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TE HAHĪ O TE KOHITITANGA MARAMA

(The Religion of the Reflection of the Moon)

A study of the religion of Te Matenga Tamati

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

The Kohiti religion was a vital movement in the Wairoa area for more than thirty years. Its positive view and teaching of inclusiveness and unity brought to the believers a hope, a dream, and a promise.

It arose in the last years of the nineteenth century - a time when the Maori was at his lowest ebb numerically and culturally. This, then, was also a time of great spiritual need.

Te Matenga Tamati received a revelation to guide his people. As the Christian church did not provide a theological system fully acceptable to the Maori, he formulated a faith that did - being a synthesis of traditional beliefs, Old Testament teachings, and Christian values.

Taking the new moon as a symbol, the Kohiti made preparations for a great new age to come. Their efforts to construct a great tabernacle to the Lord is an amazing story, and one which clearly demonstrates the belief of the Maori of this period that they were descendants of the house of Jacob.

This study begins with an introductory chapter which briefly outlines the Maori response to the gospel up to the period concerned, then examines the reaction in the Wairoa area specifically. Upon this background the whole story of the Kohiti religion is told, and biblical parallels are pointed out. The phenomenology of the movement is then fully considered.

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NOTE

While the alternative spelling of "kowhiti" is often used elsewhere, the form "kohiti" is used throughout in this case, as this is the form used in the dialect of the Wairoa area.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| A.J.H.R. | - | Appendices to the Journals of the<br>House of Representatives |
| A.M.L.   | - | Auckland Institute and Museum Library                         |
| A.T.L.   | - | Alexander Turnbull Library                                    |
| C.M.S.   | - | Church Missionary Society                                     |
| J.P.S.   | - | Journal of the Polynesian Society                             |
| MS       | - | Manuscript  |
| TS       | - | Typescript  |
| W.M.S.   | - | Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society                         |

PREFACE

Being born and brought up in the Wairoa area, and having the good fortune to have a father interested in the local history, I grew up knowing of a religious movement which has been largely forgotten over the passing years.

Te Matenga Tamati exerted a great influence in the Wairoa district around the turn of the last century. In his own area his name is still regarded with much reverence by older Maori people. But otherwise his Kohiti movement has not been accorded the recognition which is due.

My study of Maori religious movements over the past few years shows that the Kohiti religion appears to have been largely overlooked by scholars of Maori religions. It has therefore been my wish that this lack be remedied and that as full a record as possible be made of the Kohiti religion before more years pass and more knowledge is lost.

Little has been published on the subject - to my knowledge only short newspaper articles, and a brief piece in W.J. Phillipps' "Carved Maori Houses of the Eastern Districts of the North Island", (in Records of the Dominion Museum, Vol. 1, 1944) p. 83. Another mention is made by Thomas Lambert in The Story of Old Wairoa, p. 705, but it is unfortunate that this contains a number of errors. (The accounts of Phillipps and Lambert, as well as two relevant letters from the Wairoa Star, have been included as Appendix B, with comments on the content of each.)

My real sources have all been oral; firstly from my father, Bernard Teague, who learned much of the historical fact presented from three kaumatua of the Wairoa area - Mr Johnny Keefe, Mr Mana Langley-Shaw, and Mr Tiaki Hikawera Mitchell - all now dead. Much further

work has been put in by me, interviewing many people of the area in order to bring together all the remaining knowledge, and in particular to learn as much as possible about the religious beliefs involved.

All the people interviewed are in their seventies to nineties, and all acknowledge that so many others who were better informed than they on the subject, have passed away in recent years.

Inevitably there must be gaps - and it is to be greatly regretted that these should occur in the areas which are to me the most interesting, particularly in these days when we seek to understand and appreciate the beliefs and practices of a people in order to gain a deeper understanding of their feelings and motivations. The details of the doctrinal dimension of the Kohiti faith can no longer be fully recovered, but it is hoped that enough has been pieced together here to give scholars and all interested a good appreciation of it.

All the informants mentioned were interviewed by me on at least one occasion. I listened to their stories, asked questions, took notes, and checked details between them. In some cases further details have been checked by telephone calls and letters after visits have taken place. In all cases I have been welcomed and hospitably received by the people in their homes, and have been warmed by their response.

I wish to record my sincere and grateful thanks to the following people who shared their knowledge and their memories - without their co-operation the knowledge of this movement would not have survived to the next generation. Ka whakapai ahau ki a koutou mo ta koutou atawhai. Kia ora koutou.

- Mr Timi Kara Tewai Bell (Ronny Bell), Mahanga. (b. 1908) The grandson of the Prophet Matenga, he supplied useful family details and memories.
  
- Mr Api Hape, Wairoa. (b. 1908) Mr Hape refers to himself as the only remaining follower of the Kohiti faith. His parents and family were all followers of Te Matenga Tamati, and he remembers in his youth his people speaking of it Mr Hape has been my most valuable and willing informant, sparing me hours of his time on several occasions. To him I am most indebted.
  
- Mr Rua Niania, Iwitea. Personal recollections. His brother, Mr Jimmy Niania, now dead, was a Kohiti member.
  
- Mr Teti Peka, Kihitu. Recollections. His family were all followers.
  
- Mrs Maria Thompson, Wairoa. (b. 1892) Personal recollections.
  
- Mr Turi Tipoki, Wairoa. (b. 1911) His family were followers of Matenga in the Prophet's time.
  
- Mr Horace Whaanga, Wairoa. His family were all members of the Kohiti faith.

Some of these informants, according to their wishes for privacy, will not always be identified in the text specifically with the details they contributed, but their help is again gratefully acknowledged.

In addition, my thanks to Mr A. Knight, Mrs M. Fyson, Mrs M. Hawkins, Mr J. Smythe, of Wairoa; Mr and Mrs Mac Whaanga, of Mahia; Mr and Mrs J. Robinson, of Iwitea, Mr Mo Delamere, of Opotiki, for their help. My thanks and love to my parents, Bernard and Thelma Teague - particularly to my father who died before this was written. My husband, Ken Elsmore, who accompanied me on some of the excursions, took the photographs.

Little information has been available from other sources. Missionary journals and reports had ceased by this time. Copies of the Wairoa paper for the period in question are not now available, though the Wairoa Guardian for the year 1914 (records from 1907 being kept) was searched for an obituary of the Prophet, but without success. Copies of the Daily Telegraph (Napier) for the period 1896-1915 were unfortunately destroyed in the 1931 earthquake fire. One very short mention of an incident related to the religion was located in the Hawkes Bay Herald. Despite efforts, other official sources which may have been able to provide corroborating evidence (particularly a death certificate of the Prophet, and the log-books of two ships) proved to be untraceable.

While there are problems often associated with information gained from oral sources (failing memory after so many years, and perhaps additions as the result of hindsight), in this case the oral information should be regarded as vastly superior to any alternative. The Maori of the nineteenth century saw little need to create written records, even though he was quite literate and perfectly capable of doing so. As will be seen in Chapter One, those much earlier Maori religious movements which were referred to by the missionaries and/or other Pakehas, suffered from the bias of the writer, and no native sources are available to show the movements in their own perspective. Naturally, a movement which has been set up by Maori people precisely for the purpose of making a foreign system acceptable to them, can offer no possibility of being rightly understood from a European viewpoint.

It is for this reason that the oral sources must be regarded as the treasures which they are. We have, as a result, a study of a nineteenth century Maori religious movement seen (as far as possible now) within its own perspective. The little that has been written

from a Pakeha viewpoint can be seen to be rather subjective in interpretation, and in addition must also be subject to the same criticisms as may be levelled at the oral sources as they were recorded much later than the event.

For my own part, I have tried to bear these points in mind in my examination of the Kohiti movement, while still attempting to satisfy the conventions of the academic study of religions. If the result is not acceptable to my informants who shared with me their knowledge, I give them my sincere apologies.

I am grateful for the assistance of the staff of the following libraries - Alexander Turnbull Library (Wellington), Auckland Institute and Museum Library, Hocken Library (Dunedin), Napier Museum Library, National Archives (Wellington), Saint John's Theological College Library (Auckland), Sladden Library (Tauranga), University of Birmingham Library (England).

I must also record my sincere thanks to my two supervisors who have given me their time and advice - Dr B.E. Colless (Religious Studies), and Dr J.M.R. Owens (History), Massey University.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Maori religious response to the Christian gospel has been written about in many ways - from the point of view of church histories, as part of the whole history of Maori-Pakeha relations, and as studies of specific movements. In this latter category, works on the Pai Marire movement of Te Ua Haumene,<sup>\*1</sup> the Parihaka movement of Te Whiti,<sup>\*2</sup> the Ringatu movement of Te Kooti,<sup>\*3</sup> the Iharaira movement of Rua Kenana,<sup>\*4</sup> and the Ratana movement founded by T.W. Ratana,<sup>\*5</sup> have ensured that these have become well known in New Zealand and further afield.

What is not so well known, except by those with a special interest in the subject, is that these movements form only a small proportion of the total of such Maori religious movements. Certainly these examples have reason to be better known, for each one, in its time and since, has spread far beyond the specific people to whom it was initially directed.

For instance, the fame of the Pai Marire response was first due to the terrified reaction of the settlers to it. From the period 1860 onwards, the rapid encroachment of colonists across the land sparked anti-land-sale movements in which the element of anti-Pakeha feelings

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1. See, for example, S. Barton Babbage, Hauhauism, An Episode in the Maori Wars (Wellington, 1937), and Paul Clark, Hauhau, the Pai Marire Search for Identity (Auckland, 1975).
  2. See, Dick Scott, Ask That Mountain (Auckland, 1975).
  3. See, William Greenwood, 'The Upraised Hand' (Jnl Poly. Soc. 51, 1942); W. Hugh Ross, Te Kooti, (Auck., 1966)
  4. See, Judith Binney & others, Mihaiia (Auckland, 1979) and Peter Webster, Rua and the Maori Millennium (Wellington, 1979)
  5. See, J.M. Henderson, Ratana - the Man, the Church, the Political Movement (Wellington, 1972)

was certainly a factor. But the fearful reaction of many of the newer settlers was even greater, and this in turn caused a deterioration in Maori-Pakeha relations which was to encourage the original "good and peaceful" motives of Te Ua himself to eventually give way to the less pacific acts of some of his followers. It is to be regretted that such unfortunate happenings which were undoubtedly socially motivated, have been ever since taken as aspects of a religion of which they rightly formed no part.

The Ringatu movement had very similar factors which were bound to guarantee its infamy - so much so, that even in the present day the uninformed regard the Church bearing that name with some apprehension. In addition, the mysteries of Te Kooti - in particular his allusions to a huge diamond, his prophecies, and the mystery surrounding his burial - together with the glamour of the renegade figure and the military campaigns against him in the remote parts of New Zealand, are more than sufficient to ensure that Te Kooti's name has been prominent in any historical appraisal of New Zealand's past century.

Rua Kenana became widely known far beyond his own people for a number of reasons too. His claim to be successor to Te Kooti was not sufficient on its own, for others all but forgotten made this claim also.\*<sup>6</sup> But on his own behalf his charismatic leadership, his newsmaking exploits such as his journey to Gisborne to welcome King Edward, the reports of the plans to ransom New Zealand with a casket of jewels, the setting up of a new Jerusalem at Maungapohatu, and the police raid which led to the Prophet's arrest, were all material of which legends are made, and ensured Rua's fame in more than his own area.

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6. For one such example, see pages 32-33

Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana received a divine call to be a leader to his people. But to the world at large he became best known for his healing ability. To his home came streams of sufferers for a number of years, with the result that reports of cures travelled even outside New Zealand. A tour overseas to Britain, Europe, and Japan, was a very newsworthy event, and Ratana's political involvement since has meant that the existence of this Church is constantly reaffirmed in the mind of the public generally.

The factors mentioned are those which are mainly external to the religions proper. In other words, they are not important from the point of view of doctrine or belief, but the point of their mention is to show that each one of these movements included aspects which made them interesting, significant, or newsworthy outside their immediate area of effect.

The point to be made again is that in the seventeen or so decades since missionary contact, there have been many more religious responses by the Maori to the new message, and most of these have been all but forgotten.

Amongst these are those founded by persons who can be regarded as local visionaries, who experienced some form of revelation which was a response to the Christian message. Others attempted to administer to the ills - both physical and mental - brought about by the clash of the two cultures, and may be classified generally as 'healers'. Others again were charismatic figures who exerted much influence over their own people for a greater or lesser period of time. Other movements evolved as an attempt to find an acceptable Maori Christian theology.

The charismatic leaders referred to, were often just as great in their own time and area as were the better known examples previously mentioned. Their mission

might be just as significant, their following just as strong. The difference often lies solely in the lack of anything which tended to bring them to special notice of the European part of the community.

This could well be seen as a very positive factor as regards the religion proper, for it supposes the lack of some of the negative aspects that characterized others - negative in the minds of the Pakeha onlookers at least. These outsiders who, rather naturally, misunderstood that which was not a part of their own cultural inheritance, would tend to ignore any local movement which did not appear to be undermining the Pakeha position as colonists and rulers in the new land, or providing a threat to peace, or blatantly opposing the Christian gospel.

Generally speaking these movements did not spread very far outside their own region, and did not last for a very long period; and for these reasons too they were not regarded so seriously. Also, lacking any events which might make for publicity (such as the arrest of the leader on any anti-social charge, the failure of some widely known prophecy or attempt at miraculous happenings, or perhaps a newsworthy venture such as the setting up of an exclusive community based on millennial teachings or messianic expectations) the new and localized movement would be generally accorded little more than mild curiosity from the outside.

Some of the minor movements did indeed include such aspects. In the movements of Rimana Hi, for instance, in the Waihou area in 1837, the Prophetess and several followers were arrested and gaoled after a very dramatic incident at their sacred enclosure. Prophecies were made and did fail in a number of other cases - for instance, at least two prophets other than Te Kooti also predicted a further great eruption following the 1886 disaster at Tarawera.

It therefore appears that the controlling factor as regards the memorability (and hence the 'importance') of the various Maori religious responses is the degree to which they affected the Pakeha side of existence. So long as they remained totally Maori they were accepted as just that - of Maori significance only - but when they exerted any influence in European society they were subjected to scrutiny from that area.

The conclusion, then, is that any judgement as to which of the Maori religious responses may be regarded as 'major' and which 'minor', is based solely on Pakeha considerations and not on Maori factors. This means that some of the movements which are now almost forgotten might well have been of greater significance to the religious life of the Maori in their times than those which are remembered.

While the Prophet Te Matenga Tamati has not excited more interest for lack of those negative considerations mentioned earlier, his contribution concerning the Maori religious response to Christianity is indeed major.

This study includes the story of the Kohiti movement, giving details of the Prophet, the history of the movement, and the phenomenology of the religion. Some historical details which might not be strictly necessary in a study of the religion are included in order to record as full a picture as possible, so that with the passing years knowledge of it will not be lost.

But before this, as necessary introduction to the area, chapter one gives an account of the previous post-European religious response in the great Wairoa district. In this it will be shown that this area has long been to the fore in the matter of Maori response to the Christian message.



## CHAPTER ONE

Native and Newcomer

E kore e piri te uku te rino<sup>\*1</sup>

There is a story which has been handed down among the Maori people, of a great Tohunga and Prophet who lived at Nukutaurua on the Mahia Peninsula before the coming of the Pakeha.<sup>\*2</sup> His name was Toiroa Ikariki, and he was known as 'Te Toiroa' to tribes throughout the country. Te Toiroa was famous for his prophesying - not only amongst his own people, but much further afield. (This is the same Seer who is said to have, in his old age, predicted the greatness of Te Kooti before that Prophet's birth, and given to him the name 'Rikirangi'.<sup>\*3</sup>)

At times a period of great significance would seem to occur, and on these occasions (which would occur at varying intervals in differing seasons) other tohunga tuahu from a wide area would feel it approaching. Then they would say "Ko te wa o Te Toiroa" (It is the time of Te Toiroa), and each of them would set out for the Mahia. Independently they felt the spirit of the Prophet, and would travel from all over the island to be present when the great Tohunga made his next predictions.

On such occasions Te Toiroa would become entranced, and while he was in this state he would seem to take on the appearance of the papateretere (the small brown lizard).

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1. Literally "Clay will not cling to iron". A proverb used in reference to the differences between the Maori and Pakeha cultures. (See Daniel 2:43)
  2. Oral tradition. Source, Mr Mo Delamere, Opotiki. Interview February 1983.
  3. See Wi Tarei "A Church Called Ringatu", in Tihe Mauri Ora, Michael King (ed.) (Wellington, 1978) p.62.

At these times he would walk on the marae in the stance of a reptile - standing, with his arms in the air, and back arched. Then a voice would speak through him, and all sorts of happenings would be predicted.\*<sup>4</sup>

A great prophecy said to be made by Te Toiroa three years before the coming of Captain Cook, was that foreign people would come in a fast-moving boat, and that "the god of this people will be our god". This prediction was repeated by Te Toiroa on more than one occasion, and knowledge of it was spread widely throughout the country.

Within three years the prophecy had come true, for the fast boat with its foreign people had indeed made its appearance. From this time onwards the visits of further ships full of foreigners became more and more frequent. Traders made increasingly frequent visits, whalers settled in various coastal spots, mission stations followed. So the cultures of the two peoples touched each other. With the prediction of Te Toiroa being known, this cannot but have aided the establishment of the new religion in the area.

But the prophecy of Te Toiroa was a simple one - predicting merely an eventual outcome. It did not concern itself with the complex issue of how this was to be eventually effected. As it happened, the process of the adoption of the new god was to be far from straightforward, as the following decades were to show.

The clay was not to cling to the iron easily.

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4. The lizard was revered for its spiritual significance. As it was existent before man, and the gods were also existent before man, then the lizard could serve as a symbol of the divine.

Pakeha whalers and occasional other visitors made their appearance in the Wairoa area from the late eighteenth century. Several historians have dealt with early arrivals and settlers in this area, so this will not be pursued further here.\*<sup>5</sup> But it may be briefly summarized that whaling stations were established at Mahia, Wairoa, and Mohaka; a flax trader named George White (known to the natives as Hori Waiti, and later to become famous in England as 'the tattooed white man' Barnet Burns) was resident at Mahia in 1831-2;\*<sup>6</sup> and a trading station was operating in the Wairoa area in 1839. Settlement in the district was comparatively late, due to the opposition of local natives to the sale of land, and it was not until the 1860s that colonists entered the district in any numbers.

What is particularly relevant to this study is the history of the missions in that part of the country. Church Missionary Society missionaries William Williams and James Hamlin visited the East Coast area (though not so far south as Wairoa) in January 1834 in order to return eight natives who had been taken to the Bay of Islands by a trading vessel somewhat against their will,\*<sup>7</sup> and also to return a number of local natives who had been taken captive by Ngapuhi raiders some years before. These captives, freed by the missionaries, and the unwilling passengers, had all been instructed at the mission stations while in the Bay of Islands area, and so it happened that the first instruction in

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5. See particularly Thomas Lambert, The Story of Old Wairoa, (Dunedin, 1925) pp. 350ff; and J.G. Wilson, The History of Hawkes Bay, (Christchurch, 1976) pp. 428ff.
  6. There is some disagreement on dates here. It could have been 1829 (Lambert, Old Wairoa, p. 355; A.H. Reed, The Story of Hawkes Bay, Wellington, 1958, p. 25) but I have followed J.A. Mackay in quoting 1831. See J.A. Mackay, Historic Poverty Bay and the East Coast, N.I., N.Z. (Gisborne, 1949) p. 95.
  7. H.J. Ryburn, Te Hemara (Dunedin, 1979) p. 37; and Bishop W.L. Williams, East Coast Historical Records, (Gisborne, 1932) pp. 6-7.

the gospel in the East Coast area was accomplished by native teachers rather than by the missionaries themselves.\*8

These teachers created a definite interest in the Christian message, as was shown by the fact that three years later Williams was asked by a native chief to provide a missionary for the East Coast district

where the people were all eager for Christian instruction, and had already begun to abstain from work on Sunday, and to worship the Christian's God in intention at least, if not with much understanding. \*9

This he did, by sending three native teachers in 1838.\*10 So it was that when Williams moved to Turanga (Gisborne) in January 1840, knowledge of the gospel had been taught for six years.

