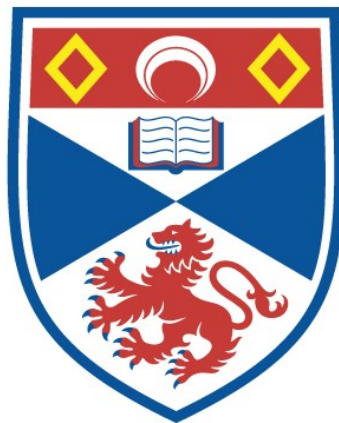


**Navigating to the Island of Hope –  
a Pacific response to globalisation, environmental  
degradation and climate change**

A. Rowan Gard

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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*Dedicated to Darci Rosales,*

*A gifted educator, inspirational mentor and true friend who has been  
a constant source of encouragement from the earliest days of my journey.*

## Abstract

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*Navigating to the Island of Hope – A Pacific Response to Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Economic Globalisation in Oceania* explores and seeks to understand indigenous responses to the powerful forces of globalisation and climate change through ethnographic research and cultural analysis spanning more than eight years in totality, and the Pacific renaissance concept of the *Island of Hope*. The *Island of Hope* serves as a lens, and is of interest both from a scholarly perspective and a praxis perspective, as the *Island of Hope* is a complex amalgamation and synthesis of Pacific ethics elements, economic justice, communal interconnectedness, cosmology and the Christian idea of heaven on Earth. This dissertation, just as the *Island of Hope* itself does, aims to critique and offer a unique perspective on a motivating and unifying principle in Oceania, which extends from the personal to international in scope, and explores the political and economic, the religious and spiritual, the local and global, as well as nature conservation and climate change activism. Global connections dictate global obligations.



## Table of Contents

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|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>   | 6  |
| <b>Acronyms</b>   | 11 |
| <b>Introduction</b>   |    |
| <i>Navigating to the Island of Hope</i>                               | 16 |
| <i>Methodology</i>  | 18 |
| <i>Pacific Epistemology &amp; Fieldwork</i>                           | 27 |
| <i>Thesis Outline</i>   | 28 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>Part I: Beginnings</b>   | 32 |
| 1.1 <i>Introduction</i>   | 36 |
| 1.2 <i>The Origins of the Polynesian Voyaging Society</i>             | 38 |
| 1.3 <i>A Total Cosmic Vision of Life</i>                              | 40 |
| 1.4 <i>The Church's Conception of Globalisation</i>                   | 42 |
| 1.5 <i>Dead Reckoning &amp; Theological Ethics</i>                    | 51 |
| 1.6 <i>Pacific Origins &amp; the Austronesian Expansion</i>           | 53 |
| 1.7 <i>Regionalising Oceania</i>                                      | 56 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>Part II: Anthropology, Christianity and Modernity</b>              | 60 |
| 2.1 <i>The Anthropology of Christianity</i>                           | 62 |
| 2.2 <i>The More Things Change</i>                                     | 63 |
| 2.3 <i>The More Things Stay the Same – Christianity and Gender</i>    | 64 |
| 2.4 <i>Christian Plurality</i>  | 67 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>Part III: Global Connections, Global Obligations</b>               | 69 |
| 3.1 <i>A View of Globalisation from the Island of Hope</i>            | 74 |
| 3.2 <i>Economic Globalisation as Historical Process</i>               | 78 |
| 3.3 <i>Political Justice, the Individual &amp; the Island of Hope</i> | 92 |
| 3.4 <i>Sleeping Rough in Paradise</i>                                 | 96 |



|   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| 3.5                                       | <i>A Slow-Motion Disaster, Centuries in the Making</i>   | 98  |
| 3.6                                       | <i>Voyagers Among the “Sea of Islands”</i>   | 99  |
| 3.7                                       | <i>For the Good of Mankind</i>   | 108 |
| 3.8                                       | <i>We’ve got the Trust, and They’ve Got the Territory</i>  | 109 |
| 3.9                                       | <i>A Painful Inheritance</i>   | 112 |
| 3.10                                      | <i>Dry Our Tears of Sorrow with Dollar Bills</i>   | 116 |
| 3.11                                      | <i>Knowing the Past, Shaping the Future</i>  | 120 |
| 3.12                                      | <i>Hope, Homelessness &amp; Hawai‘i</i>  | 121 |
| <b>Part IV: Navigating a Changing Sea</b> |  | 127 |
| 4.1                                       | <i>The Realities of Climate Change</i>   | 128 |
| 4.2                                       | <i>Tropical Cyclone Winston</i>  | 130 |
| 4.3                                       | <i>Rising Tides in a Changing Climate</i>  | 132 |
| 4.4                                       | <i>Staying Afloat in Fiji’s Economy</i>  | 133 |
| 4.5                                       | <i>After the Storm—On the Ground Response</i>  | 135 |
| 4.6                                       | <i>The Buoyancy of Faith &amp; the Role of Faith-Based Organisations<br/>in Humanitarian Aid</i> | 139 |
| 4.7                                       | <i>Strings Attached—The Politics of Humanitarian Aid</i>   | 141 |
| 4.8                                       | <i>Building A Better Tomorrow</i>  | 144 |
| 4.9                                       | <i>The Anxious Edge of Now</i>   | 147 |
| <b>Part V: Turning the Tide</b>           |  | 149 |
| 5.1                                       | <i>Thinking Like an Island</i>   | 149 |
| 5.2                                       | <i>Pacific Climate Warriors</i>  | 155 |
| 5.3                                       | <i>We are not Drowning, we are Fighting</i>  | 162 |
| 5.4                                       | <i>Countering Perceptions of “Drowning” in the Pacific</i>                                       | 169 |
| 5.5                                       | <i>Performances, on the Street and in the Theatre</i>  | 171 |
| 5.6                                       | <i>Ende Gelände—Here and No Further</i>  | 177 |
| 5.7                                       | <i>Moana—The Rising of the Sea</i>   | 181 |
| 5.8                                       | <i>Pacific Futures</i>   | 186 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Part VI: Another World is Possible</b> | 189 |
| 6.1 <i>Power, Not Just Energy</i>         | 192 |
| 6.2 <i>The Ocean Pathway</i>              | 196 |
| 6.3 <i>Steering the Vaka</i>              | 200 |
| 6.4 <i>Mana Moana</i>                     | 207 |
| 6.5 <i>The Land is People</i>             | 209 |
| 6.6 <i>Landfall</i>                       | 217 |
| <br>                                      |     |
| <b>Epilogue</b>                           | 221 |
| <br>                                      |     |
| <b>Bibliography</b>                       | 225 |
| <br>                                      |     |
| <b>Appendix</b>                           | 247 |

## Acknowledgements

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I have a longstanding interest in human–environmental interactions in fragile ecological zones and an academic background in Pacific paleoecology. More recently I have found myself drawn to the immediate and pressing concerns of environmental and social justice in the Pacific, United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK), as we, as a global community, respond to the critical threat of climate change and the environmental degradation of the oceans themselves.

While working at the University of California, Berkeley, I had been considering returning to postgraduate studies for a PhD for several years when I corresponded with Dr Tony Crook with the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of St Andrews. In correspondence, we discussed my desire to work with communities dealing with frontline climate change issues. My Master’s degree, completed in 2010 at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, in Honolulu, focused on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and utilised a fine-grained isotopic lens (e.g.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  and  $\delta^{86}\text{Sr}$ ) to explore the diet of Polynesian rats (*Rattus exulans*) and the role they played in the deforestation and complex ecological transformation that had occurred on the island. Despite being a popular culture trope of “ecocide”, I found through painstaking scientific and collaborative anthropological research that the prehistoric Rapa Nui people offer us an inspiring record of masterful environmental management, with ample lessons for responding to the daunting ecological challenges of our own time. This research and other experiences of living, working and diving in Polynesia, where I witnessed first-hand the pressing problem of “plastification” of the Pacific, prompted me to seek answers to these entangled environmental and socio-economic ills in doctoral research.

To that end, my research explores aspects of environmental justice, spirituality and the role of faith-based organisations in community resilience, while also critically examining aspects of climate change, environmental degradation, human rights and economic globalisation in Oceania. In attempting to merge what was happening at the local level with national and regional processes, I engaged in 18 months of fieldwork

with a range of communities in the Pacific, including the locales of Honolulu, Hawai'i, Suva, Fiji, and Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Drawing upon experiences from this fieldwork, academic research and previous experiences living and working in Polynesia, this dissertation offers a nuanced, multifaceted Pacific perspective on community resilience, and ultimately hope in the Anthropocene.

Next, I would like to express my gratitude to the University of St Andrews, especially St Leonard's College and the Centre for Pacific Studies for generously funding my research. I owe a tremendous debt to Dr Joeli Veitayaki with the University of the South Pacific for invaluable advice and assistance from my first days in Fiji through the present, and for generously and cheerfully sharing his illimitable knowledge of marine conservation. Thanks to Professor Christina Toren who kindly provided comments on earlier drafts of my dissertation, and a special thank you to Dr Craig Lind for his encouragement and friendship, especially during my fieldwork.

