

Bible & Treaty; backward into the future

Restoring heritage stories and creating new ones

Titiro whakamuri kokiri whakamua – Look back and reflect so we can move forward

He iwi tahi tatou –we two peoples together can make this nation great (with licence)

“Here in my right hand I hold a Bible and in my left hand Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I say first of all, let us one and all unite under Ihoa (and) the Bible, and after this, we will take hold of Te Tiriti o Waitangi,” Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana, Orakei, Tāmaki Makaurau, 1921.

Keith Newman is a passionate advocate for the Bible and the Treaty of Waitangi, the two founding documents that he believes should continue to be viewed in tandem for the outworking of a brighter, more just and balanced future for Aotearoa-New Zealand.

He says, the early missionaries had a pivotal role convincing biblically aware Maori to sign the Treaty of Waitangi as a spiritual kawenata (covenant) and that; alongside the more holistic Maori worldview (Te Ao Maori), needs to be honoured in Treaty-based decision making today.

However, Newman wonders whether the modern day representatives of the missionaries, the church and its various denominations and agencies, are serious about ensuring Treaty partners walk together in unity and equality as participating partners.

“Are we using our resources, influence and capacity for love and service to facilitate hope, unity and healthy bi-cultural relationships, or are we asleep at the wheel?”

Newman, a journalist with over 45 years experience and author of five New Zealand history books, says the breakdown of our western-based systems suggests there’s an urgent need for a more creative and indigenous approach across all sectors, including the church.

How is it, he asks, that New Zealand can claim to be one of the most desirable tourist destinations and least corrupt nations while a new underclass is struggling with some of the highest global numbers of child abuse, domestic violence, imprisonment, health issues, homelessness and suicide?

He believes some of the solutions are right in front of us but have been rejected or ignored by successive governments and agencies or derailed by silo thinking or competitive patch protection over funding.

“We seem to take three-year election term bites at the most damaging issues facing our country when clearly a longer-term approach is needed alongside our Treaty partners, to re-imagine our broken systems?”

In his public presentations, Newman delivers a ‘backward into the future’ overview of where we have come from as a nation and where we’re heading, combining inspiration and hard information, the practical and the prophetic.

He cites the Maori whakatauki (proverb) *Kia whakatomuri te haere whakamua*, “My past is my present, is my future” or “I walk backwards into the future, with my eyes fixed on the past” which he says is a concept familiar to indigenous people groups including the Hebrews who were also fighting for their land during long periods of being dispossessed.



He quotes Jeremiah 29:11 where the Jewish prophet Jeremiah says God promises “hope and a future” to the people enslaved in Babylon using the word *aharit* which translates to “looking back for what comes after”.

Newman takes us back to the earliest Maori engagements with the missionaries, through the Musket Wars to the Land Wars, the rise of the Maori prophetic movements to T.W Ratana and modern Maori cultural and spiritual awakenings or revivals.

Newman wonders whether it might take a new generation of radicals with “collaborative, out of the box indigenous, holistic and spiritual thinking” to wake us up to fresh and more connected ways of thinking and acting?

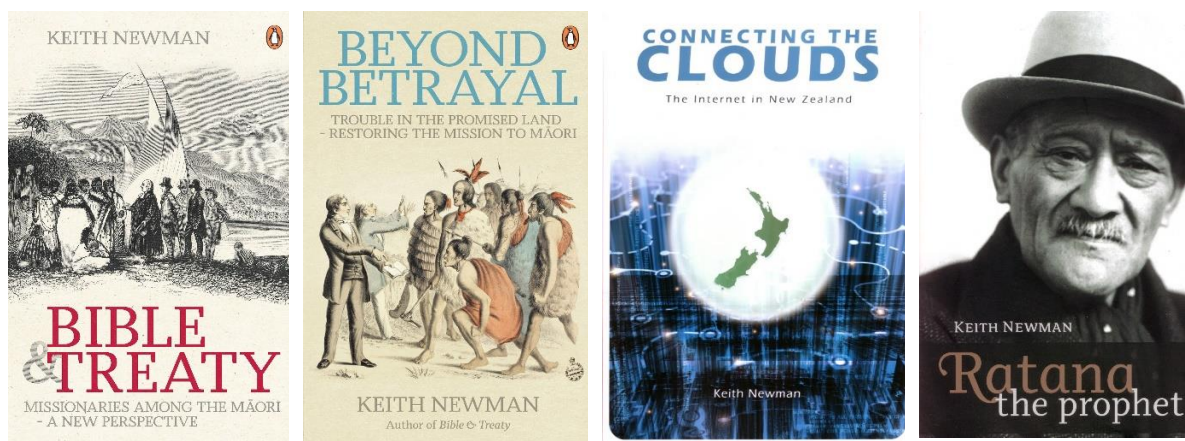
“We need entrepreneurs, innovators and lateral thinkers to inject heart, life and vision to inspire all of us to do our best but it seems we’ve often settled for “bureaucratic bullying, box ticking and endless reports that too often discourage new ideas and crush creativity”.

