**Three Treaties – broken and restored**

**Waitangi Day Message**

**Note to preacher:**

There is a power point provided that goes with this message.

Please feel free to edit anything at all, and to make it your own, and the length desired.

Only a little of the very significant pre-Treaty history is included in these notes.

For a fuller history read a book. There are a number you could choose from.

As an ‘easy’ option, I genuinely believe the ‘Chronicles of Paki -Treaty of Waitangi’ series (which I was privileged involved in the creation of along with authors Gina Taggart and Alison Condon, and artist Tania Hassounia) to be one of the easiest ways to get a broad perspective. This series is also endorsed by both historians and Kaumatua from Waitangi, who were consulted throughout the writing of it. We created this series for this reason: to make a *broad* *perspective* that also included *the Christian dynamic behind Te Tiriti* easily accessible (5 illustrated stories with many historical details).

See BigBook.nz

All the best

Dave Mann

**INTRODUCTION**

Kia ora all

I note the ‘Te Reo Pulpit Challenge’ the Shining Lights Trust has put out (**Preacher:** see graphic in power point).

* If you want to play, all preachers in February get
  + 1 point for every word replaced with a Te Reo word in their sermon (even if its one word being repeated)
  + And a one-time option of 10 points for any longer sentence or mihi (greeting) given in Te Reo.
    - So someone needs to count
    - Everyone who is away awake can cheer the preacher on every time they hear a word in Te Reo
    - And hopefully we’ll all be awake through it all to catch what the message is actually about ;-)

**QUESTION:** Have you ever been in an important agreement with some others, and then the agreement has been broken? If you have, it can be really disappointing.

Today we’re going to look at three stories where this has happened

* One from our nation’s history
* One from the Bible
* And then a relational one that relates to us all

However, the point of the message is that, wherever we allow God to be involved, there is always still hope!

I hope this message encourages something ☺

**#1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

The Treaty of Waitangi is our founding document – and on February 6th we have Waitangi Day to commemorate the occasion.

* This Treaty is not a treaty only for Maori. It is a Treaty for all New Zealanders
  + It legitimizes all of us living here as one people
  + There are two options:
    - We are either Tangata Whenua - the people of the land
    - or Tangata Tiriti - the people of the Treaty
    - This second group refers to all non-Maori, who would nothing more than colonisers if not for the Treaty.
  + And so this is an important document –
    - Because it is not only about protecting Maori rights in the face of an earlier influx of Pakeha
    - It also legitimises the rights and presence of non-Maori here in New Zealand

…and all of this remains true so long as both parties – Maori and non-Maori, honour the agreement they made together. So the treaty is important huh!

**Now - when in agreement is made we defer to the highest authority.**

And so - what’s names was Te Tiriti or Waitangi made in?

* It was signed by the Chiefs, as the top Rangatira (chiefs) of their various Iwi (tribes)
* It was put together by Hobson as representative of the Queen of England.

To give some context to that:

England was a global superpower at that time, and a very successful coloniser

* so some guarantees of protection in the name of the Queen were more than little valuable to have!!!

However, there is more to the Queens name than this - because the Monarch in England is also the head of the Church of England (the Anglican church), *which means they represent God.*

So, (regarding authority) Te Tiriti afforded Maori equal rights as British Citizens.

* And – to repeat it for clarity - the significance of the Queens involvement is that she was the head of the Church of England.
* Which made this an agreement that many recognised as having been made under God!

A final set of names that I think should be noted are those of the missionaries – because the korero of the chiefs on the day clearly reflects that many signed because they knew and trusted the missionaries present, like Henry Williams and William Colenso.

* These missionaries genuinely believed the crown would honour its agreements made on that day
* - and they’d laboured to see this treaty come about, because they knew Maori would have very few protections from the colonisation without it
* Which all goes to explain why they were so devastated at the betrayal of the Treaty – as obviously also were Maori, *who were colonised, and lost almost everything.*

So - the authority of a thing as determined by whose name it is in.

**To give a reverse example – so we understand a little of the betrayal of Te Tiriti that took place in our nation**

…When a man in Te Ati Awa (a tribe of Taranaki) sold his people’s lands without the approval of the chief - Wiremu Kingi, *the agreement should have had no authority, because the man who sold it wasn’t the chief*.

