



Te Whare Tapa Whā Māori Health Model and Spiritual Direction

by

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Introduction

This research paper explores how Dr Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā Māori Mental Health and Well-being model could be beneficial to spiritual direction relationships, first for Māori, then non-Māori, in Aotearoa New Zealand. The content is as follows: a description of my connection with Te Ao Māori; a description of the interviewees; an introduction to the model; followed by an exploration of each of the four walls (or dimensions) with input from the interviewees in relation to spiritual direction. I will conclude by discussing the issues and implications for spiritual direction and Māori that have come to my attention as a result of this research.

My Background

I am first-generation New Zealand European. My parents migrated from England in 1952 and my birthplace is Tauranga. There is a gentle thread of connection with things Māori running through my schooling,¹ the local Anglican Church,² Teachers' College,³ and my teaching career.⁴ This thread has been strengthened by whānau links: two family members are married to Māori, of which one family has fully embraced Te Ao Māori within a Christian spirituality framework.⁵ Since 2012, most of my teaching has been in two local primary schools where over 47% of the students are Māori. Earlier this year, my attention was drawn to Te Whare Tapa Whā because it underpins the hauora (health and wellbeing) education of the class I usually teach in.⁶ I have a growing desire to understand Te Ao Māori and have much to learn. The findings presented in this paper are offered with humble awareness that I am not tangata whenua (people of the land) and I am looking from the outside in. However, I am privileged to be tangata Tiriti (people of the Treaty).⁷ I hope my kōrero (conversation) is mana-enhancing⁸ for Māori, and provides helpful insights for all.

The Interviewees

During July and August 2021, I interviewed five people for this project: four spiritual directors (one man and three women) with 18 to 54 years of spiritual direction experience, plus one Māori woman

¹ I acknowledge the Māori teacher I had during Standard Two, who taught our class Māori waiata and correct pronunciation of Māori words. School visits to the local marae and the influence of Māori peers.

² I acknowledge the influence of Archdeacon Tikituturangi Raumati (Ngāti Mutunga, Te Atiawa, Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Kahungunu), Vicar of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Mt Maunganui (1975 - 1978). I also acknowledge the influence of Rev. Bruce and Catherine White, who succeeded Tiki. Bruce was the first Pākehā I met who could speak te reo Māori fluently.

³ This included: Compulsory Māori studies; a marae visit; and engagement with Māori teacher trainees.

⁴ This included: Learning from Māori students; using simple te reo Māori vocabulary in the classroom; teaching Māori waiata, art and traditional games; and completing an "Introduction to Māori Theology and Spirituality" paper through the Catholic Institute of Theology in Auckland in 2002.

⁵ Recently this particular family returned to live on the tūrangawaewae (foot-hold, standing place, homeland) of the mother's iwi. The parents are studying te reo Māori at the local wānanga and the children attend the nearby kura kaupapa.

⁶ This class comprises 120 Year 5 and 6 students with 4 teachers in a flexible learning space.

⁷ And to use the words of one of my Pākehā interviewees, I am privileged to be a whāngai mokopuna (adopted grandchild) of Aotearoa New Zealand,

⁸ Mana has many shades of meaning including prestige, authority, control, power and influence. Put simply, mana-enhancing practice is a way of engaging with others that cares for the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual dimensions of a person. (Royal, 2006) as quoted by Huriwai & Baker, pp 5-6.

who has experience as a directee.⁹ I sent each a questionnaire prior to the interview and went through it during the interview.¹⁰ Two of the interviewees have Māori ancestry. Both these women grew up in a Western lifestyle, and only began to explore their identity as Māori later.¹¹ The other three interviewees are Pākehā. All interviewees have (or have had) significant involvement in various Māori contexts. All value te reo Māori and speak it with varying levels of proficiency. All are very familiar with Te Whare Tapa Whā.

