

A PILGRIM'S GUIDE

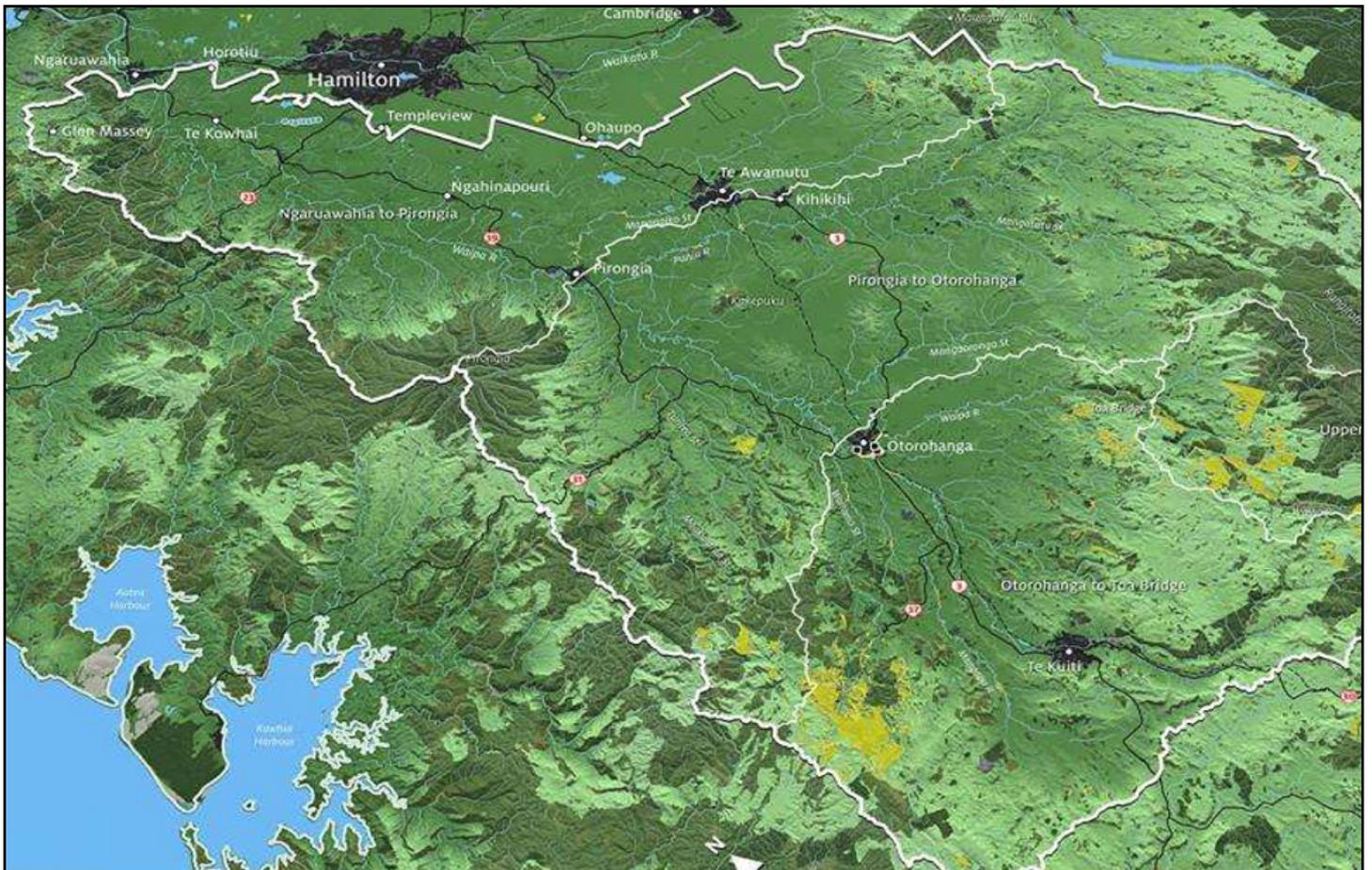
**PIRONGIA, TE AWAMUTU
AND RANGIAOWHIA**

TĒTAHI HIKOI TAPU KI PIRONGIA, RAUA KO TE WHARE KARAKIA KAUMĀTUA O HONE TAPU KI TE AWAMUTU, ME TE WHARE KARAKIA O PAORA TAPU KI RANGIAOWHIA



“The geographical pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out of an inner journey. The inner journey is the interpolation of the meanings and signs of the outer pilgrimage. One can have one without the other. It is best to have both.”

