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Māori “Conversion” to the Rule of Law and Nineteenth-Century Imperial Loyalties

Missionaries were among the first Europeans to interact with the New Zealand Māori, bringing an evangelical message with a strict set of “laws” for Māori to follow. Māori, whose own religious beliefs required rigid observance to ritual, took time to convert to missionary Christianity but, like many Oceanic peoples, did so with fervour, regulating their daily lives according to the Laws of the missionaries’ God. With the advent of British rule in New Zealand in 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi gave Māori the same rights as British subjects, but also (in the Māori-language version) guaranteed tribal autonomy. As the British administration established itself, it slowly attempted to bring Māori under the authority of the Queen’s Laws, using persuasion rather than force. This article, using Māori-language newspapers of the mid-nineteenth century, discusses how some Māori approached the question of Law in a similar way to how they had converted to Christianity. This was partly due to their own, now Christianised, worldview, but it was also due to how the colonial authorities presented the principles of Law to them.

Friends, let us now direct our talk onto the Pākehā laws.¹

Both missionaries and the government promoted European civilisation to Māori in the 1840s and 1850s. The “civilisation” presented by the Māori-language newspapers was a set of customs, *ngā ritenga pai o te Pākehā* (the good customs of the European) that Māori were expected to strive for. This article explores the promotion of the most important of these “customs,” law and order. By investigating the phenomenon of the earlier conversion to Christianity, the article will show how religious ideas underpinned not just the delivery of the civilising messages, especially law, in the Māori language newspapers, but also the nature of the Māori response.

1. *Te Karere o Poneke* (Wellington), 26 November 1857, 2. All translations in the text are the author’s, even when taken from bilingual publications, unless otherwise stated. The word Pākehā refers to Europeans, and to the English language.

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When Māori and Europeans first made contact, the cultural differences they encountered in each other were profound. Some early Europeans, such as beachcombers or traders who settled among the Māori, had to accommodate their behaviour to fit in with their Māori hosts in order to survive, becoming what were known as “Pākehā Māori.”² Of course missionaries and later government officials also needed to be aware of Māori sensitivities to render their activities successful. However, they were expressly concerned with changing Māori, that is, encouraging Māori to modify the way they lived their lives by abandoning Māori usages and adopting what the missionaries considered to be more “civilised” behaviour. As the government’s *Te Karere Maori* told Māori, “the missionaries went to work, and they tamed [the Māori], and they became tame.”³ The government was merely continuing this work.

Māori used the terms *tikanga* or *ritenga* to define the actions and behaviour of people, both of which translate as “custom,” and seem to have been used interchangeably at that time.⁴ Behaviours considered to be exclusive to Māori were termed *tikanga Māori*. Both government and missionaries used the word *Māori*, as an adjective, to describe negative human attributes, so *tikanga Māori* could also include activities considered contrary to more “civilised” European conduct.⁵ Māori were expected to abandon these *tikanga*, and adopt European modes of living — “*ngā ritenga pai o te Pākehā*.” These were a wide ranging set of Pākehā cultural and institutional activities incorporating law, religion, politics, land use, commerce, and personal habits. However, these Pākehā *ritenga* formed a cohesive set, partly due to their shared alien contrast to pre-contact equivalents in Māori culture, and partly due to conscious linkages that their promoters made between them.

Ideas of Progress

Most Britons of the Victorian era shared a general consensus that with the passage of time human progress was moving towards a purposeful goal, seeing

2. Frederick Edward Maning, *Old New Zealand: A Tale of the Good Old Times; and a History of the War in the North against the Chief Heke, in the Year 1845* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887; reprint, Auckland: Golden Press, 1973), 5. Maning also described himself as a “Pakeha Maori.”

3. *Te Karere Maori* (Auckland), 18 July 1863, 15.

4. According to Royal, “*he tikanga tētehi mahi . . . e tika ana tērā mahi i raro i tētehi kaupapa*” (a *tikanga* is an activity that is *tika* under a particular *kaupapa* [plan, scheme, proposal, policy]). See Ahukaramū Charles Royal, “Te Ao Mārama, the Māori World View,” *Tū mai*, December 1999, 30. *Tikanga*, which is popularly used today, derives from the adjective *tika*, meaning “correct,” “just,” “right.” *Ritenga* comes from *rite*, meaning “resembling,” “equal,” “arranged,” “completed.” This implies that *ritenga* could be existing practices, that may not, in fact, be *tika*, although the two terms appear to have been used as synonyms for “custom.” According to Mānuka Hēnare, *tikanga* are principles, and *ritenga* are the practices derived from *tikanga*, but this may be a modern interpretation. See M. Hēnare, “Ngā Tikanga me ngā Ritenga o te Ao Māori: Standards and Foundations of Māori Society,” in *The April Report: Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy*, vol. 3, Part One (Wellington: Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988), 27.

5. For further discussion, see Lachy Paterson, “Kiri Mā, Kiri Mangu: The Terminology of Race and Civilisation in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Māori-Language Newspapers,” in *Rere atu, Taku Manu: Discovering History, Language & Politics in the Māori-Language Newspapers*, ed. Jenifer Curnow, Ngāpare Hopa, and Jane McRae (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002), 78–97.

themselves and their civilisation at the cutting edge of this progression.⁶ Until the 1860s, many people accepted the Biblical account of creation as historical fact, and that progress was an unfolding of God's plans.⁷ The biblical view of history was presented to Māori, for example, in the 1853 calendar printed by the Church Missionary Society which contained a historical timeline for the world with creation dating from 4000 B.C.⁸ While some Europeans saw the various "non-civilised" peoples of the world merely at an arrested position on the ladder of civilisation, the accepted biblical view was that primitive societies had in fact regressed due to losing God's grace.⁹ Europeans considered themselves to be highest on the ladder of progress, but other races were able to move upwards when exposed to civilising influences and divine revelation.¹⁰

According to Bowler, these assumptions were shaken by the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58 when Indians, to whom the British were revealing the advantages of their superior civilisation, rejected it with some ferocity. The British, in an attempt to understand the situation, attributed the Indian intransigence to the limiting effects of native culture.¹¹ From this mid-century period also, due to emerging scientific theories in geology, archaeology, anthropology, and evolution many educated people started to doubt the Biblical account of creation and the unity of man. These theories, coupled with a nationalistic self-confidence, allowed many Britons to develop a belief in their own racial superiority.¹²

Thus, the "civilisation" discourse that took place between Māori and the colonial institutions in this intellectual environment, changed through the 1850s and 60s from the view that natives merely needed to be exposed to "civilisation" in order to progress, to the idea that their existing culture was in fact a brake to such progress. This discourse created an ideological dichotomy of the races — native and European, black and white — but was tempered somewhat by the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, which nominally gave

6. Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 3, 7–10, 13, 18.

7. Bowler, *Invention of Progress*, 31, 50–51, 55, 76–78.

8. *He Maramataka* (Auckland: St. Johns College, 1853), 15. This was based on the reckonings of James Ussher (1581–1656), the Anglican Archbishop of Armagh, which "established the first day of creation as Sunday 23 October 4004 BC." His chronology "was incorporated into an authorized version of the Bible printed in 1701." See "Bishop Ussher Dates the World: 4004 BC" [Cited 5 May 2004.] Available from URL: <http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/ussher.htm>.

