David Wakim Memorial Lecture 2019

Building a Community of Communities:
Challenges for Aotearoa New Zealand

Kia ora tātou. Ngā mihi nui ki te mana whenua o tēnei rohe. Ngā mihi hoki ki ngā hapū me ngā hapori maha o ngā motu o Aotearoa. Ki a tātou e huihui nei, tēnā tātou katoa.

Reflecting on what happened on 15 March this year led me to the theme for this lecture: "Building a community of communities: Challenges for Aotearoa New Zealand." One of the outcomes of the terrible assault in Christchurch has been our country's recognition of Muslims as a community. Before this, the mainstream media occasionally told us that a certain Muslim man or woman had such and such to say, as if there were a scattering of worthy Muslim individuals through our country. Although we knew that Muslims gathered in mosques, we mainly heard about a mosque when there was a suggestion that it was sheltering worrying radicals. There has been a change. Those in government and in the media now talk about "the Muslim community" or, even more correctly, "the Muslim communities." This gives Muslims a more effective voice. What is more, we are getting a picture of a community of communities that care about our country and local areas, and who want to be part of contributing to the general wellbeing.

What we might ask is why it has taken such a terrible disaster for a community that is not Pākehā to gain this sort of recognition? In what ways are other communities in our country being marginalised and rendered voiceless? How far have we as a country moved beyond a monocultural dominance?

Before moving into looking at these questions, I want to pay tribute to David Wakim, to whom this memorial lecture is dedicated. David was the first national president of Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand. He was a man deeply committed to working for peace and justice. Janfrie, his wife, told me that it was through getting to know him as a truly kind man that she was attracted to him in the first place. Others talk of his compassionate and listening ear when he worked as a pharmacist in Mount Eden; and his staunch and early support for the treatment of addiction as a health issue.

In the pharmacy, David met refugees and other migrants who found he had an empathy and understanding for their situations. David's feeling for those who were on the margins stemmed in part from his growing up in Australia as the son of a Lebanese migrant family; his father migrated in 1930's and his mother was a second generation Aussie. Later, he went to Lebanon and took the opportunity to visit Christian and Muslim sites. This began his interest in the shared connections between and among the faiths of the Abrahamic tradition. In Lebanon, David also saw the Palestinian refugee camps. He was to become a passionate advocate of justice for the Palestinian people.

Kevin McBride talked to me about David as a very peaceful man. Even in dealing with issues he felt passionately about, David found non-confrontational ways to bring others on board; this was important because he was often aware of justice issues well before others

around him. His foresight was particularly evident in his initiating, over two decades ago, the meetings of Christians and Muslims which led to the present Council of Christians and Muslims. How important those meetings and that dialogue have been—in face of the events of this and earlier years, and the prejudices that keep resurfacing!

I personally felt David's quiet support in my working with those of settler descent in trying to advance our respect for and just relationships with tangata whenua. Thank you, David, for the inspiration and encouragement you gave so many of us. Okioki i roto i te rangimarie.

Building a community of communities in a country like Aotearoa New Zealand is a big question and I can only offer partial insight. I will look at what has happened historically to create a situation where *community* identity and interests are too often disadvantaged. Understanding the history can help us see other possibilities for living and what is needed for change. I will conclude by identifying some of the things I see that are making a difference. In this room, many of you have insights and experience to bring to this issue and, so, when I have finished there will be time for you to share with one another your insights on things that can work to build the common good within communities and across communities, and to foster mutually beneficial relationships between communities.

For those who don't know me, I am a Pākehā woman of English, Irish and Cornish descent. My more recent academic training has been in Māori Studies at the University of Auckland. In the late 1990s, I started work on a phd dissertation, looking into the nature of the Crown's relationship with Iwi Māori, ie, with Māori as a people of peoples. Why did I choose this topic? Because I could see that, although the NZ Government had started recognising Treaty grievances and the need to address them, there was still much unhappiness amongst hapū and iwi with the Crown and its mode of operation. What was the underlying problem? I asked. Through my research, I learned how the Crown (New Zealand's government) is a monolithic structure that stands in contradiction to the tribally-based world. I will come back to this point.

What I learned from my thesis was reinforced when I became part of an independent panel listening to Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu leaders talk about their history and what their tūpuna intended in entering into He Whakaputanga, the Declaration of Independence, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. From what the leaders shared, I came to understand the Māori world as *a community of communities*, a nation of nations. Each hapū, each community, had and has its own mana and autonomy but across the country there are shared understandings of philosophy and law that set a framework for relationships between and among communities and with the land. And the fostering of inter-community relationships was and is highly valued.