Thomas Merton



**NGĀ PURAPURA PAI Ō TE RONGOPAI KI WAIPĀ PIRONGIA,
THE GOOD SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL IN THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT AT PIRONGIA**

The gospel first arrived in Aotearoa at Oihi Bay in the Bay of islands on Christmas day 1814 care of Ruatara, a Ngāpuhi chief, and the Revd Samuel Marsden LMS. 22 years later in 1836 the Revd Benjamin and Harriet Ashwell CMS opened the first Anglican and Christian mission station and school at Kaitotehe across the Waikato river from Mount Taupiri where, to the surprise of their superiors, their ministry met with instant and impressive success. Benjamin was known to be personable, somewhat eccentric, and resolute in spite of chronic asthma. He was called 'Potae Nui', 'Large Hat', because of his large black stovepipe hat. Being short of stature he would have cut an interesting figure. Besides the normal duties of his mission, Benjamin Ashwell had to cover a large district. Harriet was often the mission station educator and host. Her photo (right) suggests something of her strength of character. At Pirongia a large raupō church that held a thousand was eventually built and a mission established on the banks of the Waipā river.

Many of the early Anglican school classes began in this time over a wide area, largely run by Māori for Māori. As was often said during this period in the country as a whole, Māori frequently invited the gospel from others, and then shared it amongst their own in their own way and time. Te rongopai a Ruka, the gospel according to St Luke in Māori, was often the initial resource for interpretation in this way.

In 1839 Benjamin opened branch missions out of Pirongia at what came to be called Te Awamutu, and the original Otawhao Pā following the first Christian visit to the Pā of 1834, again with spectacular outcomes. Māori interest in the spirituality of the gospel and this first presentation of their own language written down in such a beautiful and respectful way, proved to be very evocative. Many Māori integrated the transformative words of the gospel in the Māori language with their own highest values and experience of the world. Harriet and Benjamin left a loving legacy of mutual respect and affection between Māori and Pākehā in their day, being deeply immersed in the Māori community. It was a good beginning.



For this and other reasons there followed widespread sowing and reaping of 'nga purapura pai o te rongopai,' the good seeds of the gospel. The mission was taken over by John and Maria Morgan CMS in 1841 when Benjamin and Harriet focussed more on their first mission school near Mount Taupiri. In Waipā, by 1843, morning and evening services were being held in 30 villages, and reading classes, morning schools, and Sunday services took place regularly.

The late Māori Queen, Te Arikinui Te Atairangikaahu, from her royal marae ātea at Tūrangawaewae, said in the 1995 Māori language year, of the sowing and planting of the gospel by Māori and Pākehā alike throughout Aotearoa:



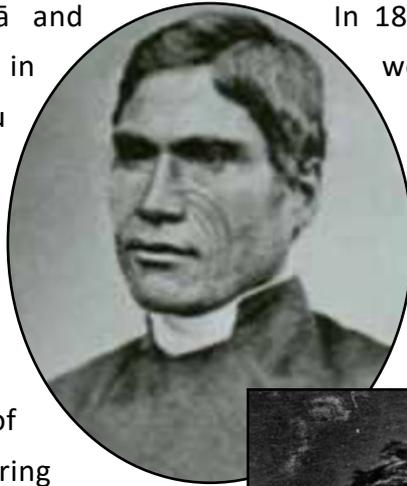
“Ka tika hoki too taatou whakaara i teenei o aa taatou taonga i too tatou Reo Maaori hei whakanuinga maa taatou moo teenei tau 1995. Koia teenei tonu hoki te tino taonga i hiikoia ai e oo taatou tupuna te mata o te whenua ki te rapu i ngaa tuhituhinga o te Paipera Tapu i te taenga mai o ngaa Paakehaa me to Rongopai. Ka rua ai eenei taonga i matenuingia e oo taatou tupuna araa ko te Rongopai me te tuhi i too raatou reo hei whakamahi maa raatou.

