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A Historical–Contextual Analysis of the Use of "Tapu", "Utu" and "Muru" in the Māori New Testament and Book of Common Prayer

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Abstract: Building on Wittgenstein's theory of ordinary language use and Lamin Sanneh's insights into the effects of biblical translations in vernacular languages, this essay examines how the translation process in Niu Tireni (New Zealand/Aotearoa) in the 1830s contextualized or indigenized Christian concepts of the sacred/holy (tapu), the price (utu) paid by Christ for the sin of the world, and God's forgiveness (muru) due to that sacrifice (utu). Through translation, therefore, Christian scripture was changed, or acquired new cultural referents. On the Māori side of the translation process, the result of reapplying fundamental Māori concepts to Christian narratives and theological categories was to re-map the Māori mental universe—so that it, also, was not the same as it was before the translation came into being. Through translating the scriptures into the indigenous tongue, they had become a Māori (native/indigenous) possession. In so doing, however, the original cultural framework had flexed towards—if not become drastically reformed by—a biblical understanding of sacred and redemptive time and the actions of a Supreme Creator/Te Atua acting within human history but neither identical with that history nor with creation itself. Nevertheless, we are also presented with a picture of intersecting but not always corresponding meanings as the result of cross-cultural translation—with creative misunderstandings or an epistemic "middle ground" (following Richard White) of multiple meanings being *one* of the inevitable results.

Keywords: translation; texts; contexts; culture; hermeneutics; religious practices; middle ground; *mentalité*; Māori world/*te ao Māori*; New Testament/*Te Kawenata Hou*; Book of Common Prayer/*Te Rāwiri*

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1. Introduction

In October 1840, a Māori tohunga (priest or customary expert) remarked to William Williams—a missionary translator of the New Testament—that the Lord's Prayer had now been *included* in his karakia/ritual prayers (Porter 1974, p. 314); this remark cannot have particularly pleased the missionary given his conception that Christian prayer was distinct in content and practice from the pre-Christian ritual of the tohunga. Such a remark indicates the challenges of interpreting across cultural divides in such a way that the target language fixes the meaning of the source text. Existing cultural/religious practices are then a wider context in which the text must find a "home", *or* new religious practices must be created.

It is now a philosophical–linguistic truism that words take their meaning from the context of their use, and that these contexts prominently include cultural, religious and intellectual contexts (Wittgenstein 2009; Geertz [1973] 2000, p. 17). In that light, what can we say about how Church Missionary Society (CMS) translators of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and New Testament in Niu Tireni (New Zealand) deployed key structuring concepts of the Māori mental and cultural landscape in their 1830s translations—namely, the concepts of tapu, utu and muru? As Wittgenstein aptly described this translation challenge:

> . . . whether a word of the language of our tribe is rightly translated into a word of the English language [or vice versa] depends upon the role this word plays

> in the whole life of the tribe; the occasions on which it is used, the expressions of emotion by which it is generally accompanied, the ideas which it generally awakens or which prompt its saying, etc. (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 212; Maurice 2024, pp. 36–40)

Rev. Octavius Hadfield of the CMS was alive to this same critical question concerning the translator's "use" of words; in 1847, he recommended that missionary trainees should study:

> . . . the philosophy of grammar—to that necessary connexion of words, and their necessary dependence upon one another which must exist in all languages; as also to the fact that all people have analogies and metaphors suitable to their particular language, and not transferrable from one to another. (Porter 1974, p. 315)

By the mid-1840s, the CMS translation syndicate revising the Māori language BCP had derived a more sophisticated set of guidelines for translation (Porter 1974, p. 317). In the early to mid-1830s, the approach was perhaps more rudimentary, but nevertheless, the linguistic abilities of older mission speakers of Māori—William Puckey and others—were combined with the Oxford BA qualifications of William Williams, and advice from Māori members of the translation committee, to produce the first complete New Testament and the texts of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Psalms, together with a number of hymns. This study uses for analysis the 1841 second edition of *Te Kawenata Hou* (The New Testament)—printed in London—and the 1840 printing at the Paihia mission, in Northland (north of the North Island), New Zealand, of the short-form BCP, which included 42 hīmene (hymns) translated from English hymns or composed afresh (Parkinson and Griffith 2004, pp. 75, 84). The Māori language BCP became known among Māori Christian communities (specifically, Anglican or "Mihinare" ones) as *Te Rāwiri*—literally "the David"—after the Psalms that were prominently included within it, or often appended to it. (I note, this essay does not include analysis of the complete book of Psalms.)

When we examine these translated texts in te reo Māori (Māori language), and compare them with their source English texts, what can we say about how these texts spoke to a Māori cultural context or *mentalité* (collective worldview)? What exactly did these translators do with Māori words and concepts—in bending their complex customary meanings to the new or different contexts and concepts of Christian scripture and prayer? How did these new scriptural contexts and narratives exert linguistic and philosophical pressures back onto the meaning of these ancient indigenous terms in the understanding of Māori themselves? Conversely, how did scriptural meanings become imprinted by the new or different Māori contexts of their use?

This essay therefore attempts to analyse some key uses of these terms in the BCP and New Testament translations of the 1830s. It reflects, sometimes speculates, on how these new usages (uses) might have struck Māori as strange, new, revolutionary or, perhaps, simply indifferent. By analysing the particular, local historical contexts in which these translations emerged—namely, the world of Northland in the upper North Island or Te Ika a Maui (the Fish of Maui)—this essay proffers insights into the drama of new Christian ideas being played out in Māori settings.[1] The scene is set for this analysis by first sketching out what these terms—tapu, utu and muru—meant in customary, indigenous, or pre-European worlds.

Drawing on various methodological insights into the study of language and "culture", I conduct an analysis of language use in specific historical and cultural contexts, treating the analysis of both language and culture as a semiotic exercise—as an interpretive exercise in search of meaning (Geertz [1973] 2000, p. 5). In other words, like the first translators of the New Testament into te reo Māori, I am engaged primarily in an interpretative or hermeneutical task rather than one concerned with ideologies or power relations (cf. Ricoeur 1981). Like the original translators, my task as historian is to interpret text in context by becoming as familiar as possible "with the imaginative universe within which [cultural actors'] acts are signs" (Geertz [1973] 2000, p. 13). In simple terms, language has

cultural and intellectual contexts within which it makes sense. In studying language, we are engaged in the study of culture, or *mentalité* (collective worldviews), and vice versa. And following the African scholar of Christian history, Lamin Sanneh ([1989] 2009), and the scholar of imperial cultural encounters, Richard White (2011), we can begin to unpick the ways that source text worked on target language and context, and vice versa, to create a range of possible interpretations and meanings. Sanneh argued that the story of Christianity is, among other things, one in which the translation of the mysteries of revelation from the original scriptural languages into vernacular languages takes centre stage. As Christianity spread via the vernaculars of the Roman Empire and then of the globe, its message was conveyed via ordinary speech "to the ordinary, commonplace world of men and women, and even of children" (Sanneh 1990, p. 2). This also means, as Sanneh critically argued, that as it was translated into the indigenous languages of the world, the Christian message inevitably spoke through the cultural forms, ideas and concepts of these languages. That is, the message became indigenized (Sanneh 2016). Furthermore, as the language use theories of Wittgenstein and others underline, if meaning is derived from how language is ordinarily used in local, particular contexts, then the interpretation of the Christian message was *always* filtered through any number of local vernaculars or "cultural heritages" (Ricoeur 1981, p. 100; Biletzki and Matar 2020). The dynamic of translation therefore involves an inevitable dialectic between, or entanglement of, sacred text and local language. The result, as postulated by the hermeneutical inquiry conducted here, and applying (or redeploying) Richard White's ideas, is an "epistemic middle ground", where meaning is not necessarily settled across the cultural and language divide.

