



**PUBLIC STATEMENT BY BISHOP BRIAN TAMAKI  
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**TAMPERING WITH ONE'S NATIONAL IDENTITY OPENS DEADLY DOORS  
(LOVE IS GREATER THAN HATE!)**

Tēnā koutou katoa. Mōrena tātou.

I'd like to speak this to our nation about the horrific events that occurred on Friday in Christchurch.

Our nation has been horrified at how other human beings can commit such a heinous crime on another human being – to gun them down in broad daylight, while in the act of prayer, in a place of worship, this also included children. It couldn't get any darker than this.

I'm aware our country is in a state of mourning, mixed with various emotions of fear, anger and asking why did this happen? We are looking for answers.

It has been said by our Prime Minister that this is the darkest time of our history. It may well be, but I want to say in dark times we can pull together, and closer together, in strength and more understanding of each other. In the Dark times is when light can shine it's brightest. How do we come out of this dark time positively with strength, with a bigger heart?

While it was a day of extreme hate, and loss, and the unthinkable, it can also be a day of a nation pulling together too.

I believe we can make New Zealand one of the safest and greatest places again.  
Because Love is Greater than hate.

Maybe it's time to ask the hard questions in New Zealand, and engage in difficult conversations that we have avoided in the past. Our tendency has been to just leave things unanswered, putting it in the too hard basket, and life goes on.

All of us must stand against all forms of hate. The present climate is rife for hatred to be expressed, with hate crimes on the rise around the globe. Social media has been a breeding ground for hate expression, including online bullying, creating places where others can find ones of common thought. It has become acceptable to express hatred and a breeding ground for recruiting the disenfranchised, disconnected, extreme and detached.

It was stated from the perpetrators of this horrific crime in their manifesto, that they felt detached, disconnected, from their place of identity, their country of origin. It was out of revenge, having resentment believing that they had lost their culture, their ways, their land, that they acted.

This is pure evil – but I want to give you insight as to how this evil forms – it's closer to home than you think.

When growing up, one of the most severe matters to deal with for any person is rejection...not being included, being discarded, and not knowing who you are? Rejection is a powerful force that can cause individuals to withdraw into a dark room, creating the environment for hate to brew.

Our Prime Minister also said "This is not who we are as New Zealanders".  
But it is not enough to say who we are not, the question is, who are we as New Zealanders?

Australian's Labour Senator Penny Wong also said yesterday, "This is not who we are!" Then someone tell us...."Who are we then?"

The crucial question of life is **'one's identity'**.

Which leads to the greater question, could this be a horrific crime motivated by a **CRISIS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY?**

It may seem premature, I don't want to be seen as out of place to have this conversation, but the burning question within many New Zealanders is **WHY?**

A nation holds true to its identity when it keeps its founding principles it's built upon. Which is normally built on three principles, it's values, faith and culture. When tampering with a nation's founding identity, and its values, faith, and culture are removed or replaced, this opens deadly doors, creating a vacuum. When one's national identity is threatened from the outside by conflicting values, faith and culture, it potentially brings rise to chaos and internal conflict.

Not having a clearly defined National identity can give birth to the many reasons why we have religious intolerance, political unrest, civil wars, the threat of losing a people's ways, customs and land, and their place of inheritance and wellbeing, the breakdown of society. This is who I am, and this is where I'm from! Once those are disrupted and muddled, it causes a deep sense of insecurity in the soul of a person, and the soul of a nation, bringing about mass migration, refugee problems, border problems, the loss of cultural identity, and displacement leaving no direction or sense of security for the generations following.

But as I said before, every time Love is Greater than hate. We have to now together find ways we can become closer than what we are now. To celebrate our differences, agreeing on one thing – we are one nation, and one people.

New Zealand is fortunate to have an identity – and that needs to be clearly defined and known. This brings me to Waitangi.

Waitangi was the birth place of our nation in 1840. It was based on our founding document, The Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the Crown and Maori Chiefs. Herein, as controversial as it may be, two people defined the identity of our nation together. It was the birth of our nation, two peoples coming together, European and Maori, as one people respecting, loving one another living in peace and harmony.

When we have gathered together at Waitangi in recent times, it is notable that one culture is generally missing. This is supposed to be a celebration of two cultures coming together. My reason for highlighting this is not to expose our European brothers and sisters' absence, but to highlight that our National Identity is not as pure as you think.

In 2020 we are celebrating 180 years of our nationhood at Waitangi. For the successful assimilation of other religions, politics, ideologies, customs and ways, diversity, and difference, a nation needs to first have their own identity clearly defined. This may well be the root problem and threat behind the horrendous acts of violence on Friday.

2020 at Waitangi would be a great opportunity to reinforce who we are, what our national identity is, and celebrating our differences, but agreeing on two things, we are one people and one nation, living out our dreams and aspirations together.

This is love overtaking hate.  
Togetherness overtaking individualism.  
Healing rather than hurting.

As Jesus Christ said:

**Matthew 12:25** *"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."*

That also applies to a nation, or a country divided.

Our New Zealand Coat of Arms Crest depicts two nations coming together – it signifies our nationhood.

We are blessed to have a national identity we can celebrate, and as our National Anthem says

'God of Nations at Thy feet,  
in the bonds of love we meet,  
hear our voices we entreat,  
God defend our free land....'

END