



## OPINION PIECE

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

Bishop Brian Tamaki

With the huge 'Black Lives Matter' protests across the United States and the world, New Zealand also joined in the action with their protests in our country with thousands turning out. Yet, it was an interesting observation to me to see so many white New Zealanders participating in a march for what is essentially black lives suffering under the scourge of racism.

While the George Floyd murder was despicable, New Zealand has long been diagnosed with a systemic racist issue for some time now. This is supported by official data and research. It was only recently within our own politics with The National Party's new line up, with their new leader, that racism was again front and centre news for a whole week! It's not the first time and it certainly won't be the last time either.

In other words, it's in our own backyard, we have been guilty of indulging in the same racist spirit that brings about the terrible injustice, separation, hate and violence we now are all witnessing across the world. The question may be then is, would the same people march, and possibly in larger numbers, for more importantly the racial issues that have been affecting Māori and Pakeha for far too long. This is turning out to be the irony of the Covid-19's ability to bring to the surface the rights and the wrongs in our world that pre-pandemic we were all happy to live with and brush off as unimportant to our everyday lives. However, it surfaced now world-wide with a vengeance. The American issue is a New Zealand issue! Let's face it, if Māori doesn't do well New Zealand doesn't do well. If poverty, crime, prison numbers, unemployment, poor health, homelessness, etc doesn't bother you, well just remember, you're paying for it quite literally! The same infection...the real infection, that's been painful for a long time in this country has been swept under the covers for far too long so it has turned into a 'dirty little family secret' that it's ok to hide. Trouble is, it's passed on to our children's children. It's caught as well as taught in our homes and schools, to which we are paying a very high price later. It's systemic in the Police force, our justice system, social services, workplaces, even churches and political parties. It's been allowed to exist with an arrogant justification that it's considered right.

Just look at the Hobsons Pledge for one example...this white supremacist group, in respectable middle-class drag you could say, openly violates our founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which was the actual birthing of this nation we now know as New Zealand. It comprised of two partners, two people together in a covenant being Māori and Pakeha (The Crown). However, Hobson's Pledge refutes Te Tiriti o Waitangi's validity! Claiming Māori have no Indigenous First Peoples importance. "We are all one," they say, Māori are not 'taonga' (a treasure or special).



If you've ever had the displeasure to take a scroll through the Hobson's Pledge website you'll have the misfortune to see the following additional statements:

- They believe Te Tiriti o Waitangi did not create a partnership between Māori and The Crown.
- They believe the word 'maori' meant 'ordinary'. It was only after 1850 did 'Māori' refer to a distinctive group of people.
- They believe that laws referring to Māori have resulted in a form of corruption, the undue influence of Māori tribal entities upon New Zealand's governance, economy and society. (Basically, any law that refers to Te Tiriti o Waitangi)
- Don Brash 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – "...whereas in reality, it is those who demand special privilege and status based on ethnicity who are the real racists." (Basically, he called Māori...racists, can you believe it?)
- They believe there are 24 common 'myths' of the 'Treaty industry'....with this wealth and power grab by the newly created 'tribal elite'. They want to do away with 'tribalism'.

There is a complete and utter disregard or understanding by Hobson's Pledge of the huge land thefts, rape and murder and the attempted extermination of a whole race. (They like to call it conquest and "it's all history now, so get over it"). To hold such thinking, and actively have a clan-like organisation to advance its evil message, is beyond believability in this day and age. This must be brought to light now, and for an organisation to have such a large following, and supported by many Christians, indicates New Zealand has lost its moral soul the moment it allowed this racism to seep into our heart. Hobsons Pledge is now blatantly and even proudly etched into one particular political party's beliefs and policies...The New Conservatives. One of the Hobson Pledge's co-spokesperson (Casey Costello) is on the board of The New Conservatives Party and their spokesperson for representation and property rights. To support The New Conservatives is to support Hobson's Pledge.



The New Conservatives previous leader Colin Craig was a devout Christian and led the party within 4% of the 5% party vote needed to enter parliament, but he ran into sexual allegations, left the party and since then it has regrouped. I struggle to see how any Christian can not only vote for but be involved with such overt racism. I have no doubt other political parties may secretly adhere to this evil pledge as well. There is a photo circulating on social media that shows Todd Muller from The National Party also meeting with Hobson's Pledge.



This is not an issue of black and white, it's an issue of right and wrong! It's time for New Zealand to honour the Treaty to review and maybe consider the Treaty becoming the Constitution of New Zealand. At least then it ensures it will be honoured, respected and will raise the value and importance of being a citizen who truly loves their free land. It's a pledge to each other as two unique cultures that we can commit to live and work together in love, peace and harmony. Hey, anything is possible in this present climate!

Maybe we will be brave enough at the next Waitangi Day, 2nd of February 2021, for Māori and Pakeha to come together at Waitangi, the birthplace of a great nation, to re-enact our oneness, and as a people who had a shared history state that we also now have a shared future together. Let's celebrate and not just tolerate each other. We need to focus on what unites us and not what divides us and maybe, just maybe, get rid of that scourge called racism.