

EVANGELISTIC PERFORMANCE IN NEW ZEALAND:
THE WORD AND WHAT IS NOT SAID

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Abstract

In 1518, Martin Luther is reputed to have nailed his *95 theses* to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, an act that sparked the Protestant Reformation. Luther sought change in the Catholic Church: a return to an unmediated relationship with God based on a closer understanding of the Word. Since then, Protestant evangelism has been a force for social change: and this is particularly true in New Zealand, where evangelism has gone hand in hand with the colonisation of the country.

This thesis proposes that it is not, in fact, the literal understanding of the Word that gives these services meaning, and that such an understanding is problematic and perhaps even impossible: the Word is always a translation. Instead, it is through what is not said - the performative aspects of evangelistic services, including the use of space, the actions of the evangelist, and pre-existing cultural “horizons of expectation” - that meanings are produced.

Taking as material Samuel Marsden’s first service in New Zealand in 1814, in which the Word was preached in English to a congregation who primarily spoke only Maori, the more contemporary example of televangelist Benny Hinn, who performs miracles to television cameras, and the religious and political performances of Destiny Church’s Brian Tamaki, this thesis uses the tools of performance studies to undertake an ethnographic study of evangelistic services. This brings into focus the ways in which evangelists may create congregations and produce meanings in their services through different modes of performance and the ways in which these ulterior meanings impact, and have impacted, on New Zealand society.

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INTRODUCTION

When I was young, I did not go to church. I was not brought up in a religious family; we did not say grace before meals; I did not attend Sunday School. We lived up the hill from St Augustine's Anglican Church, and my sister and I played in the church grounds with our friends. We'd go there when it was getting dark, and on occasion we would dare one another to go and touch the back door, where we had somehow convinced each other was the place that they kept the dead people, prior to burial. Sometimes, on Sundays, from the time I was about eight years old, I used to play outside the church while the services were underway. I remember being intrigued; I remain unsure why. The fascination I had with the people inside the church is hard to explain. They were happy, or so it seemed to me. They dressed nicely, and they met together once a week to be happy, to sing, to sit together and to listen. There was a sense of belonging, of community, that I craved.

I was introduced to the ideas of Christianity in scripture classes held at my primary school on Tuesday mornings. I liked the stories, and every week, if we learned Bible verses well enough to recite by heart, we earned a sticker for our notebooks. I liked scripture class: learning verses was easy enough, and the increasingly large collection of stickers was an incentive to study. My introduction to Christian doctrine was based on this experience of learning.

As a child, I didn't make the connection between these two experiences. On one hand, there were the people in the church, and on the other, there were words to be learned. My difficulty with Christianity stems from my (somewhat late-in-the-day) realisation that participation in the one was contingent upon belief in the other. The

verses I had learned were the Word of God. They weren't just pretty stories illustrated by coloured pictures: they were supposed to be true.

If standing in church and feeling moved were enough to be a Christian, I think I would be one. But the Bible, presented as the literal Word of God, does not make logical sense to me. This is both on the level of possibility (Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt, for example, seems physically impossible) and intent (Lot's wife's fate seems unfair and a God that would do such a thing seems small-minded and petty). It's nonetheless attractive: Lot's wife frozen into a statue, gazing back at the past, is a beautiful and evocative image. I would like it to be true. I would like the ritual that I find alluring to be based on a true Word of God. But whereas Protestantism positions the Bible as the unequivocal and literal Word of God, to me, it is the other side of the equation that entices me to believe: the ritual that contains the Word, rather than the written Word in the Bible.

I propose that this experience is not something unique to me, but that in Protestant Christianity there is often a tension between these two aspects of the service in performance. The meanings produced by the unspoken aspects of the performance of service for the congregation are not necessarily the same as those suggested by the words that are spoken by the preacher. I see Protestant Christian services as divided: there is the Word of God, and the performative aspects of the ritual of service, a context into which the Word is spoken. Both the Word and the unsaid create meaning.

As an actor, I can see my desires for belief in church echoed in my desires for the theatre. Theatre is based on a written script, and in order to perform that script, you have to believe in the words you speak, at least in the moment that those words are said. Like evangelistic services, this can be seen as separable into two parts: the

written word, and the performance of it. In the theatre, the differentiation between these two ideas is very clear, as performances of the same written text may vary enormously, and the meanings produced for the audience may therefore also be hugely altered from production to production. The truth of the words, and the meaning they convey is not stable, but created in the act of performance. When acting, I am engaged in a process of convincing myself that the words I speak are true (or, more exactly, that I believe them as I say them). Actors find the ways in which the words spoken can be true for them: a different truth than they maybe feel free to speak in the day-to-day world.

While there are similarities between theatre and church, there are also differences. While theatre had its roots in ritual practice, today it is largely an entertainment. Unlike a congregation in a church, a theatre audience is not deemed to share any religious beliefs (although theatre does proceed on the understanding that an audience may have some commonality of social and cultural understanding). There is generally no assumption that words spoken in a theatre are true, but rather, the audience agrees to suspend its disbelief for the duration of the performance. The assumption is that dramatic words are fictional, and there is (in the conventional theatre at least) no expectation that the words spoken need be believed later when the performance is over. In church, there is no such suspension of disbelief: there is no disbelief at all, at least as is recognised within the service. The truth of the Word is not under question, and its truth is ongoing. The Word is not more or less true in the context of the service, but is fundamentally and eternally true in all conceivable circumstances. In contrast, the belief in theatre performances (such as it is) is ephemeral, lasting as long as the performance continues. It is the repetition of the words, of the experience, the re-living of the performance that recharges the words

with their truth, night after night. Perhaps it is the same in church: it is the continually recurring performance of services that gives the Word of God whatever truth (and efficacy) that it has.

Traditional Protestantism asserts that the Bible is the literal Word of God. The Word is crucially important: the efficacy of missionary and evangelistic services relies on the transmission of the Word to a new congregation of people. Faith equals belief in the Word. My thesis proposes faith is not created by the Word, but by its performance: something that is not said. In the theatre, the success and efficacy of a performance does not rely merely on the right words being said by the actor, but on the actor saying them the right way. My contention is that this holds true of the church as well: the performance of the word creates faith, and the ongoing appeal of the evangelistic service.

This thesis will focus on evangelistic performances, by which I mean, on services in which missionaries and evangelists seek to spread the Gospel to new congregations around the world. They don't necessarily speak to believers, but must convert the audience to the faith. Here, it is even more important that the performances are convincing. In my thesis, I will describe and analyse how evangelistic church meetings are successful in converting their audience, not through the Word alone, but through performance. Where the customs and beliefs of the service are not hitherto shared by the congregation, the ways in which the service is performed may produce meaning as clearly, or more clearly, than the words that are spoken. This is even more obvious where there is no shared language: it seems in these cases that the *only* meaning that can be produced comes from the context in which the words are said: the way in which the words are spoken, and the other elements of the service that are not reliant on words. In Catholicism, the literal

meaning of the Word as spoken in the Mass was less crucial than ritual attendance, but in the Protestant tradition, the Word became all-important. In evangelistic services, particularly those where language is not shared: what does it mean to evangelise, to spread the Word of God, when those words cannot be understood?

In the early missionary services in New Zealand, the barrier of language was a significant factor. From very early on in the history of contact between Maori and Pakeha, missionaries and evangelists visited New Zealand to preach to the native population, few of whom spoke English. I have chosen as my first case-study Samuel Marsden's "First service," which took place in the Bay of Islands on Christmas Day in 1814, less than fifty years after Cook had explored the coastline in the *Endeavour*. Marsden, an Anglican minister based in New South Wales, was intent on bringing the world of God to the native Maori population. He landed at Rangihoua, and read the Anglican Morning Service (in English) to a group of assembled Maori. Marsden's service is widely regarded as a critical moment in New Zealand's history as a nation, and remains a pivotal part of how many people living in New Zealand today visualise the birth of nationhood. However, examined more closely, this mythical imagining of the birth of a nation is more problematic than the Christmas carols sung in remembrance might have us believe. There is no question that New Zealand celebrates this event as important and effective, but the reason why this might be so is less obvious. While this event is remembered to this day as a kind of enlightening of Marsden's "benighted heathens," the question arises as to how (and *if*) this was actually the case. Marsden (a Protestant) is remembered for bringing the word of God to the native Maori, in a scene reminiscent of the Angels appearing to the Shepherds to announce the birth of Christ. However, this ideal of the service is complicated by the fact that Marsden spoke in English, a language that the majority of his assembled

congregation did not understand. He might as easily have been speaking the Mass in Latin, a practice that Protestantism had broken away from in order to make the Word more accessible to common people. Protestantism was established on the basis that the Bible should be understood, in order to allow an unmediated, immediate, personal relationship with God through the Word.

Evangelists spread the Word of God around the world. But where there is no shared language, as in the case of Marsden, the Word functions differently, if at all. Why, then, would Marsden perform a service to a group of people that could not understand the language in which he was speaking? And why would such a service be marked in the nation's memory as an occasion of such enormous significance? Is it possible that there might be some kind of understanding that surpasses the word-for-word analytical recognition of the spoken text? From Marsden's perspective, the message of God was so powerful that it might be effective regardless of language differences, and in his view, the Maori somehow understood the message nonetheless.

Marsden included in his party a translator, a Maori chief who travelled with him, who stood between the British and the Maori to provide some sort of interpretation of what was going on. In Marsden's own words:

The natives told Duaterra they could not understand what I meant. He replied they were not to mind that now for they would understand by and by, and that he would explain my meaning as far as he could... (Marsden, in Elder 1932: 94)

The very presence of an interpreter suggests that Marsden may have seen the need for an act of translation: that despite his own indications to the contrary, he felt the need for his message to be understood in a rational way. This is contrasted by Duaterra's attitude: that for the purposes of the service, being present, sitting and listening was enough, and that a wider understanding of the significance and meaning of Marsden's words would emerge in time. Duaterra himself could be interpreted as understanding

the potential futility of the act of translation in the moment, saying that he would explain “as far as he could” (suggesting in fact that a full and accurate translation was in some way beyond him, or was impossible).

At first glance, evangelism seems absolutely dependant on the meaning of the words spoken: evangelists are charged with taking the Gospel, the *message* of Christianity, to new people and cultures in destinations around the world. But where there is no common language, surely any mutual understanding must be achieved through some other means than a cognitive understanding of the spoken word. In the context of Protestant evangelism, this contention remains especially problematic. In spite of the work of modern theologians, such as A.B Kuhn, who writes

...modern scholars stupidly and stubbornly refuse to see that ancient scriptural writing was esoteric or hidden as to its meaning, and allegorical and symbolical as to its method” (Kuhn 2002),

for many evangelists, the early Protestant ideal of the Gospels and the Bible as the literal (and intact) word of God persists. The Bible means exactly and precisely what it says and no more. The very notion that the Word may not be paramount in evangelistic services is immediately contentious within such a tradition. An Anglican minister, Marsden seems to have been assured that the Word of God had been successfully transmitted in his service, and the ongoing celebration of this service suggests a kind of efficacy whether or not a rational understanding of his message came across. Perhaps the fact that the words spoken were not understood gave them a different kind of efficacy. The words don’t work as a rational signifier of meaning; the fact that they are *not* understood may be part of what makes them powerful.

In the Reformation, emergent Protestant thinkers challenged the Catholic Church (and ultimately broke away from it) on the basis that the Church had positioned itself as a mediator between the individual and the divine. When Martin

Luther nailed his *95 Theses* to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg in 1517, his primary dispute was focused on the practice of selling indulgences, whereby penances were purchased from the Papacy for hard cash. “Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt even without indulgence letters,” Luther wrote (trans. Spaeth, 31), simultaneously refusing the authority of the Church to grant forgiveness of sins (since forgiveness was guaranteed by Christ to every repentant sinner), but also, by implication, refusing the authority of the church as a mediator between the individual and God. There would be no more interpretation and no more mediation. The Word of God in the Bible would directly be the medium of a communion with God. Because of this belief, Luther himself later translated the Bible into German, making the Word of God available to the understanding of every German, not just those educated in Latin, as had hitherto been the case. The importance of understanding and personal reflection on meaning was a strong ideal of early Protestantism. Nonetheless, in completing his own translation, Luther obviously inserted his own interpretation of the Word as a translator. The Protestant ideal, the direct union with God through the word of God – a private, personal, and intimate relationship – was (and remains) complicated by the fact that the Word itself is already mediated and translated.

The notion that the Word of God might be transmitted, absolute and entire, by any evangelist is always problematic. One might argue that the Bible, as God’s word is already a kind of translation – after all, what language does God speak? On one level, the Bible in English (of which many different versions exist) is translated from the original testaments written in Greek and Hebrew. A translator’s job is to identify common linguistic ground between the two groups of people that he stands between. Duaterra’s reticence in providing a translation for Marsden’s words may have been

because he could not see where this common ground existed: the concepts Marsden was describing may have been more complicated than could be immediately transposed. Translation is an act of creation. One word may translate a dozen ways, or there may be no common word in existence. Some concepts may not be shared between cultures. In such case, a “literal” translation is not possible. Meaning may be lost or gained. Not only is the literal meaning of words adjusted, but also the concept under discussion may be fundamentally altered. The Bible in English is already one translating step away from the Greek.

One might further argue that a similar act of translation must occur even in the original scripts of the Bible. The Evangelists recording the original texts were, in a sense, translating the word of God to a human population: something that seems to be an impossible task. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein argues that there is no private language: that language only exists in the spaces between people. As such, communication is a constant act of translation, with the meaning of words constantly shifting and being reshaped. Meaning is constantly reinvented, and furthermore can never be absolutely shared. Wittgenstein proposes that an exchange of meaning is even less likely without a mutual social context. The most extreme example he offers is that: “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him” (2001 190). Because, presumably, the psychology and experience of lion-ness is so foreign to a human, no communication is possible. One might argue that the idea of God speaking to humans is equally difficult. The Evangelists, for example, describe the life of Christ, and even they do not agree about precisely what occurred. Throughout history, theologians have strenuously argued over interpretations, and even which apocryphal Gospels were legitimate and which were not. The word of God is endlessly translated, saturated with the interpretations of many other voices, and

subject to the objectives and desires of each one of them. In what ways does the Word remain efficacious, when it is so very loaded with remnants of other voices?

What Wittgenstein does not concede is that while lions *don't* speak, where it really counts, we understand what they mean, especially insofar as it relates to chasing us with the supposed intention to eat. Words, in such a case, are not necessary in achieving a mutual understanding. Leonine *action* speaks for itself. That which is not said, may, in fact, communicate more clearly than words. The idea of Protestant evangelism as spreading the literal word of God is therefore almost inherently paradoxical: the Word, in action, is constantly translated, and constantly adapted.

The concept of “the Word” is difficult to pin down from a theological point of view. In a Christian context, the Word connotes more than can be transmitted simply using words. Acts of translation that try to give a word-for-word approximation of meaning are perhaps missing the point that the Word may have the power to transcend such attempts. Words are not merely labels or signifiers to describe objects or concepts, but carry the force of God. More than that, god is inseparable from the Word: God *is* the Word. The Gospel of John begins:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John1:1, KJV).

This verse is regarded by many as the remnant of a religious hymn or chant, as though its origin as a song might explain the internal logical paradox of the words, particularly the use of the preposition “with”, which suggests duality (or perhaps even trinity). There is much exegetical analysis of John’s writing – he is believed to have written his Gospel substantially later than the other three Evangelists (Jackson 14), and as such is seen to have a different perspective on the events described. He writes as a historian, rather than a witness, and the literal accuracy of his account is

occasionally questioned by theological historians, especially where this account diverges from the more contemporary writings of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Perhaps crucially to this discussion, the Word (*Logos*) is seen to pre-exist the Creation and the created order of things. Rather than being part of what is created, *logos* carries the power to create. For example, in the book of Genesis, the universe is spoken into existence: “And God said ‘Let there be Light’: and there was light” (Gen 1:3). The act of naming creates the universe. The Word of God is more powerful than just the bearer of a message – it is power and action. This is again paradoxical from an evangelistic perspective: how can these words be transmitted, be “spread” around the world? When Marsden, for example, speaks the Word to the Maori, does he somehow speak his congregation into existence as Christians, even though they don’t understand what he is literally saying? Does speaking the Word of God, even at the distance of so many translations, still retain power?

In Goethe’s *Faust*, Faust, grappling with his own act of translation, considers the notion of the Word. In his study, he contemplates his own translation of the Book of John into his native German:

‘T is written: “In the Beginning was the *Word*.”
 Here I am balked: who, now, can help afford?
 The *Word*? – impossible so high to rate it
 And otherwise must I translate it,
 If by the Spirit I am truly taught.
 Then thus: “In the Beginning was the *Thought*.”
 This first line let me weigh completely.
 Lest my impatient pen proceed too fleetly.
 Is it the *Thought* which works, creates indeed?
 “In the Beginning was the *Power*,” I read.
 Yet, as I write, a warning is suggested,
 That I the sense may not have fairly tested.
 The Spirit aids me, now I see the light!
 “In the Beginning was the *Act*,” I write. (trans. Bayard Taylor, 43)

Faust’s difficulty is apparent: he nearly immediately stutters to a halt. He takes issue with the idea that “the Word” can be so centrally important, immediately rejecting

that as a valid translation of *logos* in this context. The idea of the “Word” being so powerful is simply impossible for him to grasp. While Faust (as judged on later actions) may not be the most reliable adjudicator of such matters, his objections seem pertinent. To return to the example of Marsden reading to the Maori, the notion that words alone (in this case in another language) are efficacious and powerful seems difficult to accept. For Faust, there is more at stake than the efficacy of one Christian service – he is judging the potential efficacy of words in the creation of the Universe. Perhaps inevitably, he seeks another interpretation.

Faust’s second effort at translation results in “the Thought”, or in the German, *Sinn*, which might equally be translated as sense, or meaning. The word as a spoken “object” would be unimportant without its sense. Faust separates “word” from “meaning”: like Wittgenstein, he perhaps proposes that while words give names to things, they do not necessarily describe or make clear the nature of that thing: “a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it” (2001 17). Words without meaning have no power, and words in and of themselves cannot provide meaning where there is no understanding.

The idea of *Sinn* might be stretched to encase God’s intention – the desire to speak, to create, the intention of “something to say” that pre-exists the moment of speaking. But as Faust contends, the intention or mind alone does not create. He rejects *Sinn*, and substitutes “Power”. He is momentarily pleased by this, but discards the translation yet again. Power is the potential to create, to take action, but if held in check, results in nothing. The only interpretation that Faust is satisfied with (at least until the untimely intervention of a barking poodle) is *Tat* – the Act. It is in taking action that all the elements of the previous definitions: word, meaning, and power, are

manifested. *Logos* only makes sense, in Faust's view, as an action. Only an action can explain to him the power of the Word in creation.

In evangelistic performances, the Word is also an action. In fact, one could argue that words spoken are one action amidst a set of related actions, performed as a sequence with the object of communication and ultimately conversion.

Furthermore, evangelistic services may be seen to be a series of symbolic actions that the evangelist performs *as if* the congregation shares the belief system, language and understanding of the nature of the encounter with the evangelist. My task in this thesis will be to analyse the actions taken by the evangelists, both spoken and unspoken, and to consider how this set of actions works in relation to each other. I will examine the ways in which the Word becomes action by investigating the elements of performance that are unspoken. While these may be seen to vary from case to case, there are some points of analysis that will provide a common starting place from which to try and understand the performance of evangelism. This is not only a question of how meaning is produced with these services, but also what meanings are conveyed. The efficacy of evangelistic services will be seen to reside not only in the spoken words, but also in the transmission of other meanings (intentional or otherwise) that are produced by the negotiation of words and actions.

Performance Studies was initially a discipline wherein the tools of theatrical analysis (which analyse the ways in which dramatic performances make meaning) may be applied to non-theatrical social or civic performances. These may extend from personal presentations of self to religious rituals, sporting events, and political propaganda. Traditional dramatic analysis begins (and sometimes ends) with what is spoken: in theatre terms, the script as written by the playwright. Performance Studies analysis also addresses the unspoken: the actions of performers, the use of space and

technologies, costumes and properties, and extends to the cultural, historical and social context of the performance, addressing the ways in which these elements also create meaning.

My own performance analysis of the evangelistic services I have chosen will begin with attention to what might be called the “staging” of the service. While the term “staging” is perhaps already inflected with the notion of theatrical representation, I will use it here to refer to the ways in which the evangelistic performance is arranged in space, and in particular the way in which the congregant audience is positioned (both physically and symbolically) by this transaction. Henri Lefebvre argues that space shapes social interactions, but is also shaped by them, in a constantly shifting “mutual ecology”. Lefebvre suggests “social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. *Their underpinning is spatial*” (404). Social relationships can only exist through being realised in space, or in being performed. This implies that in changing the arrangement of social space, social relationships can be altered. The positioning of people inserts boundaries and hierarchies and implies rules as to who may speak, to whom, and when. Therefore, when an evangelist claims space for his performance, placing the visitors in one area (often a stage) and the congregation in another (often an auditorium, positioning the congregants as audience) the social relationship between and among the participants is affected. The position of the evangelist and helpers in relation to the congregant audience creates a context in which the actions and words of the service are heard and interpreted.

By Lefebvre’s definition, space is not an established and unchanging thing, but a constantly adapting set of relations between things (83). Generally, this fluidity is a slow process of give and take that develops gradually over time, as the social

interactions that occur carve out a space that suits them, rather like a river shaping a riverbed. The effect is two-sided: once the riverbed is carved out, the river tends to conform to the established banks. However, spatial interactions can also be consciously manufactured. In the theatre, for example, the spatial interaction may be determined in advance by the director or designer: the theatre set and the arrangement of the space create an environment which shapes the interaction of audience and actors, and helps produce meaning in the process. As Richard Schechner writes: “In the created environment the performance in some sense engineers the arrangement and behaviour of the spectators” (1994 xxx). The positioning of a theatrical audience affects the way in which they will receive, understand, and relate to the presented performance and the meanings within it. Schechner also points out that the choices made in terms of the spatial arrangement of the theatrical performance are often socially hierarchical, denoting and influencing the social relationship both between members of the audience and between the audience and the performers. A theatre set is manufactured by director and designer: to follow the previous metaphor, it is as if a dam or lock is built to channel the flow of water a particular way, perhaps guided by, but ultimately imposing upon, the pre-existing landscape. Unlike civic spaces that emerge over time, the theatre set is produced. The evangelistic use of space in performance is somewhere between these two processes. The evangelist enters a space that is new to him, but that may have pre-existing uses and connotations to the culture he visits. The use of space – the geography of the performance – shapes the performance and connotes meaning. For example, the earliest Christian missionaries to Anglo-Saxon England did not establish entirely new holy places, but performed their rituals in pagan holy places, taking over previous celebration days and inserting Christian holidays instead. Layers of meaning are overlaid, and both the natives and

the visitors are altered by this transaction, because the evangelistic message is heard in the context of the earlier uses and connotations of the space. In the analysis of evangelistic performance, a consideration of space and place is important in discerning the way in which meanings are produced.

The nature of evangelism is to take the Word of God to *other places* – locations where the Word is unknown, or differently understood. Because in most cases, the evangelist has no roots in the location of the service, pre-existing social spaces must be chosen and adapted for the purpose of the performance. Mircea Eliade argues that the creation of holy space has the effect of re-orienting the entire world:

“the manifestation of the sacred in space has a cosmological valence; every spatial hierophany or consecration of a space is equivalent to a cosmogony” (1987 51).

More simply, every arrangement of holy space reflects within itself the idealisation of man’s place in the cosmos, in relation to God or gods. From this point of view, every time a space is set aside as holy, the experience of the rest of the world is re-aligned, or the world itself is re-created. If this is taken at its face value, then every instance of an evangelistic service would have the effect of re-configuring the social space chosen as a location. However, Eliade has a tendency to see the whole world as a blank canvas before the act of sanctifying the space occurs – perhaps as some kind of primordial action at the beginning of a society. Evangelists are visitors: they perform in spaces that already have meanings attached to them. While I am interested and intrigued by the ways in which the performance of evangelistic service might alter the social spaces in which they are performed, I am perhaps more interested in the flipside of this proposal, taking into consideration the possibility that impact may go both ways. How might the evangelistic service (and the message that it presents) be mediated in performance in a new location that bears other, pre-existing cultural

connotations? In such a circumstance the performance space becomes a kind of palimpsest, with new meanings written over those that already were there. The way in which two sets of meanings intersect and inform one another give another level of interpretation. Furthermore, the notion of the use of space in performance naturally extends to the physical actions: space rarely remains static, but may be changed as the performers or participants enter, exit and move through it.

The actions of the evangelist might be compared to a theatrical score. For the duration of the service, the evangelist takes on a role. While there is a script of words, there is also a set of physical actions: a performance that may be repeated on many occasions, such as Richard Schechner has designated “restored”:

Restored behaviour is living behaviour treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behaviour can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (personal, social, political, technological, etc) that brought them into existence (2006 34).

Within evangelistic performance, it is possible to see that the “strips” of behaviour as originating from traditional church services, changed, rearranged and reconstructed to become relevant and necessary to a new congregation with a whole new set of cultural assumptions and expectations. The performance must be “readable” by both the evangelist and this new congregation.

The evangelist is in many cases central to the service, not only as the primary speaker, but also as a representative of a way of being in the world. The evangelist may be seen to be giving a performance of a role (sometimes quite explicitly), one that may in many cases be of pivotal importance to the service: and the image of the evangelist lends weight to what he says. This extends to the way in which he delivers his words, his physical actions, and his emotional responses to what occurs. This involves a conscious choice of actions that supplement and correspond to the words spoken. The evangelist, in order to deliver a successful performance, must establish a

recognisable character, or, emphasise the aspects of his own personality that most successful complement his message. In the services I have studied, the exact nature of the “appropriate” role of the evangelist can be seen to vary in some interesting ways. The evangelist, who may seem unfamiliar or even exotic to the natives, must present himself in such a way as to appeal to his audience. Particularly in the case of modern evangelists, the “audience” may extend to include public performances outside the performed service, as evangelists (particularly those who are the figureheads for large, visible churches) become public figures, and often even role models in everyday life.

Performance Studies as a discipline has a tendency to elide the difference between a ritual congregant and a spectator within an audience. This may be attributed to the basis of the discipline in dramatic scholarship, and the desire of earlier writers (such as Richard Schechner, also a theatre director) who wrote about ritual as they simultaneously sought to return theatre to its ritual roots. While there are clearly similarities between these roles, the differences are also essential, and I would argue that while it may be possible to make theatre more like ritual (and ritual more theatrical) there will always remain a distinction. A congregation is a collection of participants, deemed to share belief or faith. A spectator within the theatrical context may be prevailed upon to become a kind of participant, but may not be assumed to share a position on the performance, or a belief in it. Within this thesis, the consideration of the way in which the audience/congregation is positioned raises questions about both the extent to which these terms are interchangeable.

Reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss argues that readers of literary works can only experience these works (and evaluate and respond to them) in relation to the remembered experience of other reading experiences (1982). Aesthetic judgement (and, one might argue, understanding) is only possible in relation to what is already

known (a proposition that recalls Wittgenstein's idea of shared cultural context). Because of this, any text read (or, arguably, performance seen) will be held against other similar texts or performances that have been seen in the past. Any words spoken will be judged against words heard in the past, and any analysis of performance (and the meanings produced from it) will be influenced by other social performances hitherto experienced by the congregation.

If we regard the congregation, at least initially, as a kind of audience, who have come to hear and see a service with which they are at least partially unfamiliar, Jauss's premise may be applied: a congregant at an evangelistic service will respond to a service and understand it by drawing comparisons to whichever ritual performances are already known. An evangelist service is a particular kind of religious worship, and may be viewed in relation to other religious rituals, or similarly realised performance events. It's possible that for the congregants, the similarities in form or action will give a context for understanding what takes place. This interpretation may or may not align with the intent of the evangelist.

In this way, the understanding of the meaning of the service is interpreted from a very particular cultural position, particularly (but not exclusively) when there is no common language and the congregants must draw analogies from their own experience to fill the more substantial gaps in understanding left by an absence of linguistic common ground. Jauss' idea of an "horizon of expectation" presumes that there is a historic context for the reception of evangelist performances: even if the evangelism is a new phenomenon, the congregation will respond to what it is *like*.

Wolfgang Iser writes "[T]he book is meant to appeal to each individual reader, whatever his disposition, and its aim is to lead the believer to recognise himself (7 1974)." Iser proposes that successful novels are framed so as to leave gaps where the

reader can self-insert – and that meaning is produced not by the writer alone, but in the space between reader and text. Reading is a creative process of actively constructing meaning. If one considers the evangelist as the “writer” of the evangelist performance (in that he is the one who decides content, arranges form, and shapes the performance), then the congregants could be considered in some form readers. There are some difficulties in stretching the idea of “reading” to encompass “spectatorship” and especially to encompass being part of a congregation, but in terms of an individual congregant participant finding meaning, Iser’s proposition is useful. The performance (both spoken and unspoken) given by the evangelist is threaded together by the spectator/congregant, and meaning drawn together in a merging of the familiar and the new. Not only is what is seen and understood governed by the social horizon of expectations drawn from cultural context, but the individual congregant may respond and interpret in his or her own way.

In this thesis, I will examine the relationship between the evangelist and his congregation. It may be that the ritual of evangelism makes a group of spectators into a congregation, altering the relationship between those present, and “making the Others, we.” Again, this is not a literal message, but a function of the form of the evangelist service, that demands a performance of togetherness from its participant audience.

While this thesis may concentrate on the non-spoken (and ritual) aspects of evangelistic performance, it would be perhaps naïve to do so without considering whether to do so is simply another act of translation, and an interpretation that must, as a matter of course, remain subjective. In this thesis, my approach is ethnographic. Ethnography, as explicated by Geertz, involves the observation, description and analysis of social performance forms *in writing*. It is, again, an act of translation, and

one that may prove to be even less direct than linguistic translation. The ethnographer observes, and interprets according to his (or in this case, her) own social expectations and environment. Even determining which aspects of any given performance may be focused on involves an element of personal choice. An ethnographer chooses her own position of subjectivity.

“A good interpretation of anything,” Geertz argues, “ - a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that which it is the interpretation” (18). This seems at first to be a legitimate enough proposal. Geertz demands accuracy, sensitivity and rigour on behalf of the ethnographer. However, he seems to skirt the possibility that where “the heart” of the performance under interpretation lies might itself be contested. The evaluation of the “correctness” of an interpretation requires a similar sort of analysis on behalf of the reader: another act of interpretation. Geertz’ implication is that there may be some kind of ultimate standard of veracity, or some objective stand-point from where the validity of ethnographic interpretation might be judged, is problematic. One supposes that this may be a matter of degree – most readers would question an ethnographer who described a fleet of flying pigs summoned by a ritual, but the fact is that in many cases, the truth may be stranger than fiction, and historically (for example in the case of Margaret Mead) interpretations later found to be unfounded have been widely accepted. But who is to say what is and what is not an accurate representation of a ritual performance?

My first instinct would be to suggest that the performers within the performance may be worthy judges, and it would be imprudent, surely, to disregard their perceptions. But as a performer in theatrical productions, I suggest that the performer, while having a unique perspective on the proceedings, is possibly the last

person in the world to be able to provide any sense of objective overall knowledge with regards to the performance in question. The performer possesses *a* truth, but *the truth* is elusive – and perhaps non-existent. Vincent Crapanzano (1992) in fact takes Geertz to task for ignoring the possibility that his participant sources might be unreliable (in any degree from deliberately dissembling to not entirely forthcoming). He also challenges Geertz on his disregard for the possibility that his own presence may alter the ritual performances that he analyses: that performances (and the attention of performers) may have a tendency to turn, almost heliotropically, towards a perceived audience. Similarly, in evangelistic performance, it is often tempting to imagine that one is invisible within a larger congregation, in such a way as is untrue of the other participants: that somehow one is set apart in one's own ethnographic little bubble. But there is no place outside the ritual: in performance ethnography, one always writes as a participant. Simply by being present, the dynamic of the performance may be seen to be altered. Likewise, the experience of participation has the power to cloud whatever sense of objectivity one might otherwise like to imagine was there.

Perhaps this might be seen to refer back to the duality that is suggested by the topic of this thesis. My initial assumption is that the Word seems to work on a rational, literal, logical level. My chief problem in grappling with Christian dogma is with my own belief that the written word should exist on some pure, logically-intact level. It should make logical sense. But on the other hand the unsaid performative aspects of evangelistic performance have an appeal that is less logical and perhaps less quantifiable. They can be observed, and experienced, but any analysis thereof demands first giving over to the experience and then stepping back to try and analyse where one has been, rather like looking over one's own shoulder to get a sense of

what one might look like from behind. I cannot escape my own subjective position, try as I might.

Renato Rosaldo suggests that without an engaged emotional understanding, ethnographic interpretations lack value (1989). Both the words and the unspoken performance elements of evangelistic performances work on the emotions of their congregation. As a participant ethnographer, there's a clear dilemma. If one attempts to remain objective, one is deliberately excluding oneself from a great deal of the impact that the service may deliver. Only through living through similar experiences can the ethnographer hope to relate to his or her subject. Even so, the assumption of commonality with the subject under analysis is tricky and continually misleading. There may never be a way of telling: ethnography of performance, like the translation of texts, is in itself a creative act that may veer far away from, or stick close to what might seem an "authentic" or "accurate" understanding. It may be that there is, in fact, no "accurate" – the understanding of the event remains, consistently, subjective. As Crapanzano suggests:

Despite its frequent ahistorical-synchronic-pretense, ethnography is historically determined by the moment of the ethnographer's encounter with whomever he is studying" (1992 43).

Ethnographic writing represents not only the perspective of the ethnographer as an individual, but represents the historical and the social perspective of the time in which s/he writes.

This explicitly relates to my own research: I work as an ethnographer in studying evangelistic services (particularly my contemporary examples), and my own position in relation to these services remains problematic. In order to experience the full effect of these services, arguably I should give over to the performance and believe in it. However, in order to write as an ethnographer, I must also try and

maintain a critical distance. The most obvious example of this is sitting in a service with a notebook on my lap: important in capturing immediate impressions, but immediately marking me out as different, and altering the reaction to the performance (and performances) of those around me. Leaving the notebook at home, I'm liable to miss the chance to record my impressions (many services do not allow video cameras: some provide video footage for sale after the event). It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to simultaneously experience a service as it is designed to be experienced, while still keeping an eye to how it is structured and how it works. The paradox may not be resolvable: I can never be objective, and can never experience the services as a full subject. I'm caught in some ways in the crux of two mutually exclusive impulses: and so the problem of the ethnographer remains.

When it seems unlikely that either language or performance are capable of communicating a distinct and exact message, the question arises of what sorts of meanings are produced in this exchange. The nature of efficacy within evangelist performances perhaps relies on the impossibility of absolute literal transmission of rational meanings. Rather, what is communicated is something beyond words: a sense of emotion, a communication that is not confined to a rational understanding. How are these meanings produced, and what is the outcome of this potential ambiguity?

Evangelism has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on culture in New Zealand, in particular, but not confined to, the ongoing developing relationship between Maori and Pakeha. The Word of God has been a powerful force for social change and, arguably, a tool of colonisation. Christian practice remains the basis for the New Zealand legal system and ideas of social morality are still based on a Judeo-Christian set of beliefs. This is despite the fact that we are now, ostensibly, a secular society. Historically, I live in a nation that was formed on Christian ideals, and they

seem to remain in force. Just as in my childhood, I remain intrigued and provoked by how this should be so: within the terms of this thesis I desire to examine exactly what it is about evangelistic services that has given (and gives) them an impact that goes beyond the Word, and may be seen to be in some cases in direct contradiction to it.