**Naa ngaa tupuna Paakehaa i tiimata ngaa kaupapa e rua, hei aha raa hei koha maa tatou ki oo taatou tupuna Maaori a, ki aua tupuna hoki o te iwi Paakehaa?
E mahara ana ahau koia teeraa te tuuturu a te kaumaatua i kii raka:**

‘Kotahi anoo te koohao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro maa, te miro pango me te miro whero. A muri i ahau, kia mau ki te aroha, ki te ture, ki te whakaponu.’

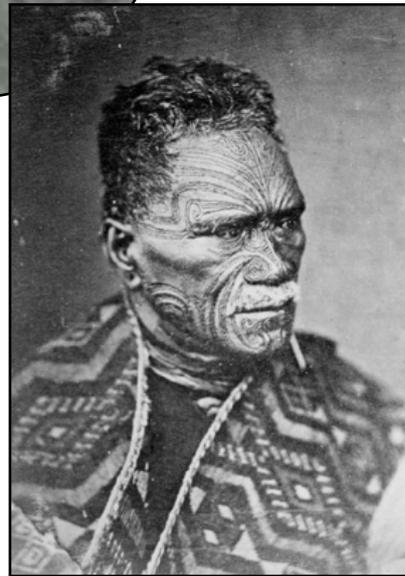
Nooreira whaaia taa te ngaakau i matenui ai, hei whakaari atu ki te ao whaanui kei te toituu tonu taatou. Maa too taatou Atua taatou hei arahi i roto i aa taatou kawenga i teenei koha whakamiharo i homaingia nei e ia ki o taatou tupuna.

These seeds planted in Waipā and Waikato, grew and prospered in later decades, with Heta Kereru Tarawhiti, the first Māori ordained as a priest in this part of the island. Heta was a Waikato Tainui chief whose name adorns the main entrance of the Waikato Cathedral Church of St. Peter. Heta stayed in Waikato during the New Zealand land wars and supported the Kiingitanga cause; "Nothing could deter him from his duties."



In 1871 Heta built a new chapel along the west banks of the Waikato river with support from Ngāti Whawhākia, Ngāti Tu, Ngāti Huakore, Ngāti Teaia, Ngāti Huakatoa, Ngāti Whauroa and Ngāti Haua. In 1877 he began ministry in Pirongia.

Heta began as a lay preacher and was later Ordained as a priest in 1866 by Bishop Selwyn at St. Paul's church in Auckland. He was of the Te Ngaungau hapū and he gifted the 'Church of England' a total of 1385 acres for the use of education and religion.



The land block there was called Pourewa o Te Tonga, located at Whatiwhatihoe, not far from King Tāwhiao Tūkaroto Matutaera Pōtatau Te Wherowhero's, home.

It is timely for us to uphold another of our treasures and to set aside this one year 1995, of our millennium of our Maaori language. For their language, our ancestors trudged the landscape simply to secure printed copies of the Good News brought by the Paakehaa missionaries.

So, these were the two treasures sincerely sought by our ancient warriors - the Good News and their language set down on paper. The Paakehaa ancestors initiated both and I wonder how we can show our appreciation to our two sets of ancestors?

I think of the vision of that ancestor of ours. This man looked into the future and hoped for a multi race of people to rise in a world of harmony. 'There is but one eye of the needle through which the white, the black and the red thread must pass. After I am gone, hold fast to love, to the law and to the religion of Christ.' Therefore, let the heart dictate the learning of our language and let the world know we still live. Only our God can guide and lead us in keeping alive this precious gift that He bequeathed to our ancestors."

Nothing remains of the first buildings and the first Christian mission, apart from a memorial obelisk marking the spot on the banks of the Waipā river west of the Pirongia village. However, beginning a pilgrimage at Pirongia can help the pilgrim pray and reflect about the seeds of the gospel that grow in any place, for anyone, rich or poor, under any circumstances.

This 'purapura pai', this wholesome seed, may grow to become a tree in whose branches many birds may come to nest. So it was here, so it can be for the pilgrim who comes here.



