

# Transcript of “Ancient Solutions: Cultural Disconnection with Jay Ruka- Part 1”

**00:00:00 Speaker 1** 21 Elephants by Scottie Reeve.

**00:00:16 Spanky Moore** Hey listeners, I've got a question for you.

**00:00:20 Scottie Reeve** What's your question, Spanky?

**00:00:23 Spanky Moore** About two hours ago, when we first started driving, Scottie said: Let's stop by this Wild Bean cafe. We'll cruise past and I'll have a look and see what the barista looks like, and then I'll tell you if we'll stop. Question. What was Scottie looking for? That's what I... He hasn't told me yet. What do you look for? Do you look for the aura? What do you look for? A training certificate?

**00:00:57 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, You are looking for - well, this is probably a horrible thing to say right here I go. If someone's making coffee over 40 or 50.

**00:01:08 Spanky Moore** Degrees?

**00:01:10 Scottie Reeve** No, they are over 40 or 50 years old, right?

**00:01:12 Spanky Moore** Wisdom. So, they've had a lot of experience.

**00:01:14 Scottie Reeve** If they're making coffee over that age, they probably don't want to be making coffee. Because anyone who's been making good coffee for that long has moved into roasting or something like that. Or you know?

**00:01:23 Spanky Moore** This is very, very right wing.

**00:01:26 Scottie Reeve** So if you were, if you are behind a coffee machine and you're like 50, then I'm sort of like 'it's great that you have a job, but it doesn't mean you know how to make good coffee.' So I'm looking for someone like I would I would always order coffee from, you know, 18 or 19 year old, because chances are they haven't had that many jobs and they might actually like drinking coffee. And they might actually get some satisfaction from their job.

**00:01:55 Spanky Moore** This connects with the book, doesn't it, because someone gave you the advice that if you're writing a book under 50, you shouldn't because you got nothing to say? But that didn't stop you. And if you're over 50 it shouldn't stop you from making a coffee, 50 year old listener.

**00:02:09 Scottie Reeve** No. Yeah, you can make a coffee totally. And if that's what you love doing, yeah I'm sure there are good 50 something year old baristas out there. But you're already taking a risk driving up to a Wild Bean, aren't you, you know so?

**00:02:21 Spanky Moore** Well, the other interesting thing is Scottie shared a lot about his upward mobility and his sense of power, his sense of masculinity in driving this Prado rental.

**00:02:30 Scottie Reeve** I don't think I ever used the phrase masculine.

**00:02:33 Spanky Moore** The way that you moved your mouth when you said power, there was certainly a masculine white masculine undertones.

**00:02:42 Scottie Reeve** Right.

**00:02:43 Spanky Moore** And this Prado diesel relocation vehicle 2016. He parked it over three car parks outside the Wild Bean as if he was an asshole.

**00:02:55 Scottie Reeve** Well, it was, It was. What was it? It was.

**00:02:56 Spanky Moore** As if it was natural it was the amazing thing. You're like, yeah, I should do this. I'm better than these people. I'm. I'm powerful. I'm the Duke of this small town.

**00:03:08 Scottie Reeve** It was 6 in the morning and there were literally no other cars around. And there is something, you're right, when you're driving one of these North Shore mobiles, there is something where you pull into a place where you think 'you know what, I own this whole place. And not only do I need to park, I don't want anyone else to park here either.'

**00:03:57 Spanky Moore** Hey, well hey Scottie.

**00:03:58 Scottie Reeve** Good morning.

**00:04:00 Spanky Moore** Have I told you you're a dear friend.

**00:04:01 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. You have told me that many times.

**00:04:02 Spanky Moore** That's true, cause one of the things I've been trying to help Scottie with is - you know this right. I have a ministry of hugging, repressed males. Males for whom physical contact and touch is uncomfortable. So often when I'll go, I'll give them a cuddle and they won't like it. They resist. But in the end, if I remain in this ministry, they start to sob. I've had that so many times that whenever I see Scottie, I give him a hug and I feel this resistance like what happened today.

**00:04:36 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. Generally, I think the thing is that if you try to hug someone at like 6 in the morning. It's just like it's a little bit too much mate. Maybe maybe go with...

**00:04:46 Spanky Moore** Yes, I know. I get a sense that the spirit is at work in your life and that the interior journey is a difficult one, and I'll continue to hug you.

**00:04:54 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. Alright.

**00:04:55 Spanky Moore** May the barriers between us break down and we become unified, in union with each.

**00:05:01 Scottie Reeve** My word, you're just the worst eh.

**00:05:04 Spanky Moore** That's a bit of a physical image, isn't it?

**00:05:06 Scottie Reeve** So we are here in Hamilton, eh.

**00:05:07 Spanky Moore** Yes, we're still here. What an amazing, um, place. I mean I'm just so glad you brought me to the North Island and I've just seen some amazing things. We've seen horses. We've seen corrugated iron sheep and here we are in Hamilton. Wow parking.