9. Bowler, *Invention of Progress*, 31, 51; Pat Moloney, "Savagery and Civilization: Early Victorian Notions," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 35, no. 2 (2001): 157.

10. Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976), 38–39.

11. Bowler, *Invention of Progress*, 32–33.

12. Bowler, *Invention of Progress*, 59–60, 107–11; Paul Spoonley, *Racism and Ethnicity*, 2d ed. (Auckland: Auckland, University Press, 1993), 1–2; Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge, 1971), 185–201. The excesses of racial theory are less evident in the mid-nineteenth century (the focus of this study) than later, after Pākehā settlers had defeated the Māori militarily and destroyed the fabric of tribal society through the transfer of Māori land into settler hands. By the turn of the century educated Māori intellectuals had internalised many of these beliefs, but claimed for Māori the position of "the most *rangatira* [chiefly] race of all the native races." See *Te Pipiwharauroa* (Gisborne), 8/1900, 5; Lachy Paterson, "Ngā Tangi a te Pipi" (DipArts diss., University of Otago, 1999), 16–23.

Māori the full rights of British citizens, and the subsequent government policy of *he iwi kotahi*, of “amalgamating” Māori and Pākehā into one nation. However, the Māori culture was still deemed to be inferior to that of Pākehā and the civilising discourse was centred on closing this cultural gap.

The Metaphor of Conversion

The goal of Pākehā involved in disseminating the message of civilisation was to convince and encourage Māori to reject traditional practices and adopt European ways. Yvonne Sutherland, in her M.A. thesis on Buddle’s newspaper, *Te Haeata*, describes the process as one of “conversion.” *Te Haeata* was a Wesleyan newspaper so its primary focus was religious, in particular to reinvigorate Māori passion for religion.¹³ Sutherland also uses the metaphor of conversion with regard to the cultural and political messages that the newspaper was promoting.¹⁴ However, although she acknowledges the various Māori correspondents to the paper, her thesis primarily stresses the transmission of information from Buddle and fellow missionaries which “orientated Maori to the world which interested Europeans.”¹⁵ Her thesis therefore reflects the essentially uni-directional nature of conversion found in *Te Haeata*. Of its approximately 260 items in its 144 pages, about twenty letters, mostly short, came from Māori,¹⁶ a proportion far lower than some other papers.¹⁷ Of the Māori contribution to *Te Haeata*, a quarter were direct exhortations on moral or religious issues, and others, such as obituaries and general news, or letters on political issues, also tended to employ the religious language of the day. For *Te Haeata*, however, conversion was principally a process driven by Pākehā.

The Model of Religious Conversion

Conversion is in fact a suitable model through which to explore *nga ritenga pai*, as there are clear parallels between the process of Māori religious conversion, and how Māori experienced other aspects of European culture. Law was the most significant of the *ritenga*, having both political and cultural implications, and provided ample examples for comparison with the religious conversion experience. Just as Māori embraced Christianity, they were not passive in their engagement with European culture, but in fact actively participated in the process.

13. Sutherland, Yvonne. “Te Reo o te Perehi: Messages to Māori in the Wesleyan Newspaper *Te Haeata* 1859–62” (M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1999), 92.

14. Sutherland, “Te Reo o te Perehi,” 3, *passim*.

15. Sutherland, “Te Reo o te Perehi,” 45, 60.

16. The use of transliterated “Christian” names by Māori without their indigenous names, the use of pseudonyms, and the transliteration of the names of Pākehā makes a definite figure difficult to reckon.

17. *Te Haeata* (Onehunga) certainly provided less of a forum for Māori opinion than the other prolific Māori-language newspapers of the time. Buller’s *Te Karere o Poneke* (233 pages) contained about 500 items, of which about half were letters from Māori. Of the government’s *Te Karere Maori/Te Manuhiri Tuarangi* (1,127 pages, 1855–1863) more than a sixth of items (although not of space) were Māori letters, not including the 218 pages devoted to the mainly Māori speeches of the Kohimarama Conference in 1860. Although *Te Waka Maori o Ahuriri* (Napier) was in its infancy in 1863, of its fifty-eight items which fall within the research period, about a quarter were letters from Māori.

Various ideas have been offered as to why Māori converted to Christianity in large numbers from the late 1820s: that Māori society suffered a “fatal impact” in encountering European culture which made their traditional beliefs invalid; that the desire to learn the “magic” of writing drew them towards the missionary teachings; that certain disadvantaged groups used the new religion as a way of gaining influence; that Māori “converted conversion” by creating a Māori Christianity, in the same way they adapted to the market economy; that missionaries were useful and a source of *mana* for Māori tribes; that conversion to Christianity allowed Māori to discard traditional attitudes to warfare which had escalated with new Pākehā weapons; or that Māori came to genuinely understand the concept of sin.¹⁸ However, no one single cause for conversion is likely to be universal. The personalities of individual missionaries could be crucial to how Māori responded to their message. In addition, conditions varied greatly not only in different locations, but also over time in the two decades that it took Christianity to become almost universally established over the whole country.¹⁹ For this discussion, I am less concerned with why Māori converted, and more with how.

Pre-Contact Religious Attitudes

The traditional Māori worldview possessed physical and spiritual domains which were not separated but fused together with few boundaries between natural and supernatural phenomena.²⁰ As Te Rangi Hiroa states, “Religion was so interwoven with social and material matters that the priests were absolutely necessary to the proper functioning of Māori society.”²¹ Māori life was regulated by the concepts of *mana*, the numinous authority of chiefs, and *tapu*, restrictions affecting individuals and human activity. Both *mana* and *tapu* emanated from divine sources, and the observance of *tapu* ensured the physical and spiritual well-being of Māori people, their society, and resources.²²

18. For example see Gary Clover, “‘Going Mihinare,’ ‘Experimental Religion,’ and Māori Embracing of Missionary Christianity — A Reassessment,” *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship (CBRF) Journal*, 121 (1990): 44–46; Harrison M. Wright, *New Zealand 1769–1840: The Early Years of Western Contact* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 115–65; Gordon Parsonson, *The Conversion of Polynesia: Hocken Lecture 1982* (Dunedin: Hocken Library, 1984), 6–11; Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice: Racial Amalgamation in Nineteenth Century New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), 20; Raeburn Lange, “Indigenous Agents of Religious Change in New Zealand, 1830–1860,” *The Journal of Religious History*, 24, no. 3 (2000): 283–84; James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders* (Auckland: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1996), 217, 219; Claudia Orange, “The Māori People and the British Crown (1769–1840),” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, ed. Keith Sinclair (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996), 32–34; A. J. Ballantyne, “The Reform of the Heathen Body: CMS Missionaries, Maori and Sexuality,” in *When the Waves Rolled in Upon Us: Essays in Nineteenth-Century Maori History*, ed. Michael Reilly and Jane Thomson (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), 37–38; John Owens, “The Unexpected Impact: Missionaries and Society in Early 19th Century New Zealand,” in *Religion in New Zealand*, ed. Christopher Nichol and James Veitch, 2d ed. (Wellington: Tertiary Christian Studies Programme of the Combined Chaplaincies and the Religious Studies Dept., VUW, 1983), 15–17.