This is the image of Jesus in Luke, 13:18-19, Matthew 13:31-32, and Mark 4:30-32, as a core teaching about the kingdom of God coming through. In good soil nothing may be seen to be happening, but then with time a new shoot from a seed breaks through into the world of light and becomes a site of new abundance. A seed as small as a mustard seed can grow into a life giving bush, self-propagating in many different soils, so full of the spice of life, easily available to people living in poverty in particular. The ground seed was mixed with water, becoming the source of the healthy mustard paste that was so common to everyone in Jesus' time. To this day, mustard as a zesty condiment continues to be valued over 2,000 years later.

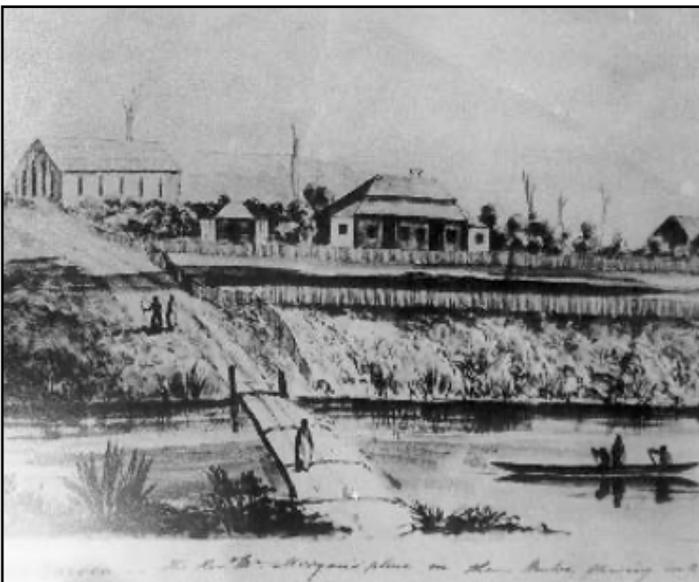
A pilgrim can be open hearted enough to receive anew the seeds of the Kingdom of God in the soil of their soul, for their own and the common good.



TE WHARE KARAKIA KAUMĀTUA O HONE TAPU KI TE AWAMUTU,
THE OLD CHURCH OF ST JOHN IN TE AWAMUTU



The first mission station site is preserved in the green park beside St Johns Church Te Awamutu, with its foundations outlined in brick paving stones, and plaques describing the extent of the various buildings by a riverbank. The name Te Awamutu, “The rivers end”, derives from the mission being located beside the last navigable point for the mission of this local tributary of the Waipā river.



‘Old’ St John’s church is the oldest wooden building left standing in continuous use in Waikato. The church was opened on Easter day 1854 by the largely Māori community, working in partnership with the Reverend John and Maria Morgan who had arrived in January 1841. People have already been visiting this historic and sacred precinct now for over 180 years. In 1856, a second church was built in a similar way at Rangioawhia, see below. All the timber is pit sawn, revealing a fine heart-rimu grain. The beautiful stained glass windows were salvaged from an earlier church and were carried by Māori supporters over the Wairere track through the Kaimai ranges from Tauranga, an ancient trail over mountain, bush and rivers, still in use today. Blood or iron rich clay stained footprints and a handprint can be seen in the roof rafters from the time of building.

The sanctuary window comprises three lights, the left showing St Peter’s ship. The centre light shows the Christian acronym IHS, for *In Hic Signus*, ‘In This Sign’, the sign of the cross, the last supper and the resurrection scene of Jesus sharing breakfast on the beach. The right light shows a church. It was from here that the gospel spread and much agricultural and horticultural activity blossomed, later spreading and developing into the vast and historic gardens of Rangiaowhia.

Early in 1864, during the Waikato Land Wars, St John’s became a garrison church for the men of General Cameron’s Army, having previously been

the centre of a Māori mission. However Te Paea Tīaho Pōtatau, “Princess Sophia”, a daughter of the first Maori King Pōtatau Te Wherowhero who had been born at Te Awamutu, placed her mana on the church for its safekeeping during the fighting. Te Paea Tīaho’s half-sister, Irihāpeti Te Paea, also a daughter of Pōtatau and a mother of 12 children from her first marriage to John Mackay in 1838, had helped fill the early mission schools after the baptism of the whole family.



