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Whāia te Atuatanga: theological education, text books, Te Rau College, cultures and contexts

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Abstract

This thesis shows that Anglican theological training for Māori in the years from 1883 to 1921 was in te reo Māori at Te Rau College, Gisborne, and surveys, in particular, the text books used, analysing what those text book indicators show about Māori theological education. This is seen in the context of theological training for Māori prior to the establishment of the college, the later period when English language instruction was also offered, and the pressures that led to the college's closure.

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*Me tipu ake te pono i te whenua
Me titiro iho te tika i te rangi.*

*Let truth grow out of the land and
Let the heavens find this truth to be just.*

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The final form of this thesis benefits from Nonie Connor's "diplomatic editorial and aesthetic suggestions".¹

You have all kept me going during my research and enabled me to complete the project.

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The appendices, which extend the word count to 82,000, will, I hope, provide useful reference material for others, although the thesis proper contains just over 36,000 words.

¹ This phrase is adapted from Michael Scott, *The Severed Snake: Matrilineages, Making Place, and a Melanesian Christianity in Southeast Solomon Islands* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), xxiii.

Prologue

My own experience of theological education is a background to my research for this thesis.

After attending some lectures and joining in the life and worship of Christchurch College (College House) in Christchurch over two years in the early 1960s, I spent the next three years as a full-time theological student at the College of Saint John the Evangelist, Meadowbank, Auckland, where I completed a Licentiate in Theology (LTh 1st class honours). The Board of Theological Studies examinations comprised: Old Testament, 2 papers; New Testament, 2 papers; New Testament Greek; Biblical Exegesis; Christian Worship; Doctrine, 3 papers; Church History, 2 papers; Christian Living; and I did some additional papers in Hebrew and Philosophy of Religion towards overall honours. Non-examined subjects included Homiletics and Speech Delivery.

In 1967 I joined the staff of St Peter's Theological College, Siota, Solomon Islands, as a theological tutor. The college for the Anglican Church of Melanesia, at that time a diocese that was part of the General Synod of the Anglican Church in New Zealand, was made up of about sixty students, some with wives and families, and three academic staff. The work of the college was influenced by the varied forms of preparation for ordination used in previous years in Melanesia.

The first Melanesian deacon, George Sarawia, had been ordained in December 1868.² Sarawia and a few others were trained by Bishop John Coleridge Patteson at the Melanesian Mission school on Norfolk Island and on the *Southern Cross*, the mission boat. They learned in the Mota language. Bishop Patteson chose this from the island of Mota in the Banks Islands, in what is now Vanuatu, to be the mission language for the translation of the scriptures and the prayer book, for daily worship, and all education and communications among the more than 130 languages of the then diocese of Melanesia. The subjects studied included: Christian scriptures, the teachings of the faith, the meaning of the prayer book, and some elementary logic, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics. In earlier years, students preparing for ordination studied at Norfolk Island. Subsequently a theological college was established at Maka on Malaita in the Solomon Islands, moving some years later to Siota on Gela.

The course developed during Fr Jim Edwards's time as Warden was based on the scheme used at the Society of the Sacred Mission Theological College at Kelham in England, but adapted to local conditions. In addition, in later years, Fr Jim spent time each day explaining in detail the liturgical readings set for morning and evening prayer (Mattins and Evensong). By the time I arrived at Siota, teaching had moved from the Mota language to English, and the subjects taught included Old Testament, New Testament, Liturgy and Worship, Christian Doctrine, and Christian Ethics.

At Siota, in 1967, most of the students were in their mid-thirties and had been district catechists for some years prior to coming to the college. The method of teaching was principally to read a set text in class, sentence by sentence in

² In 1968 on the centenary of George Sarawia's ordination I edited the publication by the diocesan press of a translation into English of his life story with the title *They Came to My Island*.

English, with explanation and discussion as we went.³ There was a change in 1970 when the first group of secondary school leavers arrived. The core subjects ~ scripture and doctrine ~ were taught in a seminar style, with set readings each week from the standard commentaries, essays to be written, and then groups of three would discuss the issues raised and the marked essays would be returned. Other subjects were taught in a lecture style with cyclostyled notes given out and much use of question and answer. I don't remember end of year examinations. I taught biblical studies, liturgy and worship, and New Testament Greek. Though, when other members of staff were on leave, we taught each other's subjects.

In 1971 two associations of theological schools gave accreditation to their constituent colleges to offer certificate and diploma courses. The Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) comprised colleges in Papua New Guinea, New Britain, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The colleges and schools involved were Anglican, Evangelical, three types of Lutherans, Papua Ekelesia, Roman Catholic, and United Church.