2. Defining the Māori Cultural–Linguistic Context of the Translated Texts

Several historical and more recent authorities assist with defining the early nineteenth century context of tapu, utu and muru, which Christian missions encountered and in light of which they translated their sacred texts. Since these terms and their operation in practice were closely intertwined, I will call them together "the tapu–utu–muru complex". The concept of mana (personal or spiritual authority or influence) was also closely enfolded within this complex of ideas and practices and consequently will also be discussed below.

2.1. Tapu

The earliest Māori language dictionary, William Williams' *A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language and a Concise Grammar* was published in 1844, and a second edition (with additional sections and word lists) in 1852. I quote from the 1852 edition here. William Williams was also the leading translator of the New Testament (first edition, 1837), to be analysed below. Williams' *Dictionary* gave the meaning of "tapu" as an adjective, meaning "sacred", with the example "He wahi tapu; A sacred place".[2] He also gave a substantive (noun) sense of tapu as "A sacred rite", and "sanctity; holiness". Lastly, he gave a verbal sense as "to be sacred; to be holy". It will be seen that these English definitions are inadequate to cope with the cultural complexity of the word tapu, which underlines some of the basic issues highlighted in this essay of incommensurate linguistic–cultural worlds. Also, in a nod to the contemporary, early nineteenth century context of clashing Māori and European missionary mentalities, Williams gave the suggestive example: "Me whakarere nga tapu maori; Let the native sacred rites be laid aside". Another aspect of these definitions is that Williams understood his primary audience for the *Dictionary* to be Pākehā learning the indigenous tongue (see the first edition preface). In that light, his English definitions made sense by utilising the closest commonplace words in English. Nonetheless, these were inadequate to describe the complexity of "tapu".

The scholars who compiled *Te Mātāpunenga: A Compendium of References to the Concepts and Institutions of Māori Customary Law* (Benton et al. 2013) describe tapu as the centrepiece, along with mana and noa, of the Māori and Polynesian sacred system: "The operation of tapu . . . pervaded Māori life and thought". Its specific meanings they give as "sacred, under ritual restriction, prohibited". Tapu is often paired with "noa", meaning the absence

of any restriction or prohibition, or a context in which balance has been restored to people and relationships, or situations in which the degree of "dangerous tapu" has been reduced to a "safe"/noa level (Mead [2003] 2016, p. 36). *Te Mātāpunenga* provides more context, including clues as to how the Christian, scriptural meanings have infiltrated the original usages:

> The term is thus used to indicate states of restriction and prohibition whose violation will (unless mitigated by appropriate karakia and ceremonies) automatically result in retribution, often including the death of the violator and others involved, directly or indirectly . . . In modern Maori it has also acquired the meaning 'holy', as a conflation with Christian notions of holiness and sanctity. In relation to God, this usage is not entirely inappropriate in respect of the older meanings, but in relation to people it ignores the dangerous and restrictive aspects of *tapu*. Violation of *tapu* constituted a *hara* (q.v.), a term now often glossed as 'sin', but, unlike the common meaning of that term in English discourse, the traditional uses of hara did not necessarily imply moral turpitude or intentionality on the part of the violator. The word is derived from Proto Polynesian **tapu*, and its core meaning is constant throughout its modern cognates in most Polynesian and also Fijian languages; ultimately it derives from a Proto Eastern Malayo-Polynesian word *tabus 'sacred', and is thus a concept of great antiquity, reaching back at least three millennia. (Benton et al. 2013, p. 404)

Hirini Moko Mead divides the concept into tapu pertaining to people and to places or things (Mead [2003] 2016). The tapu properties of a rangatira (chief) could, however, be conveyed into other objects, as discussed by Hare Hongi in 1911: if a tapu chief or tohunga touched an object, that object would become tapu itself, and that object could also pass on the tapu still further—"all forms of tapu, excepting that inherited, or that acquired by a powerful tohunga, could be effectually removed by a tohunga", that is, by an expert in the sacred realm who would conduct the appropriate form of prayer or ceremonial. It was also the case that tohunga, who performed such ceremonies, needed to protect themselves from common objects that might diminish their tapu state; this included being fed with sticks to avoid touching food with their hands, as depicted in the recent New Zealand film, *The Convert* (Benton et al. 2013, p. 406; Tamahori 2023).

Historian Angela Ballara gives an historical–contextual account of tapu and mana, concepts that she splices together. Ballara explains both terms as essences or powers ultimately derived from the gods (atua), descending through human ancestors via chiefly lines so that "the highest-ranking ariki (person, male or female, of supreme rank) were sometimes referred to as atua while they were living" (Ballara 2003, p. 75). These atua governed the spiritual and material worlds, which Māori did not divide into two realities as Western religion tended to (at least since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment). Some atua were malevolent and some benevolent but, significantly, these old gods—similarly to most ancient religious systems, including the Judaic—demanded regular sacrifices:

> All atua (gods, ancestors, spirits and ghosts) were to be propitiated and warded off rather than loved or worshipped. The essential feature of relations with them was to avoid their tapu . . . Māori observed and avoided tapu as if their survival depended on it, which they believed it did. Their lives were dominated by the wehi (terror, awe, fear) of committing hara (offences) against the tapu of atua, living or dead. In practical terms, this fear or awe of spiritual forces wielded in life by their ariki, tohunga and other grades of people in authority was the glue that held their lives together and imposed order on an otherwise chaotic or random world. (Ballara 2003, p. 75)

The most important powers possessed by traditional tohunga (priests) were to impose tapu, or to remove it (Ballara 2003, p. 76). This was achieved by performing various rites or ceremonies, or by offering sacrifices—in extreme or very tapu cases, human sacrifices were made to dedicate important houses or canoes (Ballara 2003, p. 77).

Although the religious system could be regulated by these tapu people, who were often also tribal leaders (chiefs), a religious system built around avoiding, or constantly propitiating, tapu contrasted with the Christian idea that the Divine Being was to be worshipped, even loved. Nevertheless, there was blood sacrifice at the centre of the Christian faith—a subject to be returned to.

2.2. Utu

Williams' *Dictionary* defined "utu" as "payment; ransom; reward", and as a verb, "to pay"—giving the example, "Utua taku mahi; Let my work be paid for". It is noteworthy that in 1844/1852, Williams did not provide "revenge" as a definition for utu; although it could bear that connotation in the Māori world, a later, colonial view reduced its meaning to this narrow definition. Williams did give the word "uto" for revenge or "object of revenge" a couple of entries before "utu" in the *Dictionary*. *Te Mātāpunenga* (Benton et al. 2013, p. 467) confirms the essential meaning of utu as "reciprocity", and gives its derivation as follows:

> Return for anything; satisfaction, ransom, reward, response, etc., hence 'make response, whether by way of payment, blow, or answer, etc.' Ultimately derived from Proto Polynesian *utu 'compensation, payment, return', which acquired the secondary meaning of 'revenge, vengeance' in Nuclear Polynesian languages such as Hawaiian, Māori, Rarotongan and Tahitian.

Tregear's scholarly *Māori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* of 1891 confirms the Pacific-wide importance of the concept of utu, its Māori meaning given as "an equivalent; a return; the price paid; to pay for; to compensate; a reward, a ransom". Tregear gives the Polynesian comparative meanings, indicating the common and indeed positive (beneficial) aspects of utu, the Tahitian sense given as "a present to visitors, as a token of peace", the Hawaiian "uku" defined as "to pay, to remunerate; . . . to compensate, either good or bad", and the Tongan phrase "feutuaki" meaning "to do alike to each other" (Tregear 1891, pp. 582–83).

Despite acquiring this "secondary meaning" of "revenge", Ballara considers that originally, in pre-European times, revenge/uto was distinct from the more basic concept of reciprocity or restoring balance, viz., utu. Although retaliation after the loss of kin apparently reflected a "common human condition", the "primary purpose" of seeking utu, argued Ballara, "was to maintain the prevailing order in society" (Ballara 2003, p. 83).