Williams paid his first visit southwards to Wairoa shortly after arrival - in February 1840, and records in his journal for 27 February that one tribe at least had received the gospel, having been instructed by "an unbaptized native who was a slave in the Bay of Islands", one Putoka, who had been "most indefatigable in his labours". The Chief, Apatu, had requested a testament. The following month Williams appointed a native teacher, "Joseph Kamon", to Wairoa.\*11

Williams in a letter to his bishops wrote -

At the river Wairoa no teacher had resided before my arrival, nor did I expect that any thing was

8. For more details of the great part played by native teachers in the East Coast-Wairoa area, see W.H. Oliver & Jane M. Thomson, Challenge and Response, (Gisborne, 1971), particularly pp. 29-34.
9. W.L. Williams, E.C. Historical Records, p. 7.
10. as above, p. 9.
11. William Williams. Journal, 12 March 1840.

going on there; but shortly after I came, parties began to apply for books from thence, and I learned that a commencement had been made in an irregular manner by persons who had obtained a little knowledge in the Bay of Islands, and elsewhere, and on visiting that quarter subsequently I found that christian worship was established, and that including the natives of Table Cape there were not less than three thousand who profess to receive christianity. I sent off one steady teacher thither on my return, and hope to have five or six others shortly. \*12

Williams' territory extended southwards to Ahuriri (Napier), and he made frequent trips throughout his region, taking services, conducting baptisms, and visiting the native teachers. In his summary of stations, teachers, and congregations as at June 1840, Williams noted a principal station at Wairoa, with fourteen out-stations in the area - under the direction of one male teacher and one female (Joseph and his wife). These two were the only communicants in the area, and their task was obviously a tremendous one, for Williams also claimed an average attendance at public worship of 3,000, and 12 schools in operation with 700 pupils. It is interesting to note that the numbers attending worship were higher in Wairoa than at Turanga (2470) which had fewer outstations (10) and was serviced by a total of 16 teachers; and almost as high as at Waiapu (3150) where there were 11 outstations serviced by 12 teachers! \*13

Bishop Pompallier of the Roman Catholic Mission landed at Terekako (Mahia Peninsula) early in 1841 and celebrated Holy Mass there. His journal states that a piece of land was chosen as a site for a chapel and for a missionary residence. After a three-day stay he "left the people with a knowledge of the principal

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12. William Williams, 12 August 1840, to Bishop of Australia and Bishop Selwyn. (TS A.T.L.)

13. See Williams, papers, TS A.T.L.

truths of salvation", and practising communal prayer mornings and evenings. Pompallier records that on leaving he was confident that

...through the conversion of Tohi and his influential tribe on the peninsula that of a great number of other tribes on the mainland was assured. \*14

In September of 1841, Father Baty was left at Terekako for the best part of a year, during which he took the opportunity to travel around the district, visiting Wairoa (where he found no converts) and as far as Waikaremoana before returning to the Mahia. Other short visits by the French-Catholic mission occurred in the following years, with the result that a Catholic following was resident in the Mahia area.\*15

The Reverend James Hamlin arrived at the Wairoa mission station at the end of December 1844. The Reverend W.C. Dudley had been first appointed to this post in 1842 but his state of mental health proved not up to the task and after a period spent in Turanga with the Williams family he was returned to Auckland.\*16 Hamlin was to prove a dedicated man and remained at his post until 1863. It is mainly from the journals and letters of Hamlin and William Williams that we learn of the

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14. Cited by the Rev. J. Hickson, S.M., Catholic Missionary Work in Hawkes Bay New Zealand from its Outset in 1841, (Christchurch, 1924) p. 17.
  15. Hickson, Catholic Missionary Work, p. 17ff
  16. Note here that J.G. Wilson, Historic H.B., p. 429, is incorrect in stating that Dudley's residence at Wairoa extended to only a few months, for it is clear from the journal of Jane Williams that the Dudleys stayed with the Williams for the period and did not actually move to Wairoa. Mr Dudley did, however, accompany Williams to Ahuriri in Oct.-Nov. 1842 to meet Bishop Selwyn, and the two missionaries conducted baptisms at Wairoa at that time. Williams, Journal, 23 October 1842. Ryburn, Te Hemara, p. 94, confirms that Dudley had never occupied the mission house at Wairoa, though it had been originally built for him.

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response of the Maori to missionary teaching in the Wairoa area.

Adverse reaction was to start from the very beginning. Joseph, the official native teacher appointed by Willams, was embroiled in a great rivalry with Putoka, the original bearer of the message to the district; so much so that the two were holding separate services - Putoka in the chapel he had built, and Joseph in an adjoining mission building. Williams thankfully noted, however, that the greater part of the people were with Joseph.\*17

Joseph's early months were apparently successful,\*18 but his enthusiasm and zeal were obviously not tempered with wisdom, for a year after the appointment Williams records

Joseph meets with great opposition from the natives generally. It appears that offence has been given by his enforcing a little strict discipline wh. [sic] at present they are not in the humour to bear. \*19

Part of the problem also lay, no doubt, in the clash of the traditional social organization of the Maori, and the inclusive nature of the Christian religion. A chief in the Waiau area of the Wairoa district told James Hamlin in 1845 never to send a native teacher to him. While he would listen to a Pakeha missionary, he would not receive Christianity from a native "in whom he saw much inconsistency". Hamlin comments

The native teachers seemed to have acted most inconsistently in their manner of addressing men of rank; which seemed to have prejudiced the minds of many not a little against the truth. \*20

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17. Williams, Journal, 5 September 1840.
  18. Williams, Journal, 9 July 1840.
  19. Williams, Journal, 29 March 1841.
  20. Hamlin, Journal, 25 March 1845.

As early as October 1840 the first of the movements in reaction to the gospel was recognized. William Williams, travelling from Ahuriri to Turanga, arrived at Wairoa a little before sunset on the twentieth. There he

...came up to a party who go by the name of Jews, that is they have come to the determination to have nothing to do with christianity. We had heard various reports about Wairoa, that the profession of christianity was altogether given up and the books they had received from me would all be returned when I made my appearance there, and a chief at Ahuriri went so far as to request that I would send Joseph the native teacher from thence to live with him. I did not therefore expect a friendly reception from this party of Jews, but I determined should they invite us we would stay with them for the night. They left us however in no doubt about their disposition for after a friendly reception they allowed us to pass onward. \*21

This profession of being 'Jews' is a phenomenon which occurred in more than one area of New Zealand in the early missionary period. It does not mean that the Maori had adopted the religion of Judaism in any form at all, but simply that for some reason they had found the new teachings - or even more often, the mission itself - lacking in some way, and so had dissociated themselves from it.

So the term 'Jews' (both transliterations 'Tiu' and 'Hurai' were used at different times), indicate that it is not an allegiance to Judaism, but rather a reaction against the Christian mission, because the model is taken from the scriptures of the New Testament. It is in the books of the New Testament that the term 'Jews' is used mostly,<sup>\*22</sup> the context being that the Jews were contrasted with the believers in that they refused to accept the new teaching.<sup>\*23</sup> It was in this light that

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21. Williams, Journal, 20 October 1840.

22. For example, see John 5:16; Acts 13: 43ff.

23. For example, see John 5:38; Acts 3:13, 13:46.

the Maori often saw himself in this period. So by calling themselves Jews, the Maori were at this time making a simple but definite statement of setting themselves apart from the Christian mission.

Some reasons for this were discovered by Williams the following day when he visited another village across the Wairoa River. Here the chief man who had previously been given a testament by the missionary, welcomed him with a speech which included three reasons why the people had given up Christianity:

because they could get nothing by it others again  
because some of their relations had died, and that  
the house I directed to be put up was unfinished  
because they thought nobody would come to live in  
it. \*24

These points show three interesting reasons for the rejection. First, the efficacy of the religion itself, which was found to be not to their immediate economic advantage. This is not to be seen so much as solely based on the motivation of 'cargo', but from the view of tradition. The Maori, as did most primal peoples, demanded service of his gods, and this was not seen to be forthcoming from the new Atua. In fact, after contact with Europeans, people had died from new ailments, which gave rise to the second reason - the Christian God not only failed to protect, but actually smote his followers. The third reason was the apparent failure of the missionary to live up to his word in providing a teacher, and here the difference in European and Maori ways is at the root of the problem. While Williams had to train such a helper before he could be sent out, to the Maori the delay would be seen as a lack of fulfilment of the promise. It must be remembered that Williams had been in the area for a mere nine months. In addition, Joseph was already at a nearby village, and no doubt Williams felt his influence

was sufficient for the time being. But to the Maori the fact that one village had a teacher meant, rather, that their own people should have one also.

This last reason might be further explained by an observation by the Rev. James Hamlin shortly after he arrived in the Wairoa area. On his first visit to Mohaka (approximately 30 kilometres SW of Wairoa) he records

I learnt that some of the natives of this place had formerly joined the christian party but had subsequently left off and were now living in a heathen state. But they said that now a european was come amongst them they should all go to prayers again, and said they should send for books. No baptized natives here. \*25

The following month, after his visit to Wairoa, Williams made a further journey, travelling inland from Wairoa towards Rotorua, and reported that at Te Reinga (about 30 kilometres NE of Wairoa, at the junction of the Wairoa and Ruakituri Rivers)

It is said that the people have given up karakia owing to the misconduct of a baptized native from Hokianga who has been living there. \*26

Williams' meaning here is unclear. It could mean that the misconduct of a professed Christian had been a bad example to the natives who had therefore been turned away from that belief. Or it could possibly be a reference to the persuasion of a follower of the Papahurihia cult<sup>\*27</sup> - or less specifically, of any dissenter from the northern region. The fact that a

25. Hamlin, Journal, 27 February 1845.

26. Williams, Journal, 21 November 1840.

27. Papahurihia, or Te Atua Wera, was a Prophet who arose in the Hokianga district in 1833, opposing Christianity and claiming to be inspired by a spirit which he called Nakahi (serpent). See Ormond Wilson, "Papahurihia, First Maori Prophet", J.P.S. 1965, Vol. 74, No. 4 ; J. Binney, "Papahurihia: Some Thoughts on Interpretation", J.P.S. 1966, Vol. 75, No. 3.

baptized native is specified might suggest the former interpretation as more likely.

Two days later at Ohiwa (between Te Reinga and Waikaremoana) Williams found a "tribe of about 30 men" in which "about half the people profess christianity, the remainder call themselves Jews or unbelievers." The following day another party of 'Jews' was encountered - these showing great hospitality to the mission travellers.\*<sup>28</sup>

The matter of the persuasion of these 'Jews' is still inconclusive. Williams in his entries does not himself mention Papahurihia, and as he must have been aware of that movement which had begun some seven years earlier, it must be presumed that he found no reason to associate the two. What is to be noted is that these pockets of 'Jews' were not in this case inspired by some local leader, but the reactions appear to be motivated by social factors which made these people also reject the Christian missions which were seen as responsible for new problems.

Such incidents were reported by missionaries in other parts of New Zealand around this time. William Woon reporting on a visit to "Parkanai" (Pakanae, Hokianga) in 1836, writes that the natives did not want a missionary to live with them, and called themselves 'Hurai' - Jews.\*<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the Rev. Richard Taylor reported from Hikurangi (Taranaki) in 1844 that two families had not embraced the gospel, called themselves Jews and sang one of their native songs every evening in imitation of the believers.\*<sup>30</sup>

28. Williams, Journal, 23 & 24 November 1840.

29. William Woon, Journal, 16 May 1836. See letter to the Rev. J. Beecham, 17 August 1836.

30. Richard Taylor, Journal, 24 May 1844.

Despite the hopeful beginnings, the profession of Christianity in the Wairoa area was somewhat slow in the first few years. William Williams (by now Archdeacon Williams), with his son William Leonard Williams and William Colenso, visited Wairoa in December 1843 and found the natives generally uninterested. On Sunday 17 December no native attended service so Williams had an English service with eighteen Europeans living in the area. None arrived the two following days also, and Mathew, a teacher from an adjacent area, reported that none of his people attended services either.\*<sup>31</sup> Colenso, noting "the great number of wretched Europeans" living there, attributed the apathy of the natives to this influence.\*<sup>32</sup> Williams, though, tended to see this as a failure of the mission to provide the area with a missionary, who had been promised some three years before.\*<sup>33</sup> Native teachers in areas more remote from European settlements apparently had more success.

James Hamlin too found the going hard. The day after his family joined him in Wairoa he recorded

My temper was severely tried during this week by the natives amongst whom I am placed; they refused to let us have any firewood unless we paid an out of the way price for it; and, in various other ways they annoyed us not a little. \*<sup>34</sup>

A few months later he recorded sadly

The natives of Wairoa generally with comparatively few exceptions are I fear strangers to GOD and aliens from the common wealth of Israel and are living without GOD and without hope in the world. Many it is true have professed to have joined Christianity but it is to be feared that while the greater part of these profess to know GOD in works deny HIM. It must however be remembered that this is but the seed time... \*<sup>35</sup>

31. Williams, Journal, 17-19 December 1843.
32. Colenso, Journeys 1843-1846, 16 December 1843.
33. Frederic Wanklyn Williams, Through Ninety Years 1826-1916, (Christchurch, 1939) p. 51.
34. Hamlin, Journal, 16 February 1845. See report June 1845.
35. Hamlin, report 30 June 1845.

While 200-300 had attended his services in the first few weeks, now there was an average of 100 in the mornings and 70 in the afternoons. He was critical of the behaviour of the congregation, seeing it as "a disgrace to the christian name", even amongst those who attended the Lord's Supper on the following Sunday. "It was evident that they knew not whereof they came together", Hamlin concluded.\*<sup>36</sup>

But the missionary was to prove a tireless worker. By that June he had made visits all around his district - to Waikari, Mangaaruhe, Whataroa, Te Reinga, the Whakaki inlands; two trips to Kahotea, Te Putere, Waikare Lake, the Matai, and Nukutaurua; three visits to the various settlements up the Wairoa and Waiau Rivers, and to Nuhaka; five journeys to Whakaki, and frequent visits to settlements near the Wairoa heads.\*<sup>37</sup>

Less than two years later he was able to report that his labours had not been in vain. Interest was increasing, 70 attended meetings at the station regularly, and there was greater support for schools in the outpost areas. In addition, 32 adults and 61\*<sup>38</sup> children in connection with the station had learned to write during the past year, and between April 1846 and 31 March 1847, 80 adults and 38 children had been baptized. Hamlin could claim with satisfaction that several parties who had the year before been "perfect heathen" were now listed among the believers.\*<sup>39</sup>

But if the Maori appeared to be uninterested, the teaching of the Gospel certainly exerted much influence as is shown by the movements inspired by the new teachings.

36 & 37. Hamlin, report 30 June 1845.

38. This figure is not clear in Hamlin's handwriting. I think, 61.

39. Hamlin, report April 1846-March 1847.

The next to arise in the area was that now known as the Table Cape Movement - Table Cape being the NE point (named by the natives Kahutara Point) of the Mahia Peninsula, approximately 50 kilometres east of Wairoa. Archdeacon Williams was again vitally concerned with this movement as it involved one of his native teachers, and also as James Hamlin had hardly settled in to the Wairoa area when it began.

After first noting on 15 January 1845 that matters were rather less than favourable at Table Cape where "the teacher had been listening to some wily suggestions of a native priest", Williams' journal for 18 January tells how the teacher Daniel "had been grievously led away by the native priest, giving his assent to certain heathenish practices in the case of some natives who were afflicted with sickness." Williams' action was to suspend Daniel from duty until his next visit.

The next visit was to occur in June of that year. The Archdeacon records for the fourteenth

After breakfast went to see Daniel the late teacher. He is a native of pleasing temper and has proceeded well for three years but of late he has been entangled in the wiles of satan mixing up with christianity a great deal of native superstition. On my last visit in January I talked with him on the subject; I had hoped now to have restored him to his post. But this I found could not be. He still clings to his error and rejects all remonstrance and after another fruitless attempt I left him, but of the natives who had followed him in the first instance some have come back again. \*40

Williams' report to the C.M.S. on 30 June also tells how Daniel had been "drawn aside by the snares of the tempter and has been mixing up with his religious duties a mass of superstition".

In late July-early August, Williams made another trip to Table Cape at the news that an American brig carrying

supplies for him had been wrecked there, and plundered first by English whalers and then by local natives. Williams tried for several days to have the goods returned, but little except a few lesser items was recovered.<sup>\*41</sup>

Williams made no mention of Daniel on that occasion, and it is unfortunate that the missionary did not give more detailed information of the Table Cape movement. The account of his December visit made no mention of the deviation from orthodoxy, though the plundering incident still concerned him. On his journeys of May 1846 and April 1847 he by-passed the area both ways. In July 1847 he intended to call but altered his plans on the way at the news of his son Sydney's death in Auckland.

James Hamlin, though very new to the area, met Williams on January 16 and accompanied him to Mahanga. Williams had at this stage received news of Daniel's defection, though he did not yet know the details; but Hamlin's journal made no mention of any conversation between the two on this matter. Hamlin's first mention of the subject occurred on 15 March when he noted that the native teacher had "sadly fallen and endeavoured to drag some others with him". The following day he spoke to some of the natives involved, but with little success.<sup>\*42</sup>

More details were given by Hamlin some eight years later when he gave an account of the movement to the C.M.S. secretaries in 1853. In this, Hamlin called it "Papahurihiaism", but the details he gave show no real reason to associate the two. It is most probable that Hamlin used this term as a more general rather than specific one - relating the phenomenon of spirits, rather than supposing that the local people were followers of

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41. Williams, Journal, 31 July to 6 August 1845.

42. Hamlin, Journal, 16 March 1845.

Te Atua Wera himself. William Williams never applied this term to the Table Cape movement, nor did he mention Papahurihiaism in connection with it. As he would certainly be aware of that earlier movement, it must be concluded that he saw no reason to connect the two.

While Papahurihiaism was largely a rejection of Christianity, this movement was not. The teacher Daniel incorporated the unorthodox beliefs into his Christian teaching. It was, then, what may be termed an 'adjustment movement' in which the Maori attempted to reconcile the newer unfamiliar teachings with the original familiar religion in an acceptable syncretism.

According to Hamlin, the Table Cape natives, having been inspired by dreams, believed that

spirits from the other world brought them horses, tobacco, wine, books &c. but only the spirit of them, and which they only could see and hear. \*43

The goods mentioned are all European, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the fact they were supplied by 'spirits' (probably the traditional atua) was an amalgamation of the old and the new.

The Table Cape movement, according to Hamlin, "continued unabated a considerable time". Daniel was received back into the Christian fellowship at the beginning of 1852, though not in his former position.

A further instance of unorthodoxy was noted by Hamlin in the year following the Table Cape incident. This one

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43. Hamlin, to C.M.S. Secretaries, 10 January 1853. The text of much of this report is reproduced in Appendix A, as microfilm copies of the report held in New Zealand are of Hamlin's original, and are undecipherable in parts. I have therefore had this copy checked and corrected with the original which is now held at the University of Birmingham Library, Birmingham, England.

occurred in Mohaka (approximately 30 kilometres SW of Wairoa, so some 80 kilometres or so from Table Cape by land, but not so far by canoe across Te Moana te Tangaroa, or Te Matau a Maui - Hawke Bay). Only two of the Mohaka natives were involved, and Hamlin noted that they had imbibed these beliefs at Nukutaurua. The missionary attributed the deviation from scripture to the great enemy of souls who had been sowing his tares amongst the wheat.<sup>\*44</sup> Hamlin reported to the C.M.S. that the followers of the new belief had formed a strange medley, for as well as making a show of using the books from the mission, they also claimed to receive inspiration, and prophesied. Spirits of dead "heathen" prompted them to good works, with the spirits also bringing them plenty of money, wine, tobacco and other things - but again only he who received it could see these things. Those involved held prayers about half a dozen times in the night.<sup>\*45</sup> Hamlin's journal for 20 December adds that inspiration had told them that their bodies were "absorbed".

For lack of more precise information it is difficult to know what to make of this movement which appears to be a variant of that at Table Cape. The foretelling of future events is almost certainly traditional, for this was an accepted part of Maori life and has little parallel in the Christian teachings. But in order to reconcile this to the new religion it is very probable that the practice was now seen as divination of the will of the new Pakeha God, Te Atuanui. The matter of the absorption of the body is too obscure to be interpreted, but it was not a part of traditional Maori belief. It can only be wondered if this could have been inspired by the misunderstanding of some part of Christian doctrine -

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44. Hamlin, Journal, 20 December 1846. See Appendix A.  
 45. Hamlin's report to C.M.S. 1847. See Appendix A. (For Hamlin's annual reports, see C.M.S. microfilm C.N./0 50 reel 53.)

perhaps the ascension of Christ, or even the sacrament of Holy Communion.

In the decade of the 1850s the earlier steady growth of the new religion of the gospels waned, and the numbers being baptized decreased. More contact with Europeans other than missionaries counteracted the Christian example and reduced the influence of the missions. Hamlin's annual report for 1851 refers to "a sifting of the chaff from the wheat". From the Wairoa station up the coast to the Mahia the natives had "manifested a greater indifference to their spiritual interests" than formerly, and had paid fewer visits to the station and more to the whaling stations.

The 1852 report notes that while there was steady progress in most areas, at Nuhaka a dismissed native teacher and another, plus the nearby whaling station, had been the reason for a great decline in the area. Hamlin complained that a further hindrance to the mission work was that no traders in the area, and few settlers, did not "indulge in the sins of immorality and drunkenness", and often Christian natives had been taunted and reproached when dealing with the traders, and told to go to their missionaries for the things for their bodies as well as for those for their souls. Such influence, concluded Hamlin, persuaded the natives to leave the ordinances of religion and seek satisfaction in "things congenial to their feelings".

