. 93–4.

Missionary, since the illness of Mr. Fairburn prevented him from going about among the Natives.<sup>104</sup>

So while there was contact between missionaries and the inhabitants of nearby Aotea, it was dramatically less than the full conversion process that had occurred by 1842 on Waiheke. This lack of emphasis on Aotea, too, may be partly attributed to the relatively small number of Māori residing at Aotea. This is reflected by the population numbers recorded by visiting English missionaries.<sup>105</sup> Māori on the island lived at various kainga and were very mobile on the island itself as well as around the region. The following was said by Witi McMath during a 1995 court hearing:

Ngati Rehua have harvested the resources of these motu, motu nohinohi and kohatu, and the surrounding seas, for many centuries. Our people continue to visit them and to harvest their resources today. Our many whanau who are resident on Aotea are heavily reliant on these resources for their material and spiritual wellbeing.<sup>106</sup>

This provides an explanation as to why there were very little Māori recorded on the island during the early brief visitations by missionaries.

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<sup>104</sup> Church Missionary Gleaner 1842, Vol. II. pp. 93–4. Also the Missionary Register, p. 383.

<sup>105</sup> Selwyn's estimation in 1833 was of a resident group of forty. The same year Henry Williams landed on the island and sighted Māori but did not keep a record of numbers.

<sup>106</sup> McMath, p. 3. See also in 1929, Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act. 1925: Report and Recommendation on Petition No. 175 of 1924, of Mita Wepiha and Others Relative to Motukino Island. In this judgement it is recommended by Judge F.O.V. Acheson that '[t]he court does not think that any good purpose would be served by returning the island to the Natives, but in view of the position as set out in this report it begs to suggest that some little consideration be shown by the Crown to the Natives interested during consolidation proceedings pending. The Court also begs to recommend that the Natives be allowed to continue to use Motukino Island for fishing and bird-nesting and bird-snaring purposes as in the past'. Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1929 Session I, G-06b, Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act. 1925: Report and Recommendation on Petition No. 175 of 1924, of Mita Wepiha and Others Relative to Motukino Island, p. 2.

As emphasised by Ngāti Rehua kaumātua Witi McMath, in order to survive on Aotea itself, Māori utilised their outer islands for gathering and harvesting the necessary foods to sustain their community throughout the year.<sup>107</sup>

### **The Theft of the Land**

Another major factor to why Māori at Aotea remained unconverted for another half century was the alienation of land from 1838. Well prior to the establishment of the Native Land Court in 1865, the whole island of Aotea had been alienated from Ngāti Rehua. In March 1838, a Hauraki rangatira Horeta Te Taniwha “sold” the entire landmass, described as being “20,000 acres”, to his son-in-law William Webster. This figure turned out to be markedly incorrect, as the island is over 70,000 acres.<sup>108</sup> Webster also claimed that he bought the island from ‘three hundred of the principle chiefs of the Thames’.<sup>109</sup> This is an incredible number of “chiefs” for that region during this period, considering there were very few mentioned in the land sale document.

This transaction supposedly occurred after the last musket war in the Hauraki Gulf in 1838, although there are some discrepancies with the dates. The last musket war in the Hauraki Gulf transpired when Ngāpuhi was freeing their East Coast captives and were adhering to Christian principles. According to Michael King, ‘Ngāpuhi Māori gradually came under Christian influence and began to release their considerable number

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<sup>107</sup> Beazley, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Evidence given in the 1995 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247. See also Appendices to the Journal of House of Representatives, Sess. II, 1887 Webster’s Land Claims p.14.

<sup>109</sup> Appendices to the Journal of House of Representatives, Sess. II, 1887 Websters Land Claims p. 9.

of captives in the 1830s, it was Māori evangelists so freed who began to carry the gospel to most southern parts of the country'.<sup>110</sup> This is also confirmed in an article in the *Daily Southern Cross*, dated 27<sup>th</sup> July 1855:

Peace having been established, as was supposed, upon a firm footing, Pomare II emancipated his general, [Te] Mauparaoa, and gave him permission to return with other liberated slaves to the East Coast. The party consisted of about one hundred and twenty men, who, with their wives and children, embarked on board six canoes.<sup>111</sup>

When Te Mauparaoa left the protection of Ngāpuhi he was advised by Pomare II: 'See that you do nothing ill by the way. Remember that you are no longer under my care: I therefore advise you to act with caution and prudence.'<sup>112</sup> These words of warning fell on deaf ears, and soon the peaceful people of Aotea were embroiled in a battle with the freed captives of the East Coast, as Te Mauparaoa led the people of Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Porou back to their own whenua. They were travelling in eight waka with Ngāpuhi when they landed at Aotea to gather provisions for their journey. In the *Daily Southern Cross*, the reporter states that 'the little fleet, on its way homeward, touched at the Great Barrier island, which place was a general rendezvous in those days, and the tribes, when assembled there, used to feel a degree of safety, as any approaching foe was discernible in the distance'.<sup>113</sup> Reverend Dr. Lang also describes this battle, recounting that 'towards the close of the year 1838, about one hundred fighting men of one of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Island, went on a predatory excursion to the

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<sup>110</sup> King, p. 27.

<sup>111</sup> It must be noted that although this article states six waka, local oral tradition recorded eight, this may be due to others that joined the party on their return home. Chapter V, *Daily Southern Cross*, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1855

<sup>112</sup> DSC 27<sup>th</sup> July 1855.

<sup>113</sup> DSC 27<sup>th</sup> July 1855

Barrier Island'.<sup>114</sup>

William Thomas Fairburn estimated that the population of Aotea at this time was one hundred and seventy people.<sup>115</sup> In our *kōrero* *tuku iho* it is recorded by Witi McMath that 'there were only 30 immediately available toa on Aotea'.<sup>116</sup> He further adds that 'our *tupuna* had no reasons to expect an attack in this period. Christianity had begun to take hold, the Musket Wars appeared to be over, and Ngāti Rehua faced no immediate threat from either Ngāpuhi or Marutuahu. They certainly had no quarrel with Ngāti Kahungunu'.<sup>117</sup> This is reinforced in an account from Reverend Dr. Lang who describes 'interlopers from the Bay of Islands [as] having therefore billeted themselves on the peaceful and unoffending natives of that island'.<sup>118</sup> Ngāti Rehua were renowned for their hospitality towards all visitors and tribes and would have presumed that no threat was imminent.

When those on the visiting *waka* realised most of the men were away harvesting *manu oi* (mutton birds) on the offshore islands, they plundered food stores, interfered with local women, and stole guns and ammunition from the leading chief at the time, Te Mariri. He sent a plea to his *whānaunga* at Hauraki for assistance. CMS missionary, W T Fairburn, describes the battle that took place in December 1838:

After stripping a small plantation of kumara etc a messenger belonging to the place was despatched to Hauraki in the night who the Ngati Whanaunga

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<sup>114</sup> Cited in Smith, p. 459.

<sup>115</sup> Cited in Monin, p. 26.

<sup>116</sup> McMath, p.35.

<sup>117</sup> McMath, p. 35.

<sup>118</sup> Smith, p. 460.

[sic] and Ngāti Maru joined [and also] the school boys of Hauraki who however on seeing their own party likely to be worsted commenced firing upon the enemy in their rear which turned the scale and the enemy were forced to fly for their lives to the woods. More than one hundred fell in this very sad affair including [members of] both parties.<sup>119</sup>

It is interesting to note that the dates for the battle given by both Fairburn and Lang are the end of 1838. This seems to contradict the claim that the sale of the land to Webster occurred in March 1838, as this would have been before the battle had commenced. Monin suggests that 'they were not 'selling' rights acquired from Ngāti Rehua only weeks before through *tuku whenua*; but, I believe, rights founded on some other *take*, probably *tupuna* or even *raupatu*, dating from very much earlier'.<sup>120</sup> Monin's notion of some other take (claim) giving rights to Marutūahu to sell Aotea is just conjecture. Ngāpuhi also had previously tried to sell land that belonged to Ngāti Rehua;<sup>121</sup> mainland tribes with no rights to Aotea continually tried to sell Aotea for profit. However, McMath believes that the battle occurred at the beginning of 1838, and so contradicting the accounts of Fairburn and Lang. He also stated that Ngāti Rehua today believes that Marutūahu

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<sup>119</sup> Monin, p.26.

<sup>120</sup> Monin, p.27.

<sup>121</sup> Cited in Ralph Johnson, Report on the Acquisition of Hauturu (Little Barrier Island) WAI 567  
[https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt\\_DOC\\_94185120/Wai%20567%2C%20A001.pdf](https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_94185120/Wai%20567%2C%20A001.pdf) [accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018] 'Native Land Court files record a much earlier attempt to alienate Hauturu to the Crown, Ngāpuhi chief, Pomare, from the Bay of Islands attempted to sell Hauturu to Crown agent James Reddy Clendon in 1844, as part of the 'Mahurangi purchase'. And, despite Pomare receiving a deposit payment from Clendon, representatives from other tribal interests (perhaps including Te Hemara Tauhia and Te Kiri) convinced the Government not to pursue the purchase further.<sup>2</sup> In a later Native Land Court hearing senior Ngātiwai witness, Paratene Te Manu, alluded to the fact that Ngātiwai had sent correspondence to the Government in the waka of Pomare's attempts to sell the island. The letter allegedly requested the Government not to buy the island, and instead 'wished Government to look after their place'. In reply the Government apparently re-assured Ngātiwai they would look after the island'.

had been generously recompensed for the loss of their 100 warriors in the 1838 battle, so that the sale of Aotea by Marutūahu chiefs was without justification. McMath gives this *kōrero* *tuku iho* regarding the outcome of the battle:

With the agreement of Ngāti Wai [Marutuahu] had been allowed to retain most of the Ngāti Kahungunu captives, and most importantly the majority of taonga of the defeated taua. Our tupuna Te Heru took several Ngāti Kahungunu women as wives, as did Taiawa Te Awaroa.