While gaining these understandings, I learned how the New Zealand settler government and economy were established and became a direct attack on the *communal* base of hapū and iwi. Essentially, in the nineteenth century, we had put in place the forms of government and economy that predominate today. I believe, that unless there is change at some fundamental levels, we will find that private, individualised interest will continue to militate against the wider good of communities – whether indigenous or those of our many other ethnicities and faiths.

During my research, I found that many of our country's issues regarding the non-recognition of communities and their interrelationships are replicated internationally. Suresh Sharma is an Indian anthropologist and philosopher who wrote on tribal identity and the modern world. He placed the oppression of tribal groups in India at the door of the modern state. Sharma says that for 3000 years the history of India was that of an accommodation of multiple political styles and centres. Even if "far from perfect" the relations maintained were of an order completely different from those that came with the modern political arrangements. These started with colonisation and are being continued today by those who, at key levels of government in India, would like to replicate the European "homogenous social order."[1]

While Sharma's particular concern is with tribal peoples and their place within the state, his arguments are relevant to the present situation where the Indian government is acting to undermine the semi-autonomous position of Kashmir. His observations are relevant, too, to Western colonisation and the establishment of unitary models of government in many other parts of the world. For Pax Christi, the dominance of the centralised Indonesian government and the plight of Timor Leste, West Papua and Aceh immediately come to mind.

Another international commentator with similar concerns is S. James Anaya, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People. In his book, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*, he emphasised that "self-determination" struggles are linked to the rights of *peoples*. They are not simply about the rights of individuals. Anaya pointed to the way in which the territorial divisions of states stand in contradiction to the overlapping territories and authorities of *peoples*. The rigid border lines that divide one state from another reflect "the traditional Western theoretical perspective that limits humanity to two perceptual categories – the individual and the state."[2]

These observations by Anaya have lots of ramifications. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the settler government put provincial and regional boundaries in place that cut right across the territories of hapū and iwi, adversely affecting traditional boundaries and relationships. What is more, our electoral system is based on one person, one vote and rarely allows for the representation of hapū or other diverse communities *as communities*. People might say, "Oh, we have diverse representation on our community board." But we need to ask whether the individuals have been voted in because they appeal to the general public rather than being there to represent the insights and interests of their communities. Something for us to think about!

I turn now to some slides to illustrate the tension between the traditional Māori and the settler forms of government.

[1] S. Sharma. (1994). *Tribal Identity and the Modern World*. New Delhi, pp. 41−42.
[2] S. J. Anaya. (1996). *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 77.

Sites of Power

Whenua-people up

Authority comes from the land and local community

Rangatira have face-to-face accountability to the communities they serve

Hapū direct the rangatira

Monarchical down

Authority comes from the monarch

Centralisation of power and resource

Many modern "democracies" have developed from the monarchical heritage
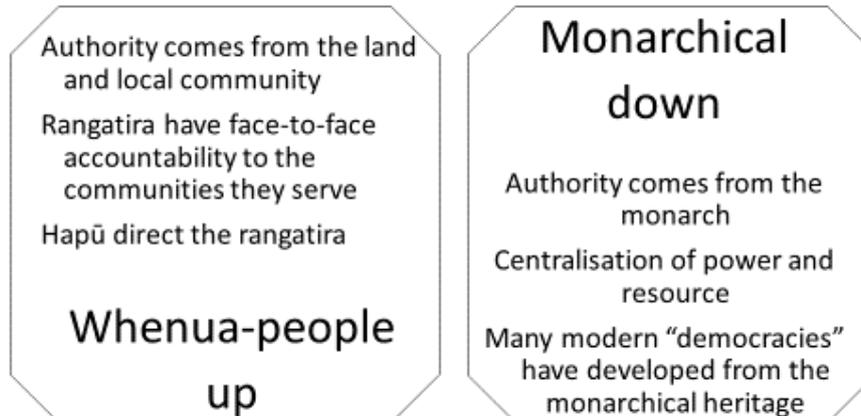
Concept "sites of power" comes from Moana Jackson evidence

Traditionally, in the Māori political order, authority starts with the land and the community woven into that land. While local authority in the form of villages and tribes was long part of the Western European tradition, this authority was displaced over time by the rise of kingdoms and the accompanying centralisation of power and the taking of resources from local communities. This latter is the heritage from which our unitary, top-down forms of government have developed. A key difficulty for tangata whenua with the imposed political order has been succinctly expressed by Sir Edward Durie.