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Charlie Trzeciak, Lili Bagyanszki, Jessica Meagher, Rebecca Leshner and Lorna Weir. Many thanks to Neil Curtis, Louise Wilkie and Caroline Dempsey with the University of Aberdeen Museums, for their eagerness in sharing their knowledge and the beauty of the Pacific Collections. Not to mention the sponsorship of the wonderful team at National Museums Scotland. How gratifying, then, that this project was happily shortlisted for the UK Times Higher Education's Excellence and Innovation in the Arts Award for 2016.

In my second collaboration with colleagues Ben Fong and Johanna Beasley at the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies, I researched a meaningful exhibition – *The Ocean Within, The Ocean Without* – which examined climate change through a Pacific fine arts lens. I am grateful to Ben and Jo for their generosity in so readily giving their time and invigorating creative energies, while sharing their extensive knowledge of contemporary Pacific art.

I am deeply grateful to Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi for his elucidating insights into socioeconomics and politics in the South Pacific, encouragement in my own journey to the Island of Hope and especially for introducing me to Vanuatuan *kava*. While in Suva I had the privilege and honour of facilitating the Relational Hermeneutics and Reshaping the Pacific Conference at the Pacific Theological College, co-sponsored by the University of the South Pacific. *Vinaka vaka levu* to Reverend Aisake Casimira, Reverend Dr Upolu Luma Va'ai, and all the staff and students of the Pacific Theology College for making my time on their campus such a beautiful, golden moment. I am especially thankful for the insights of Rosa Koian and Dr David Gegeo, and the collaborate energies of Anna Anisi and Raijieli Uluinaceva.

Next, I thank the Happy Home Trust for their generous hospitality during my time in Fiji, and providing me with shelter and sanctuary during Tropical Cyclone Winston. Many thanks to Elizabeth Clayton, Samuel Rohit, Alisi Gonelevu, and Charlotte Junghus. Further, I thank Reverend Samson Tuckwan Ah Kee with St Luke's Anglican

Church in Suva, and the parishioners at St Luke’s for making me feel welcome, especially in the challenging aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston.

During the course of this fieldwork, returning to Hawai‘i after an absence of several years was a tremendous gift. Mahalo nui to my friends and colleagues in Honolulu, especially those at the Bishop Museum—Marquess Marzen, Lokomaika‘i Lipscomb, and Malia Baron. And all those I originally met at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, especially Dawn Suioku, Bethany Bannister-Andrews and Steven Tano. Many thanks to my friends and ‘Āina Warriors with 350 Hawai‘i, especially Dave Mullinex and Sherry Pollack. I am grateful to Chad Blair with Honolulu Civil Beat for his time and for generously sharing his extensive knowledge of the socio-political landscapes of Hawai‘i and Micronesia with me.

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Figure 1. The author on board *Hikianalia* with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, Sand Island, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, November, 2015 near the beginning of her doctoral fieldwork. Image courtesy of the author.

During my fieldwork I had the pleasure of visiting Aotearoa New Zealand for the first time. I will be forever indebted to Dr Graeme Crooks and the Crooks family – Viv, Joe, Sam, Claire, and Isaac – for their tremendous hospitality, patience and especially for introducing me to rugby – go All Blacks! A special thank you to Dr Ethan Cochrane with University of Auckland for advice, listening and of course the pints. I am indebted

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Over the course of this fieldwork I was reminded again and again of how blessed I am to have friends scattered across this beautiful blue planet of ours. I would like to thank Bernadette Suresh, Rose Schmitz, Michael Hard and Summer Scanlan for all the coffee, hot sauce and love over the years. While in Aotearoa I met two extraordinary women – Angelica Lambert and Lisa Man – whom I am deeply grateful to now call dear friends. I would be remiss too if I didn't thank my dear friend Laura Pond, whose quiet calm was a source of strength during and long after Tropical Cyclone Winston.

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Finally, I am convinced that my academic journey would have been considerably bumpier and shorter if not for the excellent instruction in the subtle art of writing by both Professor Diana Reeder and Dr Gregory Miller. Thank you both for helping me to find my voice. In summation, I owe two people sincerest thanks, as friends, colleagues and mentors: Darci Rosales with Santa Rosa Junior College and Victoria Bradshaw with University of California, Berkeley, for their positive presence a mentorship in my life, each in different ways continuously encouraging me to keep going and to ultimately listen to the beat of my own heart above all else.





## Acronyms

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ADB Asian Development Bank

CNMI Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands

COFA Compact of Free Association

COP The United Nations Climate Conferences are annual conferences held in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Formal meeting of the UNFCCC Parties – Conference of the Parties or COP – are held yearly to assess global progress in tackling climate change.

ECREA Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy

EEZ Exclusive Economic Zone

EPA Economic Partnership Agreement

ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

EU European Union

FAS Freely Associated States

FCC Fiji Council of Churches

FSM Federated States of Micronesia

G-8 Group of Eight: Canada, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, United States and Russia.

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| GCC   | Great Council of Chiefs ( <i>Bose Levu Vakaturaga</i> BLV) |
| GCF   | Green Climate Fund   |
| GDP   | Gross Domestic Product                                     |
| GNP   | Gross National Product                                     |
| HUD   | US Department of Housing and Urban Development             |
| IHM   | Institute for Human Services                               |
| IMF   | International Monetary Fund                                |
| IPPC  | Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change                 |
| MDGs  | The UN's Millennium Development Goals                      |
| NASA  | National Aeronautics and Space Administration              |
| NGOs  | Non-Governmental Organisations                             |
| NLTB  | Native Land Trust Board (Fiji)                             |
| NZAID | New Zealand Agency for International Development           |
| ODA   | Official Development Aid                                   |
| OECD  | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development      |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| OXFAM | Oxford Committee for Famine Relief  |
| PACER | Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations  |
| PANG  | Pacific Action Network on Globalization   |
| PCC   | Pacific Conference of Churches  |
| PICs  | Pacific Island Countries  |
| PICTs | Pacific Island Countries and Territories  |
| PJIC  | Fiji Council of Churches' Research Group – Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation Project |
| PNG   | Papua New Guinea  |
| PTC   | Pacific Theology College  |
| PVS   | Polynesian Voyaging Society   |
| RMI   | Republic of the Marshall Islands  |
| ROP   | Republic of Palau   |
| SIDS  | Small Islands Developing States   |
| SOE   | State of Emergency  |
| SNO   | Sidewalk Nuisance Ordinance   |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| SPARTECA | South Pacific Area Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement |
| SPF      | South Pacific Forum  |
| SPO      | Stored Property Ordinance  |
| SPREP    | South Pacific Regional Environment Programme                         |
| TFZ      | Tax Free Zone  |
| THRDM    | Tonga Human Rights and Democracy Movement                            |
| TNC      | Transnational Corporation  |
| TTPI     | Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands                               |
| UN       | United Nations   |
| UNCTAD   | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development                   |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme                                 |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization     |
| UNIFEM   | United Nations Development Fund for Women                            |
| UMICs    | Upper Middle-Income Countries  |
| UK       | United Kingdom   |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| UN     | United Nations                            |
| US/USA | United States of America                  |
| VAT    | Value Added Tax                           |
| WB     | World Bank                                |
| WCC    | World Council of Churches                 |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                 |
| WTO    | World Trade Organization                  |
| WWI    | World War I                               |
| WWII   | World War II                              |
| PICTA  | Pacific Islands Countries Trade Agreement |

Figure 2. Map of Oceania. Image courtesy of the United States Federal Government. Rendered in February 2010.