Marutuahu were given all eight of the Ngāti Kahungunu waka, including the famous waka taua known as '*Waikohare*'. They also retained the pounamu and other taonga of the defeated taua, including their guns and ammunition. This is verified by Hera Puna of Ngāti Whanaunga who stated in relation to Marutuahu recompense after the battle – '*Ka riro mai ratou waka nui me nga utanga, ara nga pu, nga paura, me nga taonga mahamaha atu*'.<sup>122</sup>

The people of Ngāti Rehua are of the opinion that Marutūahu were fairly compensated for their contribution to the defeat of the raiding party. According to Hampton Thorp, 'Mr Preece [Church Missionary Society missionary] says that some of the Thames party fighting [Te Mauparaoa] were believers, and so, when the battle was over, they refused to join in the eating of the slain. Therefore, after much altercation, the bodies were left just as they lay on the ground'.<sup>123</sup> This statement emphasises the shift already occurring in and around the Hauraki Gulf: that many Māori there had taken on Christian principles.

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<sup>122</sup> McMath, p .37. W. Hampton Thorp also recorded stating, 'the largest of them, which I saw in 1840, at Te Kouma Bay, Coromandel, measured 84 feet in length and was called Waaikohari'. Alexander Turnbull Library, Reminiscences of W Hampton Thorp and other writings, 89-249-9/19

<sup>123</sup> W. Hampton Thorp Alexander Turnbull Library, Reminiscences of W Hampton Thorp and other writings, 89-249-9/19

It may be that the key factors as to why Ngāti Rehua took so long to convert to Christianity were the invasion by the Ngapuhi/Kahungunu war party in 1838, and the theft of their land in the immediate aftermath. Michael King highlights the manipulative American trader Webster's influence across the Hauraki region:

He used his Maori kinship associations to encourage Maori communities to grow fruit and vegetable produce and pigs for export, and to harvest timber and flax. He extended his operations to Great Barrier Island and, when the European settlement of Auckland was established in 1840, Webster's growers and workers supplied much of the town's early produce and firewood.<sup>124</sup>

King's notion that Webster encouraged Māori to be productive in supplying Aotearoa with much-needed supplies is not relevant to Aotea. References or oral history regarding Webster's influence with local Māori at Aotea have been difficult to find. It is undeniable, however, that his takeover of the island marked Ngāti Rehua's alienation from their land and the start of the encroachment by Pākehā settlers into the island.

In 1841, Webster sold an interest in Aotea to Abercrombie and Nagle, which would become a derivative claim. During this time, the Land Claims Ordinance was the statutory authority, allowing the Crown to establish the Land Claims Commission. This commission was created for the purposes of examining land claims that occurred prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. It gave Pākehā claimants the opportunity to have their grievances heard under British law rather than Māori tikanga.

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<sup>124</sup>King p.127.



The Land Claim Ordinance of 1841 allowed each claimant one claim with a maximum Crown Grant of 2560 acres.<sup>125</sup> In 1842 Governor Fitzroy attempted to have The Land Claims Ordinance 1841 amended to enable the Crown to award grants over 2560 acres. In 1844 Britain declined the amendment to The Land Claims Ordinance, and the Land Claims Commissioner Godfrey also declined Webster's claim to Aotea.<sup>126</sup> This, however, did not stop Fitzroy and he allowed Webster his claim to the island. Webster stated that he was the purchaser for Aotea, on behalf of the said Abercrombie and Nagle, both of whom were British subjects and thus were not subjected to the same limitations as Webster, an American. Webster declined to relinquish his American citizenship and appeal to his British ancestry. However, the tactics employed in the Aotea land transaction sale were overall favourable to Webster. In 1844, Webster issued a new claim alleging that he had bought the land for Nagle and Abercrombie, who were British subjects. He and his associates were then granted the following: Webster 8,080 acres, Nagle 8,070 acres, Abercrombie 8,119 acres, totalling 24,269 acres — significantly more than the 20,000 acres they had originally asked for.<sup>127</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, Aotea was a site increasingly occupied by Pākehā settlers. Ngāti Rehua continued to occupy some of their traditional lands but in uncertain legal circumstances. Moreover, they were obliged to engage with settlers and traders in a new round of land alienations and were often victims of unscrupulous acquisitions. It is very possible that growing missionary involvement in dubious land transactions on the

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<sup>125</sup> Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.

<sup>126</sup> Evidence given in the 1993 court case, extract from Minute Book 21 AT 242-247.

<sup>127</sup> Appendices to the Journal of House of Representatives, Sess. II, 1887 Websters Land Claims, p. 27.

mainland was also becoming an issue for the Māori community on Aotea, and further caused them to avoid engagement with the churches. The idea that European missionaries were unscrupulous on such matters was supported by Reverend Dr. John Dunmore Lang, when he wrote in June 1839 to Earl Dunham the letter *'On the Character and Influence of the Missions Hitherto Established in New Zealand, as Regards the Aborigines'*, stating:

[T]he missionaries of the Church Missionary Society have themselves been the foremost and the most successful in despoiling them [Maori] of their land. In short, the case of these missionaries is, in this respect, the most monstrous that has occurred in the whole history of missions since the Reformation - the most disgraceful to Protestant Christianity. There has, doubtless, been no express agreement between the Church Missionary Society and its missionaries in New Zealand, that the latter should not be permitted to purchase land for themselves from the natives ... .missionaries themselves shall not be permitted to abuse their influence and opportunities by becoming landholders or cattleholders among the heathen.<sup>128</sup>

Prior to the above statement, Lang also highlighted the inadequacies of the missionaries serving in New Zealand during this period, asserting:

It has come to pass that, instead of sending forth to those interesting and important stations beyond seas, that demanded the Pauls and Silases of our national establishments, men of superior talents, and education, and piety, and zeal,—we have been sending forth, with only a few solitary exceptions, *the lame, the halt, and the blind* of these establishments.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> John Dunmore Lang, New Zealand in 1839, Four Letters to the Right Honourable Earl Durham in The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout: Volume 29, <<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Stout29-t27-body-d2.html>> [accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018] p. 28.

<sup>129</sup> Lang, p. 20.

In 1853, the Crown legally allocated Māori on Aotea an area in the north of 3,510 acres, as a “Maori Reserve”.<sup>130</sup> This land is still owned by the hapū today, with not one acre having been sold. McMath highlights the inconsistencies or misunderstandings of the 1853 judgement with the following statement: ‘It was from this time that many people came to assume, quite incorrectly, that Ngāti Rehua *mana whenua* and *whenua tupuna*, applied only to the land lying north of the survey boundary established by the Land Claims Commissioner in 1844.’<sup>131</sup> This statement by McMath reaffirms Ngāti Rehua’s ongoing ownership of the entirety of Aotea, and that they continued to retain their *mana whenua* and *mana tupuna*, even when subjected to colonial and postcolonial authority.

The dismantling of hapū structures by colonial powers, through the confiscation and alienation of land, ushered in more Pākehā settlers and the need for land became even more paramount. When more settlers began arriving in Aotearoa, the Government required more land, and in 1863, the ‘*Land Wars*’ in the Waikato had begun. During this tempestuous period, many Pākehā on the island were fearful of being attacked by local Māori. An agent and manager for the Great Barrier Company, Albert J. Allom, wrote to Alfred Dommett requesting arms and ammunition in case of an uprising. The tāhāe of land, prior to the Waikato wars, was done during the second land claim purchases in the 1850s, upsetting local Māori. He records that at this time there were only one hundred and twenty Pākehā living on the island with only eighty whom were ‘strong

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<sup>130</sup> Evidence given by Tara Te Mariri in the 1871 Rakitū Investigation, this evidence was also utilised in the 1993 court hearing. See Auckland MB No. 2, Rakitu Investigation, January 1871, MLCMBI Record No. 52761, pp. 17-45.

<sup>131</sup> McMath, p.13.

and able bodied men accustomed to the bush'.<sup>132</sup> In a further letter, Allom estimated the number of Māori who were currently residing on the island during this time to be around twenty-five to thirty.<sup>133</sup> This is an alarming statement by Allom; it demonstrates the hysteria that was prevalent during this period. No doubt instituted by the colonial Government and ignited and spread by media reports. It further signals how separated Pākehā and Māori had become on the island and why Māori took so long to convert to Christianity.

Land confiscation and the incursion of Pākehā settlers within Māori communities forced many into Westernised concepts of being. This became further enhanced with the indoctrination of European Christianity. Thus began a dramatic decline of Māori on the island. This decimation may be attributable to Pākehā settlers and the ease with which they took land, leading to the rapid displacement of many Māori. The effects of colonisation and loss of land are clearly visible through the figures demonstrated by Allom, but also highlight the probable reason why missionaries were so sporadic on the island. The lack of Māori residing there could have been a key factor why missionaries did not frequent the island or establish a native school. It gives the impression that European missionaries viewed Aotea as an isolated outpost and not worthy of effort to convert local Māori.

## Summary

This chapter argues that, with the end of the Musket Wars in the late

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<sup>132</sup> Moor, p. 46.

<sup>133</sup> Moor, p. 46.