This prevailing order primarily centred around the mana and tapu of a group's high-status leaders. In other words, the mana and tapu of the group or hapū (tribe) was bound up with the mana and tapu of its leaders. If rangatira (chiefs) or tohunga (priests) suffered injuries, insults or death, these needed to be recompensed by taking lives outside the group (see, for example, the curses avenged by Te Rauparaha on Ngāi Tahu: Tamihana Te Rauparaha [c. 1869] 2020; Calman 2023, eps 4). The most common form such utu took was therefore warfare of some kind, of which there are many examples from the early nineteenth century. Sometimes lives were taken from groups unrelated to the original incident to ensure the survival of related kin groups. In the notable Ngāpuhi case of the 1830 "Girls' War", where a high-status chief, Hengi, was killed, the peace settlement reached by the local contending parties did not satisfy the utu required. To obtain that utu or satisfaction, his sons sought deaths from people in southern regions, who were unrelated to the original dispute. The imperative to take utu was so strong it was often taken by any and every means available (Ballara 2003, pp. 96–99, 204–5).

What therefore seems like basic (or base) retaliation was driven by fundamental spiritual categories of tapu and mana. In such a religious system, utu was a religious requirement or obligation: "If the group or its chief lost mana through some defeat, their power to impose tapu and thereby to order their world was also lost. The restoration of lost mana was essential to the continuation of the descent group as an independent unit of society" (Ballara 2003, p. 81).

If tribes were enslaved, their mana and tapu were diminished, often to the point of being lost. Compelled to do the menial, ordinary or "noa" work of cooking and garden cultivation, they could not maintain their independent religious ceremonial. Therefore, death in defence of mana and tapu was often preferred to "the tapu-less and mana-less status of slaves" (Ballara 2003, p. 81). Nevertheless, slaves of rank were often treated differently, with some respect, while slaves of more common birth were more likely to be dispensed with to satisfy utu requirements (Ballara 2003, pp. 100–2; cf. Petrie 2015, pp. 39–75, 217–24).

2.3. Muru

The word "muru" had three closely related entries in Williams' *Dictionary*: as a noun, "A plundering"; as an adjective, "plundering"—a "kai muru" was a plunderer; and as a verb, "To plunder; to wipe". The example given for the last reflected the historical context: "Kua murua te kainga o Tipitaha; Tipitaha's abode has been plundered". A fourth entry was for "murunga"—the "act or time of plundering".

Mead describes muru as "ritual compensation" (Mead [2003] 2016). In essence, it consisted in taking goods or moveable property of some kind to compensate for insults or injuries that did not require the more serious forms of utu, including death. *Taua muru* were armed parties sent out to plunder or "strip" goods for these reasons.

Sometimes the stripping might be from parties only distantly related, or even unrelated to the original hara or wrong committed (Stokes 2002, pp. 66–69). In the case of injury or death to the great Ngāpuhi leader, Hongi Hika, the mission stations were warned to expect taua muru in response; the Whangaroa mission of the Wesleyans did suffer taua muru during the January 1827 war between Hongi's group and other local tribes (Williams 1961, pp. 36–38, 51–52; Ballara 2003, pp. 198–99). In other cases, muru could be sought even from the chief or tribe who suffered the injury—somewhat counterintuitively to Western assumptions that compensation should return to the person injured (Ballara 2003, pp. 107–8). For all forms of utu, of which muru can be understood as a subset, or a closely allied concept, the "essential element was that an equivalent payment had to be achieved, by whatever means and from whatever source" (Ballara 2003, p. 83).

2.4. The Tapu–Utu–Muru Complex

The above discussion has outlined the basic definitions in what can be understood as a fundamental "tapu–utu–muru complex" in Māori society. It is a fundamental cultural "complex", because it conceptually and materially framed or controlled all significant human action within society. Concisely stated, and to paraphrase the literature, this complex was sourced in the connection between humankind and the gods (or spiritual beings) such that any actions or words that diminished the tapu nature of people or things needed to be recompensed through the taking or payment of an equivalent for that lost or injured. This would restore their tapu condition and with it the psychic or spiritual essence or authority of the injured—that is, their mana.

Appropriate ceremonial, including peacemaking ceremonial (hohou rongo/tatau pounamu/rongomau), was another way to restore relational balance to groups at war. Through such ceremonies, groups would transition from a tapu state of warfare and conflict to a state of "noa" or "ea" with respect to each other. Women could initiate peace agreements and were often given in marriage to secure them (Mead [2003] 2016, ch. 10). Similarly, war parties returning from battle would "perform the ceremony of Whangaihau; after which they are noa, and are at liberty to go about their ordinary business" (Wiremu Tamehana, cited Stokes 2002, p. 24). Appropriate karakia was in general a way to control or regulate tapu states or conditions, returning people to common or unrestricted states of being.

It is important to return the discussion of the tapu–utu–muru complex to the interactions of human beings with spiritual beings, atua or gods. These interrelationships and genealogies were the source of the complex. As the tohunga Te Mātorohanga stated: "Be-

cause *tapu* is the first thing, if there is no *tapu* all the actions of *atua* have no *mana*, and if the *atua* are lost everything is useless—people[,] their actions and their thoughts are in a whirl, and the land itself becomes broken and confused" (Sissons 2023, p. 82). Jeffrey Sissons glosses such a statement by saying that "tapu was a condition that was continually emerging and changing through interaction with atua, both benign and malevolent, controlled and uncontrolled" (Sissons 2023, p. 81). These statements underline the fundamental conceptual and material realities facing the missionary translators of Christian texts in their efforts to convey new or different concepts of tapu into the sacred and profane (tapu and noa) realms of the customary Māori world.

3. Texts: New Uses (Meanings) within the Translated Texts

This section analyses usages of the terms tapu, utu and muru within the translated texts of the New Testament, BCP and associated hīmene (hymns or songs). Did these uses strike Māori as strange, new, revolutionary or simply indifferent? In short, when Māori read *Te Kawenata Hou* or uttered the liturgy in *Te Rāwiri*, what did it mean or "say" to them?

The New Testament translation of 1841/1837 included approximately 270 uses of "tapu", including the following: patunga tapu/sacrifices (Mat 9:13; 12:7; Mark 9:49)[3]; pā tapu/villages, where Jesus went to preach (Mat 27:48); tangata tapu/holy person (Mark 6:20); anahera tapu/holy angles; (Mark 8:38); tahunga tapu/holy fire (Mark 12:33); poropiti tapu/holy prophets; kawenata tapu/holy covenant, promised to Abraham (Luke 1:72). All these uses, and many more, are interesting and could be analysed for their uniqueness compared to customary uses. In some cases, the idea of tapu is applied to new things, such as covenants/kawenata, or to somewhat distinct things, such as the Jewish practice of animal sacrifice; in other cases, some parallels with Māori usages are plainer, as in the case of the holy man or prophet (comparable perhaps to a tohunga/priest), and a tapu village (comparable to a place in Māori custom that is off limits to common human habitation). Some uses, including the "holy kiss"/"kihi tapu" of 1 Thessalonians 5:26 probably struck Māori as unusual.

This analysis focuses on just three usages, each in themselves significant: the Rātapu or Sabbath, the concept of Te Wairua Tapu/the Holy Spirit of God, and the concept of "murua o matou hara"—forgiveness of sin. In each case, there are some resonances with Māori customary usage, but the applications in all cases are new and possibly startling for a customary Māori *mentalité*.

3.1. New Uses: Te Rātapu/Hāpati/Sabbath—A New Sacred Time Cycle

In several gospel accounts, Jesus' disciples pluck heads of grain to eat on the Sabbath, in breach of Levitical (or Pharisaic) law, and Jesus then heals a man with a withered hand in the synagogue—which the CMS translators indigenized as w[h]are karakia/house of incantations (Matt 12:1–13; Mark 3:1–5; Luke 6:6–11). When these actions are challenged by the Pharisees, Jesus declares: "for the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath"—the term Ariki/high chief was used for "lord" (Matt 12:8). The message here is, in essence, that the Sabbath is a holy day; likewise, the house of God is a holy place—the food set apart for the priests only—yet David (Rāwiri) ate of that bread in an Old Testament story. In other words, there are some things greater than the Sabbath. One of those is healing the sick, if they need healing (Matt 12:9–13; Mark 3:4; John 7:23).