19. Owens, “Unexpected Impact,” 15.

20. James Irwin, “Some Maori Responses to the Western Form of Christianity,” in *Religion in New Zealand*, ed. Nichol and Veitch, 56.

21. Te Rangi Hiroa, *The Coming of the Maori* (Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1952), 476.

22. Irwin, “Some Maori Responses,” 58.

However, the supernatural elements that Māori had to contend with were often fraught with dangers which manifested themselves in physical form. Physical ill health was generally seen as a failure to observe *tikanga* (correct behaviour), as transgressing *tapu*, or as *mākutu* — witchcraft.²³ Māori guarded their well-being by observing *tikanga*, that is, by observing *tapu*, and by *karakia* (incantations) and rituals which were strictly adhered to lest the hapless practitioner be punished by the deity to whom he had appealed.²⁴ At times, when encountering a *hara* (offence, *tapu* violation) Māori might require *utu* (compensation, revenge, reciprocation) to maintain a state of *ea* (psychic equilibrium).

There was a unity of spiritual and material elements in traditional Māori society, with a strict, legalistic adherence to form in order to maintain spiritual and physical well-being. Of course, Māori life was ordered by human reciprocal relations, but religion fulfilled some of the roles of law as understood in the West.²⁵ The Christianity missionaries introduced was not dissimilar: it was promulgated through a set of rules to live by, under a God actively involved in human affairs, who could punish sinners now or at a later Judgement Day. Māori converts accepted and adapted this Western religious system of regulating human behaviour, but their understanding of it was heavily influenced by their previous beliefs.²⁶

Characteristics of Religious Conversion

Māori conversion to Christianity was characterised by a number of features. Of course, it originated from missionary agency, but religion, along with other aspects of Pākehā knowledge, such as literacy, was initially spread from the missions into more distant regions by enthusiastic Māori themselves, and established missionaries were aided by a considerable number of Māori teachers. Some of these individuals included chiefs who sought to enhance their *mana* through association with the new religion, and even ex-slaves who also sought to lift their own social standing.²⁷

Christianity was not seen just in terms of abstract faith by either Māori or missionaries but was, like traditional spirituality, tied to daily behaviour. It involved a set of rules, *tikanga*, or *ture* (laws). For example, when Wiremu Tamihana, the Ngāti Hauā chief and later the force behind the Kīngitanga²⁸ (Māori King Movement), established a Christian village, his written code of conduct was heavily based on the Ten Commandments.²⁹ Living as a

23. Te Rangī Hiroa, *Coming of the Maori*, 404–6, 408.

24. Te Rangī Hiroa, *Coming of the Maori*, 489–504.

25. A. Ngata and I. L. G. Sutherland, “Religious Influences,” in *The Māori People Today: A General Survey*, ed. I. L. G. Sutherland (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1940), 334–35.

26. Irwin, “Some Maori Responses,” 57.

27. Lange, “Indigenous Agents,” 281–87.

28. The Kīngitanga, or Māori King Movement, was an attempt by Māori to unify themselves under a Māori King in order to save their land and tribal *mana*. They justified their movement through Scripture (particularly Deut 17:15), the election of Saul as Jewish king, and through the example of European monarchies. Wiremu Tamihana (the “kingmaker”) anointed the elderly Waikato chief, Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, as the first Māori King in 1858. Pōtatau was succeeded by his son, Tāwhiao, in 1860.

29. Evelyn Stokes, *Wiremu Tamihana Rangatira* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2002), 62–63.

Christian also included abandoning practices now considered obnoxious, such as polygamy and cannibalism.³⁰ Christian chiefs often led the way. As Lange notes, “[i]ntegrating Christian religious authority into the existing structure of local leadership . . . had practical advantages for the missions and their advance, as well as being consistent with traditional Maori understandings of power.”³¹

With a desire to live according to God’s laws, Christian groups often formed new villages, separate from heathen relatives.³² However, the *tire* they lived by were often interpreted by Māori in accordance with their own cultural understanding,³³ which was probably not helped by the missionary use of Māori terms, such as *tapu*, to define biblical concepts. Some of these rules were subtly ignored or adapted, yet with others, including extreme interpretations of scripture, the prescribed form was rigidly followed, often to the chagrin of missionaries.³⁴ This strict adherence to form often caused missionaries to doubt that the adherence of Māori to Christian belief was truly heart-felt and transforming.³⁵ As Canon Stack put it, “with a strict conformity to the outward observances of religion there is little real spirituality of mind.”³⁶ As the newspapers told Māori, they needed to be sincere and their faith should be in the heart, and not just on the lips.³⁷ Māori religious enthusiasm was sometimes fleeting, leading not only missionaries but also newspapers, to complain about backsliding.³⁸ At times indigenous syncretic or adaptive religious movements, the “prophet movements,” emerged as Māori, disenchanted with Pākehā and missionaries, sought to interpret God’s word for themselves. However, the most significant of these movements arose in response to war and land loss and occur later, outside of this research period.³⁹

Genuine faith cannot be discounted. However, the conversion of Māori was informed by their traditional worldview, where ritual and belief were concerned with efficacy in terms of providing spiritual and physical protection, and with regulating social life. Christianity offered *ora* (life, well-being) and *oranga tonutanga* (everlasting life). That Māori believed that Christianity would provide succour to both body and soul, and models for social behaviour in the modern world, is both a logical and likely reason for Māori conversion.

30. Ward, *Show of Justice*, 14.

31. Lange, “Indigenous Agents,” 288.

32. AJHR 1860, E1C, 22.

33. Owens, “Unexpected Impact,” 45.

34. Owens, “Unexpected Impact,” 36.

35. Ward, *Show of Justice*, 22.

36. James W. Stack, *Notes on Maori Christianity* (Christchurch: Offices of the “Press” Company, 1874), 3.

37. For example, see *Te Karere Maori*, 1 January 1855, 32; 1 November 1855, 15; *Te Haeata*, 1 December 1859, 2.

38. For example, see *Te Karere Maori*, 1 February 1855, 5–6; 1 December 1855, 14; *Te Karere o Poneke*, 19 April 1858, 4; *Te Haeata*, 1 March 1862, 3.

39. These are detailed in Bronwyn Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Maori Prophets in New Zealand* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 1999), 3–136.

In 1840, under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori became British subjects, at least in name. Increased Pākehā immigration led to increased trade possibilities, but also challenged the now Christianised Māori worldview. The benefits Māori thought would accrue from Christianity did not appear to be materialising: they often followed the missionary strictures more closely than their Pākehā neighbours, but Pākehā seemed to be richer, less prone to disease, more knowledgeable and more secure in terms of body, soul, and property. Many, over time, came to the conclusion that they needed to turn to what both the government and missionaries were now promoting — *ngā ritenga pai o te Pākehā*. Of course these customs included religious beliefs, but also encompassed education, commerce, the individualisation of tribal land, personal habits, clothing, and housing. One of the most significant aspects of these *ritenga* was *Te Ture*, the rule of law.