1830s, and the imposition of British colonialism and colonisation across the whole country, a less mobile way of life became a reality for Ngāti Rehua. From that time also, this community was being forced to confront another harsh reality: the thefts of its traditional lands by Pākehā, often with the assistance of members of the Hauraki tribes. Ngāti Rehua now found themselves floundering in a foreign legal system, a process that left them even more disenfranchised and antagonistic towards missionaries and Christianisation. Their forced relocation to a reserve in 1853 fundamentally undermined their access to food, resources, and indeed their identity and mana as a community. Ngāti Rehua's recognised lands now comprised just 3,510 acres, a far cry from the 70,000 acres they had occupied up until 1838.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> This is mentioned with the 1838 musket battle on the island, many of the men were away harvesting mutton birds. Also see Witi McMath, pp. 6–8. He discusses Ngāti Rehua's occupation of multiple pā and kainga on the island and outer islands.

## Chapter 3: Mormonism Arrives on Aotea

Prior to the arrival of Mormon missionaries on the island, there had been prophetic messages by Matakite questioning the authenticity of European Christian denominations. Māori were questioning the missionaries' allegiance to a colonial government that was actively seeking to disenfranchise and separate Māori from their whenua.<sup>135</sup> After conversion in 1889, the iwi negotiated the retention (to some extent) of their traditional cultural beliefs, but Mormonism did not allow for a neatly cohesive relationship between its version of Christianity and pre-European beliefs on the island. So they remained in contest, with new converts having to adjust to a world that was foreign while abandoning centuries of traditional practices.<sup>136</sup> This chapter refers back to the arrival of the first Christian missionary to Aotea, Henry Williams, and considers why local Māori waited a further fifty years before converting to Mormonism. It focuses particularly on the arrival and impact of Mormon missionaries on Aotea, recounting both the powerful conversion narratives — mythic collective memories — and how this turning point shaped future generations.

### Prophecies

The remoteness of the island enabled shelter from missionaries generally, and their standard endeavour to “civilize” Māori by introducing local

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<sup>135</sup> This has been shown in Chapter 2.

<sup>136</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

hapū to Christianity.<sup>137</sup> Everywhere in the country they sought to baptise non-believers, and destabilise belief systems not akin to their own.<sup>138</sup> This tactic was widespread on the mainland, but the people of Aotea remained relatively undisturbed from missionary influence until the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>139</sup> This was long after most Māori on the mainland had converted to Christianity and aligned themselves with the Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan or Presbyterian churches.<sup>140</sup> While those on Aotea may have travelled off-island and been exposed to Christianity, there is minimal evidence that they brought any formal religious beliefs or practices back to the island through the mid-nineteenth century. Locals would likely have heard and seen sermons and talked and interacted with missionaries and Māori converts, but there is little evidence in the archives or local kōrero to show that Christianity was present and practiced by those who lived more frequently or permanently on Aotea in the mid-

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<sup>137</sup> This has been shown in the previous chapter with Reverend Henry Williams arrival in 1833 and also with Bishop George Augustus Selwyn's visit to the island in 1843.

<sup>138</sup> S. Percy Smith, *On the Tohunga-Māori*

<[http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz\\_32/rsnz\\_32\\_00\\_003720.pdf](http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz_32/rsnz_32_00_003720.pdf)> [accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018] p. 253-4.

<sup>139</sup> This has been shown in the previous chapter. See also, Ranginui Walker states, 'Conversion to Christianity led to further erosion of Māori culture and power. The missionaries condemned polygamy, slavery, the tohunga and tapu, the institutions that buttressed social control and the power of the chiefs'. Walker, p. 86.

<sup>140</sup> Michael King asserts that '[f]rom the 1830s the momentum had been increased by the activity of Māori evangelists, many of them former slaves who had been converted in Ngapuhi territory and then allowed to return home when their masters also embraced the new faith and rejected slavery as an institution' King, p. 143. CMS, 'Rev. William Williams dated 10 February 1834, giving his estimates of the Māori populations in the areas served by the missions. These estimates are only rough approximations and there may have been some variation in population between 1834 and 1838: but they at least make possible a tentative picture of the proportions of population affected by the missionaries. Williams thought the population of the North Island did not exceed 106,000. The northern district, where missionary activity had begun in 1814, and where the bulk of the C.M.S. staff lived, had 176 communicants, 1,630 in congregation, 936 scholars in thirty-seven schools, out of a population estimated at 16,000. The southern district had mission stations at Puriri, Mangapouri, Matamata, Rotorua, and Tauranga, formed either in 1834 or 1835. The total number of communicants given in the 1838 Report was two; in congregations, 846; scholars, 495; attending seventeen schools. Williams's estimate of the population served by these missions was 33,600; and only a dozen out of the thirty-five C.M.S. staff were in this area'. Owens, p. 28.

1800s. James Belich has argued that ‘the spread and depth of Maori interest in Christianity was hampered by the absence, in most areas, of people to tell them about it; and by the fact that, where such people existed, they could not speak Maori very well’.<sup>141</sup>

As described in the previous chapter, Aotea was not isolated prior to its colonisation, nor explicitly protected from “missionisation” or a “civilizing” missionary agenda.<sup>142</sup> Māori on the island had been exposed to Christian thinking by their mainland whānaunga during the turbulent years of the Musket Wars. However, as Belich points out, the absence of missionaries was pivotal to the lack of local conversions in some areas.

In 1881, Anglican missionary Reverend A. Baker wrote of his visit to Aotea and his intention to convert the locals there. On arrival, he was surprised to find that they already had Bibles. When asked if they would like a church service, he noted that they were suspicious of his motives and thought he wanted money. But when he waived his fee they were much more amenable to the idea.<sup>143</sup> Baker’s discovery revealed that local iwi at Aotea, despite their isolation from the mainland and from settlers on their island, had access to European visitors and missionaries well before his arrival in 1881. Indeed, interactions with European travellers had likely commenced with whaling ships calling into the island from the late eighteenth century. This was shown in the previous chapter with the ship

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<sup>141</sup> Belich, p. 166.

<sup>142</sup> Holger Jebens, *Pathways to Heaven; Contesting Mainline and Fundamentalist Christianity in Papua New Guinea* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 75. Jebens defines ‘the term missionisation to mean very generally, the process of the acceptance of Christianity, triggered first by white, then by indigenous religious functionaries’.

<sup>143</sup> Cited in, Colin C. Banfield, *Sowers of Seed: A Story of the Anglican Church on Waiheke Island References to Great Barrier Island* (Auckland: St Albans Print, 1979), p. 70.



*William and Ann.*<sup>144</sup>

There was no formal education for Māori on the island during the nineteenth century, and the theft of most of their land in the period 1838–1853 had left them unable to access traditional resources or engage in mahinga (a place where work is done; activities such as gardening, fishing). After the Land Wars, Māori generally distrusted Pākehā and had become increasingly suspicious of missionaries, especially those of the Anglican faith. Robert Joseph notes in *Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Māori and the Mormon Church*:

When Māori were cheated in land deals by laws and institutions of the state, they naturally responded by defending their lands, lives, liberties and tino rangatiratanga. This tended to alienate them from other [established] Christian sects, due to missionary involvement with the colonial Government during the New Zealand Wars period (1860s-1880s).<sup>145</sup>

Iwi responses to Pākehā missionaries, like Baker on his 1881 visit to Aotea, were a common phenomena. These were disillusioned people who remained sceptical due to previous deceptive Pākehā land agents, as well as the land thefts that occurred in other parts of the country after the wars.

Ngāti Rehua, despite their island's isolation and their relatively minimal interactions with colonisers, were not exempt from being distrustful of Pākehā land agents and the European missionary groups who had aided in the expropriation of ancestral lands. When Mormon missionaries from the United States arrived in New Zealand as early as 1854, they began to

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<sup>144</sup> Sewell, p. 27. The Missionary Register for M DCCC XLIII, Containing the Principle Transactions of the Various Institutions for Propagating the Gospel: with the Proceedings, at Large, of the Church Missionary Society, (London; R. Watts, 1843), p. 384.

<sup>145</sup> Robert Joseph, 'Intercultural Exchange, Matakite Māori and the Mormon Church', in *Mana Māori and Christianity*, ed. by Murray Rae (Auckland: Huia Publishers, 2012), p. 45.

proselyte amongst the Pākehā community, though with little success. In 1881, the US-based President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, instructed the incoming New Zealand mission president Joseph Bromley that 'it was the right time to share the gospel with Māoris'.<sup>146</sup>

During this period there also was a rise in Matakite prophecies. In March 1881, representatives of Ngāti Kahungunu and various Christian denominations gathered at Nga-Tau-E-Waru marae, in the Wairarapa. Māori tohunga Matakite Pāora Pōtangaroa, of Ngāti Kahungunu, presented to the people a flag which had a korowai, a tunic and panels of various colours inscribed on it. Pōtangaroa challenged those present to explain the meaning of this flag. But none could interpret it, so Pōtangaroa offered the following explanation:

O my people listen to me because you were unable to translate the meaning of the flag which is flying here. A miracle was performed by my hands. I shall translate the meaning of this flag. The flag represents the land which is in the power of the Pakeha ... My plea my people is tidy and unite the place that God set aside for us so they will not be lost to the Pakeha Queen so that the Lord God will stand with both feet on New Zealand. It seems the churches are hanging on to the land and the Government is taking over the land. I prophesy unto you the time is ended when the personified body of Christ will no longer appear as in the days of the prophets and Christ.<sup>147</sup>

Paora Pōtangaroa's interpretation highlighted the scepticism of many Māori that ongoing land confiscations were due to missionaries assisting the Crown. Three days later Pōtangaroa again addressed the people at

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<sup>146</sup> R. Lanier Britsch, "Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church" The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, June 1981, <https://www.lds.org/new-era/1981/06/Māori-traditions-and-the-mormon-church?lang=eng> [accessed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017].

<sup>147</sup> Elsmore, p. 249.

