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CONVERSATION

YOU ARE BONE OF THEIR BONE, THEY ARE FLESH OF YOUR FLESH

A SELDOM SEEN PICTURE OF MĀORI AND PĀKEHĀ

I've got a bone to pick with you, God.

I've got a bone to discuss with you, Mark, but you go first.

OK, God. You keep talking to me about all this Māori and Pākehā stuff, and I'm concerned it will annoy a lot of people and that seems completely unnecessary.

It won't annoy as many as you think, Mark.

Are you sure?? European Christians want to think the Māori/Pākehā thing is done and dusted. I can't blame them. I thought the same. They think a lot of Māori are just stirring up trouble.

We can change the subject if you like, Mark.

How many times do I have to tell you that I want you to talk about what you want to talk about, God!!!

Alright Mark, but only if you're comfortable.

No. I'm not comfortable at all, God, but I do want to talk about this. I worry Pākehā Christians will think these conversations are just more 'Pākehā Bashing', and it's embarrassing me. I used to

be like them, God, I thought it had all been sorted and now we could move on.

Move on to where, Mark? That's the question no one has been able to answer. And Mark, really? Did you really think the issues had all been sorted? Be honest.

OK, I'll admit I've always been a bit uncomfortable at the stories of councils and government 'borrowing' land from the Māori, even in recent years, and then conveniently forgetting to give it back and selling it and keeping the money.

How does that make you feel, Mark?

Sounds like corruption, but this is good old New Zealand so I'd rather not think about it.

Why?

It makes me want to do something but there's nothing I can. It's like the leaky home fiasco. Most of us Kiwis are aghast that government, councils and big businesses have side stepped the issues and left little businesses and home owners carrying the can, but what can we do, God??

Actually, you can do a lot. I am focused on the stories of injustice in this country. I'm not focused on your comfortable church, but I am focused on the uncomfortable injustices that have happened and are still happening in New Zealand.

Really, God?? Now you want to talk about leaky homes and church???

Not today. Let's talk about Māori and Pākehā.

OK, God, I admit that off and on over the years I have been concerned about government and local body doing dodgy deals with land and riding roughshod over Māori. It makes it uncomfortable to be on the winning side.

Who says you're winning, Mark?

Well, aren't we?

The story isn't over yet, Mark. I always support the dominated and push back the dominator.

Well, God, I used to think Māori were too welfare dependent. I guess I'm feeling a bit embarrassed to admit that now.

What's changed?

You keep talking about Māori and Pākehā and it's making me wonder if I was wrong.

All of them, Mark?

All of them what, God??

Did you think all Māori were too welfare dependent?

Well, no. Obviously there are heaps of Māori, people like my friend Gaye Tawhiao, who have been very hard working and have gotten on with life and made their own way. When I was younger, I met Stan Kepa who was an extremely wealthy businessman. And there were lots of others, Māori who were achieving heaps, just like Pākehā I guess, achieving either wealth or success in their chosen disciplines. Business people, writers, musicians, social workers, doctors, ministers – people who over the years have taught me so much, some I knew well, some I only met briefly.

People like Luke Kaa Morgan, Travis Ormsby, Pane Kawhia, Pat Wihapi, Derek Fox, Raymon Pink, John Woods, Tony Leef. And lately I keep meeting Māori who are showing me I had completely the wrong idea. People like Matt Renata, Sonny Karena, Brad Haami, Whare and Virginia Heta, Steve Utana, Dean McQuoid, Hinekoia Tomlinson, Debbie Knight, Ricky Paul, Ray Totorewa, Rangitikehu Paul, Te Tokaia Nohotima, Jackie West, Matai Bennett, Rex Newman, Hui Kakahu.

God, there are so many amazing people, I've got about another 20 names that should go in there! Way too many to mention here.

I feel like a bit of a dumb Pākehā sometimes, God. But I am still a Pākehā and I think like Pākehā think. I don't seem to be able to shake that.

So?

So these stories about confiscated land and unfair dealings are a bit uncomfortable. And I'm worried that Pākehā who read these conversations will think you're ignoring the crime rate among Māori, and the poor health statistics.

But?

But you're telling me that it's not actually that cut and dried. Neither side of the story is simple. Both sides have a point and I feel stuck in the middle.

And, Mark?

And that's why I have a bone to pick with you, God.

Explain.

You keep showing me this picture of my own land, which I'd rather not mention here because if I tell it to Pākehā, they're just going to think I'm 'Pākehā Bashing'.

Are you?

I don't think so. I think both sides, Pākehā and Māori need a bash. Well, maybe not a bash, but neither side is perfect.

