

# MODERATOR'S MESSAGE WAITANGI DAY

— 6th of February —

Waitangi Day 6 February is regarded by many as our national day. It commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi/e Tiriti o Waitangi between the Tangata Whenua (Māori) and the Crown (British Empire), at the marae in Paihia in 1840 - 181 years ago. It was an incredible achievement by all concerned. No treaty is without faults and blemishes. With both parties involved, it was signed with hope for a fruitful future.

Our history, in the nearly two centuries since the signing of the Treaty, records stories of deception, distortion, abuse and manipulation. Grief and pain will never pass. This is always the case in treaties with land and control of people at the core of such an arrangement. How do we face this? We must learn the Treaty of Waitangi story, remember and honour the Treaty, with respect for one another. We must move forward as a nation, united in love, honour, and respect. The Treaty of Waitangi is our story - look back, learn, remember, be gracious and resolutely move on.

What of today? Our Pakeha/Palagi population still leads in the majority in all areas of our society. As a nation, we are making progress. Treaty settlements continue, much has been completed. The Māori economy has improved. The study of the history of this land is now a reality from the earliest stages of schooling. Māori, Pacifica and Asian peoples are progressing slowly but surely in academic qualifications, management roles, and owning their own businesses. Representing us in the NZ Parliament are an increasing number of Māori, Pacifica and other ethnicities, more than ever before in our short history.

As a nation, we are young. We are one of a small handful of nations leading the world in the battle with Covid-19. In the sporting arenas, we compete "above our weight" and our lack of resources (isolation, people, and the latest technology) does not hinder us. This attitude and demeanour is very much the reflection of who we are in the global landscape. We are a warrior nation of men and women influenced and nurtured by our heritage - Māori, English, Scottish, Pacific, Asian, European, plus many other origins. Today, we the Tangata Whenua, the Crown, and the Manuhiri (late comers), stand on the shoulders of giants. We owe it to them to build up this land, to grow our potentials, to live in peace and harmony, be involved and participate in every level of our society.

Let us honour a bicultural treaty signed in 1840. We, a multicultural society, 5 million strong. We flourish and grow as a cross-cultural nation, emphasising building families, communities, and ourselves, on Godly values and principles.

Kia kaha, i te aroha o te Atua ia Ihu Karaiti. Be strong in the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Ke manuia/Blessings

Fakaofo

*Right Reverend Fakaofo Kaio*

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