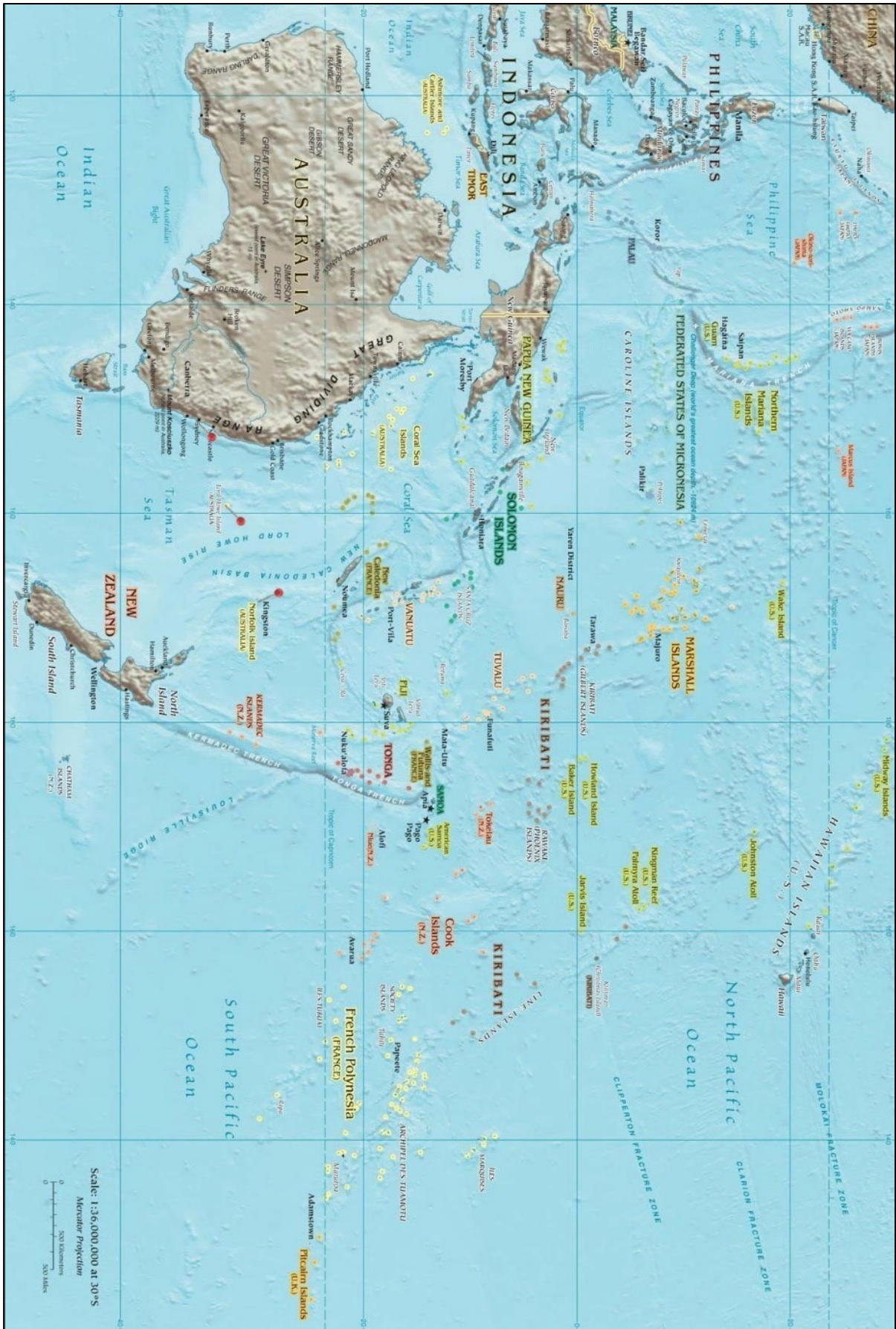




Figure 3. *Hikianalia* and crew members of Polynesian Voyaging Society, Sand Island, Honolulu, Hawai'i, November, 2015. Photo courtesy of the author.

## **Navigating to the Island of Hope**

What do you hope for? It is a deeply personal question, yet simultaneously universal, in that to be human is to hope. Even at the darkest of times, in the harshest of conditions, hope buoys the human spirit. In response to a recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, headlines around the world declared “We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe. Urgent changes needed to cut risk of extreme heat, drought, floods and poverty” (Watts 2018). How then do those on the front lines of climate change create and maintain hope in the face of such dire circumstances? Through my multi-sited research I seek to understand Pacific indigenous perspectives on the manifestation of hope, especially in response to the “wicked” problems of climate change, environmental degradation and the heavy debt burden associated with economic globalisation in Oceania (Batie 2008).

Hope and the divine are intimately intertwined in the Pacific. No matter your own personal beliefs, if you have spent any time in the Pacific, you cannot have missed God. In every village and city in the Pacific you can find God in full churches and busy temples, and joyously celebrated on holy days. Simply put, religion, spiritual practices and God have tremendous influence on those who call the Pacific Islands home.

Yet, as Nunn noted, “almost every well-intentioned outside agency – including those of foreign governments such as Australia and the European Union – that seeks to help the region’s people adapt to the effects of future climate change is drawing up its plans in secular ways, and communicates using secular language... Over some 30 years, most such interventions have failed, proving neither effective nor sustainable. The answer to the question “why” may in part lie in the side-lining of God” (Nunn 2017: 1). Nunn’s point is an essential one regarding secular approaches to the complex socioeconomic and environmental problems in Oceania.

In pursuing a deeper understanding of hope and the divine in the Pacific in my own research, I use the Pacific renaissance concept of the *Island of Hope* as a lens through



which to guide my undertaking. For the *Island of Hope* is many things, not least of which an ecumenical document, a formal study of globalisation in Oceania, and a Pacific renaissance ideal, which offers unique Oceanian insights and calls for nature-based and people-maximising solutions to environmental and social issues. These complex and entangled socioeconomic and environmental issues are all too often rooted in a desire for financial gain at any cost from outside of the region, as is made explicit in the *Island of Hope* and was quickly pointed out by my informants (World Council of Churches 2001: 9-12; Gard 2016 np). The *Island of Hope* also engages with the entangled historic contexts of colonialism, capitalism and economic globalisation in Oceania, while offering an analytical framework for viewing the social relationality of the present and the future. Ultimately the *Island of Hope* offers a re-imagined future in which Oceania is envisioned as a leader that navigates the rest of the world to this new, re-imagined future. Indeed, this a future that embraces the “Kingdom of God [and] includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace. Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference...” (World Council of Churches 2001: 8). Unsurprisingly,

[e]conomic globalization has different meanings for different people, groups and communities. Highlighting the basic characteristics, we may define economic globalization as a process of: Transnationalization of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance capital round the globe, round the clock; Process of centralization of capital via mergers and acquisitions; Transnationalization of production, e.g. the sales of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) is over \$14 trillion (US) as against an export trade of just half of it; Standardization of consumer tastes; Legitimization of the process by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and World Trade Organization (WTO); Unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed “rulers” in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes (World Council of Churches 20001: 9).

The *Island of Hope* continues with a consideration of, and stipulation that, “the theoretical rationale of this process is rooted in the assumptions of neo-classical economics. Making no reference to the basic needs of the community, this economic paradigm assumes that wants are unlimited, while the means to satisfy them are limited” (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). The *Island of Hope* is correct in drawing attention to the unsustainable nature of capitalism and the continued use of scarce and rapidly diminishing natural resources. In turn then, “the most efficient allocation of these scarce resources is secured through setting the price via the competitive market mechanism. The recurring theme of IMF, World Bank, WTO literature is summed up in the expression ‘set prices right’” (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). This is especially troubling to those with the benefit of an island worldview, when compared to a continental worldview<sup>1</sup>.



## Methodology

Relying on an approach that is anchored in cultural analysis and *I ka nānā no a 'ike* (“learn by observing” in Hawaiian) – the core method of anthropology – and what has been described by some as “using relationships to uncover relationship” (Strathern 2005: vii), this project emerged from my interest and training in anthropology, ecology and community engagement. And, deeper still, my love of the Pacific I consider the formal study of globalisation by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Pacific Council of Churches (PCC)<sup>2</sup> through the *Island of Hope*, as well as document personal

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<sup>1</sup> I will further explore “island worldviews” when compared with “continental worldviews” in Chapter Four – Turning the Tide. For a further exploration of the topic see *Thinking Like an Island: Navigating a Sustainable Future in Hawai'i*, edited by Jennifer Chirico and Gregory S. Farley, published by the University of Hawaii Press in 2015, which was popular and much discussed at the time of my fieldwork among my informants active in environmental campaigning.

<sup>2</sup> I will use phrases such as “Pacific Church” and “the Church” as a shorthand for the global Christian church, where I am specifically referring to the World Council of Churches (WCC) as they consider

encounters with communities in Hawai‘i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand that revolve around climate change, environmental degradation and economic globalisation. To that end, Chapter One – *Beginnings* – explores the formal articulation of the *Island of Hope* put forward by the WCC and PCC, the Church’s understanding of globalisation, and why this subject matter is important within the sphere of theological ethics.

Included in Chapter One is a consideration of the Austronesian Expansion, or the first arrival of people in the Pacific, as this is the origins for much of the Pacific, and the advent of Christianity in the Pacific; as one Pacific Islander colleague remarked to me at a Pacific Theology College conference: “God has been in the Pacific long before the missionaries and Christianity” (Gard 2016 np). I will conclude Chapter One with a subsection entitled *Regionalising Oceania*, which considers the uniquely diverse and unifying history of the Pacific, and how such a vast swath of the world – a full third of the Earth’s surface – can be considered simultaneously whole, yet each island is unique in time and space.

Chapter Two – *Anthropology, Christianity and Modernity* – examines the burgeoning discipline of the anthropology of Christianity. The last two decades have seen an increase of interest in a comparative approach to the many concurrent Christians populations, as well as the histories of Christianity that exist around the world (Robbins 2003a, 2007a; Scott 2005; Cannell 2006; Engelke & Tomlinson 2006; Keane 2007). As to why Christianity, the largest of all the world religions with some 2.3 billion converts, has remained an understudied area of anthropology can in part be found in the inherent biases that originate in the foundation of the discipline of anthropology (Pew Research Center 2017). One such bias is the very familiarity of the Christian faith. Many Australian, American and European anthropologists tend to view Christianity as lacking alterity and as such is simultaneously too familiar to warrant

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themselves to be an expression of the “universal church”, more generally understood as a fellowship of churches that “confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (Oikoumene 2017). I will more fully explain these terms and this point in Part I: *Beginnings* of this chapter, as well as consider the heterogeneous nature of Christianity in Part II: *Anthropology, Christianity and Modernity* while noting that my primary points of contact with religious informants were Protestants who were part of Anglican and Methodist congregations.

serious study, while paradoxically for those of a more secular background strangely confusing with something of the faintly ridiculous about it (Robbins 2003a). Thus Christianity is at once both too known and too unknown to merit in-depth academic study (Bialecki 2008).