Tangata Whenua and the Sources of Governing Authority

"The first [principle of traditional social organisation] is that political power was vested at the basic community or hapu level. Power flowed from the people up and not from the top down. Control from a centralised or super-ordinate authority was antithetical to the Maori system."

Sir Edward Durie

What neither of these slides brings out, is how the different hapū maintained relationships with one another. And yet building and maintaining relationships between communities, whether human-to-human or human-to-earth, was and is a vital part of the Māori world. In

discussing whakapapa, Ngāpuhi scholar Hone Sadler said, "the worldview of Māori, when it comes to whakapapa, is that everything is interrelated from the sky to the land."[3] In the same vein, Ngāpuhi elder Pereme Porter emphasised that to understand Māori culture is to recognise that it is a culture of relationships. "Our culture," he explained, "is based on relationships with everything and everyone in Te Ao Mārama [the world of light, the physical world] as creatures that whakapapa to the source of that creation, the creator of the cosmos, Io."[4]

One of the misrepresentations of the Māori tribal world is that communities lived in competing and warring groups, and lacked the ability to come together. In his 1839 *Instructions* to Hobson, Lord Normanby described Māori as "a people composed of numerous dispersed and petty tribes, who possess few political relations to each other, and are incompetent to act or even deliberate in concert." This myth was well disposed of for those of us who attended the Waitangi Tribunal's Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu hearing. We learnt about Te Whakaminenga, the Northern Assembly of Tribal Nations. This Assembly was rooted in centuries of hapū leaders meeting together. It gained a particular focus at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the need to reach consensus on the new issues arising from interaction with Europeans. This next slide gives a picture of how Te Whakaminenga worked.

Te Whakaminenga

- Te Whakaminenga was likened to the United Nations in its structure.
- Te Whakaminenga was a confederation, having its own sphere of decision making but committed to upholding the mana of the hapū.
- Law and government in the Māori world operated at different levels. The starting point was the mana of whānau and hapū.
- Reflects the principle of subsidiarity.

Based on Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu evidence

The understandings underlying this structure are those that the rangatira, Māori leaders, brought to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Queen's people were being offered a place alongside their hapū, with her governor as the leader of *her* people. The rangatira certainly had no intention of ceding their peoples' sovereignty to the Crown or of allowing the Crown to impose a single, dominant government that would actively work to undermine the mana of

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[3] Healy, S., Huygens, I., & Murphy, T. (2012). *Ngāpuhi Speaks: He Wakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Independent Report on Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu Claim.* Whangārei: Te Kawariki & Network Waitangi Whangarei, p. 27, citing Hone Sadler, 12 May 2010, *Wai1040 Transcript, Week 1*, New Zealand Waitangi Tribunal.

[4] *Ngāpuhi Speaks*, p. 31, citing *Brief of Evidence of Pereme Porter*, *Wai 1040,* New Zealand Waitangi Tribunal, para. 7.

the hapū and their whole way of life.[5] This is something we need to understand if we are going to appreciate why there are ongoing tensions between Māori communities and the Crown.

Paul McHugh, constitutional expert on the exercise of sovereignty in the jurisdictions of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, summed up the legal view of Crown sovereignty prevailing in these jurisdictions from the late 19th century to the late 20th:

> The Crown's sovereignty is regarded as absolute, unitary and unaccountable, the ultimate expression of this supreme power being the enactment of legislation (the Crown in parliament). Being absolute, this sovereignty is viewed as undivided and indivisible—it can never be shared with any other sovereign entity.[6]

The reports of the Waitangi Tribunal document well the ruthlessness with which the Crown, ie, the New Zealand Government, pursued its aims to break the tribal base and establish itself as the single governing authority in the country.

One particular strategy adopted by the Crown, once the British had the numbers to dominate, was an overt policy of assimilation. Māori were to be assimilated to become like Englishmen. This policy of assimilation has been extremely harmful to Māori identity and, one might say, to the Māori soul.

Besides this, there are other communities that have been harmed by the discrimination aligned to this "conform or else" policy; a notable one is the Chinese who migrated here in the nineteenth century and there are many other more recent examples.

In terms of race relations, I think it is important to recognise the collateral harm of assimilation policy to Pākehā identity and to healthy inter-community dialogue in our country. We can hear Pākehā saying rather plaintively: "We haven't got an identity. We don't have a culture." This sense of non-identity is unhealthy and can be dangerous. It comes from living inside a dominant culture, and especially a culture that has cushioned itself from encounters with communities who live their lives differently. Much self-knowledge comes through interaction with others; and this applies to individuals and communities.