**00:05:23 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, there is parking everywhere and it's cheap because the sitting Council in Hamilton wisely saw it within their judgement to create a shopping Mega Centre 10 minutes out of town and were dumbfounded when they discovered it gutted the central city.

**00:05:40 Spanky Moore** So you know how most cities have this thing where they go, either you drive or you walk. They've got this weird area where it's walkie, walkie, bikey, drivey one Laney.

**00:05:51 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**00:05:53 Spanky Moore** It's very confused cause so everyone feels like they're out of place.

**00:05:57 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And there's, you know, just keeps you on your toes really.

**00:06:03 Spanky Moore** Anyway, it's been amazing. I'm the - who's the chap where with? What's that guy's name?

**00:06:07 Scottie Reeve** We've got, we've been hanging out with my old friend Lehi Duncan, who is the manager of Zeal here in Hamilton. A Youth Centre, which does amazing stuff and now lending us their recording studio for the day. And yeah, Lehi, Lehi, man, that guy, he is a Hamilton advocate through and through.

**00:06:26 Spanky Moore** He took us for a little walk and took us down to, would you? Is it a promenade?

**00:06:30 Scottie Reeve** We would call that the I think it has a little bit of a huh like **The Promenade**.

**00:06:30 Spanky Moore** So he was he was like, showing off my new girlfriend to us, wasn't it? It was like he was saying, look at this beautiful thing here. And it was overlooking the river, which was it was lovely.

**00:06:49 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, that was like kind of kind of terraced down to the Waikato River. A beautiful little area.

**00:06:55 Spanky Moore** We were in Hamilton doing the Frank last time on this amazing road trip. Firstly, why are we on this road trip to the North Island? Scottie, why you pulling me to Hamilton?

**00:07:02 Scottie Reeve** We are on this road trip. Well, so you know, we did season one of the 21 Elephants Podcast and people were really excited about that. But they said, can you go a little bit deeper on some of those concepts. And so, we thought, well, how about we take a drive around the North Island. We meet some friends who are people living ancient solutions to modern problems. So we've been looking at things like mental health, trauma and we've been looking at things like mobile phone addiction and Christian consumerism. And we're like, maybe rather than coming up with brand new solutions to these problems, maybe there's some stuff hiding in the last couple of 1000 years of church history that we can grab a hold of.

**00:07:43 Spanky Moore** At least five things and what we do is we talk to these people and then when they're not in the room, we rip them, rip them apart.

**00:07:49 Scottie Reeve** At least five things. That's basically it. Like oh. We're sorry guys, we're sorry.

**00:07:52 Spanky Moore** Well, It's been a lot of fun so far and we're returning this incredibly beautiful vehicle that Scottie got for \$1.00 return. We just have to pay the gas. And so here we are in Hamilton. Who are we going to talk to now? What? What are we doing?

**00:08:06 Scottie Reeve** Well, so we're about to meet up with a friend, Jay Ruka. Now Jay is an amazing guy who used to, he's done a bunch of stuff with Youth With A Mission in New Zealand. He also used to run The Edge church in Kingsland in Auckland. But these days he is really passionate about reconciliation, cultural reconciliation in the church. And so Jay is has written this fantastic book called *Huia Come Home*, which we will put a link to on the website He's also got a Huia Come Home podcast and he's exploring what it looks like for the Church of Aotearoa to be a good treaty partner. So, the reason I wanted to have a chat to Jay is, I think one of the modern problems we have is that a lot of young adults, a lot of millennials these days, we have no idea where we come from. And we

have a very fragile identity. And our identity is kind of kicked to and fro by the subcultural whims of what's on television or what's in music, you know. And so, rather than a deep sense of belonging that comes from whakapapa/genealogy or whenua/land that instead define our identity by a series of logos and symbols and purchases. And so I'm curious to talk to Jay today about how we might find a deeper belonging than that. Because I think that's what Jay is really touching on for the church here in Aotearoa.

**00:09:35 Spanky Moore** And you are part of one of my favourite churches, my favourite church, church of mongrels in Wellington called Blueprint. And so, you kind of passed around the recorder the other day to see what people think about this.

**00:09:49 Scottie Reeve** We did. We had a chat to them, so here is what some of those folks had to say.

**00:09:58 Scottie Reeve** Do you? Would you guys say that you feel like stable or grounded in your identity as a New Zealander, or do you feel do you feel at home? Do you feel like this is your place?