* Governor Brown was therefore wrong to claim that he owned the lands around Waitara
* So Wiremu Kingi travelled back to his lands (with the backing of his missionary friend Octavious Hadfield), to occupy his lands, to ensure they were defended
* And then in 1860 Thomas Gore Brown attacked with cannons, resulting in our first land war.
  + This was an unjust war – *because the agreement Brown chose (against advice) to hold to was not made with the right authority.*
  + Kingi and his people lost their lands as a result!

**As a point of interest – to give us an empathy with some of the remarkable Christian dynamics of that time**

…Wiremu Kingi had been devout in his Christian faith prior. After some time away afterwards he returned to the region and is said to have made no trouble for the people who were now living on his lands. After some time at Parihaka – no doubt trying to reconcile with the enormous loss he and his people had suffered, he retired to the upper Whanganui region, and lived a native life until his passing. The humility and forgiveness seen within his manner are indeed humbling, when the scale of unjust loss is considered.

**Let’s move to our second Treaty that was betrayed – which will add some more perspective to our discussion**

**#2: The Treaty with the Gibeonites**

**The Gibeonite Deception is an account found in Joshua 9**

After the Israelites had defeated the cities of Jericho (Joshua 6-7) and Ai (Joshua 8), many of the nearby Canaanites united to form a large army to fight Israel (Joshua 9:1-2). The Gibeonites, however, took a different approach:

* They dressed in old clothes and pretended to have travelled a long distance.
* They then asked for terms of peace with Israel
* The Scriptures point out that the Israelites did not consult with God (and there-in lies a key lesson) – and they made an agreement, only then discovering they had been deceived.
* Did the fact that they were deceived give them licence to ignore the agreement?
  + No! God expects us to keep our word in things
* And so it was decided ‘Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.’ So the leaders’ promise to them was kept” (Joshua 9:19-21).

**The Gibeonite protection** **- 2 Samuel 21**

Many generations later King Saul later broke this treaty that Joshua had signed, and attacked the Gibeonites.

Then, during the time of King David, a famine occurred in Israel. When David asked the Lord about the famine, God said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; [specifically] it is because he put the Gibeonites to death” (2 Samuel 21:1).

David had to put things right with the Gibeonites

* *(****Note to preacher:*** *You may or may not want to mention at this time that to appease the Gibeonites and put an end to the famine, seven sons of Saul were given to them to be put to death – 2 Samuel 21:6)*

Then God healed Israel’s land (2 Samuel 21:14)

**What is the point and lesson?**

**(A comparison to Te Tiriti)**

* Our agreements before God are binding – and this remains true even they were made in a context of deception.
* And I think this story is quite powerful when re reflect again upon the first story
  + Because Te Tiriti o Waitangi was betrayed
    - The treaty was abandoned, and our nation was colonised.
  + If God expected David to honour
    - (i) an agreement he had no part in,
    - (ii) made many generations earlier, and
    - (iii) under a context of deceit
  + Then God surely expects us as a nation to honour our agreement together as Maori and non-Maori
    - (i) even though we had no part in,
    - (ii) and it made many 135 years ago,
    - (iii) and was NOT under a context of deceit

**…which leads us briefly back to the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal**

* Because it is surely RIGHT that we would honour Te Tiriti through the Waitangi Tribunal, right?

***[NOTE TO PREACHER:*** *The Tribunal was first established in 1975 as a platform for discussing new claims of injustice relating to future sales or transfers of Maori land. The Tribunal was then empowered in 1985 to address all Waitangi related injustices dating back to 1840]*

I believe that what our Government has done here pleases God!

* And also that this gives Waitangi Day a little significance for us as Christians,
  + This day commemorates and celebrates not only this great Treaty, which existed to protect Maori interests while legitimising non-Maori presence here in Aotearoa
  + I was also a very distinctly ‘Christian’ Treaty, put together by our Christian forefathers, as the result of a growing global Christian vision that literally impacted our entire world, and in multiple areas
    - (equality if races and genders, freedoms of speech and religion, education for all – even the poor, health care for all, welfare state, and more).
  + Our Christian forefathers were the key players in getting Te Tiriti established!

**…and what might happen if we did begin to give Waitangi some focus on Waitangi Day**

* …just as we rightly seek to give Christ some focus at Christmas and Easter?
* **I believe that many Maori *and others* would notice, *and this could be a powerful part of our witness to them -because the question would be ‘Why?’.***

**So, my question to you regarding Waitangi would be, what celebration or commemoration exists in your community, that you could go along to?**

* I encourage you to do so annually!
  + For us in Tauranga there is a dawn service.
* Then – as an idea, if you do go along as a church group, why not arrange, a big BBQ to give all your friends present some good kai for breakfast afterwards?