Part of the solution, he suggests, is better connectivity and sharing of ideas, resources and expertise across church and social networks and more effective collaboration with central and local government agencies.

He believes the pervasiveness of communications technology and social media need to be harnessed to strengthen community networks otherwise they’ll increasingly become instruments of consumerism and a new wave of digital colonisation.

Newman says it’s time for a new conversation; with a more balanced and insightful understanding of how Bible and the Treaty principles can work together with both partners around the decision-making tables. “The first step maybe to look at our biases around the true meaning and heritage of both documents.”

Rebalancing our story



Keith Newman, writer, poet and historian is passionate about bringing a balance to New Zealand’s early history by setting aside party political, tribal or denominational agendas.

He regularly speaks to church leaders and interested groups about the bi-cultural journey and the importance of reclaiming and feeling part of our own nation-shaping story.

His books and public speaking engagements examine where we’ve come; often from a localised point of view, in order to get a better idea of where we’re heading

Those books include Ratana Revisited (Reed, 2005 [out of print]); Ratana the Prophet (Reed 2009);

Connecting the Clouds – the history of the Internet in New Zealand (Activity 2009), Bible & Treaty-Missionaries Among the Maori (Penguin 2010) and Beyond Betrayal - Trouble in the Promised Land (Penguin 2013).

Newman loves to explore the connections between the early Maori and missionary heroes of the faith, the stories of the Maori prophets during and after the land wars and how we might learn from the tragedies of the past to create stronger foundations for the future.

While our early story is filled with greed, betrayal, loss and dispossession of our Maori Treaty partners, he says there's a golden thread of hope, a divine purpose running through our history that can help restore a vision of kotahitanga (unity) for the future.

He says, he iwi tahi tatou, as stated by Governor Hobson to each chief at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, doesn't mean we're all the same. "It honours diversity and the dignity of difference and agreement to work together for the good of Aotearoa New Zealand where Maori interests would be protected, says Newman.

Newman believes a better understanding of the historical Christian foundations laid even before the missionaries arrived on these shores is necessary to provide a proper context for how history played out leading up to and after the signing of the Treaty.

References:

"It has been my privilege knowing and journeying with Keith for several years. He has demonstrated a love for Aotearoa and all people who dwell here. His thorough research, writing, story telling and relationship with Tangata Whenua/Māori I think reflects the kind of attitude the God of the Hebrew and Christian Bible verses describe as loving with intentional purposes." **David Moko**, Kaihautū Manatū Iriiri Māori (Leader, Maori Baptist Church NZ)

"Keith Newman has been and continues to be a forward thinker regarding partnership and 'two peoples becoming one.' He challenges us to 'press on and pursue the high call of God in Christ Jesus' by seriously considering what true reconciliation looks like here in Aotearoa. I believe he was one of the catalysts for the unfolding haerenga/journey of the Church to enter into this understanding of partnership," **Cindy Ruakere**, singer, recording artist, worship leader, communicator.

"Keith is a thoughtful commentator in the NZ Christian realm drawing on essential histories mixed with sound cultural and theological contexts," **Bradford Haami**, author, historian, TV producer, cultural advisor, public speaker.