So, throughout New Zealand, the adjustment movements of the first four decades of missionary influence generally took a different emphasis in the 1850s. The decline in native health began from the time of continuing contact with the Pakeha, and deterioration was rapid as more and more settlers began arriving after 1840. Changes in dietary and living habits were often a change for the worse, and epidemics of infectious diseases such as measles, diphtheria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, and

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influenza were disastrous to the Maori who had no natural immunity to such ailments.

The 1850s was a period of great increase in such epidemics. Settlers were arriving in every area and spreading new diseases. Two influenza epidemics swept through the Wairoa district in 1853, causing Hamlin to note in his annual report that in some residences hardly anyone had escaped it. At the end of the following year the missionary wrote that measles and whooping cough were introduced to the district in June, and that measles, diarrhoea and dysentery had carried off many in the area. The death-rate of thirty for the six months, he noted, was consequently seventy-five percent higher than that usual for a complete year.<sup>\*46</sup>

It is therefore not surprising, but even predictable, that the religious movements of this period should have a strong emphasis on healing. The matter of healing in Maori tradition had always been allied with religion (indeed there was no dichotomy between the religious and the secular in Maori tradition), and now in this period this aspect took precedence due to the great need of the time. And in every area where there was the need, a 'healer' would arise to administer to it.

These healer figures were set apart from the traditional tohunga (many of whom were still very active during this period) in that they also attempted to reconcile the new teachings with the Maori condition. So their methods included some aspect of the Christian message - and often they instructed their patients to persevere in their Christianity while they underwent healing. The reason behind this is that the Maori, naturally, saw the European diseases (mate Pakeha) as being punishments sent upon them from the great Atua Pakeha, and therefore

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46. Hamlin, report, 31 December 1854. See too William Williams, report for 1854.

traditional methods which were effective against the Maori would not be of any use. So once again the healing movements attempted to combine the old ways with the new religion.

For instance, in 1847, James Hamlin came across such a healer who was visiting the district from the Hawkes Bay area. This man professed to cure all manner of diseases by his use of prayers, and told Hamlin that his own missionary, William Colenso, approved of what he did

for his was not the old system of the native priest but a mixture of the old and the new (or christian) and destroyed the effects of the bewitching system of the old native priests... \*47

That the healer performed his cures "by the assistance of the spirits of the departed heathen" is a stranger aspect (which very certainly would not have had Colenso's approval), but it serves as an example of the syncretism of traditional and introduced religion as the Maori attempted to bridge the vast culture gap between the two systems. It is, though, unfortunate that there is no more informed source on the subject to explain it further. The matter of the spirits of the 'heathen' shows a subjective and emotive interpretation by Hamlin, and it must be wondered if a greater attempt to understand the concept might not have resulted in an appreciation of the beliefs behind it.

In the Wairoa area, around 1852, such a healer was a woman named Tangaroa. Tangaroa, according to Hamlin, "formerly pretended to priestcraft", \*48 but now she

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47. Hamlin, Journal, 22 November 1847. For Hamlin's full report on the incident, see Appendix A.

48. Hamlin, Journal, 19 November 1852. And see report to C.M.S. 10 January 1853. Hamlin refers to this as a revival of the Table Cape movement, "modified and assimilated to the feelings of the natives of the present time". But the two appear to me to be more different than similar and so will be regarded as separate movements.

combined the need for physical healing with her knowledge of the Christian teachings in a synthesis of the two systems.

To effect healing, Tangaroa acted as agent for a god she called Paraone (Brown), who was the spirit of a baptized child who had died some years before. Paraone was said to come from heaven bringing medicine to cure all diseases. Hamlin described the medicine as "a wet white substance", adding that she no doubt got it from the whites. He was also very sceptical about the curative properties of the medicine, and the healing power offered through Tangaroa, saying that almost all bad cases had died despite her efforts. (When at Erepeti in November 1852, Hamlin visited a woman who was suffering from an "affliction of the throat", and was near death after Tangaroa's medicine had failed. Hamlin says he gave the woman some medicine and departed, so we are not to know whether his ministrations resulted in a cure either.)

Tangaroa also claimed to have continuing communication with angels, and her atua Paraone revealed to her knowledge of which of the people lived in secret adultery and fornication, and who was the cause of any incidents of makutu.

Here, then, is an example of an easy reconciliation of the two systems - traditional and new. The healer's following of a traditional-style atua is adapted to Christianity in that the atua is the spirit of a baptized child; the manner of healing is of Christian pattern, having a physical component yet being based on faith and practice; and the nature of the 'sins' revealed are more of Pakeha concern, and follow those dealt with by the Christ.

Hamlin's attitude to Tangaroa was, predictably, one of extreme antipathy - he spoke of refusing to shake hands

with her when he once met her on a path (there being no escape for him from the encounter). But the attitude of the healer to the missionary was rather more benevolent, and in fact she seemed to see her work as an accompaniment to that of Hamlin, relating it to Christian worship. She instructed all who came to her for healing to be strong in the cause of Christ, to go to church, and to attend prayers morning and evening. There appears to be no thought of acting in opposition to the mission, for Tangaroa counselled all her patients to listen to Hamlin's instruction. He, in turn, actively opposed her - preaching strongly against her methods and motives. He likened her spirit to that exorcised from the slave girl by Paul in Philippi,<sup>\*49</sup> and told the natives this was an example of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light in order to draw away the mind from Christ. One must wonder how much Tangaroa could have aided the missionary in his work had he accepted her ministrations, but Hamlin was, rather, to report "I am, however, thankful to say I do not need her assistance".

Tangaroa, in her time in the Wairoa area, drew a very large following - a response which attests to the great need of the people for both healing, and a system which bridged the great gap between the cultures of the Maori and the Pakeha. It should be noted here that in the Maori mind no real distinction existed between the spiritual leaders of the Maori and European systems. Even much later this was so, for Thomas Lambert wrote in 1925

It is somewhat remarkable how the old Maoris were unable to distinguish between their tohungas and Christian ministers. I heard a Maori in the Native Land Court say in his evidence: "Hone Te Wainohu lived at Mohaka after he became a tohunga," i.e., after he entered the ministry. \*50

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49. Acts 16:16-18.

50. Lambert, Old Wairoa, p. 421.

From the 1860s onward, throughout New Zealand, arose a new kind of movement - characterized by having a definite prophet who possessed much charismatic appeal, and who acted as a leader to his people. As the motivation behind these new prophetic movements was an escalation in the troubled nature of the time due to further breakdown in the relationships between Maori and Pakeha, these figures had a social function to lead their people in their struggle for very survival.

The 1858 census had revealed that Europeans now outnumbered the Maori, while the native population continued to decrease through disease and the effect of social disorganization arising from the large-scale sale of land, with all its attendant sociological factors.\*<sup>51</sup>

The social function of the leaders was based firmly on spiritual concepts, and the new prophetic movements were a religious response to a malady very much of the spirit.

The first of this new style of prophet was Te Ua Haumene of Taranaki, whose Pai Marire (good and peaceful) movement is unfortunately largely remembered for the actions of followers such as Kereopa and Patara who deviated from the original teachings to embark on an episode of revenge against the offending Pakeha. Many more followed - Te Kooti who was a fugitive from the law for fifteen years; Te Whiti and Tohu, known for their stand of peaceful resistance against land alienation in Taranaki. These were perhaps the best known, but there were many more, both male and female, of their sort over the following four decades.

Whereas many of the earliest adjustment movements had

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51. On this topic, see particularly M.P.K. Sorrenson, "Land Purchase Methods and Their Effect on the Maori Population, 1865-1901", J.P.S. Vol. 65, No. 3, p. 184; and Elsdon Best, Christian and Maori Mythology: Notes on the Clash of Cultures, (Wellington, 1924) pp. 3-4.

rejected the Christian message almost totally, and later adjustment movements had combined the new with the old, these prophetic movements placed their emphasis squarely on the Old Testament portion of the scriptures. The Old Testament had recently been published in the Maori language, and in it the Maori had found a ready model for their situation. In the plight of the ancient Hebrews exiled and captive in Egypt, the Maori recognized himself as being dispossessed in his own land. The prophetic leaders took on the form of Old Testament prophets leading and guiding their people against their captors and enemies.

So the prophetic movements of this period displayed a strong element of identification of the Maori with the Hebrews - both racially, as some of the early missionaries believed and had told the natives, and in their situation. The emphasis in their teachings therefore reflected this, and while they did not completely reject the Christ of Christianity, their worship was based on the books of the Old Testament.

The social need so was so strong it was felt in every area. Early in the period, and perhaps inspired by the lead of Te Ua Haumene, a man in Wairoa announced his own prophethood. Little is known about this almost forgotten figure, but the Hon. W. Fox mentions the episode in a letter to Hone Te One

At Wairoa near Ahuriri, one man said he was a prophet also, and talked about the angels. The other Maories [sic] said, this man is a fool, and they tied him to send him to Napier to Here Here. Then he was afraid, and when he saw the ship that was to take him, he cried out that he was well again, so they loosed him and let him go, and laughed at him for his folly. \*52

Although this brief episode was apparently received with ridicule then, it serves as an example of the prevalence

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52. Letter of W. Fox to Hone Te One, 16 July 1864.  
A.J.H.R. 1865, E-4, 40.

of a growing spiritual need existing at the time. How many other such prophets arose to be doomed to suffer the same fate of such proverbial figures in their own country will never be known, but many others were believed and followed.

The Prophet Te Kooti had not been generally accepted in the Wairoa district. Inland, in the Waikaremoana area the Tuhoe people had supported him - hiding and feeding him and his party of warriors and supporters, and providing necessary military assistance. But the tribes of the lower Wairoa area had opposed his leadership and many contingents of Ngati Kahungunu had fought in the campaigns on the side of the government.

The Wairoa natives had been opposed in the early settlement period to the sale of their land, and had allowed little of it to pass from their hands. Some was leased to Pakeha in the 1850s, but it was not until about the time of Te Kooti that settlers really began to enter the district in any numbers.\*<sup>53</sup> Therefore the feeling resulting from the alienation of tribal lands which was running very high in other areas was not such an issue at this point to the Wairoa natives. The chiefs of the district - Pitihera Kopu and Paora Te Apatu of Wairoa, Ihaka Whaanga of Nuhaka, and Hoani Te Wainohu of Mohaka - took the side of the government against firstly the Pai Marire rebels when they visited the area in 1865, then fought against Te Kooti in his

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53. Donald McLean, Chief Land Purchase Commissioner, on a visit to Wairoa in 1851, records in his journal for 30 January 1851, that he spoke to the chief Te Apatu but received the reply that they had no land to sell and did not have enough for themselves. While McLean two days later noted Wairoa as "a splendid rich country that will eventually be of great value and importance..." he left the district without purchasing any land. The Mohaka block, however, was bought in December of that year. (McLean's Journal, as cited in The Founding of Hawkes Bay, J.G. Wilson, Napier 1951, pp. 14, 27.)

local campaigns.\*<sup>54</sup>

But even though Te Kooti had not been supported in the area at the time, with the passing of a further decade or two, the Wairoa Maori were to become more affected by the problem which was now general throughout the country - the rapidly deteriorating Maori sense of self worth. By the 1880s and onward, people who had not supported Te Kooti were finding in him the model for protest against the situation in which they found themselves. Even tribes which had every reason to be opposed to Te Kooti himself, and his style of action, tended to support the principle of his standing up against the Pakeha order.

Te Kooti's reaction was the last one to include this extreme element of violence. Following this period, the movements of protest concerned themselves with working within the Pakeha system through legal and governmental channels, and by administering to the great spiritual need of the people by a serious attempt to formulate a Maori Christian theology.

The model of Te Kooti as a religious leader was to be taken by a number of others - several of whom claimed to be his successor. One of the earliest of these made his claim in Wairoa as early as 1878 - just six years after the last battles and five years before Te Kooti had been officially pardoned.\*<sup>55</sup> His name was Te Hapi. As T. Lambert tells the story -

54. Pitihera Kopu died in 1867 so was not involved with Te Kooti, but was the staunch defender of the Wairoa Pakeha settlers against the Pai Marire rebels on their visit. For this service he is remembered by a memorial stone on the river bank by Wairoa's main street.

55. This date is, though, approximate. T. Lambert, the source, mentions it as occurring about the same time as another incident which he dates as 1878. Lambert, Old Wairoa, p. 704.

Te Hapi began to preach Te Kooti's religion afresh, but was ordered by the Wairoa chiefs to leave the district. He therefore took himself away, but, being bandy-legged himself, his wife lame, and his children young, he proceeded by canoe to Ruakituri. Here he might have lived in peace for many years but for one fact: that the infant son of Rewi Hemoata had been taken suddenly ill. The child being a grandson of the famous Rangimataeo, Te Hapi was sent for, and found himself installed as medicine-man and Grand Sachem (\*56) to the Matiti Natives. (\*57) Singular to say, the infant chief got rapidly better, and Te Hapi's reputation was established; disciples flocked around him, and old Hemoata saw with dismay a numerous congregation eating him out of house and home, and Te Hapi was remonstrated with on the subject. Said old Hemoata: "When Elijah cured the widow's son he not only did it for nothing, but found the family in oil and meal, while you are the worst forager out." Te Hapi replied that his new religion recognised only the Books of Moses and the Psalms of David - in this he stated facts - and he could not recognise Elijah at all. Rewi, in desperation, applied to the Rev. Tamihana Huata, Captain Hapimana, Lieutenant Maraki, and Ensign Heremia, who collected a force of forty-seven men and eighteen women and ordered Hapi to quit, and he was escorted, arrayed in a white hat and top boots, and deported to Napier! \*58

Lambert relates the incident as a somewhat amusing episode, but the facts contained in the account are interesting in that they shed light on an otherwise forgotten example of the many movements of the time. It is fairly typical of these in that it obviously included this common element of the Maori seeing himself in much the same social and spiritual condition as the ancient Hebrews. The aspect of physical illness then becomes symbolic of the prevailing spiritual illness, and the prophet comes to administer to the spirit while he heals the body.

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56. Supreme chief of some American Indian tribes.
57. The area of Matiti is that now more commonly known as the Hurumua Peninsula - being that area enclosed by the bend of the Wairoa River, to the west of Wairoa town and on the western bank, opposite the Wairoa showgrounds.
58. Lambert, Old Wairoa, p. 704.

This, briefly, was the religious background to the Wairoa area up to the latter part of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s the European settlement was well established. The township had a resident magistrate from 1863, the Wairoa County Council had been formed in 1877, with the Harbour Board following the next year. Sheep and cattle farms prospered in the area, and there was a flourishing flax industry. A very vigorous trading industry was serviced by a number of ships using the Port of Wairoa, and the area provided much of the food and timber to supply the town of Napier. A newspaper had been established, and the town's brass band was considered so good that it was invited to perform in Napier.

But while the European picture was one of great progress, the Maori side was not so bright. The Maori population was at the lowest point it would reach. Much of the land had gone so the native economic situation was depressed, and about the only time any Maori was mentioned in the local newspaper it was most likely to be a brief mention to the effect that an un-named 'native' had been charged for some offence. Maori schooling in the area had been unsatisfactory up to this time.\*<sup>59</sup>

For the Maori it was still a time of great spiritual need.

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59. Lambert, Old Wairoa, p. 426.

## CHAPTER TWO

Prophet and Purpose

Tungia te ururua kia tupu whakaritorito  
te tupu o te harakeke<sup>\*1</sup>

Matenga the Man

Te Matenga Tamati must have been born around 1838. He is said to have been 55 at the death of Te Kooti in 1893, and about 65 at the height of his popularity - around 1904. If so, this would set his date of birth at around 1838, and he would therefore have been 76 at the time of his death. Matenga's grandson, Ronny Bell, confirms that the Prophet was about 80 when he died.

According to Mr Bell, the family name was Hia rather than Tamati,<sup>\*2</sup> but all other informants in the area knew him by the name of Tamati and had never heard the name Hia. In this case, then, I shall continue to use the name by which he was widely known - Te Matenga Tamati. His followers called him simply 'Matenga'.

He was an elder of Putahi Pa (on the south-eastern side of the point where the Waikare-taheke joins the Wairoa River at Scamperdown, Frasertown, 8 kilometres from the Wairoa township). He lived at Pukerimu, off Kiwi Road, on the northern outskirts of the Borough of Wairoa.

Matenga married Mate Takitaki and the couple had two daughters - Te Waihae Matanga Hia, and Heni Hia. Te Waihae became the mother of Timi Kara Tewai Bell (Ronny Bell) who, as the grandson of the Prophet, provided much of the information on the family. (See photos 1 and 4)

- 
1. "Set the overgrown bush alight, and the new flax shoots will spring up".  
A proverb meaning something like -  
Dispose of anything that hinders progress, so that what is desirable may grow and bear fruit.  
- See Aileen E. Brougham & A.W. Reed, Maori Proverbs (Wellington 1963) p. 74.
  2. Telephone conversation with Mr Bell, March 1982.

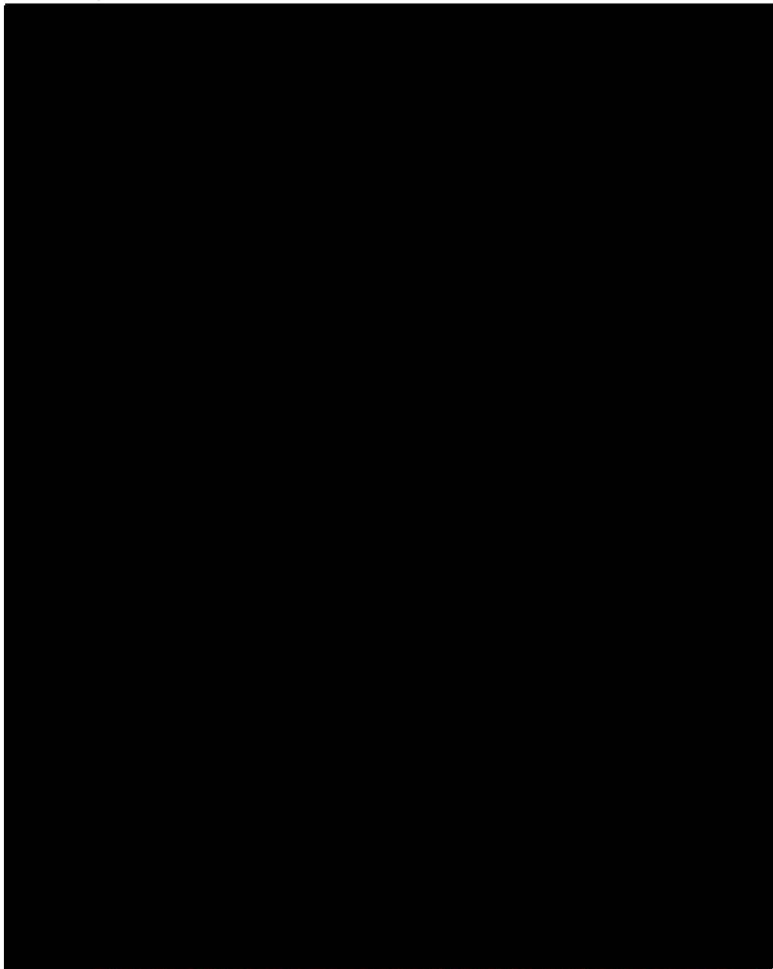
Heni married her first cousin, a move which was strongly objected to by Matenga who followed the traditional belief that this was the behaviour of animals, and who placed a curse on their union.\*<sup>3</sup> He said that all their children would die. Heni had nine children, and in order to avoid the makutu they were all adopted out at birth.\*<sup>4</sup>

Matenga died in 1914. Several informants, including Ronny Bell, agree on this date, though it could not be pinpointed more accurately. (A search of the national records for the years 1913-1915 inclusive, in the names of both Tamati and Hia, brought to light no death certificate.\*<sup>5</sup> He was buried at Korito in the old urupa on the beach, but the shifting sands have left no trace of the grave which was originally surrounded by posts.\*<sup>6</sup>

#### Matenga the Prophet

There is no doubt whatsoever in the mind of anyone who remembers Matenga - or, as is more usual now, grew up hearing of him - that he possessed the gifts of both prophecy and healing. Mr Horace Whaanga, whose family were all followers of Matenga, said that the Prophet predicted Mr Whaanga's grandparents (Mr and Mrs Kaukau) would have only one child, but promised that child

3. See Joan Metge, The Maoris of New Zealand (London, 1976) p. 21.
4. Interview Ronny Bell, January 1982.
5. Although it was required from 1913, under the Maori Births and Deaths regulations, that all Maori deaths be notified, this was not enforced for some years, and full records are available only since the 1940s.
6. Mr Ronny Bell says that as the family cemetery was at Tiakiwai, Uruhou, he was sure Matenga would have been buried there. But Mr Api Hape and Mr Teti Peka, both very reliable and knowledgeable informants, are adamant Matenga was buried at Korito. Independently they described the place, with the aid of a sketched map, both pinpointing the same place. Both saw the grave many times.