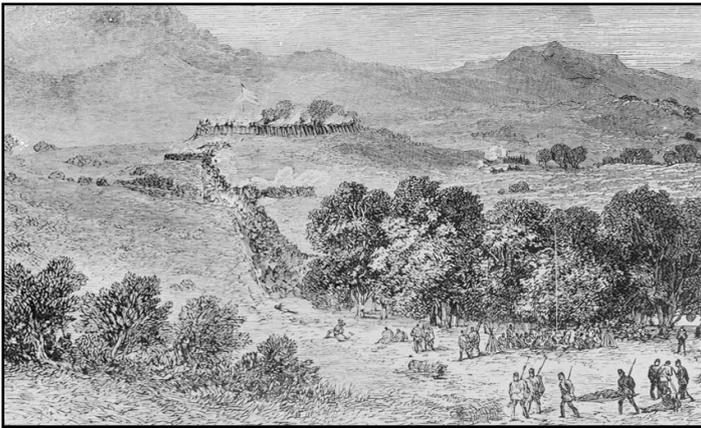
Irihāpeti and her family became a major source of support, with many others, for the continuation of the Anglican missions before, during and after the military tensions of the time. To the respective influence of the two same named sisters with their

contemporary families and friends, do we largely owe the survival of this building and its mission. A separate tribute to Irihāpeti is provided for pilgrims.

Many other buildings were burnt at that time as the followers of the paramount chief Manga Rewi Maniapoto in solidarity with the second Māori king, Tāwhiao, stood against the incoming colonial forces. However St John’s mission church was indeed protected, becoming the oldest remaining wooden building in continuous use in the Waipā and Waikato area to this day. A tribute to Rewi and his people emblazons a flag draped in the nave of the church. The Ariki, Manga, had taken the name ‘Rewi’ from the biblical high priestly and aristocratic name ‘Levi’, when he had welcomed, hosted and partnered the first missions to the Waipā area.



Years later, in 1878 Manga Rewi Maniapoto used one of his precious kaitaka, his chiefly finely woven cloak with its distinguished tāniko border (pictured left) as a symbol of a return to peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with the Pākehā community. This followed a long 14 year old stand-off between the races due to the New Zealand wars and the 1864, 31 March - 2 April battle of Ōrākau.



A number of wooden tablets, memorials to those on both sides who died during the 1864 fighting in this district, were erected around the interior walls; only those in the baptistry have survived.

A most poignant aspect of the baptistry is a mutual bilingual tribute by combatants from both sides of the war, saying “Love your enemy”, from the gospel of St Matthew chapter 5 verse 44. The English tribute was written and placed by Māori, and the Māori tribute was written and placed by Pākehā.

The church is a place there much thought can be given to the storms of life, depicted by St Peter's ship and the New Zealand Land War Crisis. The presence of God in storm and turmoil, enabled St Peter to be saved from drowning by Christ, and enabled Old St John's Church to survive care of Tīaho and Irihāpeti.

The redeeming grace of the gospel and its power to face the truth of suffering, sin and death, witnesses to resurrection coming out of crucifixion. This is imaged in the central stained glass light, through the last supper before Jesus died, the risen Christ on the beach and the baptismal sign of rebirth into a new creation.

Directly in front of 'new' St. John's church can be seen a marble memorial to some of ngā Tangata Māori i toa, Māori heroes who died during the hostilities in the New Zealand Wars, including the battle of Ōrākau. These were interred here at the request of Bishop Selwyn, the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand. The bilingual obelisk was blessed at the beginning of the third millennium by Bishop Ngārahu Katene, Te Pīhopa o Te Manawa o Te Wheke. The photo below records a tribute there by Ngāti Maniapoto descendants.



The colonial troop casualties who died at the battles of Rangiaowhia, Hairini and Ōrākau are interred to the north of the church. In 1888 the government erected a memorial to the rank and file, who are interred close by. Two officer's graves are to be seen directly outside the sanctuary.



Nearby is the memorial to four of John and Maria Morgan's children. John Morgan chose to identify with the colonial military agenda during the 1863-64

war, as did some missionary communities in other parts of Aotearoa. This time contrasted with the previous decade of the 1850's when John and Maria had shared a season of partnership and goodwill in the largely Māori community.