I have observed two common threads of meaning conveyed in the evangelistic services that I have seen, that while not explicitly biblical become an important component of the sense of the services. Firstly, a message that abounds and seems in contradiction with the literal message of the Bible is that of personal and corporate wealth. The evangelistic message is on many occasions tied up with notions of personal affluence as a signifier of a life lived in Christianity. Financial prosperity denotes a life led according to Christian ideals and becomes in some cases a perceived reward for conversion. This is despite numerous occasions within the New Testament in which Christ is recorded as having seen the possession of riches as directly adverse to a holy life. For example, in Mark, 1 Timothy, and Ecclesiastes, there are direct references to how love of money corrupts, and how wealth is a barrier to entry in the kingdom of heaven. Biblically, wealth and riches, rather than being a benefit or blessing, may be an encumbrance that hinders a soul's ascent to heaven. There is also the oft-quoted verse referring to the difficulty of a camel passing through the eye of the needle, and Christ's own lived example, owning no possessions and having his disciples cast their nets away to follow him. While working hard is seen as virtuous, wealth is more of a burden of the consciousness. This is directly contradicted in a number of evangelistic performances, where wealth and prosperity is held out as a reward for Christian living, and furthermore, a benefit that God actively wants his followers to enjoy.

In many cases, the evangelist not only speaks God's word, but also appears to step into a kind of Christ-like role, taking up the position of a translator of God's word to the people of the congregation. Performance choices indicate and emphasize such an interpretation, including arrival (or descent) into the performance venue, and in some cases the performance of miraculous acts (for example, healing). The messenger is also the message, a model of how to live and act within a Christian life: often, this Christ-like performance is combined with a strong presentation of personal wealth as an ideal to be imitated. One senses that Christ, alive today, would wear a sharp suit and have property investments in Florida.

This equation of godliness and prosperity dates back to Calvin. On one hand, Calvin proposes that salvation is predestined, and no number of good works can alter one's destiny. As Weber sums it up:

The community of the elect with their God could only take place and be perceptible to them in that God worked... through them and that they were conscious of it... [T]heir action originated from the faith caused by God's grace, and this faith in turn justified itself by the quality of that action (113).

There was no way of telling if one was a member of the chosen Elect, and no acts on earth could alter this predestination. However if a person worked hard, and became wealthy, this was a sign that he was likely a member of the Elect: in some ways a social reinforcement of what could not really be known. This was a display of being saved, rather than an action working towards salvation (perhaps rather like a Scripture notebook with more stickers than any other child in the class). Working hard (and living frugally) was thus given moral sanction by Calvin, with the ongoing result that Calvinists became increasingly wealthy – and the so-called “Protestant Work Ethic” was born.

The promotion of capitalism through evangelism extends to the very direct (for example in the sale of merchandise, mugs, videos, music tapes, t-shirts, endorsed

versions of the Bible), but also may be interpreted as a sub-textual message in many services. Maybe it is inevitable that in the meeting of two divergent cultural groups the question of trade (and capital) may arise. Furthermore, many evangelists rely on their congregants to at least partially fund their expeditions to new places, so finances often an important place within the service, wherein a collection is taken. It may be that, over time, this emphasis becomes blurred with the message of Christian salvation.

Not entirely disconnected from this ideal of capitalism and trade is the relationship of evangelism to colonisation, another thread of meaning that may be drawn between evangelistic services. Edward Said writes:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps impelled by impressive ideological formations which include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with that domination (1993 8).

Said essentially argues that colonisation is assisted by a cultural understanding that positions the natives as lacking in culture and civilisation, such as that the colonising culture sees itself as rescuing the natives from their situation, and performs both the necessity and the fulfilment of such a rescue. At its most basic, evangelism introduces the idea of a damnation that the native population hitherto did not necessarily conceive. By positioning the congregation in such a desperate position, the evangelist, his culture and his civilisation, his way of being within the world, is the only salvation.

Young argues similarly:

“Colonisation was not primarily concerned with transposing cultural values. They came as a by-product of its real objectives of trade, economic exploitation and settlement (2001 24).

Evangelists (both historically and closer to the present) were at the forefront of colonisation, and may be seen to have been concerned with the transposition of cultural values, in particular, Christian values. It is in some ways attractive to view evangelists as venal promulgators of fiction driven by the lust for financial gain, when the colonial result of their services and the subsequent detrimental effects to the native population is considered. However, I do not propose that this is the case. How much more interesting and provocative it is if one considers that the cultural effects of evangelism in terms of colonisation are in fact incidental: the evangelists in question may be purely motivated to spread the word of God, or not, but it is in the performance of evangelism – both the word of God and the unspoken elements of the service – that new cultural values are implemented and colonisation begins.

If the Word does not provide a literal meaning, then meanings are somehow garnered from the form of the ritual event and the relationships between the evangelist and the congregants. The resulting meanings must be more ambiguous, and as such, more widely applicable to a wider social context, in that the message of the performance can be interpreted and utilised a number of ways, for a number of purposes.

Samuel Marsden's First Service makes a useful first case study on a number of fronts. Essentially, his service provides a contradiction that lies at the heart of this analysis. Marsden preaches a service to a group of congregants who do not speak the same language. This service is later widely held to be efficacious: nearly two hundred years later, it is still remembered as the starting place of New Zealand Christianity; it is still regarded as a starting place of bi-cultural nationhood. These assumptions of efficacy are worthy of further investigation: if the Word of God was not understood in a literal way, then how did the service work in other ways to produce the long term

effect which is attributed to it? Is the remembrance of this event merely sentimental, a kind of revision of history to suit the preferences of modern society, whereby nationhood was initiated by peaceful worship under a summer sun rather than in the intricacies of warfare and trade? How was the service staged to appeal to the Maori, and how might the cultural expectations of the Maori be seen to have impacted on the meanings produced in this way?

Marsden's journal records the service, and his own thoughts about it. The service is also documented by his travelling companion, J.L.Nicholas. Later accounts of the service, as related in New Zealand classrooms, reveal a lot about a British perspective on this event, and a New Zealand perspective on Christianity and bi-culturalism more widely. It may be that this event was not as directly effective as Marsden believed (at least, not in the *way* he believed): the first conversions within this mission of Maori to Christianity only occurred some years later. Why then do we remember this event, and sing carols about it? What is it that New Zealanders find so appealing in this scene?

Samuel Marsden was simply the first of an almost continual line of missionaries and evangelists who have visited New Zealand. My next case study is taken as material Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade, held in Christchurch in January of 1999. After establishing a mode of analysis with Marsden, I have chosen to focus on contemporary examples. I am proposing that evangelistic services may be analysed according to the Word, but also that the experience of ritual practice also influences the meanings attributed to the service. The ability to attend live services is crucial in experiencing the effect of the Word, and what is not said. I work as an ethnographer and have therefore chosen performances which I could attend, observe, and experience.

Hinn's service bears some similarity to Marsden's: he represents a new force in the evangelisation of this country. Whereas Marsden's service can be viewed as an episode in the British colonisation of New Zealand, Hinn's may be seen as part of a colonisation that is ongoing today: the globalisation of American culture. Within this context, a similar (but not identical) Christian message is produced. Benny Hinn is a televangelist, and because of this, his relationship with his congregant audience is already mediated by the expectation that arises from earlier exposure to his television show. The relationship between television spectatorship and live performance raises a set of questions about the ways in which this performance is efficacious: whether it is merely the word, or the creation of a sense of community owing to presence at the ceremony which creates meaning in this context.

I attended two services held in Christchurch's Westpac Trust Centre by Benny Hinn. Unlike Marsden's service, for which limited records exist, Hinn's Crusade gave the possibility of joining the audience and observing the ways in which the service shaped the experience and response of the capacity crowd who were attending. Hinn's five-hour long services were structured around four main set-pieces of conversion, collection, healing, and "slaying in the Spirit", in which Hinn ostensibly sent the spirit of God into the audience, causing ranks of people to simultaneously collapse in rapture. I mean this literally: on the nights I attended, great numbers of the audience, after testifying to their recent experiences of healing miracles, were touched on the head by Hinn and fell to the ground shaking and crying. The spectacular nature of Hinn's evangelist performance is clear as Hinn and his associates take the congregation of locals through a series of actions that culminates in this drastic and dramatic conclusion. The Word, in this service, takes on an almost magical propensity, becoming a thing of power. At the end of the performance, it is a

word (“release”) that Hinn sends out to the assembled audience, demonstrating the presence of the God he speaks of through his own impact on his congregation. This is an example of Faust’s Word as *Tat* or Action, very literally demonstrated on the body of the audience.

Benny Hinn’s Miracle Crusade also provides an example of the Word inflected in performance with a whole set of other meanings: evangelism in this example is not simply conversion, but the promotion of a whole way of life. Hinn’s services culminate in mass faith healings: in Christchurch, the massed crowds swooned as Hinn ostensibly cast the spirit of God over them. This may seem to be an impact of the ritual nature of the performance, a conclusion born out of almost hypnotic repetition and a carefully manipulated crowd experience. If this is so, then being present is important and this effect cannot be achieved simply through watching Hinn’s services on the television. It is the medium, along with the message, that has effect. How does the message work differently when heard in the context of a crowd of apparently like-minded people gathered in an enormous concert venue, as opposed to heard in the isolation of one’s own living room listening to a television broadcast recorded months in advance? What is said in this context is not as important in this case as *how* it is said: the words become a communal experience of repetition, a tool for creating a sense of community. On the other hand, this is a performance structured not only for those present but in many ways set up to be televised: for this other audience, image is everything.

My third case study is focused on Brian Tamaki’s Destiny Church, a chain of churches that currently stretch around New Zealand. Tamaki’s services represent in some ways a reversal in the present of Marsden’s services in the past. Whereas Marsden visited to preach to the Maori, Tamaki preaches back. Destiny is

predominantly a Maori church, dictating a moral Christian message to the wider population. In some ways, the Word, according to Tamaki, is the same as that preached by Marsden, only filtered through nearly two hundred years of New Zealand history and Maori culture. Is the message the same, or has it changed? How does the delivery – Tamaki's performance choices – affect the meanings produced and the ongoing efficacy of his message?

In 1998, Tamaki (now also a televangelist) was the pastor of one church. Today there are more than twenty Destiny churches throughout New Zealand, and one in Brisbane, Australia. Tamaki, and Destiny, have come to take a very visible place in New Zealand's political landscape, with a political party, Destiny New Zealand, contesting the 2004 general election. The church is very visible, and Tamaki himself has become a sort of New Zealand celebrity. He is not only the mouthpiece of God, but stands as a role model and touchstone for new urban Maori identity. Rather than arriving from afar, Tamaki emerges from the audience to take his place on stage: his drawcard is not his exoticism, but his nativity. He is a New Zealander, a Maori, and he speaks to the members of his congregation, and the nation as a whole. It is in analysing Tamaki's performances that we can perhaps evaluate the culmination of Marsden's first evangelistic performance. Tamaki represents a New Zealand in which Christianity is arguably more fundamentally embedded in Maori culture than it is in the wider cultural milieu. He may be seen as the ultimate product of Marsden's evangelism: a native evangelist who stays at home to reiterate the Word to those already here.

Through the performance analysis of these three case-studies, this thesis will examine the ways in which evangelists present the Word to their congregants, and the way that this creates meanings both for the immediate moment of the performance,

but also may be seen ultimately to create an effect that stretches beyond the walls of the service to make a wider social impact. How does the Word produce meaning in these services? How does that which is not said contribute to that production of meaning? What is the personal and social impact of these services, and how does the performance of evangelism produce this efficacy?

A last example of the Word delivered in action emerges in churches that practice glossolia, or the ritual of speaking in tongues. The notion of glossolalia promotes the idea of the Word as something that is powerful in its untranslated state. God speaks through the individual, to an audience of fellow congregants, and it is the impossibility (or at least, extreme unlikelihood) of direct understanding that gives the experience its meaning. To put it crudely, we know that it is God, because we can't understand it.

In Charismatic Protestant churches, the congregation may pray together, a silence that is interrupted by individuals "touched by the Spirit" speaking in tongues. In a Charismatic church that I attended, each outburst was followed by a long silent period of prayer, and then, the translation (in English) of what had previously been spoken by another member of the congregation. In this ritual, the Word was delivered in two parts, firstly, in the authentic language of God, and then, in translation.

This almost seemed to be a double-blind test: the gift of the Word was followed by the gift of Translation, and therefore was demonstrating both the mysterious ritual presence of God, and fulfilling the need for a rational translated understanding of what was being said. The mystery of tongues, which is taken a sign of faith, of being "filled by the Spirit" was in some ways given proof by the translation. The translation served as a kind of guarantee that the mysterious language emitting from congregants was not merely babble. Furthermore, this dual process of

speaking and translation spoke of a particular relationship with the divine. Not only was God present, but He had something to say: a message of how to live and how to act.

It is here that the contradiction inherent in Protestant Christianity becomes most achingly clear to me. On the one hand, there is the potential to get lost in the divine: to give oneself over to the presence of the numinous, to be at one with God, and thus be connected to a community of like-minded worshippers. If we are all one with God, then surely, we are (potentially at least) at one with each other. But on the other hand, there is the Word, prescriptive, restrictive and ultimately individualising. Protestant Christianity demands a constant reflection on the state of one's soul, one's moral and ethical choices. Perhaps what is required is a differentiation between the concepts of faith and belief, faith as an appreciation or feeling of the presence of something beyond the worldly, and belief, a whole-hearted agreement with the tenets of Christianity as brought about by a rational understanding of the words of the Bible.

In my experience, Protestantism is caught between these two impulses: to rationally understand, through the Word, and to give over to wordless faith. In my thesis I will explore how evangelistic performances in New Zealand move through these apparent contradictions. Evangelism may be seen to be effective in a purely religious sense, but its influence extends still further. I will explore how this works (to what extent, and to what effect) in an attempt to make visible the hidden forces that move and direct the society I live in, bring about conversion, and alter actions.

CHAPTER ONE:

The Word in the absence of language: Samuel Marsden's First Service, 1814

On Christmas Day, 1814, Anglican minister Samuel Marsden performed what is widely held to be the first Christian missionary service in New Zealand. Marsden, fresh from his position as Chaplain in the New South Wales colony of Parramatta, was intent on bringing the Gospel to the New Zealand Maori. To this end, he stepped off his boat at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands, and read the Morning service to a congregation composed of his own crew and local Maori. To this day, at Christmas time, New Zealanders sing the following carol, written by William Mackie in 1957 to celebrate this momentous occasion:

Not on a snowy night
By star or candlelight
Nor by an angel band
There came to our dear land

Te Harinui, Te Harinui, Te Harinui
Glad tidings of Great Joy

But on a summer's day
Within a quiet bay
The Maori people heard
The great and glorious Word

Te Harinui...

The people gathered round
Upon the grassy ground
And heard the preacher say
I bring to you this day

Te Harinui...

Now in this blessed land
United heart and hand
We praise the glorious birth
And sing to all the earth...

Te Harinui...

Mackie's carol might be seen to celebrate twin outcomes of Marsden's service: conversion and colonisation. In a comparison with Biblical descriptions of the first Christmas, Marsden is likened to the angel band bringing the glad tidings of Christ's birth to the shepherds watching over their flocks. The Maori (like the shepherds) are portrayed as gathering around and hearing the Word of God, thus becoming converts to Christianity. The implication of the final verse is clear: Marsden's delivery of the Word culminates in the creation of a nation, racially and religiously united under God, standing as an example to the rest of the world.

As proposed in my introduction, while this landmark service is celebrated as the first Christian service in New Zealand, the simple idealisation of this moment in New Zealand history is made more complicated when one contemplates the likelihood that few, if any, of the assembled Maori could understand the "great and glorious Word" as spoken by Marsden. Marsden spoke in English; his congregation spoke Maori. This being the case, it seems unlikely that the efficacy of this service can be attributed to a rational understanding and enlightenment emerging from the spoken words.

Marsden's purpose, as revealed in his journal entries and correspondences, appears to have been the conversion of the Maori to Christianity, and preparing them as potential subjects of the British Empire (outcomes which are celebrated in *Te Harinui*). For Marsden, these aims were inherently linked. In a letter beseeching funding for his journey, Marsden wrote to the Church Missionary Society in London: "...nothing, in my opinion, can pave the way for the introduction of the Gospel but civilisation..." (Elder, 1934 16). For Marsden, the more Christian the Maori became, the more suitable they would be as British subjects, and vice versa. To be properly Christian was to be British; to be properly British, one must be Christian. Marsden's utter faith in the Word seems somewhat of a contradiction. He believed that the Word

of God had the power to convert the natives, and to civilise them, and Marsden relished the opportunity to be the first to bring it to them. However, his service was also part of a carefully planned expedition to begin a mission that would bring agriculture and trade to the people. It was not enough to make them Christian: they must also be British.

Both these objectives might be achieved through judicious application of the Word of God, along with some more practical assistance rendered to the Maori. It was Marsden's desire that the missionaries he escorted to Rangihoua also be "mechanics," trained labourers and farmers who could increase Maori knowledge of agriculture and the civilised (and civilising) arts. "Faith and prayer will again build the walls of Jerusalem," wrote Marsden, "even if we are obliged to hold the Trowel in one hand, and the Sword in another" (Yarwood 167). Marsden appears to see the Word (faith and prayer) and the delivery of the Gospel to the Maori as the key to building up the Empire, but not entirely without the aid of other means: on the one hand farming, trade and commerce, and on the other, military might. Perhaps inevitably, it is not these secondary means that are remembered happily by New Zealanders. The image of Marsden, surrounded by awestruck natives, delivering the Word of God, is much more alluring to a nation not always strictly comfortable with its colonial past.

Marsden's faith in the Word and its transformative powers fits with his calling as an Anglican minister. Marsden was, in fact, a staunch Protestant. He was known to be notoriously anti-Catholic, and was labelled the "Flogging Parson" in New South Wales owing to his harsh treatment of Irish (Catholic) convicts there, whom he believed to be absolutely beyond redemption. Marsden, as a Protestant, believed in the transformative power of the Word, as opposed to ritual practice. However, in his most famous service, the barrier of language might be seen to have "re-Catholicised" the Morning Service.

Marsden took his service from the *Church of England Book of Common Prayer*, the guidebook for Anglican worship throughout the year. First produced in 1549 by Thomas Cranmer, after Henry VIII broke with the Pope and created the Church of England, the Book of Common Prayer was so called because it was written in English, the language of the common people. It provided a template for the only legal form of religious worship in England up to the twentieth century (*Book of Common Prayer* 1999 xv). After Henry VIII died, England reverted for a short time to Catholicism (and Cranmer was executed by Mary Tudor) but the Book of Common Prayer was adopted and made official by Elizabeth I on her ascension to the throne. The prayer book was written to be understood by the common people, so as to demystify religious worship and make the Word of God accessible to all congregants. This common understanding is made problematic in the context of Marsden's service, which can be seen to represent a reversion to the mysterious ritual of the past. The thought that Marsden's service, in which he introduced the Word to a group of grateful natives, could bear any resemblance to a Latin Mass would, I imagine, have been galling to him, but the evidence nonetheless points to the fact that Marsden's service was effective on a ritual, performative level, rather than in the transmission of a literal understanding of the meaning of his words. It might as well have been in Latin. It seems likely, then, that the meanings produced by the service were influenced by the physical actions of the service and its performance elements, by the cultural context that the Maori brought with them, and the other actions of Marsden and his men.

In this chapter I will analyse the service itself to see how, in the absence of shared language, the Word still made meaning and had an effect that is still felt all these years later. Firstly, I will analyse what was said, by examining the words of the Service as recorded in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It is most likely that Marsden

worked from the 1662 edition, which was most current at the time of his arrival in New Zealand. Its pages may be treated as a kind of preliminary script for Marsden's performance. It prescribes the hymns and Bible readings that must be spoken in each service, but also contains original material from Cranmer. It is the source of the Word that Marsden spoke, but also gives clear instructions as to whom should speak, in what order the words should be spoken, and how the words should be physically delivered.

The only primary written records that describe the unfolding of the first service are in the writings of Marsden, and in those of J.L. Nicholas, who travelled with Marsden and recorded his experiences in *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand, Performed in the Years 1814 and 1815, in Company with the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Principal Chaplain of New South Wales* (1872). Because of the scarcity of sources, this chapter requires the piecing together of rather diverse fragments of information in order to propose what actually happened. These fragments contribute a perspective on the physical actions that occurred, suggesting that an understanding of the words of the Morning Service may have been affected by the actions of the service, and in fact, how the meanings of the service may have been construed by these actions, rather than simply by the words themselves. The second part of this chapter will consider these physical actions and how they interact with the words to create different meanings.

Marsden's picture, however well accepted in Pakeha imaginations, is obviously only one side of the story, even with the perspective lent by the observations of Nicholas. The third part of this chapter will tackle the question of Maori reception of this service, hypothesised with reference to Maori culture both as it exists now, but also as it can be understood to have existed then. It should be noted that Maori cultural practices have also changed over time, and are now so inflected

with Christian worship that it is difficult to accurately imagine how they might have existed before Marsden arrived. Maori had their own highly-developed rituals of encounter and exchange that might be seen to provide a horizon of expectations, or social context that shaped meaning from the words and actions of the service that Marsden may not have expected.

While the Morning Service is relatively easy to reconstruct, it should be understood as being written for a congregation of like-minded believers, and hence Marsden's service, while taken from the Book, must have been altered by the context in which it took place. The purpose of the Morning Service in its original context is not conversion, but celebration of mutual belief. Therefore, the very fact of its export as an evangelistic event may be seen to change this purpose, and in so doing, alter the meaning and implications of the words spoken, and the ritual itself. Marsden provided a whole new context for these words and actions, which must have changed them significantly.

I propose that the Morning Service in its original context was a ritual of worship, with the desired effects of affirming faith, promoting community, and reinforcing the social norms of British society. The prayers incorporated within the service are not only for the souls of those present, but for the health of the nation and the safety and prosperity of the English royal family. This befits the ritual practice of an official State religion: it was a social and political tool to uphold the monarchy amongst the masses and in so doing, to reinforce the status quo. As a religious practice, it is very much tied to a specific social (and political) context. Uprooted and transplanted, the effect must be very different. Without the commonality of language or belief, the meanings produced for the audience of Maori could not but have been changed.

Instead of being conservative of the status quo, evangelistic worship seeks to convert, or provides at the very least, the opening salvo of conversion. The evangelist seeks to extend the influence of his religion, and spread it around the world. For Marsden, the Morning Service was not merely the regular worship provided by the Book of Common Prayer: it was a tool both of conversion and imperialism. Marsden did not wish to uphold the status quo, he sought change: the conversion of the Maori.

It remains open to question whether Marsden's service actually had the outcome that he believed. The first recorded conversions achieved by the missions occurred some fifteen years after this event, a stretch of time that is almost a full generation. It seems that at the time, Marsden believed that an important step had been made, and our continuing celebration of the event would suggest that the service did, in fact, have some kind of effect. However, Marsden's first service may have been effective in other ways that extended beyond the celebration of Christianity that the words of the service imply. Marsden had to report back to the Church Missionary Society in England, to tell them about his achievements and account for the money they had offered him towards his mission. Marsden was giving the service for the Maori and for his own men, but also with the consciousness of his supporters back home who would later read his accounting of the events. Marsden perhaps even had a sense of himself in history; his awareness of being "the first" is clear within his writings, and it seems unlikely that choosing the Christmas date for the first service was entirely unrelated to Marsden's own sense of the eyes of the world upon him, not to mention the ever-present eye of God. The fact is, that this service is remembered as being the start of a tradition of evangelism in New Zealand, and also the starting place of a meeting between two cultures. An additional question, alongside how the service might have worked as a performance event, is this: what in fact was the actual efficacy of this service, and what exactly are we celebrating when we remember it?

1. The Word

The words of the Morning Service provide a template from which to consider the meanings produced by the Words and actions of the service as Marsden may have understood them. It seems clear that the words had a specific relevance to Marsden: he chose to read the Morning Service on Christmas Day, which one can only assume was because he thought the words of the Service were particularly pertinent to the task that he had before him. This seemingly ignores the difficulties of translation, or suggests that Marsden's other spectators, back home in Britain, were also an important audience. The meaning produced for this audience (as transmitted in Marsden's journal accounts and letters) was different from that produced for the Maori, present, with their own set of expectations. The words are important within the Service, however, and give an idea of what Marsden may have thought this service was about (a perspective that is still held by many Pakeha New Zealanders today).

The Morning Service for the Twenty-fifth of December begins with the ceremonial entry of the minister, who begins by reading some selected verses aloud to the assembled congregation. Immediately, the importance of words is made clear. These words are not merely decorative or symbolic; they cut to the heart of the reception of the service and indeed, its purpose. Most of these have more-or-less the similar implications, for example:

Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. *Matthew 3.2*, or

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. *Psalms 51.9*, or

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worth to be called thy son. *Luke 15. 18,19*. (69).

These messages are all, without exception, reflections on the sinful state of mankind, and refer to the prostration of the individual before the divine. Without God's mercy, it is implied, there can be no grace. Humanity is by nature sinful and therefore we must worship God and implore his forgiveness. Only then can we achieve absolution. Without absolution, mankind is damned. These maxims stated at the beginning of the service are a justification that states the absolute necessity and importance of the service itself. The first words of the service thus propose a problem that only the service itself will solve.

It is immediately obvious the extent to which the service relies on its "common language." The words are not decorative, but functional. Everything that may and should be said is carefully laid down. The readings are all directly from the Bible (chosen to correspond to the time of year) and the prayers are partly adaptations from the Catholic Mass and partly the poetic inventions of Thomas Cranmer. The words used are to the point, and avoid imagery or metaphor. These first words are declarative and clear. The words are pertinent to the day and occasion: they are written to be accessible and understood.

The second main action of the service requires all present to kneel, at which point there is a General Confession, which is a recitation of sins. This confession is spoken by the whole congregation, who repeat each line after it is delivered by the minister. These sins are obviously not specific to the individual. Rather, the group as a whole implores forgiveness. This could be seen as a request for forgiveness for the general condition of humanity, culminating in a (very general) request to be forgiven for having done the things that one ought not to have done, and for having failed to do the things that one ought.

This has a number of possible effects. For one, it creates a sense of community within the congregation. From this perspective, all difference is erased: one soul is

much like another, and the sins of all are in some respects the great equaliser.

Whether “what one ought not” have done is mass murder or taking the Lord’s name in vain, all of the congregation (including the minister) are sinners. Not even the most heinous sin, it is implied, can separate an individual from the congregation of the faithful. This is an act of community building. Speaking together strengthens the sense of togetherness in a group, but so does what is specifically said in this instance: we are all sinners, and together, we implore Your forgiveness. However, while this might be seen to act as an equalising action, the role that the minister plays is still set apart from the rest of the congregants. Quite literally, he tells the rest what to say; he leads, and they follow. The words of the service cast him as the adjudicator of what is and is not a sin, and as such, the minister is the intercessor between God and the people. The fact that he kneels alongside the rest of the congregation does not alter the fact that the Minister is the primary speaker: he decides what is said, and when. He is the vessel of God’s word, and in this moment is aligned both with the people and with God.

After the Confession is said, the minister stands and reads a general

Absolution for the sins of the congregation. This includes:

Almighty God... hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. (71)

The words spoken at this juncture serve to absolve the people of their sins, but also reinforce the power of the Clergy, affirming that the minister has been given the power by God not to pardon sins, but to “declare and pronounce” the possibility of absolution (which could be seen as a guarantee with some important conditions). The influence of the Reformation thinkers is clear: the clergy do not have the power to forgive sins, because that is the prerogative of God. The minister must, however, *announce* the potential for forgiveness, a kind of reminder and celebration. The

minister also reminds the people of the conditions that are placed on their receiving grace.

The importance of language is also reinforced here, because there are two conditions on forgiveness: repentance and belief in the Gospel. Confession is simultaneously more and less private than in Catholicism. It is enacted publicly, rather than in the dark privacy of the Confessional, but it is at the same time a matter for each individual to monitor within him- or herself. While the service implies all are forgiven (because of the blanket absolution) the conditions demand that the individual be responsible for the state of their soul, as true repentance is an individual and subjective thing. The requirements are relatively stringent, and reliant on “unfeigned belief” in the Gospels. The use of the word “unfeigned” again points towards a Protestant understanding of the Word as something that must be engaged with on an intellectual level. It is not, it is implied, enough to simply be present, and go through the motions of the service and thus achieve grace: the words spoken demand understanding and (internal, subjective, cognitive) belief.

The service demonstrates a difficult relationship that exists between the concept of an individual direct relationship with God and the need to worship as group. Its effect is simultaneously communal and individualising, encompassing two contradictory impulses: to examine one’s own conscience and to surrender one’s consciousness to the wider group. This is perhaps the great internal contradiction of Protestantism: it is certainly a contradiction that arises again and again in Protestant evangelism. Evangelism is by its very nature a public act, a ceremony conducted in public with a group of congregants who may be unfamiliar with what is going on, and unfamiliar with the meanings and sub-textual expectations commanded by the spoken text. It is a public ritual that exists to try and convince people to have a private relationship with the Divine: an external invitation to internal belief.

After the absolution has been read, the minister kneels once again (as a sign of respect before God) and says the Lord's Prayer. The people, still kneeling, say it with him. This is not in the form of call and response; rather it is assumed that the congregation will know how the prayer goes well enough to follow along. This is another sign that the service as written was never intended to be evangelistic. Its purpose is to reaffirm the faith and the community of worshippers, not necessarily to convert or to extend that community further. While later evangelists may be seen to consciously adapt both their message and their means of presenting it to meet the expectations and cultural context of their new congregants, Marsden appears to reiterate the service as written: a complete transplant. This is a confusing choice, and it is impossible to tell whether Marsden simply believed that the Morning Service was powerful in itself, even divorced from the meanings produced by common language, or he thought that translation was possible within the context of the service, or he thought that as a first attempt, the reading of the Service was nonetheless symbolic rather than likely to have effect.

A prayer in the form of a call and response follows the Lord's Prayer. This creates a kind of formal dialogue between the congregation and the minister:

Minister. O Lord, open thou our lips

Answer. And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Again, the words have two perceptible functions: to express a meaning, and as an action. Arguably, the words as a transmitter of meaning are somewhat redundant: quite literally, the people are speaking words that mean, "let us speak". The words here do not convey anything, but may be regarded as fulfilling a ritual function. The act of speaking together has an efficacy in itself, and the content is perhaps unimportant. Speaking in this manner conveys shared belief and shared motivation: we speak together because we want the same things, because we are part of the same group. It in some measure makes us the same.

After these prayers, the people stand together and sing Psalms. The first is *Venite, Exultemus Domino* (Psalm 95), which includes the words:

In his hand are all the corners of the earth: and the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands prepared the dry land.

O come, let us worship, and fall down: and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is the Lord our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

These are words that are directly pertinent to Marsden's evangelistic purpose of spreading the Word of God to "all the corners of the earth." The singing of Psalms to music is perhaps the clearest example of how the delivery of words may be performative in a way that may alter or impact upon their meaning. Whereas in the Catholic Mass the words spoken by the Priest are chanted with a prescribed inflection that is always recognisable, the services of the Church of England are spoken more plainly. The effect of the Psalms is perhaps more remarkable then because their delivery is wholly different from the other words of the service.

The psalms sung in the Morning Service are songs of praise, but also caution against living sinfully. Psalm 95 in particular refers to God's grief for those who do not lead a good life: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said: It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways." While explicitly referring the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years, there is an implication that those who do not know God's ways (for example, those, like the Maori, that have not heard the Gospel) live sinfully, and anger God. It is possible that these, and the lyrics of the other Psalms sung in Marsden's service, might have had an extra resonance for the British men present, and particularly for Marsden himself. Indeed, reading his diary, it is easy to infer Marsden's own satisfaction with the service as having at least partly arisen from his own appreciation of the relevance of what he was saying. Marsden writes:

I rose up and began the service with singing the Old Hundredth Psalm, and felt my very soul melt within me when I viewed my congregation, and considered the state they were in. (Jacob 16)

The hundredth Psalm, to which Marsden refers, begins “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands/ Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing,” an opening that seems relevant and appropriate, at least to the English speakers at the service. The relevance of the words sung was not entirely lost, but for the Maori contingent (ostensibly the focus of the service) with no understanding of the language, it seems likely that the musicality of the hymns would have contributed at least as much of an effect as any understanding of the words that was made available through the translation provided by Ruatara.

The next action of the Morning Service (in its original context) is the reading of the lessons, firstly one from the Old Testament, and later, one from the New. This may be read either by the Minister, or by another individual chosen to do so. The instructions are clear:

Then shall be read distinctly with an audible voice the First Lesson, taken out of the Old Testament as it is appointed in the Calendar... He that readeth so standing and turning himself, as he may best be heard of all such as are present. (73)

The first lesson for Christmas Day is a reading from the prophet Isaiah, predicting the birth of Christ:

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death: on them hath the light shined. (KJV Isa 9:2)

Again, it is possible to see Marsden as appreciating the analogy between the Israelites and the Maori before him, but to an extent this was only relevant to his own satisfaction (although his version of events, complete with this dramatic sense of what had occurred, may contribute to how this event has been remembered in the national consciousness of New Zealand.)

After the reading, the congregation as a whole recites the Apostle's Creed, which is a comprehensive statement of belief in the major tenets of Christianity, including belief in God as the creator of heaven and earth, belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God by the Virgin Mary, belief in the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension of Christ, belief in the Holy Ghost, Church, Saints, in forgiveness, resurrection and everlasting life for those who believe. This is an affirmation of faith in the church. This is followed by a call and response, and then by a repetition of the Lord's Prayer. There then follows a series of collects and five prayers, for the people, the clergy and the Royal family. Again, it seems unlikely that this part of the service would have any meaning without the literal understanding lent by shared language. Even if it was possible to go along with the words, that is, trying to speak them correctly, from a Protestant viewpoint there can be no efficacy without belief, and in this case, it seems that there can't be any belief without shared context. The idea of the Maori praying for the British Royal family seems especially unlikely.

2. Performance

The Morning Service as written not only oriented around words: there are a distinct set of actions that are also prescribed. The way in which words are to be spoken, chanted or sung is closely described, including the physical actions of the speaker (standing, sitting, or kneeling) and the direction in which the words should be addressed. In his discussion of the nature of ritual (and its relationship to theatre) anthropologist Victor Turner proposes the following:

[R]itual, unlike theatre, does not distinguish between audience and performers. Instead, there is a congregation whose leaders may be priests, party officials, or other religious or secular ritual specialists, but all share formally and substantially the same sets of beliefs and accept the same system of practices, the same sets of rituals or liturgical actions (1982 112).

According to Turner, a key component of ritual practice is the commonality of belief, and presumably, a common understanding of the actions and processes required in the ritual action. The Morning Service, in its ordinary, non-evangelistic context might be regarded as a simple reiteration of the faith of the community. In his explication of ritual, Kertzer writes:

Ritual action is repetitive and, therefore, often redundant, but these very factors serve as an important means of channelling emotion, guiding cognition and organising social groups (9).

Kertzer seems to suggest that the repetition does not contribute to the literal meaning produced by the ritual, but may have efficacy nonetheless. These repetitions are not the presentation of new knowledge or the achievement of new actions (symbolic or otherwise) but the repetition itself has efficacy in drawing a group together. The action of the Morning Service is not only repetitive within the confines of the service itself, but in the fact that the service is repeated within more-or-less the same format, every single day of the calendar year. The words that are spoken within the Morning Service aren't spoken to solely elucidate or convert, but to also to reaffirm what is already known. The lack of common language and lack of common understanding made this particular instance of the Morning Service less ritualistic and more what Richard Schechner might regard as "theatrical" - that is, ritual *after* a separation has occurred between participants and observers. Instead of a group of worshippers-in-common, a Schechnerian view of the first service would propose one group of performers taking action, and one group of spectators (who might also be active, but are more prominently watchers and listeners of the action controlled by the other group). Without shared language, the ways in which the service produces meaning is reliant on other performance elements that contribute signifiers of meaning. These elements are intertwined and interdependent, and the interpretation of the service as a whole (and the meanings produced by its performance) work together.