Nevertheless, in scripture and in missionary practice, the Sabbath day was set apart or made tapu for especial worship. For the CMS/Protestant missionaries in early nineteenth-century New Zealand, the Sabbath day was observed on Sunday. In *Te Kawenata Hou*/the New Testament, Jesus often preaches in the local synagogue on the Sabbath day, and the law of Moses was customarily read aloud on this day (Acts 15:21; cf. Acts 17:2). Such ceremonial devotional practice was reflected in the missionary practice of prayer and communion on the Sabbath; indeed, the latter term was translated (or transliterated) as Hapa *Tapu* (Holy Supper/Lord's Supper) in later texts. In *Te Kawenata Hou*, a neologism was chosen for translating Sabbath—"hāpati"—rather than the more literal use of "Rātapu",

a usage that appeared more in later texts (see Te Rāwiri 1848). There appears to be only one use of "ra tapu" in the Māori New Testament of 1841, referring to the Jewish practice of circumcising on the Sabbath (Hoani/John 7:22). It is clear, from numerous examples, that the missionaries used this term for the Sabbath day in their common speech (Williams 1961, pp. 91, 114–15, 184, 221, 265, 277–78, 288, 343, 348; Colenso, Journals, p. 75). In sum, it was clear to Māori, through various means, that this seventh day of the week was a particularly sacred or tapu day. St Luke's Gospel noted, for instance, that Jesus followers rested on the Sabbath, "according to the commandment"/"ki te tikanga o te ture" (Luke 23:56; also John 19:31).

Sabbath practice was one of the most prominent practices observed by CMS and other European missionaries in New Zealand. Chiefs are reported as attending these services at a quite early stage (Ballantyne 2014, pp. 126–34). The Sabbath was even observed by war parties when accompanied by missionaries (and perhaps at other times). Even chiefs not yet Christian observed a Sabbath injunction against work or trading (Williams 1961, p. 278).

It is proposed here that the idea and practice of the Sabbath or rā tapu (day set apart) introduced a new, sacred time cycle into the customary or indigenous picture. Māori were fascinated by this practice, and the sense of time that it entailed, as it was quite unlike their seasonal modes of arranging work and rest, planting and harvesting cycles. CMS mission leader, Henry Williams, reported after a visit to Kawakawa in January 1828 that Māori "enquired when the sabbath was to see if their calculation was right. It was so at which they were much pleased. They said they understood when the sabbath arrived but they could not comprehend the nature of our religion" (Williams 1961, p. 98). The application of the concept of tapu to a weekly cycle of work for six days and rest/worship on the seventh day was quite distinct from customary understandings of tapu. Mead says that people and things were tapu, not time itself—although people, places or things could be tapu for set periods. But the concept of *a day being tapu*, and especially one day in seven, did not exist in the customary (pre-European) Māori world. Scholar of mātauranga Māori, Te Maire Tau, writes that *the time before* a customary orator or expert was the time of the ancestors and atua (gods), of whakapapa and great deeds of the past: it was this time before ("mua") that was tapu, while the time that followed ("muri") was common time of human activity in the present/future (Tau 2011). Such a distinction between time before and time after reflected the orientation of tribal, customary memory in an oral culture; it was not a matter of marking out a regular or weekly cycle of sacred time and common time, as was the case with the Christian Rātapu/Sabbath.

The 1848 revised *Te Rāwiri*/BCP included the full calendar of daily scripture readings at the front of the text. Prominently featured was the use of scriptures to be read on the Rātapu and on other important days (feast days). It also included a second table of scripture readings for morning and evening prayer for each day of the month (*Te Rāwiri* 1848). This new Christian (Western) calendar underwrote a completely new calendar and understanding of tapu time.

Te Maire Tau makes a strong point about Christian time as lineal and diachronic, not the synchronic, "present time" of oral tradition (Tau 2011, pp. 50–51). The point of oral tradition is to articulate the worldview or identity (whakapapa) of the speaker in the continuous present. By contrast, the biblical narratives, in the texts of the Old and New Testament, speak of Te Atua who acts in time. Christ's coming marks a central point of history. At least, that is the way Western historiography has been structured, as Tau states:

> For western societies it is a truism that the world we live in is in a constant flux, always changing, always dynamic and never static. This perception can be traced back to Heraclitus who explained his idea with the adage, 'You cannot step twice into the same river'. A-historical societies view time differently. To twist the analogy from Heraclitus, for Māori the river is the ancestor and remains the same, constant—changing only during seasonal fluctuations, which were seen as part of a universal constant. The present was the constant. Notions of the past and future existed within the constant whole as seasonal changes. (Tau 2011, p. 53)

The question of how the biblical narratives and texts generally reshaped the Māori sense of time is outside the scope of this particular article, but the point has been made that significant new ideas of sacred or tapu time were introduced by the weekly observance of the Rātapu/Sabbath: I suggest that Te Rātapu was the intellectual and material pivot upon which time was reformulated according to the activity of Te Atua Ihowa (Jehovah God) who works, creates, rests and redeems within a lineal human history.

3.2. New Uses: Te Wairua Tapu—The Holy Spirit

The term Wairua Tapu, for Holy Spirit, occurs about a dozen times in *Te Kawenata Hou* (Luke 2:25–26; Luke 3:16; Luke 12:12; Acts 7:55; Acts 10:38; Acts 10:45–47; Eph 1:13; 1 Pet 1:12; 2 Pet 1:21).

Simeon, a devout and righteous man, has te Wairua Tapu rest on him—"kei runga hoki te Wairua Tapu i a ia". Furthermore, the Wairua Tapu reveals to him ("whakakitea mai") that he will not see death until he sees "te Karaiti o te Ariki"/the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:25–26). Did the use of "kite" in this narrative suggest to a Māori readership the idea of a matakite (seer) or tohunga (priest)? Was Simeon understood by Māori readers as a type of tohunga with powers of foresight or prophecy? Yet the idea that a Sacred Spirit reveals this vision to Simeon suggests a different type of relationship with unseen powers than that usually negotiated by a tohunga. The initiative is with te Wairua Tapu, not Simeon himself. These may be subtle distinctions, but important ones.

John the Baptist announces the coming of the Messiah as the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire: "e iriiri ki te Wairua Tapu ki te kapura" (Luke 3:16). This time, the initiative is with this Christ figure who will baptise with the Sacred Spirit and "fire". Jesus is himself also baptised with "te Wairua Tapu, ki te kaha"/with the Holy Spirit and with power. Not only this, but he went around "healing all who were oppressed of the devil"/"ki te w[h]akaora i a ratou katoa i mate i te rewera" (Acts 10:38).

It is difficult to gauge the effect of such ideas on Māori readers in the late 1830s. There appear no obvious parallels in Māori cosmology with a god who acts in this way. However, there is evidence that some Māori readers associated the devil (rewera) with their gods, or with particular gods in the customary "pantheon". European/Pākehā missionaries may have fostered such a view. Nevertheless, the latter believed Satan/the Devil was a real figure, with real power to enact evil in the world. It is necessary to recognise this fact, as it is a major exception to the missionaries' generic monotheism, as highlighted by Galbraith in this issue: for the missionary translators, as for Māori, there were other spiritual powers at work besides the Christian God (cf. Galbraith 2024). It seems likely that the disenchanted, Enlightenment worldview of most European missionaries supported their general perception that the Māori tapu and its rites and ceremonies were "superstitious", as I have recently suggested (Carpenter 2024a); but we need to nuance this picture for the ongoing influence of evil spirits, and Satan himself. On these points, there is some convergence between the world of the (scriptural) text and the worldview of both Māori and Pākehā actors in the 1830s–40s.

