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## Syncretism in Māori Theology

Theology is God talk  
A human attempt to  
Theorise the Divine

Theology 'from here' and  
Theology 'from elsewhere' (Darragh, 2003)  
Theology is shaped by context (Tate, 2012)

Through indigenous eyes  
Theology can be a platform  
From which to rediscover, reclaim...

...reconcile and redefine our spirituality  
In a neo-colonial context  
As indigenous Māori Christians

Marsden and Ruatara preached  
Jesus' blood mixed with whenua  
And a new faith grew in the people

Māori prophets, as responses  
To land lost, syncretised  
Theologies, Māori and Christian

Innovative frameworks of faith  
Developed in the face of devastation  
Instilled in our people, a sense of hope

The plea of Māori messiahs all  
Was to hold on to the land  
To look courageously to the future

Syncretism: a phenomenon where  
Indigenisation and Christianisation  
Occur simultaneously (Jørgensen, 2013)

One where the power of those who control  
Religion is disturbed and disrupted (Goosen, 2000)  
Our prophets unsettled Pākehā power!

A deep-seated uncertainty of syncretism  
Exists throughout Christian history (Jørgensen, 2013)  
And yet the Church has always...

...been infused with local culture (Vilaça & Wright, 2009)  
Gods, spirits, rituals and ceremonies  
Melt into one another

Akin to Christ's Mass and Solstice  
Our traditions merged, like wearing black  
Ringing bells, and blessing headstones

We embraced Christianity  
Through the templates  
Of our own knowledge (Cooper, 2017)

We 'did' Christianity our way  
And we never fully abandoned  
Our former spirituality (Lewis, Willing & Mullan, 1995)

atua or Atua?  
The Christians took our word  
And offered it on the altar of the new God

A capitalised 'A' to signify  
That 'the one true God' is superior  
And a small 'a' to denote the 'lesser' (Tate, 2012).

"Māori indigenous theology is  
Māori faith seeking Māori understanding.  
It is theology developed by Māori for Māori" (Tate, 2012, p. 21)

"Māori theology is  
Ranginui e tū nei,  
Papatūānuku e takoto nei" (W. Te Haara, personal  
communication)

Māori theology determines  
The parameters of our spiritual reality  
Where Hinenuitepō and Jesus embrace

Māori theology is atua  
Atuatanga is Māori spirituality  
Atuatanga is all things atua

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