(Photo 1)

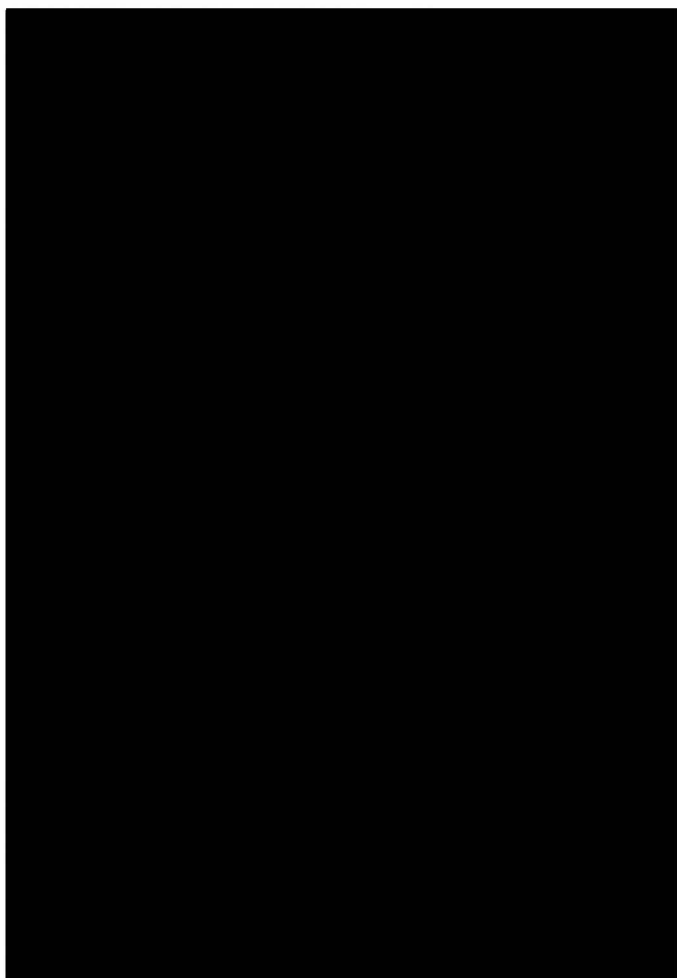
Grandson of the Prophet



(Photos taken in January 1982)

(Photo 2)

■■■■ of Wairoa -  
"the last of the Kohiti"



would be fruitful. A daughter was born, and she had fourteen children.\*7

Matenga had the faculty of matakite, and would know the problems of those who came to him for help, before they arrived. Mrs Maria Thompson, who was born in 1892, says she remembers as a girl seeing Matenga. This attests to the fame of Matenga for she has remembered to this time that he was a very important man of the area, possessing much mana.\*8

At his property at Pukerimu, Matenga had a spring, (see photo 3) the waters of which he used for healing. This spring was by a quince tree. He took patients to the spring and healed them there by blessing them with the water.\*9 (It is interesting to know that Matenga's grandson, Ronny Bell, also has this gift of healing and also uses water from a spring on his property. See photo 4.)

Another person spoke of Matenga's truly miraculous powers of healing, telling of how the Prophet could straighten and heal broken limbs with little more than a touch of the hand. But there seems to be some disagreement over the methods he used. Some say his cures were all by karakia and water, yet another claims that Matenga also used medicines which he prepared himself, utilizing herbal remedies such as boiled flax roots and bark.

One example of the Prophet's gift was given by Mr Turi Tipoki who said his parents had eight children stillborn. After Matenga's ministrations, eight more children were born - all of whom lived.\*10

7. Interview Mr Horace Whaanga, January 1982.
8. Interview Mrs Maria Thompson, January 1982.
9. Interview Mr Ronny Bell, January 1982.
10. Interview Mr Turi Tipoki, January 1982.



There was unanimous agreement amongst all who spoke of him, that the Prophet was a modest man - neither flamboyant in habit, nor a showman - and he did not try to attract people actively as some other such figures have done. But he would help all who came to him to be healed. Seventy years after his death he is still regarded in the Wairoa area and even further afield with a great deal of respect.

Following the death of Te Kooti in 1893, Matenga received revelation from God that he was to carry on the spiritual work of Te Kooti. It was revealed to him that the Ringatu religion had not received full blessings, and this would not be so until a tapenakara (tabernacle) to God be built. Matenga undertook the task of directing the tabernacle or temple - an honour which had been denied Te Kooti because of the blood which was on his hands.

The new Prophet, then, was the spiritual successor to Te Kooti. In this role he was followed by the great majority of the native population of the Wairoa district. While the people of the area had fought against Te Kooti during the period of his campaigns, at the same time there also existed some sympathy for him as it was commonly believed he had been unjustly deported to the Chatham Islands. But more importantly, the growing spiritual need of the people meant that the principles of his religion had spread and been adopted here too.<sup>\*11</sup> It was on the general basis of the Ringatu movement before it that the religion of Matenga was built.

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11. Bishop W.L. Williams wrote in 1904, "There are not a few of the Ringa-tu in Poverty Bay and Wairoa. These hold themselves very much aloof from Christian ministrations." He adds that Maori tohunga in these areas were also affecting the work of the Church. Their powers of healing are regarded with scepticism by Williams who also sees their practices as "absolutely inconsistent with simple faith and trust in God." The Maori Mission. Past and Present, (Palmerston North, 1904) p. 9.

## The Building of the Tabernacle

Just as Moses had received full details from Jehovah as to the building of the first tabernacle or tent of meeting in the wilderness, and just as the Lord had also given instructions for the building of the first temple in Jerusalem,<sup>\*12</sup> so now were details of the new tapenakara given to the Prophet.

It was to be built of 12 posts - each 40 feet in length, 4 feet square at the base and tapering to 3 feet square at the top. These pillars were to be named for the 12 children of Jacob (Hakopa), and were to be erected in a square. The tabernacle was to remain as this simple structure - merely the 12 pillars forming a square, without roof or walls, for the natural elements (rain, wind) would be kept out by divine will. Inside the sacred area there was to be an Ark of the Covenant - the dimensions of this being 6 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet. When the temple was built, the Ark was to be dragged into the sanctuary by two cows.<sup>\*13</sup>

Finally, when the whole was completed according to instructions, God himself would speak to the people from the temepara (temple).

The matter of the selection of the pillars was of prime importance. A specially selected party of men was sent out from Wairoa to locate suitable trees. A stand of giant totara was chosen high in the hills at Mangatawhiti, Ohuka area, in the foothills of the Waikaremoana ranges (approximately 30 kilometres in a

12. Exodus, chapters 25-27; 1 Chronicles 28: 11-19.

13. W.J. Phillipps, "Carved Maori Houses of the Eastern Districts of the North Island", in Records of the Dominion Museum Vol. 1, (Wellington, 1942-1944)p. 83. These points also confirmed by several oral informants.

direct line NNE of Wairoa, but about twice that distance by road). Matenga then took a group of hand-picked men to the site, and accompanied by the appropriate karakia the trees were finally chosen, felled, and trimmed at the site to the specified dimensions.\*14

The Prophet was very strict in his control of his men at this time. None of the workers was permitted to do anything which might result in violating the sacred nature of the task. All of the party were to work naked as was the traditional practice in work relating to strictly tapu rites. There was to be no smoking, drinking of alcohol, and spitting, and even the very use of inappropriate words was condemned.\*15 Matenga promised that should the men have sufficient faith, the logs would move themselves without help from the human workers. Words such as 'to' or 'kume' (drag or haul) used in connection with the logs were forbidden. The Prophet said the timber would follow the men of its own accord and the appropriate word, therefore, was 'arahi' (to lead or to guide).\*16

Mr Horace Whaanga recalled hearing that his grandfather who had been one of the party, once employed a timber-jack to help shift a log when it was stuck, and for this breach he was fined.\*17 Another two men who committed the offence of smoking were fined and banished into the hills for a week. During this period hunger forced the banished men to kill two sheep to eat, and this misdemeanour was followed by court action brought by the farmer owner of the animals. The result of this case was that the men were ordered by

14. These details were confirmed by all consulted on the matter.

15. Interview Horace Whaanga, January 1982.

16. There has been general agreement on these details.

17. Interview Horace Whaanga, January 1982.

the magistrate to repay the cost of the sheep, but were otherwise discharged as it was ruled that the men were driven by necessity and not criminal intent.

The moving of the logs proved to be an immense task, and consequently a great test of faith. At one stage the project was postponed for a few months in order to give time for greater faith to build up. Following this, a second band of men was recruited to complete the job of getting the totara to the bank of the Mangaaruhe Stream. Ropes and tackle were necessary for this very difficult part of the operation, and the project was once more postponed when the leader log, Joseph, was firmly stuck in a gully - the result once more of a lack of faith on the part of the workers. But eventually, some years after the start of the venture, all the logs were waiting by the stream for the last stage of their journey.

From this point on there would be no need of physical human help. The pillar named Joseph would lead his brothers to the chosen land - the site selected for the new temple at Korito Beach, near Iwitea, a few kilometres east of the township of Wairoa. Matenga and a very large band of followers all gathered at Erepeti in the Ruakituri Valley (approximately 5 kilometres in direct line NNE of Mangatawhiti) where in the pa they prayed under the guidance of the Prophet.\*<sup>18</sup>

Their faith was amply rewarded in a dramatic fashion, for the region soon experienced heavy rain which quickly flooded the watershed and caused the great flood of 1904. Such a result was more than sufficient to float the twelve totara, and these rode down the Mangaaruhe Stream to join the Wairoa River, southwards down this and across the bar into the sea.

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18. There has been general agreement on these details.

It is said that this occurrence excited much interest in Wairoa. A great surge of water was said to be approaching down the swollen river, and riding the crest of the surge were the giant logs. A notable incident occurred as result of this episode. As the logs were coming down the river, two men attempted to secure one of the logs, paddling out to it by canoe from Ruataniwha (near the western end of the river straight in the central Wairoa township - that is, a little west of the present Wairoa bridge). Their canoe was capsized and both climbed on top of the log. When the timber came close to the shore, one of the men jumped off and managed to reach safety, but the other stayed aboard and was drowned at the bend of the river (at the eastern end of the straight, now known as Spooner's Point) when the log rolled.

Copies of the Wairoa Guardian for the period are unfortunately not now available, but the Wairoa correspondent for the Hawkes Bay Herald (Napier) included this account in his (very occasional) report, on 18 March 1904 -

The Wairoa river during the rains was bank-high and its current carried along with it uprooted trees and logs, rendering its navigation impracticable. Two Maoris, Tamati and Shag, went out in a canoe to try and capture a passing totara log, but they bumped, their canoe was upset, and they had to cling to the log for safety. They passed the township calling for help, but as no boat could have lived in the torrent they could not be rescued. As a last resource they both dived from the log. Shag, after a long swim, reached shore, but Tamati sank and was drowned. \*19

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19. This incident was also related by several oral informants. See too, published recollections in two items in The Wairoa Star; 16 August 1950, "Whose Remains", giving the memories of Mr T. leC. Powdrell; and letter 18 August 1950 by "Settler". (See Appendix B)
- The drowned man, Tamati, was not connected with Te Matenga Tamati. I am not sure whether the name in this case was a family or given name. A transliteration of 'Thomas', it was a common name of the period.

This account pinpoints the great flood as occurring during the first half of the month of March - not a time when one would normally expect torrential rain in the high country, such as would be necessary to cause such a flood.

Eleven of the logs eventually beached themselves right on target at the chosen spot of Korito. But the twelfth - Joseph - had followed the lead of his namesake and travelled into a distant land. Joseph was located some miles to the north near Waikokopu. This time there was no hope of the missing brother finding his way back unaided, and a boat was chartered to pull it back to join the rest. \*20

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\*20. Here again it is very unfortunate that records have not survived. Some oral reports say that the ship to perform the task was the "Tangaroa", the steamer of the Wairoa and Mohaka Steam Ship Company (later Richardsons of Napier), which operated between Napier and Wairoa. Lambert and one oral source say the "Tu Atu" under Captain Knight. Although the matter is not a crucial one, I have tried to clear up this point but without success. A visit to the National Archives, and enquiries to the Marine Department offices in Wellington established that while both ships were operational at the time in the area (the "Tu Atu" being built in 1903 and registered in 1904), the ship's log of neither could be traced. Enquiries made to Captain Knight's son and daughter - Mr A. Knight and Mrs M. Fyson, both of Wairoa - also failed to clear up this matter. My own opinion on the matter is that the vessel in question is more likely to have been the "Tu Atu". The "Tangaroa", a steamer of 190 tons worked a fairly regular schedule around Hawke Bay, ferrying passengers and goods between Wairoa and Napier. The oil-vessel "Tu Atu" was a twin-screw cutter of 40 tons which also carried passengers and cargo. The respective size of the ships, I feel, argues in favour of the "Tu Atu", it being far more suitable as regards size and manoeuverability in addition to availability at the time to complete the job at Waikokopu.

Matenga paid the skipper £50 (fifty pounds) to do the job and the ship went up the coast, but the hawser they attached to Joseph snapped and the project was abandoned. Another £50 was paid by the Prophet, and the venture was attempted again. This time it was successful, and the twelfth log was brought back to join its brothers.

Mr Api Hape explained the reasons for the different results. The first expedition, under the leadership of a follower called Paetai Wilson, failed to appreciate the sacred nature of the occasion, and the appropriate conditions were not observed, for there was eating and smoking on the boat. Therefore the attempt was not successful. The second party was led by Mr Hape's father, Mr Te Rauna Hape, a staunch member of the faith, and this time the tapu was strictly observed. Consequently, Joseph was towed back and left on the beach, and the following day it was found to have moved up to be with the others.\*21

Mr Horace Whaanga attests, however, that on other occasions human agency was employed to move the logs. Mr Whaanga's brother (now dead) was also a staunch follower of Matenga, and on one or more occasions during later years when the beach was eroding from beneath the pillars, he used horses to drag them further up the beach. He would always work naked, after reciting karakia, and then when the task was completed he would wash himself and his horses in the sea.\*22

There is a story which is told by two informants about the leader log Joseph. While at Waikokopu this log was

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21. Interview Mr Api Hape, January 1982.

22. Interview Mr Horace Whaanga, January 1982.



(Photo 5)

The twelve great pillars where they still lie on Korito Beach. The stake standing at left is six feet high.



(Photo 6)

The ends of some of the totara pillars, each being between 3 and 4 feet square.

claimed by someone who cut it up for fenceposts. The posts were left at the spot over night, but next morning when the person returned, the log had joined up again.\*<sup>23</sup>

Since on the beach at Korito, the pillars have retained their strictly tapu nature. The story is told of a boy who, some years ago, sat on the logs to eat his lunch. Shortly afterwards he became ill, with sores in the mouth. Despite being taken to a well known healer of the district at the time, the boy died.\*<sup>24</sup>

The whole episode of the cutting and the moving of the pillars to their final resting place took several years. The date of the beginning of this task is said to be 1895, and the job of felling and moving the trees took 7 years.\*<sup>25</sup> This appears to leave a discrepancy of between 1 and 2 years, for 1904 is known to be the time when the timber made its exodus from mountain to sea. But the two statements can well be reconciled if the period between the selection and cutting of the trees, and the time taken to assemble the Kohiti at Erepeti are taken into consideration.

The logs were now lying ready for the building of the temple at Korito, and on completion the Ark of the Covenant would be placed inside. When this was accomplished God would talk to his people from this spot. But due to the fact that things had not gone entirely according to plan - Joseph's brief sojourn being evidence of this - the Prophet was now forced to tell his people that this generation would not be builders of the temple. Instead, another rama (torch,

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23. Interview Mr Turi Tipoki, and confirmed by Ronny Bell, January 1982.
24. Interview Mrs Maria Thompson, January 1982.
25. See Phillipps, "Carved Maori Houses", p. 83; and confirmed by other early informants.



(Photo 7)

Another view of the temple pillars.



(Photo 8)

Looking from the site of Te Karauna towards the hill, and concrete box.

or guiding light) would have to come to fulfil this work. So the people temporarily abandoned the project, awaiting the appearance of another Prophet yet to come.

This was apparently not seen as any lack of fulfilment of a promise, or failure, by the believers. It was accepted that with the completion of this stage, Matenga's work was ended. He had been given the task of overseeing the building of the temepara to this point, and this was now accomplished. The time was not yet come for the final stage, but this would surely come to pass. Matenga assured the Kohiti that should all the people gather at New Moon and pray hard then the guidance would certainly come. It would not be accomplished by this generation, but maybe the next, or the one after. Or perhaps it would be several generations. But it would be! \*26

Mr Te Rauna Hape donated 800 acres of land around the Korito-Whakaki area, to be held in trust to provide a home or 'footing' for the temepara. \*27 Mr Api Hape, who regards himself as the last follower of the religion of Matenga, believes that if for some reason the land is no longer available (for instance, a few years ago the Government tried to take the land in order to develop it), then the pillars will move of their own accord to another home. Whatever happens, the logs will be divinely protected until the time has come for the building of the temple. In addition, much more land was given - totalling thousands of acres of property in the Wairoa district - all for the sole purpose of ensuring that the 'treasure' of Kohiti would be available when needed. \*28

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26. Interviews Api Hape, January and November 1982.  
27. The local Maori Committee now acts as trustees for this land.  
28. Interviews Api Hape, January and November 1982.

Meanwhile, a small traditional-style meeting house was built approximately 100 metres from where the pillars waited. This spot was known as Te Karauna (The Crown) and it was on this spot that the promised tapenakara would eventually be built. A further 100 metres or so to the south was built a concrete box in which were kept records relevant to the religion. (See photos 9 & 10) Gatherings were held in the meeting house regularly for many years, continuing after the Prophet's death in 1914, but eventually falling off as the years passed. Additional meetings were also held sometimes in members' homes, and these continued until about 1928 or 1930.\*<sup>29</sup>

As the Ringatu Church became more established, some of the followers joined this. It is interesting to note that the people of the district never became followers of Rua Kenana who in 1904 made a claim to be the successor to Te Kooti. Matenga's influence was at its highest at this time, and the Wairoa people were always to regard Rua's later claim as having no foundation.

Over later years the meeting house, Te Karauna, (the site and the house being both thus named) fell into disrepair, and was eventually destroyed by a storm in 1969. The concrete box near the site is still there but it is now open and empty. A witness to the event testified that the contents were removed "about thirty years ago" (c. 1950?) - being taken away to Gisborne by packhorse by some members of the Ringatu Church.\*<sup>30</sup>

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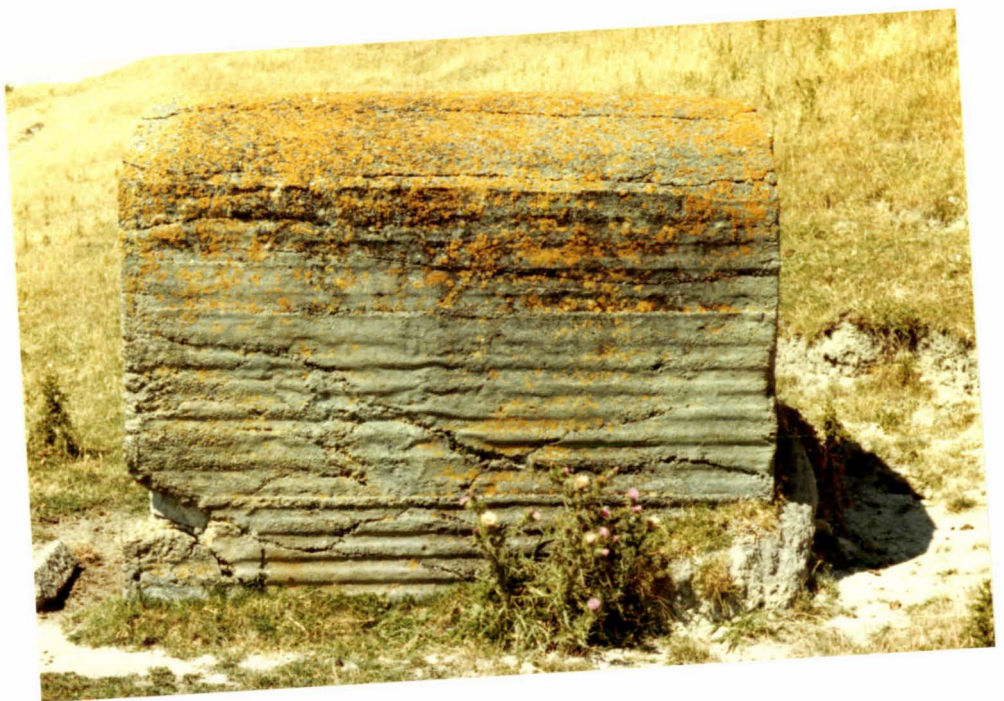
29. Interview Api Hape, November 1982.