**00:10:11 Speaker 8** I think I do. Like, I think about the tangible things that maybe make me feel that way when my family's been here for five or six generations and just north of Wellington, my family has some land that my grandfather bought 100 years ago. Four out of five of those blocks of land still have family houses on them and we gather there. And so there's a sense there where my family's been here for a long time. And so I do feel grounded in that sense, but then I wouldn't necessarily know, I couldn't list like 5 things that make me feel like I'm a Kiwi compared to somebody else.

**00:10:51 Scottie Reeve** It seems like there's this movement at the moment, where like Kaupapa Māori things are like, you know, are kind of showing pakeha millennials kind of a way out from that isolation. Have you any of you guys thought about that, or at all, or?

**00:11:06 Speaker 9** I think a sense of identity because in Māori culture like your family, your community, your land, everything is connected. And so like, that is in the very fibre of the culture, so, if everything is you feel like everything's connected, you want to connect everything new and all the new people coming in, all the new ideas you want to encapsulate and embrace.

**00:11:34 Scottie Reeve** I think where kind of like, that's a thing. Like we're fragmented people eh, which is hard. We don't have connection to the land. We don't have connection to one another, to our whānau spiritually. I like we're kind of fragmented. Where's a place where you see that fragmentation like really clear and in your face?

**00:11:54 Speaker 10** I think something's interesting about the mobility of New Zealanders, particularly young people. If you want to get further education, you need to move to a different city or away from your town. And so there's this kind of chop and change that happens in people's lives. And so you kind of maybe have a sense that you're from this place, but you're then you move somewhere else. And I think that the concept of like tūrangawaewae and really like being from somewhere and having people that are from somewhere, and that being part of your identity is like a really beautiful and powerful thing, but it's not really validated in like pākehā culture very well. And I just think that that sense of like place and all the memories and the people and the yeah, the chop and change of kind of moving around can be quite increasingly disconnecting.

**00:12:51 Spanky Moore** Gosh, that's very enlightened. I mean, if I pass this recorder around Christchurch, I'd just be terrified to think of the answers I'd get on this, but you've got some amazing people in your church.

**00:13:00 Scottie Reeve** We do, we have some great people and... Yeah, yeah, some interesting stuff there.

**00:13:04 Spanky Moore** So New Zealand's in a pretty you know, like incredibly unique place given the Treaty of Waitangi. And that perspectives just have really begun the last 10 years, 15 years to impact pakeha understandings much more, particularly younger, younger pākehā understandings. So that you start to see, hey, there's you hear in those in those comments, this disconnection and yet there's so much more referencing to tikanga around how we might stitch some of that back together.

**00:13:32 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. Well, it's interesting. You know, because I guess that the foundation of colonisation as this kind of cultural imperialism that you know the Māori people don't have something and we need to bring it, you know. And that has created so many of the problems that we see today, but now I think there's this realisation that like ohh! actually, maybe, maybe the exchange needed to be the other way. Like maybe we needed to be bought live by the indigenous people of this land and by their stories.

**00:14:03 Spanky Moore** And how nervous are you with me being in the room, talking to Jay? Because I'm from Christchurch. You think I'm a redneck. How nervous are you?

**00:14:12 Scottie Reeve** You know what, Jay is a very gracious man.

**00:14:16 Spanky Moore** so that's what you're relying on,

**00:14:17 Scottie Reeve** I think I'm relying on Jay's grace. And I'm hoping you know that. Maybe you'll just come out of this conversation a more enlightened and less racist man.

**00:14:29 Spanky Moore** Thank you. Thank you so much for that. No, well, cause constantly as we're driving, Scottie is just always telling me basically the ground rules of, you know, being in the North Island. It is crazy you know, there's lots of different kinds of people around here, and he's always just kind of giving me the... Of course he doesn't appear to follow his own advice, very confusing. But it's do as I say, not as I do, and I'm used to that with Scottie. So, not that I promised him that I'm going to be well behaved and you know... I'm going to do my best. I mean, I teach my kids at home. We watch a little programme with some Te Reo in it...

**00:15:05 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, yeah, that, that.

**00:15:08 Spanky Moore** Pūne means spoon. Anyway we can't all be born in Wellington can we?

**00:15:15 Scottie Reeve** OK. So obviously we really need to have a chat to Jay. Also, we should acknowledge the incredible help of Laidlaw College, who have helped us to bring this podcast together. So, shout outs to Laidlaw and your contribution. Thanks for the flights and the fuel.

**00:15:33 Spanky Moore** Yeah, because it does cost money.

**00:15:35 Scottie Reeve** It does. It cost money to make one of these.

**00:15:36 Spanky Moore** Yeah, that's right. And we're not getting rich are we.

**00:15:39 Scottie Reeve** Not yet

**00:15:42 Spanky Moore** Not yet. Right. Any oo I guess we should hit the road. Let's go.

**00:15:45 Scottie Reeve** All right let's go.

**00:15:59 Scottie Reeve** Thanks for coming in.

**00:16:02 Jay Ruka** Yeah, sweet as bro. Awesome

**00:16:03 Scottie Reeve** Kia Ora, everyone. So we are sitting here with our good friend, Jay Ruka, and Jay has written this awesome book *Huia Come Home*, which I've read recently. Spanky hasn't read it.