It was not unreasonable for Māori to consider that if temporal answers were not met (wealth, health, knowledge), then the spiritual message must be called into account to some extent.⁴⁰ According to Parsonson, this sort of disappointment in the results of conversion in Polynesia lead to an almost universal, although in most cases temporary, rejection of the missionary message.⁴¹ Protestant missionaries in New Zealand were certainly concerned with falling attendance and increasing worldliness among Māori in the 1850s and 60s.⁴² Māori responses varied: some turned to Catholicism, which was deemed to be less close to governmental structures; some returned to traditional beliefs; some incorporated the more temporal European *ritenga*.⁴³ For those tribes who saw or sought benefit in being closely allied to Government, the acceptance of law and other *ritenga* was a good option. As seen below, such an acceptance was not done at the expense of Christianity, but rather as an addition to their new religious worldview.

Te Ture

The Conscious Linking of Law and Religion

Ward suggests that “[t]here was inevitably some confusion of church and state law in Māori eyes, especially as the state system of justice was represented as based on Christian principles.”⁴⁴ This assessment perhaps overstates the “confusion” while minimising the “representation.” Religious imagery and modes of conceptualisation informed the Māori worldview of the mid-nineteenth

40. Ward, *Show of Justice*, 87.

41. Parsonson, *Conversion of Polynesia*, 18–19.

42. For example see *Te Haeata*, 1 February 1861, 3; *Te Karere Maori*, 31 May 1856, 5–9; 31 October 1859, 5–6.

43. It is difficult to assess the number of Māori who left the Protestant Churches. The Catholic mission was relatively successful (over 5,000 converts in 1846, mainly in the northern half of the North Island) until the splitting of the Catholic diocese into two in 1849 and the removal of the Marist priests from their northern missions. The Catholic mission to Waikato, the Kingitanga base, remained strong into the 1860s. See E. R. Simmons, *Pompallier: Prince of Bishops* (Auckland: CPC Publishing, 1984), 115–16, 139.

44. Ward, *Show of Justice*, 76. See also Paora Tūhaere’s words in *Te Wananga*, 29 September 1877, 374.

century. However, Māori made a fairly logical interpretation of the available information as government officials and missionaries presented the material in a way that they knew would appeal to Māori religious understanding.

Māori also saw church and state operating together: the early officials and missionaries worked together,⁴⁵ and sons of missionaries, such as Walter Buller, found government employment. Certainly the messages that Māori received from the Māori-language newspapers, both governmental and evangelical,⁴⁶ strongly linked the Queen and her law with religion.⁴⁷ In 1858, a book of laws was prepared and distributed to chiefs and assessors,⁴⁸ and extensive excerpts were printed in *Te Karere o Poneke*.⁴⁹ As seen in the introduction, this law book explicitly stated the link between Law and Religion.

Whether the Law be Human or Divine, it ought to have the same fountain, that is, GOD. Divine Law was revealed by God Himself; and good Human Law is built up by man upon Divine Law.⁵⁰

The two sets of law were presented as progressive events: the missionaries brought God's Law, and this was followed by the Queen's Law. The Governor even claimed to be presenting law to Māori for their consideration in the same way that missionaries had revealed the Gospel.⁵¹ The promoters did not expect Māori to fully understand the details.⁵² Instead, *Te Karere Maori* used the metaphor of the sailing ship — Māori did not understand all its workings at first, but could still see its value. Law, it stated, was like Christianity and was being presented as a gift rather than an imposition.⁵³ The 1858 law book

45. Sir William Martin's friendship and collaboration with Bishop Selwyn is one example. See Guy Leonard, *Sir William Martin: The Life of the First Chief Justice of New Zealand* (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1961), 59, 63, 81, 89.

46. In the 1855–1863 period, the government published *Te Karere Maori* (briefly known as *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*) and in 1863, *Te Pihoihoi Mokemoke*; a prominent politician, Donald McLean, launched *Te Waka Maori o Ahuriri* in 1863 with funding from the Hawkes Bay Provincial Council; the Wesleyan Church's *Te Haeata* appeared from 1859 to 1862; In 1857 and 1858 government official Walter Buller privately produced *Te Karere o Poneke*, which was heavily influenced by his father, a Wesleyan missionary; Charles Davis, when not employed by the government, published three short-lived newspapers, all with an evangelical message.

47. For example, see *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1856, 3; 31 October 1859, 4; 31 March 1860, 1–5; 20; *Te Karere o Poneke*, 20 September 1858, 2; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 April 1861, 2; 2 September 1861, 3–5; 15 October 1861, 1–2.

48. Assessors were Māori officials, generally chiefs, appointed by the government to assist European magistrates in legal issues, and to settle minor Māori disputes.

49. The book was also available to other Māori at the cost of 10/6. See *Te Karere Maori*, 16 August 1858, 1.

50. *Ko nga Ture o Ingarani: The Laws of England*, (Auckland, 1858), i. [Translation from source document.]

51. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 13 September 1858, 2; 20 September 1858, 2–3. Further excerpts of the Law Book can be found in *Te Karere o Poneke*, 4 October 1858, 2–4; 25 October 1858, 2–3; 8 November 1858, 3–4; 15 November 1858: Supplement, 1; 22 November 1858: Supplement, 1–2.

52. Compare also McLean's explanation of a truncated legal system for "those tribes who have not yet been accustomed to the administration of English law Some of the chiefs have expressed a wish that there should be but one law. This is much to be desired by all but is not so easily attained. A child does not grow to man's estate in a day." See *Te Karere Maori*, 31 July 1860, 8.

53. *Te Karere Maori*, 16 August 1858, 1–3.

also illustrated some of its discussions on law with Old Testament quotes, particularly from Deuteronomy. The law was also shown to be efficacious, to be “this upright law, through which England grew, became great and civilised, and its people came to live in peace, health, and wealth.”⁵⁴

The Māori-language newspapers reinforced these messages. Law, like religion, was presented as a voluntary option.