Chapter Three – *Global Connections, Global Obligations* – offers an overview of globalisation in the Pacific and introduces the reader to a case study in Hawai‘i, through the lens of the *Island of Hope*, that is entangled in poverty and ultimately historic environmental degradation as a result of nuclear testing in Micronesia. In the subsection of Chapter Two – *Knowing the Past, Shaping the Future* – I discuss Pacific responses to socioeconomic problems of homelessness, caring for the elderly, and the mentally ill in Hawai‘i.

Chapter Four – *Navigating a Changing Sea* – explores climate change, extreme weather, community resilience, poverty and international aid in Fiji. The role of faith-based organisations is considered and championed within the case study of Tropical Cyclone Winston. The complicated and disheartening politics of humanitarian aid is explored in relation to Fiji, as well as ways in which faith-based organisations are all too often overlooked in regional responses to extreme weather and climate change. The paucity of sustainable development policy that considers faith-based organisations and spiritual practices in relation to the environment and development is also noted. Finally, I explore mobility and faith practices as a means of increasing community resilience now and in the future.

Chapter Five – *Turning the Tide* – explores the environmental activism response by 350.org’s<sup>3</sup> Pacific chapters to climate change, the global fossil fuel economy from the 2000s through to the present day, and the connection that both voyaging and Pacific performance arts have with climate change and environmental campaigning. A further

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<sup>3</sup> 350.org is an international movement and grass-roots organisation working to “build a world of community-led renewable energy for all” ([www.350.org](http://www.350.org)). I will further explore the origins of 350.org in Chapter Four – *Turning the Tide*, as well as my experiences as an environmental campaigner associated with the organisation in several campaigns in Oceania, US and the UK.

case study is found in Fiji's leadership of the 2017 UN Conference of the Parties climate talks (COP 23) in Europe. The fifth chapter also looks at the Pacific Climate Warriors (a well-known chapter of 350.org in Oceania) and their call to all environmental justice warriors to stand with them, as they are "not drowning, [but] fighting." The "fight" is the focus of the concluding sections of this chapter (Packard 2013).

In the final section of this dissertation, Chapter Six – *Another World is Possible*, I consider *The Ocean Pathway* called for at COP 23 by Fiji, as well as the importance of self-governance and energy ethics in the manifestation of hope for all those on the frontlines of climate change in the Pacific. A case study focusing on energy ethics and self-governance in Hawai'i is considered in the subsection *Power, Not Just Energy*. The conclusion of the last chapter reflects on the impact of the *Island of Hope* as a galvanising force across the region. Lastly, the Epilogue notes the socioeconomic and climate change events that have continued to shape the region since I departed the field in January 2017, and I provide a brief reflection on my own personal engagement with the *Island of Hope*.

To further elucidate, the *Island of Hope* is primarily concerned with elements of Pacific cosmology and Christian ethics in relation to colonial and corporate values of capitalist consumption, or when condensed to a single word, as one Pacific scholar put it, "greed" (Efi 2009). This point is eloquently elaborated on in relation to nature and climate change in the Pacific by His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, the Head of State of Independent State of Samoa, in an address at the University of Hawai'i, where he states, "fundamentally the problem of climate change is a problem of arrogance and greed. If we want to seriously address the critical issues that face our world today we have to come up with something that is bold enough to allow us to say the unsayable. In other words, what is constructive in this search for answers is also what is most hard to say" (Presented to the Stars of Oceania Summit, University of Hawai'i, 9-12 April 2009).

The literature on globalisation and greed as some of my informants consider it (Gard 2016 np) in Oceania is extensive (Firth 2013; French 2000; Giddens 2003; Lockwood 2004; Scholte 2000). Herein, then, is a cultural analysis that is simultaneously grounded in detailed urban life in the Pacific while engaging with understandings of hope, nature, identity, the sacred and divine, and in some cases, the all-too-harsh economic realities impacting various community groups in Hawai'i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through utilising the *Island of Hope* lens and a multi-sited approach, this cultural analysis embraces the rich history and diversity of the Pacific, and offers a fascinating and challenging setting for anthropological exploration and enquiry (Marcus 1995 & 1999, Herzfeld 2004, Falzon 2009). Multi-sited ethnographic research is admittedly a less common form of ethnographic research that has only emerged in the last few decades of the discipline's existence.

Now often associated with the wave of intellectual capital labelled postmodern, [this type of approach] moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. It develops instead a strategy or design of research that acknowledges macrotheoretical concepts and narratives of the world system but does not rely on them for the contextual architecture framing a set of subjects. This mobile ethnography takes unexpected trajectories in tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity that destabilize the distinction, for example, between lifeworld and system, by which much ethnography has been conceived. Just as this mode investigates and ethnographically constructs the lifeworlds of variously situated subjects, it also ethnographically constructs

aspects of the system itself through the associations and connections it suggests among sites... more importantly it arises in response to empirical changes in the world and therefore to transformed locations of cultural production. Empirically following the thread of cultural process itself impels the move toward multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995: 96-97).

It is vital to note the benefits of a multi-sited approach when approaching the *Island of Hope*. I argue that this approach is best suited to the *Island of Hope*. For example, anthropological scholarship that has embedded ethnographic subjects within the wider framework of a world system, such as classically rendered in Marxist anthropology, or more recently in media studies, feminist studies, or science and technology studies, often achieves fascinating and dynamic insights into the various interdisciplinary areas of research. Further, it is because interdisciplinary areas of study are not easily delineated and contained that a world system is of great use. That is not to say that for ethnographers, even those who use a multi-sited approach, the world system is the “be-all and end-all”, to take a Shakespearean turn of phrase; rather it serves to give context to the lived experiences of communities and individuals embedded in a globalised and interconnected world.

Classic ethnographic work has long been based in the construct of “the local” with an intimate perspective that is concerned with agency and “everyday life” that is often bound by a village or town, whereas multi-sited ethnography attempts to connect with these various aspects of “everyday life” but on “a differently configured spatial canvas” (Marcus 1995: 97). The sites of my research are all embedded within the globalised financial markets, media, geo-political entanglements, class hierarchies and so on – all elements of the world system – thus it follows that tracing “connections, associations, and putative relationships are thus at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research” (Marcus 1995: 97). The contemporary Pacific and a deeper understanding of the *Island of Hope*, which I attempt to capture in my research, is not fully understood from within a holistic world system framework, as there are new processes at work, such as the end of organised capitalism and globalisation (Lash &

Urry 1987). Economists themselves have grappled with the diffuse and dynamic nature of the political global economy, as one Nobel laureate noted: “there is not some glorious theoretical synthesis of capitalism that you can write down in a book and follow. You have to grope your way” (Solow 1991: 1). This then is my attempt to grope my way to the *Island of Hope* – to simultaneously hold the micro and macro, the singular and the plural, the fragment and the world system, the now and all that has fallen away, all of which converge in the *Island of Hope*.





You might ask, what is the language of globalisation? The short answer is English. The long answer is too. While I studied the Hawaiian language as a graduate student in the mid-2000s at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, in Honolulu, and the Fijian language while living in Suva as part of my fieldwork in 2016, I cannot claim anything but the most basic of understandings of both languages. Therefore all of my interviews and fieldwork in Hawai‘i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand were carried out in the English language. Though I appreciate that some will see this as a hindrance, I ask the reader to consider that the language of the *Island of Hope* is English. The ecumenical document was authored and published in English, and this in itself is a pointed reflection of globalisation in Oceania. Indeed, English is the global *lingua franca* and the language of globalisation. As the linguist David Crystal notes, “about a quarter of the world’s population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing – in the early 2000s that means 1.5 billion people. No other language can match this growth. Even Chinese, found in eight different spoken languages, but unified by a common writing system, is known to ‘only’ 1.1 billion” (Crystal 2003: 6). Why then is English the language of globalisation?

Scholars have previously noted that global languages do not necessarily correlate with total number of speakers, rather what matters is who the speakers are that speak the language (Crystal 2003). Consider the example of Latin and the Roman Empire: Latin did not become a global language because the Romans themselves were so numerous, but because their military strength was greater than those peoples they conquered and would later redefine as citizens of the Roman Empire. Yet, even after the fall of Rome in 476 CE, when Roman military power waned, Latin continued in use for a further millennium (Vance 2000: 211-224). Latin was the international language of the elite and educated, and perpetuated by a different source of might than either brute strength or strategic military power. Rather, Latin was perpetuated by the ecclesiastical might of Roman Catholicism – the Church.

Language is intertwined with economic, militaristic, technological and religious power; it follows then that without some type of power no language will grow to be an international medium of communication. As the linguist David Crystal further notes: “[l]anguage has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails” (Crystal 2003: 7).

Unsurprisingly, the rise of the English language is inescapably linked to the rise of the British Empire and more recently the increasingly global influence of America.