Firstly, the space in which the service is performed can be seen to produce meaning. Space includes “place”: describing where (in the world) a performance occurs (or “takes place”). This idea of location is immediately relevant to how any performance may be perceived or read. In terms of Marsden’s service, I have already proposed that there is a difference between the meanings produced by the Morning Service when held in England, within a context of congregants who understand the language and are familiar with the service, and those produced near a beach in New Zealand, where no such service has ever been performed before.

In this case, it seems that the meanings provided by the service had begun well before the first word was even spoken. Marsden and his men had met with local chiefs, presenting gifts of “axes, billhooks and cotton prints” (Yarwood 174). Marsden had already met with the chiefs, and had already made them gifts when inviting them to the service. Furthermore, the area where the service would be held had been prepared in careful detail by Marsden’s travelling companion, the chief Ruatara. Marsden provides the details of these preparations in his diary:

Duaterra [...] enclosed about half an acre of land with a fence, erected a pulpit and reading desk in the centre, and covered the whole either with black native cloth or some duck that he had brought with him from Port Jackson. He also procured some bottoms of old canoes and fixed them up as seats on each side of the pulpit for the Europeans to sit upon, intending the next day to have Divine Service performed there. These preparations he made of his own accord and in the evening informed me that everything was ready for Divine service. I was very much pleased with this singular mark of his attention. The reading desk was about three feet from the ground and the pulpit about 6 feet. The black cloth covered the top of the pulpit and hung over the sides. The bottom of the pulpit as well as the reading desk was made of part of a canoe. The whole was becoming and had a solemn appearance. He had also erected a flag-staff on the highest hill in the village which had a very commanding view. (Elder 93)

Using the materials at hand, Ruatara (spelled Duaterra by Marsden) constructed what is basically a version of something that looked rather like an Anglican church, but was not one. It was a temporary location dressed up to look like a church, and that would

serve the function of a church only for the duration of the service given by Marsden. There was no roof: there was no need to protect it from the weather, seeing as it was midsummer, and there was no need to construct either the space or the objects within it with an eye to permanence or continuing usage. There were no pews, but seats made from old canoes. The reading desk and pulpit were both approximations, again using constructed parts of an old canoe, covered (in an action that makes this re-constructing seem curiously even more like a stage set) with black cloth that hid its original form.

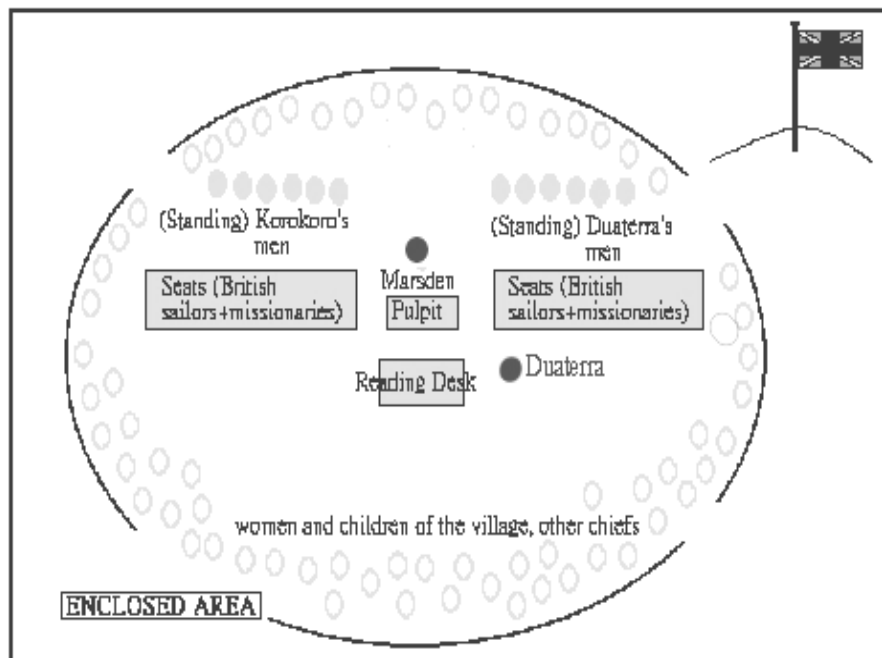


Figure 1.0 Diagram from Samuel Marsden's description of the First Service, 1814.

What intrigues me about this set-up, and the care put into it, is that Ruatara in effect creates a representation of a form that would mean a great deal to the Europeans, but little if anything to the Maori congregation. The furnishing of the area alluded to a form with which they were unfamiliar. It seems an odd choice: Ruatara replicating the elements of the church that he thought were fundamental to the service that would take place within it: the pews for the men, the reading desk (from where the Bible readings would be spoken to the congregation) and the pulpit (from where

Marsden would deliver his sermon.) This remains an approximation, an imitation of another ideal. The function of the church is supported by the structure of the space, which defines the sorts of interactions that can be performed within it. It is worth nothing that the usual visual symbolism of the church (crosses, images of Christ, doves, lions, lambs, ships) are absent, with the only decorative object to grace the area the English flag a nearby hillside. It could however be noted that the flag is a representation of the Empire, and through it, the King of England – who is also the Head of the Anglican Church.

For the duration of the service, this area was made into a church through the actions of those within it. The very first step in the redefinition of the space into a church was Ruatara's construction of a fence. On a purely pragmatic level, the fence seems perhaps the most unnecessary part of the whole structure. The walls served no practical function in terms of protection either from natural elements or marauders. The primary function remaining is symbolic. A key function of any fence is the creation of a division: bisecting an existing place to designate an inside and an outside, as it might mark the extent of owned property or city limits. This construction of inside and outside may be seen to be important in the reception of the service.

Henri Lefebvre argues:

Visible boundaries, such as walls, or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity (87).

Here, the “appearance of separation” is crucial. In terms of this analysis, Ruatara's fence might be seen to divide an area that was previously whole, into an area that was holy and an area that was not, that happened to coincide with an area “owned” by the British and its surroundings. In fencing a prescribed area for the service, Ruatara created a boundary that defined and separated holy space from the profane everyday. As proposed by Durkheim, holy (religious) and profane (secular)

life cannot co-exist in the same time and place, because worship requires the designation of a special space and a distinct time. “If religious life is to develop,” Durkheim observes, “a special place must be prepared for it, one from which profane life is excluded” (312). This is a segregation that implies a prohibition. Religious life must have its own existence, and the space, which is designated for it, must exclude quotidian concerns. Ruatara creates a “special place” by segregating the land for the purposes of the service. What could be the effect of imposing this structure over the top of a pre-existing space, with its own set of pre-existing meanings? Traditionally, Christian missionaries have sited their churches and rituals in places where other rituals were located (and deliberately so). Rather than setting up in competition, the evangelist overlays Christianity on the pre-existing ritual practice, so that one, almost imperceptibly, becomes the other.

In creating a “holy place” Ruatara characterises what is outside as profane and unholy. By fencing off the sacred, the space outside the fence (the rest of the village, the rest of the territory, the rest of the world) is characterised as profane. This may be interpreted as essentially a physical realisation of Marsden’s world-view. While a self-professed admirer of the Maori people, he was deeply disturbed by some of their customs, not least the practice of cannibalism (Elder 129). In his eyes, the Maori needed him, and needed the blessing of the Gospel. Building a church created a holy space that he controlled: Marsden imposed order over chaotic nature, and by implication over the chaotic belief system of the Maori.

Fencing may be seen as an act of claiming. It is a colonial act, that re-imagines previously inhabited space as vacant, un-marked and un-owned. The previous functions or symbolic importance of the space as it existed before are ignored, and the land is appropriated for a new purpose. The outcome of Ruatara’s fencing (on Marsden’s behalf) made the space holy, but also treated it as *empty*, and this empty

space might be filled only by the subsequent arrival of Marsden. In a way, the land becomes analogous with the souls of those upon it, needing to be filled with the Word of God.

In characterising the land as profane and unholy, Marsden in effect performs the necessity of his own arrival. Every place that is not British and Christian must by definition be profane, and so, by association must those dwelling within it. Homi Bhabha suggests that:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction...(70-1)

Marsden's evangelistic service stages a need for conversion, and then demonstrates the fulfilment of this need. He saw the Maori as a noble people, but requiring the civilisation that Christianity would bring. In his eyes, they had a potential that he believed he could unlock. Building a church in their midst could be interpreted as demonstrating what it was that the Maori lacked. Colonial theorist Frantz Fanon writes even more sharply: "What is called a black man's soul is a white man's artefact" (1967: 16). By this argument, an evangelist may be seen to construct a performance of desire where hitherto there may have been none. In particular the desire being constructed is one for conversion, manifested in inclusion within the physical ritual of the evangelist group. Consequently, the "soul" of the colonised, that which requires conversion, is an "artefact", a concept, an object, made by the coloniser, not naturally occurring but constructed, and presumably, a commodity up for sale.

The demarcation of the space as empty, and ready to be filled by the spirit of God, makes a space empty and ready for the importation of civilisation. In Marsden's case, this started a pattern that was replicated by later British colonisers: if land wasn't obviously "in use," it was much more likely to be confiscated by the Crown.

The space is re-imagined as blank and empty, ignoring the functions or symbolic importance of the space as it existed before, and appropriated it for a new purpose. In this way, the British laid claim to the land, and arguably, over the people inside it. Ruatara asserted control over exits and entrances, determining who might and might not enter, at what times, and on what terms. The result was the creation of a religious space, but also implied a new ownership. Whether or not Marsden in fact intended this to be so, his was perhaps the first instance in New Zealand of the British confiscating land owned by the Maori for a new public purpose.

This manipulation of space could be seen as analogous with the souls of those upon it, wiped clean by Christianity. In some ways, this is a tenuous argument: to whom was this symbolic transaction aimed? It is clear that in Marsden's understanding, the benefits of Christianity were a benefit that the Maori lacked, and his service fulfilled the function of bringing the Word to them. It is in some ways impossible to adjudicate the effect that this service had on its target audience, because the only primary resources that describe the service and its outcome are aligned with the British. Historically, we understand this service as efficacious; but how and why this might have been so remains contentious. Whether the service conveyed this message to the Maori is unclear (but seems unlikely), but it seems that the historical audience may have accepted this version of events. It is said that history is written by the victors, but this aphorism may go both ways: in this case, history unfolded in a certain way because Marsden recorded these events the way that he did. His report came to be held as fact, and people acted as if it were true. It informed the policy of the Missionary Society and it affected the perceptions of the British Government of the day.

The area inside the fence was turned into a church by the construction of objects that served the principle functions of the service, namely pulpit for the

sermon, reading table for the readings, and seats for the congregant sailors. For Eliade, the construction of a church becomes an *imago mundi*, nothing less than a microcosmic representation of the world (51). To this extent, Ruatara rebuilt the world around Marsden's imagination of it: there was an implied spatial hierarchy, wherein centrality was key. If we take Eliade literally, the world as represented here has Marsden at its direct centre. Marsden, in his exalted position at the pulpit, was positioned highest (and by implication, closest to God) and his centrality made him the focus of the attention of the rest of the people present. The Maori, either standing, or seated on the ground, were placed in a position where they must literally look up to Marsden, and their movements within the service were dictated in this manner. From a European perspective, this places them in a subordinate position, with Marsden (and his words) as central and important. But again, from a Maori perspective, such understandings of hierarchy and spacing did not necessarily apply. Not only did the Maori not understand the language of the British, there is nothing to suggest that the physical realisation of the service had the same impact as one could infer a British congregation might experience. That is to say, from a European perspective, height represents hierarchy, with things higher deemed closer to God. This is a cultural construct that did not apply to the Maori world-view.

The performative actions of the service are recorded quite explicitly by Marsden, and may be interpreted from that evidence:

On Sunday morning (December 25th) when I was upon the deck I saw the English flag flying which was a pleasing sight in New Zealand. I considered it the signal for the dawn of civilisation, liberty and religion in that dark and benighted land [...]

About ten o'clock we prepared to go ashore to publish the glad tidings of the Gospel for the first time. I was under no apprehensions for the safety of the vessel, and therefore ordered all on board to go on shore to attend Divine service, except the master and one man. When we landed we found Korokoro, Duaterra and Shunghee dressed in regimentals which Governor Macquarie had given them, with their men drawn up ready to march into the

enclosure to attend Divine service. We entered the enclosure. (Elder, 1932: 93-4)

The arrival of the priest or *introit* is an important ceremonial event within the Morning Service. This motif of arrival has many metaphorical connotations. The role of the minister, a constant intermediary presence between the divine and the human, begins with this act of arrival. The Minister is always the last to arrive: indeed in some Anglican services where the choir sings as the congregation arrives, the choir will exit and re-enter after everyone is seated, escorting the priest in. The arrival is processional. The importance of the Minister is indicated in this way: in later chapters we shall see that the arrival of the evangelist into the church or hall often makes use of any number of dramatic devices of lighting, music and staging to emphasise dramatic effect. The Minister bears the Word, and might be seen as descending into the space, Christlike, in order to speak it. In Marsden's service, Marsden's arrival also connotes a stepping-ashore onto a new land, the missionary arriving and bringing with him God and Empire (as symbolised by the English flag flying on the hillside).

The details emphasised by Marsden in his diary account show some other pertinent points. It must be noted that the entire crew of the *Active* came ashore, with only the bare minimum, the Captain and one sailor, left behind. While this is ostensibly because of Marsden's confidence in the safety of the vessel, the result was a large group arriving at once on the shores. On arrival, the British were escorted into the "church" by three Maori chiefs who were armed and wearing regimental uniform. This could be interpreted as a military escort. On one hand, military uniform is smart and ceremonial, creating a dashing effect, but on the other, it represents a show of force. The British, in a great number, were guided into the church enclosure by men who were uniformed and armed. To that extent, even if the implication was not

deliberate, it was a show of force in numbers and in arms. The British party in this way can be perceived as a party of warriors, due the respect accorded to that status.

The centrality of Marsden within his own narrative representation of the service makes him a kind of protagonist in the scene that plays out, but again, there are two ways of looking at his actions. As the minister of within the Anglican service, Marsden might be seen as a representative of God. He speaks the Word of God, and he leads the people through their ritual of worship. On closer examination, it can be seen that the role of the Minister within the Morning Service moves between the roles of leader and congregant. While reading, or speaking, the minister (in this case, Marsden) stands above the congregation, and acts as a kind of teacher or advisor. He is the mouthpiece of God. During the hymns, he sings with the rest of the congregation, and is one with them. During the confession, he is directly aligned with his people, but then stands to absolve them, aligning himself with God. He moves physically between kneeling with the congregation, and standing above them.

He also speaks as a representative of God. From the British (and indeed, his own) perspective, Marsden brings enlightenment and glad tidings of great joy. He is the dispenser of the Word. The role played by the minister as a kind of interlocutor between God and the people must be seen as important, and the ways in which that role develops throughout the service may be key to understanding how the service works in influencing its congregants.

The Morning Service provides a written guide for the way in which the given words must be spoken. It is very clear that the Minister leads the service, but the response of the rest of the congregation might also be seen to be important as an action that creates meaning. Speaking together (like moving together) may be seen as an action that has efficacy regardless of the words that are said and their literal meaning. Speaking together has physiological effects that impact upon the physical

bodies of those present, affecting breath and posture, and giving a sense of communality. Chanting or speaking is widely used in religious worship, both as affirmation, but also as an action that creates a sense of group. This is again problematic within the Protestant context. Speaking as a chorus would seem the opposite of a direct personal relationship with God, in that one must adhere to the ritual form (that is, speak the words as scripted, in the tone and rhythm of everyone else). If the mood is not upon you, nor the spirit moving, the ritual exists, notwithstanding. In this situation, while there is the potential to speak “unfeignedly,” a far greater likelihood, even with language in common, is that the individuals within the congregation must speak and fulfil the form of the ritual, no matter what they individually might be feeling. What results is a *performance of faith*, a formal representation of the external signs of faith, with no belief actually necessary. This may be true even within the original context of the service, where everyone shares the common language and is aware of the symbolism of each step of the service, but is doubly so where there is no mutual comprehension, and the congregation may be seen to be merely imitating what occurs before them.

The way in which the words are spoken (and sung) can also be seen to create meaning, both where language is understood and where it is not. Music, in particular, can create mood and emotion that can be used to support (or undermine) the words that are written. Music appeals on a visceral, emotional level that surpasses literal explanation. In some ways, music is the opposite of something that can be logically comprehended and literally understood. Words that are sung take on extra meanings that are impossible to translate, but that may be affected by tempo, rhythm, pitch, key, timbre, melody and harmony. For example, traditional Christian hymns generally are written in a major key, which gives an uplifting and triumphant feeling, as compared to minor keys, which are usually held to feel more melancholic and introverted.

Hymns traditionally have a regular rhythm, and are pitched moderately so they may be sung by all, with simple melodies that are easy to follow. While a great deal of music written for religious worship is complex (for example, as written by Handel or Bach), for the most part, hymns for general services are accessible, with the melody line for voices relatively simple, even if the accompaniment is musically sophisticated.

3. Reception

After reading the service, during which the natives stood up and sat down at the signal given by the motion of Korokoro's switch which was regulated by the movements of the Europeans, it being Christmas Day, I preached from the second chapter of St Luke's Gospel, the tenth verse: "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy" (Elder 93).

The way in which the Maori understood the performance of the first service is not made clear within Marsden's narrative: but what is interesting in the above quotation is the suggestion that the Maori went along with the service, following the actions of a congregation, as indicated to them by Korokoro, one of the chiefs who was affiliated with Marsden.

Within this context, the actions of the Maori in going along with the service are mimetic: they act in imitation of what they see, and as they are instructed to in the moment. There are two ways of looking at it: either the Maori simply follow the action of the service out of a sense of courtesy and it has no effect, or, the actions themselves may be seen to have efficacy. Moving in unison may be seen to have an effect as a simple physical action: by acting "as if" Christian, and taking on the actions of Christian (and British) men, the Maori may somehow *become like them*, through this process of imitation. Clearly Marsden believed that this "obedience" in following his Service was a sign of the Maori being touched by the grace of the Gospel, and certainly his impressions may have coloured the impressions of the

British back home, with an ongoing political effect in the further actions of the British in response to the Maori.

The question arises as to whether the actions of the service have any efficacy when the participation of the congregation is so arbitrary. For example, if one examines the confession of sins in the early part of the service: if the Maori follow the motions of the service (as is implied in Marsden's diary) it seems that within the parameters of the service as written, there is no possibility of the Maori actually confessing and being absolved as the actions of the service require. What Marsden says cannot be understood cognitively without shared language, and the efficacy of the service as written can't exist without that understanding. What is left is a situation where the Maori enact the actions of the service in imitation of one of their leaders, but do not actually confess, and do not seek absolution. Given this, by the very rules of the service, the Maori are not "unfeignedly believing": they are not "believing" at all, but simply going through the motions of a service that is unfamiliar to them. It seems that there is very little possibility then, of the service having efficacy as a Christian service: it cannot result in a reaffirmation of faith (because the Maori have no faith) and it cannot result (despite Marsden's impressions) as an act of conversion. It may be that the act of imitating (of giving over the decision of what one will do and say) has an ongoing effect: that this is an example of the Maori obeying the requests of the British and thus starting a trend towards submission to colonial rule. However, it seems unlikely that the Maori saw this as such. There are two ways of looking at it: either the Maori simply follow the action of the service out of a sense of courtesy and it has no effect, or, the actions themselves may be seen to have efficacy – that the ritual itself was powerful even in the absence of a shared understanding of its implications. It is difficult to read Marsden's journal entry describing the arrival of the British party into the enclosure without considering the way in which the Maori

may have viewed events from their own cultural perspective. The *Te Harinui* view of history casts the Maori as blank receptors of the Word of God, but the Maori were a people who had already developed their own sophisticated rituals of encounter. I would like to propose the possibility that the Maori may have viewed the service as a form of *powhiri* or ritual of encounter. The protocol and customs of the *powhiri* vary from iwi to iwi, but the overall process is similar. The *powhiri* is a traditional Maori welcome, whereby visitors (or *manuhiri*) are welcomed onto the marae by the *tangata whenua*, the people of the land. It is basically one long ritual of arrival and welcome. The visitors assemble outside the gates of the marae, and are welcomed on. This may be viewed as a kind of conversion in status, as the visitors, through the process of the ritual, are altered from a profane or “common” state of *noa*, to that of *tapu* or sacredness, and then back again once more to *noa*. In the transition, the visitors are physically brought onto the marae, and become *tangata whenua* for the duration of their stay.

Few New Zealanders will be totally unfamiliar with the protocol of the *powhiri* the *powhiri* has been adapted somewhat in recent years to a common usage, assimilated into mainstream culture and used at many public events as a way of welcoming guests, new employees, or conference attendees. Nonetheless, at the time of Marsden’s visit to New Zealand, the *powhiri* was an important way of recognising visitors (who were also potential enemies) and bringing about a meeting between two parties. Negotiating tribal differences in a situation where the outcome could be war was serious business, and the rules of engagement within the *powhiri* had been developed to enable this process to occur.

The ritual of the Morning Service and the ritual of *powhiri* both begin with arrival and seek to bring about a conversion of status. For the service, a strengthening of community occurs through the reiteration of faith; for the *powhiri*, the focus is on

welcoming of strangers to the status of friends. From this perspective, the fenced off area, the not-quite-church created by Ruatara, might perhaps be looked upon as a not-quite-marae, a meeting place. If this is so, it remains unclear as to whom the marae belongs: were the British being welcomed onto the Marae, or the Maori into the British church. From Marsden's description, the Maori were already there and waiting, which would suggest the former, but in this integration of two forms of ritual worship, the truth may have lain somewhere between the two. Even though Marsden and his men are the visitors to New Zealand, when Ruatara builds the fence and creates a church inside it, he could be interpreted as creating a space in which the British are *tangata whenua*. The land, claimed and fenced, is owned by the British. In this context, the Maori become manuhiri and are invited onto the church/marae by the British.

It should be noted that the British understanding of land ownership did not necessarily equate with the Maori relationship to the land. It is a fact reflected in the history of land ownership in New Zealand, from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 right up until the contemporary debate over the "ownership" of the foreshore and seabed, that British and Maori conceptions of land ownership diverge in meaning exactly at the synallagmatic crux of the Treaty. From a Maori perspective it seems unlikely that the mere construction of a fence creates a transfer of ownership. The relationship of people to the land is one of blood and soil. The land belongs to the people, but the people also belong to the land. The notion of transferring ownership in this way would be like selling your grandmother. Although you might get good money for her, she remains your granny. Maori were *tangata whenua*, and no number of fences would seem to alter that.

Perhaps, taking this into account, the almost-church may still be an almost-marae. What might be seen to have occurred then is that the British were escorted

onto this marae by local guides, in order that the two groups could meet in dialogue and discuss their mutual interests. The encounter that followed therefore might be viewed as an exchange – or an attempted exchange – the performance of the British in the ritual of Morning Service met by that of the Maori performing their own set of ritual practices. Marsden believed that he was performing the Morning Service to a congregation of Maori but there remains the possibility that both groups were performing: two (complementary) rituals taking place at once.

In its original context, the purpose of the Morning Service is an affirmation of faith and fellowship. Arguably, it is conservative of the social status quo. The worship within the service supports a community, and is a constant revitalisation and re-affirmation of the shared beliefs of the congregation. In its evangelistic context, the ostensible purpose of the service is conversion and the ultimate foundation of a mission. Evangelism is transformative, at the very least, in intent. Marsden seeks to change the Maori by exposing them to the Word of God. Similarly, the powhiri enacts a transformation, converting its manuhiri into tangata whenua, bringing two groups together so as to allow dialogue between them in the form of a *hui*, or meeting of people. The final outcome of a traditional powhiri is a re-separation at the end of the visit, with a mirroring ritual called a *poroporoaki*, a ritualised farewell that restores the manuhiri to their original state. The likeness between the two rituals lies in this conversionary intent. However, the powhiri, unlike the service, in the end seeks to return the visitors to their initial state. The service seeks conversion, once and for all.

If we consider the service as a kind of powhiri, then the arrival of the British men, and the way in which they were dressed, is even more important. Armed, and wearing military regimentals, the British party could be perceived as a party of warriors, due the respect accorded to that status. This was probably a very effective way of presenting themselves to the Maori, not threatening, but as equals requiring

respect. The Maori were tribal, and were a warrior people. Arriving as warriors therefore made much more sense than arriving as men of god: on these terms, the Maori could accept the British on equal terms, which allowed a dialogue to take place.

There is another possible reading of this situation. When Marsden wrote of the “Trowel in one hand and the Sword in the other” (Yarwood 167), he may have been talking not in terms of agriculture and the imposition of brute force (as might be interpreted in the light of later events, for example the New Zealand Land Wars) but agriculture and the technology most sought-after and traded by the Maori: arms. In such a context, the ceremonial swords worn by the British might not only represent force, but trade. Muskets and firearms were by far the most valuable commodities sought from the Europeans. From this perspective, the presence of Korokoro, Shunghee and Duaterra with their uniforms and guns were not an inducement to participate in the service for fear of reprisals or force, but a sign of what benefits might accrue from cooperating with the British on this matter. Marsden, with his gifts to the chiefs (and his reportedly dramatic landing of cattle and horses, by his own account was quite startling to the Maori who were unfamiliar with either species), and accompanied by local chiefs who had benefited by his bounty, could combine with the Christian service with promises of material advantage. Complicity in the work of the mission boded well for the promotion of trade.

The powhiri’s carefully orchestrated sequence of arrival traditionally begins with a challenge or *wero* issued by a warrior in a ritual dance. The intentions of the visitors are ascertained in a symbolic fashion via the placing of a *taki* or carved dart. (Tauroa). There is a range of options concerning the correct placement of the taki, representing the belief of the challenger as to whether the visitors are suspected of coming in peace or war. If they come in peace, a male member of the manuhiri will

pick up the taki. Depending on the circumstances, there may be as many as three challenges. If the manuhiri are found acceptable, then they will be called onto the marae by means of a karanga (a chanted call of invitation). While the symbolic actions are significantly different from the Morning Service, there is a similarity in the formalised series of actions that must be enacted. Although not ideally, the ritual of powhiri can be fulfilled without shared language. As a Pakeha New Zealander with a very limited understanding of Maori language, I have been part of a number of powhiri. By fulfilling my part in the ceremony (walking along with people who speak for me, standing and sitting in accordance with instructions from some kind of “native guide”) I have been welcomed onto maraes as a visitor, inducted into academic conferences, and been initiated as part of an audience at tourist performances. I have achieved all this without necessarily understanding what was spoken, without having to speak, and initially without knowing the rules of engagement before setting forth. However, the function of the ritual was still fulfilled. I was welcomed, I had made the transition from a state of noa to tapu and back again, I had become tangata whenua for an allotted time. Similarly, the British at the first service did not have to understand what was happening for the ritual to be effective: if they were welcomed into the land by the Maori they became tangata whenua.

Hiwi and Pat Tauroa record the welcome chant that follows the karanga thus:

Leader:	People:
Toia mai,	te waka
Kumea mai,	te waka
Ki te urunga,	te waka
Ki te moenga,	te waka

All:
 Kit e takotoranga i
 Takoto ai, te waka.

This is translated as:

Pull up the canoe
 Drag up the canoe

To the resting place, the canoe
 To the sleeping place, the canoe
 To the place where it will lie
 At rest, the canoe (55).

The body of visitors is compared to a canoe dragged up onto shore, with the words and songs of karanga being the rope that the tangata whenua use to land it. This in fact reflects the actual reality of Marsden's arrival, with his landing boat dragged onto the beach, from his ship (which is not without its own Christian connotations, commonly symbolising the church). One could perhaps stretch the interpretation to include Marsden's coming ashore as a metaphorical representation of the distance he had travelled from the established church. The canoe metaphor also casts a new light on the upturned canoes that Ruatara used to construct the seats and pulpit within the church area. On one level, this is the mere use of materials at hand in order to construct the framework of a church. The use of canoes however suggests the lyrics of the welcome, symbolising coming ashore, and the act of arrival. The turning over of the canoes represents the end of journeying, that the canoe has perhaps come to its permanent resting place, and that the British are here to stay.

It may be possible to read even more into this symbol. The canoe, in its functioning form, was an important and sacred component of Maori life, used in travel, fishing, and also, importantly, in war. Bringing it in dismantled form to form church furniture might be compared perhaps to the turning of swords into ploughshares: the arrival of the British, and their Christian message, represents the eventual end of Maori warrior culture. The seating of the British on top of the upturned canoes might be seen in two ways: as a symbolic act suggesting the superiority of British culture over the traditional Maori culture of the past, and as an act of casual disrespect for the culture, the placing of backsides (noa, in Maori culture) onto the canoes (tapu).

The ritual action, or efficacy, of a powhiri, is to navigate a group of newcomers through the act of arrival. It is the necessary first stage in a hui, which is a gathering of people together for a specific purpose or event. The way in which Marsden is escorted onto the marae (or escorted into the church) suggests a powhiri, but also an *introit*, and it may in fact be that both these rituals were being performed simultaneously.

At its most fundamental level, we have two rituals taking place at once, the Anglican Morning Service and the ritual of Powhiri, both with their own set of words and practices, and with a combined efficacy. I would like to propose that perhaps the historical efficacy of this service does not arise solely, or even primarily, from Marsden's service, but from the other side of the equation. What is important is not Marsden's arrival, but the fact that the Maori invited him in: not the immediate conversion of the Maori either to Christianity or British culture, but the symbolic hauling up of the British canoe onto shore. In terms of the *Te Harinui* outcomes of this event, the nation "united heart and hand" isn't solely a result of conversion. Or, one might argue, a conversion has occurred, but the conversion is in the transition of the British from manuhiri to tangata whenua, not necessarily of the Maori to Christianity. From a purely ritual perspective, this is a powhiri without a corresponding poroporoaki: the British are symbolically made into tangata whenua, and this process is never reversed.

If we return to the idea that Marsden is staging the desire for submission (as theoretically proposed by Said), it must be acknowledged that this is an interpretation garnered by living in a post-colonial British dominion. This scene is not of submission, or the wielding of a dominating colonial might. It is the meeting of two groups of equals, and the first step in a movement towards a partnership in trade and cultural exchange. The fact that the British fully believed that they were superior,

acted as though they were superior, and ultimately acted on this assumption with the enforcement of military troops did not make this true.

Marsden's actions as minister may be interpreted within the context of powhiri: it is possible to interpret his actions as delivering a *mihi*, a speech introducing himself to the people gathered by reciting his *whakapapa*. Whakapapa is a recitation of one's ancestry and place in the world. From a traditional Maori spiritual worldview, the connection between man and his environment is arguably much less tenuous than from a Pakeha perspective. In a mihi, one recites one's ancestry, one's tribe and family, and one's turangawaewae – the place where one stands – for example, the river and mountain with which one identifies. These markers of place are as important as ancestors (and in some cases, may be literally conceived of as ancestors, in the place in distant history where ancestry merges with mythology).

Taking this into account, when Marsden presents himself as a man of God, he might have been perceived as giving his whakapapa. Rather than a holy man, he could be interpreted as a man descended from a god. The importance of the Word in this context is not in the revelation that a God exists (for the Maori had a wide pantheon) but that a hitherto unknown God existed, and Marsden was his descendent. From a Maori perspective, the idea of being connected to, or descended from, God isn't entirely unusual.

What is revealed is not a new world order, but, on a slightly less grandiose scale, Marsden's own place within it. He is a living representative of God – as, from a Maori perspective, ultimately all people are. One's whakapapa, recited in full, might go back so many generations as to reveal divine ancestry, provided that one has been taught properly. Marsden is revealed not as the superior being (as in his eurocentric, missionary, British way, he perceives himself), but as a potential equal: a

possible partner in trade and discourse. It is clear, also, that in endeavouring to understand Marsden, in the absence of shared language, there was a possibility that the Maori could fit his actions into the rituals with which they were already familiar. The performance elements of the powhiri, including arrival, speech and sung chant, are also elements in the Anglican Morning Service.

Where the Word could not be understood, an important role was played by the chief Ruatara, who along with Shunghee and Korokoro, was an intermediary figure who moved between the two groups, facilitating understanding of the protocols and perhaps even translating the words of the service.

The natives told Duaterra they could not understand what I meant. He replied they were not to mind that now for they would understand by and by, and that he would explain my meaning as far as he could... (Elder, 1932 94).

When the Maori don't understand Ruatara tells them "not to mind now" and that "he would explain my meaning as far as he could" (Elder 1932 94). The Word, such as it could be transmitted at all, was not spoken by Marsden, but by Ruatara. In this case, the mantle of the evangelist is passed onto Ruatara, as the words can only reach the Maori by being passed through him. In this way, Ruatara becomes the translator of the Word, and as such, also aligned with the holy.

Ruatara emerges as a kind of liminal figure. He had travelled to England in the (eventually unrealised) hope of seeing King George. He had met and befriended Marsden on the return voyage, and during the journey had taught Marsden the rudiments of Maori language (Yarwood 124-5). For five years before Marsden made his journey to New Zealand, Ruatara had lived with the Marsden family in Parramatta, and had actively encouraged Marsden's plans to make a mission to New Zealand. In the first service, in the meeting of two rituals, Ruatara is aligned both with the Maori and with the British. To the British, he is the translator, but to the Maori, he might be seen as speaking the whai korero, the oration, of the visiting

group, speaking for the British who didn't have the language (or the knowledge of protocol) to do it themselves. While Marsden writes of Ruatara somewhat dismissively, he could be seen to be the central figure (and indeed the orchestrator) of the meeting of these two groups. Ruatara remains, historically, a person whose motivations are hard to assess. It is impossible to know what it was he said, then or later, the level of respect he had for Marsden's words, or his own allegiances or personal concerns. The words that he said or did not say, what reassurances or attempts towards direct translation he may or may not have offered, are lost to the past. A liminal figure, having travelled with Marsden but known to the Maori, Ruatara's unknown translation is perhaps the key to the understanding how Maori received the first service. Historian Alison Jones stated in the *Listener* as recently as February 2008 that Marsden's desire to civilise the Maori was such that "he would have been happy for Ruatara to say whatever he liked, so long as Ruatara ensured Marsden's people's protection, and Maori acceptance of the settlement." (8) This, also, is something that cannot be really known. If this were true, was the Morning Service the best way to achieve these ends? One assumes that, as an Anglican minister, Marsden thought it was, and he was not necessarily proved wrong by history.

Further evidence of the Maori reception of the service may be gleaned from the final event of the service: one that, interestingly, Marsden himself does not relate, but Nicholas, his travelling companion, notes with interest.

The service ended, we left the enclosure; and as soon as we had got out of it the natives, to the number of three or four hundred, surrounding Mr. Marsden and myself, commenced their war dance, yelling and shouting in their usual style, which they did, I suppose, from the idea that this furious demonstration of their joy would be the most grateful return they could make us for the solemn spectacle they had witnessed (Nicholas 206).

Nicholas describes clearly the Maori performing a haka in response to the performance is given by Marsden and his men. To the British, the war dance does not impinge on their understanding of what has happened, serving only to reinforce their own perspective of what has just occurred. Their idealisation of the service remains intact, although it is very interesting that Marsden himself does not record it (as it perhaps does not fit into his preferred account of events). From a Maori perspective, the haka in response suggests an exchange, and a trade of ideas: the opening of a dialogue rather than the closing of a monologue. The British have offered something, and the Maori offer something back in return. They are not blank receivers, but people who are considering what has been offered and responding to it from a position within their own system of references.