However, do not think that it is the Governor’s thought to impose these, the Laws, on places where the people don’t desire them. The Governor does not think like that. But it is like the giving of Christianity by the missionaries, which were given for the Māori tribes to take up, or push away. It was up to them. Likewise, this is the second of the great treasures the Pākehā has brought here, and displayed for them to take hold of or to reject.⁵⁵

This “offering” of law would not have appeared unusual to Māori as it reflected previous governmental practice. The Native Exemption Ordinance of 1844 had not only exempted Māori from many penalties, but gave chiefs much of the responsibility for ensuring cases came before the courts, and Grey’s more pro-active Resident Magistrates Ordinance 1847 was largely ineffective.⁵⁶ It was clear to Māori that successive governments were unwilling to enforce the law in Māori districts, for example, by suppressing feuding and murder.⁵⁷ Indeed, when feuding over land was getting out of hand in Taranaki in 1858 — events which helped fuel the first Taranaki War — Governor Browne issued a proclamation stating that he would not interfere unless the fighting spilled over into Pākehā-owned land.⁵⁸

According to the Māori-language newspapers, the ultimate penalties for *hara* were the responsibility of God, whose powers were couched in human institutional terms: “Jehovah is the Governor of the whole world.”⁵⁹ He was also “Te Kaiwhakawa” (The Judge) whom Māori would meet on “te ra whakawa” (Judgement Day).⁶⁰ God as Judge was a common theme in the Wesleyan newspaper *Te Haeata*,⁶¹ but also appeared in the government’s *Te Karere Maori*.⁶² Grey himself informed Māori he would not act unjustly towards them, saying “but how would I be on the judgement day?”⁶³

The newspapers told Māori that Law was based on Christianity,⁶⁴ but also linked the exercise of that law to a notion of divine sanction: not only did the Queen also possess a divine right to rule, but God had also given India to

54. *Ko nga Ture o Ingarani*, ii.

55. *Te Karere Maori*, 16 August 1858, 2–3. See also *Te Karere Maori*, 15 August 1857, 2; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 October 1861, 1–3.

56. Ward, *Show of Justice*, 66; G. V. Butterworth and H. R. Young, *Maori Affairs: Nga Take Maori* (Wellington: GP Books, 1990), 21, 26.

57. See Ward, *Show of Justice*, 82–83, 110.

58. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 February 1858, 1–4; *Te Karere o Poneke*, 29 March 1858, 2.

59. *Te Haeata*, 1 March 1862, 3.

60. *Te Haeata*, 1 August 1861, 2.

61. *Te Haeata*, 1 October 1860, 1, 4; 1 November 1860, 1; 1 December 1860, 2; 1 August 1861, 4; 1 March 1861, 3.

62. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 January 1855, 9; 5 February 1862, 8; 20 April 1863, 16.

63. *Te Karere Maori*, 5 February 1862, 10. [Translation from source document.]

64. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 May 1855, 1; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 October 1861, 3–4.

Englishmen to run, and had also appointed them as “guides” to the Māori people.⁶⁵ Indeed, European colonisation was even portrayed as fulfilling the Biblical prophesy of Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem:

Shem was the source of the Jews, of the people whom God had chosen, and to whom he was well affectioned: hence the saying, “The God of Shem.” Shem was also the ancestor of the races of Asia, that is of the land to the eastward of Canaan. Now Japheth (the men of Europe) has dwelt in his tents . . . for the men of Europe abide in many of his kaingas, which have been taken by them.⁶⁶

The Efficacy of Law

The newspapers portrayed the rule of Law as efficacious for human development, and argued that England had become great through its adoption.⁶⁷ According to McHugh, English contemporaries saw the law as having evolved to a point of perfection and “Englishmen thought of themselves as being in something of a constitutional Promised Land.”⁶⁸ An extensive article in *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi* gave a history of England before and after the advent of Law. The people of England were insecure, illiterate, poor, hungry, and diseased when living without Law: a situation that Māori were invited to compare to their own. However, like the House of Israel, the Law was now written in the hearts of Englishmen.⁶⁹ Their population had multiplied, and the Queen now had many powerful warships.

These are some of the blessings bestowed by our Almighty Father to his children who obey him, and he will be just as kind to all peoples who wish to listen to his Laws. When the law of God is empowered, man listens to the good laws established by the sages in accord with what they thought in olden days, because those are blessings for us, as the pathway of these laws proceeds along the Laws of God.⁷⁰

These blessings were available to Māori. Indeed the Queen was sad that Māori had not yet availed themselves of the law: she only desired that Māori have security of their material goods and “possess the benefits in the law and living justly, so that all men may live, lest they die, lest their bodies be abused.”⁷¹ Just as Christianity had allowed Māori to *ora* (live), they could now also *ora* through the rule of law.

Divine Consequences of Rejecting Law

With law, government and the Queen so closely linked with God, it was natural that any resistance to the Queen’s law would be seen also as resistance to God’s will. This message was heavily promoted during the first Taranaki War

65. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1858, 2; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 October 1861, 6; *Te Haeata*, 1 January 1862, 4.

66. *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 2 September 1861, 10. [Translation from source document.] See also Gen 9:27.

67. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1856, 3; *Te Karere o Poneke*, 13 September 1858, 2.

68. P. G. McHugh, “A History of Crown Sovereignty in New Zealand,” in *Histories, Power and Loss: Uses of the Past — a New Zealand Perspective*, ed. Andrew Sharp and Paul McHugh (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001), 189.

69. *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 2 September 1861, 1–5. This metaphor derives from Hebrews 8:10.

70. *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 2 September 1861, 4.

71. *Te Karere Maori*, 16 December 1861, 12.

in 1860 by *Te Haeata*. While some Anglican clergy were, at this stage, prepared to endorse Te Rangitāke's rights in Waitara,⁷² and to criticise Governor Browne's precipitous actions, the Wesleyan clergy threw their support behind the Governor. *Te Haeata* stressed God's role of judge,⁷³ along with the notion that fighting the Crown was a sin against God.⁷⁴ The newspaper also suggested that resistance was futile as God had the ability to deflect bullets from their target,⁷⁵ which was perhaps the origin of a similar Pai Mārire belief a few years later.⁷⁶

The government newspapers were a little less strident in invoking the divine wrath upon Māori. However, failure to accept the law and do as God wanted would bring punishment, or as *Te Karere Maori* quoted: "[t]he Lord maketh a fruitful land barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein."⁷⁷ The Kīngitanga was also presented as standing against God's will. *Te Karere Maori*, in an extended article on the movement, made a clear link to the poor decision of the Jews in electing Saul as their King.

And so their wish was allowed to happen. Saul was made king. From that their misfortune began because that was a course of insubordination to Jehovah, the King of Israel. Now let us compare this with the Māori.⁷⁸

The article then listed the benefits of the Queen's government. To the suggestion that Māori should have their own King it stated "[s]o we say this is an assumption of superiority. According to the Scriptures 'No man can serve two masters,' and the 'house divided will not stand.'"⁷⁹

The Jews had rebelled by choosing a King to rule in the place of God. By implication, the Māori had rebelled by choosing a Māori King in the place of the English Queen. By inference, the Māori King was the lesser temporal power in contrast with the divine Victoria/God. Indeed, a disapproving God had caused the demise of Pōtatau, the first Māori King, in 1860: "[t]heir king was established, then heaven's power took action and that king was removed."⁸⁰ In a similar vein, Gorst's *Te Pihoihoi Mokemoke* published an anti-Kīngitanga letter from "Whakaaro Na Mohio" (Thoughts from the Wise). This writer, most probably a Pākehā, portrayed the Queen and King as Manichean opposites, even linking them to the eternal struggle with the words "Satan divides, Christ unifies."⁸¹

72. The First Taranaki War (1860–61) concerned the 600 acre Pekapeka Block at the mouth of the Waitara River. This was offered for sale to Governor Browne by a lesser Te Ati Awa chief, Te Teira Manuka. However, the paramount chief, Wiremu Kīngi Te Rangitāke, objected on the basis of his chiefly right to speak on behalf of the tribe. Browne interpreted Te Rangitāke's actions as an attempt to interfere with Te Teira's legal rights, which was an affront to British sovereignty. Most Māori interpreted Browne's actions as interference in chiefly rights and the communal nature of Māori land. The war escalated as other Taranaki tribes and militant Kīngitanga warriors assisted Te Rangitāke.