**00:16:15 Spanky Moore** No but I don't read books.

**00:16:16 Scottie Reeve** But you don't read books.

**00:16:18 Spanky Moore** So it's nothing personal. I've the only book I've read in the last three years was Scottie Reeves book. Because I had to because he said, will you make a podcast. That is true. That's absolutely true.

**00:16:27 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. Oh, I think you would have read it anyway, but OK.

**00:16:29 Spanky Moore** I would not have read it anyway. I guarantee it wouldn't happened. It's nothing against you.

**00:16:32 Scottie Reeve** That's it. I now understand why you were telling me to make an audio book for months.

**00:16:36 Jay Ruka** Oh, right, into audio.

**00:16:39 Scottie Reeve** Have you made an audio book?

**00:16:40 Jay Ruka** An audio an audio book man? No, but so many people say, can you, can you make an audio book.

**00:16:44 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, but it just seems like after you've finally finished writing the book, it's so much more hassle, eh.

**00:16:48 Jay Ruka** Like oh roll your eyes I like yeah.

**00:16:50 Spanky Moore** What I said to Scottie, I said, how long did it take you to write the book? And he said five years. How many hours?

**00:16:56 Scottie Reeve** Don't know.

**00:16:57 Spanky Moore** Right. And it's like oh, but you can't get around to saying it for 10 hours.

**00:17:02 Scottie Reeve** Well, you know what this thing is? And some people out there should hear this and feel guilty about this. Because a bunch of you requested that I get it transferred to Kindle e-book format. And I did that - cost a few \$100 and then...

**00:17:14 Jay Ruka** Did it really?

**00:17:15 Scottie Reeve** Yeah, and I put it online and then do you know what happened? Four sales for like \$9 each. So, if you were one of those people who requested it and did not buy it, you've been officially shamed.

**00:17:28 Spanky Moore** Even though, and I think Jay will back me up on this. If you ever do anything because someone in the young adult age range says you should do it. It's on you. I mean, we've been there. We've tried this, we know.

**00:17:41 Scottie Reeve** It's like when a con man says to me give me \$100, I promise I'll pay you back. And you know, if a millennial says I'll meet you there at 3:00 and you're foolish enough to turn up at 3:00.

**00:17:51 Spanky Moore** I'd really read your book if it was just an e-book, just a bit more convenient.

**00:17:54 Scottie Reeve** Yeah. And if you fall for that, that's on you.

**00:17:57 Spanky Moore** No, that's on you. So I'm not giving you any sympathy for that.

**00:18:01 Scottie Reeve** Anyway OK, so Jay has written this amazing book *Huia Come Home*. And Jay, you'll probably correct me on some of this, but one of the key things I loved about it was this idea that a lot of our spirituality in Aotearoa has often represented kind of Eurocentric, American, English influences and that we kind of need to find our own homegrown spirituality. Would that be a... yeah? This this beautiful picture that we can find our unique voice as Christians in Aotearoa through kaupapa Māori and through re-engaging with the story of the treaty and being a good treaty partner and things like that. And so we're looking at modern problems with ancient solutions. And one of the common problems we come across for young people, for young adults is this sense of disconnectedness. And the other night I was having this chat with a bunch of our young adults at Blueprint about how... I said do you feel like a New Zealander. And they're like, ah, yeah, kind of, you know. And I said, well, what does it mean to be a New Zealander? I'm like, you know, and some of them were like, oh, you know, when you have a barbecue on a Sunday night. I'm like, oh really? Like. And so, I started prefacing it. I said, you know, what does it mean to be in New Zealand if you strip away gumboots and the All Blacks. People go very strangely, silent, you know, and I think there is this common theme that comes up of, like, a sense of disconnection and a lack of kind of standing place and the strength and security that comes from knowing where we come from. And my experience, my small journey with kaupapa Māori, has been often I've discovered this beautiful strength and this tradition and this whakapapa that that challenges me as a Pākehā New Zealander, to find where I come from to.

