

Talanoa Oceania 2009 Conference: Lotu Tapu Tikaga

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From Nasili Vaka'uta, St Johns Theological colledge University of Auckland.
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Abstracts

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DR JENNY PLANE-TE PAA, PhD (GTU, Berkeley, CA), D.Div (EDS Cambridge, MA – Honoris Causa), D.Div (VTS Virginia – Honoris Causa), M.Ed (Hons) (Auckland), BTh (Auckland), Dip Soc Serv (Hons).

Title: "E anga ana te Hāhi ki te hāhou i te rongō ki nga wāhine o Te Moana nui a Kiwa?"
(no abstract)

MISATAUVEVE DR MELANI ANAE, PhD (Auckland), MA (Auckland)

Title: Why are our young people leaving our Churches?: Pacific NZ-born youth and the search for spirituality

Abstract: This paper raises some issues of great and timely importance to the Pacific diaspora specifically and to the Pacific generally, and offers a view of Pacific church, religion and spirituality that is new and optimistic. In New Zealand there are two levels of operation that are relevant to the purposes of this paper. The first is that of Pacific leadership within the Pacific mainstream Churches, namely the PIPC - the first Pacific ethnic church to be established in New Zealand in 1947; the other level is that of ordinary Pacific people who are still going to these Churches, the PIPC ekalesia - parents, grandparents and their (grand) children who attend Church services, Bible Class, Sunday School, and who serve the Minister and the Church. In the course of this paper we will see how theological views of Pacific church leadership often differ markedly from those from the level of Church adherents and needs of the church ekalesia, especially Pacific youth. This paper is a reflection of my thoughts about western and Pacific church and religion, based on the literature, and my own experience as a NZ-born Samoan and member of the PIPC, and is offered in hope of a more fulfilling future for our Pacific NZ-born youth.

DR MELENAITE TAUMOEFOLAU, BA GCE (USP) , MA in ESFL (Wales), PhD (Auckland)

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Title: De-colonizing Pacific Studies: Privileging Pacific languages and indigenous knowledges.

This paper contemplates the history of Pacific Studies as an interdisciplinary academic subject and makes suggestions about shedding the yoke of colonial agendas and giving a central place in its curriculum to indigenous Pacific languages and knowledges.



PRESENTERS

FAKASI'ĪEIKI, IKANI: "The Biblical Calendar from the Ecological Perspective"

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In this presentation, I will look at the Priestly Calendar at the bible and in the Qumran Calendar and then the Mahina FakaTonga, attempting to answer the questions: How many calendars were kept in Jerusalem? Who else might have kept a calendar? How does the Mahina FakaTonga helps us read the biblical calendar? In the Bible, the main (and only) calendar was the Priestly calendar. There should have been more than one calendar. This presentation claims that the second calendar that might have been kept in Jerusalem was the farmer's (fisherman and local) calendar, was basically a lunar (and experience of daily life) calendar used to help form the priestly calendar to remind the priests of their sacred duties during the Sabbath and seasonal festivals, directing them to perform certain obligatory sacrificial acts at specific times of the year. It became a check and balance for the priestly calendar and was kept for religious, ecological and agricultural use. It is open for addition and discussion.

FINAU, SITALEKI 'ATA'ATA (PROF): Pacificans and Cultural Democracy: United we stand divided we fall (s.a.finau@massey.ac.nz) Directorate Pasifika@Massey Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Cultural Democracy provides an overarching philosophical frame work for particularism in multicultural New Zealand and maintaining "the unity in diversity" of the Pacificans. There are some misplaced concerns over a collective Pacific label but such a label is an essential political reality of diasporas that needs to be covered and managed without homogenising Pacific heterogeneity. This is of paramount importance to ethnic survival in a torrent discriminative mainstream. This paper promotes Pacificans as the collective term for the Pacific Islanders and how to monitor its heterogeneity through ethnic specific approaches in order to nullify the effects of the dominant economy of scale mind set and the political numbers game currently affecting Pacific migrants. Ultimately the use of tapu derivatives provides an instrument for "united we stand and divided we fall" and thus gains Pacification through particularistic rather than universalistic approaches. We are who, what, when and how we are and must not be traded for political correctness and convenience. Pacific means Peace!

HALAPUA, WINSTON (DR): "Towards a Tikanga Theology: the story of the Three Tikanga Church, The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia."

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In 1992 The Church of the Province of New Zealand changed its Constitution and became The Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. The change of identity is a realization of a transformative commitment to changing unjust structures enshrined by the old Constitution. The Three Tikanga Church has now been in place for over a decade. This paper is an attempt to present a theological reflection on this Tikanga journey.

