



## Revivals And Church History :: Tarore and Her Book

### Tarore and Her Book - posted by ArthurRosh, on: 2015/2/12 15:05

Amongst the earliest missionaries to arrive in New Zealand were a husband and wife who settled in the Waikato and started a school. One of their students was a young Maori girl called Tarore, and as she began to learn to read, she was given a copy of one of the first books of the Bible ever to be printed in Maori, the Gospel of Luke.

Tarore took the Gospel back to her village and read it to her tribe and what followed, has become one of the most important stories in the history of New Zealand.

#### The Story of Tarore

The great news of the resurrection is that Jesus is as much alive today as he was yesterday. His resurrection power is available daily because He still lives and sits at the right hand of the throne of God. Paul said these words, "I want to know Christ's yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" Philippians 3:10.

The power of his resurrection can be seen in the story of Tarore. In 1835, The Bible Society published 100 copies of the Gospel of Luke in the Maori language. In 1836, missionaries gave one to a young Maori girl, named Tarore. She read it to her father, the chief of the Waikato tribe.

She kept her treasured copy of the Gospel of Luke under her pillow when she slept.

Under threat of a neighboring warring Rotorua tribe, the mission school was in the process of relocating. On October 19, 1836, Tarore's life was taken from her by a raiding party. They also took the treasured object from under her pillow.

Unable to read, the Rotorua chief discarded it until a slave boy came along who had learned to read, and he read it to others in the tribe. The Rotorua chief was convicted and became a Christian. He determined to seek out the father of the girl and beg for his forgiveness. When he finally found the girl's father, the chief of the Waikato tribe, and risked their tribal revenge, the father of the girl forgave him. This marked the beginning of a peaceful relationship between the two previously warring tribes.

The story of this young Maori girl and her copy of the Gospel of Luke became the key to the conversion of many Maori. When missionaries visited both the North and South Islands, they discovered that many of the Maori tribes had already become Christians due to the story of Tarore and her special book, a copy of the Gospel of Luke.

On February 6, 1840, the nation of New Zealand was established by the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the Crown of England and the Maori. So many of the Maori became Christians that the government went to great lengths to protect Christianity. Today, Bibles continue to be in schools, Christianity is encouraged and Christian Schools receive significant government support. The story of Tarore continues to be distributed to school children in New Zealand as part of their heritage.

#### Additional details:

In the fields to the north of Waharoa, near the Waikato country town of Matamata, there is a small grave. A white cross adorns the resting place of a 12 year old girl who died in the year 1836. Around this grave from time to time there this site has seen the ordination of Maori deacons, special pilgrimages and a steady trickle of people of all sorts who make their way to this ordinary field. Why? The name of the girl buried in the grave is Tarore and the story of her life and death demonstrate how the gospel of Christ is able to bring peace and reconciliation.

Tarore was the daughter of the Maori chief Ngakuku. She studied at the mission school in Matamata where she was given a copy of the Gospel of Luke in te reo Maori by her teacher Charlotte Brown. It was a treasured possession and she kept it safe by wearing it in a kete (a woven bag made from flax) around her neck.

One night while camping in the Kaimai Ranges at the foot of the Wairere Falls, a raiding party from the Arawa tribe came

across Tarore's group and attacked their camp, pillaging what they could find. In the action and skirmish, Tarore remained asleep when she received a fatal blow to the head. Her attacker removed the Gospel of Luke she was carrying, thinking it might be tradable.

Her death immediately created a desire for *utu* (revenge) but back in Waharoa during her funeral Ngakuku, her father, preached against reprisal saying there had been too much bloodshed between the tribes already. Instead he called his people to trust in the justice of God. No blood revenge was sought. This revolutionary act set in motion a sequence of events that paved the way for restoration and reconciliation between tribes.

No one in the Arawa camp was able to read the book. It was not until a literate visiting slave named Ripahau read the text aloud that the people understood its true value. Tarore's murderer, Uita, was convicted by the message of peace displayed in the Gospel of Luke and humbled himself to go and seek forgiveness from Tarore's father.

Visiting Ngakuku was an extremely dangerous move and could easily have resulted in death. A local re-telling of this story claims that as the men approached one another tears were shed and they embraced. After Uita humbled himself and repented peace prevailed between the two men and a church was built to honour the message which brought about this reconciliation.

Later Ripahau left Uita's pa and returned to Otaki. There he came into contact with Katu Te Rauparaha (later known as Tamihana Te Rauparaha) from Kapiti Island, the son of the great Ngati Toa chief. Ripahau was again invited to read from the scripture to Katu and his nephew Te Whiwhi. In this way the gospel began to warm the hearts of the people in that place. Some years later Katu (who was now called Tamihana) took Tarore's book with him when he travelled to the South Island to revisit his father's traditional enemies, bringing the gospel of peace there for the first time. The dramatic reconciliation of enemies that had followed Tarore's martyrdom was repeated. Tarore's story and the gospel she bore has long been amongst the taonga (treasures) of the Church in New Zealand.