The belief system of Christianity is generally held to have fitted harmoniously with the pre-existing spiritual life of the Maori. Pat and Hiwi Tauroa write:

The spiritual concepts of Christianity were very easy for the Maori to comprehend, because they already believed very much in both the physical and spiritual dimensions of the human being. The spiritual aspect of a person, or one's wairua, is the part that continues, even after death (154).

Such a belief system aligns more-or-less seamlessly with the Christian idea of a soul. In the words of Maori scholar TeRita Papesch, "Maori already had many beliefs, what was one more?"¹ Recognising that the first encounter was an exchange where the actions were more meaningful than the words, it seems that the social performance practices of the British and the Maori also fitted together harmoniously. Both the ritual of powhiri and the Anglican Morning Service require a complex use of space, and both effect a transformation of their audience group. This perhaps suggests that what the British saw as the first Christian service in a strange land the Maori may have seen as a ritual of arrival. The similarities between the First Service and the ritual of powhiri (or ceremonial welcome) meant that rather than an evangelistic

¹ Personal communication, January 2006.

performance of conversion, what occurred were two simultaneous performances: the one the British gave and understood to be occurring, and the one that the Maori gave and understood to be occurring. There may be similarities between these two processes (at least in terms of the performance elements) but nonetheless, what remains is an almost total lack of mutual understanding.

It is possible to see this concurrent misunderstanding as the start of an historical trend that continued through race relations in New Zealand. Many of the difficulties later posed by the Treaty of Waitangi were caused by misinterpretations of language where translators believed words to be common to Maori and British cultures, but were in fact fundamentally different. As with the first service, the apparent compatibility of the two cultures was possibly more problematic than the recognition of outright difference. Marsden went away apparently believing that the Maori were grateful and submissive to him and to the Word that he brought with him: and to an extent, it seems this is an understanding that is perpetuated even today. Marsden's view was (and, arguably, still is) widely accepted.

It may be that what I have always found so enticing about Christian worship – that sense of community, or *communitas*, has both positive and negative outcomes. Maybe, as in the First Service, it is illusory – a sensation of togetherness that simply ignores difference, and as such is potentially oppressive. The *Te Harinui* scenario is an example: we remember an event where Pakeha and Maori were in perfect, ideal agreement, touched and brought together by the Word of God. This is a precious ideal for many New Zealanders: that even today we live in a country where we are “united heart and hand,” where, in spite of our bi-cultural ethos, we are all simply Kiwis at heart. To such an idealised world-view, difference is threatening, rather than interesting or provocative, and dissenters are viewed as trouble-makers or insurgents.

Debate is closed down, and we live on remembering a wholesome past in Christmas carols.

Perhaps, ultimately, the importance of this service, was in this introduction of the British to the Maori, representing some kind of unspoken agreement of mutual respect and protection, of future meetings and future trade: fulfilling all the features of a powhiri, whereby the British were welcomed as friends and trading partners. What is clear is that Christianity took hold among the Maori, maybe not immediately after the first service as Marsden seems to have perceived, but slowly and over time. Maybe the main efficacy of this service was not in its effect of conversion, or in its effect (as a powhiri) of inviting the British ashore, but as a performance – of togetherness, of meeting, of cultural understanding - that New Zealanders are still an audience to, all these years later.

CHAPTER TWO

Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade: The Word and The Body

In February of 1999, American pastor Benny Hinn visited Christchurch in order to perform two evangelistic services, bringing the Word of God to the residents of the city. Part of Hinn's global televangelist mission, these acts of worship took the same form that Hinn's services have taken in hundreds of cities around the world, staging a series of dramatic evangelistic episodes of conversion, collection, and healing. Unlike Marsden's service, nearly two hundred years before, Hinn brought the Word of God to Christchurch in English. Not only was his language understood by his congregation, but many of those present were familiar with his services because of exposure to Hinn's evangelistic television show *This is Your Day, with Benny Hinn*, which had been broadcast on New Zealand television for some years beforehand. While the words spoken by Hinn were familiar, the main impact of the service came from its spectacularly dramatic presentation, with each step in the service carefully staged towards the congregation and towards the cameras that captured the service for an international, television audience. Hinn's words remained important but even though these words were in a language understood by the congregation, they were arguably effective as *actions*. The words immediately influenced the behaviour of those present. The congregant audience demonstrated this influence throughout the service, whether standing, praying and singing together or coming forward to the stage area at the altar call. The service culminated in the dramatic healing of the ill, as those healed walked across the stage, leaving their wheelchairs behind them. At the very end, many of those present were "slain in the Spirit," falling to the ground, shaking and crying, at a gesture and one word from

Hinn. Hinn's words were not merely powerful in conveying meaning but were wielded like a weapon on the bodies of those present and captured by the ever-present cameras for the audience at home.

The Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade is comparable in some key ways with Samuel Marsden's first service. It was an evangelistic service in which a preacher from overseas arrived in New Zealand and conducted a service at which the majority of the congregation was made up of local people. Aside from the historical context, one primary difference is that I was able to attend the service and not only observe the structure of the performance but also experience the service as a member of the audience/congregation. Methodologically, this had benefits and disadvantages. Maintaining any sort of objectivity in the face of an emotionally intense and physically exhausting five-hour service was difficult, and, perhaps because of this, my overwhelming memory of the event was how I, as an unbeliever and observer, came to feel involved in the service as a congregant, and how seamlessly the service absorbed my initial resistance to participation. Many of the questions remaining from the first service are due to the fact that the Maori perspective on what occurred is unrecorded and thus, unknowable. Benny Hinn's Crusade offered the opportunity to experience first-hand the effectiveness of his evangelistic service, and to analyse the service from the point of view of a congregant; to hear the words, but also to feel their impact.

Benny Hinn's services are inclusive: they are open to people of any Christian denomination, and all are made welcome. However, Hinn comes from a tradition of American fundamentalism, which emerged in the early twentieth century as a Protestant movement stressing a return to basics: most importantly, that the Bible is the absolute and literal word of God. Hinn is in many ways faithful to this tradition, but he responds to it by making his own doctrine as vague as possible. Even though

Hinn wielded the Bible, holding it through much of the service, his actual Biblical references were few and far between, and remained quite unspecific. The actual meaning of the words used by Hinn seemed secondary: more important was their delivery, and their context within the performance of the service. Rather than reading directly from the Bible, Hinn relied on anecdotal stories from his other services, and the historical services of other famous evangelists. The lack of Biblical specificity is both deliberate and important: the words that Hinn used had the purpose of creating fellow feeling in his congregation, with the result of making people come together as a group. As such, it was important that his doctrine was palatable to everyone: no one could be excluded by sectarian differences. Hinn's Christianity is in some ways Christianity-lite: the meanings that were produced in this service were demonstrated by the actions that took place, and more specifically, by the actions on behalf of the members of the congregation. His service was arranged around four main set pieces of interaction, the altar call, the call for donations, healing, and finally, "slaying in the Spirit" casting the spirit of the Lord onto the congregation to make them fall, swooning, to the ground. Hinn's service relied on spectacle, and the words were his tools by which he created that spectacle. Perhaps in order to facilitate this, a large percentage of the words incorporated in the service were framed in songs.

I will begin, again, with an analysis of Hinn's words. While many of the structural elements of Hinn's service were similar to Marsden's, the primary difference was one of understanding: the availability of mutual language made the potential resolution of this service clear to everyone present from the outset. Nonetheless, the literal understanding of the words spoken in this service does not necessarily provide the total picture. Benny Hinn is a fundamentalist Christian preacher, but nonetheless the literal meaning of the words is not the most important

feature of this service. As Susan Harding writes in her study of evangelist Jerry Falwell:

The Bible, which God wrote using human authors to pen his words, is for fundamentalists the sole source of his authority on earth. Preachers convert the ancient recorded speech of the Bible once again into spoken language, translating it into local theological and cultural idioms and placing present events inside the sequence of Biblical stories (12).

Harding sees the role of the preacher in evangelism as translator of God's word from archaic words into an idiom that can be understood by the common people. What she does not address is the slippage inherent within any translation: the inability of a completely literal transposition from one language (or way of expression) to another. Is the evangelist's interpretation of the Scriptures still the literal word of God? At what point in translation does it cease to be so? However problematic such translation may be, Benny Hinn could be seen to be taking it a step further: the Word he brought to Christchurch was translated into action, with every spoken thing demonstrated by members of the local congregation. At the climax of the service, Hinn used the Word like a magic spell that reached out and touched people, literally pushing them until they fell over. The Word was a thing of power, and its effect was not in subtle cognitive understandings of the nuances of doctrine, nor, ostensibly, in the revelation of a closer personal relationship with God. While Hinn declares his services to be non-denominational, and self-identifies as a Protestant, his use of the Word was as a tool in a ritual process.

1. The Word

As with Marsden's first service, the words spoken (and predominantly, sung) in the Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade give a structure and a primary means of interpreting the service. As in Marsden's service taken from the *Church of England*

Book of Common Prayer the first episode within this performance is the dramatic arrival of Benny Hinn.

The way for the arrival of Benny Hinn was prepared by members of his “worship team”: men and women who had travelled from the United States with Hinn and acted as part of his support crew. The main performer before the arrival of Benny Hinn was Steve Brock, who is a middle-aged portly white man, on this occasion dressed in a navy suit. Throughout the service he would act as Benny Hinn’s assistant: in television terms, he might be labelled a “side-kick.” Before Hinn arrived, Brock led the congregation through a number of songs, warming up the crowd. The words of these songs seem at first glance somewhat irrelevant: the role of music within this service was very much geared towards the creation of atmosphere, with tempi and rhythm being important ways by which the mood of the crowd was altered from moment to moment.

Every song was prompted by a leader, usually either Brock or Hinn himself. In this way, the songs fulfilled the same function as a call-and-response, with the congregation in effect repeating the words spoken to them by the leader. This allowed a congregation that was not necessarily familiar with the words of the hymns to sing as if they knew them. The tunes, which were simple, were easily learned through the large number of repetitions.

Brock began:

Oh Lord, I lift your name on high
And I love to sing your praises
I’m so glad you’re in my life
I’m so glad you came to save us

This was a simple affirmation with number of effects. It was a song of praise, but it also categorised the congregation as believers. It served as an affirmation of belief: that the crowd was there to praise and worship, that the crowd was Christian, and that

the crowd acknowledged that God had saved them. In comparison to the maxims spoken in the Morning Service, the tone was very different: celebrating the greatness of the Lord rather than regretting the sinful state of mankind. This mood continued throughout Hinn's service. Hinn talked very little about sin, and nothing at all about hell as a destination for sinners. Sickness and illness were categorised as the work of demons, but the basic assumption of the service was that everyone present was there because they were Christian, or potentially Christian. Hinn's theology offers carrots, not sticks. This seems to be a first diversion from Hinn's American evangelistic tradition of fundamentalist Protestantism. It seemed that merely being present, regardless of faith, was enough to cast the crowd as a congregation. The equation was simple: If you were there, you were a Christian. If you were a Christian, you were saved. If you were saved, you might be healed. More complex issues of repentance and personal belief were strenuously avoided. It could be argued that these were implied within the service, but in performance, the subtleties of Protestant belief were almost completely absent.

The arrival of Benny Hinn was heralded by the singing of one of New Zealand's own hymns: How Great Thou Art.

Then sings my soul,
My saviour, Lord, to Thee
How great Thou art,
How great Thou art

After a number of repeats of the chorus, with rising modulations in pitch and a resulting increase in intensity, Benny Hinn walked onto the stage, mid-chorus, a Bible in one hand, and a microphone in the other. He prayed silently before the congregation, while the last bars of the hymn were sung. When the music ceased, Hinn said a prayer, aloud. It is perhaps pertinent to mention at this point that Benny Hinn was wearing a radio microphone. He does not need to speak into the handheld

microphone, and generally only did so for effect, or when talking to a member of the congregation on stage.

Hinn spoke aloud:

A million thanks for all You are about to do in this place
 A million thanks for all You have done for us
 I pray, wonderful Father, in Jesus' name,
 In the name that is above every name
 Spread Your hands, this night, mighty Redeemer,
 Touch Your people,
 Reach and touch Your inheritance here in New Zealand
 I pray not one shall leave this place the same
 I pray this night the mighty power of Your Spirit will fill this arena
 And not one person will remain still sick in body
 We will give You the Glory
 We will give You the Honour
 You alone are worthy...

...I pray tonight for three things especially
 Firstly I pray that every believer will be filled afresh with Your pure spirit
 Secondly that every lost soul will be born again
 Thirdly that every sick body will be healed again
 We vow before heaven, before the visible and the invisible,
 We will give You all the Glory
 That is our promise, and we will keep it
 Amen.

This was a performance of prayer. It was the demonstration of a private act apparently made public, but with a symbolism that seemed meant to convey meaning to the watchers. This prayer clearly stated the aims of the service: the renewal of faith, the conversion of those who have no faith, and the healing of the sick. Right from the very beginning of the service, these outcomes were spoken of as if their connection and interdependence was a foregone conclusion. Hinn referred to “the visible and the invisible”: in so doing he equated the healing of the sick bodies with the healing of the sick spirits. If people were healed, it would represent the holiness of the souls of the congregation: not only of the individuals concerned, but, impliedly, of all those present. What was invisible, the souls of the people, would be made visible in the healed bodies of those who were ill.

Hinn finished off this first prayer with the following exchange, which would be repeated throughout the service:

Hinn: And God's people said Amen

Congregation: Amen

Hinn: Let's give the Lord a mighty hand of praise (applause).

This allowed Hinn to direct the congregation into an action (applause) without seeming directorial. It was not Hinn himself to whom the applause was directed, but to God. However, this line became increasingly blurry as the service went on. The congregation was applauding God; we would also applaud Benny Hinn. Hinn demonstrated the same kind of movement between allegiances (exalted member of the congregation to vessel of God's word) as Marsden in his service. He was the mouthpiece of God, and as such, anything that he said, whether explicitly Biblical or not, was given a kind of stamp of heavenly approval. In a way, evangelists might be compared to franchisees, who sell their own version of a product that is monitored by head office. The product may have some personal idiosyncrasies, but remains trademarked – and the purchasers will accept almost any product under that trademark. Hinn, once he has established himself as a man of God, has the authority to say almost anything he wants, and those words become the Word of God.

After the first prayer, Hinn followed with a short, informal and somewhat generic greeting: "It's a pleasure to be in your beautiful country – you are truly a blessed people." This represents the first of many references to location that would occur throughout the service, as Hinn and his helpers (at least superficially) adapted their service to include the locals.

The next action was a group prayer (led by Hinn) that segued almost seamlessly into song. Hinn asked the people to raise their hands, and close their eyes, dictating a stance that the congregation would remain in for much of the five-hour service. Hinn spoke four repetitions of "Holy Spirit, Thou art welcome in this place,"

and the choir picked up the refrain as Hinn left off. Hinn encouraged the congregation to keep their hands aloft. This might be seen as an invocation: inviting the Holy Spirit of God to enter the venue.

Hinn's second prayer was said over the same soft music:

One of these days every name every known to man will be forgotten
 One of these days every great leader will be remembered no more
 One of these days history itself will not matter
 Only one thing will – our knowledge of the Lord.
 Only Jesus. Only Jesus matters.

There is only one name, and that name has miraculous powers.
 When that name is spoken, oppression goes, disease flees
 Darkness disappears at the mention of his blessed name.

This passage demonstrates the formal phraseology that Hinn used throughout the service: the use of structural repetition within the sentences spoken, and the constant repetition of the same ideas, over and over again. The content of this prayer is in direct contrast to the Morning Service, in that Hinn did not seek to reaffirm loyalty to the social structures of the day. Whereas the Morning Service includes prayers for the King (who is also the head of the church), Hinn dismissed everyday concerns, social structures and political movements as irrelevant and unimportant. The true community that was celebrated in the Miracle Crusade was the community of believers: a global network of Christians. Hinn might be seen as using prayer to incite loyalty, not to a government, but to a global church.

In this passage, Hinn celebrated the power of the Word. Hinn suggested in this prayer (a prayer that is really more of a comment or sermon to the congregation than an appeal to God) that the Word of God has an impact that no earthly power can match: simply speaking Jesus' name is enough to end oppression, and cure disease. It seems clear that Hinn himself saw the Word as powerful, even magical. This set the scene for the use of the Word later in healing and "Slaying in the Spirit."

The following hymn, called “His name is Jesus,” continued on from this idea. Within it, there was a call and response, with the effect of establishing a dynamic whereby the congregation surrenders to doing as Benny Hinn says, and saying what he asks them to say:

Benny Hinn: “Master”
 Congregation: “Master”
 Benny Hinn: “Saviour”
 Congregation: “Saviour”
 Benny Hinn: “Jesus”
 Congregation: “Jesus”
 All: “There’s something about that name...”

The language of the service, despite its repetition and occasional poeticism, was not generally ritualistic, but rather idiosyncratic and based in the idiom of the day. There was constant movement between formality and informality. Hinn’s movement between an alignment with God and an alignment with God’s people was indicated in this way.

After another prayer, Hinn instigated an “act of peace,” getting the congregants to shake hands with people around them. Taken from the Catholic Mass (and almost every church service of any denomination that I have ever been to), this increased the sense of personal investment in the congregation. Whereas we might hitherto have been strangers, the individuals within the congregation were connected to each other: now we knew at least one person in the room. It was the first step towards feeling like part of a community. This was continued with an informal welcome, in which the “ministers and their wives” were introduced, as was Steve Brock, who had been leading the songs up to this point. Brock and Hinn then engaged in a little informal comic dialogue, remembering the last time they were in New Zealand, a year previously in Auckland. While this was spoken to each other, it was really a performance for the rest of the audience.

Hinn: I'm glad we're in an arena, tonight. In Auckland, we were in a big tent... and the rain came down and the wind began to blow...

Brock: We thought the top was gonna come off...

Hinn: At one point the lights began to... (makes swaying gesture with hand)

Brock: We thought we were going to be raptured whether we wanted it or not!

The audience laughed. Throughout the service, Hinn and his helpers moved deftly between the formal and the informal, at turns reverential and irreverent. This brought into focus how much this service functioned as an entertainment as well as a religious celebration, as arguably this structure worked not only for the congregation but for those watching at home. For the congregation, long phases of singing and worshipping were interrupted by dramatic events, renewing both energy and enthusiasm. For those at home, these were possibly the important part of the service, edited together so that the four- and five-hour-long services might be packaged into half-hour episodes of highlights.

Hinn turned back to the congregation, and gave us the news of his latest conquests around the world:

I have news for you. The Muslim world is hearing the Gospel of Christ. I've been to Sudan, 30 million Muslims, has been killing Christians for a long time.

Hinn relates that there has recently been a CBN funded conference, to which 44,000 people came.

Now the government has sent me an invitation to come and preach freely.
There's one reason for this.... Jesus is coming Back!
The Biggest Miracle of all – I received an invitation to preach the gospel in Havana, Cuba...
Awesome Days, these are Awesome Days.

After another song came Hinn finally turns to his Bible, asking the congregation to take their Bibles (not many seemed to have brought them) and turn to Isaiah, chapter 43. The sermon that followed did not draw directly from the words within this Bible chapter, or only in the most superficial of ways. The only verses in Isaiah 43 that seem at all relevant to the sermon given are the following:

“Do not remember the former things
 Nor consider the things of old
 Behold, I will do a new thing,
 Now it shall spring forth;
 Shall you not know it?
 I will even make a road in the wilderness
 And rivers in the desert. (verses 18 and 19)

While the Biblical verses might be seen to support Hinn’s statements only peripherally, it seems that the congregation were not really expected to be following along, reading their own Bible – it was simply too much to take in at once. The Bible in Hinn’s hand gave credence to what he said, and in a sense made Hinn’s own words seem like the word of God. It gave him authority. The general gist of his words was that we may well be living in the end of days. Again, Hinn did not speak of the fate of sinners, only emphasising that Jesus is coming (one imagines, both in the Rapture and, presumably, when invoked in the Miracle Crusade service, that night). The implication was that Jesus is a real tangible entity, rather than an abstract ideal. He was a person whom the congregation should get to know.

We are living in amazing days. Prophecy is being fulfilled all around us.
 Jesus said... “In an hour that you think not...”

Again, Hinn referred to the physical world as irrelevant, but at this time, he made the first real connection between the sinful world and the sick bodies of his congregation:

The day will come where this corruption (gestures towards body) will become incorruption.

The sermon reflected on “knowing not the hour” when the Lord will come, and being ready for when he does. Hinn held up the Bible, but still did not read from it, reciting off by heart, and translating as he went:

‘Seek ye the Lord...’ and
 The real you will never die (x3)
 The real you will live forever... but the question is... where?
 It’s the Word of God
 We cannot question the Word of God.
 This is the Word of the Living God.
 You can stake your life on “thus sayeth the Lord.

Again, Hinn paid lip service to the Word of God, while not sticking to it in any real way. He was very much the translator, not only telling the Bible in a language that he thought the congregation would understand, but selecting what he saw as the relevant passages, both to the congregation, and to the service. It seems that Hinn might be able to say almost anything, in a tone of sincerity, and with a Bible in his hand, and the congregation would be inclined to believe him, and furthermore, believe that the words he said were the literal word of God.

Hinn went on to tell an anecdote of a rich man dying in Florida. He acted it out, performing all sides of the conversation, himself, the dying man, and the dying man's beautiful trophy wife. Hinn positioned himself at this juncture not as a teacher, but as a learner: a naïve pupil who was only talking about himself to reveal the things he has learned along the way.

The next episode in the service was the altar-call, wherein the congregation was asked to examine the state of their own souls, and, if not saved (or saved enough), to come forward and offer their soul to Jesus.

Hinn: Could you please bow your heads.
 The most important question you should ask yourself is "Am I ready?"
 If Jesus came tonight, are you ready?
 Put your hand up if you're not as ready as you can be.
 Come and stand with me at the front.

There was a swell of organ music, and Hinn looked up and spoke to the crowd:

I want you to know that Satan tonight is losing every one of those dear people.
 Everyone, stand and pray.

Crowds of people came forward, and Hinn said a prayer that they must repeat after him. In this moment, Hinn was the ultimate mediator between the people and God: he was providing the words by which they could gain access to salvation. He spoke as an intermediary who was connected both to the higher power of the Lord, but also speaking for the people, who were sinners. The people repeated the words after Hinn,

and many started crying. Steve Brock started the choir singing an upbeat song: “In the name of Jesus, In the name of Jesus, we have a victory!” The mood was extremely celebratory, and many people hugged in the aisles.

The altar call was followed by the “offering,” in which Hinn solicited funds from the congregation to keep on with the good work. This was an ideal time to ask, when the congregation was still high on the testimony of the saved. Hinn gave a long speech about where these funds would be going: not to America, he is careful to note, and definitely not into his own pocket, but to pay for airtime in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga.

Hinn: Say after me, This is harvest time.

People: This is harvest time.

Hinn: This is harvest time.

People: This is harvest time.

Hinn: What time is it?

People: Harvest time.

Hinn talked about the triumphs of the Christian Broadcasting Network and the global outreaches of Pat Robertson and Paul Crouch. He talked about the Israelis, who recently had launched a satellite, enabling “the Gospel to play over the entire Middle East. People are watching us as far as Saudi Arabia.” Hinn referenced Isaiah, once again, this time chapter 60, but again rearranged the words, interpreting them to suit his own purposes: “God is going to increase our ability to receive.” The implication was that in giving, the people would also receive: that the more generous they were, the more they will be rewarded with monetary gain for themselves. People were encouraged to write their name and contact details on the provided envelopes, and put them into the buckets that are circulated around. Again, there was a given set of words that the congregation were required to repeat, apparently to ensure the maximum benefit from the donation, both to the recipient ministry, and to the donor.

Take your envelope and sow your seed right now – cheque, credit cards, you can do that. I want you to lay your hand on it, and pray. Father, in Jesus’

name, we ask the Lord to multiply it. Hold it up, say it aloud: Father, this is for your kingdom, I sow it in faith, believing for harvest time to come my way, in Jesus' name, Amen.

After the business of donations was dealt with, there were yet more songs, this time led by Steve Brock, who took over the singing from Benny Hinn, and led the congregation through "Great is Thy faithfulness." After this, the music became very slow and quiet again, and Hinn sang. He was not as proficient or professional a singer as Brock, but his wavering tones may be seen to have indicated sincerity when compared to Brock's easy competence. The next song was repeated several times, always quiet, always slow. The effect was hypnotic: and the congregants were standing throughout with their arms still raised, reaching a state of physical weariness, that might be seen to have increased their susceptibility to Hinn's suggestions.

The next episode within the service was the preparation and culmination of the act of healing. Benny Hinn cautioned everyone that for the next ten to fifteen minutes, he wanted no one moving, so they could "prepare for their miracle." He started once again to read from the Bible, offering the following verses that supported the promised outcome:

He forgiveth all thy iniquities and healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103);

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7);

Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

Hinn assured the congregation that God always fulfils his promises when He gets the right cooperation, and that God's covenant is so strong that no believer should ever be ill. But in the next sentence, he chided the congregation: "Don't be looking for the Miracle – Look for the Master. Quit looking for the healing, and look for the Healer."

Hinn's speech became extremely rapid, combining personal anecdotes with stories from other evangelists (including Oral Roberts and Billy Graham). There were

increasing repetitions as Hinn assured the congregation that God has promised healing, and always keeps His promises.

He is still the “I am,”- if he healed 2,000 years ago, but not today (and that’s not happening, but if it was) it means that he’s not God anymore. He is always the same, yesterday, today and forever, and no matter what the skeptics say, he is forever. The secret – the secret to your miracle – is the presence of the Master. Forget for a moment your sickness, focus on the presence of the MASTER.

Throughout, Benny Hinn continued to give instructions to the congregation, guiding them to stand, to keep their hands lifted, to keep their eyes closed, and also telling them to keep listening. After some time, Hinn initiated another song, which the congregation and choir sang together.

His name is Jesus (x3)
Beautiful saviour, glorious God
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word.” (x3)

There were two more songs, which continued on as Hinn made random comments into his microphone, sometimes quoting the Bible, sometimes encouraging the congregation (“lift your hands to heaven, saints, sing it again...”). The songs became simple repetitions of small phrases, over and over again: “Hallelujah,” “Jesus, we worship you,” “Holy Spirit...”

Benny Hinn started talking even more rapidly, as he strode from one side of the stage to the other. He spoke softly, almost to himself, but his voice was nonetheless amplified to fill the whole arena. During this episode, Hinn “rebuked” the sicknesses inside the unwell people in the congregation, as if the ill-health itself was a personality to be defied. Hinn called out a number of illnesses that he said were being healed at that very moment, including heart disease, an unspecified “skin condition”, a brain tumour, arthritis of the shoulder, leukaemia. The form that the recitation took is as follows:

I rebuke that bone cancer in the name of Jesus

Someone is being healed of bone cancer in this arena
 I rebuke that diabetes in the name of Jesus
 Someone is being healed of diabetes in this arena

Hinn went on:

Quickly, those sick in body, place your hand on your sickness now.
 Place your hand in the name of Jesus Christ, son of the living God, I rebuke
 that infirmity in your body and command it to go in the name of Jesus
 I order you, spirit of sickness, disease and infirmity, GO!
 In the name of Jesus, I order you to go

Hinn's language became ritualistic and formal, with many, many repetitions,
 combined with an almost "chain-of-consciousness" flow of words. This rapidity was
 infectious: I could feel a rising excitement in the room, as people obeyed Hinn's
 commands, touched their hands to their bodies, and rose from their seats.

Hinn asked people to come to either side of the platform, declaiming, "I give
 you Praise for the anointing of the Holy Ghost in this house." The next episode of the
 service involved the testimony of those who believed themselves healed. Each person
 was greeted at the side of the stage, and was then brought onto the stage by one of
 Hinn's helpers. Hinn interviewed each one, demonstrating their healing to the
 congregation, and touched each one on the forehead: the healed people (almost
 without exception) fell to the ground, caught by Hinn's worship team who carefully
 lowered them to the floor. One such episode was as follows:

Hinn: What happened to that man?
 Joan (a helper): Pastor I was just watching this man right over here. He had
 bone marrow cancer. He's had pain all through his body, found it difficult to
 walk, I saw him skip out into the aisle like you said...look at him! Amazing!"
 (Hinn takes him by the hand, walks him across the stage and back)
 Hinn: Marvellous What happened to you there? What did you feel?
 Man: "Warmth... Warmth
 Hinn: "Come on!"
 Man: "Love... whoa!"
 Hinn: You felt it got through you
 Man: I felt it go through me
 Hinn: What was wrong with you then?
 Man: Bone Marrow Cancer
 (Hinn touches him on the head, he falls to the ground)

Hinn: The Anointing is strong in this place: Give the Lord a Mighty Hand of Praise!

Person after person was brought forward to testify, and touched on the forehead, most (but not all) falling to the ground and shaking. Hinn grew more and more excited, and so did the crowd, clapping and calling out “Hallelujah” when the healed people testified. Hinn turned to the congregation and speaks:

I thought you people in Christchurch were conservative
 I thought you people in Christchurch were a little on the slow side
 I’m finding out now that the fire of GOD is in this place, that’s what I’m
 finding out!
 And the power of GOD will sweep across this place.

After this observation (partly promise and partly, one might argue, a challenge) Hinn got the choir to start singing. He touched the forehead of more people, and they fell to the ground. He turned to the choir, made them hold hands, and asked: “Do you want some of that?” He made a gesture of throwing the Holy Spirit at them: many fell over (partly in a domino effect caused by the linked hands).

The formal quality of the service degenerated a little, and Hinn was the focus of all eyes as he stood at the front of the stage. He made the entire congregation close their eyes and concentrate, hands still lifted to the Lord. The musicians played quiet classical music.

I see a mist over there,
 Does anyone see it but me?
 Over that whole section over there... it’s spreading.
 Yes, it’s still spreading. Join hands, quickly.
 (long pause)

“It’s spreading,” Hinn repeated, holding his hand out to them. “Touch,” he said, finally, and the whole section of crowd collapsed. Hinn turned to the main bank of audience. “Join hands,” he requested. He paused for a long time, and when he spoke his voice was very quiet. “These are Your people. These are Your saints. Touch them.” After an extended and drawn out period of quiet, Hinn shouted,

“Release” and many people in that bank fell over. He turned and fired the Holy Spirit towards the other parts of the congregation: “Release! Release! Release!” Many fell.

Steve Brock came forward and together Brock and Hinn led the congregation through some more uplifting songs. Hinn told us to be sure to come again tomorrow, and to tell our friends, and then, as abruptly as he arrived at the beginning of the service, he left, and the service was over.

2. Performance

It is in some ways difficult to analyse the words of Hinn’s Miracle Crusade, because on the page they seem lifeless and superficial in comparison to the way in which I remember them, vibrant and affecting, and how they seem even watching the recorded video of the service. This suggests just how very much Hinn’s service was reliant on its performance elements, the use of space, the engagement of the congregation, and the charisma of Hinn himself, who delivered what seem like in retrospect quite average and commonplace words with such verve. The words really became actions in the performance, inflected with different meanings by the context and manner of their speaking. The elements of the performance, while perhaps more vivid, may be analysed much in the same way as Marsden’s First Service.

Like Marsden, Hinn chose to present his service in a place resonant with pre-existing meanings. The Miracle Crusade took place in one of Christchurch’s foremost international performance venues: the Westpac Trust Centre. The Westpac Trust Centre is a relatively new corporate venue for performance and sporting events. The Centre, named after a large banking conglomerate, is nowadays a venue for international performers, such as Janet Jackson, Ben Harper, Cinderella on Ice and Tom Jones, as well as international indoor sporting events such as tennis and netball

tournaments. As a choice of location, it bears some similarities with Marsden's beach: it is a site where New Zealand meets global influences. Like the beach, it might be considered a kind of transitional space between New Zealand and the rest of the world, neither not-New Zealand (the sea) or New Zealand (the land), but a place between that incorporates both. The Centre is in Christchurch, but it is consistently more likely to showcase international acts than New Zealand ones. As such, it is perhaps an ideal venue for evangelism, which can be regarded in the modern day (as in Marsden's time) as a meeting of two cultures.

Importantly, the Centre is not usually a venue for church meetings. Locating the service there took Christianity outside of the church. While Hinn was hosted by a conglomerate of local churches (predominantly Baptist), Hinn did not choose to bring his service to any one of these churches. Rather than holding the meeting in a local church, or even in either of the two cathedrals in the city, the Crusade took place in a venue for sport and entertainment. It is a secular space that would be transformed into a place of worship simply through locating worship inside it. This must be considered partly at least a practical consideration – there is no church in Christchurch that could possibly accommodate the number of people who turned up to the Crusade – but poses a number of immediate symbolic implications. The sheer scale of the service was unusual for Christchurch and pointed towards Benny Hinn's celebrity (as a person whom you might go to see in action even if you were not part of his faith). In locating at the Westpac Trust, the Crusade also positioned itself outside of (or even counter to) the established church structures. Sited at the Westpac Trust, there was the possibility for independent action unfettered by the traditions of the individual churches. Instead, this was a situation where a space usually designated for other purposes was altered by what occurred within it. The use of this space was once again structural rather than iconographic. Inside, there was a notable absence of

religious imagery. There were no crosses, no altars, no pictures or statues of Christ. In this absence of signage, a new imagery was constructed, and at its centre was the figure of Benny Hinn.

The location of the service also erased any possibility of denominational disputes. The service was avowedly “inter-denominational,” including all sects of Christians, from Catholics to Pentecostals. This appearance of neutrality, explicit within Hinn’s doctrinally non-specific sermon, was vital to the success of Hinn’s evangelism. All were apparently welcome, and none excluded on the basis of faith. Who you had been before you arrived was irrelevant: what was important in this service was who you became through participating in it. Everything else, as Hinn said again and again, simply did not matter.

The Crusade took place within a religiously neutral, commercial site. It was turned into a church through the belief and participation of those inside it. The space was transformed through the actions of the evangelist, and also of the audience. As the bodies of the audience would be made over and made holy, so was the space of the Westpac Trust made over into a church. The battle for souls was played out first on the space and then upon the bodies of the congregants. Both, one might argue, symbolically became the temple of Christ.

While it seems likely that most of those attending were Christians, whether affiliated with the large number of sponsor churches or not, by situating itself on neutral ground, the Crusade also made itself more inviting to non-Christians, who might otherwise have been intimidated by the comparative formality and strangeness of a more ecclesiastical environment. Attending the Miracle Crusade was positioned as no more threatening than going along to hear Ben Harper and Jack Johnson, potentially mere entertainment or sport, and as such, familiar and unthreatening – perhaps even something to do to while away a dull Christchurch weekend.

For some, the Crusade may have been a serious and intense religious occasion, but for others it posed as entertainment and so might appear amusing and diversionary, rather than radical and iconoclastic. Benny Hinn is a celebrity (and, arguably, an oddity) and it is conceivable that at least some of those who attended were there purely in the hope of seeing him make some suckers fall over, like on TV. Whatever their reason for attending, once inside the individual spectators were deemed sincere in their desire to participate, and deemed part of the congregation. For me, attending as an observer and performance ethnographer, the lure of participation was great. While I fully intended to remain in my seat and take notes, it proved enormously difficult and eventually became impossible, because the sheer energy of the event was difficult to resist, and being seemingly the only person in nine thousand to be acting out of place became, for me, impossible. The service was moving, and the sense of communion was strong. I do not believe that this experience was unique to me.

