

ADDRESS BY SUSAN HEALY O.P.

TO THE MAJOR SUPERIORS AND BISHOPS

I affirm the Major Superiors and the Bishops for their 1990 Statements.

However, I could not see in these statements an acknowledgement that the Church needs to examine itself in relation to the Treaty.

My question is: "Where do we see te tino rangatiratanga expressed within the church? One way of putting this question is to ask: "Where do we see Maori resourced by the church to work with Maori in a Maori way?"

Dr. Arbuckle and John Faisandier (The Church in a Multicultural Society) pointed out that the parishes are not suited to Maori ministry. Each diocese, therefore, has its own Maori mission team. The question can be asked - "How many on these teams are Maori?" but I will not concentrate on this area of ministry today.

I address myself to the area of specialist ministries in the church and because of limited time I have selected three particular areas - religious education, youth ministry and social services.

First, Religious Education.

Last year there was a conference of those involved in the diocesan and national Religious Education Centres. Of those present: 32 were Pakeha

1 was a Cook Islander

1 woman who has been brought up in a very Pakeha way but who does have a whakapapa which she acknowledges.

I rang two friends who have worked in the Maori colleges to find out how useful the National R.E. syllabus is to them. One said she could use parts of the form 3 syllabus but at the senior level the syllabus was of little use - it was "culturally so Pakeha".

The other friend said: "I don't use the National syllabus at all. It is not relevant for our kids...it would be an imposition on our kids. They have a different mindset".

This latter friend also enquired of three other Maori connected with the Maori colleges for their opinions. One woman who had taught R.E. said she found it possible to use some bits of the syllabus but that a different approach was needed.

Another woman thought the National Syllabus was pretty hopeless because no way the kids could get an entry point.

Another man felt that what the Maori students most needed was to be helped to find God within their Maoriness. He felt that a syllabus suited to the Maori students would cover:

The one office that showed a different pattern was the Palmerston North Catholic Social Services. The director said that they employed two part-timers (Pakeha) and five full time staff (2 Pakeha, 1 part Fijian, 2 Maori). There are Maori on their Board of Management and they are working at making themselves accountable to the Rangitane people, the tangata whenua.

The two Maori staff do work for Catholic Social Services but are also involved in supporting Maori initiatives. One of the major commitments of the Palmerston North office has been to support a Maori initiative called Taihoa Tane (a Maori men's anger management group). The office has provided the group with resources, the group chooses to meet at the Catholic Social Services premises and the Maori staff are involved in the group.

It seems to me that the Palmerston North Catholic Social Services has started to address in a real way what partnership means under the Treaty.

However, when we come back to the question: "In what ways is the church resourcing Maori to work with Maori in a Maori way?" then we must acknowledge that very little is being done.

When we know that the process of history (a history of injustice) has worked to make Pakeha the advantaged group and Maori the disadvantaged then we must recognise that the church, in many ways, is resourcing the advantaged to work with the advantaged and is not resourcing the disadvantaged to work with their own.

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