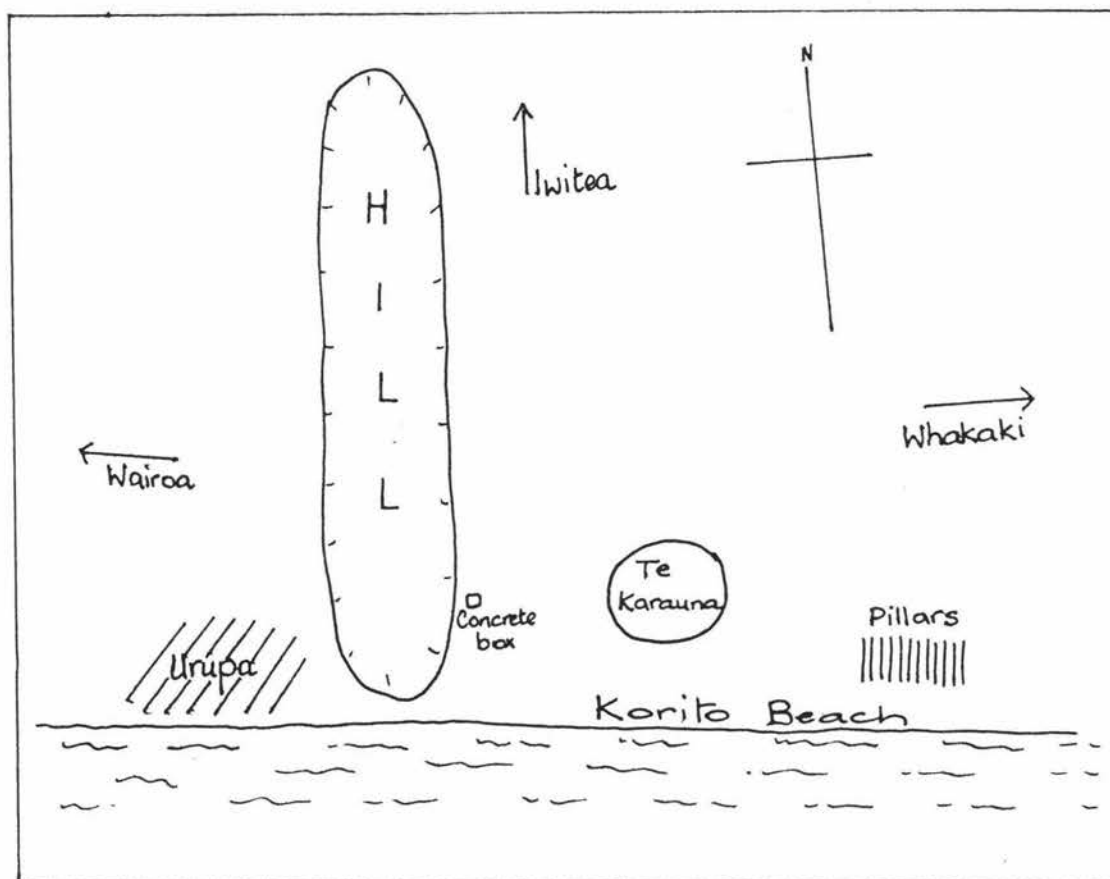
30. The informant who witnessed this event is Mr Rua Niania, Iwitea, interviewed January 1982. I have since made enquiries to leaders of the Ringatu Church, attempting to find out what sort of articles were kept in this storage-place, and their present whereabouts, but without result. It appears that no-one knows of this matter.



(Photos 9 & 10)

The concrete box used for storage by the Kohiti. (Approx. 6 x 6 x 4 feet in size)





Map 2 The Korito Beach area  
 (Sketch map to show sites in location  
 to each other. Not to scale.)

### The Religion of Matenga

The teachings of Te Matenga Tamati can be seen to be similar to those of Te Kooti. But it is most probable that they did not originate in the Ringatu religion solely. As already mentioned, the idea of the Maori being similar in situation, and in many instances of cultural parallels) with the ancient Hebrews, had been a common factor in a great many Maori religious movements over the past several decades. Matenga's religion, therefore, may be seen as another consequence of the great spiritual need felt by the Maori around the whole country at the time.

But there is no doubt that the very model and pattern for many of the religious aspects is Ringatu. The

followers of Matenga considered him the spiritual successor to Te Kooti, and sometimes referred to their movement as "the second Ringatu".<sup>\*31</sup> Services followed the Ringatu format - there being little or nothing in the way of written scriptures, but panui were committed to memory.<sup>\*32</sup>

There were, however, also differences. Matenga placed full emphasis on the new moon, as symbolic of a new world. This was promised as a time of restoration. The building of the new world was to come shortly - this was the day of God. So the religion was named Kohiti from the phrase 'Te Kohititanga Marama' - the first appearance of the moon, or the reflection of the moon. The followers of Matenga therefore called the religion and themselves Kohiti.<sup>\*33</sup> An alternative name was 'The Church of the New World'.<sup>\*34</sup>

The Kohiti faith was a very peaceful one - the followers were urged to live a peaceable life following the commandments of God and in preparation for the new age. A distinct departure from Ringatu occurred in the change in time of the sacred days. Kohiti services were held at the new moon rather than on the twelfth of each month as in Ringatu. These, though, took the pattern of the Ringatu services - beginning on the evening before the new moon, continuing with karakia throughout that day and night, and ending on the morning of the third day. Mr Api Hape remembers attending some of these meetings and says that at mealtimes people would donate a sum of money (he mentioned one shilling and sixpence as the regular amount given). This would be placed on the table, and the act of giving would help to promote health and long life.<sup>\*35</sup>

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31. Interviews Api Hape, January & November 1982.
  32. All informants agreed on this basis in Ringatu.
  33. All informants agreed on the name Kohiti.
  34. Api Hape, interviews, and letter 21 November 1982.
  35. Api Hape, interviews January and November 1982.

Meeting days were days to be kept sacred, the day of the new moon being symbolic of the day of God - the new age. On that day people should play their harps, as they will play the harp above. In addition, the days of special significance to the Ringatu religion were observed by the Kohiti - the first of January and the first of July.<sup>\*36</sup> Favourite verses chanted were from Psalms, and chapters from the book of Isaiah.<sup>\*37</sup>

Regarding the future, Matenga told his followers that if they prayed hard, then someone would be sent to build the temple. The last instructions of the Prophet were that when all the people of New Zealand get together in one church and all pray (and play their harps) at new moon, then a Prophet will come. One indication of his identity was given - he will be from poorer people.<sup>\*38</sup>

Mr Api Hape, as 'the last of the Kohiti', provided additional comments which contribute further to the feeling of the religion. He said that this movement included no element of separation - Matenga was not anti-Pakeha, as were other earlier prophets. (In fact, Matenga's daughter, Te Waihae Matanga, married a European named Bell.) He believes that Matenga was the divinely-appointed successor to Te Kooti, though as a modest man and not an active evangelist the Prophet did not widely proclaim himself as such.<sup>\*39</sup> But all the Kohiti were convinced that the spirit had come to him. In this respect the Kohiti believed that the spirit came through Te Kooti and then Matenga, but not to Rua Kenana and T.W. Ratana. It is in this light that Mr Hape sometimes refers to the Kohiti as 'the second Ringatu'. He also firmly believes that the Maori are the descendants of Israel.<sup>\*40</sup>

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36. Interviews Api Hape, January & November 1982.

37. Interview Horace Whaanga, January 1982.

38. Interviews Api Hape, January & November 1982.

39. Mr Horace Whaanga confirms this. Interview Jan. '82.

40. Interviews Api Hape, January & November 1982.

## CHAPTER THREE

Indigenous and Imported

Ka hari te iwi no ratou nei Atua a Ihowa, \*1  
te iwi kua whiriwhiria e ia hei taonga tupu mona.

The matter of the belief in the lineal descent of the Maori race from the ancient Israelites has been mentioned in regard to the Maori generally during the past century, and as a part of the Kohiti religion more specifically. This was an idea which was given to the people by the missionaries initially, and was supported in the native mind because of the similarity of the situations of the Maori and the Hebrews while in captivity in Egypt.

The Kohiti saw themselves and their race in the same political and social position as that people more than three thousand years before. Their Moses had shown them the way to deliver themselves from the yoke of their oppressors. But now in the position of being almost alien in the land which was rightfully theirs, they were in desperate need of a leader to guide them - one under whose command they could establish themselves anew in their land, and live in peaceful coexistence with the other inhabitants. The fact that the Old Testament books Exodus and Psalms were the most used by the Kohiti further confirms this. But it was a spiritual need rather than a political need, and so the response was a spiritual one accordingly.

Matenga fulfilled the role of spiritual leader in very much the same manner as did the prophets of the Old Testament. He received divine revelation from God, and this he passed on to his people. The type of

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1. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." Psalm 33:12

instructions received were very similar in that precise details were given when needed - as for the dimensions of, and the materials for, the tabernacle which was to be built. When the people followed those instructions they were rewarded by success in their endeavours - such as the tremendous flood which moved the timber to the chosen site; but any backsliding through lack of faith was punished, as when one log jammed and later Joseph went astray.

The basic laws governing the Kohiti, such as strict adherence to the laws of God, and obedience to the instructions given through the Prophet, were comparable to those incumbent upon the Hebrews, though obviously all those rules specific to the people of Moses were not applicable to the later people. Like the Old Testament prophets, Matenga was a strict leader, as can be seen in the incident of some offending members of the tree-felling party being put out of the camp - a punishment comparable to that of the period of the Israelites in the wilderness under the command of Moses, though that was permanent while Matenga's was temporary.

Matenga, like the Old Testament prophets, was himself given divine assistance in the form of unusual powers - this being seen in his faculties of matakite and healing.

But perhaps the most important parallel is that of the covenant made between Jehovah and his people. Should the Kohiti follow their instructions faithfully and build the temple to the Lord, God would then speak to them directly, just as had been promised in the earlier time when Yahweh was present at the mercy seat.<sup>\*2</sup>

The Kohiti religion follows on from the Ringatu movement of Te Kooti. The earlier Prophet saw himself as a Moses

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2. See Exodus 25:22; 30:6

to his people, and there is no doubt that some striking parallels in the situations of the two peoples occurred. Te Kooti and his band of followers were exiled on the Chatham Islands, just as the Israelites had been in Egypt - both peoples captive against their will and contrary to any sense of justice. Divine revelation came to the new Moses as it had in the earlier time, and Te Kooti was to follow his predecessor's lead to guide his people out of exile and once more to their own land. When their means of return came, in the arrival of the schooner "Rifleman", it was seen as the Ark of Deliverance - as much a divine gift as had been the parting of the Red Sea. Like Moses, Te Kooti was to spend a number of years wandering with his people without a permanent home. This all becomes very relevant to the Kohiti religion with the divine revelation to Matenga of the reason why full blessings had not been given to the Ringatu. As Moses was finally refused entry to the Promised Land because he doubted the Lord,<sup>\*3</sup> so Te Kooti was not given the task of building the temepara because the violence he had perpetrated also made him unworthy for the task. So once again a further prophet was called to continue the task begun by another.

It is, I think, unwise to try to point to an actual Old Testament counterpart to Matenga, but parallels between the tasks of both David and Solomon can be noted - the former particularly so, as he was given notice of the building of the temple but was destined not to accomplish the task himself.

The tabernacle or temple itself provides numerous parallels when considered alongside the Biblical accounts of the tabernacle of the Mosaic period and the later temple at Jerusalem. Though neither one of these provides the identical model for the Kohiti temple,

that at Jerusalem is obviously the conceptual model, and there is no doubt the whole idea is based on the Hebrew scriptures.

To begin with, the pillars for the temple (though of New Zealand totara and not cedar and cypress of Lebanon) were named for the twelve children of Israel, with Joseph as their leader.

Instructions were given by Jehovah to the Prophet that the structure should be built and the covenant of the Lord placed inside it before full blessings would be given to the people.\*4

The logs had been trimmed to 40 feet in length by 4 feet square tapering to 3 feet square, and were to be erected in a square.\*5 If the actual size of the square was known at the time (as I have no doubt it was), this information is no longer known. It seems, however, that the dimensions of the Kohiti temple must compare favourably with that of Solomon. While Solomon's whole structure was a mammoth 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high\*6 (90 by 30 by 45 feet, taking 1 cubit as 18 inches), the inner sanctuary in which the Ark of the Covenant was to rest, was a 20 cubit cube,\*7 or a ground square of 30 by 30 feet with pillars 30 feet high. Presuming that Matenga's 12 pillars were to be set 10 feet in the ground, it seems highly likely that the dimensions of the Kohiti structure would closely resemble those of its model. But the important thing to be kept in mind is that the conceptual pattern of the new structure is based on the former, if not the physical pattern.

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4. See Exodus 25:8-9; 1 Kings 5:5

5. As the dimensions of the timber were given in feet, and as metric equivalents are clumsy in comparison (e.g. pillars measured 12.19 m. long by 1.22 m. square), Imperial measurements will be used here.

6. 1 Kings, 6:2

7. 1 Kings, 6:20

The Ark of the Covenant as symbolic of the agreement made between God and man, provides several more parallels. This time the dimensions given to Matenga are known - 6 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet<sup>\*8</sup> - which proves to be much larger than that of the Israelites,<sup>\*9</sup> it being 3.75 by 2.25 by 2.25 feet when transposed from cubits in the same way. But when the mercy seat of similar proportions is added to the original, the two would be very comparable in dimensions.<sup>\*10</sup>

Upon the completion of Solomon's temple, the Ark of the Covenant was carried into the sanctuary by the priests,<sup>\*11</sup> but the Hebraic scriptures still provide a parallel for Matenga's plan to have the Kohiti Ark dragged in by two cows. As is told in the book of 1 Samuel, the Ark of the Israelites had been captured by the Philistines and kept for seven years, but with unfortunate consequences, so those people decided to return it. As no-one was willing to touch the sacred Ark, it was sent back on a cart drawn by two milking cows which drew it to the Levites without hesitation and without being directed.<sup>\*12</sup> The Ark for the Kohiti temple had not been constructed ready for the building, and this was to be provided by God upon the completion of the temple.<sup>\*13</sup> (This does not mean that the Ark would materialize miraculously, but that divine will would see to it that when it was needed it would be available - whatever the method of its construction.)

The plan that the new tabernacle should have no roof appears to be quite a new idea, but perhaps it shows

8. Phillipps, "Carved Maori Houses", p. 83

9. Exodus 25:10

10. Exodus 25:17, 21

11. 1 Kings 8:6

12. 1 Samuel 6:7-16

13. Interview Api Hape, January 1982

only a new application of an ancient belief. That the presence of the Ark of the Covenant would ensure no rain would enter the sanctuary certainly follows the Hebraic belief that it was the symbol of the power of Yahweh. This is a lesson the Philistines were to learn to their cost,<sup>\*14</sup> the people of Beth-shemesh had demonstrated to them also,<sup>\*15</sup> and Uzzah too found out.<sup>\*16</sup>

If the felling and moving of the trees took seven years, then here too a further parallel occurs, though not a complete one. With a working force of 30,000 men from Israel, plus additional helpers from Lebanon and Gebal, the complete job of building Solomon's temple took the same time - seven years.<sup>\*17</sup> And the method of moving the timber can also be seen to provide a partial parallel, for the cedars and cypresses of Lebanon were floated southwards in the sea to cover the greater part of their journey.<sup>\*18</sup>

The significance of the naming of the temple site 'Te Karauna' (The Crown) is not definitely known, but one informant said it had an Old Testament background and he had always accepted it as symbolic of great honour bestowed on the spot.<sup>\*19</sup> (If there is to be a specific reference attached to it, two would occur to me as particularly applicable, remembering that the Psalms were most used in Kohiti services:

Thou crownest the year with thy bounty (Psalm 65:11)  
 (The Lord) who redeems your life from the Pit,  
 who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.  
 (Psalm 103:4)

Both of these verses would support the idea of the temple being given as a great bounty from the Lord.

- 14. 1 Samuel 5.
- 15. 1 Samuel 6:19-20
- 16. 2 Samuel 6:6-7
- 17. 1 Kings 6:38
- 18. 1 Kings 5:9
- 19. Interview Horace Whaanga, January 1982

The final point of comparison regarding the building of the temepara occurs in the revelation to Matenga when all appeared to be ready for the commencement of the work. While the temple of the Israelites was first mentioned to David by God,<sup>\*20</sup> David was later to learn that he would not be the one to see to its construction, but this would be done by another. So too was Matenga told the task must be undertaken by another one.

The view of Yahweh as an interventionist God, as shown in his active participation in events, is also very clearly an Hebraic concept. Divine assistance as dramatic as can be seen in the account of that given to the Israelites after the exodus - guidance by pillars of smoke and fire, the miraculous provisions of manna and quail - can also be recognized as occurring in the case of the Kohiti. The dramatic answer to prayer in the flood which was necessary to float the twelve trees down stream and river until all reached the sea safely; the even more amazing guidance of eleven of them to the site previously chosen; that the timber appears to have been divinely protected from desecration on several occasions (the death of the man who rode the log could perhaps be compared to that of Uzzah); and the belief that the pillars still retain the power to move of their own accord if necessary - these are all reminiscent of the omnipotence of the God of the Old Testament.

When Matenga decreed that the lunar calendar should be followed, he was doing three things. While making a distinct withdrawal from the system brought by the Europeans, he was also returning to tradition. And, in addition, he was adhering to the old Hebraic custom. This was more than Te Kooti before him had done, for while Te Kooti's system also returned to the lunar calendar, it took its emphasis on the twelfth of the

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20. 2 Samuel 7:5-7

month from Revelation 22:2. Matenga's choice of the first of the month was more in line with the calendar of the Israelites. Like the Ringatu, the Kohiti celebrated the first of January and the first of July as festival days, and these have their model in the Hebraic system also, being taken from the instructions of the Lord to Moses as to the conducting of their ritual calendar.\*21

This brings to the fore a further point which should be noted. In many cases what may be taken as adherence to Hebraic scriptural command or Israelite custom, is very often at the same time a holding to or return to the original tradition of the Maori. There is, between the two, a great number a cultural similarities, this being a further reason why, firstly, many of the early missionaries identified the Maori as descending from the Israelites; and secondly, why the Maori himself so readily adopted the same idea and recognized the situational similarity. Just one such parallel will be given here as an example. Slavery was part of both the Maori and the Hebrew social systems. In both cultures slaves could become a part of the tribe or family, and marry into the general people.

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21. See Numbers 28:11; 29:1

## CHAPTER FOUR

Familiar and Foreign

He kai na tangata, he kai titongitongi,  
He kai na tona ringa, tino kai, tino makona noa.\*1

In this section the Kohiti religion will be examined particularly with a view to showing which aspects were traditional and which were taken from the introduced religion. The phenomenological framework used is that developed by the Religious Studies Department of Massey University.

In making the decision whether to use the past or present tense in reference to the Kohiti religion, the past has usually been selected - mainly in order to avoid confusion, as historic events and references to the Prophet himself demand this. But this does not therefore imply that the Kohiti religion is now non-existent.

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1. You can only nibble at another's food; but with food you have cultivated yourself, you can satisfy your appetite.

Brougham and Reed, Maori Proverbs, p. 104.

## Divinities

The Maori in his traditional belief, as did most primal peoples, revered his divinities because of the power the gods held over him. They were, therefore, propitiated and utilized for man's advantage, with the object of everyday religious rites being to maintain a harmonious relationship between the worlds of spirit and man. While this matter of reverence being motivated by the thought of protection from the wrath of the divine is comparable in the Hebrew system, it was the new religion which brought the concept of the necessity for absolute faith in, and allegiance to, the godhead.

But by the time of Matenga, a further tradition was accepted too. It has been a subject much debated over the years, whether the Maori did or did not have a stratified cosmology headed by a Supreme God (Io) before the arrival of the Pakeha.\*<sup>2</sup> What seems to be the point most relevant to this study is that in the time of Matenga the Maori certainly had knowledge of Io - whether it was from traditional sources or adopted. If it was traditional, the knowledge of it had by now been released to the mass of the people rather than being restricted. It is particularly notable that the most full explanation of the tradition of Io originated from the Ngati Kahungunu.\*<sup>3</sup> Consequently, this tradition would have been familiar to the Wairoa people from at least the 1860s, if not before. It is therefore necessary to relate that view of the cosmology with the beliefs of the Kohiti, and so to compare it with that of the Hebrews.

In this case, then, the view of God was very similar to

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2. For a good background to the controversy, see J. Prytz Johansen, Studies in Maori Rites and Myths (Copenhagen, 1958) p. 36 onwards.
  3. Johansen, Maori Rites and Myths, p. 39

that of the ancient Hebrews, and yet followed that of Maori tradition. While God was the monotheistic being known to the Israelites as Yahweh, the concept can also be recognized in the power which was Io. Io was a remote figure, and the task of the ordering of everyday human and worldly affairs was delegated to several gods concerned with various functions. In the Kohiti faith God was very much concerned with his creation, intervening in its workings in order to effect his own plans. In this case, then the God of the Bible took the place of both Io and the pantheon, and it is most likely in this light that Matenga saw the Pakeha Atuanui. Certainly some of the practices of the Kohiti would tend to support this view - such as the karakia which accompanied the felling of the timber for the tapenakara, and the prayers for rain to move it.