Introducing Te Whare Tapa Whā

Te Whare Tapa Whā, (the house of four sides) was originally devised by Dr Mason Durie in 1982.¹² The walls of the house represent four dimensions of Māori well-being: taha wairua (spiritual health); taha tinana (physical health); taha hinengaro (mental and emotional health); and taha whānau (family health).¹³ This simple model appealed to Māori because of its holistic approach and the recognition of spirituality as a significant contributor to good health.¹⁴ Durie emphasises that all four dimensions are interconnected.¹⁵ The interviewees wholeheartedly supported this.¹⁶ One described the level of interrelatedness as like the merging of separate ingredients when making scones. Another commented: “My directees come to the door laughing or crying, knowing that they will be welcomed just as they are, that they can bring anything and everything to spiritual direction.”

Durie adds that should one of the four dimensions be missing or damaged, a person (or collective) may become ‘unbalanced’ and subsequently unwell.¹⁷ One interviewee is part of a group that regularly uses a personal reflection sheet based on Te Whare Tapa Whā. Individuals assess each dimension to determine overall life balance, then share with the group. I heard the story of a Māori man who worked at a Māori Health Camp. He carried in his pocket four stones. One had the word

⁹ A big thank you to my interviewees – for your presence, your stories, your knowledge and your time!

¹⁰ Each interview was recorded with the person’s permission and transcribed by me. Their identities are kept confidential, in keeping with SIP guidelines. See Appendix One for a copy of the questionnaire.

¹¹ One Māori interviewee described how her mother consciously rejected things Māori because she wanted to fit in. She was colonised, which was the norm for Māori people in her day. The interviewee said how it is important for people in caring roles, including spiritual direction, to be aware of the effects of colonisation upon Māori, and to be aware that each person is on a journey, located somewhere on a continuum between non-identification and full identification with their culture. She advised: “Don’t make assumptions based on how the person looks. A person with a brown skin may not be in touch with their Māori side. A person who looks Pākehā, may actually identify as Māori.”

¹² The model was first presented by Dr Mason Durie in August 1982 during a training session for fieldworkers in the Māori Women’s Welfare League research project, *Rapuora*. It was presented again by Durie at a health hui held at Palmerston North Hospital in December 1982. The model was further developed for the 10th Young People’s Hui held at Raukawa Marae, May 1983.

¹³ One interviewee commented that a good karakia (prayer) will probably mention all four dimensions.

¹⁴ See Durie, *Ngā Tini Whetū: Navigating Māori Futures*, p 306.

¹⁵ See Durie, *Whaiora*, pp 69 and 73.

¹⁶ All four dimensions are referred to in one single verse describing Jesus: “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and people.” Luke 2:52 (NASB)

¹⁷ See Durie, *Mauri Ora*, p 237. Pā Henare Tate highlights the importance of balance in relation to te tapu i te tangata (the intrinsic being of a person). He states that to live a wholesome life, all elements of being (including spiritual, physical, mental and emotional dimensions) must be developed because they make up the totality of a person’s tapu. To address or develop one or two elements to the exclusion of others, is to deny the wholeness of one’s person and is a violation of the totality of one’s tapu. p 69.

‘whanau’ written on it, the others ‘tīnana’, ‘wairua’ and ‘hinengaro’. When talking with a troubled youth, he would take out a stone, ask the person to hold it, and then say, “Tell me about your...” (whatever dimension on the stone). Being able to hold or touch an object originating from whenua (land), or maunga (mountain) or awa (river) adds another whole level of connectedness. Objects from nature have a place in the spiritual direction space.¹⁸

Tapa Wairua (Spiritual Health)

Tapa wairua is represented by the front wall and entrance to the whare. Durie describes taha wairua as encompassing many aspects, such as the capacity to have faith, spiritual awareness, mauri (spirit, vitality, life-spark)¹⁹, and belief in God for some. He notes that religious beliefs and practices are not synonymous with regular churchgoing or strong adherence to a particular denomination.²⁰ Taha wairua is evident in relationships with the environment, so land, lakes, mountains, and reefs have special significance. “A lack of access to tribal lands or territories is regarded by tribal elders as a sure sign of poor health since the natural environment is considered integral to identity and fundamental to a sense of well-being.”²¹ Taha wairua includes access to culture and heritage, from which a person’s identity unfolds.²² It also includes mutually rewarding encounters between people, opportunities for social and work relationships with other Māori, and a balanced relationship with whānau.²³

