

## **‘Mori - Peace at All Costs?’**

**(Annual Quaker Lecture, Saint Andrews on the Terrace, Friday 20 November 2020**

**By Maui Solomon)**

*‘Permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence (Gandhi)*

If you and your family were faced with annihilation but could decide to defend yourself against certain death and worse, but this would require killing those who threatened to kill you and your family, what would you do?

What if you knew that your family members would be mercilessly slaughtered, then eaten and the survivors enslaved? What would you do?

That was the decision faced by my Mori ancestors in 1835 following the invasion of their Island home by two Maori tribes from New Zealand, Ngati Tama and Ngati Mutunga.

After debating for 3 days what to do a gathering of 1000 Mori people made the historic decision not to fight and kill the invaders because their ancient covenant of peace forbade it. Instead they offered peace to the invading tribes who they had helped nurse back to health after they had arrived at Rekohu sick and malnourished on an English sailing ship in November of that fateful year.

But that offer was spurned and about 300 Mori men, women and children were slaughtered and cannibalised in the initial pogrom. Men were separated from the women, husbands from wives and children separated from their parents. The survivors were forced to do hard manual labour, were regularly beaten, and were fed scraps and were constantly hungry and malnourished. Many of the women were raped. Some were found dead in the morning in their whares having died during the night of what Mori called “kongenge” or deep despair.

As recorded in a letter from Hirawanu Tapu, the Mori leader of the mid-Nineteenth century, to Governor Grey in early 1862:

*“Friend you should know that when the Māori arrived at this island, their plan was hidden to the Mori. Afterwards we were killed by them; some were saved as slaves and after a long time in the settlement were killed by them for meat, that is, for food. They kept on killing like this until the gospel of Jesus Christ arrived, and then they stopped. They still hold to much evil-doing, for instance they take women who are actually married as women for them, and as for the men, they hit someone and keep them as a slave. And another thing, they traded them to other men as payment for seeds or pork or whatever.”*

What Mori were forced to endure at the hands of their captors is similar to the cruelty and horror meted out to the Jewish people by the Nazi’s in the so called ‘Labour Camps’ during the Second World War. But this happened right here in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The sheer scale of the horror and length of time it was allowed to continue – for over 30 years – is, I believe, the reason why Mori became an ‘inconvenient truth’ in the history of this country

and to some extent remains so. We were an unwelcome 'stain' on the Nations conscience that had to be hidden and eventually removed altogether. The powers that be did a very good job of that for over 150 years. But they did not count on the resilience of Moriori or the power of our ancestor's legacy of peace to motivate and inspire a whole new generation of Moriori to reclaim our identity and revive our culture. This has happened only over the last 40 years.

Meanwhile, the Colonial government knew what was happening on Rekohu in the mid nineteenth century but stood by and did nothing to intervene to prevent the genocide of our people. This is because the Colonial government had its own political agenda. We have had an expert in demographics, Professor Ian Poole, do an estimate of what our population would look like today if the Crown had intervened and put a stop to the killings in 1842. He has come up with a conservative estimate of around 20,000 people. More likely 30,000. Today we have a register of about 2,000 members but believe there may be as many as 6 to 8,000 people of Moriori descent – many of whom are unaware of their Moriori heritage and some who just don't want to know because of the mythologised 'stigma' surrounding Moriori as weak and inferior to Maori. Many who managed to escape the terror on Rekohu chose to hide their Moriori identity in the new lives they made for themselves and their families on mainland New Zealand. Most never returned to their Island home.

The terror on Rekohu lasted for almost 30 years until Moriori wrote a heart-rending plea to Governor Sir George Grey in 1862 and slavery was eventually abolished in about 1868. The cannibalism had stopped sometime during the 1840's due to the influence of the early missionaries to the Islands but the brutal treatment continued.