Mark, until you move past the story and back to the start you won't make progress together.

What do you mean?

You need to go right back to the start. You need to ask me what I brought you together for in the first place, because you were and are meant to be together. Some of you want a divorce, a complete separation of the two races but that's impossible. Most of you have resigned yourselves to living in a sort of cold war, no real union just grumpily co-existing, trapped like a husband and wife living in the same house. Then there are the few who recognise the problem can be fixed and want to help fix it.

Mark, I have a message for those who want to fix the problem.

Are you talking to the church, God? Do you mean the church can fix the problem, God?

No. The church can't fix the problem. The church, as an organised body, doesn't recognise there is a problem. Some of you have heard me speak about it, but as an organised body, the church is not aware there is a problem that I want to address.

GOD!?!? Are you sure??

I'm sure. As a group, organised Christianity doesn't really know how to listen to me. Not at the level of hearing me speak full sentences and paragraphs, day after day, about complex political, financial and social issues. They know how to get impressions, but not how to hear lots and lots of detail. They just don't.

But that's OK, I have time for them to learn. In the meantime, I want to talk to those who can hear me. I want to talk to them about Māori and Pākehā. Your two races were brought together for a purpose. You're not here together in this nation by accident.

You were supposed to listen to me when you first met, both peoples knew how to do that in ages past, but both had forgotten.

Both??

Both. How do you think Māori knew about Io, the supreme and one God, if they didn't hear it from me. When you met you were supposed to ask me (together) how to put your relationship together. That was the plan.

If you'd listened back then, I would have joined your hearts as one new people made up of two distinct cultures. Then you would have been able to offer a welcoming invitation to many other nations. That was the purpose, Mark!

The angel I appointed over this nation wanted, and still wants to, send a warm welcome to many nations. I drew Māori and Pākehā here to build a new people made up of many. I wanted to use New Zealand to show the world how to put many peoples together in happy harmony. That was your purpose. Back then, 200 years ago, that was your purpose.

The age of world travel was coming. People would soon flock to other countries and I wanted to show the world how to do that in a way that brings peace and great prosperity for all involved. My purpose for New Zealand was to be an example to the world of how to meld first two, and then many peoples. You can still be that example if you want.

Your two races, European and Māori, are meant to be together to show the world how to join people groups. The world needs you Kiwis to hear this.

I've answered your question, Mark, so now it's my turn. I have a bone to discuss with you.

Is this about that picture you showed me that I've been trying to ignore for weeks?

Yes. Tell me the picture.

OK. You asked me a question and then showed me a picture. You asked me what would happen if a Māori politician confiscated my land. And as I thought about your question, you began to show me a picture of what that would look like.

Tell me what you saw.

It was awful, God! He used the tricks of the law to take my land, and there was nothing at all I could do about it. I felt so powerless.

What happened in the picture?

The Māori Politician gave me a little piece of land at the bottom of our property, on that damp cold area by the river. He let Miriam and I live in the little shack down there and told me I should be grateful.

Then what happened, Mark?

I got angry and wanted recourse. But the courts ignored me, laughed at me, stalled me and referred me to other courts. I ran out of money to fight. The Māori Politician understood the court system, I didn't. I just wanted my land back.

And?

My life was consumed with fighting to get my land back. I lost my business. I became depressed. I died an early death, sick from the heartbreak and the cold and damp.

How were your sons affected in this picture?

They became angry. Angry about the affect it had on me, angry that their inheritance had been stolen.

What did they do?

They resorted to violence, vandalism and alcohol. When they were younger, they threw stones at the windows of our old home in anger

at being evicted. When older, they broke in and stole what they felt was theirs. They tried to burn the place down. They were angry at me for losing the fight, for getting sick. They were angry at each other and at their families. Their anger and sadness consumed them. They spent more and more time fighting and drinking to numb the hurt and less and less time working. They became poor and undisciplined. Their father had been crushed and their inheritance stolen.

And what about their sons, Mark?

They were even worse. Born into families consumed with anger and frustration. Born into poverty. Born into families living in the cold and damp down by the river and being told that the big house up on the hill was rightfully theirs.

And what of the Māori Politician?

He died eventually. Happy. Was buried where I had planned to be buried, on the land he had stolen from me.

And his sons?

Wealthy. Life was great for them. My sons made it a little difficult for them but they were able to have them controlled and punished often enough to keep themselves happy and safe in our property on the hill.

Good. That's enough for now, Mark. You are bone of Māori bone, they are flesh of Pākehā flesh. It wasn't supposed to be you against them, it was supposed to be a marriage. 'Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.'

Until you understand why you have been brought together, you won't be the two peoples I called you here to be.