One Māori interviewee commented that “taha wairua affects everything,” and another said how “Māori spirituality and contemplative spirituality join hands.” Another stated: “It is important for spiritual directors to understand our parent culture because it will enhance one’s own spirituality.” One interviewee noted how Māori have a very close connection with the natural environment and how almost everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand has some kind of relationship with the ocean, bush, mountains or rivers. Another shared a story about a woman leader among Māori, who was feeling overwhelmed with work and family. He suggested that she really needed to go to her river with her husband and sit alongside it, as this is a place where Māori spirituality and Christian spirituality can meet. The woman later said: “As soon as you mentioned my river, I knew that was the answer!” As spiritual directors, we can offer similar life-giving and culturally relevant suggestions to our directees, or at least, ask: “What place nourishes your wairua?”

One interviewee said: “The Māori belief that this land, mountain or river is their literal ancestor is different to the Western view, but as a Pākehā, I can come under the manaaki (hospitality, nurture)²⁴ of the ancestors here, I am whangai by this land. That is, an adopted child.” She went on to say that “it is incredibly important for Māori, especially Māori cut off from their land, to be

¹⁸ For example: Stones, shells, flowers, leaves, seedpods, etc. Include objects that can be held.

¹⁹ For a fuller description of mauri, see: <https://arataiohi.org.nz/research/aotearoa-youth-research/mauri/> One interviewee stated that mauri is “utterly vital to Māori. It’s life or death.”

²⁰ See Durie, *Whaiora*, p 70.

²¹ *ibid.* p 70.

²² Cultural identity includes knowledge of te reo Māori, whakapapa (genealogy), tikanga (custom), and tribal history. See Durie, *Mauri Ora*, p 174.

²³ Durie, *Mauri Ora*, pp 243 and 174.

²⁴ Another interviewee talked about manaaki: “It encompasses more than hospitality. Aki means to inspire, nurture or increase. It is to enable the mana of a person, of all four sides of Te Whare Tapa Whā, to be enhanced.”

validated.” She highlighted the importance of spiritual directors being aware that every person who enters their room comes with a whakapapa - their ancestors, whānau, and descendants come with them.

Another underlined the importance of beginning and/or ending a spiritual direction session with a karakia (prayer) and said how a Māori directee would expect this ritual. However, if the person was Pākehā, this director would wait in order to sense whether they would like a prayer or not before offering one.

Another interviewee, who, in the past, had helped provide a weekly spiritual programme for Māori prisoners, said that the challenge was to move away from religious or church language to find the heart of spirituality. She used a variety of creative ways to do this, such as sketching objects from nature. This helped them to breathe into the mystery that is God.

Taha Hinengaro (Mental and Emotional Health)

Taha hinengaro is about the expression of thoughts and feelings, both of which derive from the same source within the person.²⁵ Māori don’t draw as sharp a distinction between these two things as the Western world does. Emotional communication is as meaningful as an exchange of words. For example, condolences are frequently conveyed with tears and infrequently with words.²⁶ One interviewee described how she learned to grieve by attending tangi, and learned when to move from grief to celebration of the deceased person. She commented, “In Western society often we don’t know how to stay with these movements for long enough.” All the interviewees talked about the importance of providing a safe space where directees can notice, name and express their feelings. One said how she may help a client or directee to release stuck emotions (such as grief) by offering to hold the person while they cry.²⁷ “She (the client) needed a deeper connection in order to release the bottled-up grief from her body. This allowed her to have an incredible cry.”²⁸