In the aftermath of World War II (WWII 1939-1945), the United Nations formed in 1945 with representatives from 51 countries. The UN Charter was then ratified by a number of signatories, including China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States (United Nations Charter 1945). A mere decade later in the 1950s, the membership had risen to 80 nations and is still counting, as I will explore in greater depth in the final chapter of this dissertation; as the independence movement further increased the member nations of the UN into the following two decades. In the 1990s membership was further spurred at the UN with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Consequently, as a result of this increasing global interconnectedness there had never been so many people and nations needing to speak with each other. This was further spurred by the rise of tourism and economic air travel, which enabled many of modest means to travel internationally for the first time. Clearly a *lingua franca* was and remains needed; and while the might of the British Empire has waned in the last two centuries the economic power of America has only increased. The might of the US dollar, with the English language behind it, achieved new heights of domination. As economists recently noted, “[d]espite facing challenges at the domestic level along with a rapidly transforming global landscape, the US economy is still the largest in the world with a nominal GDP forecast to exceed USD 21 trillion in 2019. The US economy represents about 20% of total global output, and is still larger than that of China” (Focus Economics 2019: 1). As I noted previously, language is often intimately intertwined with economic, militaristic and religious power, and this in small part

explains why the language of the *Island of Hope* is English and why I carried out my fieldwork.



In the following chapters of this document I argue that, just as with hope itself, the Island of Hope is positioned between possibility and reality, at a point just over the horizon. I further argue that Oceanian perspectives and “island worldviews” have much to offer the rest of the world at this historic moment, and I will argue this point throughout the dissertation, with a further consideration of this subject in Chapter Six’s Thinking Like an Island. As we rise to the challenges of climate change and what the United Nations (UN) have deemed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; gender equality and empowerment for women; and environmental sustainability there is much to be found in “thinking like an island” (World Health Organization 2018). For example, consider the Melanesian concept of creation, as beautifully expressed by Ronnie Tom Ole in *Making Sense of the Oneness of Life: a Melanesian Christian View on Creation*, “in terms of people’s relationship to the earth and the environment, with all their contents, visible and invisible. It is an affirmation of life’s unity – the interrelatedness, and the interdependence, between human life and nature” (Ole 1990: 33). From this perspective all things are connected and dependent on each other, and greater still, “each is made possible by the other. The interaction, that takes place between nature and people, provides a meaning of life” (Ole 1990: 33).

This is further exemplified in the Papuan mythology of the origin of the coconut tree, which is essential to Papuan agriculture and spirituality. In the distant Papuan past, there was once a village near the sea where many fishermen lived, and in their midst was one exceptional fisherman who would leave the village and fish alone, always returning with more than he could eat. The other villagers grew curious as to why this man was so exceptional at catching fish. After much discussion, it was decided that a young boy would follow him to see how exactly he achieved such success. This is what he saw:

the man put down his fishing basket, and then took hold of his head with his two hands. He pulled and pulled, till his head came off. He placed his head on the sand, and he walked into the sea, till the water came up to the middle of his body. After he had stopped in the water, the man bent down till his throat was level with it. Then the fish came swimming in great numbers, and swam down the man's throat. When he had enough, he walked slowly back to the shore. He shook the fish out, and put his head on again. The boy, who witnessed all this, was afraid, and he ran home quickly, and told others about it. The next day, all the men went quickly to the seashore, to see what happened. They saw the man take off his head, and get into the water. Then, one of the men ran out from the trees, and, taking the head, he threw it into the bush. After a short while, the owner came out of the water, and began feeling for his head. When he could not find his head, he ran back into the sea, and changed into a big human fish. He swam out of sight.

A few days later, the boy, who first saw the man, started to think about the head. He went into the bush, to try to find it. When he came to the place, where it had been thrown, he found a palm tree growing. Nobody knew what the tree was. It had nuts on it. The men, who saw this, then were afraid to eat them. But one of the women took a nut, and ate the inner part. When the others saw that she was not harmed, they ate some as well.

Melanesians say, if you look at the nut, when the husk has been taken away, you can see the face of a man. I can tell you, it is the face of the man, whose head became the first coconut (Ole 1990: 34-35).

From this creation myth, a perspective on the wholeness of life is given narrative form and reflects a perspective that embraces both nature and humanity, as the fisherman in the myth literally opens himself up to nature in a conflation of interior and exterior, man and animal, terrestrial and aquatic. Through human–environment interdependence and interaction, all life on the planet is integrated. This is also what Bernard Narokobi eloquently speaks of in *What is Religious Experience for a Melanesian?* when he states one’s “encounter with the Spirit, the law, economics, politics, and life’s own total whole... [is the] Melanesian’s vision of cosmos, and its relationship with it” (Narokobi 1977: 8). From this perspective life is understood to be all encompassing, transcendental, sacred. In this spiritual world, “[l]ife is consecrated towards upholding that religious order... within the world of spirits” (Ole 1990: 36). It follows, then, that life emerges from a divine source and thus it is only right that human endeavours be centred on a spiritual path embedded within a religious framework. One might imagine that this path is circular and that life both emerges from the divine and submerges within the divine over the course of an individual’s lifetime.

From this Melanesian spiritual and religious framework it is life itself, and through life, that all things are connected; such that to separate a human life from its surrounding environment results in a false dichotomy. Consider that for many Melanesians, “[i]f we lose our land, for example, we lose our place in creation. If we find ourselves alienated, or exiled, from our land, we find ourselves at odds with ourselves and all creation” (Ole 1990: 36). These sentiments hold true for many Pacific Islanders and are the emphasis of the theatrical production *Moana – The Rising of the Sea*, which is analysed in greater depth in Chapter Five – *Turning the Tide*.



## **Pacific Epistemology & Fieldwork**

The oneness of life is at the core of the *Island of Hope*, even while, as I show below, the *Island of Hope* manifests in dissimilar forms in a variety of areas across Oceania, much like the shifting contents of a kaleidoscope forever yielding distinctive patterns from unchanging materials. Throughout the following chapters I will engage with a constantly changing sequence of elements and employ the *Island of Hope* lens as my analytical method, which is to say that through detailed cultural analysis I will transition between the micro (i.e. individual) and the macro (i.e. regional) perspectives of the Pacific, as I seek to more fully understand hope-focused responses to mounting socioeconomic and climate change pressures in Hawai'i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand.

As it has been noted elsewhere, the macro and the micro are “confounded in one another,” such that the local and global, past and present, spiritual and secular are indivisible (Comaroff 2003: 149; O’ Reilly 2012). Significantly, this indivisibility or oneness of life transcends the theoretical realm, and coalesces in “an empirical conjuncture” (Comaroff 2003: 151) that also forms aspects of the *Island of Hope*. Consequently, my fieldwork directs a curious eye simultaneously to the micro and macro, the individual and the group, the rural and the urban, the village and the region, the past and the future, the piece and the whole, which simultaneously embrace, reject, consume and construct the local.



## Thesis Outline

This thesis is separated into six chapters positioned in an intentional sequence with each chapter building on the previous and moving deliberately through time, from the past into the present moment of the contemporary Pacific. When read together these chapters tell my journey to the *Island of Hope* and more broadly share the impact that hope-focused, spiritual responses to socioeconomic and environmental challenges have had in the Pacific in the last decade.

The First Chapter – *Beginnings* – commences with the importance of the founding and increasing popularity of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS), especially in light of the renaissance of long-distance voyaging in the Pacific. Reflections on the Polynesian Voyaging Society then dovetail into a consideration of the Austronesian Expansion, or the first peopling of the Pacific, and the resurgence of long-distance voyaging across the Pacific<sup>4</sup>. The remainder of Chapter One explores the formal articulation of the *Island of Hope* put forward by the WCC and PCC; this is especially important as we begin to understand the Church’s conception of globalisation. Then, I transition on to understanding the prehistoric and historic attempts at constructing Oceania as a region, both within and without the Pacific.

From the earliest days of people in the Pacific we then shift to the more recent and obscuring legacy of colonialism, while in the Second and Third Chapters I consider the advent of Christianity and in turn the formation of the anthropology of Christianity. Here I deliberately separate the advent of colonialism and Christianity in Oceania, as this is an important separation drawn by many of my informants, though often conflated in literature and popular culture (Gard 2016 np). I give considerable attention to a Hawaiian case study which examines the economic pressures on residents to secure housing, as well as those who are slipping through the cracks and end up living on the streets and beaches of Hawai‘i. In this Hawaiian case study we find the painful legacies of capitalism and nuclear colonialism in

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<sup>4</sup> Both traditional Oceanian voyaging and the Austronesian expansion are longstanding interests of mine. Further, I have created and delivered public educational programming around these topics while employed at Bishop Museum – The Hawai‘i State Museum of Cultural and Natural History – in Honolulu from 2006 to 2011. Further, I am also a proud member of the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

Micronesia manifesting in Hawai'i today. Yet, where I expected to find hope to be thinnest on the ground, I found the inverse to often hold true.

In Chapter Four – *Navigating a Changing Sea* – I take the reader to Fiji for an in-depth case study of climate change, extreme weather aid response and the devastating damage of superstorm Tropical Cyclone Winston. In this chapter, I also consider the politics of humanitarian aid, the role of faith-based organisations in resilience, as well as different aspects and definitions of poverty in Fiji. Chapter Three concludes by examining income diversification and mobility as a means of increasing hope-based resilience in response to frontline climate change.

Chapter Five – *Turning the Tide* – is a meditation on loss, change, sustainable development and empowerment through art and activism. I am especially interested in environmental campaigns in the Pacific that have come about through the energies of 350.org, a global environmental activism network dedicated to reducing carbon emissions to safe levels in the atmosphere and being an active part of a renewable energy future. The Pacific Climate Change Warriors, a grassroots network of thousands of Pacific Islanders who have taken up the battle cry of “we are not drowning, we are fighting,” are a hugely successful and high-profile section of 350.org that unites several chapters of the organisation throughout Oceania. Through their collaborative energies they are leading the global fight against climate change and urging a swift transition to a carbon-neutral economy from our current reliance on the fossil fuel economy (Gard 2018).