This Wairua Tapu is also portrayed in personal terms, as a teacher/kaiako (Luke 12:12), friend or "comforter"/kaiwhakamarie (John 14:16), and as someone (or thing) that might "fill" a person or martyr (Acts 7:55). The last, astonishing scripture has St. Stephen, just before he is stoned, being filled with Te Wairua Tapu, looking up into heaven and seeing the glory of God and Jesus standing at his right hand. At Pentecost, te Wairua Tapu is poured out on all believers, Jews and non-Jews—to the astonishment of the Jews. In response, the new Gentile believers are also "baptised with water" (Luke 11:45–48).

To a Māori tohunga (priest) or rangatira (chief) steeped in the whare wānanga (traditional houses of learning for elites), this emphasis—in Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles—on the work of te Wairua Tapu seems to have reinforced an aptitude for prophetic statements. Perhaps this was partly because, as Te Maire Tau suggests, the influence of oral tradition continued to operate to place these events in a continuous present of the Māori believer. That is, if the Holy Spirt was active in the scriptures/*Te Kawenata Hou*,

then why should the 1830s–1840s be any different? The ongoing influence of a "ngā-wā-o-mua"/times before *mentalité* suggests that the work of the Spirit was understood to be as relevant now as it was in the time of the Apostles—which, I suggest, was a time collapsed to the immediacy of the time before. Thus, a Māori preacher, one Āperahama (Abraham), wrote to Bishop Selwyn in 1843 that he had preached in Whangarei and prophesied that te Wairua Tapu would fall upon the native people and bring life to their "dry bones"—perhaps recalling the Book of Ezekial (Aperahama 1843). This Abraham was quite possibly Āperahama Taonui, a high-ranking young chief of Hokianga (northern New Zealand), but if not, he was most probably a person of rangatira status who, like Taonui, was given to prophetic utterances. On one occasion, Taonui proclaimed the return of Christ and the rising to life of a chief who had just passed away (Binney 1993). Again, this reflects the immediacy of a "ngā-wā-o-mua" worldview.

Te Wairua Tapu is also described as essential to salvation: it is after believing in Christ that believers are "sealed with the Holy Spirit"/"i hiritia koutou ki te Wairua Tapu". It is this "sealing" which is the guarantee of the promised inheritance, that is, final redemption: as the 1841 *Te Kawenata Hou* put it: "Ko ia hoki te tohu o to tatou wai taongatanga" (Eph 1:13–14).

There are other associated uses for the Holy Spirit/Wairua Tapu, including "te Wairua o te Karaiti"/the Spirit of Christ, who was in the ancient prophets when they testified of a future Messiah (1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:21); or, perhaps, "te Wairua o te Ariki", as in Luke 4: 18, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives . . ." This central verse of modern liberation theology may have struck Māori elites or chiefly leaders as contra the customary hierarchies of Māori society, in which people of rank were distinct from commoners, and slaves were another "class" below. A hierarchy of elites and people was not foreign to English or European thinking either. However, the general spiritual or human equality of all people or all believers before Te Atua/the Christian God was anathema to many rangatira for whom spiritual and earthly rank was an inheritance from the gods. There are cases of chiefs railing against the concept that all are equally sinful and in need of God's saving work (Williams 1961, p. 278). Henry Williams noted how the fact that chiefs were often catechised, or schooled, alongside their common brethren and even their slaves was a practice at odds with the ancient customary traditions of elite education—or, perhaps, a contrast with the usual social distinctions made in Māori society (Williams 1961, p. 94). Wesleyan missionary, John Whiteley, in 1847 argued from the biblical creation story against the practice of war: all human beings were made in the image of God, including in his tapu image, and therefore they were "taonga tapu"/sacred treasures to be preserved at any cost. Whiteley argued that all people bore this tapu image of God—of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—regardless of whether they were a chief or a lowly slave (Whiteley 1847, pp. 18–19).

3.3. New Uses: Murua o Matou Hara—Forgive Us Our Sins

This brings us to the salvific narrative of the New Testament. In the Lord's Prayer, a daily part of the practice of common prayer in the BCP, the congregation implored "to matou Matua i te Rangi"/our Father in Heaven to "forgive us our sins"—"murua o matou hara". The idea of forgiveness by te Atua/te Matua does not have a counterpart in traditional Māori cosmology. The closest word the translators could find was the concept of "muru", in imperative or passive form "murua"—to wipe away. Of course, this was most associated, as described above, with the practice of muru/plundering or stripping of goods to remove the taint of an offence against tapu—usually for offences less serious than those requiring an equivalent payment to be taken in the form of human life. Hence, goods were taken to remove the "hara", wrong or offence (Ballara 2003, p. 103).

Again, a distinction here with Christian theology was that "hara" did not of necessity imply sins of immorality, that is, conscious actions contrary to moral law. Instead, hara could be simply unintentional offences, perhaps the trampling on a tapu place or the touching of food set aside, or made tapu, for tapu people—usually, priests or chiefs.

In the Christian, salvific system, it was ultimately the work of Te Atua, by sending his Tama (Son) to die, that was the utu (payment) for the hara of the world. This was, as underlined above, the initiative of this God. By accepting or placing one's faith in this God, one was saved and one's sins/hara were forgiven. To accept God's salvation in Christ—through his death and shedding of blood on the cross—was to be saved/redeemed/paid for by God. Christ's death was God's utu for the sin of the world. This, at least, is a plain summary of the story of redemption that is told in *Te Kawenata Hou* and *Te Rāwiri* (pp. 10, 23), as preached by the evangelical Protestant missionaries of the early nineteenth century in New Zealand. This salvation narrative was underlined in at least five of the hīmene (hymns or songs) appended to *Te Rāwiri*; by the time of the 1840 printing, this group of hīmene had grown to a total of 42. Perhaps the most striking verse of these was Himene 5, which had the lines:

He aha tona aroha?

I heke iho ia i mua

Ki te ao maori, hei utu

Mo a tatou tini hara.

(In what does his love consist?/He descended in times past/To the native or ordinary world, to be the price paid/For all our many wrongs) (*Te Rāwiri 1840*, p. 26).

There is not space here to examine how Māori initially perceived or understood this narrative of redemption by the blood of Te Atua, or how they comprehended concepts of individual sin as opposed to wrongs for which the collective would typically suffer or provide utu/payment. Yet the fact that the new Christian texts disclosed a central narrative of "redemption by utu" must have ultimately appealed to the Māori consciousness.

4. Contexts: The Texts in Historical Contexts

This section reflects on how the new Christian texts reinforced old ideas or introduced new concepts and religio-cultural practices. To what extent did scripture and prayer book lead to intellectual change in the Māori world of the 1830s–40s? Was such intellectual change reflected in new cultural or religious practices? How did the old world of concepts/practices continue to exert influence on Māori minds interpreting the scriptures/prayer book for themselves? Was there a meeting of minds, or an intellectual "middle ground" of creative misunderstandings (following Richard White)? Reaching somewhat beyond this analysis—was there a discernibly Māori or indigenous version of Christianity that developed by the 1840s or in subsequent decades?