Durie describes Māori thinking as holistic. Understanding is gained by synthesis into wider contextual systems, by searching outwards rather than inwards. This is challenging for our western model of spiritual direction, which privileges interior movements. Durie adds that healthy thinking is integrative, not analytical.²⁹ One interviewee said when directees find prayer difficult, his job is to help them develop a better mental and emotional attitude to prayer. He may suggest that they pray somewhere different or go for a walk with God. Another mentioned a directee who needed to make a big decision, so the directee went to the place of her ancestors to talk to them about it. This communing with her ancestors was incredibly important to her. The same director also highlighted the value of knowing and using whakataukī (Māori proverbs) with Māori directees, and she encourages spiritual directors to build up their repertoire of these.³⁰

²⁵ See Durie, *Whaiora*, p 70.

²⁶ *ibid.* p 71.

²⁷ The interviewee explained how she is trained to do this, so the holding of the client or directee is done in a safe, caring, non-invasive way - and always with the person’s permission.

²⁸ This account demonstrates the interconnectedness between physical, emotional and social dimensions.

²⁹ *ibid.* pp 70-71.

³⁰ *Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tīpuna* (The Sayings of the Ancestors) by Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove, is an impressive collection of more than 2500 proverbs, charms, witticisms, figures of speech and boasts.

Durie states that communication for Māori depends on more than overt (spoken) messages. “Māori may be more impressed by the unspoken signals conveyed through subtle gesture, eye movement, or bland expression, and in some circumstances regard words as superfluous, even demeaning.”³¹ This view fits well with contemplative listening, where spiritual directors are attentive to all forms of communication.

One interviewee talked about the significance of mana³², and the importance of respecting the dignity of the directee. If a Pākehā director happens to be more fluent in te reo Māori than their Māori directee, for example, they must not show it, because that would diminish the mana of the directee. Humility is essential. Practical examples of guarding mana include sitting at the same level as the directee, with the chairs at an angle, using limited eye contact, and respecting personal space.³³ If a person’s mana is diminished in some way, this can cause them mental unwellness. If a directee was showing signs of mental distress, regardless of ethnicity, he or she should be encouraged to see a GP.

Taha Tinana (Physical Health)

Taha tinana, or physical health, includes mobility, activity levels, sleep patterns, pain issues³⁴ and eating patterns.³⁵ The interviewees all agreed that these are important areas to enquire about with directees. One said, “I model how listening to and caring for the body is very important.” She went on to say how a physical issue, such as overeating, may relate to another dimension, such as taha hinengaro. The directee may be feeling unhappy about something, or feeling stressed about work or family issues. Another interviewee said, “Spiritual directors help to awaken people to be in touch with their bodies and to be aware of how other things affect our bodies. For example, if a person is not sleeping, the source of the problem may be physical, emotional, spiritual or to do with whānau. Stress is shown in the body first. Learn to notice and pay attention to it.”

Durie states that Māori may be more accepting of well-rounded body shapes, and show less disapproval of obesity than society does in general.³⁶ One interviewee mentioned body image and how part of the spiritual direction role is helping directees to accept themselves and to look after themselves. He spoke of the importance of physical exercise and movement, of encouraging directees to go for a walk, even a short one. “It’s simple, yet so lifegiving.” Another interviewee has introduced directees to body prayer.³⁷

In taha tinana, Durie talks about the clear separation of tapu (sacred, restricted) and noa (ordinary, free from restrictions). Certain parts of the body, especially the head, are regarded as tapu (sacred), while bodily functions such as sleeping, eating, drinking and waste elimination are imbued with their own significance, reflecting various levels of importance and requiring quite different

³¹ *ibid.* p 71.

³² Tate’s definition of mana: spiritual power and authority, influence, control, prestige, status. p. 286.

³³ Moira McLennan has an excellent paragraph describing taha hinengaro (pp. 9-10) in her special interest project, “Māori Spirituality, Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Direction.” She provides these examples.

³⁴ See Durie, *Mauri Ora*, pp 237 and 243.

³⁵ Taumoepeau, p 11.