Alternate re-telling:

In the 1830s a Maori girl called Tarore lived in the Waikato (New Zealand). She was about 12 years old. Her father, Ngakuku, was a rangatira's Maori chief. Life was uncertain. People traded for guns. There were tensions. War parties could strike at any time. If people were killed revenge was expected.

Some missionaries arrived with God's written Word, the Bible. These missionaries, Rev and Mrs Brown, wanted to teach people to read, so that they could read the Bible and learn about God's love. Tarore had heard about their school, so she asked her father, "Please, can I go? I'd like to learn from the book." Ngakuku agreed.

At school Tarore learned about Jesus. Jesus was different. He had great mana. But Jesus didn't fight back, even when his enemies were going to kill him. Instead, Tarore learned, Jesus loved people. From the Bible, Tarore learned that Jesus helped people love each other and taught them to love God. She learnt that Jesus was the Son of God, and that he died on a cross and rose again. She learned that, by his death and rising to life again, Jesus defeated the dark powers of the world and made it possible for us to be right with God. Tarore decided to follow Jesus.

At this time the first parts of the Maori Bible were being printed. One of the first was Te Rongopai a Ruka-- the Gospel of Luke. The Browns gave a copy to Tarore.

As Tarore read from her book to her people, Ngakuku her father stood nearby and listened to his daughter. The message about love and peace was new, but it had impact as Tarore's people thought about the hate and pain of war. Fighting was never far away.

Ngakuku decided to take his young people over the Kaimai mountains to Tauranga. They stopped to spend the night by the Wairere Falls. The group gathered around the campfire. Perhaps Tarore brought out her Gospel and read to the group. Then, putting her book under her head, she slept.

But up the valley warriors watched smoke from Tarore's camp rising above the trees and made their way quietly towards the sleepers.

Crack! A branch broke. Ngakuku was instantly awake. "What was that?"

Crack! There it was again.

"Quick!" shouted Ngakuku, "Into the bush and hide!"

Ngakuku grabbed his little son and led the way. But where was Tarore?

When it was safe Ngakuku went back, afraid about what he would find. By a tree where she had slept, Tarore lay dead. Ngakuku wept.

"Revenge!" cried others in the group.

"No!" said Ngakuku, "there's been enough killing!"

"Where is Tarore's book?" someone asked. But it had been taken.

Uita had taken the Gospel. Thinking it must be a great treasure, he took it back to Rotorua. But no one could understand the strange marks. No one, that is, until Ripahau arrived. Ripahau was a slave from Otaki who had been taken to the Bay of Islands. He had been taught to read by the missionaries there. His master had died and now he was returning home.

“I will read it,” said Ripahau. Others gathered around to hear.

As he listened Uita found the words were a special message for him. “Love my enemies? But I killed the wahine (girl) who had this book...I want the peace Jesus brings.”

So Uita sent a message and asked forgiveness from Ngakuku. And there was peace, not through force, but through the power of God's Word.

Ripahau left and went on to Otaki. There he taught Tamihana, son of the great Otaki rangatira Te Rauparaha and his cousin Te Whi-whi. He taught them to read from Tarore's Gospel. But Te Rauparaha himself was a fierce man of war. People feared him.

One day Te Rauparaha's son, Tamihana said, “I do not want war! I want to follow the way of peace.”

He taught his people from Tarore's book. Te Whi-whi went to Paihia to bring a missionary to teach them more about Jesus. Even Te Rauparaha began to change his ways.

Tamihana looked across at the South Island. People lived there in fear of wars and revenge. He said, “I will take them the message of peace.”

So he set off in a canoe to the very places where the name of his father was enough to make people grab their weapons. There he told the people the things he had learned from Tarore's book—how Jesus had taught that the way of peace was better than the way of hatred and war.

Six years later Bishop Selwyn took his missionary journey through New Zealand. No European missionary had been to the South Island, but Selwyn found the people living in peace and following Jesus. Many people had learned to read and write. The only textbook they had known was Tarore's Gospel of Luke and two pages from the Maori Prayer book.

What about Ngakuku and Uita? Rev Brown records in his journal that, in 1842, Ngakuku and Uita met:

“In the evening, they were engaged together in worshipping God at their prayer meeting and were apparently on the most friendly terms.—Who but the Christian loves their enemies?” wrote Brown.

In 2009 more than 240,000 copies of the Tarore Story were distributed to New Zealand schools.

#### **Re: Tarore and Her Book - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/3/22 13:30**

Blessed be the Lord God for sending the Browns to New Zealand, for supplying the grace needed for the bible to be translated into the Maori tongue Blessed be His Holy Name for moving Tarore's father to send her to school. To Him alone who sits on the throne of Heaven, be praises for Tarore's 'book'!

Who would have thought the loss of one precious saint and her book, would be the great catalyst the Lord would use to deliver a great number of people from darkness?

Divine strategy at work.

The Lamb of God is victorious!