The problem is exacerbated for Pākehā because we come from a culture that is imbued, in ways subtle and unsubtle, with a conviction of its superiority. Let's face it! We come from a white imperialist history. This "superiority" has impeded our entering into respectful and enriching conversations with those to whose lands we came; hence, we struggle with knowing who we are. Developing the skills and finding the spaces for our people to know ourselves as *a* community *alongside* others is an important challenge for Pākehā.

However, it is not only our form of government that has conspired against indigenous and other communities, as communities, in Aotearoa New Zealand but also the fundamentals of our Western economy, especially with its notions of private property. This point has been

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[5] Waitangi Tribunal, New Zealand. (2014). *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti: The Declaration and the* Treaty. Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, p. 529.
[6] McHugh, P. (1996). The Legal and Constitutional Position of the Crown in Resource Management. In R. Howitt, J. Connell & P. Hirsch (Eds.). *Resources, Nations & Indigenous Peoples*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, p. 302.

brought out by James Tully, Canadian philosopher and political scientist, author of *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*.[7] In sync with Suresh Sharma, Tully argues that modern constitutionalism—common to most nation states today—developed out of Europe over the past four hundred years and imposes a cultural and institutional uniformity that is foreign both to earlier European constitutionalism and to the societies colonised by the Europeans. And Tully goes further. He highlights that the constitutions imposed by European powers on their "colonies" incorporate systems of private property and European modes of commerce—both of which have wreaked havoc for indigenous communities whose economies were built on a shared base in the land.

Tully explains that the writing of the highly influential political economists, James Harrington, John Locke and Adam Smith, gave the impression that the implanting of European institutions was historically inevitable. They defined Indigenous peoples as "the propertyless and wasteful hunter gatherer, the vicious savage and the rude native." Particularly insidious were the associated notions that the sole title to property is "individual labour," that Indigenous people are better off as a result of European settlement, and that European commerce is superior to that of the Indigenous peoples and therefore must of necessity bring benefit to them.[8]

Locke's and Smith's persuasions were carried by many who spearheaded British colonisation in this country. And, once Māori communities started resisting the colonists' drive to commandeer significant areas of land, the scorn poured on the "native" way of life became vicious. "Beastly communism" was the term used by Christopher Richmond (Minister of Native Affairs, 1858–1860) to describe tribal organisation. Like others, he wanted the communally-held lands converted to private property, claiming the latter was an important mark of civilisation.[9]

Behind the rhetoric, the 19th century settler government had concrete reasons for seeking the subdivision and privatisation of hapū land. These were not limited to securing land for immigrants. A good number in the settler government were bankers or speculators with a direct interest in getting their hands on Māori land. Speculation in land was seen as an assured investment in future wealth.

Besides this, there were Pākehā traders who resented the competition from Māori groups who often were able to work more efficiently and offer lower prices because of their communal organisation. Hazel Petrie observed that, while early traders married into and became one with hapū, the "later arrivals came with the view that colonisation was a capitalist venture required to yield a profit to the colonisers."[10] For them, the communal hold a hapū had on its land and its co-operative way of working were barriers to their ambitions.

The settler drive to acquire land, and to privatise and subdivide it, led to an all-out attack on Māori communities and their lands. This attack was both physical and legislative. To expand on a phrase used by Sir Hugh Kawharu: while the Crown's wars brought great

[7] J. Tully. (1995). *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*, Cambridge, 1995. The book is a compilation of the 1994 Robert Seeley lectures, delivered by Tully.
[8] Tully, ch. 3.
[9] Healy, S. (2019). Settler Christianity and the Taking of Māori Land. In S. Healy (Ed.). *Listening to the People of the Land: Christianity, Colonisation and the Path to Redemption*.
[10] Petrie, H. (2002). Colonisation and the Involution of the Maori Economy. A paper for Session 24, *XIII World Congress of Economic History*, Buenos Aires, July 2002, p. 18.

harm to Māori, the laws it put in place became "a veritable engine of destruction for any tribe's tenure of land anywhere."[11]

I think this imposed system of private property, so central to the capitalist economy, is a major factor in the inequalities manifest today, in this country and beyond. It is sustained by philosophies that promote individual self-interest over communal advantage. And its narrow focus leads not only to the impoverishment of many but also to a great deal of environmental damage. The inter-related good of earth and humanity is not easily accommodated in this paradigm.