The following is a quote from Hirawanu Tapu in a letter he wrote to Governor Grey which accompanied the 1862 petition:

*"Friend, greetings to you with the law of England and the law which comes from the Scriptures....England holds the cause of God and a cannibal people cannot rise above nor refute the law of England because God is the source of Pakeha law.....Friend Grey, here is our word to you concerning our two Islands...the rights of the Maori are not straight, they are stealing the rights to our land.....the rights of our islands are with us. We are the original inhabitants. This is our word...our law says that land taken unjustly must be returned to those whose it was before. Enough, come to set this island right...the doings here are not in accord with the law"<sup>1</sup>*

Such was the disdain and contempt that Moriori were held in by their Maori captors that the phrase "*send a paraiwhara*" – which translates as "send a black fella" – because that was the term Maori used to describe Moriori at that time – was common place. This derogatory term had been borrowed from the sealers and whalers who often visited Rekohu and who used it in referring to Aboriginals of Australia.

But further pain was to follow for Moriori. After the two invading tribes had returned to their traditional homes in Taranaki by 1868, the Crown set up a land court on the Chathams in 1870. In less than a week of deliberations, the Judge (John Rogan) awarded 97.3% of Rekohu and 100% of Rangihau or Pitt Island to Ngati Mutunga despite them having left the Islands and that Moriori were once again the majority population on the Island. Albeit having suffered a population collapse of massive proportions. Between 1835 and 1870 the Moriori population

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hirawanu Tapu to Governor Grey, June 1862

had plummeted from about 2000 down to a mere 100 survivors. That is a population collapse of 95%. By international standards that is called genocide.

And why did the Court give all the land to Ngati Mutunga? Because the Court considered that Moriori were a “conquered people” and therefore had forfeit rights to our land we had lived on for over 800 years. They decided instead that people who had been on the Island a mere 5 years before the Treaty was signed in 1840 had all the rights. The Judge gave no consideration to the Moriori ancient law of peace.

Why? Because it didn't suit the colonial agenda of the day. The Crown and British settlers were busy on the mainland trying to steal Maori land in Taranaki (and elsewhere) and the Crown officials had promised Maori that if they returned to Rekohu they would get all the land they wanted. The Crown at that time did not want to have to deal with the influx of Maori into Taranaki returning home from Rekohu.

Conveniently the presiding Judge John Rogan was the same Judge who sat at the land hearings in Taranaki during the mid-1860's so was well acquainted with the political and colonial aspiration of the settler government. Indeed, he was doing the Crown's job for them. He was their agent as were all Native Land Court judges of the day. The Courts were busily issuing a Crown title over customary Maori land so that it could more easily and quickly be fragmented and sold or otherwise taken up by Pakeha settlers hungry for land.

Meanwhile, many of the Pakeha settlers who had made Rekohu their home from the 1840's onwards were also keen for Ngati Mutunga to have title confirmed in their names because they were leasing the land from them for farming and were keen to buy as much land as they could once that title was confirmed in Maori ownership. And of course, this is exactly what happened. Maori got all the land and either immediately leased or sold large tracts of it to Pakeha settlers. It wasn't theirs to start with and by 1870 they had largely left the Islands and gone home to Taranaki. So, it was easy come easy go and a lot of money changed hands and the Crown, Maori and Pakeha were happy with the outcome. The Court had done its job as had the Crown. After all, Maori had only done to Moriori (in term of stealing their land) what the Crown were busily doing to Maori on mainland New Zealand.

Whichever way you look at it, Moriori never stood a chance. Of course, the Crown and the Court were always going to find in favour of Maori because that suited the Crown's own agenda of 'might is right' and 'colonial conquest'. However, both the Crown and the courts conveniently overlooked that under prevailing international law at the time, although the Crown may have obtained the *imperium* over Aotearoa, they did not have the *dominium* which remained with the original inhabitants. In other words, while the Crown may (arguably) have gained *sovereignty* (*imperium*) over the land in Aotearoa in 1840, that did not extinguish the *customary title* (*dominium*) of the native Maori inhabitants. Of course, in Aotearoa, there are many Maori who will argue to this day that the Treaty never guaranteed or ceded sovereignty to the Crown. Equally, Moriori maintain that what took place in 1835, aided and abetted by a British national on a British flagged ship, was an unlawful act and neither *imperium* nor *dominium* passed to Maori.