4.1. Theme: The Chief as Tapu Person and Christian Convert

Angela Ballara writes that rangatira (chiefs) feared Christian conversion "for fear of losing their mana, mana and tapu being the roots of their authority and status". The tohunga (priest), Tohitapu, would not attend Christian worship at the Paihia mission as he feared mixing with slaves, which might diminish his tapu powers (Ballara 2003, p. 79). William Colenso noted in his journal in April 1840 that although a Māori community had modified funerary practices to allow for Christian or missionary sensibilities, at the Evening Service during the hāhunga ceremony, 20 or 30 Māori sat apart from "the believing party", being "tapu"; these were almost certainly people of rank. Two of these chiefs a day later renounced their tapu by touching their heads with food, while a third feared his atua too much to perform this "ceremony" (Colenso, 10 April 1840; Journals, pp. 91–92). In the realm of ideas, as alluded to earlier, Henry Williams recorded a rangatira arguing vociferously against the creedal declaration that all were spiritually or humanly equal (as to their sinful state) before God, who came to save all people regardless of human status or rank. On this occasion, this senior Ngāpuhi rangatira (Tāreha) engaged in debate not with the English missionaries directly but with another senior rangatira (Rāwiri Taiwhanga) who had already converted and lived in the mission community (Williams 1961, p. 278). In other words, this was a debate that had become an intra-Māori debate over concepts of human

status and worth, or spiritual equality; it was no longer just a case of European missionaries preaching from the margins of Māori society. Christian ideas were front-and-centre by the mid-1830s in Northland, whether accepted or not.

The nineteenth-century scholar, John White, highlighted the intricate connections between Māori cosmologies, the laws of tapu, and the daily requirements on rangatira:

> In collating the oral traditions of the tribes who have descended from the different migrations of the Maori, it is first necessary to have a clear idea of their mythology (or religion), for this will be found to underlie all the rules which guide the acts of their daily life. The status of chiefs and rules of war are equally affected by their dread of the power, tapu, and malignity of their gods. Their modes of dressing, cooking, and eating food are influenced by the same dread of transgressing the tapu of the gods. (White 1880)

This is perhaps why some chiefs who were contemplating conversion, or had converted, undertook ceremonies or actions to remove their personal, ancestral tapu—as in the case recorded by Colenso. These ceremonies often involved the use of food, which was seen as "noa"—having the potential to break tapu conditions if tapu people were in contact with it. Henry Williams recorded with disapproval that some Māori were performing a modified form of Christian baptism: the ceremony involved washing the head in warm water, out of an iron cooking pot, "the person, at the same time confessing his sins . . . a washing away of sin and a release from Tapu very much according to native custom . . . This ceremony is termed by them Kokiro". A missionary, Benjamin Ashwell, similarly reported a rangatira cutting his hair to remove his ancestral tapu (Ballara 2003, pp. 78–79). Such ceremonies seem usually to have been of Māori initiative or invention, although it has been thought that missionaries themselves encouraged chiefs to thus "defile their tapu to demonstrate the genuineness of their conversion" (Ballara 2003, p. 78; cf. Best 1922, pp. 23–24). Missionaries *did* preach against the tapu system, believing it to bind Māori in "superstitious" fears and observances (Colenso, Journals, pp. 91–92, 131, 184). Instructing chiefs to perform specific actions in breach of customary tapu is, however, quite another matter—for which actual evidence is necessary. More reflective missionaries could write that the tapu system was "beneficial" in some respects and was part of regulating indigenous society as it was anciently constituted. Missionaries recorded themselves intentionally breaking tapu on occasions where it hampered their spiritual ministrations or other necessary activity such as travel down rivers (Taylor 1855, pp. 57–58, 63–64). But there are many examples of European missionaries taking care to observe tapu, lest they cause unnecessary offence, and it seems doubtful there were many instances where they explicitly instructed Māori Christians to ceremonially free themselves from tapu using Māori practices. On the contrary, as already indicated, it was Māori themselves who performed such actions according to their own conceptions of what was tika (right or correct). The burning of ancient tapu objects and lizards thought to be spirit beings (atua) in Taranaki in the 1850s has recently been narrated by anthropologist Jeffrey Sissons; such iconoclastic activity was also witnessed throughout Polynesia in response to Christianity being preached (Sissons 2023, 2014; Carpenter 2024a). Colenso recorded on another occasion that an old tohunga performed a "horohoro" ceremony (to remove ceremonial restrictions) on himself and his children so as to remove their tapu and announce their acceptance of Christ (Colenso, Journals, pp. 338–39). This seems to have been the repurposing of ancient ceremonial to Christian ends, and was entirely the action of the tohunga—who did it despite a high-ranking chief (Te Hapuku) opposing such an action.

Regardless of the exact reasons for such practices, chiefs seem often to have experienced them as a psychic or spiritual trial, as cutting off their customary mana and tapu, which exposed them to the utu (recompense) of their atua. But they also expected that if the Christian god was powerful then they would not suffer, or die, from their having abandoned such tapu. As Ashwell reported in some detail:

> [William Tawaitai] now resolved to abandon his old courses and to remain stedfast [*sic*] to Christ as a decisive step he cutt [*sic*] his hair which was sacred and threw it in the fire which was cooking food for his slaves. The Chiefs of Waikato, hearing of this profane act brought a fight [taua] to kill his slaves. The Native Priests prophecied [*sic*] that William would soon die. He said—Well, if I die call my new religion false—but if I live it is true. The fight remained several weeks, and finding he did not die after ineffectual efforts to persuade him to renounce Xtianity returned without killing his slaves. (Ballara 2003, p. 79)

Many of the leading chiefs in the north, where Christian missions were first established, resisted baptism until the very end of their lives. Kawiti, who fought the British at Ruapekapeka in 1845–1846, afterwards became a friend of the CMS mission, was counselled or catechised by Henry Williams, and was baptised by him in 1853; he died just over a year later (H. Williams, Pakaraka Journal, 1853). Similarly, Rewa, one of Williams' close chiefly associates in peacemaking in the north and southern regions (Hauraki-Waikato) in the 1830s, was baptised not long before his passing (H. Williams to William Williams, 16 September 1862). The first rangatira convert, Karaitiana Te Rangi ("Christian Rangi"), also died only a day after his baptism (Falloon 2020, pp. 186–91).

The relationship between Christian conversion and the changing nature of chiefly authority is a complex picture. While Protestant missionaries preached a crucicentric, conversionist gospel that all people needed, regardless of rank (Bebbington 1989), they did not ostensibly or explicitly seek to undermine the authority of chiefs among their tribal groups. In fact, chiefs were often seen, from an English point of view, as akin to "gentlemen" or landed gentry. Even the New Zealand Company, and Crown purchasing practice in the 1840s–50s, recognised chiefly rank by making provision in many cases for reserves for chiefs within larger Crown (or Company) purchases. At the same time, the diminishing weight of the old tapu system is apparent as Christianity was embraced, especially by a younger generation of rangatira. This younger generation derived their authority from their customary mana or rank but also from the accoutrements of missionary literacy and learning, and European agricultural and artisanal technologies. The authority of leadership was no longer based solely on mana and tapu—at least as defined in customary terms (see Stokes 2002).

The CMS mission printer, William Colenso, who had several stormy relationships with rangatira, whose customary status and mana he does seem to have sometimes disregarded, later reflected on the demise of the (old) tapu system and its implications for chiefly authority. This analysis was produced in the late 1860s, more than two decades after Colenso had left his missionary work, and it appears very much as an ex post facto critique—for Colenso recorded himself in the 1830s–1840s as speaking to chiefs "pretty strongly on the Tapu Maori" (Colenso, 10 February 1836, Journals, p. 53). Nonetheless, by the late 1860s, Colenso had reflected more deeply, writing:

> Their mysterious and intricate institution of the *Tapu* (taboo) with all its many forms, rites, observances, and customs, was, on the whole, beneficial to the New Zealanders. However irregular, capricious, and burdensome it may now appear (to us) to have been, it was certainly the source of order to them; and was of great use to conserve them as a race, and to sharpen their intellectual and moral faculties.

He lamented that the demise of this tapu system had caused the authority and status of hereditary chiefs to fall by the wayside and, consequently, their tribal society to suffer. The rangatira, having become the poor, Christian husband of one wife (who was made physically weaker by an increased domestic workload) could not provide the customary hospitality that he still wished to provide. Colenso opined that the early Christian missionaries could have done better to ameliorate the old tapu system slowly, and not to immediately impose the New Testament or "ecclesiastical" teaching on monogamy (Colenso 1868, pp. 40, 72). This was however a counsel of perfection or prudence composed at a time

much later than Colenso's missionary period—on which Colenso doubtless based many of his descriptions of Māori custom. These later opinions—promulgated in the context of colonial/imperial war of the 1860s, also lamented as caused by this loss of chiefly and tribal mana—were both eccentric and provocative, if not rose-tinted, while also having the appearance of reason.