In conclusion, Chapter Six – *Another World is Possible* – considers the future of the Pacific and the critical importance of faith-based and place-based responses to climate change and the socioeconomic ills that have been pressed upon the Pacific. I also draw upon a case study from Hawai'i that explores the importance of energy ethics and self-governance in securing a safe future based in renewable energy in the subsection *Power, Not Just Energy*. In *Landfall* and the *Epilogue* I consider the impact of the *Island of Hope* as a renaissance concept that is continuing to impact the region today, as well as further developments that have occurred in the Pacific around the climate crisis since I left the field in 2017.





## **PART I: BEGINNINGS**

*We are all in the same canoe.*

– Prime Minister Bainimarama of Fiji at COP 23, 2017

This chapter provides a basis for understanding the *Island of Hope* as an ecumenical document and motivational force that calls for all people of conscience to respond to the pressing issue of economic globalisation and the resulting damaging impacts on the environment and impoverished communities. Globalisation is clearly defined, and a plan for achieving the aim of a re-imagined future is addressed through numerous quotations and examples from the *Island of Hope*. Theological ethics and the Church's perspective on globalisation are also considered. Following on from these points, the origins of Oceania as we know it through the Austronesian expansion and peopling of the Pacific serve as an entrance point in understanding the complex prehistory and history of Oceania. In the final section of this chapter readers explore the complex process of defining and representing Pacific cultures and locales, as well as offering critiques of historic and more recent anthropological fieldwork in the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1975; Wendt 1987; Hereniko & Teaiwa 1993; Trask 1991). Further, while it can be illuminating to understand the deep commonality of Oceania, it is vital to understand regional differences and contradictory narratives, to cultivate one's understanding of the vastness and richness of the Pacific, as well as avoid homogenous stereotypes of Pacific Islanders.



The globalisation of political and economic processes against an environment in transition, beset with degradation and climate change, is a mounting moral concern for many in the Pacific, especially theologians. My dissertation as a whole seeks to outline and analyse the Church's response to globalisation in Oceania. From this understanding of globalisation, I move toward understanding place-based solutions anchored in religious and sacred frameworks unique to the Pacific.

At this juncture it may be of use to clarify what I mean by religious and sacred frameworks. For the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, “religion is a system of beliefs and practices that bind a community together around those things which it holds sacred” (Durkheim 1995: 44). This definition of course begs the question, what is sacred? For Durkheim anything can be made sacred: objects, people, times, places, events, and so forth (Durkheim 1995: 35). How then do everyday objects and events transcend the ordinary and become extraordinary?

It is through transformation that the ordinary can be made sacred. A transformation process is possible and wrought through a force or power that is capable of rendering the commonplace sacred. The Pacific term *mana*<sup>5</sup> (“power” in many Pacific languages), for example, is such a force or power, and a concept that is of considerable interest to scholars seeking to understand the sacred (Nielsen 1999: 168–174). For Durkheim, these powerful forces arise from society but can find permanent expression only if they become attached to objects (Durkheim 1995: 327). Thus objects, events, places, and people can become channels for the sacred when they are imbued with diffuse societal

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<sup>5</sup> My first deeper understanding of *mana* came while working as a conservation technician at the Bishop Museum in the mid-2000s. I understood *mana* as a force to animate, and more generally as power. While working with colleagues in caring for the Museum collections I came across one object that had been in the possession of King Kamehameha I, who united and reigned over the Hawaiian Islands from 1782–1819. This object in particular came to define *mana* for me, as it was a large koa wooden bowl that had served as the spittoon of the King. Not only was the striking bowl massive with a diameter of approximately two feet across, the entire bowl was studded inside and out with human teeth. All of those embedded teeth, of which there were dozens, had once been in the mouths of the King's enemies.

forces. Durkheim's identification of the sacred with social power or force is intriguing, as it allows for an uncoupling of the sacred from religion, which can be especially helpful in Oceania.

Next, when I say the "Church" in this context I am specifically referring to the WCC, as they consider themselves to be an expression of the "universal church", more generally understood as a fellowship of churches that "confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Oikoumene 2017: 1). The WCC is unified "in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship" and seeks to advance the "unity Jesus prayed for his followers, 'so that the world may believe'" (Oikoumene 2017: 1). The WCC unites churches, denominations and fellowship groups in some 110 countries and territories across the world and represents "over 500 million Christians... most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as many United and Independent churches" are included in this community (Oikoumene 2017: 1); additional member churches include Mennonites, Disciples of Christ and Friends (Quakers) (Oikoumene 2017: 1). Of course, they do not represent every perspective and expression of Christianity (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-Day Saints and Seventh-Day Adventists are examples of non-member churches); however, they do offer a broad Christian perspective on globalisation as they themselves are a multi-denominational, global expression of the Christian faith.

The PCC is a part of the larger WCC and has "27 member churches and nine councils of churches in 17 island states and territories" with the regional headquarters located in Suva, Fiji (Oikoumene 2017: 1). Both the WCC and the PCC (which is affiliated with the WCC) strive to unite churches in dialogue on a range of matters, including ecumenical, ecological, economic, political and social issues.

Collaboratively the WCC and PCC evaluate globalisation by utilising biblical and theological principles from the Christian tradition. From this analysis a moral discourse has arisen around globalisation from an ethical perspective significantly

informed by theology. Ultimately this moral discourse has proven to be a call to resist globalisation and pursue home-grown economic alternatives to capitalism. This ideology opposes globalisation and constructs a theological argument for global justice, as well as a restructuring of political and financial institutions, and offers ethical guidance for a realistic global citizenship.

In my research, the significant ecumenical document entitled *The Island of Hope* (World Council of Churches 2001) serves as a primary lens through which to critically analyse both the church's approach to globalisation, as well as ways in which it has been embraced by Oceanian communities in Hawai'i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand. And, perhaps more importantly still, the *Island of Hope* conceives a reasonable, citizens-focused, hope-based, all-encompassing consensus for global justice.



My research in the broadest sense then explores aspects of global justice and the role of faith-based organisations in community resilience, while critically considering the colliding and colluding intersects of climate change, economic globalisation and human rights in Oceania. In attempting to connect what was happening at the local level with national and regional processes, I engaged in 18 months of fieldwork with a range of communities in the Pacific, specifically in the urban centres of Honolulu, Hawai'i, Suva, Fiji, and Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, from September 2015 through to January 2017. Drawing upon this fieldwork, academic research and my own previous experiences living and working in Hawai'i over a seven-year period in the 2000s, this dissertation offers a nuanced, multifaceted Pacific perspective on community resilience, and ultimately hope.



## 1.1 Introduction

The *Island of Hope* is a pan-Pacific renaissance concept laid out in the ecumenical document of the same name, which critiques economic globalisation and emphasises that global connections dictate global obligations. The word globalisation itself denotes a complex process of political, economic, spiritual and cultural interactions presently occurring in our world. In historic terms the interactions of political, economic, spiritual and cultural agents were primarily local, and more easily bounded by the concepts of village, city, island, nation or region than today. That is not to say that exchange and trade networks did not exist, as did exploration and travel, wars and other international occurrences that impacted and shaped communities. Yet the last few centuries' rapidly advancing technology and economic practices have dramatically shaped our understanding of self in relation to others, such that it is far more global in scope than any previous century. Every human life on Earth today is shaped by global processes and in turn our moral concern stretches beyond our immediate physical space, beyond family and friends, beyond colleagues and acquaintances, to grapple with what it means to have connections with “neighbours” who are not just next door but half a world away. Global connections have become global obligations, and indeed I will argue that in cases where they have not, such as in *For the Good of Mankind* in Chapter Two, they *must* become global obligations.

The Christian church itself has long had a global outlook, while also being a product of globalisation, with missionaries proving a prime example of this phenomenon. Christian aid activity has forced the church to more deeply consider the structural factors that have prompted the need for aid in the first place, especially around issues of prolonged deprivation and extreme poverty. The spiritual and ethical discourse around these issues has motivated material organisation and response to globalisation and is perhaps best exemplified in the words of the Brazilian Roman Catholic Archbishop Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara: “when I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist” (Carolan 2017: 1).

The Church's response to globalisation in the *Island of Hope* is anchored in empirical data on economic globalisation and theological themes. In this way, the *Island of Hope* document is a theological, ethical critique of globalisation that calls on all Christians to resist the damaging effects of globalisation and strive for a better world.

The *Island of Hope* concept is a complex amalgamation and synthesis of Pacific ethics elements, economic justice, communal interconnectedness, cosmology and the Christian idea of Heaven on Earth. Hence, the WCC described the *Island of Hope* as being rooted in and simultaneously a fruition of:

Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect [... These] are components of the concept of the “Island of Hope” which prioritizes relationships, celebrates quality of life, and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The “Island of Hope” is an alternative to the project of economic globalization which entails domination through an unjust economic system (World Council of Churches 2001: 5).<sup>6</sup>

From this perspective, the *Island of Hope* is prevalent in a vast array of conversations throughout the Pacific, including but not limited to current political and economic issues, religious discourse, and in environmental dialogue and climate change activism. For many, the *Island of Hope* is an ideologically conceived-of location that Pacific peoples can navigate the world towards. This is perhaps misleading, however, as you do not navigate to the *Island of Hope*, strictly speaking, rather the island comes to you when you are deemed ready.

