

# A THEOLOGY OF **TURANGAWAEWAE**

This statement offers a theological framework for understanding the mission of this Church within its social justice tradition. It takes the unique language of tūrangawaewae as it speaks to that tradition and its desire to enhance the dignity of all human beings.

As a theological resource the language of tūrangawaewae speaks to God's declaration of love for humanity through the act of creation. Tūrangawaewae is translated as a 'place to stand'. Its origins are in the Māori philosophical claim to a community's divine inheritance, their mana tuku iho (divine authority), mana motuhake (sovereignty), and tūrangawaewae over a defined geographical area of creation. The claim is grounded in a community's genealogical relationship from the divine to its ancestors to its living members; bounded by the natural landscape, such as mountains, ranges and rivers; metaphorically imagined as a whare tapu (sacred house). Thus, a community bestowed with God's mana; dedicated to God's purposes, holds responsibility to share equitably in its resources for the well-being of all members of its community.

To truly speak of tūrangawaewae is to speak of encountering God's love through the shared human experience of home, identity and belonging in the world. Theologically then, God's act of creation of the world (Te Aoturoa) is where humanity claims the gift of creation as its tūrangawaewae. Human communities embody tūrangawaewae, when they acknowledge and live out of God's blessing for humanity, in the flourishing of personal and communal well-being through creation. Thus, the embodiment of tūrangawaewae begins in a community's vision of the world where God blesses humanity to do on earth as in heaven – to be loving, to be kind, to be just, to be merciful, to be forgiving – to be God's agents in the world. If we know that sense of love through having a sense of belonging, we affirm the life-giving presence of God not only for ourselves but for all humanity. For a community to claim tūrangawaewae gives concrete expression to a spirituality that seeks to love God and love neighbour in the world through its place, its peoples and its resources. Such is the nature and purpose of the gift of creation to all humanity.

The Church stands in a long tradition of speaking about and acting on God's love for all humanity. It speaks into the public square about social issues, in critiquing the political and economic order, of affirming human rights and obligations to one another, and it lives in the world as witnesses to the sacredness of human life, for the stewardship of creation; and in service to all humanity. Where human communities fail in their stewardship of creation they fail in their responsibility to care for the well-being of all of its members. To speak of tūrangawaewae then is to also speak of new beginnings for communities in light of the truth about who we are as human beings.

We take then tūrangawaewae as a whare tapu, a sacred house where maunga, awa, moana etc. stand in declaration of a particular community's place of home, identity and belonging; where it holds responsibility for the wellbeing of all its members. In the words of the liturgy in our prayer book, giving effect to that responsibility so all are fully alive, is where the gifts of God's creation meet the needs of all: 'Ko tāu rourou, ko taku rourou, ka mākona mātou'. With your resources, and my resources, the people will live'.