**00:19:56 Jay Ruka** Right, Wow, good questions, but firstly Tena koe e pa, Ko lo-Matua-Kore, tēnā koe. Tēnā kōrua, ko Spanky, ko Scotty. Thanks so much for having me. Tēnā koutou, all the listeners out there. Yeah. Gosh, where do I start? I guess I start with my maunga. Ko Taranaki tōku maunga; ko Waionganga tōku awa; Ko Tokomaru tōku waka; ko Muru-raupatu te marae; ko Te Atiawa tōku iwi. So you know I guess to start off with an answer to that question you know. I belong to the maunga Taranaki, even though I'd never lived in the rohe. I grew up well. I grew up everywhere, a lot in the South Island, but yeah, I whakapapa to the mountain, Taranaki and to the rohe of Te Atia Awa, which is around Waitara and that area. So I have, a I have a belonging to that space and to that location, you know, and I also have you know I have whakapapa connections in a lot of places you know Ngāti Koata which has its origins in Whāingaroa-Raglan where I now live. And then of course down to Nelson on the top of the South Island.. So Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāpuhi up north, you know, so I have whakapapa connections to those to those locations. So for me, I, you know when we talk about that idea of, well, where do we stand and I don't know, you know the whole concept of turangawaewae you know, I have an ancestral connection through my tūpuna to these mountains and these rivers and these locations, you know. And that's that' a good place to start.

**00:22:07 Scottie Reeve** So you come from a kind of a YWAM, like Pentecostal background. I think we used to call it Youth Want A Marriage.

**00:22:16 Jay Ruka** Oh, really? Youth want a marriage? I haven't heard that one.

**00:22:24 Scottie Reeve** But, has this like been a journey for you of kind of reconnecting?

**00:22:28 Jay Ruka** Yeah, it's no, good question, bro. I mean I, you know, I kind of call myself a kinder surprise, you know, like brown on the outside, white on the inside. You know, rīwai, a potato. You

know, brown on the outside, white on the inside. But so my story is I've not been brought up in the Māori world. My father, who is Māori, is one of 13, and his family, you know, most of his siblings, you know in his household because his father had three marriages I believe sort of grew, you know? So he was raised not in the Māori world at all. In fact, I only learned a story recently that my grandma, she would kōrero Māori but my grandfather would say no. You're not allowed to, you know, not allowed to speak that language around the house.

**00:23:15 Spanky Moore** Why? Do you know why that was?

**00:23:16 Jay Ruka** Just because it wasn't cool, you know. It wasn't the way. At the time in the 40s and 50s that was not you know, we just wanted to fit in, yeah, to society around us. So, the Māori world didn't fit in for my dad's family at that time. So, my grandfather would say to his wife, my Nana, you know no, no speaking the reo in this household. So, my uncle told me that he would hear her as little boy talking, you know, just to either his sisters or you know, a few friends, now and then on occasions, you know. But so all that to say is that I was very much raised in a predominantly, you know, Eurocentric world, Eurocentric way of thinking, Eurocentric way of being. And it wasn't it hasn't been until the last, maybe 11 or so years that for me you know, I've gone well, maybe this maybe there's something I need to learn about myself. You know, I had a real defining moment, funnily enough, in England. And I was at one of those 'Young Warriors After Maidens' gatherings, you know those Youth With A Mission gatherings, and I remember hearing this lady talk and she was talking on, you know, how to, you know, dial yourself in to listen to the voice of God. I'm doing my fingers "quote unquote thing" here. And I had heard her speak many times before and she made us go and do this exercise of going away and asking God a couple of questions. And the first question was "God, what do you think of me?" And you know I, you know, I've done this exercise a couple of times before and so... I'd heard, you know, I was at this young people's gathering. And anyway, I go off for this walk and I'm in this big field, you know and I've got my hands in my pockets and I'm sort of, you know, rolling my eyes going, oh, here we go. "God, what do you think of me!"

**00:25:15 Scottie Reeve** Where do you see Jesus in this room?

**00:25:17 Jay Ruka** I wasn't thinking about any of this stuff at all, but very like very quickly. I heard a response on the inside of my spirit, of my soul, and this thought popped into my head straight away that's what I heard." Jay, I think you're Māori." I just stood still. And I was like WTF you know I was like, what?! I wasn't thinking about anything to do with, you know, my culture and my country, anything like this. I was in England for crying out loud and I asked God, God, what do you think of me? And I heard a response come to me. Jay. I think you're Māori. And I froze because I'm that guy that's always struggled, you know, with my Māoriness, the person that appears to be so but clearly is not in thought and language and in deed, and especially in diet. You know, there's some kina of I can go, "oh, that's not too bad." But you have to go out to Rēkohu to get that stuff, out of the Chatham Islands.