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**FOOTNOTE FOR PREACHER – in case this illustration has relevance.**

**Some are negative toward the Waitangi Tribunal, and hold a fear that it might bankrupt our nation.**

Total Waitangi Tribunal settlements will end up being somewhere near $2b, given to Iwi as compensation ***for their losses which are likely counted in the trillions.***

* (It is not a full payment. It is a ‘token’ of sincerity, to accompany an apology)

To compare amounts:

* Our annual welfare bill is $26 billion
* Our annual superannuation bill is currently $11b annually
* Within that’s sole parent support is over $1.1b annually
* And the governments recent decision to give a first year of Tertiary education for free will tally past the $2b mark within just 4 years

**SECOND SIDE-NOTE TO PREACHER:**

The connection between the existence of the Waitangi Tribunal (inaugurated in 1975) and our Christian heritage is notable. While Christian reasoning is not explicitly in wording, there is no question that the decision comes from a continuing embrace of Judeo-Christian (Jewish-Christian) values.

An interesting current comparison is of a Taranaki Iwi who broke their own prior agreement with the Moriori of the Chatham Islands in 1835 . They consider the Moriori "conquered and subjugated" – and for this reason are currently contesting the Crowns Treaty compensation to Moriori, because they believe these lands belong to them. See <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/12/taranaki-iwi-fights-to-keep-moriori-land-it-invaded.html> (27/12/2018)

* + With the Jewish-Christian value system honesty and truth reign supreme, because God is watching.
  + Without it – the same integrity cannot be maintained.
    - With Darwinianism it is ‘survival of the fittest’ (the end justifies the means, whatever gets the job done, morality is relative, etc.)
    - This is not very different however to various Eastern religions within which it is believed, for example, that one has power and privilege because of good Karma (the word ‘good’ is considerably defined within Hinduism as doing what is appropriate *within the boundaries of the class into which you were born,* so the idea of using power that you have been given by your Karma is not seen as a great moral wrong).

I.e. The even the decision to create the Waitangi Tribunal happened as a result of our Christian Judeo-Christian values.

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**All this leads to our final agreement – and the elephant in the room when it comes to important treaties that have been broken**

**#3: The Treaty of Jesus**

**And I’ve led us through the Treaties with the Gibeonites, and at Waitangi, to this**

* **Because sometimes we can be so focused on something that is small – and as a result miss something that is genuinely big.**
  + - ILLUSTRATION: I recall talking with a guy I know who was a champion for the legalisation of Cannabis. I couldn’t understand his choices, because he presented himself to me as a ‘great campaigner’ – and so I asked him to explain – because it seemed he was fighting for something small, and with a self-confessed selfish motive, when that ‘pioneer energy’ could be so much better deployed in helping the poor…
      * He didn’t say much – but he got my point, because he really was focused on something small to the detriment of even seeing issues that could be a more important use of his time.
  + While honouring Te Tiriti is very important (and you know I’m an advocate for it) - there is something even greater that we must not miss.
* Because (to give a final Treaty) humanity was led into an agreement of sorts with God at the Garden of Eden. ***A relational contract was put in place between God the Creator and we humans.***
* God created everything for our pleasure and use– and then gave us the right and responsibility to care for this planet. It was an incredible gift – and a perfect planet –
* ***but it came with one condition***
  + We were to trust him – as reflected in the instruction from God to Adam and Eve, to eat from any tree in the Garden he had made for them except for one specific tree
* ***And just like with the Treaty with the Gibeonites and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we have broken from that agreement or contract.***
  + We have taken God’s planet as our own, under our own authority – and have then pushed him away
  + We’ve then damaged not only the planet, but all of our relationships within it as well
    - We’ve created nations – that argue and fight
    - Families – that feud
    - And even with those we love the most we are sometimes dishonest, impatient and unkind
* And as a result of it all we have become ‘lost’

***(Note to preacher:*** *I intend no tone of judgement in the below list – which the next point further validates. It’s simply a humble recognition of our brokenness)*

* + Lost to mental illness (which costs us 5% of GDP annually - $12b)
  + Short on hope – and too high on suicide (NZ has one of the highest rates in the OECD, and is the highest for teenage boys)
  + Suffering a weight of family breakdown and pain
  + And then lost also to our own dysfunction, out of which we do all sorts of things, maybe including
    - Drugs and drink for some
    - Or too much TV – or porn
    - Then there is our greed, our materialism and idolatry of our assets
    - Or the selfishness with which we look out for #1, and overlook a need of another

**And so – because of love, instead of condemning us (John 3:17) God decided to create another Treaty (John 3:16)**

* Its purpose was to enable our reconciliation with him
* However, more than being merely signed in the highest name possible – his own name
  + This Treaty was signed with the most costly ink possible – his own blood.
  + God came in Christ to bear sin on his body on the cross (2 Peter 2:24)
    - This protected the laws of justice – which even God constrains himself to, because a good God cannot sin.
      * And a just judge cannot leave wrong-doing unpunished
* Why does God do all this? So we can know him, and the life he intends us to have again.

