

# Moderator's Waitangi Day message 2024

## Tēnā koutou katoa

As we approach Waitangi Day on 6 February, talk of the Treaty and what it means for our country and our people is to the fore.

There is some rhetoric that is inflammatory and harmful. Some policies from within the new coalition government have prompted uncertainty, anger and fear. There are many voices speaking into this space – some helpful and some not.

Within our PCANZ Book of Order we have set out the following:

### 1.5 A cross-cultural and multicultural Church with a bicultural commitment

(1) *The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi):*

- (a) *was signed in 1840 by the Crown and Tangata Whenua,*
- (b) *made extensive settlement of New Zealand by Europeans possible,*
- (c) *retained certain specified rights for Tangata Whenua, and*
- (d) *has been characterised as a "partnership".*

(2) *It is within the context of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) that the Church recognises a bicultural partnership between Te Aka Puaho and its other church courts. These bicultural partners work together within the mission of God*

And

(4) *The Church affirms that it is cross-cultural in that it recognises that the richness of the Christian Gospel and its proclamation can be found in the sharing of experiences, wisdom and learning from many different cultures. The Church stands in opposition to any view that favours one culture over another as holding a monopoly on the interpretation or transmission of the Christian Gospel. In affirming the Church to be cross-cultural, the Church is also affirming that the Christian Gospel creates community across cultures.' [PCANZ Book of Order]*

This is who we say we are as a Church. We honour the Treaty, see relationship at the heart of how we operate: relationship between Tangata Whenua (the indigenous people of the land) and Tangata Tiriti (all others who have come here). We uphold respect for and the worth of people of other cultures.

It has been encouraging to see more people engaging with workshops and gatherings at Te Maungarongo marae in Ohope – exploring Tikanga Māori, The Treaty of Waitangi, Te Ao Māori and more. Relationships are being built, conversations are taking place, knowledge extended, understanding is growing. There is also an increasing use of Te Reo within churches and work going

on to help resource the Church in this space. This is all very helpful as we journey together.

As followers of Christ, we seek to follow his example of seeking justice, healing the broken, having compassion for others, bringing good news to the poor, treating all people well. In order for our society to flourish we need all people to do well in their context so this is something we would wish to support and foster.

On Waitangi Day I will be involved in the services at Waitangi alongside the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, the Rev Tamiana Thrupp. It is an honour to work alongside him at this important event for our Church, and at other events in the life of our national Church.

As we face the current divisiveness in our country, we continue to pray for, and seek to action in our own contexts, justice, equity, respectful dialogue, attentive listening to others, finding ways forward that honour all people, and living out our faith as followers of Christ – the one who came to bring fullness of life to all people.

### **Te manaakitanga – The blessing** (Philippians 4:7)

*Ma te mārie a te Atua  
e kore nei ē taea te whakaaro  
e tiaki ō koutou ngākau ō koutou hinengaro  
i roto i a Karaiti Ihu;  
ā kia mau kia ū hoki ki a koutou  
te manaaki a te Atua Kaha Rawa,  
a te Matua, a te Tama, a te Wairua Tapu  
āianeī ā āke tonu atu.  
Āmine.*

*May the peace of God  
which passes all understanding  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus  
and may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be with you and remain with you now and always. Amen.*

Rose

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