Ngā-Tau-E-Waru, where, as recorded by Mormon missionary Matthew Cowley, he declared:

My friends, the church for the Maori people has not yet come among us.  
You will recognize it when it comes. Its missionaries will travel in pairs.  
They will come from the rising sun. They will visit with us in our homes.  
They will learn our language and teach us the gospel in our own tongue.  
When they pray they will raise their right hands.<sup>148</sup>

Pōtangaroa's prophetic message that they will travel in pairs, live amongst our people and teach us in our own language were key components to Mormon missionary discourse and technique. Historian Bronwyn Elsmore offers a slightly different interpretation of Pōtangaroa's message: 'There is a religious denomination coming for us; perhaps it will come from the sea, perhaps it will emerge here. Secondly, let the churches into the house – there will be a time when religion will emerge for you and I and the Maori people.'<sup>149</sup> LDS missionary Cowley's narrative asserts a now well-rehearsed Mormon view that has underpinned generations of Māori conversions, whereby LDS missionaries utilise kōrero from Māori prophets/tohunga matakite to convince potential converts. Of this phenomenon, Mormon historian R. Lanier Britsch has suggested that 'though Polynesians of all island groups have taken well to the restored gospel, the Maoris appear to have been prepared in special ways for the coming of the Mormon missionaries'.<sup>150</sup> Despite this, Elsmore has noted that 'this did not last long, however, and most dropped the new faith

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<sup>148</sup> Cited in R. Lanier Britsch, *Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church*, June 1981.

<sup>149</sup> Elsmore, p. 252

<sup>150</sup> Cited in, Ian G. Barber, 'Mormon Conversions, and Māori-Israelite Identity Work in Colonial New Zealand', *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July 2015) p. 172.

within a short time.’<sup>151</sup>

### **Racial Hierarchies and Genealogical Connection**

Latter Day Saint authorities at the time utilised local Māori prophecies that they believed might reveal Māori to be scattered Israelite descendants referenced in the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>152</sup> In 1881, an LDS missionary in New Zealand, John Sorenson, had a dream ‘that the Maories down near the Coromandel out toward Manaia had preserved the Language best since the Confusion of Tongues at Babylon’.<sup>153</sup> The tribal areas Sorenson’s dream referred to included Ngāti Rehua at Aotea. His dream further supported church philosophy regarding Māori conversion and their important place in church lore and discourse. The belief that Māori were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel was not exclusive to the Mormon faith. It first made its appearance here in Aotearoa, with Reverend Samuel Marsden, when he posited the theory in the early 1830s after witnessing trading interactions between Māori and Pākehā.<sup>154</sup> This origin story also appeared in relation to other indigenous peoples. In the United States, Norman Douglas, for instance, has pointed to ‘1567 as the first time the theory that American Indians were a Lost Tribe of Israel appeared in print. [Douglas]

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<sup>151</sup> Elsmore, p. 252. See also R. Lanier Britsch, ‘Māori Traditions and the Mormon Church’ he states, ‘By the end of 1884 the missionaries had firmly established the restored gospel among the Māori people. The next several years were very satisfying to most of the elders and sister missionaries (several couples were sent to New Zealand beginning in 1885). In August 1885, there were 16 Māori and 4 *pakeha* branches of the Church, and this number continued to grow steadily for the next 15 years. At the close of 1887, there were 2,573 Latter-day Saints, and by the turn of the century there were nearly four thousand members of the Church in New Zealand’. R. Lanier Britsch.

<sup>152</sup> Ian G. Barber and David Gilgen, ‘Between treaty and Covenant: The LDS Future in New Zealand’, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (1996), p. 210.

<sup>153</sup> John P. Sorenson, *Journal* (June 1881-June 1882), Cited in Barber and Gilgen, p. 143.

<sup>154</sup> K. R. Howe, ‘Ideas of Māori origins - 1770s-1840s: early ideas’, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/ideas-of-Māori-origins/page-1> [accessed 31 August 2018] See also, Marjorie Newton, *Māori and Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014), p. 14.

also asserts that the theory was so well established, especially among “the religiously inclined”.<sup>155</sup> Thus, Marsden’s theory was not novel, and when Mormon missionaries arrived at Aotea they too adopted the Israelite connection.<sup>156</sup>

The Israel connection to Polynesians also included other nations. Missionaries adapted this narrative depending on where they served. Sociologist Armand Mauss identifies this when LDS missionaries were serving in England in the 1840s and 1850s. They supported the British Israelite theory that the British royal family linked genealogically back to the Royal House of David in ancient Israel.<sup>157</sup> Also around this time, Arthur de Gobineau published *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Race*, which scientised racist thinking. Another doctrine that further aided this view was Charles Darwin’s classic and influential work *On the Origins of Species*.<sup>158</sup> These texts contributed to contemporary views about racial distinction, superiority, hierarchies and origins. Mormon missionaries were not exempt from this discourse. LDS author George Reynolds highlighted this in *Man and his Varieties* (1868) when he declared:

We will first inquire into the results of the approbation or displeasure of God upon a people, starting with the belief that a black skin is a mark of the curse of Heaven placed upon some portions of mankind. Some, however,

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<sup>155</sup> Cited in, Hokulani K. Aikau, *Chosen People, a Promised Land; Mormonism and Race in Hawai’i* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. 38.

<sup>156</sup> Marjorie Newton claims ‘Māori converts absorbed Book of Mormon teachings, reconciled these with their own migration legends and their prior self-identification as Israelites, and passed these legends on to the missionaries; the amount and degree of cross-fertilisation is impossible to ascertain’. Newton, p. 20. It is important to note that this theory is still taught today by Selwyn Jones.

<sup>157</sup> Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 26–7

<sup>158</sup> Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015). Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection* (London: Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2008).

will argue that a black skin is not a curse, nor a white skin a blessing. In fact, some have been so foolish as to believe and say that a black skin is a blessing, and that the negro is the finest type of a perfect man that exists on the earth; but to us such teachings are foolishness. We understand that when God made man in his own image and pronounced him very good, that he made him white.<sup>159</sup>

Adam Kuper argues that, at this time, anthropologists were seriously engaged with Darwin's theory of evolution. He further asserts that 'they looked back in order to understand the nature of the present, on the assumption that modern society had evolved from its antithesis'.<sup>160</sup> He further writes that

anthropological notions of race, lineage, and evolutionary hierarchy resonated with Mormon understandings of lineage. For example, the sociologist Armand Mauss argues that within LDS theology lineage comes to be racialized in particular ways in the 1850s at precisely the time when the larger narrative map of Mormonism was being reimagined.<sup>161</sup>

Racial policies within Mormonism then were being reinvented, and in the 1850s led to the exclusion of black Africans from receiving the priesthood and entering the temple.<sup>162</sup> Mauss further states that Mormon leaders were actively involved in 'the retrospective construction of Mormon lineage'.<sup>163</sup> While these racial attitudes were indicative of the wider "scholarly" debates of the time, they also reflected themes from the *Book of Mormon*, first published in 1830. As stated in 2 Nephi 5:21:

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<sup>159</sup> George Reynolds, *The Juvenile Instructor*, October 15<sup>th</sup> 1868 <  
<https://ia800306.us.archive.org/26/items/juvenileinstruct320geor/juvenileinstruct320geor.pdf>> {accessed 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018}.

<sup>160</sup> Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformation of an Illusion* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 4.

<sup>161</sup> Aikau, pp. 34–5.

<sup>162</sup> Mauss, p 9.

<sup>163</sup> Mauss, p. 9.

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, and they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon.<sup>164</sup>

Brant Gardner explores this idea around the changing of skin tone and defines it in two ways: firstly, they were cursed (that is the Lamanites), and secondly, that 'a skin of blackness came upon them'. This second part of the curse also indicates the separation between the Nephites and Lamanites, which would create a barrier to intermarriage between the two lineages. He further suggests that many have read this statement literally instead of offering an alternate reading. He also argues that many believed that, with conversion to the Mormon religion, their skin would whiten.<sup>165</sup> This is further supported by 3 Nephi 2:12-15, which says that dark-skinned Lamanites who converted unto the Lord would have their curse 'taken from them, and their skin became white like unto the Nephites'.<sup>166</sup>

This complex set of beliefs on racial superiority continued during the early decades of LDS proselyting among Māori. It might be asked, therefore, why Māori (in particular those on Aotea) were quick to convert to Mormonism. Within the LDS church, genealogical connection is an important component to understanding one's place in connection to the scriptures. Marjorie Newton states, 'Though the Church gives no official interpretation of the Hagoth legend [i.e. a Nephite whom Polynesians allegedly descend from], it has served Mormon missionaries from Hawaii

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<sup>164</sup> Joseph Smith & Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon the Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1981), p. 66.

<sup>165</sup> Brant. A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Volume 2 Second Nephi – Jacob* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), p. 108.

<sup>166</sup> Smith, p. 410.

to New Zealand to give thousands of natives hope that they once again can become “white and delightful”.<sup>167</sup> On the other hand, many believe that Polynesians are the descendants of the Lamanites because of the colour of their skin. In regard to Mormon history in Aotearoa, Bronwyn Elsmore writes:

Although the LDS scriptures provided much which could appear to support the Maori belief in their descent from the ancient Israelites, it should be remembered that this belief did not originate with the Mormon scriptures, and while the teaching might have served to strengthen the notion in some of the Maori, it too was essentially another foreign message which also did not fully answer the needs of the Maori.<sup>168</sup>

Elsmore is correct in that claims of Māori ancestral connection to the ancient Israelites did not begin with the Mormon scriptures but had arrived with other mainstream missionaries, like Samuel Marsden, well before Mormonism arrived in New Zealand.