73. *Te Haeata*, 1 October 1860, 1, 4; 1 November 1860, 1; 1 December 1860, 2; 1 August 1861, 4; 1 March 1861, 3.

74. *Te Haeata*, 1 April 1860, 1; 1 May 1860, 1; 1 December 1860, 4; 1 January 1861, 1, 2; 1 May 1861, 4; 1 June 1861, 1; 1 July 1861, 1; 1 August 1861, 1; see also *Ko Aoteaaroa* (Auckland), 1861, 15.

75. *Te Haeata*, 1 March 1862, 3.

76. See Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 176.

77. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 May 1856, 4; see Psalms 103:34.

78. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1860, 2.

79. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1860, 2–3. See Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; Mark 3:25.

80. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1860, 7.

81. *Te Pihoihoi Mokemoke* (Te Awamutu), 9 March 1863, 13.

It is therefore clear that the Pākehā-run Māori-language newspapers, when promulgating their messages concerning law and religion, were prepared to do more than merely suggest that law was based on Christian principles. Law was presented as religion had been: it possessed its own book, as well as supplementary tracts in the form of newspaper articles;⁸² individuals or tribes had free will to accept it into their lives and receive subsequent benefit, but would suffer God's wrath if they chose not to. Direct links and less than subtle inferences also made it plain that it was the Queen's law, rather than any that Māori might develop, which would receive this divine favour.

The Māori Response

By the mid-nineteenth century, Māori were deeply influenced by Christianity. This was not merely that they thought religious thoughts, but that religious language coloured how they saw the world. They were not only familiar with biblical exemplars and imagery, but with an absence of modern political terms, transferred the biblical lexicon onto the contemporary situation. This meant that acceptance of law and other *tikanga* required a form of conversion, which formed an extension to their earlier acceptance of Christianity.

Many Māori considered that the Queen, and through her the governor, were directly responsible for the arrival of missionaries and the spread of the Gospel.⁸³ The advent of religion, then law, was seen by some as a natural progression which would lead onto wealth and civilisation.⁸⁴ Hoani Meihana Te Pohoi of Manawātū expressed this progression through Māori metaphor, "So, the older brother, religion, has become indigenous, and after will be his younger brother, the law."⁸⁵

Given that the government and missionaries consciously blended religion with the rule of law, it is hardly surprising that many Māori "assumed the law and the gospel to be one."⁸⁶ This can be seen in the ubiquitous linkage of law and Christianity in many Māori letters to newspapers and reported speeches,⁸⁷

82. Prior to the 1858 law book, the Chief Justice, Sir William Martin, at the request of Governor Fitzroy, produced *Ko nga Tikanga a te Pakeha* (Auckland, 1858), a set of instructions on English laws and customs. *Te Karere Maori* also published accounts of trials, partly to instruct Māori, partly to justify decisions which Māori might have resented. For example, see *Te Karere Maori*, 1 May 1855, 1–11; 31 January 1856, 1–4; 29 February 1856, 4–15; 14 April 1862, 4–9. There was also extensive publication of an arbitration case between two tribal groups in Kaipara, described as a *whakawā* (trial) over which Grey presided.

83. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 August 1860, 3; 14 July 1860, 22, 26; 30 November 1860, 18, 47; 1 May 1862, 21; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 November 1861, 15.

84. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 28 June 1858, 3; *Te Karere Maori*, 14 July 1860, 16; 1 July 1862, 9. The "advent" of Christianity varied. For example, the first mission was established in Northland in 1814, but Octavius Hadfield did not set up his mission at Ōtaki until 1839. See *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Department of Internal Affairs, 1990) 1:169, 224.

85. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 15 November 1858, 6.

86. Ngata and Sutherland, "Religious Influences," 345, cited in Henare, "Ngā Tikanga me ngā Ritenga o te Ao Māori," 33.

87. *Te Waka o te Iwi*, 1 October 1857, 2; *Te Karere Maori*, 1 August 1855, 8–10; 30 November 1859, 6–7; 31 January 1860, 11; 15 March 1860, 8; 30 June 1860, 12–15; 14 July 1860, 19, 20, 27, 28, 31, 33–34, 35, 40; 31 July 1860, 11, 16–17, 28, 35, 36, 37, 38, 56, 59, 59, 61; 3 August 1860, Supplement, 25; 3 August 1860, Supplement, 6, 41, 51; 1 September 1860, 20, 32; 30 November 1860, 11, 12, 17, 32, 34, 35, 38, 15 December 1860, 3, 4–5, 10; 15 January 1861, 3; 28 February 1861, 13, 14, 15; 16 December 1861, 18; 15 January 1862, 11, 13, 18, 19; 5 February 1862, 24; 14 January 1862, 13; 1 May 1862, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22; 20 July 1862, 7; 18 July 1863, 16; 28 September 1863, 3; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 1 March 1861, 9; 15 March 1861, 9; 15 April

especially the addresses given by chiefs at the 1860 Kohimarama Conference.⁸⁸ Even those Māori employed to uphold the law sometimes saw the religious side to their role. For example, when Rīhari Hekeawai, a constable from Wanganui, stopped Hēnere of Ngāti Tū from acquiring ammunition for a war-party in 1858, he stated his authority, saying “because I am a constable of the Law of the Queen, and of God.”⁸⁹

The missionary God who interposed himself into human affairs had become firmly established in the Māori worldview. Several Māori wrote letters thanking the government hospital for saving their lives, but they were explicit in attributing the success of the doctor to God’s agency.⁹⁰ God’s punishment on Judgement Day also weighed on Māori minds and they considered the wages of sin (death) to be the obvious cause of the decrease in Māori population.⁹¹ Many Māori interpreted events in terms of God’s will, in the same way as the newspapers presented them. For example, if God, as *Te Karere Maori* suggested, had sanctioned the British government,⁹² then resistance was therefore a sin. Himiona of Tūhourangi told the assembly at Kohimarama of his misgivings about Browne’s aggression over Waitara, but then considered, “The Lord chasteneth whom he loveth. This is the chastening of which I approve for those who persist in doing evil.”⁹³ This was echoed by Hēmi Mātini of Whāingaroa: “In my opinion this is the punishment of God that the people may be brought to repentance. It is right that the Governor should punish our sins.”⁹⁴ Similarly, the actions of Kingitanga supporters were seen in terms of sin,⁹⁵ and Hone Wētere of Kāwhia repeated the assertion that Pōtatau had died due to his taking the reins of kingship.⁹⁶

The Parallels between Conversion to Christianity and Law

A number of parallels show that Māori reacted to temporal law in a similar way to their conversion to Christianity several decades earlier. Law had its own unofficial missionaries, such as Tāmati Wiremu Upo Haepaia, a Wesleyan lay preacher in Wellington. For nineteen years he had learnt Pākehā ways, but with feuding over land causing lawlessness in his home in Taranaki, he

1861, 2; 15 August 1861, 24; 2 September 1861, 14–17, 20–21; *Te Karere o Poneke*, 17 September 1857, 4; 19 April 1858, 4; 10 December 1857, 4; 19 July 1858, 2; 30 August 1858, 3, 6 September 1858, 3; 13 September 1858, 4; 4 October 1858, 4; 11 October 1858, Supplement, 2; 18 October 1858, Supplement, 1; 18 October 1858, Supplement, 2; 1 November 1858, 2, 3; 8 November 1858, Supplement, 2; 15 November 1858, 3.