The location of the service outside the church walls was potentially radical and even revolutionary; whatever might be likely to occur, this was something different from your usual church service. However, in locating the service outside the church, the Crusade also fitted into a pattern of evangelistic performance that, by its nature, seeks out new audiences. Benny Hinn fits neatly into a long tradition of American Christian evangelism. He notes in his book *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (1997) that he received the Spirit himself at a service given by evangelistic preacher Katherine Kuhlman, a charismatic and sentimental preacher, who, like Hinn, always wore white. It seems that the performance practice of evangelism is something that is passed on from person to person, almost like an apprenticeship. Certainly many preachers credit the ministers who converted them, or influenced them greatly, and

adopt elements of their style. Specifically, it fits into a long history of American fundamentalist evangelism.

In the Great Revival of 1800-1805, the path from rejection to redemption was spelled out in vigorous and emotionally persuasive form, and the vogue of large outdoor worship services, soon called camp meetings, gave the hesitant seekers living examples of what was interpreted as redemptive grace... (Boles 63).

The Westpac Trust service was in many ways similar to the camp meetings in the Great Revival. The positioning outside of church walls symbolised a revolutionary new approach to religion, unbound by the conservative mores of tradition. Outside the church walls, the evangelist takes his message to those who are literally and figuratively 'outside the church', making religion available to those who may in one way or another be excluded. At the Tent meetings (as is perhaps true at the Westpac Trust Centre) however, many of the congregants were already Christians of one sort or another, looking to revivify their faith and put some oomph into their religious commitment. There was definitely an aura of excitement, and the sense of an unusual and celebratory occasion at the Westpac Trust. Boles writes of the Great Awakening that:

The very size and novelty of the camp meetings seemed to legitimate God's miraculous power, as did the evident number of conversions being effected (63).

The Miracle Crusade was, in Christchurch terms, both an extremely large religious meeting, and a novel one. Nonetheless, its size and scale were presented as being only the tip of the iceberg, compared to the Global Mission of which we were a part. We were, it was suggested, part of a worldwide Crusade, and with our help, Pastor Hinn would fulfil his aim of reaching every nation in the world by the dawning of the New Millennium. Our contribution was important, and stretched beyond our own experience. Through participating in the Crusade (and donating to it) we were involved in a widespread global community.

In my previous chapter, I considered the actions of Ruatara, Marsden's local intermediary, and in particular, the way in which Ruatara cleared and shaped the space for the staging of Marsden's arrival that was pivotal to the success of Marsden's venture. In the context of the Miracle Crusade it also seems clear that the performance of evangelism began well before Benny Hinn stepped ashore (this time out of a plane at Christchurch airport). Marsden's path was prepared by Ruatara, who built him a church. In the case of Benny Hinn, there were two ways in which the congregation was prepared for him. This preparation was begun even before the Westpac Trust Centre opened for the service, through the airing of Hinn's television show.

Hinn's audience, arriving at the Westpac Trust, already knew what to expect and how to act. Having watched the programme, I was familiar with Hinn, familiar with his beliefs, familiar with what he would say and do, and how I, as a member of the congregation, could act to fit into that scenario. I had seen other congregations in other places, and from them, I knew how to stand, what to sing and how to behave. I also knew what to expect from the service: our foremost objective was the healing of the sick through faith, and certain behaviours were required of the audience in order for this to occur.

This expectation was enhanced by the posters that were displayed in shop-windows and on bollards around the city in the weeks leading up to the event. The primary image was of Hinn, a distinctive figure with his Bible-prophet white hair and cream-coloured suit. On the poster, he held a Bible in one hand, and a microphone in the other, representing the word of God in written and spoken form.



The Bible is the source of Hinn's wisdom and power; the microphone is the way in which he will distribute it, via his own spoken word. The image made it clear what to expect. Benny Hinn was bringing the Word to Christchurch. The header was more ambiguous. It stated: "Experience the presence of the Holy Spirit/ Come expecting to receive your Miracle." The words of the poster emphasise the experiential nature of the service. The impact of the words and image combined suggest a combining of the Word with the experience of the Holy Spirit. One is inseparable from the other. In Hinn's service, it is implied, the Word is experienced, not merely heard and understood. For Hinn, the Faustian ideal of Word as "Tat" or Action seems already particularly relevant. The Word, as advertised by Hinn, has a concrete effect. It *acts*. In terms of audience impact, it is reasonable to expect that many if not most of the audience may have arrived at the venue expecting if not to "receive their Miracle" then to witness others receiving theirs.

The congregation have also had the opportunity of being exposed to Hinn's television ministry. Hinn's worldwide "Miracle Crusade" is a tour of multi-denominational Christian revival meetings that are presented in cities in America and around the Globe. When Hinn came to Christchurch, he arrived from Brisbane,

Australia, and was heading off to Tonga. His stated goal was to have visited one hundred and thirty countries by the end of the millennium. Each “Crusade” is a long worship meeting that culminates in mass faith-healings. Each Crusade is also captured on camera for later broadcast on *This is Your Day*. This television audience makes for another, larger congregation, comprised of millions of people worldwide. In a way, this audience could be compared to Marsden’s audience “back home” – people interested in the progress of his mission, prepared to help fund missionary activity to areas previously un-reached. However, there is an important difference. Those watching on television are deemed to be part of Hinn’s congregation, similar to those who are actually present in the live event. It is implied that their input (spiritual as well as financial) is crucial to the outcome of each featured service. These are like the members of the Church Missionary Society in England, who funded and served as a kind of secondary audience to Samuel Marsden. However, their relationship to the service is more complex than that. This audience at home is the live audience of the future. Not only do they support Hinn, but they will be visited by him in turn, and converted anew to his cause.

It is the televisual element that reveals how independent the message of the Benny Hinn Crusade is from the Word. Television is about images, and this is arguably a performance directed towards the capture of footage - images of Hinn healing the congregation - that speaks much louder than the literal meaning of the words that he says. This is effective: it is also big business. Hinn broadcasts all over the world, and not only must he retain audiences, but he must constantly aim for new ones: both an evangelistic ideal, and a capitalist one. As the purveyor of television, Hinn must always be seeking new congregants, new viewers, and new investors.

Donating to the ministry can be a long-term and ongoing commitment. Having given my name at the Benny Hinn Crusade in 1999, I have received personally

addressed newsletters and solicitations for donations even as recently as the end of 2007. Benny Hinn will be returning to Christchurch shortly for a “Training for Ministry Conference” and I am invited to go again, to find my miracle again, and to donate further. It seems that this is a never-completed process – and not only will watching *This is Your Day* prepare me for my first encounter, but it is assumed, it will keep me satisfied when Benny Hinn cannot be here in person. The Miracle Crusade features a process by which a previously physically-separated and physically-passive television audience become active participants of a live event, recreating the behaviours that they have seen broadcast from other similar congregations before them. The mutually reinforcing relationship between the experience of being a television spectator and being part of a live audience is perhaps one clue to the extraordinary effectiveness of Hinn’s service in motivating his congregation. The television show prepares the audience, giving them a shared horizon of expectation and a shared goal.

In terms of the preparation of the space, it is clear that this set-up was designed for the cameras as well as for the live congregation. A man with a light meter stood on stage at the exact point that Benny Hinn would later stand. Electricians and sound operators moved around the arena. The entire space was warmly lit with coloured spotlights, making the audience visually cohesive and warmly attractive, and rather like a congregation in a church lit through stained-glass windows. Close-up, the people around me looked like everyday citizens of Christchurch. Reflected back at me on the huge screens that were set up on both sides of the stage, we looked like a harmonious congregation.

Before Hinn even arrived in the building, however, the many activities of preparation were in place. The entire structure of the auditorium was designed to create the empty space to be filled by Hinn’s arrival. The inside of this auditorium is

a proscenium arch theatre with a large flat area (sometimes used for seating and sometimes for performance) surrounded by a circular auditorium. For the Crusade's purposes was set aside as a special reserved seating area.

In the week prior to the Crusade, I rang the event organiser at the Westpac Trust Centre, only to be assured that no bookings were necessary for the service. This is usually true of Miracle Crusades, with congregants apparently admitted to entrance on a first-come, first-served basis. According to Hinn's promotional materials, in the United States, demand for places is so high that queues may begin forming outside the Crusade venues some days before the event is to take place. The hopeful congregants camp out in all weathers for the chance at the best seats, which are usually those in closest proximity to the stage. These queues of people are as effective an advertisement for the events as the posters. Crowds of unsuccessful queuers may even remain outside the packed venues throughout the service.

Arriving an hour early at the venue, there were no queues, and still plenty of seats. Upon entering, I was asked by a young usher if I had a ticket. Replying in the negative, I was sent, a little disgruntled, to sit upstairs. I later found out that tickets were available, but that they were only issued through affiliated churches to their parishioners. The reserved area was the flat area directly in front of the stage, although there was a strip of maybe three metres in width that separated the front row of seats from the stage, creating a gap that would later be filled by converts and the healed. In the reserved area sat a combination of people. In the front row were local celebrities, including the mayor of Christchurch, Garry Moore. This might be seen as equivalent to Marsden, who was met by the local chiefs, which may have led credibility to his actions. Having Hinn affiliated with the important people in town suggested that this was in fact an important civic event for the city, as well as an occasion of religious observance. In the rest of the seats sat seriously ill members of

parishes, many of who were seated in wheelchairs, others with crutches laid in the aisles. This area was blocked off from the rest of the surrounding seats, which were filled with worshippers.

The raked seating gave all of the rest of the gathered crowds a good view of the stage, but also of the restricted area. It was almost as if the aged and sick seated in this area were on display. Through this act of positioning, these people became literally and symbolically central to proceedings, symbolising all that was at stake through the whole service. Miracle Crusades advertise just that – miracles, and many attend these services in the hopes that they will be healed, or will witness their friends and loved ones being made well. I imagine that many of those seated in the special area would have been known to groups of church-goers in the audience, each providing an individual focus for a small group of people. It was my experience on the second evening to sit next to a woman named Denise, who was hoping that her aunt, whom she pointed out to me, seated below us, would be healed of her Parkinson's disease. For the rest of the evening, I kept looking back, trying to see if this had in fact occurred. As it happened, in the flurry of activity after the healings, we lost sight of her, and she never appeared on stage, so I do not know what happened to her. Perhaps this not-knowing is part of the point: I remain hopeful, despite my cynicism, that Denise's aunt somehow came through okay.

Practical considerations were clearly involved in this arrangement. The flat area was easier to negotiate for those with wheelchairs or movement impediments, and such an area allowed easier access to the stage. However, placed so centrally, the important and the sick (arguably two indistinguishable groups within this service) are displayed to everyone else. It was impossible to look at the stage without taking in the presence of the ill and decrepit. In some cases the appearance of illness was magnified by the event organisers, who thoughtfully invited those who were frail to

take a wheelchair, even if they did not arrive in one. This was on one hand a genuinely considerate gesture. On the other, it could be seen as a performative choice, as the sight of an elderly or infirm person getting up out of a wheelchair and walking across the stage is a lot more vivid and spectacular than if he or she simply walked up there unaided. This equates to a use of stage properties for the maximum theatrical effect, and the discarded wheelchairs became a symbol of the fetters of sin that had been left behind.

Sitting on raked seating at the back of the stage was a choir, dressed in white. These were local people, a choir trained in the songs for this service in advance. When I entered, well before the service had formally started, they were singing worship songs, conducted by a man who was later introduced to us as the music director, Jim Cernero. The choir sang a song, stopping halfway, and ran through a tricky passage once again. This was not a private interaction, but public: Cernero was wearing a radio microphone, and the milling crowd could hear his every word. As he spurred on the choir, encouraging them to sing with greater energy, and a higher level of enthusiasm, Cernero was also instrumental in beginning the process of warming up the crowd. Every note he gave them became by proxy an instruction to everyone else: “Put some heart into it. Sing as if you really mean it!” Some sang along with the songs as the choir practiced. The sense of excitement and expectation amongst the crowd was already palpable, and mounting.

On the stage in front of the Choir were an electronic organ, and a piano. There were a number of seats to the side, which would later be filled by local pastors, and their wives, from the churches who had contributed the most toward bringing Hinn to New Zealand. At the dead centre of the stage was a lectern where Hinn would later stand and preach. It was as if everything was in place, ready to go, the choir primed, and the cameras set, and the only thing missing was the person of

Benny Hinn. Two large screens above the stage broadcast the logo of the Christian Broadcasting Network: a dove flying over (and eclipsing) the globe. On two enormous cranes, television cameras loomed over the audience. These would later provide a live feed to the screens above the stage. They were also a constant visible reminder that this service was being recorded, and would later be aired elsewhere. I will come back to analyse the act of televising later, but in the mean time it is impossible to describe the set-up of this space without alluding to these enormous machines, which swept in close to capture every emotion of the audience, then panned back to show wide-angle images of the joyous, celebrating crowd, beautifully lit in bright, rainbow, stained-glass colours.

As the seats filled, the aura of preparation intensified. The choir appeared ready, and the cameras were in place. The local pastors arrived and sat on the stage, dressed in conservative linen suits, and accompanied by wives wearing pastel outfits. The disabled had been wheeled into place, and everything seemed ready to begin, except for the notable absence at the centre of everything. Benny Hinn had not yet arrived, but otherwise the space had been prepared for him. The physical space was created, but also the audience expectation, shaped by the audience's television spectatorship, and one might assume, other experiences of churchgoing.

Hinn's arrival into the space was carefully orchestrated. Everything, and everyone, was in place, and ready, but the congregation could not be complete without Hinn's presence. The service began without him. Steve Brock told us that he had just heard that Pastor Hinn was on his way, and when the cheering at this announcement died down, he got the crowd up on its feet, and together we sang worship songs for over half an hour, mostly upbeat victory songs. Just at the last triumphal chorus:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art...

Benny Hinn appeared, almost by magic, on stage. At the second evening's service, I tried very hard to witness the entrance of Hinn, but again, despite being on the lookout, I missed it. I figured out later that he had entered through a centre stage corridor, from under the banks of the choir, but in the moment of performance it seemed like he had just appeared, miraculously, and almost as though he had descended from heaven. One moment he wasn't there, and then he was, and in that moment, the congregation became complete. The implications were profound. It was as if by singing – *How Great Thou Art* – we had summoned up Hinn, centre stage, eyes closed as he sang along with the final chorus of the hymn. As we finished singing, it became clear that Hinn was praying, and as the music altered, becoming softer and more reverent, with a hint of mystical bells in the air, we could hear his words, asking for the Blessing of the Lord and hoping that the Holy Spirit would fill the venue that evening.

It seems to me that this act of arrival could not have been more symbolically effective if Hinn had flown himself down from the flies on a bungee cord. It was as though he had appeared at the bequest of the audience, as though the "Great Thou" of whom we were singing was Hinn himself. Hinn was the answer to our prayers. The architecture of the performance was designed like a frame around an absence. The space for Hinn was constructed, and then his arrival filled it, the performance of God assuaging the need of the audience, right at the opening of the service. The first request of the audience had been answered.

Just as Marsden might be seen to have performed the necessity of his own arrival, by visiting the chiefs with gifts, by the creation of the fenced church area, and his ceremonious arrival, Hinn might be seen to have similarly warmed the audience to the prospect of his entrance. This occurred before the actual service, but was also

inherent in the way that the service started, in which an absence was created in a venue filled with people, and then, dramatically, filled.

The relationship between Hinn and the audience altered throughout the service, and it is possible that tracing this alteration illustrates Hinn's transition from a televisual presence to a theatrical one. When Hinn first arrived on stage, he spoke very softly, and if it were not for the amplification (he wore a radio microphone as well as carrying a handheld mike), one would not have been able to hear him. His speech was soft. His gestures were discreet. The experience of viewing the close-ups on the big screens meant that this part of the service was not so very different from watching Hinn at home. Hinn might be seen as performing in such a way to construct intimacy with the television audience, an approach that also worked for the congregation, who were, after all, more used to seeing him that way. Hinn's very quietness was notable, especially when compared to other famous televangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart or John Bakker, who have a tendency to shout and hector, rather than to cajole. Even later, when the pace of the service picked up, Hinn was comparatively quiet, relying on the members of the congregation to provide the dramatic flourishes that the service demanded.

Once Hinn had arrived, it became clear that there was a hierarchical structure to the arrangement of the space. Hinn was at the apex of this structure, the hub of the performance. On the stage with him were his assistants, and the choir, who were set behind and above him. The special onstage seats were filled by high status Christians, the pastors of the sponsor churches and their wives. Immediately, this generated an equation wherein it was possible to interpret that only those who were committed Christians would have the opportunity to share the stage with the pastor. The nearer one sat, the closer one was to the holy. So, the next most important

people, after the pastors, were the mayor and the local celebrities in the front row, and close behind them, both figuratively and literally, sat the chronically ill.

This equation of proximity to Hinn and holiness was important, because throughout the service there would be two opportunities to approach the stage, and one only to step upon it. The altar call invited people to stand and assemble in front of the stage, to say a prayer of conversion. At the end of the service, those who had been healed were invited to come forward, and some of those were invited to testify on the stage, and to talk directly and be interviewed by Hinn himself. This spatial equation created a set of meanings that the words of the service did not necessarily support: to be on stage was to be closer to God. To be famous and wealthy was to be closer to God. To be like Benny Hinn was to be like God, and to win Hinn's approval was to please God. Hinn glorified God, but the reverse, one might argue, was also true.

Hinn, while very much the focus of the service, was not the only performer. The service required the congregation to be performers, both as a crowd, but also in the case of specific individuals, who were drawn out from the crowd and brought onto stage. Throughout the service, Hinn made a symbolic substitution that was quite simple but nonetheless enormously effective. The climax of the service was when Hinn ostensibly used the power of the Lord to cure illness: to "send out the demons of illness" from the bodies of the ill. In doing so, good health became a signifier of holiness, just as illness became equated as a sign of the Devil. In so doing, Hinn made visible what previously was unseen, and enacted the spiritual battle within human souls on the bodies that could be seen. The intangible was displayed.

The first direct instance of this was the altar call, which might be identified as the first dramatic episode that emerged from the chorus of songs. After a long stretch of singing, Hinn made the audience shut their eyes, and prayed a long prayer, that

invited anybody who wished to surrender their soul to Christ to come forward in front of the stage. As we opened our eyes once again, the aisles began to fill with people, coming forward to Jesus, through his current representative, Benny Hinn. In this way, Hinn was signalled as the purveyor of salvation, again, God on earth, able to offer forgiveness and grant salvation. The rest of the audience, who remained in their seats, were in this process also redefined, not as unholy, as might be expected, but as those who had already made the commitment, and were at this moment praying for the souls of the new Christians. The audience was in this way characterised as fully Christian: the possibility that there were those in the room who were not believers was completely disregarded. Everyone was a Christian, or about to become one, and the means to this end was the simple act of speaking a prayer to God. In this sense, appearance was everything, and attendance was everything. This was the performance of a church service, and as long as the congregation went along with the explicitly stated rules of behaviour, the performance was complete.

Hinn said a prayer over the gathered masses that filled the aisles; they repeated it; they were subsequently converted. This reinforced Hinn's position as the purveyor of the holy. This allowed Hinn to package this experience for the global television audience, and secondly, it manufactured a situation where he was the dispenser of Grace. Hinn not only stood as mediator and director of the audience performance for the wider world, he stood in some ways as mediator between the individuals and God. His control over the performance in this instance was absolute. This was not the establishment of a direct relationship with God for the converts, but a public performance of repentance and conversion. For the purposes of the service (for those watching both within the auditorium and at home) the inner state of an individual's soul was absolutely irrelevant. This was a ritual performance, enacted in public.

It is probably not a coincidence that after this general conversion, Hinn moved from the direction of a mass spectacle to an individual drama. The following episode shows how Hinn performed for two audiences, and mediated the reality of the service in order to produce his own desired effects and meanings. Hushing the crowd, he spoke into his microphone, looking down at the gathered mass of new converts below the stage. Using the microphone, Hinn could be seen to be in control not only of his own words, but in control of the words of others, by means of wielding the microphone which amplified their words to the rest of the congregation.

“Young man, I see you there crying,” Hinn said softly, pointing. There was an intense illusion of intimacy, as if Hinn was speaking to the young man alone, but the microphone and the audio system amplified his voice so that every whisper reached the ears of those at the very back of the auditorium.

“You’ve had a rough life, haven’t you?” Hinn asked, and invited the young man up onto the stage. He turned to the audience, telling us, “He’s got no shoes.” Centre-stage, Hinn put his upstage arm around the young man’s shoulder and told the audience “This is the kind of folks (sic) Jesus died for!” The audience applauded, and the sound of bells was heard over the sound system. The newcomer was a young man in his twenties, clad in a rugby shirt and torn stonewash jeans. He was tall, muscular, and tattooed, barefoot and crying. By selecting this young man out of the crowd, Hinn put a face to the conversions that had just occurred en masse. The young man (Jason, as we later discovered) symbolised all the people whose lives could be interpreted as having been “rough”, in one way or another, before Hinn’s miraculous intervention. Hinn interviewed Jason, asking his name, and his age (twenty-six). Throughout the interview, Hinn held the microphone to Jason’s mouth, so that we could hear his responses. However, this allowed Hinn to monitor and control every word that was said. When Hinn asked, in a soft, sympathetic tone, “Why don’t you have any shoes,”

he moved the microphone to his own mouth, so that Jason's response (which the video of the performance seems to suggest is "I didn't feel like wearing any") was edited out. The audience was left to infer Jason's response from Hinn's somewhat mournful demeanour. The illusion was of a quiet, private conversation, but it was constantly monitored and censored by Hinn. With a grave, concerned face, Hinn asked what Jason did for a living, if he had family, and where they lived. The answers to these questions remained a mystery, but the implication was that Jason's life was very hard, and that he was poor, unemployed and alone in the world. Jason became a performer in a script of Hinn's devising. This demonstrates how Hinn uses words in a performative way, so that the meaning is transmitted not only in the literal understanding of what is said, but in the performative qualities with which the words are endowed. What Jason says is not important: how Hinn responds, modifying and implying meaning through his response, is how meaning is created in this instance.

The erasing of Jason's specific responses also had the effect of making him more generic. If we did not know the details of his life, it made it all the easier for the congregation (both the live and television versions) to identify with his plight. Jason became a cipher, in that he came to represent anyone who was tired, sad, lonely, or poor, and whose life might be changed by becoming a Christian. He literally became "the kind of folks" Christ died for, and so, by association, did we. It was important that Jason was local, because, picked out of the crowd, he could then come to represent any one of us. It was also important that he did not remain too locally specific, however, because in that way, he could also come to represent anyone, anywhere in the world, who might be watching. Through this act of sleight of hand, Hinn made Jason a representative of both the local and the global. He could only achieve this status through jettisoning Jason's individual circumstances. It may be that this is also a function of becoming Christian, or at least, performing that

particular transformation. After conversion as a Christian, Christianity could be seen to become one's foremost identity.

Hinn spoke words of comfort, ending with, "When you prayed this prayer tonight, you did not hear trumpets and you did not see the angels. It doesn't happen that way. You prayed a prayer in faith, and starting tonight, things will begin changing for you." Hinn turned suddenly away from Jason. "The Lord has just spoken to me to do something here." As if suddenly impelled to action, he strode across the stage to where the preachers were sitting. "Preachers – give me some money!" he commanded. The audience broke into laughter and applause as the preachers, without hesitation, got out their wallets and started thrusting green twenty-dollar and blue ten-dollar bills into Hinn's hands. Brock helped collect it, and the two men started trying to count it, initiating an almost Marx-Brothers-esque comic routine. Someone from the crowd tossed a wallet onto the stage, and Hinn did a classic comic double-take. "Someone has thrown his wallet onto the stage," he commented, and picked it up. He handed it to Brock, who took all the cash out of it, as Hinn turned his attention back to Jason.

"Hey, young man, come here," Hinn said. "You know the Lord loves you very much. He wants you to start going to church – will you do that?" As Jason nodded, Hinn collected the rest of the money off Brock, and turned to Jason. "You've got about six hundred dollars, right here. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to go and fix yourself all up, buy some new clothes, new shoes, get yourself all fixed up. Take that little earring out. Will you do that?" Jason muttered something, quietly. Hinn spoke into the microphone. "He said, 'I just want happiness'. Well, God wants to give you more than that." Hinn folded the money and tapped Jason on the chest with it, then handed him the huge wad of bills. "This is a tangible sign that God doesn't only care for you spiritually, he cares for you physically. Because now you're

his child, you are to look like his child. Go buy yourself some clothes, and come back here tomorrow, all dressed-up, get yourself cleaned up, take that little earring out – I want to see you here.” Hinn turned back to the audience and raised his hands. “Let’s give the Lord a Mighty Hand of Praise!” he called.

This masterfully choreographed sequence had a number of immediate effects. Within it, the young man, Jason, became a signifier of the power of God’s mercy. The complexities of his situation were irrelevant compared to what he was made to symbolise. He represented not only one person whose life was changed, but everyone. His raggedy appearance before his transformation represented the needy of the world, those with rough lives of poverty, unemployment, crime. His smart, new appearance the following day, in bright, clean, pressed clothes, came to represent the life that stands ahead of those converted.

It was a physical transformation, and Jason's eventual alteration in physical appearance implied his spiritual change. Just as, we were told, he had been cleansed within via the Holy Spirit, Jason was symbolically cleansed on the outside, a transformation that the audience could behold. The next night, Jason wore glowing white trainers, black pants, and a white sweat shirt that read “Truth 1 Way”. He was immaculately groomed and had removed his earring. His appearance was no longer exceptional. He looked like any one of the young men attending the service. When Hinn asked Jason up on the stage again, Hinn placed an arm around his shoulder in a gesture of fatherly affection and indulgence. Jason had undergone a change, and in so doing, he had incorporated into the group, as represented by this small physical gesture from Hinn.

The symbolism was clear: God cares for you spiritually, and also physically. The change undergone by all the converted people was physically enacted on the body of the young man. It was perhaps evident however, that God’s love came with a

caveat. While helping Jason, Hinn also chided him, suggesting that now he was a Christian, that there was an appropriate way to act and dress, that hitherto Jason had not achieved. The comment about Jason's earring, while amusing, was also very much what a father would say to a rebellious teenager. If God is our Father (who art in heaven) then Hinn is very clearly presenting himself as our Father here on earth. In so doing, Hinn dictated a mode of being in the world that properly represented being Christian. Clearly, one's presentation of self must be appropriate. The external represents the internal.

Hinn also provided a model of Christian generosity. Not only did Jason provide an example to the assembled watchers, but so too did the preachers, in a demonstration of appropriate Christian giving. When Hinn asked the preachers on stage – the highest status Christians in the room, after Hinn himself – for money, they did not question him. They did not hesitate, but simply pulled out their wallets and emptied them into his hands. They were generous, and perhaps more importantly, they were obedient. It was no coincidence that the next significant episode of action within the service was the offering, when buckets were passed around the congregation for donations to aid Hinn's mission around the world. This was our chance to replicate the model of generosity and obedience that had been staged in front of us, but also to make a difference in the lives of others, as Jason's life had just been changed in front of us.

3. Reception

Throughout the service, a community was created as the congregation ceased merely observing, but became participants in the ritual that took place. Initially, the audience replicated the televised actions of others, but as the service progressed, they

were encouraged to take further actions as a sign of more complete surrender of individual resistances to the group. Firstly, there was the physical mode of worship, which in its most basic form involved people standing, hands raised to the ceiling, eyes closed and singing along. At the altar call, one could offer oneself up, by coming forward to pray for conversion. The offering invited participants to show their partnership through giving money. Through this process a picture emerged of a group of devout, generous, caring and obedient worshippers, led through this series of episodes by Hinn, who was a fatherly persona in the centre of the service, always compassionate, steadfast, and good-humoured.

The audience response to Benny Hinn at his Miracle Crusade demonstrates the genesis of a crowd, which Gustave Le Bon defines as a group of individuals who are transformed through their sheer proximity to a state of greater suggestibility, and a greater tendency toward collective actions (1947). Individuals within such a group automatically have a greater potential to be influenced by others, or have beliefs and behaviours imposed upon them. This idea, that proximity promotes suggestibility, perhaps goes a small way to explaining how the audience of Benny Hinn's Crusade is affected. Believing oneself hidden amongst a group of people, one has a certain sense of freedom from repercussions. Le Bon argues that this feeling of anonymity, tied to the effect of the sheer proximity of so many others, may ultimately change the behaviour of the individuals until they act together without conscious decision.

The Crusade was, for audiences, two discrete experiences of community. Attending the Crusade was akin to stepping inside one's own television set. Philip Auslander critiques the traditional separation of "live" and "mediatized" performances, and the notion that these two concepts are mutually exclusive, and particularly challenges "whether there really are clear-cut ontological distinctions between the live and the mediatized" (1999 7). Auslander does not study evangelistic

performance, but nonetheless, his comments are interesting in regard to the Crusade. What is essential for Le Bon's conception of the crowd and seemingly absent from Auslander's is the notion that a state of mind might be contagious between individuals. I would argue that it is the combination of these experiences, and the transition from the experience of the mediated television audience to the experience of the live congregation that has a definite impact on the congregation at the Miracle Crusade.

The experience of a television audience is individuated. Individuals, or at most, family units, watch Hinn's services in the privacy of their own living rooms, separated from the event by time and distance. What they see and experience is already intensely mediated, the footage selected, edited together, and broadcast at the leisure of the television company. What becomes evident in attending the Crusade live is that even though the purpose of the Crusade may be to produce a televisual event, it is designed so that the audience of passive television viewers becomes activated into a congregation when attending the Crusade, through a series of performative means.

Le Bon's thesis is dependent upon the idea that the individual becomes free to take action only as a member of a crowd, because as one face among many, there is the assurance that one cannot be identified. Individuals within groups therefore believe that they cannot be held responsible for any actions taken on their part. It should be noted that Le Bon's observations of crowd behaviour are influenced by his own distaste at the collective actions of mobs following strikes in France between 1869 and 1871, when he witnessed violence and a real breakdown of social order. While Le Bon sees some positive possibilities for crowds, he remains overwhelmingly distrustful of their potential for violence, and suspicious of the motives of their leaders. The impact of a crowd on the individual is a reduced self-

consciousness, caused by “the crowd’s *anonymity*, the resulting belief of individual *unaccountability* for behaviour within the crowd, and a cumulative sense of *invincibility* on behalf of the crowd” (McPhail 3). In this way people in a crowd are empowered to act in ways from which they would otherwise be socially constrained. If we accept that this perhaps occurs in the context of the Benny Hinn congregation, it would suggest that the sheer volume of people in proximity to one another directly impacts upon the self-consciousness of the crowd, allowing individuals to more readily give themselves over to the performance of worship. Put simply, being there makes all the difference.

There are certainly a number of resonances with Le Bon’s description of crowd behaviour in observations of the Miracle Crusade. The first is the presence of the charismatic leader:

The arousing of faith – whether religious, political or social, whether faith in a work, in a person, or an idea – has always been the function of the great leaders of crowds, and it is on their account that their influence is always very great (119).

Hinn already had an influence on the audience members as the host of a popular television show. The live service used a number of devices to recreate the sense of personal intimacy that watching television generates. When Hinn appeared, the screens above the stage were filled with close-up images of his face, recreating the sensation of watching Hinn on television. In this moment, the audience were both television viewers and live viewers, reconciling two experiences together. There was a startling illusion of intimacy. In extreme close-up, we could see every tiny flicker of expression on Hinn’s face. While we might actually be standing hundreds of metres away, Hinn seemed close to us. We became a crowd, a homogeneous group acting in concert, and also a congregation, sharing actions and working together towards a ritual outcome.

The experience of television viewing may be seen as re-Catholicising Protestant belief through the use of the image. Watching television, a person may be isolated and alone to consider the state of one's individual soul, but the focus of that worship is the image of Benny Hinn. God is invisible: as the Evangelist John writes, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. Words can also not be seen. Television, which as a medium relies on images, de-prioritises the Word in favour of the spectacular picture. Traditionally, Protestantism deplored images: the early Protestants breaking icons and building churches that were bare rooms with only facility for prayer. In shaping an evangelist performance that is designed for television, Benny Hinn adapts the service so as to build spectacle.

By the time that the attendees reach the Miracle Crusade, they have an expectation as to their own behaviour, but they also know what to expect from the Crusade itself. The Word is unimportant, or rather, its meaning is unimportant: the image overrules the Word. The congregation go from a group of individuals to a community, and many of the actions of the service could be interpreted as attempting to enable this process. The attendees have clear rules of behaviour, learned from the television, and what is more, standards of achievement to reproduce. They know what a congregation looks like and acts like, and replicate this behaviour.

Gustave Le Bon isolates several techniques of crowd control, all of which are visible within this service.

When... it is proposed to imbue the mind of a crowd with ideas and beliefs – with modern social theories, for instance – the leaders have recourse to different expedients. The principal of them are three in number and are clearly defined – affirmation, repetition, and contagion (124).

The first of these three principal elements, affirmation, refers to a simple statement of belief. In this service, affirmation and repetition were achieved primarily through the means of music. While there were some performances by individuals, mostly the

songs were sung by the congregation, led by the example of the choir. These songs affirm belief and are sung over and over. The lyrics are simple statements of belief, dovetailing neatly into Le Bon's notion that:

affirmation pure and simple, kept free of all reasoning and proof, is one of the surest means of making an idea enter the minds of crowds (124).

Le Bon suggests that almost any assertion, if repeated enough times, over a long enough period, will come to be believed. While he was referring possibly to political sentiments, or opinions about individuals, this goes a long way to explaining the power of worship songs. They repeat. Melodies develop in straightforward progressions in major keys, encompassing a number of upward modulations into higher (and hence more uplifting) keys throughout the duration of the repetitions. They are rhythmical, and over time, even hypnotic. Even if one doesn't know the tunes to begin with, they are very easy to pick up, and the number of repetitions is so great that by the end everybody in the audience knows the song well enough to sing along.

The act of learning the songs gives the crowd a shared experience and common base of knowledge, and singing them creates a coherent chorus out of a disparate group of people from a number of different backgrounds. From being individuated, isolated viewers, the group had already gained a feeling of group. The beat of the song also gave a mutual rhythm to the movement of the audience, who tended to sway along to the beat. The first songs were sung at a tempo of approximately sixty beats per minute, the approximate rate of a human heart. Throughout the service this beat was accelerated and slowed down, initiating a physical response through a series of peaks and troughs. In this way, the audience response was controlled. The music was a constant presence throughout the service, with a soundtrack of harp music and synthesized bells underlying even the spoken episodes.

The experience of singing together in this way might also be seen to begin the process of contagion, as the feeling of excitement begins to spread between people. The structure of the performance created three musical peaks. The first was before the altar call, the second before the collection and the third after the healing, when those who believed themselves healed were invited forward to testify. Both the melodies and the repetitious lyrics were designed to make the audience act together in unison. Beliefs were affirmed, and a unified response was created to the stimulus provided by the service. Hinn led many of the songs, so the audience literally repeated his words, like a catechism. Not only were we affirming belief, we affirmed beliefs that Hinn delivered to us, and, perhaps, our belief in Hinn.

The notion that the repetition of affirmations under the charismatic leadership of Hinn might be seen as having led to contagion and a state of “crowd mind” is complicated in the context of the Miracle Crusade by the effect of the presence of the cameras. It is questionable whether a sense of anonymity was possible within the Crusade, simply because the presence of the enormous crane-mounted cameras created an extraordinary field of surveillance. These cameras focused on the crowd as a whole, but also zoomed in to capture individual faces. The enormous live-feed screens above the stage relayed much of this footage back to the audience. In some ways, the cameras enforced the codes of behaviour within the service. The awareness of the camera isolated individuals, and brought them to the view of the crowd, and by implication, the watching eyes of the world television audience. Those who had seen the television programme knew the signifiers of holiness, because these visual signs had been broadcast again and again. There was a certain way of standing, a certain way of raising one’s hands, palms upward, to the sky, and a way of singing, eyes closed, with as much sincerity as one could muster. It was easily replicable, because it was a set of physical gestures, rather than a state of mind. As with the Maori at

Marsden's First Service, who stood, sat, and kneeled when indicated to do so, there might be seen as having been some pressure at the Crusade to act like everyone else. The presence of the cameras ensured that the individuals would act appropriately, no matter what they might be thinking or feeling.