Many in the first wave of mission personnel of the 1830's, like Benjamin and Harriet Ashwell mentioned at the outset, more often than not identified throughout with the Māori community they were totally immersed in and dependant on.

The graves as a whole can encourage us to live with the griefs of life, influenced by the great and limitless compassion of God and the hope of Christ's victory over suffering, sin and death.

An aspect of new creation can also be sensed in the efforts of Ngāti Maniapoto today to seek restorative justice and peace, to reconcile with the Crown over the unjust loss of much of their tribal lands following the war. There are many Pākehā people supporting Treaty settlement negotiations, and there are many Christians on both sides of the redemptive process. Signs of resurrection are emerging from a crucifying history. The church of St John at Te Awamutu now has bilingual signage on its notice board. The parish is enjoying a renewed relationship with Ngāti Apakura, the local iwi, which had first begun in 1839.

Parables of hope can be discerned for the pilgrim, from the Christian experience of redemption for both the peoples involved here. The much loved Māori whakataukī, or saying, can relate: "aroha mai, aroha atu; love received, love returned."

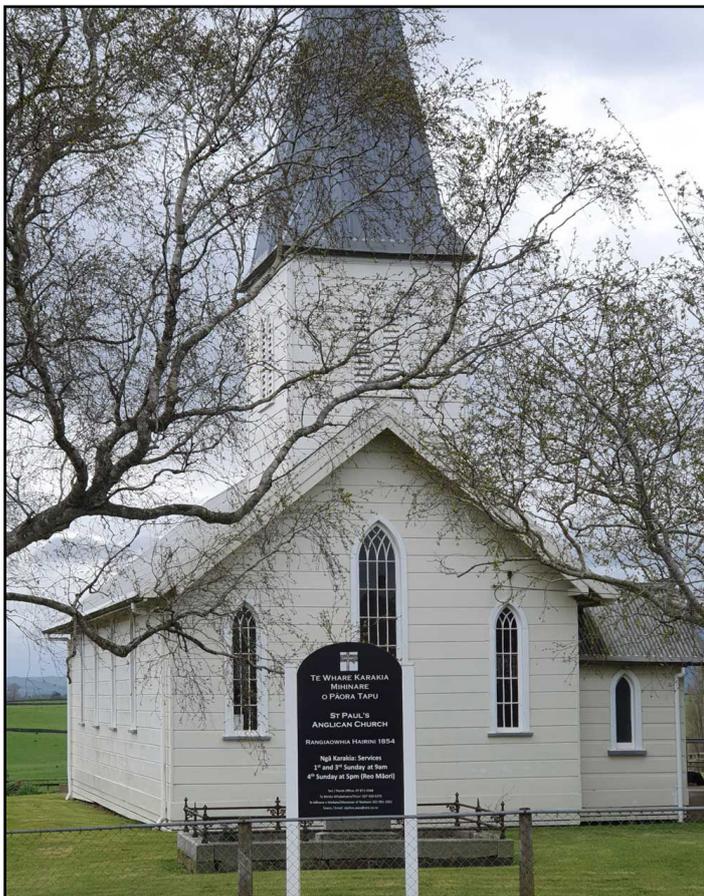
This is what can rebuild a relationship.

This whakataukī is inscribed on a pounamu, greenstone, disk to the right. Pounamu shared between different peoples is an ancient Māori custom which opens a 'tatau pounamu', a 'doorway of peace' between them.



TE WHARE KARAKIA Ō PAORA TAPU KI RANGIAOWHIA, ST PAUL'S CHURCH, RANGIAOWHIA

St Paul's church at Rangiaowhia, known also as 'Hairini' (Ireland), stands as a sentinel overlooking a peaceful, rolling countryside. The building of St Paul's by a largely Māori construction team was commenced in 1852 for the people of Ngāti Apakura, when the district of Rangiaowhia was one of the most populated in the Waikato. In 1841 John and Maria Morgan, who had been working for the Church Missionary Society in the Waikato and the Rotorua districts, were sent to the Te Awamutu area, as above. In partnership with local tribal leaders they helped facilitate the church building project at Rangiaowhia, as well as the basis of a strong by Māori with Māori for Māori Christian mission.