But those international legal principles were never going to find favour with the colonial government or its agents, the Native land court judges. Needless to say, the attempt by Hirawanu Tapu to argue that what happened was not in accord with tikane Moriori, was dismissed out of hand. Unlike the Maori claimants, Tapu was not experienced in land court

processes so was at a major disadvantage. Not that this would have likely helped his or the Moriori cause given the high level of pre-determination at play. There was no reference at all in Judge Rogan's decision to tikane Moriori or the ancient law of peace which shows that it was not even taken into consideration. And yet it was the statutory role of the Judges under the Native Land Act 1865 to investigate and apply the "native custom" of the land. In 1835, 1842 and in 1870 the native custom of the land in Rekohu was tikane Moriori. That still remains the case in 2020.

The relevance of all of this in modern day terms is that Ngati Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust holds to the view that they have 'exclusive mana whenua' (translated as 'exclusive authority over the land') over Rekohu/Wharekauri because they were gifted the land in 1870 by the Court. They assert that this is their source of "exclusive mana whenua" over Rekohu and that they "conquered and totally subjugated Moriori" in 1835/36. They have made these claims in recent submissions to both the High Court and Court of Appeal in 2019 and 2020 in attempts to stop the vesting of Crown land on Rekohu in Moriori and also to stop Moriori signing our Deed of Settlement. All these cases have failed but have been at considerable cost to Moriori in terms of cultural stress, wasted energy and legal fees of which only a small percentage has been recovered from NMWIT.

So, what is one to do when faced by this kind of modern-day aggression from those whose ancestors have been your historic oppressors? Must one keep turning the other cheek? To "forgive them for they know not what they do?"

How is it possible to move on from this kind of deeply negative behaviour when it has such corrosive and insidious consequences for the present and future of our Island community? When their advocate who lives in Wellington has been warning the Crown of "civil unrest" on the Island if they don't get their own way? When such insidious conduct is calculated to influence and bully the Crown into making concessions in their own Treaty settlement negotiations? Or to undermine the Moriori settlement?

I deliberately titled this talk today "Peace at All Costs?". The title ought to have a '?' at the end. This is because for Moriori in 1835 it was, in all reality, 'peace at all costs'. That was their law, and they were not prepared to violate it by taking up arms against the invaders. And the cost to them was horrendous as I have already explained.

So, what are today's generation of Moriori, many of whom on Rekohu also share Ngati Mutunga hokopapa, to think about all of this?

How is that unsavoury past to be reconciled so that we can put it behind us and move forward together?

Are we forever to keep turning the other cheek only to have it slapped harder?

In 1835, we offered peace and to share with the newly arrived people. That offer was thrown back in our faces. In 1870 we offered to share the land and rent monies from land leases. That was rejected by Maori and upheld by the courts. In my own lifetime and experience over the past 35 years, Moriori have offered to share resources with Ngati Mutunga on numerous occasions but have been faced with "we own 100% and will decide what Moriori should have."

I spent 25 years in the courts and the Waitangi Tribunal (including an appearance in the Privy Council in 1996) arguing for Moriori fishing rights while Ngati Mutunga maintained that they should have 100% of the fish quota from the Fisheries settlement. They argued that as Moriori had no *mana whenua* ipso facto we had no *mana moana*. Eventually we did agree to share it 50:50 but that was only because Moriori had achieved strong legal and political backing over that 25-year period. We could have litigated that in the Courts for the next 20 years but instead chose a peaceful path to negotiate a settlement. Some Ngati Mutunga leaders still argue today we got more than we should have. We offered to share the whale bone from stranded whales that wash ashore on Rekohu from time to time. It took 25 years for Ngati Mutunga to agree to share this precious resource – which meant for 25 years neither Imi/Iwi had access to whalebone for carving.

When Moriori sought to have our claims heard before the Waitangi Tribunal in 1994, Ngati Mutunga went to the High Court to try to stop the Tribunal hearing those claims. They argued that because Moriori were not Maori we had no standing. The High Court threw the case out.