It is, of course, difficult for those of us who are immersed in this system to imagine a different economic reality. However, I believe that we could get a great deal of insight and direction from appreciating Indigenous economies, their values and practices. But to do this we need to find our way through a mountain of prejudice which, as Tully says, puts modern Western institutions as the most progressed and as historically inevitable.

Recently, I learnt a good deal about the traditional Māori economy when preparing a chapter for *Listening to the People of the Land: Christianity, Colonisation and the Path to Redemption*. The chapter was a piece of writing that took an unexpected turn and ended up being called "Rethinking Ownership." I found that far from a "beastly communism," whānau (families) had recognised rights to their homes, garden plots and other resources. But the land as a whole belonged to the community as a whole. Major enterprises, whether of gardening or fishing, were carried out communally with the benefits going to each whanau; they were true co-operative ventures.

Learning about Māori values and practices has pushed me into wanting to know more about the history of the peoples from whom I am descended. I mention this because I have found that many communities throughout Ireland and the British Isles used to farm and do other work co-operatively, and this has been a pattern for communities throughout the world. Somehow, many of us today have been lulled into believing that competitive self-interest is basic to being human—an idea that needs to be questioned if communities and communal interests are to prosper.

Certainly, care for the communal good was built into the whole Māori social and ethical framework. There is much that could be said about this but here I simply give one illustrative example. It appears in the writing of Henry Kemp, a 19th century land purchaser for the Crown. He wrote:

> A special feature connected with the old purchases is one, I think, that should not pass without recognition, viz, that the distribution of the money payments in the early days was in cash, gold and silver. The claim of each member of the tribe, or section of a tribe, however small, was honourably recognised by chiefs of the old school, who frequently left themselves minus the share to which they were equitably entitled. [12]

What Kemp observed about this sort of resource distribution derives from a very long history of practice in the Pacific. A leader's mana comes from the care they show for their people. And underlying the whole Māori ethic is the powerful notion of individuals and communities as kaitiaki, ie, as guardians of the people and resources entrusted to their care.

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[11] Kawharu, I. H. (1977). *Maori Land Tenure: Studies of a Changing Institution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 15. Sir Hugh was referring specifically to the Native Land Court put in place by the Crown, but his description can be applied to a whole raft of laws directed against the tribal base in the land.

[12] Kemp, H. T. (1901). *Revised Narrative of Incidents and Events in the Early Colonizing History of New Zealand from 1840 to 1880*. Auckland: Wilson & Horton, pp. 10–11.

There is much more that could be said about what we can learn from appreciating the traditional Māori social and economic order. Certainly, such reflection can help us see the falsity in some of the precepts that have supported colonisation and have endorsed the major settler-established institutions that prevail to the present day.

I firmly believe that to ensure our common survival on this planet we need to develop a politics and economy that is based in favouring community identity and development, co-operative enterprise, and practices that reflect a deep respect for the wellbeing and integrity of the earth and its communities. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this should start by ensuring care for and dialogue with tangata whenua, those who are the first peoples, the first guardians of this land. Through respectful relationships with tangata whenua, the rest of us will find a right and sure place here, and a foundation for shared values to unite our diverse communities.

In conclusion, I will put up a couple of slides that point to things that can encourage us in terms of movement towards becoming a community of communities in this country. I am hoping that in your following discussion you will add to and expand on the things I have noted.

Signs of Hope
Community in Governing Arrangements

Hapū, Whānau, Iwi, Marae

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Constitutional transformation
➢ Matike Mai report
➢ Treaty-based constitutions for Te Hahi Weteriana/Methodist Church, Literacy Aotearoa …

Organisations with community-based constitution and/or representation
➢ Anglican Church's Three Tikanga, Multi-ethnic and Inter-faith Councils

Co-governance involving hapū/iwi and Crown bodies
➢ Recognition of mana/personhood of Te Awa Tupu (Whanganui) & Waikato Rivers

Tūhoe Mana Motuhake

Signs of Hope
Community-based Economies & Social Welfare
Inter-community Dialogue

> Hapū, Iwi, Whānau, Hapori, Marae and their economies
> Religious and ethnic communities
> Communities of common interest
> Community housing projects
> Co-operative enterprises
> Community environmental restoration projects
> Community gardens
> Transition Towns
> Whānau Ora
> Interfaith forums
> The Christian ecumenical movement
> Diverse celebrations: Dwali, Matariki, Chinese New Year, Christmas ...

What things do you see can work and are working:

To support community and/or co-operative interests and wellbeing?

To foster mutually beneficial relationships between communities?

To build a community of communities in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

Susan Healy

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