HALL-SMITH, BEVERLY MOANA: Ko au te whenua/ I am the land: A Maori woman's ecological reading of Judges 19 *Email: bmoanasmith@gmail.com*

This paper is exploratory. As part of a larger research paper, I am looking to explore a paradigm for reading the sacred scriptures and in particular the Book of Judges using Maori eco-feminist lens. By drawing on the issues of land exploitation, gender, patriarchy and colonial dominance I first argue that a Maori eco-feminism is integral to postcolonial thinking. By using a Maori woman's postcolonial optic



the study will use imagination by reading Judges 19 as a metaphor portraying the effects of colonisation on Maori society; the dominance of male over female; and humanity over non-human; animals; land; and sacred text. The reading will provide space to interpret the text in such a way as to further the liberation of Māori women in postcolonial Aotearoa, New Zealand. For the reason that the reader needs to avoid the parameters of colonizing and decolonizing practices and work towards inspiration and imagination. Within the confines of this paper a detailed reading is not possible but simply the proposing of directions for more independent interpretation. My analysis is not formed out of women's alleged affinity with nature. Rather it will be drawn mainly from a planetary level in which social policies give men power over women.

HAVEA, PALATASA (DR): Food in Pacific cultures: the implications on diasporic life and wellbeing

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Most Pacific peoples leave their native homelands with strong intertwined cultural and moral values that are often biblically based. In diaspora they settle into cultures with values that are often predominantly materialistic and scientifically based. The influence of adoptive homeland cultures often challenges the traditional ways of displaying Pacific values. Pacific cultures have close association with food and within the more favourable economic environment of the respective adoptive homelands it is often easier to display Pacific cultural traditions by way of feasting and celebrations. These, however, often lead to abuse of food and privileges that are provided by the economic environment and criticisms by the adoptive homeland cultures. The biblical text teaches that our body is sacred and that food is provided for health and sustenance of life. It is proposed that when feasting in our cultural traditions, certain biblical taboos associated with food are often overlooked. This is a contributing factor to the increasing number of people suffering from many food related diseases (such as diabetes and heart diseases) and high mortality rates among the diasporic Pacific communities. In the light of both biblical text and current scientific knowledge, this presentation discusses the associations of Pacific cultures with food and their impact on life and wellbeing of Pacific peoples in diaspora.

HAVEA, ROSALINE UANIVĀ: "Tikanga-Pasifika" (Pacific ways) and workplace implications: a mismatch between aspiration and reality?

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The advent of globalisation presented crucial changes that challenged leading economies, including Australia and New Zealand. The importance of cultural diversity has been hailed by many as a positive contribution to gaining the competitive edge. Given our "pasifiki" ways, how do Pacific Islanders fit in to this aspiration? Employment is an integral part of our settlement process and for many the workplace provides opportunities for advancement and self-determination. However, a majority of Pacific islanders are employed in labour intensive and low paid jobs. This presentation will explore dominant world-views of "Tikanga Pasifika" as part of our cultural identification and how these relate to workplace activities and regulations. To what extent can our Pacific ways take advantage of our workplace situations and contribute to our advancement in the society in which we live?

LĀTĀ, PAULA ONOAFE: Tongan Methodists Divisions: An insider's view.

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'Tongans transformed Methodism' seems ambiguous and awkward a statement to imagine, considering they were sent to transform Tongans. In over a hundred years, no one endeavour to explore the depth and circumstances of this state of affairs. As a Tongan Methodist minister, Church historian and an



individual with ancestors in the midst of this history web, (the great grandson of two brother Methodist ministers, Rev. Sione Latu I and Sione Latu II agreed to break their familial relationship as brothers, to have the elder (Jione Latu I) take side with Moulton's Methodism Siasi FakaOngo, while his younger brother (Jione Latu II) took side with Baker's Methodism Siasi Tau'atina in the first division of the Tongan Methodists in 1885); I have a particular interest in studying the depth of the influence matter further. I believe that my ancestral past and experiences within the church to date, allows and facilitates a balance exploration from an insider's view point, as to how the Tongans' ways of life impacted the Tongan Methodist development, in the context of kainga to form five consecutive forms of Tongan Methodism – 1885-1985.