³⁶ See Durie, *Whaiora*, p 72.

³⁷ Body prayer is engaging the whole body in prayer – adopting postures that express your heart, e.g. lifting your hands, dancing, kneeling, or lying face down on the floor. It can be done individually or as a group.

rituals.³⁸ For example, food is a leveller which removes any vestiges of sacredness or distance between people.³⁹ One interviewee said how in group spiritual direction and on retreats, the director must be aware of the tapu and noa and the mauri of the group and the room. She explained how if a Māori directee talked about the death of a loved one, (thereby increasing tapu), she may invite the person to stand up and stretch, to wash their hands and/or have a cup of tea. Food, drink and water help to re-establish noa. A non-Māori directee may appreciate the offer of these things as well. One interviewee suggested having a pot-plant, a vase of flowers, or a water feature in the garden.

One interviewee said it is important to think of taha tinana in a communal rather than individualistic way. Directees bring their whakapapa into the room – their physical ancestors and their descendants, who are part of who they are continually. “See the person, see the whakapapa.”

Taha Whānau (Family Health)

Durie states that family is the prime support system for Māori, providing care and nurture, not only in physical terms, but culturally and emotionally.⁴⁰ Ill-health in an individual may be seen as a reflection on the family, with the family being blamed for allowing a person to become ill or die, even when there is no direct causal link.⁴¹ Māori value interdependence rather than independence. “A sense of personal identity derives as much, if not more, from family characteristics than from one’s occupation or place of residence.”⁴² Credibility in some Māori settings depends on the individual being able to make the links to family and tribal background and demonstrate active whānau and tribal support.⁴³ One interviewee said: “Each person is important, but each person is always seen in relationship.”⁴⁴

One Māori interviewee referred to whanaungatanga (family relationships, relationship structure)⁴⁵ and how it comes with rights and obligations which serve to strengthen each member of the whānau – how “our actions affect one another.”⁴⁶ Durie adds that in addition to involvement with relatives and friends, taha whānau also represents social outcomes in the broader context of human relationships and social functioning.⁴⁷

All interviewees highlighted the importance of whakapapa – how it gives Māori and non-Māori a place to stand. One shared a whakataukī: “We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone

³⁸ *ibid.* p 71. For example, a person shouldn’t sit on a pillow because the pillow is made for the head, or sit on a table because the table is for food.

³⁹ *ibid.* p 71.

⁴⁰ See Durie, *Whaiora*, p 72.

⁴¹ Durie expands on this by saying that there are times when the extended family may take it upon themselves to remove a child from parental custody and take over the caring role. For example, if the child is being abused or neglected. Parental rights often tend to be seen as secondary to the interests of the whānau or even the tribe, to ensure that future generations are protected. (p 72)

⁴² *ibid.* p 72.

⁴³ *ibid.* p 72.

⁴⁴ Tate describes how in Māori consciousness, three sets of relationships constitute who they are: with Atua (God), with tangata (people), and with whenua (the land). They are all inter-connected. p. 38.

⁴⁵ Brief definition provided in a Glossary by Tate, p 297.

⁴⁶ She went to make a connection with how the New Testament early church members supported one another, practically, spiritually and relationally.

⁴⁷ Durie, *Mauri Ora*, p 244.

before us.”⁴⁸ In spiritual direction one can ask: “What does your tupuna (ancestor) say? Or: “What’s a favourite whakataukī from your iwi (tribe)?” The interviewee added: “If a person doesn’t have a whānau, or has an abusive whānau, then his or her spirit, body and mind doesn’t have a grounding. No whakapapa, no whānau. Somehow this lack needs to be faced, and the person given one with their iwi, or in some other way. Otherwise, all our talk about prayer and so on, isn’t going to go very far.” Another interviewee said how she encourages her directees to bring their whole whānau and their cloud of witnesses with them, in their memories and imaginations. “It’s learning to belong to the cloud of witnesses, to people of faith who have gone before,⁴⁹ and choosing a few to study and imbibe, and letting them abide in you. Then they become part of our whānau.”

