

He Kura Māori, he Kura Hāhi

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**World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education
University of Waikato**

**November 2005
Hamilton
Aotearoa/New Zealand**

Introduction

Church initiated and operated Māori secondary boarding schools have existed in Aotearoa in various forms since the arrival of the missionaries in the early 19th century. Unfortunately, these schools have contributed to the colonization process, as they have in many other parts of the world, accelerating assimilation of the Indigenous people and the rapid decline of the Indigenous language, in this case, *te reo Māori* (Māori language). One of the Church boarding schools primary roles in Aotearoa is to act as a vehicle for the proliferation of Christian beliefs. As a result many educationalists have proposed that the “civilizing” intentions of the missionaries was to colonise Māori children. However, I propose that the amalgamation of both the Church schools and Māori communities created a hybrid of Māori culture; a Māori Catholic culture. As a result I propose that these schools, since their inception, have contributed significantly to the development of Māori society, particularly in the production of dynamic Māori leaders who have had a compelling influence on their Māori communities and Māori society and in some instances on the nation state.

Therefore, this paper will examine the development of Māori leadership within the Church secondary boarding schools. It will discuss the way in which these schools have, or have not, responded to the constantly changing social and political conditions, in which they exist. The ability to respond to these changes determines the type of leadership that is produced and how effective it is. Hato Paora College, a Catholic Māori boy’s school in Feilding, will be used as an example of this type of schooling. The way in which it has attempted to adapt to meet the social, educational and cultural needs, of its students and their communities in producing effective Māori leaders will be reviewed.

Overview

Initially education in New Zealand was provided by the various groups of missionaries that began arriving from the early 19th century through their mission schools. The intent of these schools was to civilize Māori through an education that encouraged them to adopt European customary, moral and commercial behaviour.¹ The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 allowed the establishment of a settler government and the beginning of the nation state. The responsibility for the education of Māori was assumed by the settler government, through the Department of Native Affairs, with the introduction of the *The Native Schools Act* (1867). This Act allowed the creation of a national system of

secular Māori Village Day-Schools where instruction was in English and there was a clear focus on European knowledge values and attitudes. This school system had an obvious goal of assimilating Māori children into European culture and society by replacing the Māori language and Māori cultural practices.²

Despite the replacement of the mission schools as the primary providers of education the various denominations continued to operate schools for Māori and overtime established various secondary boarding schools. These schools included the Anglican secondary schools of St Stephens School opened in 1849, Te Aute College in 1855, Hukarere Girls' School in 1875, Queen Victoria Girls' School in 1903. The Presbyterian school of Turakina Māori Girls' College opened in 1905³ and the Catholic schools of St Josephs Māori Girls' College opened in 1867, Hato Petera College in 1928 and Hato Paora College in 1947.⁴ These schools are spread throughout North Island with particular concentrations in the Auckland region (St Stephens School, Hato Petera College and Queen Victoria Girls' School) and the Hawkes Bay and Manawatu regions (Te Aute College, Hukarere Girls' School, Turakina Māori Girls' College, St Josephs Māori Girls' College, Hato Paora College). The quantity of these schools and their location throughout the North Island aided in the conversion, civilisation and assimilation agenda of the settler government and the Churches themselves.

These schools have provided Māori society with some of their most charismatic and celebrated leaders including Sir Apirana Ngata, Te Rangihiroa, Arapeta Awatere, Sir Kīngi Ihaka and Dame Whina Cooper to name some of the obvious. They came from Māori communities who were steeped in Christian belief, whether Catholic or Anglican. Within these communities there was a hybridity of culture with the combination of Māori tradition and Christian tradition creating a culture that had elements of both. Through their upbringing in these communities and the education they received at one of the Church boarding school these leaders were able to exist in the Māori world and the Pākehā world.

Whilst there have been many more exceptional leaders other than those already mentioned produced by the Church boarding schools it is the authors assertion that these are not as numerous as they should be given the time that the schools have been in operation and the amount of students that have attended the schools. There also appears to be a decrease in the production of national leaders in more recent times.