As the ancient Hebrews would not pronounce the sacred name of their Lord, so was the name of the Supreme said to be regarded as esoteric knowledge to the Maori in the pre-European period, with only the worthy members of the whare wananga knowing of it. So too, the Prophet Matenga would not pronounce the holy name of Ihowa, and referred instead to 'te Hahi' - the Church.<sup>\*4</sup>

While Matenga allowed the existence of other divine beings, such as angels, they did not seem to be of great significance in the Kohiti religion itself. (The existence of angels inhabiting the heavenly realm can be recognized as comparable to the pre-European concept of ancestral spirits as atua.) It was accepted that the angel Gabriel may have been the agent of revelation for others such as Te Ua Haumene and Te Kooti, but there was no need of these intermediaries in the Kohiti religion.<sup>\*5</sup>

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4. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

5. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

## Persons

The role of Te Matenga Tamati, the founder of the Kohiti religion, was similar to that of the Old Testament prophets and leaders, and Matenga fulfilled a social and spiritual need of the Wairoa people of his time. Like his ancient counterparts he received revelation direct from the divine source, and so acted as intermediary between God and man. As were the old-time prophets, he was given a specific task to accomplish - one which had great significance to his suffering people. Like the ancients he was a strict leader, keeping the people to the commands of God, and imposing penalties when necessary in order to keep up the standards demanded. Matenga possessed powers which were claimed to be divinely given.

The great leader-figure who was both a social leader and spiritual adept was of course a part of the Maori traditional social system. The Rangatira or Ariki was quite likely to be a tohunga tuahu also, and the gifts of matakite and healing were accepted powers possessed by some souls. There is, however, a difference between the role of Matenga as a new-style prophet and that of the tohunga or matakite before him. While the traditional figure usually sought actively to divine the will of the gods by the use of devices such as the niu, Matenga's revelation was not sought by him, but divinely bestowed without the agency of any material aids.

The concept of the prophet-figure is central to Kohiti belief, with Old Testament figures and later prophets accepted together with the concept of a continuing line of prophetic figures. The prophetic designation of Te Kooti was continued in Matenga, and after Matenga there was to be at least one more, for another was to complete the tabernacle. The prophecies of Te Kooti which refer to another who would come after him were believed by the

Kohiti to be fully realized in Matenga. While the two never met, there was no doubt in the minds of the new Prophet's followers that it was to Matenga that Te Kooti referred.

Matenga, like the Old Testament prophets, was entrusted with a specific task, and this he fulfilled. With the materials for the temepara in readiness, he was told his work was now ended, and like those before him he accepted this command. His role after that was to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, and this he did to his death. He did not concern himself with political matters, other than to see that a 'treasure' was set up to ensure the continuing security of the temple and the Kohiti religion.

His powers of healing - disregarding the method used - were certainly regarded to be a gift from God, and an adjunct to his prophetic and spiritual mission.

And yet, the role of Matenga as prophet did not include any belief in his own divinity (as for Christ). In this too he not only follows Maori tradition, but the pattern is also that of the Old Testament prophets who were men divinely chosen for a special task amongst their own people. It is in line with this belief that there has been no attempt to preserve any sort of lasting link with the Prophet. His grave is not now traceable, no photographs of him are revered, and there has been no question of his returning to guide his people as an Atua.

His relationship with his followers was very much a person-to-person one. He did not keep himself apart from them, and in fact he worked alongside them, with no special privileges accorded him. There was no special designation by which he was addressed - he was known to the Kohiti simply as 'Matenga'.

## Concepts

The purpose of the Kohiti religion - and therefore the task of the Prophet Matenga - was to act as a spiritualizing or revitalizing force to the Maori people who were at their lowest ebb culturally, socially, and spiritually. At the period of its activity, the natives were very much astride the two cultural systems, with neither foot firmly placed. The religion of Matenga brought them a positive approach to the problems of the day - teaching as it did, that the answer was in the unity of the people. While this inclusive message had a definite social purpose, it is also clear that the manner of the response was very much a spiritual one. Rather than becoming a political leader, Matenga led the people in building up a new spiritual system from which they would gain inner strength.

This religion was based firmly on the threefold assurance that there was an all-powerful God - the creator and sustainer of the world; that the Maori people were his people; and that God had made a covenant with his people by providing them with a prophet to lead them. There is no doubt that the model for these concepts is provided in the scriptures of the Old Testament. This is not to say that the later Prophet deliberately based his religion on the earlier system, but rather it should be seen that as the God who spoke to Moses was the same as spoke to Matenga, and with the situations of the two races being so comparable, then it is inevitable that the solution given in each case should be similar.

The necessity for strong faith was emphasized in the Kohiti religion. It was faith which earned the divine intervention necessary to effect the moving of the temple timber to its designated spot, and even greater faith which will be required to bring about the new age to come. This appears to be a slightly different application of an old concept. While the pre-European

Maori had no doubt about the existence of the gods, his method of approach was one of adherence to suitable ritual rather than an earnest petitioning. Misfortune, or the withholding of fortune, in Maori tradition, was seen as the consequence of failure to correctly perform the due rites, but there was no suggestion of the divinity using punishment as a way to train his people, or to force them to worship him solely.

The concept of God being an all-powerful force was certainly a part of the Kohiti religion - this being seen particularly in the power of the divine will in the protection of the cause. Human agency might perhaps affect minor details, but could have no effect on the ultimate fulfilment of the divine plan. This view is comparable to that held in the old Hebraic system.

The Kohiti beliefs included a strong sense of the sacred, as is illustrated by the great reverence which was paid to God and all to do with religion. Not only correct practices, but even the very use of appropriate words was demanded. Here again the background is from both the traditional and the introduced system. The institution of the tapu had as its very basis this extreme concern for the sacred. The Hebrews, likewise, were taught to regard with numinous awe any manifestation of divine presence.

## Scriptures

The Maori generally exhibited a very enthusiastic approach to literacy right from the early days of European contact. The missionaries deliberately restricted their tuition in reading to the Maori language for a long period, in order to keep the natives from non-religious written influence. (Hamlin, though, did report in 1853 that at the Wairoa station "Twelve of the forwardest of the children have begun to read English".)<sup>\*6</sup> The members of the Kohiti, therefore, had some fifty years of literacy behind them, and as this was based largely on the Bible, they knew the scriptures intimately. It was squarely on this foundation that their religion was founded.

The books of Te Kawenata Tawhito (The Old Testament) were of most appeal - these being those which brought to the notice of the Maori the cultural and situational links between the Israelites and themselves. Of these, the books most used by the Kohiti were Ekoruhe (Exodus) with its history of the wanderings of the Israelites under the protection of Yahweh and the guidance of Moses, and Nga Waiata (the Psalms) containing verses of praise of God often with reference to the time of the exodus, and in their patterning reminiscent of the laments of the traditional waiata.

The verses of these scriptures were memorized by the people as was done also by the Ringatu before them, and in their services no books were used to aid the memory. Unfortunately, as a consequence, no specific examples of the verses used by Matenga can now be found. It is also believed that he revealed some panui of his own,<sup>\*7</sup> but similarly, these are not now available.

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6. James Hamlin, Annual Report to C.M.S. 1853

7. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

In addition to these scriptures, oral traditions arose and stories of the Prophet survived his death. Nothing of this nature was written down, so what survives today are the memories of those who heard these stories in their youth from their Kohiti parents and friends of a generation past.

### Eschatology

The beliefs of Matenga and the Kohiti of the time, on the matter of personal death and the hereafter, cannot now be certain, as Christian doctrine (particularly that of the Ringatu Church) has affected the thinking of informants now. But it could be noted here that the underlying traditional beliefs of the Maori as regards survival of death, and ultimate destinations, were far more similar to the Hebraic than to the Christian teachings. The concept of judgement after death or at a day of judgement, with its consequences of reward or punishment, had been introduced by the missionaries - this being a concept which was formerly quite alien to the New Zealand native.\*8

The promise of the Kohiti religion was the establishment of a new age which would see an end to the cultural and spiritual problems of the Maori people. It must be remembered that at the time of the beginning of the Kohiti religion the Christian mission had been in New Zealand for only eighty years, and in the Wairoa area for only fifty years. In this half-century the Maori

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8. On this matter see Johannes Andersen, "Maori Religion", in J.P.S. 49, No.196, pp 540, 543; and Lieut.-Col. W.E. Gudgeon, "Maori Superstition", in J.P.S. 14, No. 56, p.169.

had been expected to make cultural adjustments equivalent to several thousand years of natural development. Not only their material lives had been totally changed, but their very mental and spiritual concepts had been completely shaken.

The Maori, who had possessed a strong sense of the spiritual aspect of life, had been labelled a heathen and told his religion was mere superstition, and even of the devil. The Maori, naturally, looked for something which would lift him from his wretched social and spiritual condition and restore him to his former exalted position in the cosmic scheme.

That he developed a type of millennial yearning, now seems to be quite predictable. This was a form of millennialism in its broad sense - not necessarily requiring the return of Christ as is usual in many Christian movements, but looking forward to a period of peace and harmony upon earth. It was this which formed the basis of the Kohiti religion, and it is this belief which was symbolized by the new moon.

This was a new age which was to be enjoyed by all. It was not separatist, for a chosen tribe or race or a selected people only - Maori and Pakeha would live together in harmony, in peace, and prosperity.

The new age was a divine promise which would, therefore, definitely eventuate. But the actual time of its advent was dependent upon faith. It would come when the people all gathered together in unity and all prayed, and harps were played so that the earthly assemblage resembled the heavenly one, and harmony was established between the two. So strong was the belief in this coming period of a new age, that much property was amassed in order that no material consideration would hinder the setting up of the new kingdom.

This hope of a new golden age is very similar to the hopes of the Israelites in their simple longing for a home in their ancestral land, with a peaceful existence to follow. There does not seem to be any need to relate it to the millennial hopes of the Christian apocalypse as outlined in the Revelation of St John, for the Christ figure which is so much a part of that is not emphasized in this case.

It was believed that at the advent of the new age, when there was sufficient faith and unity to bring it into being, another rama or guiding light would arise to lead the believers, and under his guidance the temepara would be completed. When all was accomplished, and the Ark of the Covenant installed, then God would speak to the people directly from this spot. There would then be no need of an intermediary, and in this respect too the belief resembles the Hebraic religion rather than Christianity.

### Mythology

(The term 'mythology' is used in studies of religion to refer to stories about gods or God, and accounts of historical events associated with a religion. It does not mean to imply that such stories are without factual basis, as is sometimes popularly inferred from this term. Such stories, though, may have a supernatural level superimposed on them. In this case 'myth' is used in its original meaning of 'story'.\*9)

The whole story of the building of the tapenakara has

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9. See Ninian Smart, The Religious Experience of Mankind (London, 1969) p. 18.

been fully told in Chapter Two, and will not be repeated here, but what must be noted is that the whole episode can be related to both the traditional and introduced systems.

The erection of spiritually significant buildings was of course not a new idea to the Maori, and the manner in which the materials were selected and handled definitely follows Maori practice. There is no reference in the biblical accounts of the building of Solomon's temple to suggest that this was regarded as a strictly sacred task from beginning to end, and indeed many of the workers in that case were not of the chosen people. Instead the element of the sacred appears to be present from the entry of the sacred ark. But in Maori tradition the very trees which provided the pillars were already sacred as part of the produce of Papatuanuku the primal parent, and under the protection of Tanemahuta. As they were destined for use in a sacred building they were also tapu, and so not to be touched by those not fitted for it - just as the materials chosen for the erection of a meeting house (symbolic of an ancestor) were likewise strictly sacred. Whereas Solomon's temple was consecrated at its completion, that of the Kohiti was set apart as sacred from the time of the first steps towards its building.

Incidents are also related which illustrate the protection which surrounded the timber. That which tells of the pillar Joseph being cut up and miraculously becoming whole again, can be likened to the traditional story of the tree which was felled in the forest without the permission of Tanemahuta first being obtained, and which subsequently was re-erected intact by the guardians of the forest (Te Tini-o-te-hakaturi).<sup>\*10</sup>  
The story of the boy who died after sitting on the

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10. See A.W. Reed, A Treasury of Maori Folklore (Wellington, 1963) pp 178-9, 207, 232

pillars to eat his lunch also illustrates the power of the Maori tapu. But both incidents may, in addition, be reconciled with the divine protection given to sacred objects.

The adventure of the logs, named for the twelve tribes of Israel, coming out from a distant country to a new promised land, and the sojourn of Joseph in alien territory, are incidents which illustrate the adoption of the mythology of the Israelites into the Kohiti religion.

### Rituals

The services of the Kohiti were held at the time of the new moon in each month, and followed the pattern instituted by Te Kooti - they began at sunset on the night before new moon, continued for all the next day and night, and ended on the morning of the third day.

The traditional system of the Maori included the celebration of a few significant times in the calendar (New Year, harvest), though these were not fixed days. But they had no conception of any days which were set aside more regularly for religious observances, such as a sabbath. As Johannes Andersen states, while the Maori had no day set aside for religious purposes, "it was a perpetual sabbath; that is, the Maori's religion was his daily life".\*<sup>11</sup> The Hebrew system featured the weekly sabbath and a number of holy days during the year,\*<sup>12</sup> these holy days commemorating some incident in the

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11. Andersen, "Maori Religion", p. 518

12. See Leviticus chapter 23

mythology, or a time of seasonal significance. The Kohiti practice of holding their religious services on the first day of the month therefore has no parallel in either the traditional or Hebraic systems, and so is an innovation of the Prophet Matenga.

There were no holy days set aside to honour the Prophet, and no special practices or rituals were associated with his presence or person. Matenga was a man who lived and worked with his people - neither demanding nor expecting any special privileges. He was, though, accorded the great respect which his unquestionable mana deserved. This is reminiscent of the function of the rangatira figure who worked alongside the people, though not in the extreme form where the mana of the ariki was so strong that people were afraid to come into any contact with him.

No regular rituals, such as rites of atonement, or feasts of remembrance were included, for these were not relevant to the Kohiti religion.

The practices illustrating the strong sense of the sacred have been mentioned already - the working naked when in contact with tapu objects, the extreme reverence to the extent of a careful use of suitable language, and the avoidance of any objects which would affect the tapu nature of anything connected with the temple. While every religious system includes the idea of reverence due to the divine, these specific instances of response can be recognized as having their origin in traditional Maori practices.

Another ritual should be mentioned here - even though it did not actually occur. Upon the completion of the temepara, the Ark of the Covenant was to be taken into the sacred enclosure - being dragged in by two cows. There can be no precedent for this in the traditional system of the Maori, and the origin of the ritual is

definitely biblical. The occasion upon which this occurred in the time of the ancients was when the Philistines had captured the ark, then finding the consequences unwelcome, desired to return it to the Israelites.\*13 There appears to be no obvious parallel here between the two situations. If the ark of the Kohiti (symbolic, for no material object existed at this time) was thought to have been in alien hands, then this must presumably mean that the spiritual affairs of the Maori had been taken over by the European. With the completion of the tapenakara this hold would be released, and the people would again be in control of their own spiritual destiny.\*14

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13. 1 Samuel chapters 5 and 6

14. This is my own interpretation. No-one could tell me why the cows were to be used, so I have attempted to suggest a possible reason. It should be clear, however, that this is supposition.

## Invocations

Karakia was of great significance in the religion of the Kohiti, with much emphasis being placed upon it. God was invoked on every sacred occasion and blessings asked for before anything was undertaken - a service started, a task begun, a journey commenced. In fact prayer became an indispensable pre-requisite to almost any action. Precise details as to the content of these prayers and invocations is now not known, but what is most likely is that they were of traditional Maori patterning with content from the Old Testament scriptures.

The gatherings held at the new moon, and continuing for some 36 or so hours, featured a number of services, and these were for the purpose of praising God in prayer, and invoking his blessings and guidance.

Karakia was a vital part of the healing work of the Prophet. Whether or not any additional method was employed - either application of water, herbal remedies, or touching - the basis of the ritual would be the recitation of karakia for the act of healing was dependent upon the will of God. In the traditional system there were suitable incantations for use on a variety of occasions - for such purposes as making barren couples fruitful, the curing of illnesses, removal of makutu which might be the cause of illness. So in employing prayer for such purposes Matenga was following traditional practice.

## Experiences

The Prophet Matenga Tamati was no mere visionary who experienced flashes of insight regarding the future, but is believed to have been in continuing communication with God, and was therefore able to communicate the Divine Will to his people. Whereas earlier prophets of the Maori people - for instance, Te Ua Haumene and Te Kooti - were said to have been instructed by medium of the angel Gabriel, Matenga's communication was direct, with no intermediary involved. The Prophet heard the voice of God instructing him, and this revelation was to prove a continuing one which enabled him to lead his followers for the twenty years of his mission. This communication was a gift from the divine - it was unsought, and no practices such as divination were employed in order to prompt it or to ascertain the will of God in any way.

Similarly, the gift of healing was apparently unsought, but was a divine blessing or a consequence of his prophetic designation. Several examples of the Prophet's gifts were given by informants. Some of these reported 'miraculous' healing of broken limbs, and others tell of blessings being given to families to ensure the welfare of its members. It is interesting to note a direct parallel in stories told about Te Kooti and Matenga. James Cowan relates how he was told by Pirika Hohepa that several of Hohepa's children had died, one after the other, so he had gone to Te Kooti for help. The Prophet gave his spiritual ministrations and there were no more deaths of children in the family.\*<sup>15</sup> This account closely resembles that told to me by Mr Turi Tipoki who told of eight children dying before the help of Matenga was sought, with the result that a further eight lived.

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15. James Cowan, Tales of the Maori Border, (Wellington, 1944) p. 135

The matter of spiritual healing is always a difficult one to assess, but in this case the reason for the cures does not really matter, for the fact remains that the ailing asked for help from the Prophet and their faith was rewarded - often in a spectacular way.

At the feast held on the occasion of the monthly meetings, it was the practice of the believers present to put down a donation of money on the table (the sum of one shilling and sixpence stated as the regular amount), the purpose of this being to ensure physical strength. The informant who told me of this said that the result was dramatic - one could feel a sense of increased strength immediately.\*16

While the matter of spiritual healing was certainly known to the pre-European Maori, it was generally related to the removal of a makutu, effected through the ministrations of a tohunga. Or a breach of tapu could also result in an illness, and again spiritual help would be sought. In the Hebrew tradition, illness was often evidence of a punishment imposed by Yahweh, as was barrenness in a family. Matenga's view of the cause of such problems is not now known, but what is clear is that the faith of the believers appears to be a requisite part of the healing, and this is reminiscent of the biblical model.

The faith of the believers was rewarded in dramatic fashion on occasions other than healing too, as has been

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16. Interview Api Hape, January and November 1982. It was mentioned also that the Kohiti amount was one shilling and sixpence while the Ringatu equivalent was threepence. This, then, appears to have some connection with the Ringatu practice of 'tapae na koha' (placing the offering), in which several coins (usually three, representing thanksgiving, repentance, petition) of the lowest denomination were offered as a symbolic sacrifice. The practice was often associated with petition in times of ill health.

noted in regard to incidents relating to the building of the temepara. Divine intervention followed instances of intense faith, with the result that the pillars were transported from hills to sea, and the children of Jacob were led to their destined land. With such experiences of divine aid, and answer to prayer, there could be no doubt in the minds of his followers as to the truth of their Prophet's revelation.

### Times

The Kohiti celebrated the time of the new moon as the beginning of their month. In this they were reverting to the Maori traditional practice, and also following that of the Israelites who likewise observed the new moon as the start of the month. But to the Kohiti there was a greater religious significance, for the new moon stood as a symbol for the new age which was the promise of the movement, and the inauguration of which was the aim of the religion.

As was done in the Ringatu Church, the first of January and the first of July were also celebrated. The origin of these is largely biblical - being taken from the instructions given to the Israelites on the observation of their ritual year. It should be noted here, however, that in these cases the celebration of the New Year, and the first day of the seventh month, were organized according to the Gregorian calendar and did not follow either the Judaic or the traditional Maori calendar. That is, the dates were fixed as 1 January and 1 July, rather than at the corresponding season of the Jews, and rather than at te tahi Pipiri (the new

moon after the heliacal rising of Matariki, the Pleiades) and at te tahi te whitu (the new moon of the seventh month).<sup>\*17</sup> So, the festivals were observed according to the European calendar and not according to that of the Maori or the Israelites. Here, then, is an excellent example of how the Maori-Hebrew identification manifested itself - it was a matter of abiding by scriptural command rather than of adopting the customs of the actual Judaic religion.

But the celebration of the New Year was not taken solely from the biblical command, for this was also the time for festivities in the traditional Maori calendar (though the date of New Year varied amongst the tribes), and was marked by a three-day festival.<sup>\*18</sup> Such a commemoration is a common element in primal religions. As New Year symbolizes a reactualization of the act of creation, it therefore implies a new beginning, and its celebration becomes a time of regeneration through a return to the time of origins.<sup>\*19</sup> The traditional three-day festival which was held at New Year might also be taken to be the origin of the monthly religious festivals which lasted over a three-day period.

