**WORKING WITH TANGATA WHENUA IN MAKING DECISIONS**

**ABOUT LAND AND BUILDINGS**

At the Special General Assembly held in April 2022 the PCANZ determined that in support of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, Presbyterian churches seeking to dispose of land and/or buildings should offer these assets for purchase to relevant Māori entities before being made available for sale on the open market.  This proposal was adopted by the General Assembly but does not apply in Otago and Southland where property matters lie under the jurisdiction of the Synod of Otago and Southland. Nevertheless there may be congregations in the Synod region who choose to honour the spirit of the General Assembly decision by giving a first option to purchase surplus land and buildings to local Māori entities.

There may also be congregations in the Synod area who are planning to develop their land and buildings and who wish to acknowledge the important status of Māori as original inhabitants of the land and to work with local Māori in developing their land and buildings for the ministry and mission of the church and the good of the wider community. Such a commitment lies entirely at the discretion of local congregations, but this resource is provided to assist and guide congregations who seek to honour the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as they explore how to be good stewards of the land and buildings that they inhabit.

**RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH MĀORI IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND AND BUILDINGS**

Within the southern region one of the easiest ways to access local Māori expertise in the development of land and buildings is through the Aukaha consultancy. This is a consultancy set up specifically to assist with the recognition of tangata whenua in building design and development and with the incorporation of cultural narratives in the built environment. See details here:

<https://aukaha.co.nz/mana-ahurea/#cultural_design_support>

<https://aukaha.co.nz/mana-ahurea/#cultural_narratives>

At a more local level, churches might seek to engage with the marae in their area and learn from marae authorities the stories of Māori history in the region. The building of relationships with local marae is one of the best ways to explore possibilities for partnership with Māori in serving the community. Such partnership can be very fruitful, not only in the development of church buildings but also in opening up possibilities for joint projects like social housing, or the development of community amenities. Even simple projects like developing a community garden, providing on church owned land a landscaped area for public use, or regenerating native planting, can benefit from partnership with local iwi. There are good examples around the country of churches working in such partnerships with local Māori communities.

**INFORMATION ABOUT LAND TRANSACTIONS IN THE SOUTH**

The acquisition of land from Māori during the course of colonial settlement is a very mixed story. Much land was illegally taken from Māori and while some was ‘legally’ acquired according to the laws of the day, the prices paid in such transactions were commonly well below the market value at which land was then onsold to settlers. In many cases the government’s promises of reserve land for Māori were not honoured. In addition, of course, the concept of land ownership is understood very differently in a Māori context than it is in Western contexts. Churches in Otago and Southland wishing to dispose of or develop land may therefore wish to investigate further the history of the land in question.

Here are some resources that may assist with such investigations.

* Harry C. Evison, *The Long Dispute: Maori Land Rights and European Colonisation in Southern New Zealand* (Canterbury University Press, 1977). Chapter 9 of this book is concerned specifically with ‘The Otago Purchase’.
* Harry C. Evison, *The Ngai Tahu Deeds: A Window on New Zealand History*, Revised edition (Canterbury University Press, 2007) See chapter 3 especially for details of the acquisition of land in Otago.

**FURTHER RESOURCES**

Those seeking to understand more about New Zealand’s history, settler engagements with Māori, and Māori perspectives on spirituality and the land may find these books of interest.

* Jay Ruka, *Huia Come Home* (Oati, 2017)

Jay has worked in full-time ministry since his early twenties, as youth pastor, mission director and church minister. He is now the Dean of the Anglican Cathedral in New Plymouth.

* Keith Newman, *Bible and Treaty: Missionaries Among the Māori – A New Perspective* (Penguin Books, 2010)
* Keith Newman, *Beyond Betrayal: Trouble in the Promised Land – Restoring the Mission to Māori* (Penguin Books, 2013)

Keith is an award winning journalist and deeply committed Christian who is a leading expert on the role played by the missionaries in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the subsequent unfolding of relations between Māori and the Christian churches.

* Paul Tapsell, *Kāinga: People, Land, Belonging* (Bridget Williams Books, 2021)

Paul is a former Professor of Māori Studies at the University of Otago. He writes in autobiographical mode of Māori understandings of the land and of his concern for responsible habitation of the land and protection of the environment.