Hato Paora College

Hato Paora College will be used as an example of a Māori Church boarding school in the analysis of its ability to adapt to the needs of its students and communities in producing effective Māori leaders. Hato Paora College was opened in 1947 on the former site of Parorangi farm outside of Feilding in the Manawatu. The school was established by the Catholic Church for Māori Catholic boys from the Archdiocese of Wellington.⁵ The operation of the school was given to the Society of Mary who were the Māori Missioners of the Archdiocese since its creation. Hato Paora College was primarily to give Māori boys the opportunity to attain Matriculation standard or the Commercial Examination. However there was also to be a particular emphasis on manual skills, technical,

agricultural and pastoral in line with governmental education policy of the 1930's and 1940's⁶ and to provide the students with skills they could use in their largely rural communities.⁷

Hato Paora is the most recent established of the current Church boarding schools, this is important because it falls well beyond the missionary and settler periods of New Zealand's development and exists post the major World Wars. This is significant because the social and political situation within New Zealand and Māori society defines the type of leader that is needed. With its establishment immediately after World War II Hato Paora has existed in a time that has been marked particularly by the urban migration of Māori and the effective loss of a generation of potential leaders through the War.

Hato Paora College effectively belongs to two primary communities, the Catholic Church and Māori Catholics. Accordingly, the expectations of the school can differ markedly between the two groups. The education philosophies and ideals of the Catholic Church and control and authority that the Church asserts over the school affects the school's ability to adapt and respond to Māori needs as they have their own priorities and agendas.

Firstly, the Church wanted a school that could produce Māori vocations and secondly they wanted a Māori Catholic college to produce Māori leaders that were firmly grounded in the Catholic faith that could then return to their communities as leaders socially and morally and aid the proliferation of the faith in those communities.⁸ Furthermore it was hoped that the College would provide suitable Catholic Māori husbands for the young Māori ladies that had attended St. Joseph's Māori Girls' College and again aid in the proliferation of the faith among Māori.⁹

In regard to the creation of Māori clergy and the proliferation of the faith Hato Paora College has been extremely successful providing four, of a total six, Māori priests to the New Zealand Clergy. Fr Hemi Hekiera was ordained in 1964, Fr Karaitiana Kingi in 1969, Fr Max Mariu in 1977 and Fr Jack Smith later the same year. Further to this Fr Mariu was ordained as the first Māori Catholic Bishop in 1988 and assumed responsibility for all Māori Catholics.¹⁰

The expectations of Māori Catholics was for an education that incorporated Māori ideals and attitudes, along side Catholic ideals, whilst still providing an education that would allow the students to succeed in the broader New Zealand society. The curriculum at Hato Paora operated slightly differently than the standard New Zealand Education Department curriculum. There was particular focus on the Māori language so that the students can continue to operate in their own *whānau* context upon completion at the school.¹¹

In 1991 Father Jack Smith was appointed as the sixth rector of Hato Paora College. Fr Smith's appointment was extremely significant due to the facts that he was an old boy of the college and he was the first Māori rector. This background was reflected in his intentions for the school that were fully illustrated in his inaugural rector's address where he stated that:

Hato Paora is a Māori College, preserving and teaching Māori values and language. It is my hope that Te Reo Māori will blossom among our youth. Language, the clothing of any culture, preserves a particular way of life and will enhance ones ability to step confidently into this bicultural land of Aotearoa.¹²

This was an obvious change in philosophy for the school and illustrated Fr Smith's desire to promote the Māori component of the schools character as a means for preparing the students for post-school life. This idea was very much in line with the emerging thinking of Māori nationwide in regard to immersion teaching as a means for retaining both the Māori language and culture. It also reflected the cultural renaissance that was occurring in the late 1970s and 1980s as there was a revival of cultural pride amongst many Māori young and old.¹³ If Smith's desire could be made reality it would have put Hato Paora at the very cutting edge in terms of Māori immersion education as it could have offered an option that ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week and capitalized on the resurgence of the Māori culture. This would also create an unique opportunity to produce fluent Māori speaking leaders that could operate in both Māori and Pākehā society. This initiative seems to be the first time that the school is answering the needs of Māori and is situating itself into a position whereby it can produce leaders that Māori desire. Until this point the school has merely followed the philosophies instituted by the founding priests and have attempted to adhere to these whilst still lining up with government policy.