**00:26:29 Scottie Reeve** Right. OK. That's the good stuff, right?

**00:26:32 Jay Ruka** It's like, wow that was pretty good. But essentially you know, I've always struck, even though I've gone to marae and you know or done pōwhiri, you know in Youth With A Mission we used to do pōwhiri stuff all the time. So I was sort of familiar to the scene, but I on the inside I've always gone, uh, you know, surfers they are my people or you know skaters or snowboarders, whatever, you know. I've connected culturally to that very, very small part of what we might call Western culture. But that day, it was 2005 actually, about probably July sometime around there. And I was floored because all of a sudden I was like, "God you think I'm Māori? like. And I was like, that's



important to you.” And I was like, Oh my goodness. If that's important to God then, and that's what God thinks about me. I need to pay some attention here and learn about this part of myself. And it was the first time where I went. You know, I didn't give a rat's arse about what anyone thought about my Māoriness or lack of. I was like I'd no longer care what people think about me, whether I'm, you know, white on the inside or not. If God thinks I'm Māori, then bang, that's it. Like I accepted something that day and I, you know, I was 30. You know very, you know very much well down the path of my life, so to speak. But that brought a peace into me that I was like, man, I need to learn about me and what's more God thinks something about me that I need to pay attention to. So that was a very defining moment for me. I'm Oh my goodness for like, for the first time I felt I could say I am Māori if that makes sense. Like I actually am. I like I accepted something and I, you know, I probably peace is the word that I that I would say. I found something that I was like, “wow” and it's the random thing was is that that was the probably the key point that started me on a process of discovering not only some of my own story, but even the story of Christianity in Aotearoa in the land. And so that was almost like the one of the conception-points you know. But I think ...

**00:29:15 Spanky Moore** It's interesting that you were in England. This is sort of like there's not great resources in England, but also yeah this is where the church started.

**00:29:26 Jay Ruka** Very interesting, right? Yeah, no. I go that is random that is random. But I find it to be a go to place, cause you know if I find myself on a marae and you know I'm like “man do I walk on now?” you know. Some stuff I'm not exactly sure where I put myself,

**00:29:45 Spanky Moore** How Scottie feels in a cathedral.

**00:29:47 Jay Ruka** But I, you know, I find myself drawing a lot of peace from God. And what's more, you know, I learned a lot about what it means to have my identity in Christ. You know, I was raised in a church and in a discipleship environment that was like, you know, that your identity in God is that you know God loves you. God has a wonderful plan for your life. But all of a sudden, I was like, oh my goodness - my identity in God is that I am Māori, you know. Like I am a Māori person, you know. And that means something to God.

**00:30:29 Scottie Reeve** I'm kind of interested in that because at the time you're leading a church, right?

**00:30:32 Jay Ruka** At that time, no, I wasn't.

**00:30:34 Scottie Reeve** OK.

**00:30:35 Jay Ruka** Actually at that time I was leading Youth With A Mission, in New Zealand. Yeah, I was the national director for Youth With A Mission.

**00:30:39 Scottie Reeve** YWAM. Which has a buzz

**00:30:41 Jay Ruka** Peew-peew

**00:30:44 Spanky Moore** YWAM's got a buzz?

**00:30:45 Scottie Reeve** Which has a particular flavour, particular buzz you know, in the kind of I guess mainline evangelical kind of flavour. And so you have this discovery. It almost strikes me like, you know, we don't in our faith have one conversion moment. We often have several moments, kind of. And it's almost like. I'm wondering how was it for you to kind of come back to the context that you're familiar with, but something had fundamentally changed in the way you saw yourself and I guess how you saw God as well?

**00:31:12 Jay Ruka** Yeah ah um. The cool thing about Youth With A Mission is, you know. Like, I joined Youth With A Mission in 1995. And so from '95, even though in my church upbringing, I would go, you know, I might have had my church experience going to noho marae, maybe three times, maybe four. But in Youth With A Mission we're, we're on marae quite often and in Youth With A Mission, a lot of our processes and our meetings, our hui are done around a pōwhiri context. So, that context was sort of comfortable to me doing things in a sort-of Māori was comfortable to me and comfortable in being familiar, if that makes sense. However, still an internal awkwardness of like - man, I don't really. I don't know how to do a whakataukī. I don't know how to give a mihi. I don't know. How to don't know how to say words correct or whatever - But at that time, like something in me like. it was a shift that went actually, no I need to pursue and learn about this. And then it wasn't till. Well, that happened in 2005 I guess. We did some stuff and ... but it was a couple of years after that when I really, really learned about the history of Christianity in New Zealand. And that began to change everything for me, you know. So I had ... There wasn't so much a massive change in my Youth With A Mission out-working. I had only funnily enough I had only been the National Director a month, if not three weeks, when that happened, that voice spoke to me.

**00:32:55 Spanky Moore** He was getting in early.

**00:32:57 Jay Ruka** Yeah. And then it wasn't till say maybe about a year or 2 1/2 of being in the role that things really began to change, when I discovered the history of Christianity in New Zealand.