The South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS) had some overlap with MATS and comprised colleges in the South Pacific islands centred on the Pacific Theological College in Fiji (PTC), with English and French speaking schools. Those from the Solomons and Vanuatu belonged to both.

Denominations represented included Anglican, Congregational, Evangelical, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan. The accreditation was based on staff qualifications and numbers, the number of books in libraries, hours of teaching, and curricula, and there were regular inspections of the colleges in their respective regions.

In the Solomons this led to improved examination standards, increased staff numbers, a larger library, the issuing of certificates and diplomas, and streaming for more advanced students. In 1970 St Peter's College, Siota was transferred to Kohimarama, West Guadalcanal, to become part of the newly established Bishop Patteson Theological Centre (as it was initially named). Courses for a Certificate in Theology, a Licentiate in Theology and a Scholar in Theology were offered. The Scholar in Theology course required a long research essay. Students who had completed their diplomas could be sent to the PTC for their Bachelor of Theology degrees. Hebrew studies were at that time reserved to the PTC.

³ Text books included the following:

A Book of Common Prayer in Simple English, Taroaniara, BSIP: Diocese of Melanesia Press, 1965.
The Bible in Basic English, CUP, 1965.

Boer, Harry R., *The Minor Prophets*, Ibadan, West Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1965.

Hargreaves, John (formerly Warden, Buwalasi College, Uganda), *A Guide to St Mark's Gospel*, TEF Study Guide 2, London: SPCK, 1969.

Hargreaves, John, *A Guide to the Book of Genesis*, TEF Study Guide 3, London: SPCK, 1969.

Parmalee, Alice, *Guidebook to the Bible*, London: English Universities Press, 1951.

Plummer, G., *Who was Cain's Wife? Some Old Testament Questions Answered*, Ibadan, West Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1964.

Stephens, John, *An Introduction to the Life and Letters of St Paul*, Ibadan, West Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1966. [Based on Perry, Raymond, *An Introduction to the Life and Letters of St Paul*, London Missionary Society, 1962.]

Sugin, F.O., *Cry Justice: Interviews with Old Testament Prophets about a nation in crisis*, Ibadan, West Nigeria: Daystar Press. n.d.

Thomsen, Mark W. (Vice-Principal, Theological College of Northern Nigeria), *An Introduction to New Testament Theology*, Ibadan, West Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1964. [Based on Hunter, A.M., *An Introduction to New Testament Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1951.]

During my years as a theological tutor I quickly learned that a lack of facility in the English language is in no way a measure of intelligence. I realised that I needed to ask appropriate questions about local cultures to understand how gospel and culture could interact. These were insights that I was able to use in later years in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 1975, not long after my return to Aotearoa, the Bishop of Aotearoa, Manuhuia Bennett, asked me to take up the position of vicar of Te Ngae Māori Pastorate in the Rotorua district. Initially I needed to learn te reo Māori and immerse myself in the life of Te Arawa. New kai-karakia had to be trained to provide support to small communities within the pastorate. Two further Māori pastorates and Māori mission districts were added to my responsibility.

A response to the challenges of Anglican Māori mission in Waiapu diocese, led by bishops Manuhuia Bennett and Paul Reeves, involved my participation in a new form of theological education. This was for minita-a-iwi (community priests) for the small, isolated, mostly rural Māori communities on the eastern side of the North Island. As there were insufficient numbers of Māori priests available and the financial base for providing fully stipended clergy had diminished, partly as a result of the migration of Māori families to the cities, the minita-a-iwi scheme sought to provide unpaid priests in local districts.

Appropriate candidates were identified, with their training taking the form of bi-monthly weekend block course seminars and weekly bible study sessions. As tutor to a large number of candidates and support priest to a an even larger number of newly ordained clergy for the next decade and more, I was able to draw on some of my experience in Melanesia, and immerse myself in the gospel and culture questions facing Māori Christians. I was awarded the Licentiate in Theology (Aotearoa) in 1990 as a result of this work.

From 1991 Te Wananga o te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa took Māori theological training further with the establishment of five tāpapa (campuses) throughout Aotearoa for block courses and resource support services. Certificate and diploma courses were offered under NZQA, and later, degrees were offered at certain campuses. My involvement was by now only occasional, but I continued to be invited to lead seminars at summer and winter schools and at training weekends.

I believe my long experience in, and reflections on, multi-cultural theological education, both as student and teacher, provide me with a broad base from which to consider Te Rau Theological College in Turanga/Gisborne, and its text books.