Jane Sampson has commented that "missionaries like Colenso did not have to wait for professional anthropologists to point out the tragedies of too-rapid change, nor did they lack the capacity to criticize their own beliefs and practices where necessary". Sampson also cautions, however, that "something so profound as religious change could not have somehow taken place in the 'right' way, avoiding all negative social, cultural, or political consequences" (Sampson 2017, pp. 36–37). It is undeniable that religious change was happening in the 1830s–1840s period through encounter with missionary texts and practices, and that Māori leaders exercised their own agency in this process, including in adapting customary ceremonial to Christian ends—as indicated in Colenso's own missionary papers of three decades earlier.

4.2. Theme: Te Rongopai, te Rongomau—Christian Peacemaking in Tapu War

Christian peacemaking was performed in a context of Māori tapu practices of war and peace but with the new, tapu authority of the scriptures as an alternative source of legitimacy, and with third parties, namely, missionaries, acting in the role of mediators. The missionaries introduced the use of white flags to demarcate peacemaking zones and times (Troughton 2019, p. 132). Appropriate scriptures were often read. In 1867, the renowned Ngāpuhi peacemaker and Wesleyan convert, Āperahama Taonui, read from *Te Kawenata Hou*, including from the beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (*Daily Southern Cross*, 27 August 1867).

Āperahama Taonui, Mohi Tawhai and other Christianised, baptised Māori chiefs were involved in the Taiamai peacemaking in 1867, which coincided with, if not resulted from, the death of the missionary peacemaker, Henry Williams. This 1867 peacemaking process, including the use of white flags, reflected the peacemaking between Bay of Islands and Hokianga hapū in 1828, in which Henry Williams, George Clarke and other CMS missionaries had played key mediatory roles (Williams 1961, p. 115).

In the context of such peacemaking, leading Māori peacemakers sometimes queried the use or application of the missionaries' sense of tapu. At the 1828 Hokianga peacemaking, a chief opined to Henry Williams that he considered the Rātapu a good day to make peace. Williams, however, saw the observance of the Sabbath as a priority, although he would have adjusted to suit the circumstances if peace needed to be made urgently to prevent further hostilities:

> We were sorry for such an infringement of the Sabbath day, but could see no remedy as by delay much evil feeling might be excited and all our endeavours frustrated. However while in conversation with Warepoaka I intimated that tomorrow was the Ratapu. He said that it was a very proper day to make peace upon. I asked him what he thought upon the propriety of sitting still and making peace on Monday. He and some others sitting by immediately consented… (Williams 1961, p. 114)

On this occasion, therefore, the observance of the new sacred, Christian cycle of Sabbath rest/Rātapu was prioritised, with consent of the relevant rangatira, many of whom were already beginning to observe the new Christian, weekly rhythm themselves (Williams 1961, pp. 114–15). As Wharepoaka intimated, though, given the work of making peace was a tapu activity, it would have been appropriate—in a Māori *mentalité*—to do this work on a Sunday/Sabbath. Indeed, one might recall the stories of Jesus healing on the Rātapu as scriptural authority for such a notion.

Some Māori naturally also interpreted the Rātapu within their own cultural framework, investing this day with tapu powers such that people would die for infringing it. In late November 1832, Henry Williams reported what local leaders thought about losses in battle

occurring to those commencing war on the Rātapu: "The natives attach great weight to the circumstance of the Tauranga people turning out on the Ra tapu, and consequently attribute their loss to this" (Williams 1961, p. 265). It may be missionary teaching that was partly responsible for this "enchanted" conception of the sacred day. Indeed, Williams articulated his own enchanted view of the Sabbath—as a kind of divine law of nature—when he declared in an early 1823 conversation with chiefs that the *Brampton* had run aground in the Bay of Islands due to its attempted departure on the Sabbath—an idea to which his audience expressed some mirth (Falloon 2020, p. 274). The difference in Māori views between 1823 and 1832 indicates a substantive element of cultural or religious change. Missionaries did emphasize the primacy of Sabbath observance, but it is also no wonder that Māori overlaid it with their own cultural interpretation. If people died while fighting on the Sabbath, then the law of Christianised tapu no doubt had something to do with it. Scriptural meanings were thus intermixed with cultural norms.

Missionary peacemaking was part of a broader sweep of the Christian idea of peace and the presence of mission stations themselves. Ballara states that by the late 1830s, "most Māori believed that the first consequence of accepting Christianity would be peace since conversion entailed the rejection of war". There was an expectation that the establishment of mission stations on the ground would create a new basis for intertribal peace and security (Ballara 2003, p. 432). William Williams recorded similarly, in 1838, that Maori "seem to take it for granted that peace is the universal consequence of the introduction of missionaries" (W. Williams, 23 January 1838; cited Ballara 1991, p. 470).

Māori themselves testified to this connection between the gospel and social peace. When in February 1840 William Williams met Tūtepākihirangi, exiled due to the musket wars at Mahia Peninsula, the rangatira declared: "Bring your treasures for the young and the old for the women & children. It is by receiving the word of God that I shall go back to my own place, for it turns enemies into friends, and makes people live in peace" (W. Williams, 22 February 1840, Porter 1974, p. 85; W. Williams 1867, p. 285). In parts of the country, the old institutions of taua muru and warfare were still pursued in the 1840s–1850s, while at the same time, Māori leaders, many of them Christian, were themselves seeking new ways to redress wrongs and disputes (Ballara 2003, pp. 433–35).

4.3. Theme: Te Ture Tapu—From Utu via War to Utu via Law

For historian and Māori language scholar Lyndsay Head, the Māori embrace of peace and Christianity was part of a package that included, prominently, acceptance of new forms of adjudication of disputes—which substituted for warfare in pursuit of utu. Head calls this the embrace of a Western–Christian idea of civility, "civil society" or "citizenship". This should not be collapsed into notions of a colonial legal system: the ideas and new procedures were already being experimented with prior to any formal colonial administration or courts being introduced. Nevertheless, the use by local Māori of colonial courts to pursue lesser civil matters (debts, property damages and employment claims) and criminal matters (assaults, drunkenness and robbery) was prominent in centres like Auckland in the 1840s (Dorsett 2017). The main changes Head points to however are the underlying intellectual changes brought about by Christian teachings, including "a doctrine of peace", and the Scriptures and literacy generally (Head 2001, 2006). Relatedly, Lachy Paterson has highlighted, for a slightly later period, the critical role of the Māori language newspapers in teaching about the (supposed) goodness of European colonial laws (ture) just as the translated Scriptures had taught new Christian laws; Māori actively engaged with these new discourses (Paterson 2008).