There is a current dispute between Moriori and Ngati Mutunga about welcoming protocols for Minister's and senior Crown officials visiting the Islands. The Moriori position is that this is a responsibility that should be shared between our two Marae with each supporting the other at times on the tuahu korero/paepae. The Ngati Mutunga position is that as they are the "mana whenua" Iwi, they should always have pole position and thus always provide the first welcome. Moriori could and with greater justification, claim pole position as we are the tangata whenua tuturu ake (as found by the Waitangi Tribunal), whose mana has never been extinguished. But where does that get us? Sharing seems to be the only sensible, logical and respectful thing to do – or you would think? Only last month a planned visit by CEO's from Crown entities had to be postponed because of the inability to reach an agreement.

Meanwhile, we continue to face claims by Ngati Mutunga to Moriori miheke/taonga that are found on the Island and have also faced cross-claims to our human ancestral remains which are being repatriated from around New Zealand and all over the world and will eventually be returned home to rest. We have had our sacred tree engraving attacked with a machete and shot at with a 22. calibre rifle. We have had the limestone entrance to the sacred cave of Nunuku Whenua (the legendary ancestor who re-affirmed the ancient covenant of peace over 600 years ago on Rekohu) recently defaced with graffiti and culturally offensive remarks. These are serious and deeply offensive attacks on Moriori culture and identity and if this was happening on the mainland would be the subject of intense media scrutiny and a public outcry. But as usual, Rekohu is out of sight and out of mind.

How does one respond in a peaceful manner when one is faced with such deeply offensive and culturally pre-meditated behaviour?

I am proud to say that the Moriori renaissance over the past 40 years has focussed largely on honouring and upholding the central tenets and values of Moriori culture and tikane and not being reactive to aggressive behaviour. This is not to say that such behaviour is not upsetting or hurtful – it is. But our renaissance has been founded on our ancestral values such as sharing, acting respectfully and honourably, making visitors to our Island and to our Marae feel safe and welcome – being good hosts. We might not always get it right, but we strive to. The Moriori philosophy is one of giving and sharing and being open to new ideas. It is a culture rooted in hope. Hope that humankind can be better than we are.

All these qualities are embodied in Kopinga Marae which was built first and foremost to honour our karapuna and their legacy of peace. To let them know and let the world know that we are a resilient people and that peace should not be regarded as a weakness, but rather as an enduring strength. I have often said it takes more courage to respond in a peaceful manner than it does with violence.

This is not to say that we get it right all of the time and often we do not but peace and kindness are aspirational so one should never stop striving to accomplish either of these objectives even if this means at times falling short of the mark.

But there cannot be peace without truth and justice. Moriori will no longer accept being treated as a 'door mat' on our own henu/land. We will not accept or tolerate the bad behaviour that is being exhibited by some of our neighbours on Rekohu. Fortunately, those who hold the kinds of extremist views I have mentioned above are in the minority on Rekohu/Wharekauri and the majority of people in the community whether they are Moriori, Ngati Mutunga or both just want both Imi and Iwi to get along together for the good of all. That is what Moriori want as well. But as the late Dr Michael King said in his ground breaking book 'Moriori: A People Rediscovered' – *"Non-violence is an effective weapon only against an adversary who shares your conscience"*.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, it takes two to tango so to speak. If one party to the conflict is not prepared to engage in a process of sharing or truth and reconciliation, then what?

Over the years we have tried various pathways to achieving some form of respectful détente with the Ngati Mutunga Island leadership. None of these have proven to be durable. Having been rejected in our overtures at home we went to Parihaka in 2006, 2007 and 2008 in an endeavour to build a bridge with Ngati Mutunga based on a shared peace tradition. Ngati Mutunga and Ngati Tama on Rekohu/Wharekauri became, paradoxically, staunch advocates and supporters of Parihaka prophets, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi in the 1860's. While Parihakian's were sympathetic to the bridge building concept, they also felt that any invite to Rekohu/Wharekauri should come from Ngati Mutunga themselves. But this never happened.

We also suggested to the then Minister of Treaty Negotiations, Chris Finlayson, in 2016 that before we enter negotiations to settle our historic claims with the Crown, that we go through a truth and reconciliation process with Ngati Mutunga, the Crown and Moriori – but this idea was dismissed out of hand by the Minister. He was focused on achieving his political goal of settling as many claims as possible within the shortest timeframe possible. A lengthy and difficult conflict resolution process with Moriori and Ngati Mutunga did not float his boat.