At this juncture, it may prove helpful to also consider that traditional Micronesian navigators and sailors envisage a voyage between two islands with the islands moving,

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<sup>6</sup> A full text of the *Island of Hope* (World Council of Churches 2001) document can be found in the Appendix of this document.

rather than the outrigger canoe or vessel, as is traditionally done in most other maritime practices. For these sailors, it is the origin point that diminishes as the desired destination approaches. Clearly then, from this example and the resurgence of traditional Pacific voyaging practices in recent decades, navigation and ocean-going abilities are highly significant. These traditional Pacific voyaging practices are worthy of in-depth consideration symbolically and literally, without and within the context of the *Island of Hope*.

In 2017, following my return to the UK from fieldwork, the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) completed sailing a traditional voyaging canoe or *vaka* around the world. The voyaging canoe named *Hōkūleʻa* (“Star of Gladness” in Hawaiian) has covered over 47,000 nautical miles, 85 ports and 26 countries as part of the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* (“to care for our Earth” in Hawaiian). For PVS members, such as myself and many others around the world, the *Island of Hope* ideology is embedded in the very existence of the Society and mission of the organisation. For PVS members and supporters the *Mālama Honua* Voyage is considered a “means by which we now engage all of Island Earth—practicing how to live sustainably, while sharing, learning, creating global relationships, and discovering the wonders of this precious place we all call home” (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2014: 1).



## **1.2 The Origins of the Polynesian Voyaging Society**

The Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) was founded in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, in 1973 by Dr Ben Finney, an anthropologist at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa; Herb Kane, a well-regarded Hawaiian artist; and Tommy Holmes, a researcher and avid waterman.

The trio set about illustrating how the ancient Polynesians had successfully and deliberately settled<sup>7</sup> the islands of Hawai‘i, and indeed wider Polynesia, in double-hulled voyaging canoes with traditional navigational techniques (Polynesian Voyaging Society Archives 2018).

In the early years of its existence, the Society set about designing and constructing an ancient voyaging canoe or *vaka* replica. This replica, which was first launched in 1975, was named *Hōkūle‘a*. As the first voyaging canoe to be built in Hawai‘i in more than 600 years, *Hōkūle‘a* was, and remains, a powerful symbol of Polynesian ingenuity, cultural pride and Hawaiian independence.

In 1976 *Hōkūle‘a* navigated from Hawaiian waters on her maiden voyage to Tahiti in an attempt to re-enact and provide a modern context for the traditional migratory routes Polynesians followed out of Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands to Hawai‘i (Howe 2007: 298-309). Upon *Hōkūle‘a*’s arrival in Papeete, Tahiti, some 33 days after departing Honolulu, more than 17,000 Tahitians gathered to greet the canoe. In 1976 such a warm welcome consisted of more than half of the island’s total population (Polynesian Voyaging Society Archives 2018). Consequently, what had initially started as an experiment on the origins and settlement of the peoples of the Polynesia ended up covering an area of more than a million square miles, and ultimately spurred a cultural renaissance that is more dynamic and inspirational than ever today.

Over the following four decades *Hōkūle‘a* would undertake numerous voyages, the most recent being the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* as part of a larger Pacific call to environmental action focusing on climate change and the health of the world’s oceans. The resurgence of Polynesian voyaging and the navigational traditions of the last four decades has been truly revolutionary. In Chapter Four – *Turning the Tide* – the legacy and on-going energies of the Polynesian Voyaging Society will be explored in greater depth. Later in this chapter, in subsection 1.6 *Pacific Origins and the*

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<sup>7</sup> Establishing the deliberate settlement of Polynesia was of critical importance, as the settlement of the Pacific was still a contested academic topic. Some, such as the explorer Thor Heyerdahl, hypothesised that the Pacific was settled from South America via drift raft, as he trialed with his Kon-Tiki expedition of 1947, where he drifted from Peru to Raroia in the Tuamotos.



*Austronesian Expansion*, the origins of deep-sea voyaging will be considered in greater detail.



### **1.3 A Total Cosmic Vision of Life**

At various points throughout this dissertation, I will refer to the WCC simply as the “Church”. This is for both ease and expediency, in addition to the WCC considering themselves an expression of the universal church. It is vital to note that the WCC’s members include denominations that collectively represent some 590 million people around the world. That is not to say they represent all of Christendom, but with a presence in 150 countries and supported by some 493,000 priests and pastors their global presence is significant (Oikoumene 2018). The WCC is at heart a council of ecumenical discourse and service. Furthermore, it is itself a global intuition with an interest in the effects of economic globalisation in the communities it serves. To that end, in the 1990s globalisation became a subject of theological reflection, analysis and practical action for the WCC (World Council of Churches 2001, Scott 2005).

In this dissertation, I focus on the *Island of Hope* where theoretical arguments are made by the Church as to why globalisation is an important matter that all Christians should engage with in an ethical manner. The *Island of Hope*, at the time of its publication, was a working document for the Church and thus intended for public deliberation. Formally called *The Island of Hope: An Alternative to Economic Globalization, Dossier 7* the document assembles international consultations on economic globalisation that were carried out in collaboration with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Council of European Churches. The document’s purpose

is “to trigger thoughts and actions on alternatives to economic globalization from the islands of the Pacific Region and other regions of the world” (World Council of Churches 2001: 3). In the *Island of Hope* document, thoughts on globalisation are developed and articulated from a uniquely Pacific perspective. In 2001, the Church organised two regionally focused meetings, one in Hungary and one in Fiji. Following these proceedings, Pacific churches embraced a collaboratively created platform document critiquing both economic globalisation and the neoliberal values that perpetuate it. The resulting collectively authored document – the *Island of Hope* – emphasised the Pacific’s communal focus, family values and ethical stewardship of natural resources.<sup>8</sup>

As the *Island of Hope* document was circulated, considered, critiqued and ultimately welcomed, further voices joined the dialogue regarding the meanings, definitions and ideological expressions of the *Island of Hope*. For Teranango Beneteri, a Kiribati youth educator, “on the *Island of Hope*, life is significant, valued and celebrated. There is a celebration of life over material wealth. The *Island of Hope* is sacramental, self-contained, independent, and in tune with nature. It is an island marked by sharing and caring, to which people want to journey in order to celebrate life in all its fullness... The *Island of Hope* has the *mana* (“power” in many Pacific languages) to draw human beings together” (Beneteri 2013: 90-91). For many the “concept of the *Island of Hope* is not merely a dream. It is founded in reality and has been our normal life in our islands. The institutions and values embedded in the *Island of Hope* may not create wealth on a massive scale but they will never be responsible for creating second class citizens, destroying the environment at will, causing poverty, the debasement of humanity and denial of human dignity, as economic globalization is doing” (Beneteri 2013: 90-91). Thus, the *Island of Hope* is not just a re-imagining of the future, but also a return to the past, and a celebration of an idealised Pacific Island life.

The following chapter contains a survey of the *Island of Hope* document, with the focus of the following chapters each illuminating various aspects, namely: contemporary

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<sup>8</sup> At this point it is vital to note that much of the genesis of the *Island of Hope* as a concept that came from Reverends Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi and Aisake Casimira, both of who I am grateful to have interviewed and worked with during my fieldwork in Fiji at the Pacific Theological College.

socio-economic issues, Christian religious practices, and environmental conservation and climate change campaigning within Oceania. Yet, just as Bernard Narokobi described the Melanesian Way as being “a total cosmic vision of life in which every event within human consciousness has its personal, communal, spiritual, economic, political and social dimensions... by its very nature, inherently open to change,” so too I believe is the Island of Hope (Narokobi 1980: 20). The Island of Hope is much like a kaleidoscope as I mentioned previously, where its elements or expressions shift and morph, revealing an ever-changing pattern that is open, but composed of stable components.



#### **1.4 The Church’s Conception of Globalisation**

As I embarked on my journey to the *Island of Hope*, I was especially interested in understanding what constituted globalisation from the Church’s perspective. In the broadest sense, the Church identifies globalisation as a quickening and increasing interconnectedness on a global scale, while recognising that these globalising mechanisms were first originated by prehistoric and now modern empires, fully entangled with political, socioeconomic and military forces.

In brief, the Church currently defines globalisation as “economic globalization” or “capitalist globalization”, or “financescapes” as Arjun Appadurai refers to them (Appadurai 1990: 296). For the Church economic globalisation is the “transnationalization of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance

capital round the globe, round the clock... [u]nprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the self-appointed 'rulers' in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes" (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). For the WCC economic globalisation is founded on the theoretical underpinnings of neoliberal economics, which posits that the "invisible hand" of the marketplace gives individuals the ability to pursue material desires without limit (World Council of Churches 2001: 9).

The neoliberal economic paradigm is the global operating principle for numerous financial and business institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and various transnational corporations (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). These organisations engage in many economic globalisation practices, such as the deregulations of governmental standards and control, loss of national sovereignty, privatisation, international movement and transnational mobility, homogenisation of culture and goods and ultimately a commodification of life (World Council of Churches 2001: 9-11).