**00:33:08 Scottie Reeve** So tell us a bit about that. About that Journey.

**00:33:12 Jay Ruka** Well when I first heard the story of Christianity in New Zealand was January 2008. I heard the story of, you know, like Parihaka, and Tohu and Te Whiti. And I heard the story of Ratana the Prophet who I, you know, when I did hear about Ratana as a child growing up in the church, Ratana equalled a cult right, you know. Ratana equalled not good. So, you didn't know, don't touch it, touch it with a 10-foot barge pole. However, I heard the story for real for the first time. And I'm like, what? Why wasn't I told this story.

**00:33:47 Spanky Moore** When you said you were told to avoid it was that through a more like Pentecostal lens of like 'you don't know what could get in', kind of. 'Don't go near the dark stuff.'

**00:33:54 Jay Ruka** Yeah, totally. Well, you know, I'm, I'm trying to remember as a kid, it's almost like he's a cult, so cult equals bad. Hmm, so don't. Don't even don't even go there, you know.

**00:34:11 Spanky Moore** Yeah. When they were saying that it wasn't particularly through Māori lens either. It was just in general.

**00:34:16 Jay Ruka** No, no, not a Māori lens at all.

**00:34:19 Spanky Moore** Here is the blacklisted sort of church groups that we don't go near.

**00:34:21 Scottie Reeve** I'm pretty sure, the church I lead, Blueprint, made cultwatch.co.nz for a year, a few years ago. So, you know you don't have to go too far off the beaten path.

**00:34:32 Jay Ruka** Youth With A Mission definitely did. It's probably still on there.

**00:34:33 Spanky Moore** I find it hard to believe that Ratana Church would hear that and go, oh, that makes us feel better.

**00:34:39 Scottie Reeve** Probably not.

**00:34:37 Jay Ruka** You know but when I heard the stories of you know these guys and these incredible Māori leaders and the incredible way that Māori took to the gospel, you know, in in a certain period of our history I was like, floored. And I was like why do we not know this stuff? You know, Christianity in New Zealand, you know, if we are truly honest then the goal posts are somewhere else, right? The goal posts are Redding, California, the goal posts are Sydney, Australia. You know, in other words.

**00:35:18 Scottie Reeve** Not naming any names, just songs coming from the hills and.

**00:35:20 Jay Ruka** Oh no, not naming.

**00:35:24 Scottie Reeve** Out the holy trumpet.

**00:35:25 Jay Ruka** But the good things are somewhere else, you know? And you know, I'm definitely growing up in a in an evangelical environment where the goal posts are definitely revival. You know, we worship revival. You know, we worship this thing where God's going to show up and we don't have to do anything, you know.

**00:35:42 Spanky Moore** Pretty good.

**00:35:42 Jay Ruka** But here I was discovering a story that, whatever we classified as maybe what we might say, revival well, it happened in the 1830s. It happened from the 1833 onward, to 1832 onward that for a 10 year period, you know our, my people experienced a move of Christ that has just been unprecedented in world history. And yet and then that January of 2008, I was, I was 1. I was ecstatic and then, I felt ripped off because I'm like man, how can I grow up in an institution called the church and not know anything about this? How can I not know this story, you know? So, yeah, anyway, so that was that. That then coupled with the dream that my wife had, that then began to outplay in my thinking and in my work and in my ministry that goes "hang on, maybe I need to be learning from that which has been under my nose my whole life".

**00:36:43 Spanky Moore** Tell me about the dream.

**00:36:44 Jay Ruka** The dream. So that that that week that we discovered these stories. The first time my wife had a dream and in her dreams she saw a very large chicken, 3 storeys tall, like it was massive, like, great for a KFC.

**00:36:59 Scottie Reeve** You know Spanky loves it.

**00:37:00 Jay Ruka** He's got the grin on his face.

**00:37:01 Spanky Moore** But this is my kind of story.

**00:37:05 Jay Ruka** So she.

**00:37:07 Spanky Moore** Does the dream ... I'd be happy if the dream ended there. Yeah, it's a great dream.

**00:37:08 Scottie Reeve** Oh, just listen to the rest of it.

**00:37:14 Jay Ruka** It was standing in front of a pōhutukawa tree. You know it was sort of overshadowing the pōhutukawa tree.

**00:37:20 Spanky Moore** Shit that's a big chicken.

**00:37:21 Jay Ruka** That's a big chicken man. And then she heard the word *huia* and woke up. And this is you know, so it was an afternoon nap. And she's like, "Jay, I just had this dream and I saw this big chicken and I heard this word, is it huia? What's huia?" Cause my wife's from the states so she's like she didn't know what huia. And I said, "oh, look, it's an indigenous bird from New Zealand, that's now extinct." Anyway, we sat on this dream for a year, shared about it with three people. And you know what the dreams come to mean for us is that the, you know, folks I don't know if you knew this, but the chicken is not from Aotearoa, it's not from New Zealand.