### **The Mass Conversion of 1889**

With the encroachment of Pākehā into Aotearoa, a very different culture and lifestyle were ushered into the country. Māori began to embrace and welcome Pākehā industry, tools, exchange, reading and writing, and were

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<sup>167</sup> Newton, p. 34. Also, cited in Newton’s *Māori and Mormon*, states, [an] article quoted a local Presbyterian spokesman who objected to Mormon proselyting and who accused the Mormons of prompting racist doctrine, citing the “white and delightful” Book of Mormon verse ... When the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon was published, the term “white and delightful” was changed back to “pure and delightful.” Eugene England, among other scholars, noted that “pure,” not “white,” was the term used by Joseph Smith in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Any racism, England insisted, was human weakness on the part of the editors of intermediate editions, who simply reflected the views of contemporary American society’. Newton, pp. 34–5.

<sup>168</sup> Elsmore, p. 152.



keen to engage with new ideas generally. Rev Samuel Marsden stated:

Their temporal situation must be improved by agriculture and the simple arts in order to lay a permanent foundation for the introduction of Christianity. It may be reasonably expected that their moral and religious advancement will keep pace with the increase of their temporal comforts.<sup>169</sup>

This observation by Marsden demonstrates the pathway utilised to “civilize” Māori through the adoption and implantation of Christianity. Ranginui Walker affirms that Māori on the mainland had already taken up the opportunity and had begun to utilise Pākehā practices to their advantage. He notes that ‘tribes around Hauraki Gulf headed for Auckland markets in canoes and sailing vessels laden with produce to service the population of 2,000’.<sup>170</sup> According to Walker

prosperity encouraged the tribes to invest their profits in the purchase of capital goods such as flour mills to grind their own corn and ships to transport their produce to markets. These two items were as much symbols of tribal mana and prestige as the hallmarks of economic enterprise.<sup>171</sup>

With trade, Māori also understood the advantages of being able to read and write. In 1857, after the majority of their land had been alienated through fraudulent land sales, the people of Aotea wrote to the *Te waka o te iwi* to assert their land boundaries:

Ko te timatanga o te rohe kei Maunganui, wahia i runga o Maunganui, kei te Pakeha tetahi taha, ki a matou tetahi taha rere tonu Opuawhango, rere tonu Taupaki, rere tonu Tokaroa, rere tonu Waiwerawera, rere tonu

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<sup>169</sup> Elder, p. 167.

<sup>170</sup> Walker, p. 100.

<sup>171</sup> Walker, p. 100. It is worth noting that Māori had been trading with Pākehā ships since the time of Cook. Walker, p. 78.

Papakio, rere tonu Puketorotoro, rere tonu Tiheruheru, rere tonu Kahupumau, rere tonu Opuawango, rere tonu Herangi, rere tonu Haukawakawa, rere tonu Tokaawetea, rere tonu Pukumanuka, ka whakawhiti i te awa o Oruapawhero, kapiki I te hiwi ka eke i Te Ripitini, haere tonu, a, Tataweka, ka rere kei Totarawhakaanganga, kei Te Rangaarua, ka rere kei Ahuriri, ka rohe te wahi ki a matou. Ko to matou kainga tenei ake, ake, amene noa. Ko nga ingoa enei o nga kainga e puritia ana e matou, ko tetahi taha o Ahuriri, ko Kaiwhakangenge, ko Kaikohatu, ko Te Roto, ko te Kawau, ko Motairehe, ko Kawa, ko Onewhero, ko Nimaru, ko Poutere, ko te taha o Maunganui, ka mutu o matou kainga.

The beginning of the boundary starts at Maunganui, and is divided over Maunganui, the Pākehā has one side and we have the other side that carries on; and runs on to Opuawhango, to Taupaki, to Tokaroa, to Waiwerawera, continuing to Papakio, to Puketorotoro, Tiheruheru, Kahupūmau, on to Opuawhango, Hērangi, Haukawakawa, Tokaawatea, and on to Pukumānuka, then crosses the Oruapawhero River, climbs the ridge, goes down from Te Ripitini, going until Tātāweka, where it runs to Tōtarawhakaanganga, to Te Rangaarua, and runs to Ahuriri; that is our boundary. This is our settlement forever and ever, amen. These are the names of our homes that are held by us. On the one side is Ahuriri, Kaiwhakangenge, Kaikohatu, Te Roto, Kawau, Motairehe, Kawa, Onewhero, Nimaru, Poutere, then pass Maunganui. This is the end of our homes.<sup>172</sup>

This kōrero expressed by the Ngāti Rehua rangatira, Tara Te Mariri, with the agreement of others present, is revealing. It highlights the importance of being able to comprehend English but also having a written language that could be exposed to a wider audience. Here, Te Mariri recites his knowledge of the landscape and its boundaries relevant to the people of Aotea. What is telling in the text is the phrase 'ko to matou kainga tenei

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<sup>172</sup> "He Pukapuka Pupuri Whenua, Na Te Mariri Na Ngatiwai Katoa" *Whetu o te Tau*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 1 November 1857.

ake, ake, amene noa' which, Jane McRae explains, means 'made a strong, even warning, statement about possession. It also was a clever [play] of the traditional with the phraseology of Christianity'.<sup>173</sup> What this text also reveals is that the people of Aotea had been influenced by Christianity but remained committed to their own tikanga. They were able to navigate and express their views in Pākehā newspapers, to share knowledge that had previously existed only in an oral form. It emphasises the importance of land to Ngāti Rehua and how they used newspapers to express their views. They were aware that they needed to move in a Pākehā world to secure their land, when the Crown was continuously finding new ways of expropriation.<sup>174</sup>

The first LDS missionaries to visit Aotea kept meticulous records. The Auckland Mission archives describe 'hearing of the people living on the Great Barrier, the first land sighted by vessels on coming into Auckland. The elders had often desired to visit them but did not until November 1889'.<sup>175</sup> LDS missionaries had been coming to Aotearoa since 1854, but it would be another thirty-five years before they would set foot on Aotea — on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1889. The delay in reaching the island can be attributed to the LDS church's aversion to proselytising among Māori through their first decades of work in the country. Once they decided that mission work amongst Māori should begin, it took another eight years to reach the island. The relative physical isolation of the island, and the relatively small number of Māori living there, also would have been

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<sup>173</sup> Jane McRae, *Māori Oral Tradition: He Korero nō te Ao Tawhito* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), p. 71.

<sup>174</sup> Governor Fitzroy's amendment to the 1841 Land Claims Ordinance, as shown in Chapter 2.

<sup>175</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

contributing factors. On the other hand, by the early 1840s, missionary schools had been established in neighbouring places to Aotea, notably Waiheke Island and Hauraki.<sup>176</sup>

President Angus Wright and Elder Davis were the first Mormon missionaries to arrive. During their trip to Aotea they met a Māori man, Hone Paama, who invited them both to his home. There they stayed for a week preaching the gospel amongst Ngāti Rehua. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1889, thirty-four adults were baptised, along with eleven children being blessed. Elder Davis remained on the island for a further week 'adding ten more souls, making fifty in all, including eleven children'.<sup>177</sup> This is a remarkable number of baptisms at one time and highlights how receptive they were to Mormon missionaries.

In the interviews conducted as part of this study, participants merged in a general consensus regarding the history and narrative that led many to be baptised into the Mormon faith. According to these narrators, the baptisms of 1889 and broad conversion were enabled by "the power of the Priesthood".<sup>178</sup> The importance of collective memory is significant in the way these oral narratives are delivered, maintained and preserved over time. Regarding ANZAC soldiers' war memories, Alistair Thomson writes national mythology has helped define how combatants recall their experiences. He says that 'we compose our memories to make sense of our

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<sup>176</sup> Has been discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>177</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>178</sup> Life narrative interview with Judith Klink, 23rd December 2016. Interviewed by Kelly Klink. Tape held at Waikato University History Programme. Beazley, 29th December 2016

past and present lives',<sup>179</sup> and that this composition happens in two ways: 'In one sense we 'compose' or construct memories using the public language and meanings of our culture. In another sense we 'compose' memories which help us to feel relatively comfortable with our lives, which gives us a sense of composure'.<sup>180</sup>

The conversion narrative of priesthood "powers" is built around an underlying religious discourse that has positioned the priesthood as a power above and beyond previous spiritual and religious beliefs on the island. American Elder Neil Andersen recently offered a short description of what he considered "the power of the Priesthood" to be. He asserts that 'the priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all — men, women and children'.<sup>181</sup> Those whom I interviewed for this project maintain this same basic discourse, which is firmly embedded within an LDS ideological and narrative framework and should be taken into consideration here.

An important story about the first week of proselytising work on the island is recorded by both local oral narratives and Church records. The first LDS missionary at Aotea, President Angus Wright, recounts the story of a "possessed woman" who had been "vexed by an evil spirit which necessitated church intervention". When he asked what the spirit wanted, the response was 'kai kai'. Wright then asked what sort of food, to which

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<sup>179</sup> Alistar Thomson, ANZAC Memories; Putting Popular memory Theory into Practice in Australia, in Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (New York; New York University Press, 1999), p. 240.

<sup>180</sup> Thomson, p. 241.

<sup>181</sup> Elder Neil L. Andersen, 'Power in the Priesthood', *Deseret News*, 6th October 2013, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865587830/Elder-Neil-L-Andersen-Power-in-the-priesthood.html> [accessed 20th January 2016].

the spirit responded 'tangata tangata'.<sup>182</sup> Those present concluded that this spirit was a cannibal. According to the kōrero retained within the community today, the missionaries then used their priesthood powers to remove the spirit that had plagued the woman — who may, in fact, have been Mere Tiaho — on multiple occasions. The following was also recorded a few days later:

At another time the woman was caused to rush into the sea and was only saved from drowning by her husband, a man of great bodily strength, who stood near and followed her. After baptism, she was not further troubled.<sup>183</sup>

Many Ngāti Rehua people at that time would have interpreted the exorcism performed by Wright as a type of 'tohunga-ism' rather than 'priesthood powers.'<sup>184</sup> This is significant because in thinking of this exorcism as the power of tohunga, and not simply an act of a foreign priestly authority, certainly may have opened the doors to enable Wright and his colleague to move beyond barriers that had previously shut out other missionaries.