Anyone who has been subject to being filmed becomes aware of enormous self-consciousness. A good example of this is in a family gathering, when someone pulls out a video camera, fundamentally altering the interaction as all the relatives either run and hide, or pretend as if they have no idea Uncle Edgar is a few feet away with his Handy-cam pointed right at them. As an actor, it is always challenging to maintain focus and not give over to self-consciousness on occasions when cameras are used to record theatrical performances, especially when the cameraman is on the move and one doesn't know quite where he will pop up next. In the context of the Crusade, the presence of the camera created a sensation that the audience was constantly being watched. This provided a stimulus to act in the manner that had been learned by the congregation through their experiences of watching other Crusades on television. There were possibly two primary motivations for this: the desire not to stand out as extraordinary or strange, or the hope to be selected by the cameraman for a close-up as an example of excellent conduct. I would argue that most people probably find one, or a strange combination of both, to be an ample motivation to act in concert with the others around them.

The appropriate modes of behaviour had been modelled, and were imitated by the live audience for a new audience posed by the cameras. Michel Foucault writes:

Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used (205).

Foucault refers to Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, an ideal of a prison wherein individuals were isolated and subject to a consistent surveillance from a central

viewing tower. The function fulfilled by the cameras at the Crusade was arguably similar. The members of the audience did not know for sure if they were being filmed or observed in any moment, but even so they were confined to a range of appropriate actions, just in case they are being captured on film. The cameras made the audience into performers, because they introduced a consciousness of being watched, both by the global television audience, and the rest of the crowd who were present at the Crusade. The screens which replayed the service instantly back to us were not mirrors, and the collage of images that were displayed upon them were captured, edited and relayed, a process involving a conscious decision on the part of the television crew. We were showed back to ourselves in the best possible light, at our most enthusiastic, most generous, and most devout.

Despite the fact that only a small fraction of the audience response could ever be so captured, the presence of the cameras introduced self-awareness and self-monitoring. Perhaps there may be no one at home in the central core of the Panopticon, but the prisoners act as if there is because they are never sure:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself, he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles... (Foucault 202).

In this case, the congregants were performing according to the established rules of the event, and monitoring their own performances. They were simultaneously audience and congregation, watchers and participants. This might be seen to complicate the application of Le Bon (who, it should be pointed out, was writing well before the advent of mass media coverage of riots and mob events, and before the impact of surveillance could be measured).

It is my contention that the audience may not have lost their individual self-consciousness enough to become a crowd in the Le Bon sense, but that it was the tension between individual and crowd which caused the congregation to become like

actors, pretending to be a crowd: actively choosing to replicate the behaviour of other audiences that they have seen before.

Denis Diderot argues in *The Paradox of Acting* that:

It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were, a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the occasion may have full sway, while the actor is on the alert for every detail of his method (53).

Diderot's "paradox" is that the actor needs to be open to the possibility of being moved by his emotions, but at the same time must be attentive to the structure of the performance. Therefore, the emotions should never be so overwhelming that the actor is swept away and forgets his audience, and the role he is required to fulfil. The actor can never fully believe that his situation is anything other than inherently artificial. Ultimately, Diderot concludes that only in the absence of emotion can a performance be controlled enough to be consistently repeated, night after night. From this point of view, one might regard Benny Hinn as necessarily without emotion: if he were to rely on inspiration to strike, sometimes the Crusade would work, and sometimes it would fall terribly flat. As far as I am aware (although obviously Hinn is in control of the distribution of his own image) this is never the case: the Spirit of the Lord always comes, the crowd is always cohesive, and the healing always seems to occur. Hinn is the director, as well as the primary actor in the Crusade, and he seems very much in control both of himself, of the material, and of his congregation.

In the Crusade, the emotions of the audience were aroused, but the appropriate expression of these emotions was confined to a clearly defined range. Arguably the cameras make the audience into performers, because they introduce this double consciousness, and the audience is held between being moved (as a crowd) and being shaped (by the implied viewer). This not only controlled the actions of the audience, but it altered their interaction with each other. Throughout, the congregation was given additional instruction from Benny Hinn, who looked at the congregation and

told us what he saw, who told us how to sit and stand, whether to raise our hands or lower them, and whether to close or open our eyes.

The build-up to the final part of this performance was long, hypnotic and (for me, at least) exhausting. It was very quiet, and during this time the audience response was rigidly directed. While the congregation sang repetitions of the word “Hallelujah,” the electronic organ played carillons of tinkly bell music. Hinn monitored the crowd, preventing excess excitement with “just a whisper, if you please,” or requesting at another time, “Every eye closed.” The choruses grew progressively slower and quieter, soothing the audience into a state of relaxation.

It is clear that a lot of the power of Hinn’s words was in their delivery. Hinn whispered, cajoled, chattered and shouted. He demanded a response from the congregants: one that was not always achieved. However, when his words fell flat (for example, in revealing the Christian ministry to Cuba, about which the congregation was politely impressed rather than surprised and overjoyed as Hinn seemed to think the situation warranted, or when a woman touched on the head failed to fall to the ground) Hinn simply acted as if everything had gone completely to plan. It seems that in the service, the actual belief, and actual souls of the congregation, were more-or-less irrelevant, and the actual thoughts and response of the audience less important than their continued presentation of ecstatic, external, belief. As long as I stood with my arms outstretched it really didn’t matter if I believed or not.

Those who did believe themselves healed were invited up to the stage, and great swathes of people began to assemble at the stairs to the stage, where each one was met by one of Hinn’s assistants, and quietly interviewed. The rest of the audience were led through some upbeat hymns, including “In the name of Jesus, We have a victory!” A short time later, the healed were brought out, one by one, onto the stage to testify to their experience. Many were clearly emotionally moved, many

walked with some difficulty. Some were crying. From either side of the stage, Hinn's helpers would introduce the individual, and paraphrase his or her testimony. The individual would then walk over to Hinn, who would interview each in front of the audience, much as he had with Jason earlier.

It was almost impossible not to be moved by the suffering of the people and by that of many of those who testify themselves healed during the Crusade. However, this episode can be seen to be a set piece that was constructed for the audience as much as any other part of the service. The journeys of the healed across the stage to Hinn were carefully controlled by the helpers at the side of the stage. Only those who had been interviewed and found acceptable were channelled up onto the stage and allowed to speak with Hinn. Only these chosen people became the stars in this, the penultimate action of the service.

This spectacle of healing worked symbolically on a number of levels. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, spontaneous healing from disease rates as a miracle, direct from the New Testament, just as Christ worked. The people paraded up on the stage and testifying to the warmth of the Lord's spirit and their newfound freedom from pain were "taking up their beds and walking," as described in the Book of Matthew. Benny Hinn's role in achieving this made him seem holy on a par with Jesus. The advertised miracles had occurred, and this was posed as an achievement of the entire audience, because "only with the belief of every heart" could this have occurred.

The implications may be even subtler. It is possible to interpret this service as the presentation of a grand agonistic battle between good and evil, writ large on the body of the ill. The service created faith by manifesting what cannot be seen. Illness became the sign of evil, and healing the sign of the power of God (and Hinn) to defeat it. Illness, injury and disability were made out to be signs of the presence of the

Devil. When Hinn cast out illness, evil was embodied, and then exiled. In a sense, Hinn might be seen to have performed an exorcism, sending out the evil and cleansing each individual soul. In doing so, he integrated each individual into a community of the saved.

The equation of physical illness with sin or demonic possession is by no means new. In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag notes:

The melodramatics of the disease metaphor in modern political discourse assume a punitive notion: of the disease not as a punishment but as a sign of evil, something to be punished (82).

This idea was taken to an extreme extent in the Miracle Crusade; the evil was not punished, but annihilated, or, to use Hinn's word, rebuked. The signs of illness were signs of the Devil. As wheelchairs were lined up along the front of the stage, discarded by those who no longer needed them, the Devil could be seen to be cast out, and God became visible in the pure healed bodies of the previously infirm. It was a victory of faith over sin, and importantly, of the community over the individual. It was stressed over and over throughout this performance that only with the combined belief of the whole audience would the necessary transformation take place. And so, it followed (although this remained unspoken) that if the miracle should not occur, the whole audience would be to blame. When the miracles apparently manifested themselves, it worked as proof that the whole audience had come together in mutual belief because *only* with individual and corporal faith of the highest order could such miracles occur.

Hinn had an inter-denominational message, but his charismatic fundamentalism was intrinsic in this relationship between spirit and body. In the Catholic faith, healing from illness may be regarded as miraculous, but likewise, physical disability or injury is often a sign of holiness, rather than its counterpart. Stigmata and physical suffering was often a signifier of the most pious saints. For

example, Saint Francis of Assisi is believed to have been troubled with eye disease, and Saint Cecilia with stigmata. This is aside from all those who died horribly as a matter of faith, for example Saint Peter (crucified upside down) or Saint Sebastian (shot through with arrows, Sebastian was rescued and survived to be beaten to death on an entirely different occasion: he is not the patron saint of endurance athletes for nothing). It is perhaps a sign of Hinn's more Protestant world-view that within the Crusade it was the miraculous cure of such ailments that signifies God's presence, with illness itself signifying exactly the reverse. In this service, the saints were those who walk away apparently whole, with illness vanquished, and their chequebooks open.

It is possible to regard the healing process as a final step in the bringing-together of a congregation. Just as illness may be sent to represent sinfulness, it also might be seen to represent the individuality of the congregants. Sontag considers how the states of health and illness have been socially categorised through history, and quotes a rather provocative fragment from Novalis:

The ideal of perfect health [...] is only scientifically interesting'; what is really interesting is sickness 'which belongs to individualising' (31).

The Crusade might be interpreted as one long process by which the audience members were induced to act alike, to forgo their individual beliefs and circumstances, and come together as a whole congregation. This began with the imitation of audience actions, was developed in the altar call, which invited individuals to commit to Jesus and hence the implied belief system of the group, through the episode where Jason was converted, both spiritually and by way of a makeover of his appearance, and finally in this act of healing. The audience are also asked to forsake their local identification for membership of a global community. The curing of illness is just another way of making everyone alike.

Another way to consider this possibility arises from a reading of Elizabeth

Grosz:

Every body is marked by the history and specificity of its existence. It is possible to construct a biography, a history of the body, for each individual and social body. This history would include not only all the contingencies that befall a body, impinging on it from the outside - a history of the accidents, illnesses, misadventures that mark the body and its functioning (142).

If one considers the body as such a site, or locus, of identity, then the act of healing in fact erases the history of the body that Grosz suggests illness marks. Jason was made-over in the earlier part of the service, redressed and refigured to a more conformist state of dress, and so too were the bodies of the sick made to conform to another ideal, that of health. This is not to argue that those healed may not have believed themselves better off, but that what differentiates them as individuals was symbolically wiped away in the process. This might be seen as the ultimate step in creating a community, by wiping clean the bodies of the audience.

It can be seen that the episodes of the service were increasingly embodied by the audience. First a prayer was said, and a commitment to Jesus (although, even this requires a journey towards the stage), and then the offering of money required physical proof of commitment, and then finally, the bodies offered up for healing showed Hinn's global message written on the local people.

The concluding minutes of the Miracle Crusade are by far the hardest part to write about with any sense of perspective or objectivity. Even after analysing the service, it is difficult to say precisely what it is that made the crowd of Christchurch people fall over, en masse. I suppose I must admit the possibility that the Spirit of God was in the room, but I do not believe this to be true, so I must consider the other options. After a flurry of healings, and "slayings in the Spirit," where Hinn caused the recently healed to fall to the ground and shake, Hinn turned his attention to the audience, who had been standing throughout, their arms raised. He gazed out over a

section of the crowd. He gave a gentle push of his hand, and some more people fell over. The linking of hands literally joined the audience together. It meant that one person alone could not fall, without taking the group with him or her.

The tempo accelerated, with the incidental music swelling to match. Hinn seemed almost distracted, and he urgently commanded that the preachers come forward. They did, and he touched them (some quite roughly) on the head or shoulders, and they fell to the floor. Hinn's helpers were close behind, picking them up and escorting them off-stage. The crowd surged forward, and the gap between the front seats and the stage was filled with people holding out their hands. It was reminiscent of a rock concert, with the audience longing to touch the performer. Hinn finally began to shout at the audience. He walks along the front of the stage, gesturing at the crowd in front of him. "Release!" he shouted. "Release! Release! Release! Release!" People fell over, almost hysterical. The word was an action, a tool to "release" the crowd from their near-hypnotic state.

As I have shown, the Miracle Crusade was constantly mediated, because it was a performance being prepared constantly for an invisible audience. Each action on stage was carefully situated for the camera; Hinn edited and censored as he went, as in his interview with Jason. He was also in control of the crowd. While some of the effect of contagion can be contributed to the crowd's proximity, it is clear in this example that the behaviour of the crowd was monitored, and even controlled, constantly by Hinn. The presence of the cameras added to this effect, but Hinn even so might be seen to have commanded and wheedled responses from the audience, whether that was simply when to sit and stand, or when to close their eyes, when to sing, when to come forward and finally, when to fall down. The Miracle Crusade constantly referred back to the experience of being a television spectator. There was a

sense of a bar of achievement for the audience: a standard to be imitated, a way of being in the world that must be adhered to in order to remain part of the community.

This was clear in the example of the choir. Replaying the video of the service, it is clear that the choir were performing an imitation of a Southern Gospel Choir. At the beginning of the service, Jim Cernero urged them to be more enthusiastic – the close-ups on the video suggest nothing more than a group of Christchurch choir ladies trying to get into the groove, while still anxious about getting the tune right and keeping up with the words. The extent to which this may or may not be adequately achieved was disguised by the fact that the local choir was amplified with the sound of a recorded – American – choir. They were singing with American voices. It is impossible for a panoptic schema to operate if there is not a set of rules by which those observed are governed. The prisoners in the Panopticon need to know what actions must be fulfilled – and very clearly, at the Miracle Crusade, we did.

The Miracle Crusade presents a performance of ritual ecstasy, wherein the congregations all around the world can be seen to react similarly to the presence of the Word of God. No matter who we are, or who we were, the outcome of Hinn's service is the same, with people being converted, being healed, falling in the aisles. Victor Turner describes "communitas" as the potential outcome of a ritual action, with a social group brought together through the ritual process to a state of community and flow. One might see the falling en masse as an exhibition of this state of like-mindedness brought on by common action. But Turner also differentiates between the type of communitas that emerges spontaneously, and that which is required by an established set of ritual actions. One, he proposes, holds the possibility of liberation, the other, governed by rules, is socially conservative. In the Miracle Crusade, one could see a performance of communitas, wherein the spontaneous communitas of religious ecstasy is demanded, and legislated. The congregation must

act as if they are ecstatic, even if they are not. Turner does not imply, and I do not mean to suggest, that a group of actors in a theatrical performance may not experience *communitas*, a likeminded sense of connection when working towards a common goal. Turner says of *communitas* that

it cannot be legislated for or normalized, since it is the *exception*, not the *law*, the *miracle*, not the *regularity*, primordial freedom, not *anangke*, the causal chain of necessity” (1979 49).

The Miracle Crusade formalizes the conditions for the working of miracles: in this context they are not something that are chanced upon, but that are demanded, that the audience “come expecting.” The Crusade demanded certain behaviours, in return, from its participants. The result is a quite oppressive set of hidden rules that, while politely suggested rather than aggressively demanded, are in force at the Crusade.

There are some questions that it is impossible to answer. The Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade, as a performance, generated an audience response that culminated in people testifying to their belief that they have been healed. This is a fundamental climax to the performance, and arguably, the inevitable conclusion to the event: it is the ultimate embodiment of faith on behalf of the new congregants. Whether this is efficacious in an ongoing way is outside of the realm of this research – importantly, it is also outside the scope of the Crusade. There is no testimony from those who were healed last week or last year. Only what happens in the moment of this particular experience is relevant. People speak their belief to others: it is not enough that they are healed, but that they testify *publicly* to that fact.

The final part of this service, the final outcome of the ritual of community that is played out for the watching cameras, may be only the illusion of *communitas*, an effect reminiscent of Herbert Blau’s critique of the mass media in *The Audience*: “outwardly producing more of the social but inwardly neutralizing whatever it is that makes the social cohere” (8). While Blau is addressing the mediatization of

theatricality, his remarks might just as well be addressed to the Miracle Crusade, which creates a replica of *communitas*, a performance of the structure of a social act, but in fact actively prevents any authentic meeting between people in this space.

Evangelistic performances in New Zealand have a long history, from as far back as Marsden, of prioritising colonial or global cultures over the local, and in fact it begins to seem that this may be essential to the lure of the evangelistic event. The grass must always be greener on the evangelist's side of the fence, whether he offers arms and trading, or healing from illness. This is not to say that local Christian culture is outstandingly original, or even necessarily worth preserving, or even perhaps at risk from events like Benny Hinn. What is however visible through the Benny Hinn Crusade is that only through jettisoning one's cultural baggage, and by assimilating the model of Christian behaviours presented by Hinn, can the audience as a group become a congregation, and reach towards the miracles offered. This service literally demonises individuality, and, maybe even worse, provides as an alternative a mere shadow of community, an illusion that is caught by the cameras and then, perhaps, fizzles out.

Grace, as such, is perhaps also something of a miracle that never fully eventuates: evangelistic Christianity is an ongoing process, which must be committed to, again and again. The elusive *communitas* of the evangelistic event remains unfulfilled, and so people must return again and again, or at the very least, tune into their television sets every morning, expecting to receive their Miracle. Perhaps the effect of evangelism lies therefore not in the transmission of faith, but in the transmission of a performance practice: in the repetition of this set of actions, a group is generated that performs *communitas* and is dedicated to representing itself as part of an illusory and unreachable global community.

Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade as an experience is much like being an actor, in that one can enact something that has been choreographed and planned down to the smallest detail, and that even so, (at least ideally) it can be new each time. It does not seem to matter if, later, you will believe what you said. Through the long repetitions of hymns, and the extended sessions of prayer, words became almost meaningless, except as a way of accessing a congregation reaction that was almost hysterical. This was worship that was not about the state of individual souls, but about the state of the congregation as a whole. While it was constantly implied that every person present need be committed to the service for the expected results to occur, this was not necessarily so – or if it was, there was no way of assessing it. God can't be seen: Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade performs the presence of God by showing it on the bodies of the congregation, and in order to bring the congregation to a point where that is possible, the service uses the Word in repetition and in song, in long slow protracted sessions of prayer, as a hypnotic chant. Unlike in Marsden's service, the congregation at Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade understood what was spoken. Nonetheless, it seems that this understanding was almost irrelevant: that the Word did not function simply as a signifier of meaning, but worked in action and performance, communicating perhaps little more in terms of meaning in this state of shared language than it did in Marsden's first service.

CHAPTER THREE:

Brian Tamaki and Destiny Church: The Word spoken back

On Monday the twenty-third of August, 2004, the streets of New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, were disrupted by a public march of protest. This is not noteworthy in itself, because Wellington has been the site of many such marches: in response to the introduction of genetic engineering in New Zealand, or in protest against our possible involvement in the war in Iraq, or to draw public attention to issues arising from legislation contesting Maori ownership of the foreshore and seabed. However, the demonstration on the twenty-third of August drew more media attention than most. Several thousand people marched on Parliament, wearing uniform black t-shirts, each bearing the somewhat ambiguous slogan "Enough is Enough." The "Enough is Enough" march, as it came to be dubbed by the media, was organised by New Zealand's first indigenous televangelist church, Destiny, and by its leader Pastor Brian Tamaki. In this protest performance, Tamaki steps outside the church and brings the Word of God to the public of New Zealand. While sharing a linguistic and cultural context with this potential new audience, Tamaki's words are less important than the striking image presented by his congregation. The march, with its fascist overtones, might be seen to represent the aestheticisation of religious practice, with meaning produced by the choreographed image, rather than the Word.

Tamaki is New Zealand's most prominent evangelist. Rather than bringing his message from afar to spread to the people of a foreign nation, he is local and his message is geared towards local people and reacts to local issues. Destiny Church may be seen as representing a culmination of the process begun by Samuel Marsden and continued through the short history of New Zealand. In 1814, Samuel Marsden first brought the Word of God to the Maori. Since 1998, Brian Tamaki has been

bringing his own version – his own translation, if you will – of the Word to the people of New Zealand. His services bear a resemblance to the Morning Service in structure and apparent aim, but the meanings produced in performance are quite different, responding to the social and cultural circumstances of contemporary New Zealand. Tamaki's services are an interpretation of Marsden's message after nearly two hundred years of New Zealand history: the Maori on the beach turning and speaking the Word back to the culture that colonised and converted them. Perhaps inevitably, the emphases and concerns of Tamaki's services can be seen to have shifted. While, ostensibly, the Word is the same, and the mission is still to celebrate God and convert newcomers to Christianity, the outcome has altered. Tamaki is an indigenous New Zealander, and Destiny is an indigenous church. The church has arisen out of New Zealand culture, and thus may be seen to be responding to the culture directly, taking its place with other extremely influential Maori religious movements such as Ratana and Ringatu. The church has become a permanent fixture in many places around the country, ministering to the social needs of its congregants even as it spreads into more and more centres. If we see the history of evangelism in New Zealand as a kind of progression from Marsden through to the present day, Tamaki represents both a development in this progression, and a response to it. Marsden and Hinn may be seen as ultimately subduing native identities in favour of colonial or global alternatives, visible in the transformation of their audiences into congregations that act alike. Tamaki similarly offers a new sort of identity, but one that may be seen as a kind of bi-cultural fusion between evangelistic Christianity and Maori culture. Furthermore, Destiny's pretensions to political power might be seen as creating a larger national audience. Tamaki, like Marsden many years before him, might be seen as socially evangelistic: seeking to improve the nation through the Word of God, just as Marsden sought to civilise the Maori. Having internalised the Christian message, Tamaki, a

Maori, finally rejects the British culture of the coloniser who introduced it, seeking a return to a kind of idealised warrior masculinity with which to confront a decadent, feminised, colonial culture. The Word, in Tamaki's mouth, means something very different.

In this chapter I will analyse the services given by Pastor Tamaki in Christchurch to celebrate the opening of the new Christchurch branch of Destiny Church, at the time the latest of a number of such services around the country. For the past few years, I had watched with interest the growth and development of Destiny Church in New Zealand. The first Destiny church was started in Auckland in 1998. By 2004, there were twenty churches nationwide, and even one church in Brisbane, Australia. While Destiny does not identify itself directly as a Maori church, it has a high quotient of Maori attendees, and the leader of the church, Brian Tamaki, is not only Maori, but a member of a prominent Maori family known for interests in the New Zealand cultural tourism market, both in Rotorua, and more recently in Christchurch. With its strong emphasis on the dominant role of the male, both within the family and church, and in society at large, and an explicit modelling of a sort of Maori Christian warrior masculinity, the church can be seen to represent a reclamation of identity for urban Maori and for Pakeha: those who lack the traditional ties of Maori identity, that is, blood and soil. The bi-cultural identity of the church is exemplified and embodied in the person of Brian Tamaki, but it is also implicit within the doctrinal emphases in the church and later performances in the public sphere.

Unlike Samuel Marsden and Benny Hinn, whose services developed elsewhere and were transported here, Brian Tamaki was born and raised in New Zealand. Perhaps because of this, there is no need to adapt the message to the local population, or to use the local congregation to perform metaphors of faith and healing. Tamaki's services are still reliant on spectacle, but Tamaki himself is the main feature

of that spectacle, as a model of behaviour for the congregation and, it follows, for the nation as a whole. Tamaki is local, and the transformations that Christianity can bring about are written on his own body. He is the central protagonist and ultimate focus of the service. He speaks in English to a congregation of English-speakers, most of whom share his cultural origins. He provides a translation of the Word of God that speaks directly to the social and cultural context of the congregation. However, ultimately, the image trumps the Word. The words spoken by Tamaki remain of secondary importance in his services: it seems that the performance elements are just as important as when a wider gap exists between the cultural context of evangelist and congregation.

In post-colonial New Zealand, the practice of Christianity forms a greater part of Maori culture than it does of Pakeha identity. After a somewhat shaky start with Marsden, Maori culture has more or less seamlessly absorbed Christianity. But as Maori culture has become more Christian, the mainstream culture of New Zealand has become increasingly secular. As an illustration of this, in my experience it is very unusual for prayers to be said at any secular Pakeha gathering, or official occasion (for example, the opening of Parliament). Yet prayers are integral to most Maori public ceremonies, the most immediately obvious being within the powhiri or hui. The rather unusual situation now exists that, owing to the adoption of the powhiri by mainstream Pakeha culture as a means of expressing its bi-culturalness, it has become politically correct to ask for God's blessing on any proceedings, as long as you are speaking in Maori. Saying grace has fallen out of fashion in many (perhaps most) New Zealand homes but is *de rigueur* on a Marae (Tauroa 102). For many non-Christian Pakeha New Zealanders, public prayer will *only* occur in a Maori cultural context. Maori culture has become Christian as Pakeha culture has become less so, and many New Zealanders only experience Christianity directly through the Maori

cultural forms that the mainstream culture has adopted. Interestingly, it could be argued that public prayer is only acceptable when the Word can't be properly understood. The language for public prayer in New Zealand is te reo Maori: which the majority of the public (both Pakeha and Maori) does not understand. This is because people see it as a performance, and perhaps regard it as part of Maori ritual, rather than a Christian ritual. It is no longer the Word that is relevant, but its performance. Prayers may be said when they are not understood, or when they can be categorised as an inevitable part of Maori culture.

Maori and Christians are two groups within the New Zealand population about whom it is very difficult to generalise. Both are, in their way, tribal, with individuating differences between different groups. What may be true of one iwi is not necessarily true of another, and the same may be said for churches. What Destiny may be seen to have, in effect, created is a new tribe that is unified by Christianity, and now seeks to proselytise back to the nation as a whole. From Marsden seeking to civilise the Maori through evangelism, and to convert the Maori by exposure to civilisation and trade, it seems that the latest development in the colonial religious history of New Zealand is Destiny, which seeks to evangelise the nation as a whole through the Word and identification with Maori masculinity. Destiny church may be seen as inheriting Marsden's mantle: its congregants are the new evangelists offering a civilising influence and ideas of appropriate cultural behaviour.

The performance praxis and message of Tamaki's service reflects the influences of American fundamentalist evangelism. It may be pertinent at this point to point out that while the first wave of missionary activity in New Zealand was primarily British, it was not long after settlement that evangelists from the United States began touring the country. The first of these is said to have been one Reverend William "California" Taylor, who first arrived in Auckland in 1864, before

commencing a trip around all the main urban centres. At the time he was noted for his inflammatory effect on the emotions of his congregants, and his use of graphic verbal imagery which seems to have been quite a contrast with the more reserved approach that was familiar to the commentators of the time (Gilling 65). During the twentieth century, there were at least six major evangelical missions to New Zealand, including those of R.A. Torrey (1902), J.W. Chapman (1912), Billy Graham (1959 and again in 1969) and Leighton Ford and Luis Palau (1907) (Gilling ii). These visits (while not necessarily efficacious in creating long-term conversions) can be seen to have influenced evangelistic practice in New Zealand. Whereas Marsden's service (however misguided) relied on the reading of the Word, the style of American evangelism (as demonstrated by Benny Hinn, for example) is more explicitly choreographed for its audience, both live and televisual. Brian Tamaki, like Benny Hinn, is a televangelist – and so, like Hinn, his television appearances provide a kind of horizon of expectation for his live services. However, unlike the case of Hinn, Tamaki's television show is largely studio based: he did not record the services in Christchurch, and, in fact, the use of recording devices by the congregation was firmly discouraged (suggesting that Destiny church is very protective of its media image). This contrasts very strongly with the media attention attracted by the "Enough is Enough" march.

Destiny Television was briefly removed from its 6.30am slot on national television in 2000, in response to complaints to New Zealand's Broadcasting Standards Authority of an alleged breach in standards, in particular regarding Tamaki's staunch stand against the "fatherless generation," a New Zealand characterised by a lack of men in leadership roles, most prominently evidenced by a female Prime Minister. "This is the Devil's strategy," claimed Tamaki at the time, "because you can't have sons and daughters without a father." This piece of rhetoric

is perhaps more telling than it immediately appears. Tamaki targets the position of men both Maori and within the wider community as being both the cause and a symptom of the social ills that beset the nation. Tamaki offers an alternative, a return to a strong patriarchal society, and offers himself up as a model for a new kind of masculinity. The First Service, with its replication of the Anglican Morning Service, intact as if in Marsden's home church, sought to convert Maori into British citizens and Christians through exposure to the Word of God. American evangelists combine their own translation of the Word of God in popular idiom with dramatic proof by way of testament, either in the dynamic person of the evangelist, or aroused from the congregant audience, as is visible in Benny Hinn's Crusade. Tamaki's performance might be seen as influenced by both these models. The transformation of Christianity is demonstrated by Hinn, and as such Tamaki represents someone who, having converted to Christianity, has grown into a strong, wealthy man, powerful both within the church, but also recognised, his opinions sought after, throughout the nation.

American televangelism makes a similar cult of celebrity, with the "big names" of evangelistic preaching recognisable well outside of the context of religion (for example, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, to name but a few). This cult of celebrity is reflected in Destiny services, but also in the structure of the church's organisation. Much of the swift growth of Destiny must be attributed to the celebrity of the man at the helm, Pastor Brian Tamaki. This was demonstrated in the Christchurch services, which were advertised in the daily newspaper with a photo of Tamaki underneath a Destiny logo. Even though Tamaki was not to be the pastor of the Christchurch service, he lent his name and image to the Christchurch service. As in the case of Benny Hinn's ministry, Destiny operates like a franchise, with the product (the sermons and church activities) monitored from Auckland. This is comparable both to Marsden's setting up

the mission at Rangihoua, preparing the way for the missionaries who would live and work there, and to Benny Hinn's search for global partners. The figure of the evangelist creates a brand for the church, providing a role model for worshippers. The performance of the evangelist, both within the confines of the church and in a seemingly inevitable movement towards social protest and eventually politics, sells the church and comes to stand for its beliefs. The evangelist provides an image that becomes a brand. This is true in the examples of Marsden and Hinn, but even more so in the case of Tamaki. An analysis of his performance within the Christchurch service shows Tamaki negotiating the space between God and the congregation, just as Marsden did, but in an entirely different way. Tamaki was presented as a man like any other in the audience, but he is made special by his pure relationship with God. Where Marsden and Hinn stage a ritual encounter that allows them to arrive in the holy space and speak to the audience, Tamaki stepped out of the crowd, and as such, his success represents the possibility that any person – any man – in the audience might do the same.

1. The Word

Head Pastor Tamaki (now Bishop Tamaki) visited Christchurch for the opening of a new church in 2003. He performed three services, all located in the hall of Christchurch Boys' High School. The services were held on Saturday night, Sunday morning, and Sunday evening. The services worked independently of one another, although those attending all three may have noted a thematic development, focusing on the importance of joining a church, the benefits of Christianity, and how to be a strong Christian.

Each service followed a similar structure to Marsden's Morning Service. The service began with singing, which was followed by the arrival of Tamaki, which was followed by prayer, an offering, a sermon, and an altar call. Similarly to the Benny Hinn Crusade, Tamaki moved between the very formal language of the Bible and his own down-to-earth explanation of what these Biblical words could and should mean for the congregation. His sermons seemed aimed towards a specific purpose, which was encouraging those who were present to join the nascent Christchurch branch of Destiny Church. Tamaki uses Bible verses as proof of his own contentions: rather than starting with a verse, and explaining it, he makes assertions, and then uses the Bible (sometimes with somewhat tenuous connections) to back himself up. The result is a very particular theological doctrine, which is predominantly based in Old Testament teachings, and borrows from contemporary New Zealand culture. At no time did Tamaki's words seem simply directed towards religious worship and celebration. In a reversal of Benny Hinn's very general and ambiguous use of the Bible, Tamaki uses Biblical teachings to create a strong, stern set of rules by which he demands that a good Christian must live.

At the first of the three services in celebration of the opening of Destiny Christchurch, Tamaki's sermon was dedicated to explaining the idea of "spiritual cover." According to this doctrine, women and children are especially "spiritually vulnerable," and depend on the presence of a man at the head of the household to provide them with "cover." Tamaki quoted from Jeremiah:

My people have been lost sheep.
 Their shepherds have led them astray;
 They have turned them away on the mountains
 They have gone from mountain to hill;
 They have forgotten their resting place. (50:6)

Tamaki uses an Old Testament verse that is about the trials of the Israelites to refer to the parlous state of people living in New Zealand outside of the protection of a

church. The exact nature of the evils of the world from which women and children especially need protection is unclear, but the inference is that without this protection they are as vulnerable as sheep without a shepherd, who have wandered out of the pen (a biblical analogy utilised over and over again.) The man, in his turn, receives spiritual cover (a term that could refer to shelter or to insurance) from his pastor. Because of this, Tamaki stressed, it was important to be “planted” within a church, regularly attending services on a weekly basis. The pastor gets his spiritual cover from the head pastor, Tamaki, who presumably gets his straight from God, or is in fact so powerful that he needs no cover at all. The Devil would not dare to touch him. Either way, all spiritual protection stems from the head of the church, in a kind of pyramid scheme, from the most powerful (Tamaki) to the least (women and children).

Such an emphasis is notably different from the examples of Marsden and Hinn. Marsden offered the Gospel and salvation in Jesus Christ, but this was also tied to British citizenship and the implements of culture. Marsden established a mission, and brought with him tradesmen, not preachers. Hinn offered the Holy Spirit and the benefit of physical healing. Tamaki on the other hand offers protection against ills which could be inferred to be social as well as spiritual.

This idea of the pastor as dispenser of protection and grace demonstrates a real contradiction with the fundamentalist Protestantism of Tamaki’s American models. In some ways, this is an absolute return to the sort of medieval Catholic religious practice that Luther first took a stand against. In *Destiny*, there is no direct, private communion with God. God’s protection and grace is only available through the church hierarchy. If one is a woman or a child, that grace and protection is only available in turn from the figure of a husband or father. When this is combined with the fact that members of the church are strongly expected to tithe (that is, to pay one

tenth of their income to the church) in exchange for this spiritual protection, Destiny seems to be building a new Catholicism, with Tamaki as the putative Pope.

What Tamaki effectively creates through this line of doctrine is the idea of the church as a kind of sanctuary: a spiritual zone of protection, and a place of belonging. This could be seen as responding to a perceived need in his constituency, a modern post-colonial situation where urban Maori are dissociated from the land, and as such are separated from one of the two main sources of whakapapa. A person's whakapapa, or identity, stems from two main sources, the first being genealogy, and the second, a connection to land. In a *mihi*, or ritualised greeting, it is usual to state your whakapapa, reciting your ancestry, and also referencing the physical features of the landscape where you belong, for example, your mountain and your river. Destiny might be seen to address a perceived alienation from this source of identity by providing an alternative through the church, addressing both strands of whakapapa. The creation of a virtual or spiritual space might be seen to provide a place of belonging that is dependent purely on one's membership in the church. Tamaki builds a fence that surrounds his congregation, but it is symbolic rather than actual. It is an idea of space that substitutes for absent real spaces. In such a context, one is never outside of the church, as long as one commits (spiritually and financially) to being a part of it. Destiny provides a spiritual landscape that offers a place of belonging, to replace that which has been lost. The actual physical space of the church is thus less important: it can be anywhere. This simultaneously addresses the dispossession of the Maori component of the congregation, and the displacement of the Pakeha. It also brings a kind of equality, because identity within the congregation ceases to be based on race or ethnicity, but is defined by membership in the church, and one's place within the firm hierarchy within it.