The return of the students from Hato Paora to their communities as leaders can also be judged as successful given the loyalty that these communities, and the families contained therein, have shown to the school. Kahurangi Faloa (1991 – 1993) an old boy of the College explains his families relationship with the school,

My family history at the school, my grandfather was here on the opening day. He's my namesake and he made a vow to Ihaka that day that he was going to send all of his sons here. So every year since the school has been open we've had someone in our family attend the school. I think that there has only been one year when there hasn't been someone from our family attend school.¹⁴

This continued dedication and loyalty to the College supports the assertion that the school was providing leadership back to the community. This is also a common theme across all of the Church schools with particular families and sometimes *hapū*+ and *iwi* continuing to support the school(s) throughout its existence. In some measure this is an example that the communities are satisfied with the school and is providing leadership back to those communities.

This brief examination of the education offered by Hato Paora has been used to offer some insight into the pressures and influences that the Māori boarding schools encounter and how these affect the ability of these schools to produce effective leaders. The schools are often accountable to more than one community and the power relations between those communities affects the provision of education and leadership within the schools.

Critiquing the effectiveness of Hato Paora College in the provision of leadership to Māori society as a whole however is far more problematic. Throughout its history there have

been past pupils of Hato Paora that have risen to prominent leadership roles. Archie Taiaroa who has been prominent in the governance of the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Ltd, Robin Hapi who was the CEO of Te Ohu Kaimoana, Arana Traumata a nationally renowned Māori broadcaster and Professor Robert Janhke who is Professor of Māori Studies at Massey University are examples of leaders produced by Hato Paora. Whether there have been as many as could be expected or even are needed is hard to measure.

Conclusion

The Māori boarding schools are a part of an education system that is constantly changing in its policies about Māori and their education. Further to this are the educational attitudes and goals of the various religious denominations that established the schools. This creates an environment that is constantly changing and often at the mercy of non-Māori educators and policy makers. Each Church had and has their own reasons for the establishment of the schools and the way in which they operate. This means that whilst these schools are similar in character there are stark differences related to the difference in religious belief and application. Despite these differences these schools throughout their existence have provided Māori society with some of its most celebrated and influential leaders. Many prominent Māori leaders across the whole spectrum of New Zealand society can be attributed to the Church schools.

Whether these schools can continue to provide such prominent leadership in a continually changing and evolving society remains to be seen. In the new millennium with less control and influence from the founding Churches perhaps these schools will become more effective in the provision of leadership, not only for their faith communities, but for Māori society as a whole whilst still retaining their special character.

¹ B Hokowhitu “Te tāminga o te mātauranga Māori” in Ka’ai, Moorfield, Reilly, Mosley (eds), *Ki te Whaiao An Introduction to Māori Culture and Society* (Auckland, Pearson Education, 2004), 190-192

² Hokowhitu 190-192

³ A Davidson. *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*. (Wellington: The New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, 1991)

⁴ R McSweeney. “The Catholic School System of New Zealand.” Ph.D thesis, Auckland University, 1954, 231

⁵ I Gupwell in *Paroro-o-te-Rangi: Hato Paora College School Magazine* 1949, np

⁶ Hokowhitu, 195

⁷ J Riordan “Resume of Article on Nature and Necessity of College for Māori Boys”, SPM 1, 33-4

⁸ Riordan, 33-4

⁹ Riordan , 33-4

¹⁰ Lawton “Whaia te Tika. Hato Paora College: The First Fifty Years.” M.A. thesis, Massey University, 1996, 185

¹¹ Gupwell in *Paroro-o-te-Rangi: Hato Paora College School Magazine* 1950, np

¹² J Smith in *Paroro-o-te-Rangi: Hato Paora College School Magazine* 1991, 9

¹³ T Ka’ai “Te mana o te tangata whenua” in Ka’ai, Moorfield, Reilly, Mosley (eds), *Ki te Whaiao An Introduction to Māori Culture and Society* (Auckland, Pearson Education, 2004), 187

¹⁴ K Faloa. Oral Interview 20/11/02