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<sup>182</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 1, 1853-1894, Part 2. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>183</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 1, 1853-1894, Part 2. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>184</sup> See Smith, pp. 253–70. In an annual report given by medical officer for Māori, Doctor Pomare gives a damning report on tohunga practices. In the report Pomare suggests the following: 'I beg the Government to at once pass a measure for ever abolishing this demoralising practice of witchcraft'. Māori Tohungaism. New Zealand Herald Volume XLI 12669, 24 September 1904  
<<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19040924.2.26>> [accessed 30th August 2018] The Tohunga Suppression Act, it later came to symbolize a movement from traditional spiritual views to new beliefs. Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 (7 EDW VII 1907 No.13) <[http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist\\_act/tsa19077ev1907n13353/](http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/tsa19077ev1907n13353/)> [accessed 30th August 2018]. G. Blake Palmer, Tohungaism and Makutu, Some Beliefs and Practices of the Present Day Māori, Journal of the Polynesian Society Volume 63 1954, No.2 pp. 247–164

It is also likely that the conversion process was interpreted and welcomed more willingly by locals because the LDS missionaries were Americans and not the typical European evangelists who had garnered so much mistrust in the preceding decades.<sup>185</sup> The suffering endured by local iwi after the theft of land at Aotea left many sceptical of Pākehā missionaries. Māori, more broadly, suspected them of working as interlocutors and spies for the Government, thus of being responsible for the large-scale alienation of land.<sup>186</sup> To an extent, this was demonstrated via the Māori reaction during the earlier arrival at Aotea of Reverend Baker. This viewpoint is also shared by Ian Barber, who writes:

Latter-day Saints success among late nineteenth-century Maori having been variously ascribed to a coincidence of world views, the proselytizing techniques and connections of Maori-speaking missionary elders who lived among the people, and the alienation of the Māori from British based

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<sup>185</sup> Cited in, Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them that Dream: the Māori and the Old Testament*. In 1877 Reverend T. S. Grace offers a reason to the change between the mission and Māori he states, 'in early years they [Māori] received Christianity – and I may say Colonisation – at our hands without doubting, and, to a great extent, on credit. Colonisation, war, confiscation and English vices have followed each other in quick succession, while the expectations anticipated from representations made when they signed the 'Treaty of Waitangi' have not been realised. Now they turn round and question their first advisors, and look at the whole of our connection with them as a scheme by which to get their lands, and, as they can point to large blocks of land acquired by the early Missionaries – whom they say began the business – they appear to think they have good reason for coming to this conclusion. These things, together with the course some of our brethren took in the war, have completely changed our position with these people.' Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them that Dream: the Māori and the Old Testament* (Auckland: Libro International, 2011), pp. 64–5.

<sup>186</sup> An example of this is in Kerry Howe, 'Missionaries, Māoris and Civilisation on the Upper Waikato 1833-63' (Unpublished MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1970) he draws attention to Reverend John Morgan and his intelligence gathering for the British army at Otawhao. Also, Clifford Roy Simons, 'Military Intelligence in the New Zealand Wars, 1845-1864' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Massey University, 2012), Simons highlights, Archdeacon Henry Williams who was head of the CMS church during the Northern Wars was asked to give comment on maps drawn on deck of HMS *North Star*. The comment given by Williams stopped the British from drawing Kawiti into battle at Waioomio. They then went on to strike Heke's pā at Puketutu.

Christianity, non-prophetic religion, and the settler government.<sup>187</sup>

This is further supported by Presbyterian leader John G. Laughton's (1891–1965) observations of the success of Mormonism around Nuhaka; he stated that American missionaries during their formative years in the country utilised anti-British feeling to their advantage<sup>188</sup> and that this was demonstrated by the substantial number of converts in 1889.<sup>189</sup>

### Conversion

Although Māori on Aotea were baptised en masse in 1889, the conversion to the LDS gospel was a gradual process over time. Missionaries did not remain with the people on the island throughout the coming decades, and subsequently many at home remained living predominantly in te ao Māori. Slowly they began incorporating Mormon beliefs into daily life.<sup>190</sup> Thus, there occurred a syncretism of these two worldviews.

Conversion within Aotearoa generally was a long and inter-denominational process, advanced by literacy and other technologies. Judith Binney has highlighted how 'the elaborate imagery of the Bible,

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<sup>187</sup> Ian Barber, *Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Māori Culture in the Twentieth-Century New Zealand Mormon Church* <[http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1995/NZJH\\_29\\_2\\_02.pdf](http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/docs/1995/NZJH_29_2_02.pdf)> [accessed 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017]. p.142.

<sup>188</sup> Cited in Newton, p.11.

<sup>189</sup> In the *New Zealand Herald*, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890, not long after the mass conversion reported the following, 'I left Auckland per cutter Watchman, on Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup> January, at three p.m., and after a smooth passage arrived at Māori Bay, Great Barrier, at seven o'clock on Sunday morning. There I found nearly all the Māoris were Mormons. The principle man is a half-caste, called John Palmer ... I attended the Mormon church, which is conducted by John Palmer. The singing is very good, and if the church does no other good, it bring the Māoris together, and makes them sociable. The natives complain about not having a school. There are quite enough children to employ a teacher'. *New Zealand Herald, The Great Barrier and its Needs* 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890 p. 6.

<sup>190</sup> Klink, 23rd December 2016 Beazley, 29th December 2016.



much quoted by the missionaries, would [have] appeal[ed] to the Maoris, adept in the use of metaphor'.<sup>191</sup> Biblical references made their way into common parlance — changing patterns of iwi governance often contained reference to values that were propagated in the Bible, or by missionaries. Bishop Muru Walters in *'Te Upoko o te Ika Karaitianatanga'* offers another perspective on why many Māori converted to Christianity. He states:

The intellectual and spiritual strength to address their diminished status in their own land led Māori to identify with the pagan leaders of the Bible. Their cultural style appealed to Māori. They had tribal leaders; chiefs like Māori, except God called these for service. These leaders were challenged to be new people with new hearts capable of leading their people in the sharing and managing of a new world, a kingdom of God for all God's people.<sup>192</sup>

Belich also offers his analysis on why Māori converted. He argues:

Explanations include the grace of God, favoured by the missionaries and the faithful; the shock of fatal impact (or at least crippling impact), undermining Maori faith in traditional religion; an improvement in missionary methods and resources, associated with the leadership of Henry Williams and involving the inversion of Marsden's 'civilise first, Christianise later' policy; and superficial conversion, as a means to the end of literacy.<sup>193</sup>

Both views demonstrate the link between western religion and wider colonial processes. If Belich is correct, an indirect goal of missionaries was to diminish the reliance of Māori on their traditional beliefs and practices and increase reliance on Christian ways of thinking. This represented a systematic process of cultural deprivation which also included the implementation of western nuances, such as schooling. There would have

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<sup>191</sup> Binney, p. 326.

<sup>192</sup> Muru Walters, *'Te Upoko o te Ika Karaitianatanga'* in *The Future of Christianity: Historical, Sociological, Political and Theological Perspectives from New Zealand* ed. By John Stenhouse, Brett Knowles assisted by Antony Wood (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>193</sup> Belich, p. 165.

been an urgency amongst Māori to read and write in English, to help fight the land theft during the nineteenth century. Such pressures, in turn, helped the process of religious adaptation by Māori at Aotea. Our elders today insist that our ancestors in 1889 believed the only way for Ngāti Rehua to move forward was through conversion to Christianity.<sup>194</sup>

LDS missionary visits to Aotea in the coming years were sporadic. In November 1893 Elder Ben H. Hollingworth reported to an American audience that ‘it is nearly six months since I penned a few lines to your readers ... Elder Morgan and I did not reach the Great Barrier after all, on account of headwinds and a heavy sea’.<sup>195</sup> Hollingworth’s correspondence here highlights the ongoing remoteness and difficulties of early missionary engagement with the people at Aotea. However, only a few months later, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1894, during a Church conference near Whangarei, the same media source recorded that ‘after singing, Elder Pita Kino, of the Big Barrier island, offered the closing prayer’,<sup>196</sup> and that ‘at 4.30 the Big Barrier Saints led the singing...’<sup>197</sup> Ngāti Rehua, as these sources show, despite the sporadic visits from missionaries, moved freely within the wider district to attend church services. This is further supported in the *Auckland Star* the same year, which reported that ‘on Wednesday and Thursday the natives came in from all parts, including a cutter load from the Big Barrier Island, all the natives there belonging to

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<sup>194</sup> Klink, 23rd December 2016 Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>195</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1854-1893. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>196</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>197</sup> New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 1, 1894-1897. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the church'.<sup>198</sup> Missionary interaction remained scarce, and like many other Māori communities, Mormon conversion on the island was driven primarily by locals themselves.<sup>199</sup>

With sporadic visits from missionaries to the island, many Ngāti Rehua faced personal trials that made it difficult to find a stable ground between the old ways and the new religion. Nūpere Ngāwaka was an early church leader and tohunga amongst his people and was baptised in 1889. He too struggled living within the two worlds of te ao Māori and Mormonism. When Matthew Cowley visited Aotea in the early 1930s, he counselled Nūpere 'that the Melchizedek Priesthood was stronger than his tohunga customs'.<sup>200</sup> This type of discourse was influential in the dismantling of traditional belief systems, the removal of Māori customs and assimilation into a Mormon world. By the 1930s, Nūpere, like many others on Aotea, now largely accepted the Gospel and had significantly moved away from

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<sup>198</sup> Mormon Conference at Whangaruru, Volume XXV, Issue 42, Auckland Star, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1894, p. 3.

