

Acknowledgements

This book has emerged from the ongoing intellectual dialogues within the UNESCO *Collective Healing Initiative*. This initiative helps advance the global effort dedicated to addressing the enduring wounds of transatlantic enslavement, Indigenous genocide, colonialism, contemporary racism, and other forms of structural injustice. As an integral part of the UNESCO *Routes of Enslaved Peoples (REP) Programme*, the Collective Healing Initiative seeks to examine these historical and ongoing harms from multiple perspectives, fostering pathways towards collective healing, structural justice, and communal well-being.

Over nearly three decades, the REP Programme has contributed significantly to research, documentation, and recognition of the physical, economic, and psychological damage—along with the transgenerational trauma—resulting from systemic brutality. However, communities most affected by these legacies of injustice have further emphasized the necessity of acknowledging the spiritual dimension of harm. They argue that fully understanding and confronting *man's inhumanity to man* requires recognizing the deep interconnection between multifaceted tribulations and structural dehumanization..

In 2022–2024, the Fetzer Institute (Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA) joined forces with the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation and the Pureland Foundation to co-sponsor the activities of the Collective Healing Initiative. In collaboration with the Global Humanity for Peace Institute at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and AfroSpectives: A Global Africa Initiative, these partners co-convened two international symposia in 2023 and 2024 to explore the harms of inhumanity, with a particular focus on their spiritual dimensions.

Through these events and ongoing dialogues with impacted communities, a profound realization emerged: those who were violently subjugated and their descendants, and those who performed inhumane acts upon the enslaved, colonized and the displaced, and their descendants, are entangled in what might be termed 'man's inhumanity to man'. The former was able to draw on traditional, cultural and religious resources to strengthen their spiritual resilience, whereas the latter grapple with moral and spiritual impairment. Today, the harms of inhumanity extend beyond human relations, reaching other living beings and the planet's ecosystems, deepening the urgency of collective healing.

It was these shared reflections that led to the creation of this book.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who participated in the symposia—scholars, community leaders, activists, and practitioners—who generously contributed their insights, experiences, and wisdom. Their unprecedented contributions have enriched our collective understanding of complex, multifaceted

human experiences, while also illuminating pathways towards healing, justice, and hope.

We are especially grateful to the Fetzer Institute for its visionary commitment to this work. In particular, we thank Mr. Bob Boisture, its President, Dr. Mohammad Mohammad, Senior Programme Officer, and Mr. Sylvester Jones, for their recognition of the profound nature of spiritual harm and their unwavering belief that *love must be the antidote to inhumanity*.

Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to the Trustees of the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation, Mr. Bruno Wang of the Pureland Foundation, and the Vice-Chancellor and senior leaders of UWTSD. Their steadfast support and shared commitment to advancing global well-being have been instrumental in sustaining this work.

It is our hope that this book will serve as a catalyst for deeper reflection, meaningful dialogue, and transformative action in the pursuit of collective healing, social justice and global flourishing.

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January 2025