

Listening to the People of the Land: Christianity, Colonisation and the Path to Redemption

Edited by Susan Healy

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BOOK

This is a rich and multi-faceted book, with contributions from people with wide-ranging expertise and perspectives, skilfully linked by the writing, passion and knowledge of the the editor, Susan Healy. Given the themes, I had initially thought the book might be heavy-going. What drew me in was the beautiful front cover — so vividly alive with its promise of hope and positivity. And my first impressions were wrong: the book is as rewarding and colourful as the artwork suggests and eminently readable, too.

Although also addressing a wider context, *Listening to the People of the Land* asks us to consider and responsibly acknowledge the part played by Western Christianity in the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand and the resulting

harm inflicted on the Māori people. It's not about condemnation but more an analysis. It grapples with causes and effects and seeks an honest understanding of our history. A second aim is to search out, on an ongoing basis, how Christian Churches might help to heal and restore right relationship with Māori and the land by

"listening to the people of the land" — learning from the wisdom of the Māori worldview and building on Treaty relationships. The future is about dialogue, not the imposition of ideas and structures. However, there is also the opportunity for Christians to "recover treasures of the Christian heritage" as we imaginatively seek to build a mutually beneficial future.

This is a beautiful and important book offering profound depth and hope. It is a book for all of us, particularly if we call ourselves Christians, to reflect on, be challenged by and act on. 🌀