<sup>199</sup> In June 21<sup>st</sup> 1899, New Zealand Mission President Ezra T. Stevenson and Elder John E. Magleby boarded the *S.S. Muritai* and left for Aotea, spending only a week on the island, with European and Māori. New Zealand Mission history: Volume 3, 1894-1900, Part 2, 1897-1900. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. November 18<sup>th</sup> 1903, David E. Davis and Elder William M. Paxman left to visit Aotea New Zealand Mission history: Volume 4, 1901-1919, Part 1, 1901-1919. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah also, December 20<sup>th</sup> 1904, 'Elder George Cowley and Jesse M. Layton made a two weeks visit to the Great Barrier Island. While there they received kind treatment and they reported bright prospects' New Zealand Mission history: Volume 4, 1901-1919, Part 1, 1901-1919. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah

<sup>200</sup> "There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic Doctrine & Covenants (D&C 107:1). The Melchizedek Priesthood, which is "after the Order of the Son of God" (D&C 107:3), is the greater of these. It "holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church" (D&C 107:8). It also holds "the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church" (D&C 107:18). It is named after a great high priest who lived during the time of the prophet Abraham (see D&C 107:2-4; see also Alma 13:14-19)". The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, < <https://www.lds.org/topics/melchizedek-priesthood?lang=eng> > [accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018]. Also, Whaanga, p.52.

te ao Māori. He also thought it best for the community to move off the island, due to contentions over land and a desire for better education for their young. The issue of marriage partners was also important.<sup>201</sup> Marrying cousins was prevalent on Aotea. This practice, indeed, was not uncommon in the traditional Māori world,<sup>202</sup> though early Māori ethnographer Makereti Papakura opines that:

The old Maori was very much against the marriage of close relations, and termed it incestuous, even to the third and fourth generation from a common ancestor. If the two people belonged to the second generation from a common ancestor, they were considered too close to marry, but were allowed to, if they were at least three generations from a common ancestor.<sup>203</sup>

Although Makereti Papakura offers this perspective, not all tribes adhered to it. Api Mahuika, noted tribal expert within Ngāti Porou, states:

The norm was that marriage should be between people of equal status. This was important, not only in terms of personal mana, but also for the perpetuation of the mana of a particular line ... Marriage was generally endogamous, that is, within the hapu or sub-tribe. In Ngati Porou, first-cousin marriages were not uncommon in pre-European times, such was the degree of 'in-marriage'. There is a saying, 'e moe i to tuahine (tungane) kia heke te toto ko korua tonu.' (Marry your sister (brother) so that if blood is to be shared, it is only your own). This suggests that the situation was not peculiar to Ngati Porou. The inference is that if the 'blood' was 'shared'

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<sup>201</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>202</sup> Megan Cook, 'Marriage and partnering - Marriage in traditional Māori society', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/marriage-and-partnering/page-1> [accessed 31 August 2018]

<sup>203</sup> Makereti Papakura, *The Old-Time Māori* (London: Victor Gollancz Limited, 1938), p. 60. See also Elsdon Best, *The Māori Volume 1* (Wellington, 1924), pp. 446–7.

among close kin, the unity of the hapu would not be jeopardized.<sup>204</sup>

But it is likely that Makereti Papakura's ideas on the marriage of close kin is also tainted with Christian values. Similarly, when Nūpere used the finding of non-related partners for his family as a reason for leaving his homeland he must have been inserting fully-fledged Christian beliefs over his traditional Māori values. The full conversion of people at Aotea to Mormonism clearly ushered in the displacement of people from their traditional whenua and the whittling down of their remaining traditional values and practices.

In 1939 Nūpere passed away without having left the island. Many other residents, however, following the advice of Ngāwaka and the missionary Cowley, moved to Auckland, Whananaki, Tauranga and Hikurangi. Leaving their home presented a range of difficulties as they attempted to shift from the hapū, communal-based framework of te ao Māori into the Pākehā-style nuclear household. This family structure left many isolated from their extended kin and having to adapt to a new way of living without connections and support. Although Cowley was proficient in te reo Māori, his understanding of the implications of the removal of Māori from their whenua, and the implications this would have on future generations, was deficient. Hirini Moko Mead highlighted the importance of whenua through a Māori lens:

Land was the foundation of the social system in the forms of residences, villages, gardens, special resource regions and so on. Continuity of the group depended very much on a home base called te wā kāinga where people could live like an extended family and actually see it on the ground

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<sup>204</sup> Api Mahuika, 'Leadership: Inherited and Achieved' in *Te Ao Hurihuri: Aspects of Māoritanga* ed. By Michael King (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 1993), p. 45

as a working reality.<sup>205</sup>

Frederick Beazley, widower of the late Te Ruahuihui Ngāwaka, eldest daughter of Nūpere, left Aotea in the early 1940s along with about sixty others. This large-scale emmigration was following the directions of Cowley and Ngāwaka. Beazley dismantled his house at Kawa and brought it to Whananaki, with his children and stock.<sup>206</sup> The children had been speakers of te reo Māori in their younger years, but when they moved to the mainland Frederick needed to work and no longer had the time to instruct his children in te reo.<sup>207</sup> This same decline in the use of te reo also occurred in the other families that left the island around this time.<sup>208</sup> The assimilation of the Aotea migrants into the Pākehā world led to the decline of both hapū and te reo Māori. It is, however, necessary to note that many LDS families saw this conversion as a form of progress rather than loss.<sup>209</sup>

This perception of progression rather than assimilation amongst many of those who were interviewed was very revealing as to how memories are stored, processed and transmitted through generations. The question must be asked, however, whether those tūpuna, during the early conversion period, fully understood the wider implications of accepting the Gospel. Most likely they believed that this offered the best future for their whānau.

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<sup>205</sup> Hirini Moko Mead, *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2003), p.272.

<sup>206</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>207</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>208</sup> Klink, 23rd December 2016.

<sup>209</sup> Klink, 23rd December 2016. Beazley, 29th December 2016.

## Loss of Identity

An important aspect of the conversion process, from a Māori traditional belief system to the LDS faith, has involved the use of te reo Māori within the church. There was much debate over this subject by members; the fact is, from the 1940s Māori were discouraged from speaking te reo over the pulpit, even though there was no doctrine on the matter issued by the Prophet.<sup>210</sup> Rather, the discouragement arose from the belief of some Mission Presidents that the only language they needed was English, as this was the Lord's language.<sup>211</sup> Apostle George A. Smith, speaking in the United States in 1867, 'ingenuously proposed that as God, in His divine wisdom, revealed the gospel in the English language, it was up to the non-English speaking Latter-day Saints to take the hint and learn English'.<sup>212</sup> This attitude subsequently filtered down to Mission Presidents who served in Aotearoa. New Zealand Mission President, Ariel S. Ballif (1955–58), for instance, believed that as indigenous and other non-English speaking people 'take up the righteous way of living, they become more attractive and acceptable to white people and lose their dark skin [by intermarriage]'.<sup>213</sup> Reflecting on this comment, Marjorie Newton noted:

Fifteen years later, President Ballif vehemently insisted that the last phrase was inserted by the reporter, with whom, he said, he had had only a short interview. "My point of view was that the LDS Maori was becoming a better person that he was more acceptable to people because of the way of life that

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<sup>210</sup> Beazley, 29th December 2016.

<sup>211</sup> Newton, p. 165.

<sup>212</sup> Cited in Newton, p. 166. Also in the Te Karere which was written both in English and Māori however they believed this was an 'incentive [for] ... our young Māori friends to learn the English language and to learn the Gospel in English. It is hoped they will look diligently to acquire the use of the English language since it will be such an aid to their intellectual and business welfare'. Elders' Messenger 1, no.1 (January 1907) p. 1.

<sup>213</sup> Cited in Newton, p. 34.

the Church taught him”.<sup>214</sup>

According to Newton, ‘the explanation scarcely helped his cause, if by “acceptable to people” one understands him to mean “acceptable to white people”’.<sup>215</sup> These ideas and beliefs current during the formative decades of LDS conversion on Aotea are indicative of the dominant views in the Church at that time and explain white Mormon attitudes towards non-English speaking communities. Those interviewed recalled that the old people would kōrero Māori in the home amongst themselves but not outside their home.<sup>216</sup> Many of them explained that their tūpuna, who at the time of the mass conversion in 1889 only spoke te reo Māori, did not want to lose the language; however, with the assimilation of Māori into the Pākehā world, this happened unintentionally.

## Summary

This chapter has focused on the continued refusal of Ngāti Rehua to convert to Christianity and their mass conversion to the Mormon faith in 1889. Prior to that momentous event, there was a prophecy — subsequently interpreted as predicting the acceptance of the Mormon faith within Māori communities — by the Ngāti Kahungunu tohunga Pōtangoa.<sup>217</sup> In the same year, 1881, consistent with an emerging Mormon view that Māori are genealogically linked to the Lost Tribes of

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<sup>214</sup> Cited in Newton, p. 34.

<sup>215</sup> Newton, p. 34.

<sup>216</sup> Judith Klink, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.

<sup>217</sup> For his descendants, and those from the Wairarapa area, Potangaroa prophecy was not explicitly related to the LDS Church. Nevertheless members of the LDS church have maintained this prophecy as part of a grand narrative of Māori conversion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Israel, the Latter Day Saints church began to proselyte within the Māori world. One of their missionaries also had his own revelation — which Māori in the Coromandel area spoke a dialect that linked directly back to Babylon. Following the conversion of most Ngāti Rehua, the iwi attempted to retain some of its traditional cultural beliefs and practices, but Mormonism did not allow for their co-existence alongside its version of Christianity. For several decades, therefore, these two ideological systems remained in contest, though over time it was Māori values and identity that were diminished and undermined.