The observance of the sabbath on the seventh day was a feature of the Ringatu religion, but this was not regarded as a sacred day in the Kohiti faith. As the religious services were held on the first of the month and not each week on a sabbath, such a day did not hold

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17. These are the popular terms for the months of the tribes of the Ngati Kahungunu, to which the Wairoa natives belong. For more details on this subject see Elsdon Best, The Maori Division of Time, (Wellington, 1973).
  18. Best, Maori Division of Time, p. 15
  19. For more explanation of this practice of primal societies, see Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, (New York, 1959) p. 77ff.

any religious significance, though it may have been honoured as a day of rest from work.\*20

Some branches of the Ringatu Church commemorated a Judaic-style feast of the Passover, after Te Kooti's celebration of that festival on his arrival back in his own land from exile.\*21 But it is not remembered that any such observance was included in the Kohiti calendar, and indeed it would not appear to be relevant in the new religion. Though the Kohiti often referred to themselves and their church as 'the Second Ringatu', the term refers to the renewal of the revelation to Matenga, as this had come to Te Kooti before him. It does not mean, though, that all aspects of the new movement followed those of its predecessor.

### Places

The most sacred place associated with the religion is the area at Korito containing the site of Te Karauna and where the temple pillars rest. This is a spot which is still highly tapu, and will remain so.

The temepara to be erected here shows a very developed concept of sacred space which can be related to both traditional Maori and biblical origins. In the primal system the tuahu was the place where the gods were represented - a sacred space set aside at which sacred rites are performed. In addition there were countless

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20. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

21. Greenwood, "The Upraised Hand", p. 59

other spots which were known as wahi tapu because of some association with a spiritually significant event. Such spots were often deliberately sited (as the tuahu was often placed near the heketua or at another place where it would be away from likely pollution by noa substances such as food), but the inherent sacred significance of others was thought to be revealed by special happenings at the place, these attesting to its tapu nature.\*<sup>22</sup>

The ancient Israelites believed that Yahweh was their active leader and guide, and at his command set up a sacred space for him to occupy - the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in the tent of meeting. When the permanent temple was to be erected, the site was to be one which had been revealed already as religiously significant - upon Mount Moriah where their progenitor and patriarch Abraham was commanded to offer up his son as sacrifice,\*<sup>23</sup> and where God had appeared to David.\*<sup>24</sup>

It is now not known if the site of Te Karauna had any traditional religious significance in pre-Pakeha times, but it certainly became a wahi tapu with its divine designation as the destined place of the temepara. The concept of this site, then, as a sacred place can be related to both Maori tradition and the introduced religion in that it was a place of religious significance, and the spot from where God would remain in continuing communication with his people. Te Karauna, in this case, would be not only the spiritual centre of the Kohiti religion, but the focal point of the spiritual and religious life of the Maori of New Zealand.

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22. On this subject see Johansen, Maori Rites and Myths p. 63ff.

23. Genesis 22:2

24. 1 Chronicles 21:15 to 22:1. Some scholars are not certain whether the two Moriahs are the same historical spot, but even the latter incident is sufficient to denote a place as sacred to the Lord.

In the time of the Prophet and for many years after his death, all sacred meetings of the Kohiti were held at Te Karauna. In addition to the monthly meetings though, additional social gatherings were held in the homes of the believers.

The religion lacks the existence of places designated as holy because of their association with the Prophet. Te Matenga Tamati was not regarded as a divine being himself, but only as a medium for the revelation of divine will. Therefore the place of his former residence is all but forgotten, and no sign of his grave remains. This may be seen to be both a break from Maori tradition, and also compliant with it, as in pre-European times elaborate memorials were often erected to honour a dead leader or Rangatira, yet their graves were very often unmarked and secret for fear of desecration. In the case of Matenga, though, the reasoning seems to be more in line with the view of the Prophet being the mouthpiece of God and therefore not to be associated with practices which might tend to deification. It is therefore more of introduced origin. It is interesting to note that the 'last Kohiti' expresses his satisfaction that Matenga's grave is no longer precisely marked, for this he likens to the location of Te Kooti's grave, which is unknown also. When speaking of this matter it is notable that he used the very words which occur in scripture in reference to the resting place of Moses - "no man knows the place of his burial to this day".\*<sup>25</sup>

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25. Deuteronomy 34:6  
Interview Api Hape, November 1982

## Objects

No objects of religious significance were used in any Kohiti services, nor is there anything tangible which might be used as a symbol for the religion (for example the cross of the Christian church, or the gesture of the upraised hand of the Ringatu religion). As has been mentioned, even books were not used in services - neither scriptures, nor prayer nor hymn books.

The thing most central to the Kohiti beliefs was the new moon, and it is for this that the religion is named. If there was to be any symbol for the movement it must undoubtedly be this, but I have been unable to find any reference to its being used in any tangible or pictorial form. Neither have I been able to ascertain whether there was any form of ornamentation, such as carving, planned for the temple pillars.

The Ark of the Covenant, though it never actually became a physical reality, had conceptual existence, and must be regarded as the most significant object of the Kohiti religion. This was patterned on the model of that built by the Hebrews on instructions from Yahweh, and the details of the later ark were likewise given by Ihowa. This object was to be the earthly symbol of the power of God - it was therefore to be strictly tapu. This concept can be seen to have its roots in both traditions. The original ark was highly sacred as it stood for God on earth, and must not be defiled by being touched by the heathen or those not ceremoniously fitted and prepared. In Maori tradition, the mana inherent in a thing rendered it sacred in the same way - none but the tohunga could approach it, and then only after appropriate karakia. Any contact with a noa object or person would defile it in the same way and diminish its power. Both arks were to symbolize the covenant made between God and his people - an agreement made first in the ancient times and then renewed with the later people. In addition, both of the arks were to be the earthly

Seat of God - from this spot on earth the Lord would guide his people.

So too were the materials for the tapenakara sacred. It was due to their sacred nature that they were treated with the utmost reverence at all times, and remain so to this day. This appears to owe more to the traditional side than to the new. Whenever the temple pillars were handled it was only after the due rites had been performed, and the men who touched them worked naked. This has no precedent in the customs of the ancient Hebrews, but it is completely in line with the traditional Maori practice, for the tohunga always worked naked when he performed highly tapu rites.\*<sup>26</sup>

The harp was to be played in the gatherings of the Kohiti in order to bring about the promised kingdom - the new age. This is an instruction of the Prophet which, although it is to be observed literally, symbolizes the harmonic link between heaven and earth. As the angels play their harps above, so too should the people below. In that event the earthly will resemble the heavenly, and the microcosm will therefore be in harmony with the macrocosm. This is, of course, from the new religion, and many biblical references can be found referring to the playing of the harp in praise of God.\*<sup>27</sup>

The water used in the healing conducted by Matenga would be considered a sacred substance. His supply was from a spring on his property. This was a usual source of wai tapu in former Maori tradition, with sacred ceremonies and rites often taking place beside the water.\*<sup>28</sup>

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26. See Apirana T. Ngata and I.L.G. Sutherland, "Religious Influences Today", in N.Z. Institute of International Affairs... 1940, p. 349.
27. Psalms 33:2-3, and Revelation 14:2 are most appropriate to this.
28. For details on the subject of wai tapu, see Johansen, Maori Rites and Myths, p. 20ff.

## Institutions

The followers of Matenga called their movement 'Te Kohititanga Marama' (the First Appearance of the Moon, of the Reflection of the Moon), or the Church of the New World. But the Prophet set up no religious institutions to formalize the administration of the new church, and none were set up by the believers after his death.

The revelation given to Matenga apparently did not include any instructions to this effect, and this is in line with the view of the Prophet as mouthpiece of God and not a divine being in his own right. While Matenga was alive he himself was the tohunga, and as he had been divinely appointed he could not pass on his function to another. When the time was right for someone else to carry on his work, then that one would be appointed similarly.

There was little set ritual - the emphasis being placed on feeling and individual inspiration rather than on adherence to definite formulae and doctrine. In this respect, then, there was little in the way of format and practice which required a continuing formal institution by which to preserve it. So no priesthood or any other order evolved. (The lack of any such institution could perhaps be the reason that the Ark of the Covenant was to be drawn into the tapenakara by cows, and not carried in by priests.)

Here, then is a definite contrast to the organization of the ancient Israelites with its continuing priesthood of the tribe of Levi, and also to the Ringatu church which had a system of functionaries set up by Te Kooti. In the Kohiti movement members did in fact act as officers and religious functionaries when necessary, but no definite institutions were set up to formalize this. The believers would act under individual inspiration,

doing whatever had to be done on each separate occasion. This practice continued after the death of Matenga - should something need to be done, then someone would arise to fulfil whatever role was appropriate to the occasion.<sup>\*29</sup> This is obviously the reason why the religion does not appear to survive at the present time, but the Kohiti feeling behind this would be rather that the religion does exist for it is the will of God, and that when the time is right it will be renewed and will again flourish.

It appears that, lacking any orders of functionaries, the only thing which may be regarded as an institution is the land which was given for the purpose of ensuring the security of the temepara. Without an ongoing system of leadership, and lacking too a written tradition of history and scriptures, there would seem to be nothing material which would remain to ensure the continuance of the religion. But the fact that a very substantial amount of land is held in trust until the time of the new leader, means that the existence of the Kohiti religion will never be in doubt. The land, then, must be regarded as the sole institution of the Kohiti, and also as its lifeblood, and its memorial to the Prophet.

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29. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

## Ethics

The Prophet Matenga instituted no new code of moral ideals or laws. There was no list of prohibitions such as dietary regulations designed to set the Kohiti apart from others.<sup>\*30</sup>

This, though, is not to say there were no such standards set. On the contrary, Matenga insisted that the moral laws of the past be kept. The Kohiti code was therefore based on Maori tradition and missionary influence.

A reasonable understanding of it can be gained by a review of the Prophet's directions to his followers. His strong opinion of his daughter's action in marrying her first cousin shows adherence to the traditional law - though this most probably occurred in the period prior to his prophetic designation. The extreme reverence for anything of a sacred nature, and a sense of what behaviour was fitting in relation to sacred matters can be attributed to Maori tradition, but supported by biblical example. In addition the Kohiti were taught complete reliance on the will of God, and this governed many of their actions.

The reason why a new system of social or ethical values was not set up, would appear to be because it was not appropriate to the movement. The Kohiti was not a new religion which would demand a whole new system of doctrine, scriptures, rituals, institutions, and ethics, but it was rather a renewal of religion. In view of this, no new code of precepts was necessary.

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30. Interview Api Hape, November 1982

## CHAPTER FIVE

Classification and Conclusion

Kotahi te kohao o te ngira e kahuna ai te miro ma,  
 te miro pango, te miro whero. I muri, kia mau ki  
 te aroha, ki te ture, me te whakapono. \*1

The Kohiti faith was a vital movement in the Wairoa area for more than thirty years. Its positive view and teaching of inclusiveness and unity brought to the believers a hope, a dream, a promise. Prominent members of the Maori race - Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), James Carroll, Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare - ably saw to the political needs of the Maori of the time, and did much to improve their economic and social conditions. But there was another side to this need too - a spiritual longing in the people, and it was this spiritual need which was the concern of Te Matenga Tamati.

Many studies have been conducted on the subject of new religious movements, in an attempt to find a common pattern in their formation, purpose, and characteristics. The Kohiti religion will be related to the models formulated in order to see if it fits into any of the recognized categories.

In new religious movements categorized as 'messianic movements' \*2 the motivation of social need is a

1. "There is only one eye of the needle, through which the white, the black, and the red threads must pass. After I am gone, hold fast to love, to law, and to faith." Spoken by King Potatau (Te Wherowhero) at his coronation. (Note that Brougham & Reed's translation, Maori Proverbs, p. 63, specifies the "religion of Christ", but this is not explicit in the saying.)
2. See Stephen Fuchs, Rebellious Prophets (Asia, 1965) p. 2. Fuchs gives a number of characteristics which recur in messianic movements. While it is debatable whether the Kohiti movement should be considered a messianic movement in its strict sense, the characteristics are usually common to new movements generally, so will be considered in relation to the Kohiti.

commonly occurring factor - this being the result of a clash between two cultures of different technological advancement. Social dissatisfaction can arise from a number of causes - for instance, a disorganization of the original culture, relative deprivation, and a surge of nativism in response to a clash of cultures. All of these were applicable to the Maori situation generally, and therefore relevant to the Kohiti people also.

The clash of cultures places the people involved in a spiritual dilemma as well as a social and cultural bind. While they naturally feel a great yearning for the traditional system which has served their people for centuries and is the basis of their very culture, they can see also that the former beliefs no longer translate well to the new world. While not willing to cast off the old completely, yet forced to some degree of adherence to the new because it is basic to the new values and conditions, a syncretism is formed in an effort to reconcile the two. This syncretism can be seen in the Kohiti religion in its emphasis on the Old Testament scriptures, because of the number of parallels which occur between the Maori culture and that of the ancient Israelites. In contrast, the culture of the Christian missionaries and settlers was almost totally alien to the New Zealanders.

In some societies faced with such a dilemma the resulting reaction is one of extremism, with the traditional ways being almost completely set aside for the adoption of new methods which bring wealth; or else a rejection of the new in protection (sometimes with a physical component, meaning war) of the old. But these are generally reactions typical of an earlier period in the colonization process. By the time of the Kohiti, there no longer existed any real choice - the Pakeha was obviously here to stay and the only appropriate response was one of syncretism, as is seen in the movement of Te Matenga Tamati.

The appearance of a charismatic leader is another characteristic of new religious movements - such leaders often being radical figures who make extravagant claims and exert a strong hold on their people. A common picture of such leaders shows them as demanding total faith and obedience from their followers, with the leader himself being regarded as apart from the people in station. There is active recruitment of followers, and those who are willing to support the methods of the leader are put into positions of authority. The mass of the people are then asked to make a total commitment to the cause by radically changing their lives or by giving up their assets to it, and those who will not conform are dealt with severely.

Matenga, on the other hand, was not such a type, but is remembered as a modest and moderate man not given to extravagance in either claim or living, and was not an active evangelist. He was one with his people and demanded nothing for himself, but complete faith in God. His powers of matakite and healing were not emphasized as proofs of his own greatness, but accepted naturally as gifts of God. Matenga made no exclusive claims for himself or the religion, and instituted no hierarchy, but simply fulfilled the task he believed he had been instructed to do.

As the motivation behind the setting up of most new religious movements is a rejection of the established authority, there usually occurs, to some degree, an element of rebellion against it. The Kohiti faith, on the contrary, took a positive approach to the situation and sought to find a solution in a syncretism of old and new. This they accomplished by accepting Christianity through its own predecessor, with which they were more culturally familiar. So, while no rejection of the established secular authority occurs, there may be seen to be an implied rejection of the authority of the Christian church.

New movements often include a teaching of a great golden age which existed in the past - to serve as a contrast for present conditions. The usual revival of interest in the traditional religion is therefore a yearning for that idealistic time, and implies a further rejection of the new order which took the people further from it. The promise of the new movements is that of a coming millennium or period of earthly paradise, often accompanied by the appearance of a messiah. Regarding the future rama - in the Kohiti belief there is no suggestion that this person be of divine origin, such as the term 'messiah' might suggest. He was to be, simply, a further leader, as was Matenga to his people.

The Maori feeling generally, was that the new religion of Christianity failed in its appreciation of the holistic nature of the universe, in that God was removed from the creation. In this respect, then, the old views would seem to refer to a sort of golden age when the gods were with people and the two had an active and continuing relationship. In the Kohiti religion God is seen to be actively concerned with his people, to the point of intervening on their behalf; and this intervention was with the sole purpose of establishing that state of peace and harmony upon earth. With the Kohiti this was to be effected in a positive manner, with all inhabitants included in the new golden age.

The Kohiti faith was never instituted formally as an independent church as were, for example, the Ringatu and Ratana churches, though both of these have similar origins as sectarian movements formed in protest against the established church.\*<sup>3</sup>

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3. Sects are religious movements which differ in some doctrine/s from the orthodox beliefs of the established religious authority. For more detailed consideration of the characteristics of sects, see Bryan Wilson, Religion in Secular Society, (Harmondsworth, 1969) p. 207ff.

Sects, generally, are lay movements which deny any division of religious roles - the believers usually sharing the functions otherwise fulfilled by a professional ministry. The hierarchical structure of the church is often replaced by one of equality and community, though in the case of those founded by a charismatic leader, the continuance of a line of leaders is also likely.

The sect's purpose is protest against the established religious order in a positive manner - by the setting up of a new movement in which those aspects rejected in the former system are corrected in the new. The strength of the sect is dependent upon the degree of devotion given by its members - these having complete belief and trust in the new values on which the group has been formed.

Despite the fact that there was a definite founder of the Kohiti religion - and one who claimed revelation from God - the new movement was one of community, with no hierarchical structure either in the time of the Prophet or later.

On the subject of response to the world, consideration of Bryan Wilson's "Typology of Sects"\*<sup>4</sup> would categorize the Kohiti religion as not 'conversionist' for it did not try to transform the world by active evangelism of society. It was certainly not 'revolutionary' as there was no aim to pull down the present social order by force, and it did not restrict membership. While the Kohiti believed the answer to the problem of the people lay not in the world but in God, there was no attempt to isolate themselves from a polluted mankind in favour of their own spirituality, so it cannot be termed 'introversionist' either. As there is no teaching of the Kohiti religion offering esoteric exclusive

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4. See Bryan Wilson, "A Typology of Sects", in Roland Robertson (ed), Sociology of Religion (Harmondsworth, 1969) pp. 361-383.

knowledge to members, and because it accepts a very personal idea of God, it cannot be regarded as 'manipulationist'. The 'thaumaturgical' label does not suit the Kohiti for it lacks the necessary emphasis on spiritist practices. 'Reformist' movements are characterized by a more secular approach to the world than is found in Kohiti. The 'utopian' type sect tries actively to reorganize the world along community lines, demanding a more outgoing and radical approach than was seen in the religion of Matenga.

As a new religious movement the Kohiti faith, or Church of the New World, has some features in common with other such movements generally. It does not, however, appear to fit into any of the recognized types easily, and so cannot be categorized as a messianic movement or a Christian sect.

The problem is, of course, that any attempt to categorize the movement in this way, commits the error of imposing a model which is totally alien, upon a situation which it cannot possibly suit. What is necessary is to attempt to see the movement from its own viewpoint, in its own perspective, yet on the background of the historical settings - and then to appreciate the characteristics it did manifest.

Matenga set up no institutions to officialize or formalize the religion, and no steps were taken to have the movement registered or recognized officially in any way. There would appear to be two conclusions which can be drawn from this - firstly, that it was intended merely as a movement for the time and therefore it was not essential that any features be included to ensure its continuance. This would seem to be denied by the basic doctrine of the faith - that of the millennial hope promised. And it would also make the matter of the building of the temepara pointless, except perhaps for providing some mental diversion for the people away from

their own situation over a few crucial years. While possible, this seems most unlikely. In the case of some movements begun by a charismatic leader, that person is content to merely gather a following in his lifetime, and is not concerned with whether or not it continues past his death. But this would not appear to be at all consistent with what is known of the character of Matenga himself - a man who was modest, at one with his people, and did not seek publicity.

The other conclusion which could be drawn is that no institutions were set up as such a step was not thought to be necessary, because as the religion was the will of God, no man-made considerations were needed to safe-guard it. The religion of the Kohiti was based solely on faith in God - God being seen as leader, protector, provider. This conclusion, then, would appear to be both possible and probable.

Matenga was not an innovator, as can be seen from the doctrine and concepts of the religion. Few new elements were introduced - with most of the beliefs and practices having their basis in either the traditional Maori system or the Old Testament scriptures. This fact too, would support the conclusion that Matenga had not set up the movement for his own gain or satisfaction. But it is fully in accordance with the belief that the Prophet was merely the mouthpiece of God, and the commands given were those of the Divine.

No teachings in opposition to the new establishment - either the government or the church - were incorporated in the Kohiti religion. In most new religious movements founded by a charismatic leader, there are doctrines which deviate to some degree from the tradition from which they arise - in this case the Christian church. But here there is no element of any such rejection, and the emphasis on the Old Testament scriptures in this case should not be regarded as criticism of the

established church, but rather, simply a natural approach to any learning situation, through the acceptance of the familiar aspects first. Also, any religion which is divinely revealed will be geared to the people for whom it is intended, and be appropriate to their condition and situation.

The Kohiti religion can be considered a 'revitalization' movement in regard to the Ringatu Church, and indeed the members referred to themselves and their church as 'the Second Ringatu'. The Church of Te Kooti, it was thought, was denied full blessing because of that Prophet's record of warfare, and it failed to place special emphasis on the New Age, as symbolized by the new moon. Because of these factors it was necessary that the divine guidance be given through another prophet in order that these things be set straight. So, rather than being just a revival of the Ringatu Church, the Church of the New World was a revival, or a renewal, of the message of God to his people.

The revitalization was also of the Maori people themselves. With a renewal of the divine message, the Kohiti were revitalized in their spiritual lives, and turned back to the things of the spirit.

If the Kohiti religion must be categorized at all, it is perhaps best to regard it simply as a movement of reconciliation; as a stopping-place on the search for a new Maori theology - a journey made necessary by the clash of cultures between native and newcomer.