However, as was recently discussed at a Hokotehi Moriori Trust Board meeting on Rekohu, we should never give up hope of finding a peaceful resolution to these historic grievances and conflicts which continue to play out in the modern day arena.

One such approach we are considering is to design a truth and reconciliation process that is based in both indigenous and western styles of conflict management/reconciliation. Nunuku's Law was that in the event of any serious conflict between two men (always men!), they could fight with wooden staff's called 'tupuari' and at the first abrasion of skin or sign of blood, fighting was to cease with honour satisfied. Obviously, we have moved on from that

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<sup>2</sup> King, Michael: *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, 1989, page 76.

tradition although, I must confess there are times when I have thought that this would make for a faster and cheaper option than long drawn out and costly litigation!

We have had offers of assistance to design a truth and reconciliation process from staff and post-doctoral students at the National Centre for Peace and Conflicts Studies based at the University of Otago. HMT helped set up the Centre in 2008 alongside the ANZPACS Trust of which I am currently the Co-Chair together with Janfrie Wakim from Auckland. We have also had offers from leading Maori figures on healing and conflict resolution including Norm and Rob Hewitt. Both men were recently on the Island giving community talks on men's mental health issues and gave an inspiring presentation at Kopinga Marae.

So, while we will no longer take a backward step in terms of defending our customary rights and standing as the *waino pono* (original inhabitants) of Rekohu whenever we must, nor will we cease to look for solutions to the historic and contemporary conflicts that separate us. But these solutions must be grounded in mutual respect, honesty, truth, justice and *Iaroha* or love for one another.

This is what our ancestors would want us to do. And this would be another way of honouring their ancient legacy of peace. Such a process would also recognise that in both Moriori and Maori tradition there exist the sibling relationships (and rivalry) of Tu and Rongo, with each having its own time and place to shine. And the world today needs more peace than it does war or conflict – if it ever needed these things?

The title to this talk this evening is “Peace at all costs?” For Moriori historically, they paid the highest possible price with their lives and the lives of their loved ones and as a result 95% of our population was lost. As Hirawanu Tapu put it in a letter to Sir George Grey in 1862 when reporting an incident in which 90 men, women and children were staked out alive on the beach at Waitangi with hands touching – “*and the strings of their hearts quivered*”.

But what the ancestors decided and the sacrifice they made has left a strong impression on the hearts and minds of Moriori living today. They have passed down to this generation a sacred covenant that has been paid for with their own blood and it as if are now saying to us present day Moriori “*well, what are you going to do with that now?*” That is the challenge we face. That we all face as a human species in fact. What path do we now choose to take?

This has been a major motivating factor for me personally over the years. How do we honour that legacy of “*peace at all costs*”? What does it mean to be Moriori today? How should we conduct ourselves and how do we reclaim, relearn and inspire the present and future generations – not only of our own people but of all peoples? Afterall, no one person or peoples has a monopoly on peace. When all the conflicts, violence and wars have been fought, what then? How do we live in peace and what does that mean for modern day communities?

These are indeed big question's, and the answers are not easy or straight forward. Humans are a complex and most difficult species. But we not only need to learn to live peacefully with each other but with all the other creatures we share this precious planet with. And with Papatuanuk' herself. The climate crisis is real and getting worse every year. Human's as a species are not acting peacefully or respectfully towards the Mother who sustains all life. So what hope is there for humanity to achieve true peace on earth?

If there is one important lesson, I have learnt from my journey in becoming Moriori, it is that one must never give up on hope. Without hope we are lost. I believe that people such as

Hirawanu Tapu foresaw a time when the ancient covenant of peace would again be a guiding light for his people. Which is why he worked so diligently his whole life to preserve as much knowledge about our culture and history as he could. And why he actively encouraged surviving Moriori families to intermarry to preserve the toto or blood lines. My own Horomona Rehe family is a product of one such arranged marriage between my Great Grandfather Rangitapua, and my Great Grandmother Ihimaera.