Table of contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Prologue	iv
Table of Contents	vii
List of Plates	viii
Abbreviations	ix
Glossary	x
Chapter 1 ~ Introduction	1
Chapter 2 ~ Theological Education for Māori prior to Te Rau College	7
Chapter 3 ~ Theological Education at Te Rau College in te reo Māori	29
Chapter 4 ~ Theological education at Te Rau College in English	69
Chapter 5 ~ The closing of Te Rau College	85
Chapter 6 ~ Summary and Conclusions	103
Bibliography	
Nga Pūtake i Te Reo Māori	112
English language sources	116
Appendices	
Appendix 1 ~ Māori ordained before 1930 by year of deaconing	145
Appendix 2 ~ Māori ordained before 1921 not at Te Rau College	149
Appendix 3 ~ Staff of Te Rau College	151
Appendix 4 ~ Students of Te Rau College	152
Appendix 5 ~ Ngā Pukapuka (text books) listed chronologically	155
Appendix 6 ~ Te Rau College students who were not ordained	164
Appendix 7 ~ Māori candidates for the BTS examinations and their grades	165
Appendix 8 ~ Māori at CSJE in 1920s	168
Appendix 9 ~ Māori ordained between 1921 and 1930 not at CSJE	169
Appendix 10 ~ <i>Te Kawenata Tawhito</i> and <i>Te Kawenata Hou</i> printing dates	170
Appendix 11 ~ <i>Te Rāwiri</i> and <i>Ngā Hīmene</i> printing dates	171
Appendix 12 ~ <i>Te Māramataka</i> , dates, and list of additional material	178
Appendix 13 ~ BTS Grades and Syllabi 1908-10	183
Appendix 14 ~ BTS Grades and Syllabi 1914-16	186
Appendix 15 ~ BTS Grades and Syllabi 1917-19	190
Appendix 16 ~ Church History articles in <i>Te Pipīwharauroa</i>	193
Appendix 17 ~ Books from Te Rau College Library at the Kinder Library	195
Appendix 18 ~ Recent academic qualifications by Māori on Māori spirituality and related topics	196
Appendix 19 ~ Those Māori ordained prior to establishment of Te Rau College in 1883	197

List of Plates

Plate 1	<i>Te Kawenata Hou</i> 1894, sample page	26
Plate 2	Translation from <i>The Apocrypha</i> , sample page	27
Plate 3	<i>He whakamakoha i te Pukapuka a Paora Apotoro ki te Hunga o Karatia</i> (Commentary on Galatians), sample page	28

Abbreviations

AJCP	Australian Joint Copying Project
BiM	<i>Books in Māori 1815-1900</i> , Phil Parkinson and Penny Griffith
BTS	Board of Theological Studies
chp.	chapter
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSJE	College of Saint John the Evangelist (St John's College)
DNZB	Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
HWW	Herbert William Williams
JPS	Journal of the Polynesian Society
Kinder	John Kinder Theological Library
LTh	Licentiate in Theology
M	Microfilm, e.g., M234
NZJH	New Zealand Journal of History
NZMTB	New Zealand Mission Trust Board
PBH	Poverty Bay Herald
r.	rārangi (verse or line)
Sommerville	A.D. Sommerville, "A Supplement to the Williams Bibliography of Printed Maori."
TACSA	Te Aute College Students' Association
Te Pīpī	Te Pīpīwharauroa ~ Kupu Whakamārama
Tikanga Māori	The Māori section of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa
Tikanga Pākehā	The Pākehā section of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa
u.	upoko (chapter)
WCG	Waiapu Church Gazette
wh.	whārangi (page)

Glossary

Atuatanga	theology, spirituality
Hāhi	Church
te Hāhi Mihingare/Mihinare	the Anglican Church
iwi	extended kinship group, people(s), tribe(s)
karakia	prayer
kaikarakia	prayer leader, lay-reader
kainga	home
kaupapa Māori	undergirding Māori philosophy, principles
manaaki, -tanga	hospitality
Māramataka	Lectionary
Mihingare, Mihinare	Anglican Church, or Māori Anglican Church
tangata whenua	the people of the land, Māori
Te Kawenata Hou	The New Testament
Te Kawenata Tawhito	The Old Testament
Te Paipera Tapu	The Holy Bible
rangatira	chief(s)
te reo	the Māori language
tikanga	customarily correct ways of doing things, practice, culture
utu, whakautu	reciprocity
wairua	spirit, spiritual
whāia te Atuatanga	the study of theology / theological education
whakairo	carving
whānau	family, extended family
whare karakia	house for prayer, church building

Note: all translations in this thesis are by the author unless indicated otherwise.