88. In 1860, Governor Browne called a conference of friendly and neutral chiefs to discuss political matters. High on the government’s agenda was to gain Māori disapproval of Te Rangitāke’s actions at Waitara, and of the Kingitanga. The Governor also stressed the need for Māori to accept British sovereignty and English law.

89. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 18 October 1858, Supplement, 2.

90. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 June 1858, 4; 6 November 1858, 4.

91. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 10 December 1857, 4; 8 November 1858, 2–3; *Te Karere Maori*, 30 September 1859, 5; 15 December 1860, 15; 28 February 1861, 17; 16 December 1861, 16; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 March 1861, 5.

92. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 January 1860, 11; 5 February 1862, 24.

93. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 July 1860, 35.

94. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 September 1860, 32.

95. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 July 1862, 12.

96. *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 August 1861, 23.

returned in 1858 to give his people the benefit of his knowledge. His answer was to abandon Māori customs and he told his people. “When we decide to enter into the Pākehā ways, we should together ennoble the Law as a kindness for the people, so that we see the benefits for the body.”⁹⁷ This did not involve any rejection of the moral authority of religion to which Māori had already subscribed. As he saw it, “the Governor’s law is crying to the law of Christianity for them to grow together until the end of the world.”⁹⁸

Just as syncretic religious movements emerged from missionary teaching, some Māori were not prepared to accept colonial control of the administration of law and order. The Kingitanga created its own magistrates and an emerging system of law which stood outside of the Queen’s Law. The results were variable, but one success was Wiremu Tamihana’s *rūnanga* at Matamata which employed a fusion of Māori *tikanga*, as well as English and Biblical law in its deliberations.⁹⁹ However, the King’s justice was galling to those Waikato Māori still loyal to Queen Victoria. Just as Māori Christians had in the past separated themselves from their heathen relatives, Fenton noted in the late 1850s that the loyalists were deciding to set up new settlements “where law and order can be carried out without interruption from the Kingites.”¹⁰⁰

Even when Māori accepted British law, Māori sometimes interpreted its workings in traditional ways. This was problematic, particularly with inter-racial violence, as the customary Māori demand for *utu* tended not to differentiate between the actual perpetrator and his kin. Colonel Wynyard, when acting Governor in 1855, travelled to Tihorewaru, a *kāinga* in Waikato, to appease Māori there over a murder of one of their number by a Pākehā. The Acting Governor, as leader of the Pākehā tribe, was held personally responsible for the murder, and his visit was interpreted as a peace mission. For many of the chiefs present, a suitable payment for the murder was a flour mill.¹⁰¹ However, one speaker considered a metaphorical killing was the required payment.

Ropati starting up and dancing before his Excellency for a moment, said — I am a man, I wish to be a man, and live in peace. O, the Governor, I will spear you, I will kill you. This is my spear; I will pierce you; there (striking the spear into the ground before the Governor). It is done, you have my only weapon.¹⁰²

When a Māori, Erietara, was found shot in the bush near Patumāhoe in 1860, suspicion quickly fell upon a local Pākehā. An enquiry was hastily called together with both Māori and Pākehā investigators who could not find

97. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 25 October 1858, 3–4.

98. *Te Karere o Poneke*, 19 July 1858, 2.

99. Stokes, *Wiremu Tamihana Rangatira*, 89–90.

100. AJHR 1860, E1C, 22.

101. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 March 1855, 1–5, 9. The chief murdered was probably Hemi of Waikato. See *Te Karere Maori*, 1 September 1855, 19.

102. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 March 1855, 8. This account was originally printed in the *New Zealander*. It was based on English notes made by the interpreter, John White. Therefore Ropati’s statements above were translated back into Māori from the English notes. There may be some similarity between Ropati’s actions and the spearing actions involved in the *pihe* dirge at a *hahunga* ceremony. See *Te Rangī Hiroa*, 425.

evidence to link anyone to the killing. However, a large group of South Auckland and Waikato Māori assembled and criticised the Māori investigators, calling for *utu*. This may merely have been an outpouring of grief, but it was soundly condemned in *Te Haeata*. The Māori investigators were then defended by the prominent Waikato chief, Tāmāti Ngāpora, and the crowd dispersed.¹⁰³

The government was aware of the depth of Māori feeling in these cases and presented a number of high profile trials in *Te Karere Maori* in an attempt to show the fairness of British justice. Considerable coverage was given to the trial of Walter Huntley for the manslaughter of the Māori woman, Te Kopi, with extensive explanations on the difference between murder and manslaughter.¹⁰⁴ Charles Marsden, although quite likely mad, was less fortunate than Huntley and was hanged for the murder of the Māori woman, Kerara Rangiawhipari of Ngāti Whakaue. In the latter case, the judge’s summation was translated for the Māori audience sentence by sentence. The newspaper account comprised parts of the proceedings verbatim, no doubt forming the basis of the printed account of the trial provided to the chiefs. A number of Māori attended the public execution, and a grandiloquent letter, also printed in the newspaper, was sent to the chiefs of Ngāti Whakaue. No doubt, they felt gratified at the *utu* dispensed, and the government probably had few qualms about the death of a poor, mad, Catholic, Pākehā woodcutter.¹⁰⁵

Many Māori still saw justice in terms of their own *tikanga*, and at times “converted” it to their own ends. In one extreme case in Northland, the assessor and chief, Maihi Parāone Kawiti, was dismissed from his position for his involvement in a case of *mākutu* where he and others murdered an alleged sorcerer.¹⁰⁶ However, after “confessing his sins,” he was subsequently forgiven by the Native Secretary, Donald McLean, at Kohimarama.¹⁰⁷

As previously noted, there were doubts that Māori truly felt the transforming nature of Christianity, and, similarly, aspersions were cast by both Māori and Pākehā, on the sincerity with which Māori accepted the law and other Pākehā customs.¹⁰⁸ John Gorst, the magistrate appointed to Waikato, considered that most of the Māori there who were prepared to take positions as assessors generally did so out of cupidity, and some were even paying over a portion of their salaries to the Māori King.¹⁰⁹ Gorst was also critical of the small Waikato *hapu*, Ngāti Whaurua, whose allegiance to the Kīngitanga evaporated when the King’s judges ruled against them in a case over an eel weir. He regarded their demand for a British flag, a mail contract, and salaries for ten official positions in return for loyalty to the government as unreasonable.