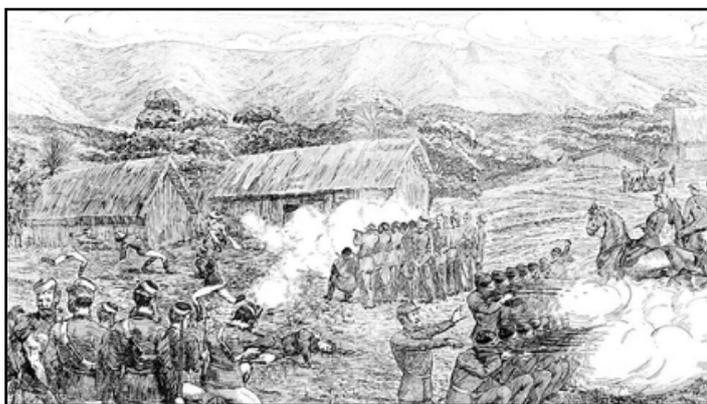


When this mission was at its height in 1840s, the vast Māori gardens and orchards of Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hinetu were feeding Auckland. Trade was already well established with Australia and beginning in California. Many visitors commented on the abundance of life that flourished there. The community would often gather for prayers in the Anglican and Catholic churches when the steeple bells rang. The urupā, cemetery of the Catholic mission of the Holy Angels remains, and the bell of Te Whare Karakia o Paora Tapu, the surviving St Paul's Anglican Church, rings to this day. In recent times Ngāti Apakura have returned there to pray.



In the early 1860s, racial tension and conflict broke out following increasing settler numbers from Europe, and a particular expansionist business plan in Auckland which began to outflank the Maniapoto fruit and Vegetable business at home and abroad. This complemented Governor George Grey's colonising and land acquisition agenda. Many central north island tribes, inspired by the Ngāti Haua Christian prophet and statesman Wiremu Tamihana, chose to stand with their newly and biblically anointed king in 1858, to retain their land, their unity, their language and their way of life in the face of attrition. Military conflict was inevitable.

General Duncan Cameron was ordered by Governor Grey to cross the Mangatāwhiri stream into the Waikato, which resulted in the battle at Rangiriri on 20-21 November 1863. The war came to the Waipā area on 21 February 1864 as the general's forces invaded the Anglican and Catholic mission tribal village area, something he later greatly lamented.



The village was largely undefended because the Māori fighting force were preparing to defend their position at Pāterangi, 16 kilometres away. However General Cameron's military strategy suddenly shifted overnight from the large heavily fortified Pā at Pāterangi, to the vulnerable food basket village of the tribes at Rangiaowhia.

The deaths of a number of innocent women, children and older men followed, some of them burned alive in the raupō church building that was thought to have given them sanctuary, is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's worst calamities. There were Anglicans on both sides of the conflict.

Bishop George Augustus Selwyn, had established a military field hospital at Te Awamutu to care for all the Māori and Pākehā wounded, having transported it down behind the colonial troop advance. The bishop was seen defending tamatoa soldier

Māori from attack in the ward, while also trying to provide the chaplaincy that he was required to offer his own countrymen in the colonial army. This tragic ambiguity troubled him to the end of his days, when he died as Bishop of Lichfield in 1878. He had strong critics from both sides of the war.

The bishop has since been largely seen as caught up in a conflagration he didn't intend to ignite. Because he was found in the middle of the conflict, he had in fact been asked by Manga Rewi Maniapoto to mediate Geneva type conventions for the safety of Rangiaowhia on his behalf with General Cameron; a mediation which collapsed disastrously.

The full story is narrated by Tony Simpson in his article "What happened at Rangiaowhia", by Alan Davidson in his article on Bishop Selwyn at Rangiaowhia, and in Vincent O'Malley's book "The Great War for New Zealand", itemised in the references. The articles are usually available in St Paul's church. Following the war Ngāti Apakura had all their land confiscated and were forced to seek a papa kainga, home, with other iwi elsewhere.

Only in 2021 was this dispossession beginning to be addressed positively by the crown, after much challenge by the descendants of the original people of Rangiaowhia for a measure of restorative justice. A key leader in this quest includes the widely respected Waikato University historian and tribal elder, Professor Tom Roa. Te Hāhi Mihinare, the church derived from the early missions, now represented by Te Hāhi Mihinare ki Aotearoa, ki Niu Tīreni, ki Ngā Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa, through the Anglican General Synod of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia today, is in complete solidarity with this cause.

