

## An open letter to PCANZ

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16<sup>th</sup> October 2007

### **Re: Terrorism and Ruatoki**

I write this as an open letter to all members of PCANZ in relation to the Terrorist events in Ruatoki in the last 48 hours and indeed the insult to the Tuhoe Nation. I am an Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and I am also a proud descendent of the Tuhoe Nation.

The events in Ruatoki during the last 48 hours are nothing new to the Tuhoe people. In the mid to late 1800s colonial forces invaded the Urewera searching for the religious leader Te Kooti employing the scorched earth policy that forced Tuhoe into starvation and subsequently confiscated much of their lands. In 1916 the Urewera was again invaded by armed police who shot and killed two people while arresting the Tuhoe religious leader Rua Kenana. Growing up in Tuhoe country as children we would often hear stories of those times, today our children will now grow up telling stories of when armed police invaded the Tuhoe Nation in 2007 and held guns frightening children and old people. These atrocities and terrorists acts by the police and the Government upon Tuhoe sovereignty must stop.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has maintained good relationships with the Tuhoe Nation primarily through the good relations between John Laughton and Rua Kenana and Sister Annie Henry and the people of Ruatahuna, Miss Webber and the people of Waiohau, Nurse Doull and Mrs Annie Gorrie and the people of Waimana and Dr North and the people of Te Whaiti. These relationships have for us become covenant relationship serving as a model of bi-culturism within the Presbyterian Church and a model of partnership for the entire country. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has a covenanted relationship with the Tuhoe Nation that is both historical and in good faith.

The valley of Ruatoki has given the Presbyterian Church some valuable leaders. Most notable being the late Rev Purewa Biddle and the late Rev Sonny and Mona Riini. I must also mention that Tame Iti himself is from a Presbyterian background with his mother being a long serving Elder of the Church and Tame Iti a Sunday school child of the Maori Synod. Te Aka Puaho continues to develop its ministry and mission in Ruatoki through the good ministry of Taneatua the Rev John Wharekotuku (Tamiana) Thrupp and his wife Honey Thrupp and two of our current Amorangi students are also from Ruatoki awaiting Ordination in 2008.

Currently the Rev John Wharekotuku (Tamiana) Thrupp and his wife Honey Thrupp both of Ruatoki are providing pastoral care and leadership to their people during this time. They have reported that there is a great sense of anger and hurt amongst the people of the valley in particular with innocent people being held at gun point, children also being frightened by police with guns and children being stranded by police arresting their parents.

It is sad that these events have transpired two months after the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Tuhoe people provided a model to this country of redemption and reconciliation in regards to returning former confiscated lands. This was a major undertaking of which I am particularly proud of my Presbyterian Churches actions.

I encourage every member of the Presbyterian Church to write to the Prime Minister the Hon Helen Clark and the Minister of Police and register their disapproval of the events in Ruatoki during the last 48hours.

I also ask that you keep in your prayers the following:

- The Rev John Wharekotuku (Tamiana) Thrupp and his wife Honey Thrupp
- Our Amorangi students from Ruatoki, Selwyn Pryor and Wi Tapere Te Pairi.
- Our ministry and mission within the valley of Ruatoki
- Our ministry and mission to the Tuhoe people.

Finally I ask that people pray for a peaceful resolution to the weeks events and that justice will prevail.

We await with interest the police evidence to prove these outrageous claims of Terrorist camps in Ruatoki and the Urewera.

Yours in Christ

Arohanui

Rev Wayne Manaaki Rihari Te Kaawa  
*Te Ahorangi o Te Wananga a Rangi*