## Conclusion

This thesis began with the question “Why was it that Ngāti Rehua took so long to convert to any Christian denomination, particularly in a space so close to the Bay of Islands, the hub of early mission activity in the country?” While other iwi were converting in large numbers to Christianity, or renegotiating Christianity on their own terms, Ngāti Rehua on the island of Aotea in the Hauraki Gulf remained isolated and aloof for much of the nineteenth century, maintaining traditional beliefs and practices that in other tribal regions had disappeared or been significantly modified. It seems extraordinary that, while other iwi and Māori had converted or experimented with Christianity to varying degrees decades before Ngāti Rehua’s conversion, the Aotea story began so long after the first visits by Pākehā missionaries. This thesis thus presents a history of this specific conversion process and of Ngāti Rehua’s subsequent identity formation.

The study also focused on the contest between traditional Māori beliefs and a new religion, Mormonism, on Aotea. These traditional beliefs included māku, tohunga and te reo itself. Ngāti Rehua did not simply leave these behind when in 1889 they mass-converted to the Latter Day Saints faith, and through the next two generations while they grappled to reconcile these two very different cultural worlds. Indeed, as this study has shown, Christianity struggled to find purchase on the island until the late nineteenth century because it found itself confronted with a community still firmly committed to its earlier belief systems. While the geographical isolation of Aotea was an important factor in this singular resistance to Christianity, the island nevertheless remained — much as it had been in traditional times — in communication and interaction with other tribes on the nearby mainland of Aotearoa.

Chapter One contended that although Aotea from ancient times was a location known to and visited by Māori generally, it was still somewhat isolated from Tai Tokerau politics and its social and cultural trends. In particular, Ngāti Rehua practiced and lived by a well-defined and particular body of spiritual beliefs. At the same time, Ngāti Rehua were a relatively mobile people, so that conversion to new religious beliefs was a difficult prospect for either European missionaries or native ‘agents’; they not only needed to deal with the isolation of Aotea but also with the movement of people both within and beyond the island. Thus, while Christianity was variously embraced and negotiated by other Māori communities across the country, those on Aotea remained more strongly connected to many of their traditional spiritual attachments and practices.

Chapter Two explored the arrival and settlement of Pākehā in the wider region, the ensuing engagement between them and Ngāti Rehua and how these interactions altered traditional practices and belief systems. Māori

wanted to engage with Pākehā as they brought, initially, a new way of warfare. In particular, the introduction of muskets saw a shift in power, resulting in Ngāpuhi domination over the north and well beyond. Due to the inter-tribal warfare, the people of Aotea saw a wave of warring iwi passing through the island. Without a doubt, this impacted on the people of Aotea in more than a military or strategic sense, as they would have been exposed to some elements of Christianity through the comings and goings of these transient, partly-Christianised groups. Foremost, amongst the early Pākehā were missionaries, who brought with them new ideas on the morality of warfare, kaitangata, tā moko and other traditional practices. Māori attitudes to these traditional practices began to be renegotiated in their own terms. These ideas, even in the absence of Christianisation, also projected onto the people of Aotea; for example, the last known case of kaitangata occurred in 1838.

In 1833 Henry Williams of the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) became the first recorded evangelist to visit the island. Prior to this, the only form of Christian engagement would have been through Māori visiting from the mainland or Ngāti Rehua familiar with developments on the mainland. However, during this same period, disenchantment also began to emerge in parts of the Māori world towards Christianity, thus igniting the Māori prophetic movements such as Papahurihia.

One of the key factors as to why Ngāti Rehua remained unattracted to Christianity in these formative years is because of the tāhae (theft) of their land. By 1838, most of the island had been “sold” to the land shark, William Webster. Ngāti Rehua then found themselves marginalised on

what from 1853 was being described as a “reservation”, a space of just 3,510 acres — far from the 70,000 acres they had formerly occupied. By this time, other Pākehā were also resident on the island and in possession of various areas of Māori land.

Chapter Three focused on the impact of Christianity, and Mormonism in particular, on the Māori community at Aotea from the late nineteenth century to the present. It exposed how their mass-conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) in 1889 radically transformed their culture and society, slowly at first, dramatically a half-century later. In the process, the people of Aotea variously resisted and embraced new Christian ideals, values and doctrines which, in turn, disrupted earlier lifeways and belief systems.

Although Mormon missionaries had originally arrived in Aotearoa in 1854, it was only in the early 1880s that they began to proselyte within Māori communities. Around this time, Māori tohunga, such as Pāora Pōtangaroa of Ngāti Kahungunu, offered prophetic messages that strongly influenced Mormon missionary work amongst Māori. In particular, LDS missionaries emphasised genealogical narratives from the Book of Mormon that depicted Māori as descendants of the Tribes of Israel. In 1889 Elders Wright and Davis, from the United States, became the first Mormon missionaries to land on Aotea. They brought with them new belief systems that Māori interpreted into their own way of thinking. In the space of a week, nevertheless, they converted the majority of Māori on Aotea. From then on, the Mormon faith was the official religion of Ngāti Rehua. This chapter also argued how they managed and navigated the

reshaping of tikanga in the face of the new spiritual discourses and how into the present they reflect on whānau, hapū and iwi identities.

This thesis not only revealed how and why Ngāti Rehua took so long to convert to Christianity, but exposed many unanswered questions on how they grappled with two ideological world systems. Although it had long existed on one of the busy coastal highways in early tribal movements, Ngāti Rehua, through colonial exposure, found themselves isolated for the most part from Christian influences.

Finally, this study shone light on the 1940s–50s movement of a major part of the Ngāti Rehua population from Aotea to the mainland. This, in many ways, marked the second phase of the conversion process. Its principal outcome was a shattering of associations for so many in the Ngāti Rehua community with the lived reality of their home island. At a deeper level, too, it resulted in the marginalisation of their young peoples' connections with their traditional culture, especially with te reo Māori.

## Glossary

Atua	God
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Hui	Meeting
Iwi	Tribe
Kai Tangata	Cannibalism
Kainga	Home
Kaitiaki	Guardian
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship
Karakia	Prayer
Karanga	To call
Koiwi	Human bone
Kōrero	Talk, Speak, Say
Kōrero tuku iho	Words passed down
Mākutu	Witchcraft, magic
Marae	Courtyard – in front of
	Wharenui
Mana	Prestige, authority, influence,
Mana whenua	Territorial rights
Manu oi	Muttonbird
Matakite	Prophet, seer
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom
Moko kauae	Chin tattoo
Motu	Island
Pā	Fortified village

Pakanga	Battle, to fight
Pakeke	Adult
Pātere	To chant
Pepeha	Tribal identity
Rangatira	Chief, noble
Raupatu	Conquer
Rohe	Group
Tāhae	Theft
Tā moko	Tattoo
Tapu	Sacred
Tauīwi	Foreigner
Te ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te reo	Language
Tiaki	Look after, guard
Tikanga	Protocols
Tohunga	Skilled person
Tuku whenua	Land Gift
Tūpuna	Ancestor
Utu	Reciprocity
Wāhi tapu	Sacred site
Whānau	Family
Whanaunga	Relative
Whare	House
Whenua	Land, Afterbirth





## Appendix B

*Tu tonu ko te rae, I haere ai te makau*  
*E kai ana au e, i te ika wareware*  
*E aurere noa e, i te ihu o te waka*  
*E kore hoki au e, e mihi ki a koe*  
*E mihi ana au e, kei a Ngahua, te ipo*  
*Taku kahui tara e, no roto i a au*  
*Taku totara haemata e, no roto no Moehau*  
*I haere te makau e, i te ara kohuru*  
*Kihai i tangohia e, i te mata rakau*  
*Totohu to hinu e, nga one hungahunga*  
*I waho Te Karaka e, ki te hau kainga*  
*Te uru I piua e, ki te wai ngarahu*  
*A, noho mai ra koe, te puke i Rangipo*  
*Ka whakawai mate ra, te wahine a Tipuhi*  
*Kauaka e koaia e, he ngawha toki nui*  
*Kowai ra tohu e, hei ranga i te mate*  
*Ma Te Rohu e ukui e, mana e homai*  
*Tau noa te makau e, he huia rere tonga*  
*He unuhanga taniwha e, terea na ki Te Muri i<sup>218</sup>*

Forth stands yon headland, alas:  
 Whence passed onward my beloved  
 I with intent and fixed gaze  
 Am as a demented victim  
 Oh that helpless call which arose  
 From the bow of the canoe.

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<sup>218</sup> Graham, p. 195. Smith pp. 394–5.

Yet not indeed do I alas  
Mourn for thee, alas!  
I mourn rather alas  
For Ngahua thy companion  
Oh my flock of terns, alas  
Gone forth from my own self.

Oh my flourishing totara, alas!  
From inner depths of Moehau  
Hence passed did my spouse, alas!  
By pathway onward to death so foul  
Nor were you slain, alas!  
By cleft of weapon's edge blade  
Thy blood with deep ruddy glow  
Will flash across the heavens span  
Deep stains thy gore, alas!  
Deep as deep sandy soil  
Down there at Te Karaka, alas!  
Thy beloved village home, alas!  
Thy head with fair flowing locks  
And tattoo scroll adorned, alas!  
Now kept art thou afar  
On hill pa at Rangipo  
There taunted in thy death to be  
By the women of Ngapuhi  
But be ye not exultant, alas

For this is but as chip off great axe  
Who now will give due regard  
To seek revenge for thy death?  
By Te Rohu will chastisement come, alas!  
By him (it will be) effected  
Like was my beloved one alas!  
Even as a huia fitting in the south  
Like unto death struggles of taniwha alas!  
You passed away unto Te Muri – eh!

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