The theme of being “planted in the church” could be seen as also relating to this perceived need of the congregation. The three Christchurch services led by Tamaki, and the subsequent Sunday’s sermons by Pastor Hudson Bond, who would be the ongoing pastor for the church, concentrated on this idea of being “planted”. In demonstrating the words:

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water
That brings forth its fruit in its season
Whose leaf also shall not wither
And whatever he does shall prosper. (Ps. 1:3)

Pastor Bond went so far as to pull an asparagus fern out of its container by the roots to demonstrate how the plant could not be nourished without the soil to carry the water and minerals to its roots. Such a focus seems pertinent when the aim of the services is to establish a new church, especially one that will eventually be funded by the donations of its congregants. But the motif of planting can also be seen as a colonial metaphor. Young observes that colonisation operated through a process of “territorialization as, quite literally plantation” (1995 173), the claiming of land through planting exotic species that would be farmed by the native population and harvested by the colonisers. By planting, one claims space for oneself. The metaphor of planting encouraging the congregants to claim space for themselves (within a society that may have left them feeling marginalised) but also to give them back “roots” - a place of identification, or in Maori terms, *turangawaewae*. The place of identity within Destiny is spiritual, not physical, coming not from a connection with the land, but with God (as manifested by Brian Tamaki). No place is safe without God, and God is tied to people, not to places. Robert J. C. Young considers colonisation through the frame of Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus, in particular utilising their concept of territorialization, addressing this to the colonial appropriation of land. Young notes that

colonialism above all involves the physical appropriation of land, its capture for the cultivation of another culture... colonization was not simply a discursive operation but a seizure of cultural (in all senses of the word) space (1995 172).

One of the key components of British colonisation in New Zealand was the appropriation of Maori lands (perhaps beginning with Marsden's fencing of his church at Rangihoua), still a contentious issue that present-day governments are seeking to address and redress. Because Maori identity was so inseparable from the land, the loss of land, along with increased urbanisation, created a disjunction from traditional markers of identity. Destiny's emphasis on spiritual cover could be seen as replacing one of the lost aspects of whakapapa, by creating a virtual space – a “sheepfold” – that is a place of belonging. This is explicit within the doctrine of Destiny but might also be seen to be enacted in the welcome offered to newcomers, like stray sheep being welcomed into the fold.

The doctrine that Tamaki preached, even couched as it was in colloquial language and light-hearted rhetoric, was strongly conservative of social values, and very influenced by readings of the Old Testament, emphasising the evil of sin, rather than the blessing of salvation. It is possible to see a certain juxtaposition of traditional Christian ethics where they correspond with traditional Maori beliefs, particularly with regards identity. The second strand of whakapapa was similarly addressed by Tamaki, because in Tamaki's church, identity does not come from bloodlines, but from a choice that any individual can (and should) make.

In his second service, Tamaki preached the doctrine of generational transference. This encompasses the notion that by living a life in Christ, one passes a blessing on to the next generation of one's family. Therefore, if I live a Christian life, my children will be blessed, and their children doubly blessed, and so on, moving exponentially forward through the generations to come. The reverse, unfortunately, is also true. If I live a life of sin, I am cursed, and rather like a nasty case of syphilis in

an Ibsen play, I will pass this forward to my children, who will be doubly cursed, and their children, who will be four times as unlucky. This fits in nicely with the strand of whakapapa that is connected with lines of ancestry. Destiny is perhaps particularly attractive to those who are divorced from ties of blood and land that legitimise New Zealand identity. Pakeha, defined by their not-Maori-ness and their potentially guilt-inflected status as coloniser, and urban Maori, detached from ties to the land and denied iwi status, find in Destiny a place of belonging. Destiny addresses the uncertainty and feeling of illegitimacy which is arguably a defining characteristic of Pakeha New Zealanders, and the sense of disinheritance that may characterise urban Maori. Destiny is a tribe where anyone can belong. A kind of whakapapa is gifted for the price of belief (and ten percent of your gross income). The blessings of the Lord will increase over generations. A kind of reverse whakapapa is created whereby your own good deeds and spiritual purity will be passed down to your children and to their children. Rather than counting back generations to provide a sense of belonging, Destiny counts forward into the future. All blessings can arise from “being planted” in the church: a decision to belong that can be made by the individual, and is not reliant upon the chances of birth. Tamaki said: “We should be inheriting humungous churches,” but owing perhaps to the failure of our forebears, we are not. Tamaki offers the possibility that we may be “the breakthrough generation”: those who turn history around and start it anew.

This is a choice for each individual to make, but it also purports to impact on the generations to come, representing a weighty decision that makes individual choice important. It is also all or nothing, demanding a complete commitment. The consequences of failing in this choice are portrayed as nebulous but terrifying. What precisely it is that will befall those without spiritual cover is unclear, but it must be

assumed to be very, very bad, and furthermore, will damn not only you but also all your descendants through time.

It is certainly a strong part of Tamaki's message that New Zealand, as a nation, has turned away from godliness. Destiny is a bi-cultural church that seeks to remedy this, by promoting Christian ideas to the culture at large, both in the context of Tamaki's evangelistic services and in a concerted effort towards evangelism in the political sphere. It as if a full circle has been achieved since Marsden preached to the Maori he saw as "benighted heathens." Now, one of Tamaki's stated missions is to bring the gospel back to New Zealand, to "claim back New Zealand for the Lord." Pakeha culture is now the one that is benighted, and Tamaki and Destiny seek to bring enlightenment. Within the proceedings of this evangelism, it is possible to identify the influences of historical evangelism, in particular, of American global evangelists such as Benny Hinn. However, it is also possible to see inflections of Maori cultural practice, and a doctrinal emphasis that fits in with more traditional Maori ideas of spirituality and identity. The church is truly bi-cultural, and Tamaki, as a local, indigenous, evangelical preacher, expresses a culture that has fully internalised the Christian message and performative practices of the coloniser, and performs them back again, in churches all around the country.

In Christchurch, Brian Tamaki stood in front of the congregation, and leaned confidently against the lectern. "I'm sick of men in our nation being wimps, pimps, and gimps." This typical Tamaki rhetorical flourish, (reminiscent of American "Power Team" evangelist John Jacob's assertion that "Jesus Christ was no skinny little man. Jesus was a man's man" (Mazer 162)) expresses the essential Destiny doctrine: that the country is in the state it is in because men are weak, stupid, and surrendering their power to women.

Destiny doctrine firmly places the man, in his “natural” role as father, at the head of the household. The pastor sits in a similar position as head of his church. He provides spiritual guidance and leadership to all members of Destiny, and is deferred to in all matters of doctrine and practice. In late 2005, Tamaki was ordained (or, as head of the church, declared himself) a Bishop, in a rather extraordinary gesture of self-aggrandisement which perhaps also sought to endow Tamaki with status similar to heads of other churches. As the father of the church, Tamaki demands that men, similarly, “take back their role” as head of the family and rescue the fatherless generation from the inherently decadent rule of women, under the spiritual guidance of Tamaki.

New Zealand is traditionally a very male-led society, with its indigenous Maori culture based around tribal warfare and trade, and its settler culture based on the ideals of the soldier and the pioneer. In both regards, the social role of men has been eroded by changing times. New Zealand’s identity as a nation, separate from Britain, was wrought in times of war. We are no longer at war, but while the idea of the New Zealander as soldier and warrior has diminished in actuality, for example through circumscribed military spending and a greater tendency in foreign policy to be involved in global conflicts as “peace-keepers” and “re-builders” instead of direct combatants, the iconic imaginary of Pakeha man-as-soldier and Maori man-as-warrior is still potent. Brian Tamaki provides a whole new cause that Maori men in particular can be mobilised against, but it is the “godlessness” within society that Tamaki seeks to fight, rather than an enemy without. “We are the army of the Lord, ready to take back this nation for Jesus Christ!” he claimed. In doing so, he reasserted the identity of Maori men as warriors and leaders, and raised the possibility of his congregation becoming “an elite crack army who would almost lay down their lives.”

As in most evangelistic services, the ritual of giving was extremely important. Midway through each service, the congregation was encouraged to stand, and read aloud in unison from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, written on another transparency and projected onto the screen:

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9: 6-7)

A special collection was then taken up for the seeding of new churches. Everyone held up a gold coin (either one or two dollars), and a prayer was said over the coins, and for the new churches that might be established using this additional money. Like many of the rituals in the Destiny service, this small gesture had an immediate purpose (in this case the raising of money), but also served in a small way to indicate belonging. The first time I attended the Destiny service, I didn't have a gold coin on me. The second time, I was prepared, and it was in my wallet, and the third, the gold coin was handy in my pocket to be raised and blessed, because I knew what was expected of me, and being able to fulfil it, I became closer to being a member of the church. This was a learned behaviour. The effect of complicity with the rituals of the Destiny service is not the dramatic conclusion of healing, as in Benny Hinn, but rather it is part of a more gradual building of a sense of community. What perhaps is important here is that while Destiny church may be seen as evangelistic, that is, outwardly mobile, and seeking to gain new converts, but it is also seeking permanence within the communities that it fosters. A one-off dramatic conclusion is not enough – Tamaki's services aim to be the first of many that the same congregation will attend. Having said this, all three evangelists in these case studies can be seen have turned their converts over to the care of others, Marsden to the missionaries left behind at Rangihoua: Kendall, Hall, and King, and Benny Hinn to the sponsor churches in Christchurch. At the end of the three Christchurch services, Tamaki

turned the Christchurch Destiny church over to Pastor Hudson Bond. Each evangelist might be seen to offer an ongoing community that tends to both spiritual and physical needs, although to differing extents.

Material wealth becomes a signifier of a successful life in Christ, and somewhat paradoxically, is also a sign of a “cheerful giver,” as God’s satisfaction with such giving apparently manifests itself in increasing returns in what seems less of a charitable contribution and more of a canny investment. It is common practice in American televangelical campaigns to link wealth with spiritual salvation, and spiritual salvation with wealth. Tithing (the donation of one tenth of your gross income to the church) becomes essential to fulfilling one’s duty as a good Christian, and wealth is the reward for fulfilling this duty. A great example of this arose in the 1950’s, when Oral Roberts, wanting to raise a target of \$42,000 to improve the quality of his televangelist programme, instituted a “blessing pact”, promising donors that “if the Lord had not returned their gift from a totally unexpected source within the year, he would refund their money” (Morris 108-9). Morris calls this promise a “success and prosperity doctrine” (109) because tithes or offerings were offered with the express promise of material rewards, rather like a bet made with God. While a significant financial contribution is required, the rewards are presented as being well worth the investment. In a social environment where Maori are over-represented in nearly all the unpleasant social statistics, including poverty, mortality, and crime, Brian Tamaki provides a leadership that proposes another way of existing in the world, that can be achieved with the help of God and of Destiny church.

In summary, the Word of God according to Brian Tamaki in these services focused on three things in particular: the need for the spiritual cover of the church, the generational blessing (or curse) that would be deployed to our descendents, and the absolute necessity of tithing to the church. Tamaki’s use of the Word was very

specific: he used the Bible to create a firm set of rules, in essence, urging the congregation who had assembled to take up the significant challenge of not just converting to Christianity, but committing to living as a Christian.

2. Performance

The choice of location for the opening services of Destiny Christchurch once again produced its own set of meanings. Like Marsden and Hinn, Destiny took their service outside the ordinary confines of a church. However, in this case, unlike the tent meetings of the Great Awakening, the services were not held on the edges of the city. Christchurch Boys' High School is situated in the middle of the most expensive suburb in Christchurch: Fendalton. The result is that instead of heading out of town in order to attend the service, people who lived in the other (less affluent) areas of the city had to make a journey into the wealthier area. The equation of physical wealth with spiritual fulfilment pervades Destiny culture and many aspects of the meetings. By situating the service in this particular location, even the passage of the congregants to the location of the service was a process of moving from comparative poverty towards comparative wealth.

The choice of a school hall represents a different approach to the service than that of Benny Hinn. This was not a location for entertainment or frivolity; it was a place of education. Neither was it a venue for grandiose, one-off events. Tamaki was "planting a church," and after the three services of the weekend, Christchurch Boys' High School would be the meeting-place of Destiny Christchurch, for Sunday services, Monday night Bible meetings, and Wednesday night "warfare prayer" prayer-meetings. The "special occasion" of the Tamaki services was linked to the

ongoing work of the new church, to be led by Pastor Bond.¹ The choice of a school as a location has obvious practical implications, as schools are often willing to hire out their halls or classrooms to such groups in order to raise funds. Several other Destiny churches are based in schools around the country, although in one highly publicised case, protests from the student body over Destiny's very vocal stand against homosexuality caused the church to be evicted from the premises. Basing the church in a school ties it to a community, but also creates the symbolic connotation that the church is a place of education. In the case of Christchurch Boys' High School, it may be worth noting the perhaps obvious fact that this is a prominent boys' school - a place where boys learn how to become men. It is therefore apt that Destiny, with its ideals of powerful masculinity, should have chosen this, of all Christchurch schools, in which to base itself. Nonetheless, it is perhaps also possible interpret the church as standing *against* conventional education and conventional ideas of masculinity, and taking their church to the heart of Pakeha culture. Destiny in some ways can be seen to work counter to this space, by replacing the rituals of education and school assembly for which the space was designed with a whole new set of educational practices: those of a church. Just like the early Christians celebrated their festivals in pagan holy sites, and on the pagan feast days, or like Marsden and Hinn creating new churches in spaces with their own appropriate rituals and meanings, Destiny took over Christchurch Boys' High School, and for the length of the service, made it their own.

Just as with Samuel Marsden's First Service, and Benny Hinn's Miracle Crusade, the setting of the stage and the ways in which the audience and then the pastor entered into that space created important meanings that inflected the whole of the service. The hall of Christchurch Boys' High School is located inside one of the

¹ While we share the same surname, I should probably clarify that Hudson Bond and his wife Victoria are as far as I know, no relation of mine.

oldest of the school's buildings. To enter it, you must pass through several stone archways and climb a large set of stairs. Each successive entrance to the hall was flanked by two or three men or women, who guided those arriving towards the correct direction. Immediately personal relationships were established. Unlike the rather impersonal and businesslike functioning of the ushers at the Westpac Trust Centre, those in the doorways welcomed me in a personal and very friendly – almost affectionate – manner. For example, on shaking my hand, a woman at the outside door commented on the coldness of my hands. She told me I should get some gloves and even offered to bring me some the next time. Like Jason in the Miracle Crusade, I was offered Christian charity which held within its generosity a seed of censoriousness. I felt criticised for my act of thoughtless glovelessness. I assured her that I had merely underestimated the temperature, and she squeezed my hands to warm them. This immediately established a kind of relationship between us, and at the following two services she hailed me as a friend. My entrance into this service was in this way mediated by friendly faces: arriving alone, I was immediately befriended, and incorporated into the community. In her investigative research into Cults in America, Willa Appel describes a process called “love bombing,” by which proselytizers target the attention of potential converts:

Acceptance, friendship, and understanding are the initial bait. Within the space of a brief encounter, the proselytizer must manage to win the potential convert's trust and desire to continue the acquaintance (34).

While I would hesitate to call Destiny a cult (although this suggestion has been bandied in some media contexts) the feeling of being cared about and nurtured in this way was extremely enticing, and I would regard this as constructed and planned rather than a spontaneous outburst of gratuitous niceness. This also, it may be argued, is the extension of a tribal welcome – a kind of powhiri in its own right. By attending to my physical needs, the elders of the Destiny tribe were, in a sense, making me

tangata whenua, or making me part of the family. It was not just Christian charity being demonstrated, but the performance of a Maori cultural welcome.

Pastors and their wives from a number of different Destiny Churches from around the country, including Nelson, Auckland and Tauranga, had assembled in Christchurch to celebrate the opening of the church. They were there to give support to the new pastor, but also they acted as a model congregation on whom the newcomers could base their own behaviour. The welcoming from the women could be seen as a way in which the gender roles in Destiny were established. The men on the door talked to the men, the women to the women. As I sat, waiting for the service to begin, I was approached again, this time by an older woman who sat down beside me and introduced herself as Elizabeth. She, it later turned out, was the wife of the pastor from Tauranga, and they had both made the trip down to Christchurch together to attend the three services. She asked me a few questions about myself, and which church I attended, and when I answered honestly that I wasn't a regular church goer, we had a short discussion when she expressed her hope that I'd enjoy the service and maybe become a member of Destiny Christchurch. After she went away, I felt again that I had been intimately welcomed into the service. The personal welcoming touches were provided only by the women, who had no other role within the service apart from as members of the "worship team": the name for the group of singers who were like a support act for the main feature. This also removed any sense of just being able to slip into the service unnoticed: there was immediately and throughout a sense of being observed: not by cameras, as in the Miracle Crusade, but by the congregants themselves.

Just as with Marsden and Hinn, this could be seen as the transmission of a performance practicee, a way of being (and relating to others) was modelled by the group of pastors who had travelled with Tamaki. Welcoming the congregation in this

way turns strangers into part of a group. This was the beginning of a new church, and the movement towards community would occur over time. This is not a one-shot performance, and there were no dramatic healings. The same process of assimilation might be seen to occur as in other evangelistic performances, but in this case, it occurs more slowly, developing over time owing to the long-term presence of the church. The final culmination of this performance was the public demonstration of faith, in the Wellington “Enough is Enough” march. This could be considered performative as a demonstration of faith. It bears a resemblance to the performance of healing at the climax of Benny Hinn’s Miracle Crusade, although in a very different context. The performance given is of bodies altered and made new: but also stripped of individuality, and made the same.

The school hall at Christchurch Boys’ High School is a fairly standard high school hall, a large empty room with an elevated stage at the front. There was a large area of seating, slowly filling with people, and on the stage there was a band, with three women in black singing into a microphone. There were also a couple of young men, one of whom was playing the bass guitar, and one of whom was seated at a large drum kit. Another woman, similarly clad, was standing by an overhead projector that showed the lyrics of the current song on a white pull-down screen. The women on stage sang songs of worship: upbeat, modern Christian songs, in a hip-hop style. When there was a break in the singing, and the service formally began, these women went and sat on chairs against the back wall of the stage area, sitting quietly throughout the proceedings, which were without exception presided over by men.

The use of space within the school hall was not really exceptional. The mundane nature of the space was not disguised, and the low-level technology of the overhead projector and potted trees lit with fairy lights were embraced rather than hidden. In this situation, the church was created explicitly by the activities within it.

As Pastor Hudson Bond remarked in his opening address, “Three hours ago, this was just a hall. Now it’s a church.” The implication was clear: that the church is wherever the people are. Even this may be seen to be linked with the creation of Destiny’s masculine identity, because it was not church buildings that made the church, but the spiritual protection articulated and offered by the Pastor. While the elements of clearing of space, preparation, arrival and conversion were present within the service, perhaps on this occasion, in contrast to the services of Marsden and Hinn that were distanced by language and cultural difference, a more important message lay in the sermon and in the performance of self by Tamaki.

The arrival of Brian Tamaki at the Christchurch Boys’ High School hall was as carefully staged as Marsden’s or even Hinn’s, but arguably the symbolism produced has an almost opposite effect. Whereas both Hinn and Marsden’s entrances make concrete their arrival as exotic foreigners with a superior connection to God, Tamaki’s identified him as a man of the people. In the midst of the worship team’s enthusiastic music, Tamaki entered the crowded hall, but from the back. I was not immediately aware of his presence, but a ripple of awareness moved through the crowd, and the crowd turned its attention from the front of the hall, and the worship team, towards the back, in order to observe Tamaki entering. Tamaki walked through the crowd, casually touching people on the shoulder, and stopping to shake hands with men on both sides of the central aisle. When he made his way to the front, he waited there while the song ended, and was introduced by Pastor Bond, who would eventually be the pastor of the new church. Only after this introduction did Tamaki climb the stairs, take the microphone, and address the excited crowd. It took him some attempts to calm down the crowd, who by this time were clapping and whooping in celebration of his arrival.

The primary difference between Tamaki and Hinn is encapsulated in this act of arrival. Whereas Hinn stages his own almost miraculous appearance from elsewhere, Tamaki made a slow and deliberate journey out of the crowd. This difference is pivotal in understanding the contrasting agendas of these two services. One might look at Hinn's service, like Marsden's long before it, as a ritualised enactment of arrival, followed by eventual departure. Tamaki's service enacted emergence. Central to Tamaki's service, central to his performance of self, and arguably central to the importance of Tamaki's church as it spreads throughout New Zealand was and is the fact of Tamaki's locality. It is important that Tamaki emerged from the crowd because it is a literal reference to Tamaki's status as a native. He is quite literally one of the crowd – one of us – who steps forward to become the leader of a church. In this sense, Tamaki does not perform the standard role of an evangelist: he is not a visitor, but a man of the people, or, more precisely, he *was* a man of the people until he was made special through his connection with God. Tamaki negotiated the space between God and the congregation, just as Marsden did, but he did it in an entirely different way. Where Marsden and Hinn stage a ritual encounter that allows them to arrive in the holy space and speak to the audience, Tamaki stepped out of the crowd, and as such, his success represents the possibility that any person – any man – in the audience might do the same.

Emerging out of the crowd and onto the stage, Tamaki made an immediate and dramatic impression. He is a tall well-built Maori man, and he was dressed in an extraordinarily well-cut black pinstripe suit. His mode of address was neither mysterious nor esoteric. He took on the audience as if they were a group of listeners crowded around him at a pub. He was casual, Kiwi, and in many ways the epitome of New Zealand masculinity. He was a “bloke,” and his appearance and delivery complemented his theological message. Tamaki's Christianity harks back to the days

when men were men, women were women, and there was altogether less confusion about gender, specifically the role of man as father and spiritual protector of his family.

Perhaps this might be seen as a new warrior identity, reclaiming part of a New Zealand culture that has been lost owing to Christianity. The first missionaries arrived in New Zealand and were confronted by a warlike and tribal society. In some ways, Europeans might have been seen to have stimulated tribal warfare: certainly the advent of muskets aggravated the casualties in battles between tribes. But the Christianisation of the Maori also might be seen to have stood in the path of war, sometimes literally. Missionary Henry Williams, one of the immediate successors of Marsden was particularly famous for endeavouring to reduce the slaughter of warfare: “It was not unknown for Williams to stand between two warring tribes, defying the threat of musket balls and demand that in the name of Jesus Christ they stop their sinful behaviour – and at times they did” (Drake 28). With the advent of Christianity, tribal warfare became sinful. Brian Tamaki reclaims the warrior identity, by finding an appropriate target: sin, weakness, and social deviancy.

Destiny doctrine emphasises the necessity of a new masculinity, or men who are strong enough to give cover to the weak and needy. There is an implication that such men are few and far between, and while Destiny doctrine emphasises the necessity of a new masculinity, it is modelled in its fulfilment by Brian Tamaki. As a celebrity evangelist, Tamaki exemplifies this new strong masculinity, a sort of bi-cultural fusion of Maori man and American Super-Apostle. Perhaps the reason that so many men are drawn to join Destiny is the implied invitation to be like Brian: strong, smart, wealthy and sexy. For women, the promise is differently slanted; they have the potential of marrying a man like Brian. The women in Destiny, as far as can be ascertained by at the Christchurch service at least, are all wives.

Tamaki's distinctive visual persona is subject to a degree of mockery in various media. This is a testament to the strong visual image that he has developed, which has strong connotations and meanings to many people (not all entirely flattering). Tamaki is a particular target of bloggers, and has been described as "like Elvis", and "a cross between (somewhat portly, shaggy-haired New Zealand media personality) Mikey Havoc", and (smooth country and western singer) John Rowles." My favourite suggestion is that Tamaki's look, with his height, broad shoulders, long slicked-back hair, dark skin and sharp suit, closely resembles that of action film star Steven Seagal.

This resemblance, whether directly intentional or not, is very much in keeping with the nature of Tamaki's self-styled celebrity. In a national television interview, Tamaki remarked: "We've got a lot of sports stars in this country, we've got some pop-starts, we've even got some 'mon-stars'. It's time we had some 'pass-stars' – pastors, geddit?" (60 minutes, 2003). Tamaki definitely falls into the category of a "pass-star". He is perhaps New Zealand's only religious leader immediately recognisable to the general public, with a more visible public persona than any other religious leader in the country. Brian Tamaki promises a power for social change, both for individuals, and for what he characterises as a feminised and weakened - society.

Tamaki's Seagal-like persona can be seen as presenting a solution to this problem. Rather than reverting to the more traditional warrior identity of old, Tamaki embraces a popular global cultural icon. Tamaki represents a whole new flavour of warrior male. Seagal himself sprang to fame in the 1988 film Above the Law, playing a cop trained in Vietnam to be a master sixth degree black belt in Aikido. When his neighbourhood church is blown up, and his parish priest murdered, Seagal's character swears vengeance on all those connected with the killing. The Seagal persona has

developed up to the present day into a common man, whether policeman, doctor, or cook, who, when confronted by evil in its various forms, draws on spiritual and physical strength and kicks evil's ass, whether it comes in the form of voodoo-practicing Jamaican drug lords, or terrorists of various creeds and races. The bad guys in Seagal films (like the Devil as characterised by Brian Tamaki) are simply that – bad, taking pleasure in wrecking things for the good people. They have no interior motivations, no repressed childhood trauma or cogent philosophical beliefs. They are the sort of people who “hate freedom” and the only way to cure this is to beat them to a pulp.

The combination of spiritual power, physical toughness and worldly good humour demonstrated by Seagal are also the qualities of Tamaki's persona. Destiny's services centre on this individual performance by Tamaki as evangelist celebrity. This cult of personality underlines and strengthens the firm message of the church: what it means to be a strong man, and how to become one. Unlike Hinn or Marsden, Tamaki does not present himself in any way as a Christ-like figure. His presence isn't mysterious, and one gets the sense that if he has a special relationship with Go that he shares with his congregants, it is one in which God speaks to Brian Tamaki on a man-to-man basis. Although he “was born to be a shepherd,” it is possible that Tamaki's lifestyle and works might be emulated by the men in his congregation.

Like Seagal, Tamaki might be seen to have perfected the performance of a fusion identity. Seagal, an American, plays characters of varying ethnic backgrounds. Interestingly, none of the internet fandoms I searched for biographical details on Seagal could be any more specific with regards to Seagal's own ethnic background. The actor is legendary for being the first Westerner to teach martial arts in Japan, and in 1997 he was even pronounced a *tulku*, or the reincarnation of a Buddhist lama. Tamaki, like Seagal, presents himself as just such a kind of spiritual warrior, the only

difference being that Tamaki is a Maori and a fundamentalist Christian, not a Buddhist. In his case, the evils of the devil are manifested in the social policies of a liberal Labour government. Tamaki has railed against such policies as the legalisation of prostitution, and the Civil Unions Bill, both from his pulpit, but also leading civic protests before Parliament. As such, he has become a spokesman for the conservative religious right in New Zealand.

The presentation of a masculine identity is enabled by the construction of a certain relationship towards women within the performance of the service. Women remain important in Destiny services, but their role is particularly circumscribed. Status is conferred in relationship to the men, and women are featured within this role. Thus we were introduced to “Pastor Brian Tamaki, and his wife, Hannah,” and “Pastor Hudson Bond, and his wife, Victoria.” Women make up a large proportion of the worship team, and their personal presentation seems as carefully monitored as is Tamaki’s. From the very beginning of the service, the role of women is to frame the entry of Tamaki.

In some ways, this reflects the role of women on the marae. While women remain powerful and influential within Maori society, it remains a firm social convention in most iwi that women may not undertake a speaking role in the context of the powhiri (although there are notable exceptions to this rule, for example, Ngati Porou). There are important roles for women, without which the powhiri could not take place, for example the karanga which welcomes the visitors onto the marae. The role of Destiny women, more informally, welcoming us into the church could be seen to reflect this. The women were by no means a weak presence within the Destiny service, although their role was confined. The worship team sang with verve and panache, providing a model for the rest of the congregation when we stood to sing together, following along the lyrics on the overhead projector. The songs themselves

were cheery and upbeat, with a definite hip-hop flavour, reflecting perhaps both the impact of American evangelism and of African-American popular culture on Pacific cultures in New Zealand, including Maori. The subtle dance moves that accompanied the songs (mostly arm and head movements) were also reminiscent of hip-hop dancing, with some hints towards the movements associated with haka and action song. I could also discern an attitude reminiscent of pukana, the dilation of the eyes to expose the whites. Timoti Karetu says of pukana: “In the case of the female, the pukana accompanied by a knowing smile can do much to beguile and allure” (29-30). I point this out to show that the women’s role is not necessarily passive or weak; the worship team are strong performers with an imposing presence. If it is possible to see warrior masculinity within Destiny, it is also possible to discern a sort of warrior femininity. However, this is positioned nonetheless as in a subservient and circumscribed relationship to the men within the service.

To suggest that this reflects the role of women in Maori society, just as it does the role of women within fundamentalist Christianity, is no doubt to oversimplify.

Pat and Hiwi Tauroa write

Because the woman is tapu (sacred) to the Maori, it is quite inappropriate to equate the role of women on the marae with what happens in today’s society generally. The tapu accorded a woman on a marae acknowledges her “supremacy” over men. (79)

While I respect this viewpoint, there are clear ideological assumptions in common with American fundamentalists, who maintain fervently that they accord superior status to women. Jerry Falwell is reported as saying

I’m a Christian, and all Christians believe that women are special and that God made men to take care of women, to protect them, to help them with their jackets and to make sure nobody else messes with them. (Hadden and Swann 98)

The combination of these two cultural positions perhaps creates a role for women that is even more restricted. If a new masculinity is being performed at Destiny, it occurs within a context of a restrictive model of femininity.

To continue with the Seagal analogy: in Seagal films, the female characters remain incidental rather than achieving post-feminist action-flick tendencies towards Lara-Croft-like adversaries and heroines. The women in these stories remain minimally important: beautiful, occasionally treacherous, but more-or-less solely decorative. Their primary role is to ensure the signification of Seagal's heterosexuality – to ensure that we, the audience, know that although Seagal may be a gym-sculpted snappy dresser who prefers the company of men, he's not gay. Seagal's attractiveness to female characters is imperative, even if he doesn't pay them much attention, and even though the most important target audiences of his films are male. Similarly, the women of Destiny church have a vital role. Without them, the new masculinity has nothing to stand against, and importantly, nothing to protect. The family, led by the father, must include a mother, and preferably children. Destiny women, attired in fashionable black and rather a lot of gold jewellery, appear confident and affluent. Many do not work outside the home, both a testament to their Christian family-oriented preference towards child-rearing, but also a symbol of their husband's financial security that allows a family to prosper on one income.

A Hollywood persona is a character deliberately constructed via careful choices of film and role, and built over time by the nature of an individual actor's public appearances. The performance of Destiny services, and a carefully controlled media presence (my friend, using a video camera at a Destiny service, was asked to desist filming before Tamaki arrived) constructs a similar narrative around the person of Brian Tamaki. Attending the services, I was struck by Tamaki's tough-guy persona. There was a sense of vibrancy and spontaneity to his actions, as though

nobody knew quite what he was going to say next. He was prone to sudden, energetic bursts of movement. He was often deliberately outrageous. In comparison to Benny Hinn, who I would characterise as mainly solemn, except for the occasional arch joke usually at the expense of his helpers, Tamaki stood out as loud, even aggressive, but most of all, decisive. He was physically imposing, but he was also someone who is unafraid to speak his mind. He was and is always articulate and confident, but not afraid to joke around:

“If you meet the Devil, what do you do?” he asked. “I’ll tell you what I’d do. I’d beat him up, and put him in the back of my truck, and drive out into the country. And then I’d get him out and I’d *run him over*. Then I’d reverse, and run over him again. And then I’d get out my spade and dig a hole and bury him. And then I’d drive out there six months later, and dig him up, and drive over him again!”

This was a very vivid image of a Kiwi bloke taking on the power of Satan, with only the aide of a Holden ute. Tamaki engaged with spiritual matters in this way on the presumed level of his audience. There were no matters of theology beyond the grasp of the everyday person - everything was digestible, and simplified so that it could be easily grasped by anybody who attended. Tamaki listed firm clear rules: that the man is the head of the household, that to be committed to the church you must tithe, and that the church must fight in society for the rights of the family.

Tamaki’s idea of the “pass-star” – preacher as national celebrity – can be seen as a direct influence of American evangelicalism, which is studded with its own “pass-stars”. These personalities are often very strong, with global missions based on the preaching and charisma of various individuals. An important component of the “pass-star” is the presentation of a fully-fledged theatrical character, complete with symbolically relevant back-story. The life-story of the evangelist is catalogued and made meaningful in hindsight, often involving a grand life-change brought about by conversion and the subsequent dedication of a life to God’s call. There are numerous examples of this. Billy Sunday, perhaps the first great American televangelist,

emerged from a “poor and fatherless childhood to become a professional baseball player and then, after switching to evangelical work, ‘the last great revivalist’” (Frankl: 51). Jim Bakker was reportedly “a poor extremely shy child... small in stature, but had a large inferiority complex” (Hadden and Swann 34). Bakker turned to religion after running over a small child in his car. Pat Robertson felt called to the ministry after failing the New York bar exam (Hadden and Swann 35). Benny Hinn in his autobiographical work *The Anointing* writes of his own transformation from a shy, retiring young man with a crippling stutter into an internationally recognised evangelist. Turning one’s life around becomes a sign of the work of God in one’s life.

Following this trend, Brian Tamaki is very open about his own transformation. He has stated on many occasions that before the Lord elevated his life to its current high purpose, he could have been an All-Black. The implication is that the choice he has made surpasses the ultimate achievement of New Zealand manhood. Tamaki thus symbolises a life-style that has transformed him from a “rugby-playing, Mark-II-Zephyr-driving, beer-drinking kid” into a wealthy, influential public figure, a proponent of a new New Zealand masculine identity, one that is not satisfied with the traditional New Zealand masculine accoutrements of beer, cars and sport, but is capable of attaining other kinds of success.

A common feature in these pastorly presentations of self is the transformations from zero to hero that embody the symbolic change that Christianity has wrought. All of the above stories are characterised by a sense of lack, whether of identity, direction, or place of belonging, which has been fulfilled only in devotion to God. This results in a dramatic change in character, a miraculous reversal, exemplified in the performance the evangelist gives on stage. From the shy underachiever, Bakker became a staunch believer and flourishing businessman. From being an insecure

stutterer, Hinn became a seductive and articulate speaker whose ministry is heard around the world. It is evident that in nearly every case the success of the evangelist as a preacher became a signifier for their special connection to God, as a successful articulation of belief becomes a signifier of divine mandate. In Brian Tamaki's case, the transformation was perhaps even more profound. Because he emerged out of the crowd, he demonstrated a transformation that is presumably possible for any man standing in the audience. He came to represent all the men of New Zealand.

Furthermore, he represented himself as someone who, although successful in terms of the society in which he found himself (for it is difficult to overstate the high social coin attached to being an All Black) felt the need to be more than that. In so doing he created a whole new definition of what it means to be successful, but he also challenged the values of the society whose ideals of success he rejected. In this way, Brian Tamaki is not only the Bishop of his own church, he is its saint. Having had his own revelation on the Road to Damascus, he becomes an advocate for God, and brings about miracles – not spectacular healings – in the everyday lives of the poor.