LELEIVAI, HAPAKUKE PIERRE: Lotu and Custom in Uvea Is (Wallis & Futuna Is.): The Uvean and Futunan Catholic Church after 2005 Crisis, Implementations, Consequences and Prospects

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This paper addresses the situation of the Uvean and Futunan Roman Catholic Church in 2009, more than three years after the 2005 crisis that had involved the French state and the Uvean great chieftainship. My aim attempts to depict the implementation of the Catholic Church to the crisis so far. The analysis will not deal with Futuna since it was not directly concerned with the quandary. The arrival of the French Catholic missionaries in Uvea in 1837 but particularly in 1842 when the entire island turn into Catholicism, Church and traditional chieftainship worked hand in hand until 2005 when the crisis blown up this "entente cordiale". During the period of upheavals, a greater part of the local clergy appeared to contest the Great chieftainship, representing the traditionalists, in being sometimes actively involved in the faction of anti-royalist also known as the renovators. I will begin with a short history of the Catholic Church in the archipelagos from 1837 up today. I will continue by analyzing the position of the Catholic clergy all along the 2005 crisis, especially the relationships between the Catholic clergy and Sagato Soane Place - Saint John Place – where stands the Royal Palace of the Lavelua, the King of Uvea. I will wrap up by drawing a general conclusion going through the crisis' stakes and prospects for the Catholic clergy.

MANU'ATU, LINITĀ (DR): Talanoamālie: Good Tidings in the Academy

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In the university, academic work is driven by the mind only. Drawing on the Tongan language and culture, I would argue that the academic work should include the heart, soul and the mind for Tongan academics, at least. I call for a broader approach to explain the concepts of lotu, tapu and fakaTonga. In this paper, I shall refer to the biblical concept, TalanoaMālie, Good tidings, to discuss three aspects of TalanoaMālie: lotu, tapu and fakaTonga with examples from my practical work in the School of Education. In related terms, I will discuss the loto, heart as the site where the goodness of lotu, tapu and faka-Tonga are contemplated.

MOYLE, RICHARD (A/PROF): Holier than thou? The language of culture meets the language of Christianity on Takuu *Email: r.moyle@auckland.ac.nz*

Takuu, a small and remote Polynesian-speaking atoll community located within the political boundaries of Papua New Guinea, continues to practise its traditional religion despite more than a century of Christian missionising in the south-west Pacific region. By banning missionaries and churches, and by exercising tight control on foreign visitors, the community has largely retained its secular and religious



power structures, and also its own language. But a forthcoming translation of the New Testament into Takuu seems likely to exert a subtle new form of outside influence on both the culture and language.

NĒMANI, IANI: The Role of Remittances in Community Economic Development in Tonga

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This presentation will engage the audience in the potential role of migrant remittances in community economic development with a specific focus on Tonga. Migrant remittances is not a new phenomenon. But, the topic has captured a resurgence of heightened academic and policy interest among the international Diaspora community, researchers, economists, policy makers, development practitioners and politicians. Remittances have skyrocketed and have become a major source of income for individuals, families and communities in developing countries. Data from the World Bank suggests that in 1995 remittances to developing countries totalled US\$57.8 billion and reached US\$96.4 billion by 2001 and in 2006, the World Bank reported that remittances to developing countries had reached US\$206 billion (others suggest US\$298 billion). By 2008, the figure had reached US\$305 billion. Of this, the biggest remittances receiving countries include India (US\$45b); China (US\$34.5b) and Mexico (US\$26.2b). However, as a contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing countries, smaller countries were leading the way, including Tajikistan (45%); Moldova (38.3%) and Tonga (35.5%).

While much of remittances literature focus on the increasing level of remittances; its nature and how it is consumed by recipients, much lesser attention is given the potential role of remittances in community economic development in poorer and developing islands including Tonga. This presentation will focus on the role of the international Tongan Diaspora community in social and economic development in Tonga through remittances. The presentation argues that while remittances has a positive role in poverty alleviation (for example it covers education and tuition fees, household groceries, power bills and so forth) a more proactive, well planned, deliberate and strategic engagement between the Tongan Diaspora, their adoptive countries and remittance receiving communities could lead to a more effective use of remittances as an enabling tool for social and economic development in Tonga. The presentation will further highlight some potential and practical community economic development project ideas for consideration by the audience.