**In case you are unaware, the bible was very clear from the start that [Genesis 2:17] Adam and Eves disobedience would lead to death**

* We now suffer that death – living a short period, after which we pass from this life – and potentially to separation from God

**But you might say – “I didn’t sin in the Garden of Eden – I wasn’t there! Why blame me?”**

* + Ezekiel 18:20-24 **20**The soul that sins, it shall die.
  + The point made is that a person will only die for their own sin – and not for the sin of your parents, or any other ancestor before that.

**As in Romans 3:23 -for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

* We all fall short of God’s standard

I means – consider : If we think betraying Te Tiriti o Waitangi was bad, How bad is betraying God?

* If ignoring Treaty values is bad, how bad is ignoring God?

Every day we humans selfishly distract ourselves with the three Gs of

* Glory
* Gold and
* Girls.

These idols of our lives are sometimes called the three Ps of

* Popularity
* Pleasures
* Possessions.
  + All-the-while ignoring the one who gave us breath.

We live on God’s planet, breathing his ear, and enjoying life he gave us – all while rejecting him.

Our greatest arrogance and sin is not ‘the subjugation of less powerful people –because we can’

* + While that definitely is wrong –our greatest arrogance is our rejection of God…
    - …which gave way to the selfishness of our hearts
    - *…which has led to every evil we have ever done.*

…because it all starts in the heart.

To be healthy, our hearts must be in connction to God!

**Where then is our hope?**

Well – there is an eternal Treaty that has been made by God

And signed in the blood of his Son

And it offers not only (i) forgiveness - and therefore protection from the long-reaching [eternal] consequences of our various wrongs…

…at its core, (ii) it’s actually about reconciliation

* The offer is of a restored relationship with God.

**SUMMARY  
You see (to summarise everything)**

* **#1. The Treaty with the Gibeonites was backed by God – that is the lesson** 
  + The accounts in the Bible show us this, and we can learn something
* **#2. The Treaty of Waitangi was also backed by God – and the great news is that our nation has chosen to honour that Treaty.**
  + This is something we can all feel proud of.
  + And as Christians even more so – because this is something our Christian forefathers helped to put in place.
    - Honouring this Treaty fits with our beliefs!
  + **For this reason Waitangi Day is a day to be honoured more than it is.**
    - Let’s not see it as just another holiday
    - This is a significant day in our nations spiritual and bicultural history – and if our nation could know this story better, their hearts might be more open to God!
    - Waitangi Day is therefore a day to do something different – that remembers Te Tiriti o Waitangi and it’s significance
      * …just we do things of significance at Christmas and Easter to remember Christ.
      * *How about the local dawn service, followed by a BBQ breakfast together???*
* **#3. But finally there is the Treaty made – or offered, in Jesus’ name trumps them all, because it represents an eternal treaty and offer** – and on this point I want to end.

**CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION**

**For all that you stand for…**

* all that you advocate for,
* for all the issues you represent,
* for all the beliefs you would even fight for, what place does God have?
* What do you have without him? (What will you have when you die?)

God loves you, and wants you reincorporated into his family and plan.

* And His plans for you are good

His offer has no comparison – there is no second option or path. There is only ONE way.

* God has revealed himself to us through his Son!
* Jesus died for your sin – not Buddha, Mohammad, Confucius, Darwin or anyone else!

What is required is the humility to recognise our need, and the faith to receive what is offered through Jesus!

He says

* **Come** to me with **faith**
* **Admit** your wrongs and **ask** forgiveness , which is enabled because of what I did for you at the cross of Calvary
* and then **commit** to follow my **teachings in the Bible**
  + and I will be with you,
  + I will forgive you,
  + I will love you as an eternal member of my family,
  + I will heal your heart and hurts, and comfort you
  + and I will begin to lead you through that Bible,. so you can become my hands and feet, showing love in this world.

**INVITATION:**

My friend – do you want to know Jesus today?