Durie says elsewhere that there needs to be a balance between healthy individualism and whānau interactions. He notes that for some people, whānau experiences have contributed excessively to suffering, and an unconditional return to the whānau would not be in the interests of health and well-being.⁵⁰ One interviewee talked about issues around spiritual abuse and family: “Before I tell a client or directee about spiritual abuse, when I have noticed its presence in what has been shared, I have to look at every wall of Te Whare Tapa Whā, and consider how it will affect them in their house if they begin to stand up to those who are using power over them.”⁵¹

Issues and implications

It is clear from my research that Te Whare Tapa Whā is a health model that can be used easily and effectively within spiritual direction relationships with Māori and non-Māori. There are more complex models,⁵² but the metaphor of a house with connecting walls is understood by all. It’s memorable, versatile and apt.⁵³

Durie’s original Te Whare Tapa Whā model refers to a whare (house) and does not include whenua (land) as a separate dimension.⁵⁴ However, on the Mental Health Foundation website, the whare has been upgraded to a wharenui (ancestral meeting house). This seems most appropriate, since the wharenui is central to the marae in at least three ways: It represents the body of an ancestor of the iwi; contains the whakapapa of its people; and is the gathering place for families, communities and tribes.⁵⁵ Whenua (land, roots) has also been added to the model.⁵⁶ The website states that the wharenui’s connection with whenua forms the foundation for the other four dimensions.⁵⁷ The recognition that whenua undergirds all other aspects, is a significant, valuable addition to the model.

⁴⁸ In te reo Māori this translates as: “Me tū ka runga i ngā pakihwi o ōu tupuna.”

⁴⁹ Such as: Teresa of Avila, Hildegard of Bingen, St. John of the Cross, or Julian of Norwich.

⁵⁰ See Durie, *Mauri Ora*, p 244.

⁵¹ The people holding power over them might be their church leaders, husband, aunty or big brother.

⁵² Such as Te Wheke (the octopus). See Durie, *Whaiora*, p 74 for a description of this model.

⁵³ The Pacific Island communities of Aotearoa New Zealand have their own version of Te Whare Tapa Whā, known as The Fonofale Model. It may be helpful for spiritual directors to learn about this particular model if they have directees who identify with a Pacific Island culture.

⁵⁴ Durie mentions the connection to whenua under taha wairua. Durie, *Whaiora*, p 70.

⁵⁵ See <https://www.tamakimaorivillage.co.nz/our-stories/what-truths-do-our-wharenui-hold/>

⁵⁶ See Appendix 2.

⁵⁷ See <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>

A key finding that emerged from the interviews is that there are very few Māori involved in formal, one-to-one spiritual direction. The interviewees suggested possible reasons for this: Māori may not be well-represented in the kinds of churches that promote spiritual direction; the formality of making an appointment for spiritual direction is not straightforward for Māori because there's often something that comes up and gets in the way; the spiritual direction relationship is weighted towards professionalism rather than 'doing life' together⁵⁸; cost may be a barrier; and for Māori with te reo Māori, going to a Pākehā spiritual director may not be appealing because of the risk of not being understood.

The wero (challenge) that arises out of my findings is this: How can Spiritual Growth Ministries enlist the help of Māori to come up with their own unique approach to spiritual direction?⁵⁹ Here are four responses that may be stepping stones on this particular journey:

Moira McLennan, in her research paper (2010) raised the question of how the training of spiritual directors, through Spiritual Growth Ministries, could honour Māori, Māori spirituality and the Treaty of Waitangi.⁶⁰ My observation of the current formation programme,⁶¹ is that there is increasing acknowledgement of Te Ao Māori, tikanga Māori and te reo Māori. The present co-ordinator, Fran Francis, observed that "within SGM and its people, there is a growing sense of appreciation for Te Ao Māori and of the significance of being tangata Tiriti"⁶² and gave evidence of this.⁶³ She added: "We have lots more to discover on this journey and a lot to learn."