Head and Paterson have highlighted the significance of Christian texts for cultural change, but texts also need to be viewed within a complex of new religious or cultural practices. It turns out that the Rātapu or Sabbath was integral to the missionary re-orientation of Māori to an ethic focussed on forgiveness of enemies; and thus, we return to where this analysis began. As Troughton writes, noting the various concepts conveyed by observance of a Rātapu:

> Sabbath-keeping did important cultural and symbolic work. On the one hand, it marked out time and space, structuring an alternative social existence. On the other hand, it testified to Christian understandings of rightly ordered worship of God, and to the importance of obedience to divine law. The Sabbath was also symbolically situated within a framing of Christianity as peace-bringer. (Troughton 2019, p. 131)

Missionary teachings about Sabbath observance and a "gospel of peace" were tied intimately to a wider concern—beyond foundational gospel imperatives—of inculcating civility or civil ways of resolving disputes. The white flags used on the first Sabbaths held in the Bay of Islands, as "the Signal for Peace", were conceptually and religiously connected to the white flags used in missionary peacemaking (see Troughton 2019, p. 132). Christian faith was equated with, or at least was thought naturally to produce, civil peace. Such was the history of Christian Europe, at least if the conversion of the Viking hordes and other "barbarian" peoples is telescoped, though in wider scope the *pax Romana* (Roman imperial governance) probably also had something to do with such "civilisation". Missionaries were often found quoting the prophecy of Isaiah that "swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks" (Troughton 2019, pp. 136–37). A settled, agricultural existence was thus seen as the Christian antidote, or alternative, to cycles of war in pursuit of utu. "Civility" therefore meant, in practical terms, "cultivation", and such a state was equated, in European minds generally, with "civilisation"—which should not be conflated with colonialist/imperialist military coercion or political subjugation. Such imposed, colonialist solutions were contrary to (inconsistent with, at least) the missionary idea of civilisation as the product, or handmaiden, of Christian conversion. (Marsden probably emphasised the "handmaiden" dynamic, whereas later CMS missionaries, Williams and company, emphasised civility as one *result* of conversion.) In sum, if people no longer had to fight to obtain utu, then their lives would be focussed on cultivation, along with its fair cousins, trade and commerce. Among the first generation of Christian rangatira, there were outstanding examples of new, agriculture-based villages, with Christian chapels at their centre, and with codes of laws derived at least partly from biblical models (Stokes 2002). These were Māori-led versions of the Christian mission stations, which were themselves inter-cultural zones and, like them, kainga (villages) seeking to observe Christian rhythms of work, prayer and Sabbath rest (see Carpenter 2024b).

The emergence of new biblically inspired codes of "ture"/law in the 1840s–50s point to the next issue: agriculture and Christian civility were not a total answer, because offences would still occur requiring redress, and enemies could still be found—and were found on a regular basis, even among the nations of Christian Europe. If Māori were to relinquish utu and muru as a way of restoring lost tapu and mana after deaths, insults or breaches of tapu sanctions, then alternatives needed to be found. Aside from intertribal peacemaking that included new Christian elements, another answer proposed at the time was to adjudicate disputes via legal procedures sourced in English–European legal traditions of trial or adjudication. As J. G. A. Pocock has described, in a Western, Enlightenment anthropology, the plough and uses of particular land were followed by the law to resolve disputes over such land or claims to its ownership (Pocock [1992] 2005). Prior to formal imperial authority being established in New Zealand, there were no legal or state sanctions to support such alternative dispute resolution processes; however, various cases appear in the missionary literature where different parties to a dispute agreed to have cases heard via some form of trial or "court of inquiry", with compensation or fine often imposed. This is not the place to review such instances, but various procedures were tried with some success in the early missionary period, even in the 1820s (Ballara 2003, pp. 436–39). Other institutions known as committees or "komiti" also evolved to hear disputes; Māori were quick to take up such innovations. A key distinction was that komiti or kōti whakawā (committees or courts of inquiry) decided individual guilt as opposed to the utu or muru system that involved whole groups in redress activity. This was a revolutionary change (Ballara 2003, pp. 440–43; Head 2006).

Māori communities, especially perhaps Christian ones, were seeking new law codes or "ture" themselves. This was a response to new and evolving economic contexts, but also, and perhaps primarily, to the new concepts of dispute resolution by adjudication or committee. All such new modes of adjudication or decision-making were influenced to some degree by the scriptural concept of ture/law, in particular, the law of God (or Moses). There are over 250 uses of "ture" in *Te Kawenata Hou* of 1841, and at least 17 in *Te Rāwiri* of 1840 (if the Book of Psalms was included in this analysis, the number would be far higher). The scriptural texts were thus, again, a big part of the picture of intellectual and institutional change. Although her analysis is not focussed on the scriptural texts, Angela Ballara agrees that the "new ideas, concepts and institutions were . . . leading to an end to war. They were undermining the need for the extremes of tapu, weakening the compulsion to seek utu, and presenting gentler, and therefore increasingly popular, alternatives to what had been a harsh system" (Ballara 2003, p. 443). Lyndsay Head and Te Maire Tau agree with this assessment that by the 1830s–1840s Māori were seeking new *ture* modes of resolving civil and social disputes (Head 2006; Tau 2008; Paterson 2008).

5. Conclusions

By 1840, the customary tapu–utu–muru complex was flexing, shifting and breaking apart sufficiently to allow in, even welcome, Christian concepts and categories. This shift was in part intellectual—as new ideas were adopted and adapted, and in part institutional—as new practices and lifeways were embraced. The terms tapu, utu and muru themselves flexed to envelop new concepts of the sacred and powerful, including that of kawenata (covenant) in *Te Kawenata Hou* ("kawenata hou"/new covenant being among these usages), the concept of a Rātapu (Sabbath), of Kai Tapu/Hapa Tapu (Lord's Supper/communion), and te Utu nui o te Tama a te Atua (the great Ransom of the Son of God), by which Te Atua Kaha Rawa (the Supreme God) would muru (forgive) the hara (wrongs) of humankind. Forgiveness was a radically new concept, without apparent Māori antecedents, but it was conveyed by the new tapu texts (and eventually in the 1850s by the complete *Te Paipera Tapu*/the Holy Bible) into Māori consciousness using the conceptual and societal fundamentals of utu and muru.

Following Wittgenstein, new concepts or new uses of old concepts within the texts of *Te Kawenata Hou* and *Te Rāwiri* meant that the intellectual universe, the *mentalité* of Māori society could not remain the same. And so, it flexed and shifted to accommodate new ideas, and in some cases threw off the old ideas and practices (of tapu, for example) in order to embrace new ideas, or new forms of old ideas (tapu prominent among these).

These intellectual and institutional shifts were complex, hybrid and entangled. The mentalities of the Māori world and the world of Christian texts and practices begun to fold in upon each other, at times weaving more naturally, at others encountering friction, and at other times generating misunderstandings. Such misunderstandings, to deploy Richard White's "middle ground" paradigm, created new forms of knowledge, or spaces where mutuality could emerge in hybrid intellectual (and imperial) zones—even if people were not using (and perhaps still do not use) the same terms in exactly the same ways. In addition, the old indigenous world of meanings and symbolism acted upon the interpretation of the new Christian terms. The high-ranking chief who told Henry Williams it would be good or correct to make peace on the Rātapu (Sabbath) was most likely reflecting the customary view of war and peacemaking as tapu realms of action. The missionary, however, counselled the observance of the Sabath day/Rātapu as a spiritual priority. Different ideas of tapu or the sacred—sacred activity and sacred time—competed for observance or priority in altered hierarchies of spiritual and human values. The Māori world and Christian scripture both found new expressions within the linguistic and cultural worlds of the other. For some period beyond 1840, different people with contrasting *mentalité* could meet around the new worlds of *Te Kawenata Hou* and *Te Rāwiri* without necessarily always agreeing on what they meant by the new words, or altered senses of old words, they now used. The missionary translators, working with native speakers, had produced new meaning through admixture

of old and new language uses. This new meaning was created at the confluence of the world of the original text and the Māori language in its situated historical contexts. This admixture and interweaving created an "epistemic middle ground" or a new, Christian "form of life" (Wittgenstein 2009)—a unique, indigenous expression of Christianity (Sanneh) distinct from both the world of the European translators and the Māori culture of reception.

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Notes

[1] It is acknowledged that many of the sources for this c. 1820s–1840s study are missionary or European sources, though wherever possible Māori responses to or readings of Christian texts evident in the available sources are relied upon.

[2] As a general rule I will add macrons to Māori words in general analysis, in accordance with current practice, but when quoting verses or phrases from the original, nineteenth century texts, I will not add macrons for reasons of historical authenticity.

[3] When citing Scripture, I will use the English abbreviations for clarity, rather than the Māori language names.

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