



## **OPINION PIECE**

**WAITANGI DAY – 6TH FEBRUARY 2021**

**APOSTLE BRIAN TAMAKI**

I find it difficult to reconcile why the NZ Police and Waitangi organisers saw fit to discriminate against their own Māori people today?

Our beautiful ManUp & Legacy people were stopped from crossing the bridge onto the Upper Waitangi Treaty grounds today....why...purely because they proudly wore their ManUp & Legacy branded T-Shirts.

Today, many ManUp & Legacy families made the trip to Waitangi to experience the festivities and celebrate our history with their children. For many, it was their first visit as they attempt to create new healthy, positive family memories with their children, free from alcohol, drugs, abuse, addictions and more. So imagine their disappointment to be stopped by the NZ Police and banned from crossing the bridge to enjoy the tax-payer funded entertainment on the Upper Treaty grounds.

Little kids were told to take their T-Shirts off or turn them inside out.

Frail old Kuis and Koros were told to take their T-Shirts off or turn them inside out.

One young single mother with a tribe of young kids in tow was also asked to take her T-Shirt off or turn it inside out. Was she expected to strip off right there in public view?

We have video footage of the NZ Police stopping our people and saying its because their clothing represents gang affiliations. What is that about? Like most churches, we have ex-gang members who are now reformed. Are they forever tarnished and never allowed a second chance? And while the majority of our people stopped were Māori, even clean-cut European businessmen and women amongst our number were stopped for wearing our clothing. One was even wearing a nice dress shirt with our small logo embroidered on the pocket.

Yet, its fine for the Black Power and other gang members to strut past the NZ Police wearing their gang regalia? It's fine to wear a Rainbow flag? It's fine to walk past promoting other charities that also do good works like the Auckland City Mission. So what's so wrong with the ManUp & Legacy brand? This is our third year in a row attending Waitangi, and every year we've worn ManUp & Legacy branding with no problems or incidents reported to us.

For a change we didn't even roar into town this year on our motorbikes, we gave them a rest this year.

ManUp & Legacy received absolutely no communication from the organisers or the NZ Police, nor did they attempt to open any lines of communication with us. Even those within our church who work for the Police department received no comms.

The Waitangi Treaty Grounds website states "The Waitangi Festival is a family-friendly event free from smoking, vaping, alcohol and fizzy drinks." There is no mention of gang regalia even being banned.



*The Waitangi Festival is a family-friendly event free from smoking, vaping, alcohol and fizzy drinks.*

And even if gang regalia is banned....since when is ManUp & Legacy classified as a gang?

Gang definition: *a group of criminals...a group of young people who do illegal things together and who often fight against other gangs.*

Today, that was a big call for the NZ Police to make – to state that we have gang affiliations.

We must be clear that the lower marae, Te Tii Marae, the marae of the people, was much more accommodating. They allowed us this year to book and pay for some stall spaces to set up a stage and host a fun day for our families. At least we felt welcomed down there! Does this again show how out of touch with reality those on the Upper Marae really have become with all their pomp and ceremony?

As Waitangi Day draws to a close, a day that is supposed to be a day of celebration of how far we've come as a country and the unity between two cultures, why are we left with such a bad taste in our mouths? Why are our ManUp & Legacy families once again discriminated against by the colonial leaders of this country?

When questioned, the police on the ground said their orders came from the top? So who exactly is this 'so-called' top? Who gave this the rubber stamp? Who lacked the cultural awareness to realise how tone death this decision is? Why are inclusion and diversity preached to everyone, everywhere, except when it comes to Destiny Church and their associated programmes. Who should be held accountable for this modern-day form of discrimination, enforced by the Crown-owned Police force?

Is it Andrew Coster, the Police Commissioner, and apparent Christian?

Is it Wally Haumaha, who is supposed to be the Deputy Police Commissioner for Iwis and Communities?

Or do we need to go higher up the food chain to the Minister of Police, Poto Williams or the big cheese herself, PM Jacinda Ardern?

What has changed this year? Does this government now think they are untouchable? They can blatantly do whatever they want to with no fear?

In this day and age, I find it unfathomable that the NZ Police would openly discriminate like this? Is it time to reveal internal correspondence we have seen from within the NZ Police department that shows their attempts at blatant discrimination towards ManUp & Legacy and our people?

Please explain Andrew Coster why the NZ Police would discriminate against the programs we provide to our communities free of charge, that:

- Teach men to be healthy fathers and partners, turning their lives around from being abusers and neglecters
- Heals women who have been abused and down-trodden, instilling confidence back into them
- Helps individuals overcome and conquer alcohol, drugs and addictions
- Supports individuals to find forgiveness and healing from past brokenness
- Assisting many men to finally leave notorious gangs, correcting their past mistakes where possible, and forging new futures free from crime
- Providing safe and happy homes for our children and youth to be raised in

Many NZ Police members have been actively involved and supportive of ManUp over the years, and we've willingly taken on those cases referred to us by the Police, with no request of funding. Yet despite all of our attempts to freely help them, here we now find NZ Police giving us the massive snub today.

Perhaps we've been too nice up until this point. Whoever sits at the top, and made today's poor taste call to action, owes us an immediate apology....because we are not going to stay quiet about this constant and systemic discrimination any longer. We have rights too!

#### **Further Info:**

Facebook Live from one Legacy lady: <https://www.facebook.com/kathy.chamberlain.94/videos/3783471741700129>