'OTUNUKU, MO'ALE: Tongan parents' conceptions of schooling

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This quantitative study was to identify and established the conceptions of the Tongan parents towards schooling (teaching, learning, assessment, aims, responsibilities, school choices, obstacles) in the context of New Zealand education. Conceptions of assessment, teaching, learning and other aspects of schooling have been found to have impacts on students' achievement. The research sought to extend our understanding of Tongan parents' conceptions of schooling in the hope that understanding of these conceptions by school administrators, teachers and students alike would help in elevating the issues of Pasifika and Tongan students not achieving in the classrooms. The data was collected from a questionnaire survey of nearly 400 Tongan parents. The questionnaire items were analysed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine whether responses to statements indicate a relationship of statements to a common factor. These factors were used to draw models where the next step was to test these measurement models using maximum likelihood confirmatory analysis (CFA) to validate the factor structure of these measurement models and to see if reasonable fit characteristics were



obtained. Eventually, models of Tongan parents' conceptions of schooling for each of these aspects (teaching, learning, assessment, aims of schooling, their responsibilities, their school choices and obstacles for achieving) with good fit statistics were established.

POLE, SIOSIFA: Kāinga as a Hermeneutical Metaphor

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This presentation will seek to define the Tongan concept of kainga vis-à-vis the notions of tapu and lotu, and draw out some implications for reading the Bible as a Tongan migrant in Aotearoa.

SMITH, FRANK: Tapu, Fa'aSamoa and the Environment

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Tapu and fa'aSamoa are important concepts which impact on Samoan cultural constructs. Tapu refers to what is sacred. Fa'aSamoa refers to what may be described as the "Samoan way". Contrary to popular belief, I will argue that the "Samoan way" is not totalistic, neither is it "traditional" but should be seen as "opportunity" and as such, is searching and contextual. In this paper, I will explore how these two concepts are related and their utility in creation of an environmentally friendly consciousness, and the role of indigenous practices that support such a frame of reference.

TOLUTA'U, TĀLITA: Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua

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This presentation will be introduced with a screening of the documentary film Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua. This work is the presenter's creative synthesis of the talanoa of three Tongan women and was designed to capture the cultural and emotional resonance of their stories. The work orchestrates photography, animation, sound design, filmed footage and extensive postproduction research into a unique text that seeks to move the parameters of documentary beyond face-to-face interview. In doing so, the research draws heavily on Tongan paradigms of narrative and representation. The realities of dispersion experienced by the women in the film are carefully woven into three garlands that exist as a related unit. The stories become a manifestation of kakala. The relationship between talanoa and kakala is made manifest as the viewer experiences the weaving (tui) of a garland, that is gifted (luva), and by this process, helps to strengthen the talanoa of future Pasifika women. The work considers talanoa as something beyond Palangi paradigms of the told story. It considers a more nebulous form of relating that engages memory, loss, desire, rhythm, accent and beauty, woven into a dignified process of self-declaration.

TU'ITAHĪ, SIONE, Tufunga Fonua: Contributing to the collective material and spiritual prosperity of Tongans in Aotearoa *Email: s.tuitahi@massey.ac.nz*

This paper will attempt to assess the current socio-economic and cultural status of the Tongan community in Aotearoa – in terms of factors such as governance, leadership, social capital and economic capital building. It will explore some broad goals and a strategic direction that might contribute to a collective endeavour towards improving our material and spiritual health and wellbeing.

TUPOU-THOMAS, SISILIA: The Call to Follow Jesus in Diaspora: A Theological Reflection of a Tongan Female Faifekau *Email: ttupous@yahoo.com.au*

This paper begins at the 'womb' where the seed-of-faith was conceived: Tokamoelolo; a name that highlights the fact that water and oil do not mix! It reveals a TABOO that history has dictated and



nature has blessed! What might be the kind of faith-seedling grew out of such an environment? An unusually diversifying kind! This paper explores the dilemma faced with such faith raised and nourished in religious beliefs & teachings (LOTU), mixed with cultural traditions & values, the Tongan ways (TIKANGA); a mixture that's been inseparable through many years of drifting journey across the seas; a mixture that produced challenges, causing constant struggles to separate what is LOTU from what is TIKANGA (Tongan ways); what may be relevant or/and what may be irrelevant to the journey. The call to follow Jesus in Diaspora was heard in the midst of the 'storm'! A call that led the 'called' to the UCA's vahanoa, before landing on the river-valley pathway! The struggles to 'separate' often made the called felt haunted by the original TABOO (Tokamoelolo); the desire to break away from the TIKANGA (Tongan ways) became so strong; and at the same time, the desire to block the 'one-size-fits-all' mono-cultural expectations of the LOTU became so overbearing; and at times, the called hide in the hyphen (-), the in-betweenness and its jungle, and try to resist all! A theological reflection weaves in.