A second response is that all spiritual directors are invited to grow their experience and understanding of things Māori. A Māori interviewee stated that: "If a person is going to practise spiritual direction in Aotearoa New Zealand, (...) it is important to realise that God planted a first people here, and that they have a knowledge of God, and it's not something we (Māori Christians) have to get delivered from, or have washed out of us. Be open to recognise our stories (...) Knowing these stories can earth you." She added: "The word 'aroha' breaks down to 'aro' meaning 'in front of you', 'your way', 'wherever you go'. 'Ha' means 'take the breath', the breath of life that comes from God. This is an invitation for all Kiwis to make this part of your heritage too."

A third response emerges from an interviewee's observations that on retreats she has helped to facilitate in the past, Māori participants preferred to come to spiritual direction in twos and threes.

⁵⁸ It has been suggested to a facilitator of this course by Māori students in a theological college, that the natural place for Māori to work through life or spiritual issues is their marae, rather than in a room somewhere else with a person they have no other connection to.

⁵⁹ This challenge is applicable to spiritual direction formation programmes run by other organisations within Aotearoa New Zealand.

⁶⁰ McLennan, p 12.

⁶¹ The Spiritual Directors Formation Programme (SDFP).

⁶² Tangata tiriti means "the people of the Treaty." This refers to all non-Māori New Zealanders who are in the country by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi.

⁶³ I.e. having a Māori advisor in the workgroup (the leadership body of SGM); having two Pākehā workshop facilitators who are well advanced in te reo Māori; all SDFP applicants have to have attended Treaty workshops; the Kohanga Ako week begins with a whakatau (Māori welcome ceremony); there are learning modules on "Engaging Culture" and "Working with Difference"; and regular use of te reo Māori (e.g. greetings, signing off, etc.) in email and face to face communications within the SDFP.

Perhaps some form of group spiritual direction may suit Māori better? This is an area for exploration with Māori.⁶⁴

The final response comes from an interviewee who has a pastoral care role with the local iwi. He described the importance of 'doing life' with local Māori, getting alongside them in informal situations and on their own turf. He comments: "It's about the difference between religion and spirituality today. Religion is seen as the church. The Wānanga is their equivalent of church. It's not about preaching to Māori, but being alongside them. Māori have rejected religion, as have many others, but they are deeply spiritual and have their own kaumatua,⁶⁵ own tūpuna⁶⁶ and own practices. Going to spiritual direction is a big question mark."

Conclusion

In this research paper, I have explored how Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā Māori Health and Well-being model may benefit spiritual direction relationships with Māori and with non-Māori. My findings show that the model lends itself easily and effectively to spiritual direction for Māori specifically and all cultures generally. The main issue that emerged from the research was that Māori are scarcely represented in spiritual direction in its present form, and the wero that naturally emerges is this: how can Spiritual Growth Ministries (SGM) deepen their partnership with Māori, not simply to help SGM improve their current programme, but in offering themselves as a resource to Māori who want to develop a uniquely Māori experience of spiritual direction formation. I have offered some responses which may be stepping stones in addressing this challenge, in the hope that others may pursue it further in the future.

⁶⁴ This year I have participated in SGM workshops focusing on the value of, and facilitation of, group spiritual direction. I have observed an openness to exploring a variety of approaches within this.

⁶⁵ Kaumatua: Māori elder.

⁶⁶ Tūpuna: ancestors

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The title page photo: 3D wooden model of Te Whare Tapa Whā on display in Hub 4, Welcome Bay School. Photo source: Katrina Tulip.

Appendix One

An exploration of how Dr Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha Māori Mental Health and Well-being Model may benefit the practice of spiritual direction in general, and in relation to spiritual directors and directees who identify as Māori.