For Hokotehi Moriori Trust and for our people, we have made a commitment not to dwell in the identity of victimhood. To focus our energies instead on the key values of Moriori culture and identity as the pathway to follow into the future. Afterall, what happened to us does not define who we are as a people. It is for this reason that we have made a conscious effort to highlight in everything we do the best of what Moriori culture stands for. This includes being a good t'chieki or customary steward of the precious resources of our Islands. To give back to the land and moana and not just keep taking from it. As part of this we plan to plant 1.5 million trees back onto our henu over the next 10 years to help restore the korowai that has been stripped from the body of Papatuanuk' over the past few centuries.

Another example of this is Ka Pou a Rangitokona (the heart post of Rangitokona). This Pou stands at the heart of Kopinga Marae and lists 1700 names of Moriori people who were alive at the time of the 1835 invasion. The original list compiled by Tapu and the 33 surviving Moriori Elders has two "x's" beside the names of those who were killed and eaten and one cross beside the names of those died during captivity. In total there are 1,561 names with crosses beside them on the original list that was sent to Governor Grey in 1862. We made the deliberate decision not to place crosses beside the names on the Pou itself because we wanted to remember our ancestors for *who* they were as people and not *what* happened to them.

A further example is the permanent Moriori exhibition at Te Papa. There is no mention of the genocide or enslavement of our people as part of that display. This is because back in 1996 when Te Papa first opened their doors they gave Moriori the opportunity to present our culture and identity in the way that we wanted to present it. So, there are both historic miheke (taonga) and present day (now 25 years old!) images and photos of our people. We wanted to show the public that Moriori were not confined to the rubbish bin of history but were once again a living thriving people. Te Papa copped criticism from some sectors for supposedly trying to sanitize Moriori history by not mentioning the genocide and part of me thinks they might have a fair point. But as this was the first time that any major public institution had given any recognition to Moriori history and identity, we felt that it was important that we told our story our way and not the way it had been told by others for us over the previous 150 years – and mostly to our detriment (Michael Kings book being an exception).

So, in responding to some of this public criticism, I pointed out that Moriori descendants wanted to tell our story in our own way and in doing so take control of our own narrative. We had been subject to the vicissitudes, vagaries and violations of other people writings and portrayals of Moriori as weak, inferior, extinct and unworthy for 150 years and we were well and truly over it. We also felt that this was acting in a peaceful way in terms of not wanting to smear anyone's face with historical mud. In so doing honouring our karapuna and their legacy of peace.



Now some of you may be thinking – “well you have not pulled any punches this evening in your talk!” This is true. But when we are being continually confronted as we are today, with claims from the leadership of Ngati Mutunga on the Chathams and their main advisor who lives in Wellington that we do not have ‘mana’ on our own Islands and are incapable of receiving Crown lands as part remedy for historical grievances, it is time to speak out. It is time for the truth to be aired. In a personal letter that Michael King wrote to me in 1989 sending me a special pre-publication copy of his book on Moriori, he wrote “*And may the truth set us all free!*” Despite his book laying out the truth about Moriori history and culture, 30 years later we are still awaiting that freedom. The myths, the misinformation and the denials still continue unabated on Rekohu, New Zealand and indeed overseas.

We told the Crown during our settlement negotiations that what happened to Moriori is a stain on the conscience of our nation. That it is a dark period of our country’s history that has been hidden from view and worse, deliberately misrepresented to generations of New Zealanders. Many of whom still believe the mythology to this day. All because historically the Crown had its own selfish agenda driven by its colonial sense of superiority and acquisitiveness.

The mythmakers such as Elsdon Best and S Percy Smith conveniently placed Moriori on mainland Aotearoa as a “pre-Maori peoples”, only to be driven out by the later and more aggressive ancestors of the Maori arriving on their waka from Eastern Polynesia. The New Zealand School Journal published in 1916 shows a picture of a person who is supposed to be Moriori but is in fact either a Fijian or Papua New Guinian. This suited the Crown/Pakeha narrative because according to the myth Moriori were come from Melanesia and apparently this explained their docile nature and inferiority to the more ferocious-like Polynesians. (I don’t think anyone should tell this to a Fijian or Papuan!) According, to this narrative which was taught in schools to five generations of kiwis, the refugees fled to the Chathams to lick their wounds. This myth, for that is all it ever was, justified Pakeha displacing Maori from their land after the arrival of Captain Cook because were not Pakeha only doing to Maori what Maori had done to Moriori?