As pilgrims we are called to lament the catastrophes and losses of our own life and to be honest about our pain; to name it and share it prayerfully with deeply interested companions, as the psalms of lamentation do in Psalms 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 85, and 90. Then we may gradually be given the grace and freedom to look for a measure of hope.



Ngāti Maniapoto as an iwi and the people of Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hinetu today, want this for all of us in Aotearoa today, as do many Pākehā Christians. We aren't called to remain located in perpetual pain, but to face the truth of our past, and then to move redemptively into a new and better future. The following words in 2014 of a rangatahi, a young descendant of Kahutoi and Thomas Power from Rangiaowhia who survived the Rangiaowhia tragedy, can move us to the core:

“Should we first know of Rangiaowhia and its full story, we will know that the partnership between Māori and British was once very promising. The weaving of the white thread, the black thread and the red thread once created an extremely beautiful picture and in that picture was a treaty showing complete promise....

“Giving up on hope is always wrong. Even in the place of what we can calculate to be certain destruction. Because it cuts us off from ourselves and our own humanity. Privileging the head over the heart, the mind over the body.” Nadia Colburn



We look forward to a day where we again live in harmonious, thriving partnership. All flowers encouraged to blossom as did the lanes of houses and children of Rangiaowhia. All branches of the peach trees that once lined the ridges. Branches connected to a common trunk that is partnership. And should a strong gust of wind approach, we stay bound committed to growth and to tomorrow.”

**Te Whare Karakia o Paora
Tapu ki Rangiaowhia**

**You have survived,
You have endured,
Church of Sorrows.**

**Once you graced the
burgeoning land with
your bell ring of peace.**

**Life abundant encircled you,
life in Christ centered you.**

**Then you were surrounded
by war, by terror, and by tragedy.**

**The crucifixion you knew
wounded the land.**

**One day the resurrection you
herald will heal the whenua,
one day.**

**May that Kingdom come,
may that will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**



“Kua kākahuria e koutou a te Karaiti

Put on Christ like a garment”

The epistle of St Paul to the Galatians 3;27

As pilgrims we are invited to open our own hearts to repentance, healing and redemption, in our own life journey, which however slowly and painfully, is available to us through God in Christ.

We are challenged to prayerfully seek peace through justice under God in our own context, to learn from tragedy, to create a better world for ourselves and for others; to serve a new creation. This is the vocation of God's pilgrim people in the world.

“Whatua te kakahu aniwaniwa

Weave the cloak with rainbow colours

Ahakoā rereke atu te miro o tena I tena

Even though the threads differ

He miro tui aroha

They are twisted cords that weave love

He miro whakau

They are twisted cords that hold the cloak firm

Kei te taha o te kakahu nga miro pirau

On the edges are the frayed threads

Horekau he kaha

Without strength

Pena ka waihotia tena kakahu kia mukamuka, ka ngahoro

If the cloak is left to fray it will fall apart

No reira ra

Therefore

Tuia te miro kia kotahi tana kukume, kia mau tonu

Weave the cord strongly so that it is firm for ever

Tuia te maoritanga me te pakehatanga

Weave Maoritanga and pakehatanga

Kia rite ki te mahiti ki runga, ko te paepae roa ki raro

Kakahu o te rangatira

Ko te ao nei te rangi ka uhia

Ma te huruhuru te manu ka rere

So together they will be like our cloak, like the dogskin

Cloak over the shoulders and a cloak with a fine taniko border below fitting for a chief

Because as clouds cover the sky so feathers adorn a bird.

Kia pera te maroro o te kakahu me te mangemange

Kei mate tatou i te hukapapa

Kia u, kia tu tangata i roto i nga mahi ataahua, a te iwi e,

So let the cloak be made as strong as the climbing fern

Which never wears out or we will perish from the frost

So be diligent

Be upstanding in the beautiful work of you people”

Bishop Muru Walters

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This article for pilgrims is written in complementarity with the “Te Ara Wai “local history story boards and apps produced by the Waipā District Council. It is a work in progress and seeks to respect the variety of voices that speak into this history.