Interviewer: Katrina Tulip

Interviewee Code Name:

Date interviewed:

Interview Questions:

1. Describe your level of connection with things Māori. e.g. Do you identify as Māori? Do you speak te reo Māori? What associations do you have with a marae, or any groups or organisations that are primarily Māori?
2. If you are a spiritual director, how many years have you been providing spiritual direction? How much involvement have you had with directees who identify as Māori?
3. If you are receiving spiritual direction, have you had a spiritual director who identified as Māori? To what degree (that you are aware of) does your present spiritual director have knowledge and experience of Māori culture, language and spirituality? Do you think it would be personally helpful for your spiritual director to have this knowledge?

One model for understanding Māori health is Dr Mason Durie's concept of Te Whare Tapa Whā, which literally means the house of four walls. The symbol of the wharenuī illustrates four dimensions of Māori well-being. They are interconnected. Should one of any of these dimensions be missing or in some way damaged, a person or collective may become unbalanced and subsequently unwell. The four walls or dimensions are:

Tapa wairua – spiritual health (the front wall and entrance)

Taha tinana – physical health

Taha hinengaro – mental and emotional health

Taha whānau – family and social health

I am exploring how this model may benefit the practice of spiritual direction in general, and in relation to spiritual directors and directees who identify as Māori.

4. How familiar are you with Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model?
5. *In Durie's model, taha wairua (spiritual health) is represented by the front wall of the whare. The spiritual essence of a person is their mauri (life force). It encompasses religious beliefs and practices, but it is also evident in relationships with the natural environment. Because land, lakes, mountains and reefs have spiritual significance for Māori, lack of access to tribal territories is seen as a sign of poor health. Taha wairua includes connection to culture and heritage.*
 - a) Please comment on how your experience and beliefs around spiritual identity and well-being may be similar or different to this.

- b) Please comment on how the Māori view of taha wairua may be beneficial to spiritual direction – for those who identify as Māori, and in general.
- 6.** *One of the other walls of the whare is taha tinana (physical health). Durie talks about the clear separation of tapu (sacred) and noa (ordinary, common, free from the restrictions of tapu) and gives examples of rituals based on these. He says body image may be regarded differently by Māori. He also mentions how the physical dimension is only one aspect of health and wellbeing and cannot be separated from mind, spirit and family.*
- a) Please comment on your understanding of physical health and how it might be similar or different to this model.
- b) Please comment on how the Māori view of taha tinana may be beneficial to spiritual direction – for those who identify as Māori, and in general.
- 7.** *Another wall is taha hinengaro (mental and emotional health). Durie describes how the expression of feelings as well as thoughts is considered vital for Māori, not only for the individual's well-being, but also for the well-being of whānau and the wider community.*
- a) Please comment on your understanding of mental and emotional health and how it might be similar or different to this model.
- b) Please comment on how the Māori view of taha hinengaro may be beneficial to spiritual direction – for those who identify as Māori, and in general.
- 8.** *The remaining wall, taha whānau, acknowledges the relevance of the family to health. For Māori, this belonging, caring and sharing is with the extended family, hapu and iwi. It even extends to the broader context of human relationships and social functioning. Whānau strengthens one's identity, and includes ties to ancestors, and to present and future generations. Interdependence is valued over independence.*
- a) Please comment on your understanding of family and how it might be similar or different to this model.
- b) Please comment on how the Māori view of taha whānau may be beneficial to spiritual direction - for those who identify as Māori, and in general.
- 9.** *Te Whare Tapa Whā is a holistic model of well-being. The four dimensions are interconnected. Ill-health experienced in one dimension affects the other dimensions.*
- How might an awareness and understanding of this interconnectedness influence the way spiritual direction is (or could be) practised? (With Māori; with non-Māori).
- 10.** Are there any important Māori values not already covered, that may relate to Te Whare Tapa Whā of which an understanding of, could benefit spiritual direction? Please elaborate.
- 11.** Are you able to recommend anyone else whom I could interview about this topic?

Appendix Two

Diagram of Te Whare Tapa Whā

(Sourced from the Mental Health Foundation Website).