And yet, as far back as 1924, Dr Henry Skinner of Otago, who had been to Rekohu and carried out extensive research on Moriori exploded this myth and concluded that Moriori were most definitely from Eastern Polynesia and closely related to although long separated from, Maori in Aotearoa. But this did not fit with the colonial narrative of the times and so it would be another almost 70 years before Michael Kings book exposed for all time the gigantic hoax that had been perpetrated upon Moriori, Maori and indeed all New Zealanders.

The findings of Skinner as confirmed by King align with our own stories of our origins but differ to the extent that in Moriori tradition the first settlers to Rekohu came directly from Eastern or Central Polynesia. Later waka likely arrived from Aotearoa and some settled and remained on Rekohu and others returned to their home. However, for a period of 500 or so years there was no further contact between Rekohu and anywhere else and it is during this time that Moriori evolved the culture we know today. All Moriori today descend from the founding rapuna, Rongomaiwhenua who was the first to settle Rekohu and erect the first sacred pou on the land at a place called Te Awapatiki. That pou, metaphorically, has never been removed.

Returning to the settlement negotiations with the Crown. During these negotiations our team had a very tough time trying to get the Crown to accept the findings of the Waitangi Tribunal

that largely uphold our various claims. As they continually reminded us, they are “guidelines only” and not legally binding on the Crown. Under our Deed of Settlement, Moriori have been offered \$18m and the return of a few Crown reserves as “full and final” redress for loss of life, land, liberty and language. By way of comparison, the Crown recently forked out \$54m for a new wharf on the Chathams and have agreed to pay \$42m to upgrade the Island airport. Having waited almost 180 years for justice it’s sobering to realise that the destruction of your people and their culture is valued by the Crown at less than 20% of the cost of two public utilities.

On the other hand, Ngati Mutunga have been offered \$16m by the Crown for having received 98% of all the land on Rekohu in 1870 – land that was not theirs to begin with. And they are not happy with that either. Their chief negotiator, Tom McClurg, is on record as claiming that it is a disgrace that Moriori are receiving more in our settlement than has been offered to Ngati Mutunga.

When we pointed out to the Crown the impropriety of offering Ngati Mutunga practically the same level of financial redress as Moriori, they merely look at you without blinking and glibly say “*we must act fairly to both partners.*” This despite the fact that the major finding of the Waitangi Tribunal report for the Chathams clearly states that “*the main relief by far is due to the Moriori people*”.<sup>3</sup> So where is the fairness in this you may well ask? In reality Treaty settlements are not about fairness and justice they are all about *realpolitik* and *De minimis*.

Yes, we have signed a Deed of Settlement because we know we have done the very best we can possibly do, and our people are exhausted after more than 30 years in the Tribunal and negotiations process. It is time to move on. To his credit, the Treaty Minister gave a heartfelt apology to Moriori at the signing ceremony back in February at Kopinga Marae and it was an occasion to celebrate having reached an important milestone. But the sense of hurt and that you have not truly been heard, lingers on.

Moriori face another uphill battle in the coming years over the Marine and Coastal Act 2010 for competing claims (with Ngati Mutunga) over customary marine title and rights around Rekohu and Rangihau. The 2010 legislation locks in the ‘1840 Rule’ as regards the marine area in much the same way that the Native Land Court locked in the 1840 rule for dry land. I made submissions for HMT to the Maori Affairs Select Committee in 2010 in an attempt to have this potential injustice to Moriori avoided but to no avail. So, for Moriori it is like ground hog day.

Despite these challenges and difficulties, or more accurately, because of them, Moriori will continue to fight the good fight because that is the right thing to do. Because that is what we must do in order to honour our karapuna. Because we are duty and honour bound to uphold our tikane as a distinct peoples. The first peoples or *waino pono* of Rekohu. A people with a unique culture of peace that is the longest and strongest in the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand and perhaps even the world.

Peace at all Costs? There cannot be enduring peace without its twin cohorts, truth and justice.

Me rongo

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<sup>3</sup> *Rekohu Report*, Wai 64 at page 285 section 14.1

Maui Solomon

*'The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.'* (Gandhi)