The extent to which Tamaki is a role model is evident when one scans the congregation at any service. Both men and women are attired formally, in black, all are well-groomed, and there is a lot of jewellery on display. There is a strong sense of uniformity, to the extent that when I arrived wearing my smartest red jacket, I felt uncomfortable, even though I was very tidy. Conformity to an un-stated dress code is an immediate badge of membership and signals respect of the conventions of dress demonstrated by church leaders. There is nothing new in the concept of wearing "Sunday best" to church. The style of Destiny's dress code, with its flamboyance and culture of affluence, is something different. "You want me to walk down there (to the stage) in sandals and shorts and a ripped t-shirt?" Tamaki has asked his critics. His dedication to representing God both in his inner and outer life is clearly present in his

choice of costume. One is Christian within, certainly, but this is manifested on the outside by tidy and stylish dress. Image is important, and is held to reflect the state of your soul and the state of your integration into the church (two concepts that are almost completely integrated).

This is another signifier of prosperity, and marks quite a change from the traditional performance of Christian selfhood in New Zealand. More traditional forms of Pakeha Christianity are characterised by more restrained performances of poverty. Destiny represents a paradigm shift: the difficulty with which a rich man may or may not enter the kingdom of heaven seems to have lost relevance, and the performance of the charitable Christian who gives up worldly goods in emulation of Christ is substituted for a performance of wealth as a signal of being worthy of God's blessings. Wealth is seen as a signifier of God's reward. One might argue on this basis that the strongest influence American evangelists have had on Destiny is not the fact of its Christianity, but instead the strongly capitalist management ideals that infuse Destiny culture. Destiny is not simply a string of churches, it is a corporation. Tamaki as head pastor and leader of the franchise is also its C.E.O – a fact that he has stated is reflected in his salary – and his persona is an integral feature of the Destiny brand.

3. Reception

By presenting himself so boldly as a role-model and as an unashamedly financially-successful businessman, Tamaki's financial practices have come under intense public scrutiny, with a campaign from national weekly newspaper The Sunday Star Times that was little short of a vendetta. Such scrutiny is not so unusual in the New Zealand media, particularly in to Maori in public office. Tamaki's assets were

displayed as a sign of the huge gap between Tamaki's circumstances and the comparative poverty of those from which he takes money. Tamaki's prosperity is directly linked with the practice of tithing firmly encouraged by Destiny as a commitment to God and the church. This involves giving ten percent of one's earnings to the church: Destiny encourages this money to be deposited by direct debit. While often regarded as slightly dubious by secular society, tithing is quite a common practice, particularly in fundamentalist churches. It's also Biblically justified. Giving one's tithe is part of being a member of Destiny: the appropriate direct-debit banking forms standard issue to those who join.

What the media perhaps finds suspicious in Tamaki is his combination of excessive material display – the suits, the big house, the his-and-hers Harley Davidson motorcycles – with his public devoutness and opinionated social critique. Many Destiny members belong to lower socio-economics, leading to charges that, in demanding tithes, Destiny is targeting and exploiting the poor and vulnerable. Tamaki's wealth is not just a sign, or a side effect of his success, but one might argue, a cause. His material extravagance might be seen as another way he steps out from the crowd, and proves himself worthy as a leader of his congregation. Such expenditure is a strong feature of the American evangelical environment.

Tamaki's popularity suggests that as a New Zealander, emerging from the society his church services, he knows very well what his congregation wants and meets it effectively. The move towards providing social services, and thence to involvement in social and finally, political affairs, seems almost inevitable for Destiny. Perhaps the most significant way in which Tamaki's locality differentiates him from visiting evangelists is the seemingly natural extension of his work into the public sphere. Living and working in New Zealand, Tamaki's evangelism does not begin and end with his church services. The perimeters of his performance extend

much more widely, and because of this, Destiny and Tamaki himself have become increasingly more influential. Much as Marsden linked his sacred and secular agendas, Destiny is not just a church, but also a provider of education and social services, and now a political presence on the national stage. Destiny and Tamaki now have a far greater audience than merely those who attend church services. 2003 saw the emergence of Destiny as a political party under the leadership of ex-policeman Richard Lewis and the “spiritual guidance” of Brian Tamaki. Although the party did not make much of an impact in the 2005 General Election, the party was successful in attracting the attention of the public to certain key issues. This development seems inevitable. If one views evangelism as the transmission of a performance practice, that seeks to alter the actions of a group of people in order to fulfil a conversionary mission, then clearly, a political presence that seeks to legislate actions rather than simply encourage them, seems the ultimate evangelistic act. Destiny’s move into politics is the first step in taking the Word of Tamaki to the entire nation, church-going or not. With a 2008 election looming, Destiny has again been in the news, this time courting a merger with other Christian parties. As yet, these seem to have foundered on the question of who would lead the newly formed party.

The presentation of personal wealth as a signifier of successful Christianity is reinforced by Destiny in the provision of a range of church-based social services to address the needs of the congregation, both in terms of education and in terms of helping the needy address their own poverty. In October, 2001, when Destiny moved into its current premises in Mt Wellington, the Church opened a bi-lingual early childhood centre, Nga Tamariki Puawai, followed by the Proton Bookshop and Health and Fitness Centre, and Destiny School in 2002.² The education of children has been

² This, and more information about Destiny Church, is available at their official website: <http://www.destinychurch.org.nz>. This should not be confused with www.densitychurch.org, which at

an important part of the social services provided by Destiny. Once again, this can be seen as a response to the decimation of warrior culture by Christianity: Christian values are taught, but so are Maori performance practices: the haka is taught to all young boys at Destiny. Karetu notes “Many tribes began to perform haka less and less and the influence of the missionaries became stronger” (35). It is a fundamental facet of Destiny’s teaching that the traditional signifiers of Maori identity are not incompatible with Christianity, and in fact may be seen to support it. It is possible, Tamaki told us again and again, to be a warrior for Christ. This in itself seems to be contradictory: Christ, himself, was not a warrior, at least in the traditional sense.

The next logical development in this outward expansion was the creation of the Destiny New Zealand political party. Since the party was launched, Destiny has drawn a lot of media attention through public protests against a number of legislative changes, in particular those that the church sees as diminishing the role of the family in society. While the breakthrough generation may not yet have entirely eventuated, the first sallies have begun. In his Christchurch service, Tamaki laid down a challenge: “We have governments to bring down and the spirit of God to raise up in this country!”

Destiny’s 2004 “Enough is enough” march was ostensibly “a stand for the next generation” and supportive of “family values.” The march was led by a solo warrior performing a *wero*, a dance of challenge with a taiaha or ceremonial spear. This created the immediate impression that the march was war party, a group of soldiers. The warrior was followed by three similarly dressed men, who moved in a formation behind him. They in turn led a group of black-shirted men, who carried two enormous red and black banners with the legend “Taking a Stand of the Next Generation”. Behind this leading group, many more men in black marched in lines.

the slip of a finger takes you to a very similar very detailed parody site, which is also well worth a look.

All of these men wore the “Enough is Enough” t-shirts, a slogan that the group, led by men with loudhailers, shouted in an ongoing chant, raising their fists in the air.

Following the men in a similar formation came a large number of young boys, also dressed in the t-shirts. Much further behind followed the women, in much less uniform style and dress. At the back of the march, like the generals marching behind the troops, walked the high-ranking members of Destiny, including Pastor Tamaki, Hannah Tamaki, and Richard Lewis. Interestingly, none of this group wore the “Enough is Enough” t-shirt, but Tamaki and Lewis wore similar black suits, with black and white patterned ties. Tamaki walked hand-in-hand with his wife, who was dressed in a very formal red hat and coat, creating a strong visual statement amongst the crowds of black-clad men. The combined colours of red, white, and black are also the colours of the Maori sovereignty flag and the *tino rangitiratanga* movement. The importance of this small group of leaders within the carefully composed hierarchy of the march was emphasised by the fact that they walked under black umbrellas, held by others, that sheltered them from the inclement Wellington weather.

The composition of the march was obviously carefully choreographed. Reminiscent of a Leni Riefenstahl extravaganza, the performance was clearly directed not only the people of Wellington but towards the avid cameras of the news media. This was a spectacle, and even the very basic Christian intention behind the march was secondary to the images that were shown on every news channel that night: a group of unified Maori men, marching, identically dressed, through the streets of the capital to Parliament. If, as Walter Benjamin argues in the conclusion to his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”:

The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life (241),

then perhaps this fascistic performance of an ideal masculinity in Destiny’s marches reflects the introduction of aesthetics into religious life, or rather, its re-introduction.

The performative elements of religious worship, dispensed with by the early Protestants, are re-introduced. In Destiny's march, just as in its church services, it is the performance elements that produce meaning, rather than the words or the Word by itself. The Word is aestheticised: it is in the circumstances of its delivery that meaning is produced. The Protestant ideal of the Word as the pure and literal word of God is dispensed with. "Enough is enough" are words that on their own mean little: but the images of protest, the warriors, the black-shirted men marching in formation, create a message that is transmitted to the viewers. The march, like the evangelistic process leading to it, erases individuality from the body of the congregation, and enforces rules of common behaviour along with a belief-system that dictates what is right and wrong. This is not about words: the image is everything.

The images of the march clearly raised a lot of symbolic associations for the watchers, not all of which may have been intended. The equation of the marchers with Nazi brown-shirts was almost inescapable, but there were other connotations with more local historical events. The march was certainly reminiscent of the Maori land march, when tribes walked the North Island to converge on Parliament to protest land confiscation, and the more recent "Hikoi of Hope" whereby people walked in concern for the plight of the poor. The Land March is seen as having been a great step forward for Maori in the battle for social justice in New Zealand. That Destiny is not explicitly protesting issues of land ownership, or even the conditions of Maori in particular, is irrelevant to the sense of legitimacy that this conveys, a sense that Destiny represents not only the Christians of New Zealand, but the Maori people more widely. This is in spite of the fact that the issues that Destiny campaign on are not "Maori issues" per se, rather moral or conscience issues that stem from biblical readings. If Destiny might be seen to be creating an identity in relation to others, it is on the basis of religion and morality, not ostensibly on ethnicity, with Tamaki at

various times during his Christchurch service speaking out against Buddhists building their temple in Auckland, and an associated “eastern invasion of their spirits and gods,” Hindus, Muslims, “crafty gay movements,” and fathers whose liberal tendencies meant that they failed to protect their families because: “Every Dad has been given the power of God to protect the virginity of his children.” This erased the traditional bi-cultural splits in New Zealand society in favour of new outsiders.

The image of men marching side by side was extraordinarily evocative. This was a show of force, a group of men united in their desire to challenge the decisions of the government. The sheer presence of these men implied agreement with Tamaki’s message. These men were followed by ranks of boys, representing the “next generation” for whom this entire spectacle was ostensibly mounted. The presence of the children was controversial because many beholders of the spectacle felt that the boys were too young to have a proper understanding of what precisely the march was advocating. One television camera crew managed to interview one of the boys who said simply that they were marching “against the bad people.” The moral outrage accorded to this revelation perhaps ignores the point that perhaps many of those on the march did not share a conception of its purpose that was much more sophisticated, or, for that matter, the possibility that no one really watching knew what it was about, either. Benjamin sees Fascism as attempting to organise the newly created masses, and giving them an expression (241). The “Enough is enough” slogan is the slogan of a mass: the kind of political formula that everyone could stand behind – so broadly general as to become linguistically meaningless. What the marchers had to say was more or less irrelevant compared to the aesthetic exhibition of the march itself.

While the protest worked as a performance of common commitment for the members of the church, its main audience remained the public of New Zealand, and

the government of New Zealand, both of which were a more varied, secular audience. As such, Tamaki toned down the specificity of his doctrine. It was easily understood and digested by its new audience. Kertzer describes protests as invented rituals that aim to produce “bonds of solidarity without requiring uniformity of belief” (Kertzer 67). It seems that this accurately reflects the nature of the “Enough is Enough” march. The audience of the public (as well as the marchers themselves) could not be presumed to share a horizon of belief, so the message was adjusted away from specificity towards repetitive slogans so general that it became difficult to formulate logical disagreement. “Enough is enough” was extremely successful in this regard. One could not respond with “Enough isn’t enough,” yet formulating rebuttal for all points of view covered by this umbrella slogan was impossible. In regarding the way in which affirmation can move crowds, Le Bon notes that “words whose sense is the most ill-defined are sometimes those that possess the most influence” (103). While Le Bon gives examples such as “liberty” and “democracy,” one suspects that “family values” might fall well within his definition. “Enough is Enough” is even less well defined in this context.

While the organisers of the march articulated that they marched against recent government legislation such as the legalisation of prostitution and the Civil Unions Bill (although public attention focused on the latter) the slogan became an umbrella for any sort of discontent with current policies or society in general. Other slogans displayed by marchers ranged from the explicit “Civil Union = Civil Ruin,” and “No Prostitution,” to the obscure: “Put God’s DNA back into our Families,” to the perhaps entirely unrelated: “Enough is enough...give us back our foreshore.” The lumping together of a number of issues under the same banner meant that it was difficult to fully disagree, or at least, to quickly articulate a response. Perhaps the most evocative sign was one that read: “Human wrong does not equal Human Rights,” which

expressed the essential conflict between a perception of the government's liberal social policies, and the marchers' interpretation of biblical prohibitions. The marchers marched for God, and those opposed were therefore cast as against God.

Perhaps unfortunately for Destiny, the performative qualities of their march were more than specific enough to polarise public opinion. The matching shirts, the marching, the fists in the air, and the changed slogans made a firm connection in the minds of many bystanders and media commentators. Although the march was billed as a "peaceful protest" many witnesses noted the resemblance of this highly choreographed and disciplined march to a Nazi rally (an interpretation no doubt influenced by the nature of the subject matter). What Destiny said the protest was about could not compete with what the watchers saw. The image was powerful and evocative, creating its own meanings for a disgruntled audience. One female bystander was filmed by the Holmes show yelling "What about the Jews? What about the Gypsies? Go on, do the lot of them while you're at it." The march generated a lot of emotional responses of this nature. There were a reasonably significant number of counter-protestors. Members of this group held signs reading "Hitler called –he wants a shirt!" and "Not my Destiny". One counter-protestor wrote in her weblog:

It wasn't just the uniforms, the marching and the salutes that made people think of Nazi Germany. It was the blank looks that were given. The way they all shouted the same slogan over and over. The way they were following...seemingly without giving it much thought.³

This lack of thought is perhaps not accidental, but rather part of the point of what is being performed here. What may be read from this is not only agreement with the beliefs espoused by the speakers at the march, but unquestioning obedience. In a sense, this may be seen as a natural development from the performances at Destiny in Christchurch. The marching troops of Destiny are the fulfilment of the promise given

³ Beautiful Monsters: <http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/ecoqueer/archives/0036699.html>. This site also has posted a number of powerful images of the rally and counter-protest, as well as a number of posts, representing members of the counter-protest, with apparently some members of Destiny responding.

in Tamaki's own performance. The march is not about theological subtlety, but another performance, this time en masse, of the masculine identity presented by Destiny. Just as the boy questioned by the media answered that he was "against the bad people," the fallback answer when the adult marchers were asked the similar question was along the lines of "because God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve," – a kind of high-school homophobe's joke uttered with all the conviction of a biblical quotation. What spectators and media commentators took away from the march was partly Destiny's strong opposition to solo mothers, prostitutes and homosexuality, but also a sense of the strength and unity of the Destiny community. The march claimed a position within society, and within the political spectrum, apparently the moral high-ground. When the Civil Unions Bill passed into Law, Tamaki and supporters were widely reported as looking down "stony-faced" from the public galleries as members of Parliament celebrated in the house below.

Tamaki's leadership of Destiny Church might be seen as the most recent in an ongoing series of evangelistic performances that have sought to convert and to civilise the people of New Zealand. The process by which I have identified the audience becoming a congregation might be seen to occur within Destiny, but its institution is more subtle, because the evangelistic performance occurs over time. It may be that the insistence on planting in the church, and the commitment of fiscal investment is geared towards the establishment of long-term relationships with the church. Only over time, it is proposed, with the ongoing spiritual cover of the pastor, can true commitment be achieved. Seemingly, this occurs outside of the panoptic model of Foucault. Tamaki's evangelism focuses on his own celebrity as a model, and as he is "one of us," this transference works. Whereas Hinn selected the young man Jason from out of the crowd, and transformed him in front of the audience as a

representative of that audience, Tamaki presented himself as our representative.

Within the Destiny service, all eyes were turned towards Tamaki.

Perhaps the Christchurch services, in fact, all Destiny services, might be seen as preparation for the public act of arrival staged in the “Enough is Enough” protest. The evangelistic process is writ large on the streets of Wellington. The streets were literally cleared of traffic (with the cooperation of the Wellington City Council), and while there were still pedestrians present, as the march converged on Parliament, all present who did not explicitly position themselves with the counter-protest became aligned with the overwhelming numbers of Destiny supporters. Walking into the central city, the march restaged the arrival of Marsden, making the entire capital into their territory, perhaps even making the entire nation their church. In a context where the church is defined by where the people are, when the people entered the city, that city was redefined as their church.

The haka performed at the steps of Parliament was at once a challenge, and a statement of intent. The haka in this context is not a welcome, but a prelude to battle, and an act of aggression. It positioned the group in opposition to the Parliament buildings, and everything that they might be seen to stand for: tradition, the authority of the government, and the liberal social policies that were in the process of being introduced. It also set the scene for the emergence of the Destiny political party in the election that was to follow. When Tamaki preached to the crowd from in front of the Parliament buildings, he set himself up as an alternate authority to match that of the government. The entirety of the protest march was a performance of what Tamaki had promised in Christchurch: the church “taking back” the nation for Jesus Christ.

The efficacy of this ritual of protest must be considered retrospectively. Seemingly, the march had little to no impact on the decisions made by Parliament. The legislation legalising civil unions passed into law by a narrow majority. If

anything, the sight of Georgina Beyer (a transsexual MP) on the steps of Parliament challenging the crowd in tears as they jeered at her and called her “George” raised support for the liberal legislations, rather than for Destiny Church. The march may not have been effective in changing the views of the public, but it was nonetheless effective, in claiming an identity for the people of Destiny.

It is here, rather than in the confines of the church, that the Destiny congregation became actors. The cameras of the media reinforced the panoptic schema that was less obvious (but by no means absent) within the Destiny services in Christchurch. One could argue that the congregation is monitored in regular Destiny services, but that the eye of the pastor was upon the congregation, and also that the congregation chiefly monitors itself. Once one has officially joined Destiny, the flow of money into the Destiny coffers is also monitored: it was reported on *60 Minutes* that those who fell behind on payments, or cancelled them altogether, soon received a phone call to check up on progress (much like a financial default on any hire-purchase or debt-repayment agreement). The inadvertent pressure to dress alike and behave appropriately is coercive, but one could argue that it is only in the march on Parliament that the congregation of Destiny truly came into its own in a performance of its own corporate identity. This was the fulfilment of the inherent promise of Tamaki’s leadership, the emergence of a new tribe of bi-cultural, and warlike, Christian men.

This performance was of an army of strong men, marching with a simple message, and with absolute obedience to the church and its pastor. The men led the protest, and the boys, the future generation of men, followed them. The women came after, less regimented, less disciplined, like camp followers. The Church became, as Tamaki had foretold, an Army of the Lord, fighting against liberalism and sin as represented by the government of New Zealand. In that moment, the Word of God, as

recorded in the Bible, was of little importance, compared to the strong image of strong men, marching in righteousness, and representing an aestheticisation of both politics and religious life.

CONCLUSION

In January 2004, I was invited to work on an independent film project directed by Peter Falkenberg, titled *Remake*. Specifically, my task was to assist with the direction of a scene in which the film's two female protagonists (Marian and Liz) visit a charismatic Christian church. The narrative of this episode was relatively simple. Entering into a scene of joyous and fervent worship, the two young women join the congregation. After a sermon from the pastor, Marian walks forward in the altar call, is prayed over, and finally touched on the forehead by the pastor in front of the congregation. The scene was accompanied by an increasing pitch of enthusiasm from the congregants, culminating in a cut at the dramatic climax of Marian falling to the floor, apparently "slain in the Spirit."

Given my field of research, I was pleased to accept this opportunity to put into practice some of the observations I had made of evangelistic church practices, both at Destiny Church and the Miracle Crusade, and also at a number of church services around the city during the period of my research. In some ways, it seemed like a natural conclusion: having observed evangelistic services, and found them inherently performative I was to take note of the performance elements I had seen employed, and use them in turn in the creation of a filmic representation. Both Benny Hinn and Brian Tamaki construct an image of worship that is captured on camera. My work on *Remake* was to do exactly that: although in this case, the service could be seen as "fake" or, more precisely, a representation of a service, without "real" worshippers and without "real" belief. The reason I have difficulty with these terms is that, in many ways, the "fake" service was compelling and convincing: and in very real ways,

the experience of attending (and acting) on set was not that different from attending (and acting) in church.

The words, both sung and spoken, were written by the actors and the director, and although not taken directly from the Bible were imitations of worship songs and sermons from services they had attended. For example, George Parker, playing Pastor Flint, used a sermon about “vulnerability” gleaned from another service. George spoke passionately and convincingly about Christianity – but he was speaking about what he believed to be true about acting and the theatre. In this sense, his words were both “true” and “not true”: George is not a pastor (although one might argue he shows great promise) and he was not talking about God. However, he was speaking about something he believed in very firmly. His performance of the Word was moving, even though the meaning had fundamentally altered from its original context. The meaning of the Word was produced in its performance, rather than existing independently, and was both affecting and effective.

The overwhelming observation I must make of the process of building a congregation for filming is this: despite a minimum of rehearsal for the congregants (seeing as the extras were volunteers and mostly available only on the day of filming) and the time restrictions imposed with only one day’s availability of the location, it was remarkably easy. Evangelistic services are easy to replicate. The performance of the evangelist pastor (George) was easy to imitate with a series of gestures and the appropriate charismatic sincerity. Services have a clear progression of action, an episodic nature that is extremely suitable for the process of filming, and the roles are clearly defined: the pastor, his wife, his second-in-command, the worship team and the amassed crowd of congregants.

The main component of my task was to wrangle the crowd of extras that had assembled to perform as the congregation. The group of actors involved was extremely varied. Some were very experienced, with a number working at the time on another, very different, physical theatre project. The rest was a diverse group of people, mainly the friends, relatives and friends of friends of the cast and crew. Many of these could not attend the preliminary rehearsal the previous day, and turned up, for the first time, on the day of filming.

At the rehearsal, we learned a worship song: “Holy Spirit, Enter me,” composed by Liz and Marian, and rehearsed the gestures of worship. On the day of filming, the song was accompanied by a small band: keyboardist, drummer, and electric guitar. The congregation was told when to stand and when to sit, and the way in which to stand, with hands raised, and eyes closed, in order to appear most devout. In some ways, the extras were the Maori to my Ruatara, willing to go along graciously with what I asked, even while the ultimate outcome and purpose – the effect – might not have been entirely clear. Those who had been to the previous rehearsal were initially more skilled, but through the rehearsal effect of repetition, this gap narrowed, and in some ways this dynamic rather serendipitously served our purposes. Those who were less experienced mimicked the gestures and exuberance of those who knew the song well, until they became comfortable enough with the performance to commit to it with enthusiasm. Just like in an evangelistic service (even though I hadn’t planned it that way) there were those who mimicked others who knew what to do. It struck me that the creation of our pretend congregation, through a ritual of song and repetition, through placing a group of people together, eyes closed, hands raised to God (we took the gestures directly from a video of the Miracle Crusade), was fundamentally similar to the actual experience of being a congregant at

an evangelistic event, only without any idea whatsoever of God actually being present.

Filming always seems to take longer than you expect. In this case, there was a long shot-list, and even shots outside the venue and close-ups on the emotional responses of the two young women as they performed their line of action within the scene required full commitment from the extras in order that the ambience - and sound levels - should remain constant. It was a long day, heavy with repetitions, with the group of congregants performing their song and their movements over and over again. This could be interpreted as our own experience of affirmation and repetition, and it seemed that contagion was not far behind. While, in the first few takes, the extras were stiff and not particularly convincing, as we ran the scene again and again, through multiple takes, everyone relaxed, and the group gelled as a convincing congregation. A sense of excitement and fellowship emerged, and the celebratory feeling of the performing congregation stretched beyond the takes. When, finally, at the end of a long afternoon, we sat outside the Music Centre and ate pizza and drank beer, it appeared to me that we had accidentally made a kind of congregation, a community, by going through the actions of evangelistic ritual. It did not matter that we had no shared belief, and it did not matter that we did not speak the Word of God. It did not matter that some of us would never see each other again: for the purposes of the afternoon, we had become a congregation. For the purposes of the film, we were as reasonably convincing a congregation as any.

It seems to me that the act of worship we staged for *Remake* had its own sort of efficacy even when purely theatrical and constructed for cinematic purposes. The split consciousness of the actors, between concentrating on their own (and each other's) actions and the awareness of a camera (that in this case was there explicitly

for the purpose of creating a film) replicated in many ways the experience of being at the Miracle Crusade. It seemed that in the evangelistic context, to do is to become: action has efficacy even when simulated. I was reminded of Richard Schechner's decision to become a Hindu, on the basis that he wanted access to the temples to see the performances within. Tantalised by the performances he saw on the streets, Schechner describes himself as having been "hungry for what was happening inside" (1993 3). He decided, somewhat apprehensively, to convert. Schechner, perhaps a little uncertain about the ethics of such a transformation, and what it meant to his own sense of personal identity as an atheist and a Jew, writes:

I learned [...] of the objective power of ritual acts despite the duplicity, or worse, of those undertaking them (1993 4).

The literal belief in the words of the ceremony was unnecessary; Schechner still emerged a Hindu, with access to all those holy places hitherto denied him. Putting together the evangelistic scene for *Remake*, there was no necessity for belief in the words spoken. We nonetheless found that even going through a representation of the performance of service contained its own sense of efficacy. The question is, whether the same is true of any evangelistic ritual. Is belief necessary at all on the part of the congregation for the ritual to be effective, for the outcome to be assured?

From a purely practical standpoint, the elements needed to produce this scene were simple. The space was ready-made, a de-sacralised chapel attached to a former convent which now houses the Music Centre of Christchurch. This building has many of the architectural traits of a church, with a high, vaulted ceiling, church windows, and old wooden pews still lining the walls. The Chapel is now used for concerts, orchestra rehearsals, and piano examinations. It was originally a place of worship, however, and that aura still remains: it still looks holy, even if according to the Church it is not. Into this space, we brought a small band, a microphone, an

overhead projector with transparencies for the lyrics of our worship song, and importantly, actors – all the elements necessary for a service.

On reflection, the use of the old chapel, while in many ways ideal for the act of filming (which was, after all, the point of the exercise), was almost counterproductive in creating an authentic evangelistic representation. Evangelism occurs outside of the church, and makes a virtue of using the materials at hand to create a churchlike atmosphere. So, for example, Ruatara, acting for Marsden, made pews out of the upturned canoes. Benny Hinn used the lights of the Westpac Trust Centre to give the churchlike appearance of light falling through stained glass windows. Brian Tamaki turned a school hall into a church, and then replicated the process on the streets of Wellington. When setting up the space for the filming of *Remake*, some tension emerged between me and the music director over the possibility of using a grand piano that was stored in the Chapel. For him it seemed like a grand opportunity to produce a better quality soundtrack for the scene. I argued that even if this location was used for a “real” evangelistic service, it was doubtful to me that a group such as the one we were portraying would use the grand piano. In many churches around Christchurch, I have seen the same thing: a band of young men who play the guitar and keyboards, and a group of young women who sing. The point is not their musical virtuosity (or the quality of their instruments) but their ability to step, Tamaki-like, out of the crowd and to become leaders. In doing so, they become role-models for the other members of the congregation, the implication being that if they can do it, any one of the other members of the congregation might also be able to step up.

The importance of the use of space in evangelistic performance cannot be overstated. The evangelist walks onto an empty stage, and turns it into a church. The

division of space between inside and outside creates meaning that suffuses the entire interaction between evangelist and audience. In each of the case studies, space is claimed, and in each case, the division between sacred and profane encompasses other meanings. For example, the holy space created by Ruatara for Samuel Marsden's First Service equated holiness with civilisation, implicating the space outside the fence of the church enclosure as not only profane, but wild. This connection was aided by the embodiment of holiness and civilisation in the person of Marsden, but also in those who accompanied him: the Maori chiefs Ruatara, Korokoro and Shunghee, dressed in regimental uniforms and bearing arms. These intermediary figures between the British and the Maori congregants advertised a way of being in the world that clearly benefited from Christianity and Civilisation. The flagpole from which Ruatara hung the Union Jack was raised every Sunday afterwards to indicate the Sabbath, so that the indication of the holy day was represented by the sign of Empire. The missionaries who Marsden left behind him after he returned to Parramatta were all "mechanics": skilled in the "civilised arts" of agriculture and carpentry. Marsden saw civilisation and Christianity as inseparable, and his performance of evangelism might be seen to have reflected that. Inside and outside became holy and profane, belonging and excluded, and civilised and uncivilised.

Benny Hinn might be seen to have sanctified the space of the Westpac Trust Centre, but the symbolic barriers created around the audience/congregation were differently inflected. Inside the Westpac Trust Centre was a congregation of believers, compared to an outside inhabited by the faithless. In this case, holiness was attached to ideas of health and wholeness, whereas outside was illness and dirt. Only through the combined faith of everyone present could healing happen. Because of

this, when healing apparently occurred, the miracles served the dual purposes of showing the presence of the Lord and proving the faith of every single person present.

Within the Destiny Church services I attended, an inside and outside was clearly produced. Brian Tamaki staged his service in the Hall of Christchurch Boys High School, a choice that underlined one of the aims of Destiny: to take over the education of boys into men. While the inside and outside were less concretely spatial, with Brian Tamaki creating the more metaphorical zone of spiritual “cover”, the separation was still clearly marked, and inside and outside were again inflected with a whole set of meanings. The inside of Destiny is holy, masculine, and strong, the outside – literally the rest of New Zealand – is feminised, weak, and morally corrupt.

The very values of the sacred and the profane are changed within such a performance. The evangelists present Christianity in tandem with a set of related but not identical ideals. So, Maori were offered civilisation and trading opportunities along with the Gospel. Hinn’s audience was offered prosperity, health and physical wellbeing. Tamaki’s congregation was offered prosperity, and a return to the strong masculinity of the past – a reassertion of clear (and therefore, comforting) social roles. In each case, evangelistic performance may be seen to offer a role within the service that equates to a role in the society as a whole. A British Citizen. A Global Partner. A Strong Man. In all three cases (just as with *Remake*), these transformations were recorded and even, arguably, staged for an absent audience.

What these case studies suggest to me is that within the performance of worship, belief is produced through action. The belief or moral position of the individuals that make up the congregation is irrelevant. If this seems reductive – a kind of “you are what you eat” theory of religious practice – such a conclusion seems nonetheless supported by the evidence. Put another way: what is the difference

between an evangelistic service filmed for an audience, and a filmic recreation of an evangelistic service that shares all of the physical actions? What is the difference between attendees at the Miracle Crusade and an instant congregation assembled purely for cinematic purposes? The answer may be: nothing in particular.

Protestantism involved a move away from mutual ritual worship towards a concentration on the state of the individual soul. Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* might be seen to reflect this: replacing the Catholic Mass with a ceremony in English that might be fully understood by each individual, who might then go home to consider carefully the state of his or her soul. Marsden's First Service might be seen, ultimately, to reverse that process. His congregant audience of Maori did not understand the content of the service, and the meanings were produced simply by their presence, and the implied compliance that could be understood from their acquiescence with the instructions of the British. It may be that in evangelistic performances, the individual understanding, as Ruatara suggested, comes later: certainly in the first contact of evangelistic performance, Christian belief is demonstrated (or inferred from) a number of factors, including presence, obedience and compliance with the structure of the service, and the presentation of self according to the precepts of the group.

Evangelistic performance never ends. It is never fulfilled. Evangelism initiates an ongoing process. The successful transmission of the practice of Christianity does not mean that the evangelist need cease his activities, rather that he is joined in performing by those for whom he once performed. The congregation become actors: active participants who perform a model of behaviour. Ultimately, the congregation becomes evangelists themselves, taking their own translation of the Word, and their own version of the performance practices passed on, to a new

congregation, or, finally, reflecting them back at the culture that once gave them. The Word, translated, changes. The message and meaning of the services changes. Rather than having an “unmediated relationship with God” each new congregation becomes the latest listener in a game of theological Chinese whispers.

Is the Word irrelevant? I would argue, no. While the meaning of the Word is in a constant state of adaptation and flux, the idea of the Word remains relatively constant. It is powerful because of its very status as the “literal word of God.” When Benny Hinn holds a Bible in his hand and speaks his own words, the Bible gives him authority. It is probably blasphemous to suggest, but the idea of the evangelist as the mediator between the individual and God perhaps disguises the fact that there is no God needed, whatever “God” means. The Word of God is replaced by the performer or the performance.

The history of evangelism in New Zealand is linked very closely with some crucial developments of the nation – but what we remember from these moments is not the Word of God. It is the images of performance that are remembered, celebrated and denigrated. We sing no songs about what, in particular, Marsden told the Maori; in all but the most recent historical investigations, the lack of common language is completely ignored. We remember the picture of a sunny Christmas Day in 1814, on a beach, with the British sharing their knowledge of God with the delighted savages. We remember the “Enough is Enough” march with some anxiety, but the precise words spoken by Tamaki are long forgotten. Ironically, when we even remember Martin Luther, it is his performance, rather than his words, that we recall – a man striding up to a church door, and nailing up his demands, changing the world, but perhaps, in some ways, not changing it all that much at all.

Luther's action eventually caused a schism that tore the Catholic Church in two. Protestantism emerged as a religious doctrine driven by its early thinkers' desire to dispense with the mediation of the Church, and concentrate on an unmediated personal relationship with God through close study of the Word. The early Protestants discarded ritual and image and all the rich accoutrements of the Catholic Church. The Bible was translated so everyone could read it and the new technology of the printing press made it widely available. The Word was a direct link to God. Faith was paramount: salvation could no longer be bought.

The paradox within Protestantism is this: while faith might be individual, religious worship, in the form of services, is social. Furthermore, in order for the new religion to spread, Protestant evangelists had to spread the Word of God, to new places and new cultures, where a literal understanding of the Word was not a given. Evangelists move outside of their own cultural context: they go to new places to take the Word to new people. Evangelism demands demonstration: where there is a lack of shared language or a cultural divide, the Word of God cannot be literally understood. Missionaries and evangelists, in such cases, must demonstrate the reality of God, rather than simply offer the Word. Because evangelists cannot use the Word (or in some cases, use words at all) to explain God, the message must be performed in other ways. The result is the re-Catholisation of Protestant faith through the image of the performance. God becomes a spectacle. God can be seen in the bodies of the healed, in the bodies of the collapsing congregants, in the obedience of the men marching through the streets of Wellington.

God is invisible, and evangelism seeks to make the invisible visible. Encountering the impossibility of a literal understanding of the Word, evangelists like Samuel Marsden, Benny Hinn and Brian Tamaki sought (and seek) to demonstrate

God's presence through spectacle. In so doing, they create belief: which in the final analysis must be seen as something different from faith. Belief is a trust in the existence of things. From a Protestant perspective, faith is a trust in the existence of things *unseen*. Evangelists, by performing God's presence (for example, through performing miracles) create belief at the expense of faith, because faith in something you can see is pretty cheap – and maybe cannot be regarded as faith at all.

Ultimately, this represents the aestheticisation of religious life: perhaps even fascism, in Walter Benjamin's definition. Individual faith is unimportant: what matters is performance, and what a performance it is. A congregation, rather than a group of likeminded believers, becomes a group in which members act alike and dress alike, and in so doing embody (for an audience of the nation) the values that the man up front suggests are deemed appropriate by God. The meaning of the Word is produced entirely through performance. In the end, in the performance of evangelism, Protestantism ironically returns back to the Church it once protested against.

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