**00:38:02 Spanky Moore** I did wonder where? And chickens it's a big chicken too.

**00:38:09 Jay Ruka** You know, whereas the Huia as a bird it's indigenous to our landscape, but it's now extinct. And you know very quickly what it's come to mean for us is a chicken represents a western way of thinking. Western ways of being, western ways of approaching life, philosophy, education, religion or whatever. Whereas the Huia represents for us an indigenous Māori perspective. Yet that bird, it's not that the Māori world is extinct, not at all. But perhaps to most of New Zealand, a dominant culture in New Zealand it is. It's unseen. It's unheard. It's not very well perceived as a viable option of living from, you know. So we've coined this phrase from it, *Huia Come Home*, which is we. It's not that the chicken is wrong, but it shouldn't be 3 storeys tall.

**00:38:58 Spanky Moore** It's a big chicken.

**00:38:58 Jay Ruka** So the chicken needs to come down to its normal size, and the Huia needs to come home. It needs to come back from the grave, so to speak, and we need to learn from an indigenous perspective of life.

**00:39:10 Spanky Moore** That, what is really interesting around that story is, as we talk about connectedness. And connectedness, seems to also be coming to a place of knowing oneself. Which is quite a hard thing to do, particularly in this globalised world, where we feel very fragmented, it's really hard to know what... It's cool to know oneself, isn't it? That's popular, just no one's quite sure how to do it. So, in that you experience sort of God's voice proclaiming over you that you're good. This is good. Then you become pissed off when you ... There's this rage, you know, there's this angst. I mean, I could see that in your body as you start talking around it, there's a frustration and an angst around when you discover the history. And then there's and then there's a kind of that mysterious part, isn't there the dream? It's a complicated dance, that sort of, it feels almost like God was sort of sanding you with sandpaper.

**00:40:09 Jay Ruka** Definitely man. When I when I think about this, I think about the story, you know, God has definitely been tackling me from many angles. You know, like from places that you know, like I wasn't expecting. I mean you know, a dream about pursuing indigeneity in my indigenous story and not just mine, but what I believe is the indigenous story for the church, and then I could say for New Zealand came via an American woman. I mean, that's just bizarre. Right? That's just weird. But there are layers to this that's made me go "ooh, hang on then this is not just Jay you know, hearing voices or whatever" you know. There are things coming to me from all types of spaces that I need to tune into and pay attention to.

**00:41:07 Scottie Reeve** So something I find kind of interesting about what you're saying you know, is that you didn't realise that God saw you as Māori, which I guess means that you thought he saw you as something else. Whether he saw you as Pākehā or... ??

**00:41:23 Jay Ruka** But you this probably is a good question I haven't really thought about that, you know.

**00:41:26 Scottie Reeve** Well like, how do you how did you see yourself prior to.

**00:41:29 Jay Ruka** You know I would probably answer that question by saying God saw me as a human, who had loved me and had a wonderful plan for my life. You know, to sum it up. You know that God saw me as a zealous young man, that he could use me for his Kingdom and his glory, you know? And he saw me as a, as a worshipper. And I guess what I'm saying is that he saw me in terms that are, like, 'go-to' words in Christianity. Go-to words and...

**00:42:01 Spanky Moore** The disconcerting thing about what you're saying is a lot of people listening, including me and Scottie, will go, well that's what we say about ourselves.

**00:42:07 Jay Ruka** Well, it is. But that's why it was so. That's why my ears sort of lifted. And, you know, I tilted my head like a dog or something. Like what? You know, I was like, what cause there were terms that when I would think about God thinking about me, I wouldn't think that God saw my culture, in other words my body, the colour of my skin, as something that he thought was freaking awesome...

We kind of tend to think that this layer is a layer of nuisance. It's a layer of this almost like that - what we do in the body or who we are, not even not what we do, but who we are, is not important to God. And I just I felt so much validity over my fleshly humanness. That this part of me was actually so important to God and God loved...

Yeah, it was. It's something that's really. It's done my head in a bit. It's made me question a lot about even my own discipleship and what, where, where we draw our worth from in God. And it's not, I guess in that I heard that like my culture, like my culture is actually important, where so much of Western evangelical Christianity, and let's just say in New Zealand, the experience of the Māori world is that you have to leave being Māori at the doorstep to come into Christianity or to come into the church.

**00:44:12 Spanky Moore** Hey so, ah, once we started editing this interview we did with Jay, we've realised it was so great that we actually didn't really want to edit it very much. And we wanted to kind of play as much of it as we could because we think it's so important. So, we've decided to do this podcast in two parts, so pretty soon you're going to see Part 2 coming up in your podcast feed. Hope you listen to it and enjoy. But in the meantime, here is me playing the 21 elephants theme song, quite badly, on a piano.

The 21 Elephants podcast © Scottie Reeve and Spanky Moore

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