103. *Te Haeata*, 1 November 1860, 1–2, 4; *Te Karere Maori*, 15 December 1860, 14.

104. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 May 1855, 1–11.

105. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 January 1856, 12–14; 29 February 1856, 4–15.

106. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 October 1859, 1–5; 15 November 1859, 1–2, 4–5. This case was also discussed in *Te Haeata*, 1 October 1859, 2–3.

107. *Te Karere Maori*, 3 August 1860, Supplement, 73; 1 September 1860, 12–13.

108. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 February 1860, 1, 5–6; 1 July 1862, 11; 20 August 1862, 16.

109. John Eldon Gorst, *The Māori King*, ed. K. O. Arvidson (London: Macmillan, 1864; edited reprint, Auckland: Reed Books, 2001), 20, 45, 85, 103–5.

It was said to them that this was the best way they would be known, their upholding the Queen's laws. The fruits [of this] would be to see what they really wanted, and if they were firm in this, then perhaps the Governor would observe the appropriateness of their actions, and [they] would then get a flag.¹¹⁰

Salvation for the Body

Traditional Māori religious belief was concerned with maintaining *ora*, physical and spiritual well-being. Conversion to Christianity merely transferred the responsibility for that *ora* to God. However, the grafting of the idea of Law onto the Māori worldview allowed a dichotomy to develop between the needs of the body and soul. As Temuera Amohau stated at a meeting called to establish law amongst the Te Arawa tribal confederation, the object was “the acceptance of the Law as safeguard for the bodies, as it is clear that the guardian of our souls is God.”¹¹¹ These two parallel systems of law, God's and the Queen's, were essentially separate but fused together, like the lead and wood of a pencil. Expressions that the Queen, Governor, or Law were the source of *ora[nga]* for the *tinana*, while Christianity remained the *oranga* of the *wairua* were common both in letters to the newspapers, as well as in public speeches.¹¹²

Māori saw deep correlations between the two systems. This was, to some degree, partly of the government's own making. Its espoused race policy was that New Zealand would be *he iwi kotahi*, one amalgamated people of Māori and Pākehā living peacefully together, as brothers. The governor was presented as the nation's father, and the Queen as a more remote mother. The obvious analogy for the Queen was with God the Father. According to Taurau Te Tirarau of Parawhau in a written statement at Kohimarama, the temporal authorities had become the new trinity: “All we approve of is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that is to say, the Queen, the Government, and the Law.”¹¹³ For Heremi Matua of Ngāti Apa, law would give everlasting life: “This is what I hope for, approbation of the Queen's laws. I desire the laws, because they will give me life for ever.”¹¹⁴

Just as human agents represented the divine authority, so too did the governor represent the Queen. Some Māori felt they had been “saved” by the governor who had the power to “wipe away sins.”¹¹⁵ Appeals to the governor as father sometimes resembled religious prayers.¹¹⁶ The religious metaphors employed were also prevalent at Kohimarama in 1860. Governor Browne and McLean were both called on to lead like bishops, and the conference was compared to

110. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 May 1862, 9.

111. *Te Karere Maori*, 29 February 1860, 5.

112. For example see *Te Karere o Poneke*, 25 October 1858, 4; 15 November 1858, Supplement, 2; 13 December 1858, Supplement, 1; *Te Karere Maori*, 31 January 1860, 11; 29 February 1860, 5; 30 June 1860, 12; 14 July 1860, 36; 31 July 1860, 19; 3 August 1860, Supplement, 51, 51–2, 53, 54; 30 November 1860, 18–19, 35; 15 December 1860, 12; 16 December 1861, 19; 1 May 1862, 18; 20 August 1862, 15; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 15 March 1861, 5; 2 September 1861, 20, 23.

113. *Te Karere Maori*, 30 November 1860, 12.

114. *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 2 September 1861, 16.

115. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 January 1862, 13, 18; 1 May 1862, 15; *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi*, 2 September 1861, 16.

116. *Te Karere Maori*, 15 January 1861, 3; 15 January 1862, 10–11.

a sacrament¹¹⁷ within a wider covenant.¹¹⁸ Parakaia Te Pouepa of Ōtaki even alluded to the last supper of Christ when discussing a dinner at which the chiefs and Governor attended.

[This is] like Christ, at the end of his work when he ate together with his disciples: it was the affirming of his love to the Apostles. Where can you fly to now? [You] have eaten together with the Governor.¹¹⁹

Some felt they had little choice in accepting of law into their lives. As Wiremu Tīpene of Te Uriohau stated,

This was the day I was saved, the preaching of the Gospel. I will cling to the Word of God as a father to me. When the Law of the Queen came as guardian for my body, we were all warm. The gates of death have been guarded by the law of God, and of the Queen. I looked, that was a sign of life for all the people of this island who are suffering. I say, religion will guard my spirit, and the law of the Queen will improve my body: here I will cling to.¹²⁰

Of course not all Māori embraced the viewpoint that accepting the synthesis of these authorities also meant, at least in principle, accepting colonial rule. The Kīngitanga based itself on Christian foundations without feeling any need for governmental involvement. No doubt, there were perfectly valid political reasons for tribes to “convert” to the Queen’s Law. Other Te Uriohau speakers, although no less religious in their tone, were quite explicit that their tribe was small and defenceless and needed government protection from neighbouring tribes.¹²¹

Conclusion

Māori possessed a holistic worldview, where the spiritual and temporal concerns impacted upon each other. The spirit world was appeased or cajoled, and forms and rules were followed in order to safeguard physical well-being. Māori regarded the Christianity of the nineteenth-century missionaries in a similar fashion. However, increased contact with Pākehā caused many Māori to doubt the total efficacy of God’s Laws for their physical well-being, with some turning to the Queen’s Laws to safeguard their temporal condition. This re-evaluation required a new conversion of sorts — not just spiritual, but also political. The Māori language newspapers were not only a conduit for the gospel of Law to be relayed to Māori, but, in some cases, a forum for a Māori response. The newspapers provide a window on the processes happening at that time. Some of the forms of this new conversion mirrored those of the first conversion to Christianity. Māori now considered that God would look after their souls, and the Queen’s government and laws their bodies. However, the spiritual and physical domains could not be totally separated: they still interacted upon each other. Given the way that the government and newspapers presented the law to them, the biblical lexicon available to them, and their worldview at that time, it would have been hard for Māori to comprehend it in any other way.

117. *Te Karere Maori*, 31 July 1860, 56, 59.

118. For example, see *Te Karere Maori*, 3 August 1860, Supplement, 4; 15 August 1860:7; 1 September 1860, 15, 16.

119. *Te Karere Maori*, 1 September 1860, 20.

120. *Te Karere Maori*, 3 August 1860, 51.

121. *Te Karere Maori*, 3 August 1860, 51–53.