"Keith Newman has a vast knowledge about our history that is highly significant for our present and future in Aotearoa New Zealand: the relationship between Maori and missionaries, the influence of the Bible on the Treaty of Waitangi, and the impact and relevance of Christian faith in our society. His books are a great read. And his presentations are deeply passionate. I have witnessed a standing ovation in a church setting, which pretty much says it all," **Glyn Carpenter**, former National Director, NZ Christian Network

"Keith Newman's contribution to our understanding of New Zealand's mission story has been immense," **Alistair Reese**, farmer, historian and public theologian

"Keith is a pioneering Pākehā, in the best sense of those words. When not many in his generation have been interested in New Zealand history and the plight of Māori through brutal colonisation, Keith has been a leading author, voice and creative poet to articulate an acute and pertinent sense of justice to a New Zealand society that needs understanding.

Keith presents himself as an energetic, creative and intelligent communicator of many stories—and the consequences, implications and solutions to such stories—that audiences need to hear," **Jay Ruka**, author, communicator, church minister.

"I have known Keith for nearly 20 years now, being initially deeply influenced by his wonderful book

"The Bible and Treaty," which inspired me but also challenged my lack of knowledge and understanding concerning the work of the early missionaries, the initial interaction of Maori and Pakeha, and the journey of the gospel in Aotearoa New Zealand. Subsequent reading of his other books has had the same impact!

Keith has spoken into our local church here in Christchurch several times, as well as at city wide events that we have run. He has always been an inspiration, his level of content is extraordinary, rich and deep, so often the response being from people, 'why have we not heard this before!'

His ability to research and write, and then speak from this basis has been a powerful force in re-shaping our national narrative, and assisting churches and other organisations to have a more accurate picture of what has gone before us, which helps shape and inform how we live today, and what we might dream about for the future!" **Donald Scott**, senior pastor, Northcity church, Christchurch

Career basics:

Keith Newman has been a writer for over 45-years and has two adult children and three grandchildren. He's married to Paula who is an artist and musician. He's originally from Feilding in the Manawatu but has lived and worked in Palmerston North, Wairarapa, Hawke's Bay, Sydney and Auckland.

He trained as a journalist working on newspapers and in radio. After a period working in Sydney in the music industry he returned to Palmerston North to start his own entertainment magazine then returned to radio journalism then on moving to Auckland worked on a range of mainstream and trade publications from 1984. He later wrote for and edited technology and trade magazines and produced radio programmes for Radio NZ National, before moving to the coastal township of Haumoana in Hawke's Bay in 2009 where he lives with his wife Paula.

Awards:

- Journalist of the Year at the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Hi-tech Awards 2009
- Best Produced Music Feature for "*The Blerta Years*" four part documentary for Radio New Zealand National's Musical Chairs programme (2007)
- Best Magazine Feature Writer, IC&T, Qantas Media Awards 2004
- Journalist of the Year 2004, Telecommunications Users Association (TUANZ)

2011 to present: Freelance writer for Hawke's Bay's *BayBuzz* current affairs magazine. Contributor to Audioculture on NZ music history. Itinerant speaker on early New Zealand history (est 100 engagements 2008-2020); Chairman of Walking on Water (WOW Inc) coastal protection group representing the Cape Coast (Haumoana, Te Awanga, Clifton); Cape Coast Art & Heritage Trust, trustee and chief researcher.

2012: *Beyond Betrayal* – Trouble in the Promised Land (Penguin, 2013)

2010: *Bible & Treaty: Missionaries Among the Maori* — A new perspective (Penguin 2010)

2009: *Ratana, Ratana- the Prophet* (Penguin/Raupo)

2009: Journalist of the Year, PriceWaterhouseCoopers Hi-tech Awards

2007: *Connecting the Clouds* – the Internet in New Zealand (the history of the Internet in New Zealand for InternetNZ) Published in June 2008.

2007: New Zealand Radio Awards: Best Produced Music Feature for "*The Blerta Years*" four part documentary for Radio New Zealand National's Musical Chairs programme. In total he produced around 35 such freelance programmes.

2006: *Ratana Revisited; an Unfinished Legacy* (Reed/Raupo)

2004: Qantas Media Award for Best Magazine Feature Writer in information technology and communications

Pre-2004: Feature and news writer for various technology, engineering and related trade magazines

including freelance business writer for *NZ Herald*

Pre-1997: Editor of PC magazine (ACP), Network World (IDG), columnist Metro magazine.