VAMARASI, MARIT (DR), Keeping the Rotu in Rotuma (and Elsewhere): An Agenda for Maintaining Pacific Island Cultures *Email: m-vamarasi@neiu.edu*

The small islands of the South Pacific, once the object of Western romantic dreams, now find their very way of life threatened by a host of factors, including climate change, the world economy, and mass migration. In each of their dispersed communities, Pacific islanders (PIs) are trying to find their identity while, at the same time, trying to preserve their traditional ways of life. This paper offers an agenda, based on the centrality of language to a culture, which involves the combined efforts of community members, linguists, specialists, and other PI groups. PI's are urged to a) accept the fact that the languages are changing and will continue to change in their overseas versions; b) find domains, such as church worship, traditional celebrations, or funerals, where the indigenous language will be used exclusively; c) be willing to teach their languages, formally or informally, to children for whom English is their first language; and d) work together to document the languages as they are currently used, as a resource for current and future group members. There are available Pacific models to follow—for instance, Vanuatu has recruited and trained 100 volunteers to work on documenting its indigenous languages. And Maori has developed a large number of new words, based on Maori roots, to make the language better able to deal with modern needs. Special emphasis is placed here on how Rotuma and Rotumans are progressing along this path, but with wider application to the other PI languages.

WILKINSON, MARLENE: Help me read the Bible! Reading the Bible from a Multi-cultural Perspective

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Scripture can never be read 'in a vacuum'. It comes from a specific context, and is read by people who live in a particular context now. To read Bible passages in a multi-cultural group is to share insights which might never be seen if the passages are read mono-culturally. This presentation will look at specific Bible texts and consider how they are read and understood in different ways by people from different cultural contexts.

TAHAAFE-WILLIAMS, KATALINA: Feminist epistemology, power relations, and knowledge productions

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(no abstract)

TUWERE, ILAITIA SEVATI (DR): Na Vanua, Kei Lotu Na Matanitu: Then, Now and Where?

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This paper is an attempt to identify and briefly describe what constitutes each of the three strands that make up the Fijian social organization, namely: Vanua (Land), Lotu (Church), and Matanitu (State). It seeks to capture the origin of these 'three pillars' of Fijian identity; state where they are in the present difficult political situation in Fiji and suggests ways of moving on into the future. For this movement into the future, it is proposed that their unity as well as differentiation should be maintained as they have always been from the beginning. But the contextual or historical realities they have gone through by way of outside contacts and the socio-political and religious changes over the past years in the country must be accounted for and allowed to redefine their roles in the present. The need for all of them – Vanua, Lotu kei na Matanitu to critically enrich each other and be actively engaged in the building for a better and happier Fiji cannot be over-emphasized.

PANEL ABSTRACTS

Panel 1: Diaspora/Home/2nd Gens/Overseas-born Group

TAITO, ITU: '2nd Gen-ers and 2nd Gen-res' : Beyond the Mono-culture, an Australian Perspective

This presentation will examine the cultural identity issues facing 2nd Generations and the pressures placed on them by society and their 'own' ethnic groups to remain within mono-cultural and stereotypical confines. It will demonstrate how this tension can have a limiting effect on their sense of identity, artistic pursuits into wider 'genres', theological and educational development and general interaction with society. It will also examine the role Mono-Cultural Churches and Multi-Mono Cultural groups (Palagis and PIs) play in perpetuating this limiting effect, and will emphasise the importance of moving beyond the mono-culture into a more diverse cultural perspective.

Panel 2: "Self/Body"

GROUP: MOLUMALU 'O E MO'UI

In this Talanoa Oceania conference we will be presenting a session on the second part of our Theology of the Body mantra: Theology of the Self. We will discuss our own images and the transformation of those images in terms of our faith and the courses of our life experiences through our personal and professional journeys. We will synchronise the different school of thoughts on human nature, environment, faith and the God given 'free will' in shaping the image of a person. We will discern four biblical texts: Number 30: 3-16; Proverbs 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5 and 1 Peter 3:3-4, as points of reference for our session discussion with our participants in gauging an understanding of what influences and shapes people's images. The theme from the conference that we have chosen to focus our discussion on is the tenet of Tabu.

Panelists: Sela Mafi Taufua, Sioana Faupula, Sitela Naimet, Nicole Alexander

Panel 3: Manahine Group: The Pacific Patriarchy

How accommodating are our men (in reality) towards the equality and acceptance of women as theologians, ordained ministers of the word and sacrament, leaders of our churches? Women get lots of lip service from male colleagues in one on one dialogue but why men are mostly silent in group conversations and women also silent. Is the excuse: It's cultural, it's tradition, we all know our place. Is this a cop out?

Panelists: Fei Taualealeausumai, Seforosa Carroll, Linda Hope, Charissa Suli