If this is considered as a search of man's making, then the result can be seen in that light - the religion was based on models which were familiar, through both tradition and introduced scriptures. It included what was relevant to the condition of the people and the situation of the time. For instance, it did not follow all the Hebraic ordinances as some were not relevant,

But it took what was appropriate. In this case, then, the new Prophet would institute what changes were necessary to guide the people on the next stage of their journey.

But this was not the viewpoint of the Kohiti themselves. They believed that their spiritual destiny was in the hands of the Lord, and all aspects of the new religion were divinely revealed. In this case, there can occur no deliberate patterning of the religion on an earlier model, but all of its aspects are provided because they are suited to the situation and are relevant to the people. Similarities occurring are a natural result of parallels between people and circumstances, and the fact that the values of God are unchanging.

What is more important, is the fact that the Kohiti faith served the people of the Wairoa area for more than thirty years when the need for spiritual guidance was at its highest. It welded them into a united people by giving them a hope and a promise for the future.

Kia tau te rangimarie ki a koe, e Matenga;  
pai rawa e te pononga pai, e te pononga pono.

APPENDIX A

(Extracts from the journal and reports of James Hamlin)

Journal of James Hamlin, 20 December 1846

...there were one or two who almost profess Papahurihiaism which contains a host of nonsense. They profess to believe\* they can foretell future events and are inspired according to their notion of inspiration that their bodys\*\* are absorbed and that they have half a dozen spirits by the help of which these spirits bring them a plenty of money and wine Tobacco and I know what besides. I advised those who a\*\* little affected with this strange meddly [?] to think and repent of their sins before they attempted to approach the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

\* Hamlin adds this comment between the lines -

These natives appear to be going on steady but here the great enemy has been sowing his tares.

Report to the C.M.S. Secretaries, 1847.

...I found two who profess Papahurihiaism which they had imbibed at Nukutaurua. These people are going on well at this place; but the great enemy of souls has been sowing tears\*\* amongst the wheat. This strange medley consists in this, that they pretend to use the books we have given them, but in addition, pretend to inspiration and prophesy, though it is mixed up with much ignorance and nonsense that it scarcely deserves the name. They pretend to have a number of good spirits (though the spirits of heathen, who lived and died as such) prompting them to that which is good; they have prayers about half

\*\* sic

a dozen times in the night. These spirits bring them, or their spirits, a plenty of money, wine, Tobacco and I know not what else, and when asked to produce it, their reply is, that no one else can see it but the person who receives it. I advised these two to repent of their sins before they attempted to partake of the communion of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Journal of James Hamlin, 22 November 1847

...a small party of about ten who had arrived here today from Tangoio a place in Mr Colenso's district. Among these was a person who pretended to cure all manner of diseases by his prayers. After our short service was over he came and sat round our fire and began to tell of how many persons he had cured by his prayers and that Mr Colenso approved of what he did for his was not the old system of the native priest but a mixture of the old and new (or christian) and destroyed the effects of the bewitching system of the native priests and he was enabled to perform these cures by the assistance of the spirits of the departed heathen. I have had and still have a good deal of trouble at the Wairoa with this system consequently I was prepared for him. Having heard his whole story I opened fire upon him. I commenced by saying our Saviour says no man can serve two masters etc. I also quoted many other passages and then told him his was a system of lies from beginning to end and that God has said that all liars shall have their portion in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. I was sorry to see several bapd [sic] natives siding with him this however only shows how deep rooted their superstition is in all their hearts very few appear to be altogether from it. Finding himself vanquished on all sides he begged to give up the contest and to talk about something else which was accordingly done.

James Hamlin to C.M.S. Secretaries, 10 January 1853.

(extract begins on page 6 and continues to page 10)

...

Papahurihiaism, which the natives call a karakia wairua (a religion of spirits) has appeared at various times modified and changed to suit the state of the native mind for the time being. In the early times it used to promise its votaries those things which the natives most esteemed and admired. Subsequently to whites coming into the country, it offers them horses coats of male &tc (sic) from having seen Hongi's, I suppose. It must, however, be remembered that it is only the spirit of these things which none but the initiated can see and hear.

In the beginning of -45 when I first came to the Wairoa, some of the natives of Table Cape having had some dreams, this system was again taken up, and the native teacher of this place who was much respected by the natives joined, it continued unabated a considerable time, and it was not till the beginning of last year that he was received back again, but not to his former employment. Many of the natives of this congregation joined this foolish system. They pretended that these spirits from the other world brought them horses tobacco, wine, books &tc. but only the spirit of them, and which they only could see and hear.

It was revived in the Wairoa district last season by an old woman who formerly pretended to priestcraft whose name is Tangaroa, still more modified and assimilated to the feelings of the natives of the present time. She pretends that her God Brown (the spirit of a baptized child who died some years ago) comes from heaven and brings medicine to cure all diseases. It is a wet white substance, some kind of medicine which she no doubt gets from the whites. It does not however cure all diseases for almost all bad cases have died

under hands. To make all palatable she denounces popery, and tells all about her to be strong in the cause of Christ - to go to Church - to attend prayers morning and evening. Hence many of the natives thought that she was under the influence of the Spirit of God. She likewise pretends she has communication with angels; and that her God reveals to her who amongst them lives in secret adultery and fornication, and when any great person is ill who it is that bewitches them. For this object when I returned from Turanga in December Apollos\*, a native of Turanga who had become a native teacher of Jenishanga\* accompanied me, to inquire of this woman who had bewitched Rawiri and Wikitoria two great persons of Turanga. His object in coming he kept a perfect secret, nor had I any suspicion of it till after his return. Little or nothing of what that woman was doing was heard of in our immediate vicinity; but when I visited the inland tribes about 3 months ago, I found her doctrine amongst them. I preached several sermons against it. I took for one text Acts 16:16. On hearing this discourse many of the natives came and told me that the reason why they listened to her at all, was, that they thought that what she said was very good, but as they had heard from me a very different account of it they should abandon it.

I told them that Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, and his great object in all that he does is one, namely to draw away the mind from Christ.

I then explained to them at some length, and told them that the Bible contains the whole revealed will of God, and if we hear not Moses and the Prophets, and his Word by Christ and his Apostles, neither shall we be persuaded though one rose from the dead. With this they seemed satisfied. There are however several

\* sic

individuals who still take their children to be medicined by her nearly the whole of them have died; this has weakened their attachment to her deception.

The words of our Saviour are a test to all such persons. By their fruits we shall know them. This person who sometime since denounced fornication has been known to excite persons to the committal of those crimes; her doom is therefore fixed. It has never given me much concern, for though it may seem to spread for a little time their works can not endure the light that is now abroad in the land. But before I have done with this woman I must mention, strange to say, that she used to tell those who consulted her not to forsake me, but to attend to my directions. I am, however, thankful to say I do not need her assistance.

On the fourth of Dec. as I was going up to Turiroa I met her on the path on which I was going, there was no escape. She put out her hand to shake hands with me, I put mine behind me, she grasped the upper part of my arm and passed on. In the evening holding service at this place she appeared among others who came. I endeavoured to impress upon my hearers that there was one God, one Saviour, and one spirit by which both Jew and Gentile are acceptable to the Father. God would never leave this great work for a poor little silly child to perform who knew not how to take care of itself or provide food or clothes for itself. At the close of the service, I waited some little time outside expecting some observations would have been made on the discourse I delivered in the house, but not a word.

Besides Papahurihiaism their<sup>\*</sup> are also their dreams in the interpretation of which much confidence is placed. These in time past has lead<sup>\*</sup> to much practical evil. They are still more or less recognized by many of the natives and are made the omens of good or evil.

\* sic

The twicking\* also of the muscles of the body is regarded by the same individuals as indicative of something to be desired or dreaded according to the direction to which the twicking inclines, and many other things of a like nature which are a great hinderance\* to the gospel of Christ exerting its due influence on their hearts.

From these observations it may seem that the Christianity of the natives is mixed with much that savours of the old system - that they are in fact children and though there are many examples of stability amongst them there are not a few who are liable at times to be again entangled in that thralldom from which they profess to have escaped. I know from long experience that in times of difficulty and sickness the native mind is occasionally subject to misgivings peculiarly its own, and there is often a struggle between light and darkness of which christians in our highly favoured country can have little or no conception.

...

\* sic

(As the text of the microfilm is undecipherable in parts, this copy has been checked with the original which is now held at the library of the University of Birmingham, England.)

APPENDIX B

From W.J. Phillipps, Carved Maori Houses of the  
Eastern Districts of the North Island (1944)

Kowhiti Temple

In any survey of former houses of the Coast, this temple may be included because of its historical background. Briefly, the story as given to me by Mr J.H. Mitchell, of Wairoa, is as follows:

A faith-healer named Te Matenga Tamati, who lived at Putahi Pa, near Wairoa, proclaimed himself Te Kooti's successor. He proposed to his followers that a tabernacle be built of twelve posts forty feet long and four feet by four feet wide. These posts were to be named after the twelve children of Jacob, and were to be erected in a square without walls or roofing. A Covenant 6ft. x 4ft. x 4ft. was to be placed in the square. This Covenant was to be dragged into the temple by a pair of cows.

In 1895 twelve totara trees of the required size were felled at Mangatawhiti at the back of Ohuka near Waikaremoana. These were trimmed and shaped; and it took seven years to have the logs hauled to the main stream (Manga-a-ruhe). Each sub-tribe now sought to have the temple erected at their own pa; but the prophet declared that the log named Joseph would lead the other logs to the right place.

After a severe flood all the logs were washed out to sea at Wairoa. Eleven logs were cast up on the beach at Korito, near Whakaki, some miles east of the Wairoa Bar. The missing log, Joseph, was ultimately located at Waikokopu; and no time was lost in chartering the steamer "Tangaroa" to tow the log back and beach it alongside its bretheren. Because of these occurrences the prophet proclaimed that the temple would not be

built by that generation. The posts still remain strictly tapu on the sand dunes at Korito and are marked on a Government Survey map as "The Twelve Apostles." Te Matenga died about 1914; but his adherents are still awaiting the "rama" or guiding light which will direct them to build the temple.

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### Comments

This account is quite accurate as far as it goes.

It does, however, tend to imply that the site of the proposed temple was left to chance, being determined by the agency of the tides. In this case, then, the temple should have been constructed at Waikokopu where Joseph, as the leader, had come ashore. But my informants were adamant that Korito was the destination designated from the beginning, which explains why Joseph was brought back there, and the other 11 not taken to join it.

Regarding the ship "Tangaroa", see footnote 20, page 45.

From Thomas Lambert, The Story of Old Wairoa and the East Coast District, North Island New Zealand (1925)

(Follows an account of Te Kooti's visit to Wairoa in 1886)

As a result of this visit, interest was revived in a project, long dormant, to build a great Hauhau temple at Whakaki. I may state that years ago Hauhau contingents from various parts of the district met at Whataroa, near the Manga-a-ruhe. There they cut down and dressed in the square four large totara trees - splendid sticks they were, being three feet square at the smallest part and sixty feet long\*. These were to be the corner pillars of the temple, and it was prophesied by Matenga Tamaki Te Ua, a "prophet" who died at Hastings in July, 1909 that the logs had to lie where they were dressed until, by means of a flood or other agency of the atua, they were conveyed to the site of erection, but no human hand was to help in bringing them down to the sea. To a certain extent this "prophecy" was fulfilled, for in the great flood of 1904, when a Native named Tamati Waaka was carried down on a floating log and drowned, the temple pillars also came down and were secured at Kihitu. Several efforts were made by the Natives to induce the logs to proceed to Whakaki without human aid, but these failed, and Captain A. Knight and the "Tu Atua" had to be invoked to carry out that work. For years they lay high and dry on the Whakaki beach, protected by a fence of barbed wire, and, of course, strictly tapu. Hauhauism being long since as dead as Te Kooti himself, the logs were fated to remain there, and doubtless by this time some Maori, uninfluenced by the fear of the tapu, has split them up into house-blocks for some modern dwelling to replace the extinct whare.

\* At Okere, where the trees referred to were cut, two settlers not long ago came across a "plant" of silver coins to the value of £3 10/-, partly blackened by fire. It is supposed it was an offering made at the time to the Maori atua.

### Comments

This account suggests that the plan to build the temepara pre-dated Matenga's revelation by some years, and there has been no evidence elsewhere to support this. On the contrary, my informants are positive that the plan was given to the new Prophet after the death of Te Kooti in 1893. Should the project indeed have been "long dormant" by 1886, then it would have been planned well within the active period of Te Kooti's campaigns, and this was the period during which the natives of the area were fighting against Te Kooti.

Lambert, in referring to these people as "Hauhau", is committing an error common to the early period. This term was frequently applied loosely to all reactionary movements after that of Te Ua Haumene in the early 1860s. But it is incorrect to apply it to anything other than Te Ua's Pai Marire religion.

The author gives Whataroa as the place where the totara were cut. Whataroa is about 5 kilometres in direct line south-west of Mangatawhiti, just to the southern side of the Mangaaruhe. This could be, in fact, a more precise location than the references to Mangatawhiti given by all other sources. If so, it shows the site to be far more accessible to the stream.

This too, would make the suggestion in Lambert's footnote more than an intriguing theory. The rite of 'tapae na koha' (placing the offering) as practised by the Ringatu at this time, consisted of the offering of coins for thanksgiving and petition, and these were then placed on a fire and burnt. This ritual of sacrifice has its roots in the traditional culture where it was practised in regard to 'first fruits', and it can also be seen to have its parallel in the sacrificial burnt offerings of the Hebrews.

While Lambert states there were 4 trees, there is no doubt whatsoever that he is quite wrong here.

Regarding the alternative name of the Prophet - there is also no doubt that Mr Lambert is wrong in this too. The name was definitely 'Tamati', not 'Tamaki', and the additional name 'Te Ua' has no place in this particular family. Mr Ronny Bell was definite about this, and all other informants agreed upon it. Matenga did not die in Hastings, and the date of his death is certainly not 1909, but is unanimously agreed to be 1914. I feel that Lambert may have confused the Prophet, in this respect, with another person.

Tamati Waaka could have been the name of the man who drowned - certainly the name 'Tamati' is in this case common to other accounts.

Lambert states that the pillars landed first as Kihitu, and were then moved to Whakaki. No other account mentions this point, but all agree that they landed first at Korito, some kilometres east of Kihitu and a few more kilometres west of Whakaki. There appears to be no reason to regard this alternative version as at all factual.

While the 'Tu Atu' didn't drag 4 logs from Kihitu to Whakaki, it is possible that this ship may have towed the one errant pillar back to Korito. (See footnote 20, page 45)

Finally, Lambert's last supposition is completely conjecture, and is totally erroneous. The 12 logs remain to this day on the beach as they have done since 1904. (See photographs)

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Article in The Wairoa Star, Wednesday August 16, 1950

W h o s e     R e m a i n s ?

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FOUND WHILST  
EXCAVATING

---

SOLUTION OFFERED

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The discovery of human bones last week in the vicinity of the riverbank whilst excavations were being carried out in connection with the sewerage scheme, has caused Mr T. leC. Powdrell to forward particulars of a peculiar incident which occurred nearly 40 years ago as the result of which a man was drowned and possibly the remains found last week were those of this victim.

Mr Powdrell states that 40 years ago the headquarters of the Ringatu Maoris were at Whakaki, and a prominent member and leader had convinced the followers that if they were to build a church at Whakaki then the Messiah would come to earth. Accepting this prophecy as correct a party of Maoris set off for the Mangapoike district and felled 12 very fine totaras which they named after the 12 Apostles.

As usual, the Maoris left the trees handy to the river so that they could be later drifted down stream. However, an exceptionally heavy flood came and away went the trees. The majority of the logs drifted ashore at Whakaki, but an exceptionally large one travelled alone. In the vicinity of Ruataniwha it was seen by two Maoris, Tamati and Shag, who went out to claim it. Unfortunately for them their canoe capsized and they sought safety by climbing on to the totara. They endeavoured to paddle ashore, but were unable to get out of the current. Near the spot where the bones were recovered, the tree came fairly close to land and the Maoris decided to make a jump for it. Shag was successful in reaching shore, but

Tamati failed to do so and was drowned. Thus, possibly the bones may have been those of this unfortunate Maori.

Concerning the log, this drifted to sea and eventually came ashore at Kereru, a little cove near Waikokopu. The Whakaki Maoris were keen to regain the totara, so chartered the Tu Ahu,\* under Captain A. Knight, and had it towed back to the settlement where it was drawn up on the beach. There it lay with the others for some time awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. Finally the Maoris concerned with the erection of the church quarelled among themselves it being decided to sell the totaras. Fearing that the trees would be burned, something approaching sacrilege in the eyes of Ringatus, a number of followers of that faith dragged the totaras inland where they were buried and there they remain to this day - awaiting the arrival of the Messiah.

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\* (My note) Should be 'Tu Atu'.

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Comment

These memories of Mr Powdrell give further backing to the basic story of the passage of the temple pillars down the Wairoa River. It is particularly interesting as it shows a Pakeha view of the Kohiti religion.

He calls the people concerned "Ringatus" which they were not, strictly, though some association between the two is recognized.

The 12 logs have been called the Twelve Apostles, but this term appears to have been a Pakeha one only - not used by Maori. All Maori sources say they were named

for the 12 children of Jacob, and therefore have Old Testament rather than Christian significance.

The statement that the temple was to be built in order to invoke the Messiah is an interesting one, although it appears to have no basis in fact, as it is unsupported by any further evidence. Indeed the opposite (that the Messiah would come to build the temple) could even be more true, for it was another leader who was to build the temepara. It may, therefore, reflect the suppositions of the Pakeha community regarding the Kohiti religion. Such a millenarian view is a European Christian concept, and it does not fit in with the other known beliefs of the Kohiti.

Mr Powdrell appears to have confused Mangapoike with Mangaaruhe, in his memory. The Mangapoike is a different tributary of the Wairoa River, extending into the Wharerata-Hangaroa area north-east of Wairoa rather than into the Ohuka-Waikaremoana district to the north-west.

Whakaki is the settlement some kilometres to the east of Korito.

This account says that the log onto which the men climbed was the leader Joseph. This has not been specified in any other report. If this were in fact true, it would be most interesting from the point of view of Joseph's later alternative destination. Should this pillar be travelling alone, as stated, then because of differences in the tides this would account for its different landing place. But from a more spiritual view, the fact that its tapu was affected by the action of the men, could well have produced the same result.

There is no suggestion from any other source as to the truth of the matter of the quarrelling over the fate of the pillars, and they were not buried as is stated here.

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Letter in The Wairoa Star, August 18, 1950

#### THE TOTARAS

Sir. - Mr T. leC. Powdrell states that it is possible the bones uncovered at Alexandra Park are those of the unfortunate Maori who was drowned when trying to bring one of the "Twelve Apostle" totaras to shore.

I believe he is wrong, because I was an eye-witness to the drowning, which took place at Spooner's Point. Mr Powdrell is correct in saying that one of the men - Shag - jumped ashore at Alexandra Point after the canoe capsized and they had clambered on to the log but the other man remained on the log until at the river's bend a strong southerly wind rolled the log over and he was drowned.

The river had been in flood several days then and was running very fast so that his body must have been swept out to sea. - I am, etc.,

SETTLER.

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#### Comment

This account by "Settler" is similar to those told to me by informants.

GLOSSARY OF MAORI TERMS USED

- Ariki - high chief; chief of a whole waka (canoe) or tribal area
- Atua - God, divinity
- Atuanui - great God, Supreme God; as the God of the Europeans
- Atua Pakeha - the God of the Pakeha or Europeans
- Heketua - lavatory, latrine beam
- Hurai - (transliteration) Jew
- Ihowa - (transliteration) Jehovah
- Io - God. Name of the Supreme Creator in Maori cosmology
- Karakia - prayer, invocation, chant
- Kaumatua - elders of an area
- (Te) Kawenata Tawhito - The Old Testament
- Kohiti - the new moon
- Makutu - curse, black magic
- Mana - prestige, influence
- Matakite - seer; second sight; prophecy
- Mate Pakeha - European illness or disease
- Mate Maori - Maori illness or disease
- Ngati Kahungunu - the tribe to which the Wairoa people belong
- Niu - to tell the future; also sticks used for this purpose
- Noa - not tapu; free from tapu
- Pa - village (originally meaning a fortified village)
- Pakeha - European, non-Maori
- Panui - verse/s
- Papatuanuku - the Earth Mother
- Rama - light, torch
- Rangatira - chief

- Tapenakara - (transliteration) tabernacle  
Tapu - sacred, holy  
Temepara - (transliteration) temple  
(Te) Tini-o-te-Hakaturi - the multitude of Hakaturi.  
birds, or fairy-like creatures  
Tiu - (transliteration) Jew  
Tohunga - expert, specialist, priest  
Tohunga tuahu - high priest  
Tuahu - sacred place
- Urupa - cemetery, burial ground
- Wahi tapu - sacred place  
Waiata - song  
Wai tapu - sacred water  
Whare wananga - school of higher learning

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