For the Church the empirical realities and features of economic globalisation widen the gap between the world's wealthiest and the world's poor, as well as threatening much of the Earth's ecological life systems – "the devastating social effects are accompanied by destruction of the natural environment" (World Council of Churches 2001: 11).

For the WCC the impact of economic globalisation is adverse, harmful and wholly negative. The empiric features of economic globalisation expose the ways in which the world works for those who are not in positions of power, yet these features are devoid of moral value in and of themselves, rather they are merely tools. What then are Christians to do if these economic globalisation tools conflict with their moral sense of what is right and good? Moreover, "whether rational or intuitive or both, the moral sense is prior to what is experienced. It acts as a guide to right action in life to how things should be" (Scott 2005: 7). For Church theologians, and the laity alike, these tools of economic globalisation rub against their moral sense of rightness and justice.

The focus for the Church in the *Island of Hope* is on globalisation as an affront to the Church body, which is to say the harsh realities of global inequalities, manifesting in extreme poverty, homelessness, preventable diseases, polluted drinking water, lack of sanitation facilities and other basic human needs are not considered in a deeper context. Thus the *Island of Hope* analysis tends to focus not on the deprivation of life at the economic margins of globalisation, but rather on how globalisation disrupts the theological and spiritual conception of the Church and the broader community.



## 1.5 Dead Reckoning & Theological Ethics

The *Island of Hope* taken as a whole criticises economic globalisation from a theological and ethical perspective. In the following section, I seek to expand on why globalisation is a subject of importance to theological ethics. Specifically, in what ways does economic globalisation fail theological values? For the WCC, as articulated in the *Island of Hope*, economic globalisation is the “ethics of competition and domination, which favours individualism and fosters consumerism at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of the community of life” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). The theological ethics of the *Island of Hope* are founded on a bedrock of “deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters the culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God’s care for creation and Christ’s teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). The ethics of the *Island of Hope* reflect the primacy of God and Jesus’ teachings in the biblical text of Matthew 6:24, which states “serve God not mammon”, where *mammon* is understood to mean money or wealth.<sup>9</sup> And in several places throughout the *Island of Hope* are calls for readers to “serve God, not mammon” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12, 19-20). The words of Christ are taken as a divine command, where the moral action is in regard to money and the accumulation of wealth. For Christians it is made clear that for all those that seek to follow the example of Jesus Christ and lead a righteous life, they must turn away from the material world and *mammon*. This is reiterated in the words of Ecclesiastes 5:10 which states, “whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.”

A contemporaneous definition and analysis of mammon can include economic globalisation, vast income inequalities, exploitation and ecological collapse. When *mammon* is seen as economic globalisation it threatens and competes with theological values of human solidarity, justice, charity, peace and restraint (World Council of Churches 2001: 23). Tangentially, Christians find divine commands through Commandments and biblical verses which offer guidance on the pressing issues of modern life. If not for this interpretation of mammon, the term and broader concept

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<sup>9</sup> *Mammon* is a Semitic word for money or wealth, and is used throughout the New Testament of the Bible.

would have a restricted relevance; a relevance that is specifically tied to a particular time and place contained within the New Testament scriptures. As the Bible is the guiding text for Christians today, this living interpretation of the Bible serves to contextualise both concepts and terms for the Church body on complex issues of the present, and conversely these same issues confer meaning onto the scriptures and further relevance. This mutually self-reinforcing “interpretive process is important for understanding how the church builds ethical motivation against economic globalization. By framing this through biblical and theological lenses, we have seen how it poses a moral challenge to the churches” (Scott 2005: 12). It is through this collaborative praxis that the Church is engaging in biblical interpretation that securely reinforces their communal ethics.

It is here that I would like to draw the parallel between this collaborative creation that the Church is undertaking, in regards to their communal ethics, and a type of navigation known as dead reckoning. The term dead reckoning refers to a type of navigation in which a navigator can calculate their position by utilising a previously established point or location, and can extrapolate that position based upon known or calculated speeds over elapsed time and distance. This process is much the same as that which animals use to navigate and determine heading, such as in the ecolocation processes used by dolphins and whales. Biologists refer to this process as path integration. It is through reinforcing this “path integration” that draws upon biblical texts and theological understandings that the church cultivates an ethical motivation against economic globalisation.



## 1.6 Pacific Origins & the Austronesian Expansion

Let us now transition from the religious and economic, to the marine and terrestrial spheres of Oceania. And with this shift, let us too slip back in time to the beginnings of people in the mighty Pacific. The beginnings of the Pacific we know today has its origins in the shores of Taiwan and China some 6,000 years ago. Consider that the expansion of long-distance ocean navigators of Austronesian language speakers, from an ancestral homeland in Taiwan and Southeast China, thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean to the Polynesian triangle – Hawai‘i, Aotearoa New Zealand and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) – and transversely across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar, remains one of the most extraordinary achievements of humanity. To more fully understand the magnitude of the Austronesian expansion and the origins of much of the Pacific, it is vital to consider this migration and following habitation of a third of the Earth’s surface through oral traditions, archaeology, linguistics, and genetics, as well as through the relatively recent Polynesian cultural renaissance of traditional voyaging.

In recent decades many Pacific anthropologists, linguists and archaeologists have focused their energies on mapping and simultaneously associating the historical expansion of the Austronesian language family<sup>10</sup> (Blust 1995) with the prehistoric people who spread the archaeological Lapita cultural complex (Spriggs 1984; Bedford 2003) – named after the type site in New Caledonia. These data were then linked with the population history of the region as suggested by modern genetic and mitochondrial analyses (Cox 2003). Perhaps the most robust of the many models put forward in relation to this, is the “Intrusion/ Innovation/Integration model” in explaining the origins of the Lapita cultural complex (Green 1991).

Compelling evidence from the fields of archaeology, genetics and historical linguistics all point to an expansion out of Taiwan, with a possible earlier origin point being the neighbouring Fujian province of China around 6,000 years ago. Intermittent pauses in the eastward expansion of the Austronesian peoples provided opportunities for mixing

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<sup>10</sup> The Austronesian language family exhibits its greatest diversity in Taiwan and many Pacific linguists consider it the likely point of origin for the language family (Blust 1995).



with non-Austronesian populations. The most significant amounts of genetic admixture reflect non-Austronesian populations along the coastal areas of New Guinea and neighbouring islands, before the Austronesians continued onward in an easterly direction towards Polynesia (Gray et al. 2009; Moodley et al. 2009).

Numerous motivators for the Austronesian expansion have been analysed. For instance, agriculture and associated cultigens (i.e. more commonly known as “canoe plants”) in Hawaiian – *'ulu* (breadfruit); *niu* (coconut, meat and drink); *uhi* (yam); *'uala* (sweet potato); *mai'a* (banana); *kalo* (taro); *kukui* (candlenut); *ko* (sugar cane); *hala* (pandanus flour, paste); and animal foods in Hawaiian – *i'a* (fish, dried and fresh); *pua'a* (pig); *moa* (chicken); *'ilio* (dog); *'ole* (rat)) have been considered for their inherent ability to transform island landscapes into hospitable zones for human subsistence (Bellwood 1975). Environmental factors, such as *El Niño* events and changes in sea level in the mid-Holocene (approximately 7,000 to 5,000 years ago), impacting the dietary resources available in coastal habitats, may have also encouraged or required people to search for new areas for permanent habitation, furthering the spread of the Lapita cultural complex (Gibbons and Clunie 1986; Dickinson 2003; Anderson et al. 2006; Cabioch et al. 2008; Pope and Terrell 2008). Nor can the great human drive for adventure and exploration of the unknown – in a word, curiosity – be underestimated.

As it is split on world maps, with the continents taking precedence, we often forget that the Pacific Ocean covers an entire third of the Earth's surface and is the “tide-beating heart of the earth” as Melville called it, with a water volume more than double that of the Atlantic and a surface area that exceeds the whole terrestrial surface of the Earth (Melville 1851: 478; NOAA 2018). In its mighty vastness – some 63.8 million square miles (165.25 million square km) – the Pacific remained the last great unexplored and uninhabited region of the world (NOAA 2018). The continental land masses of East Asia and the Americas, which encompass the Pacific, were peopled, but not the expansive Pacific itself. With the exceptions of Australia and New Guinea, the Pacific of ten thousand years ago was teeming with marine life, but devoid of human life.

I consider the Austronesian expansion of 6,000 years ago then among the most extraordinary achievements in human history, not just because of the scale of the Pacific, but because those who explored and ultimately came to populate the Pacific Islands had to develop entirely new nautical and navigational technologies capable of long-range ocean voyaging. Furthermore, unlike popular cultural stereotypes of the Pacific, which depict the islands as tropical heavens on earth, most islands prior to human arrival were relatively meagre in flora and fauna. In fact, the islands of the Pacific, especially in Polynesia, have limited and fragile ecosystems lacking in diversity and carrying capacity (Gard 2010: 7-8). The advents of agriculture and animal domestication enabled the Austronesian voyagers to bring domesticated plants and animals with them into uncertain marine terrains and in a literal sense bring their world with them in their double-hulled voyaging canoes. Significantly the Austronesian expansion is the origin story for much of the Pacific, and in some ways it also marks the beginning of humanity's relationship with the greater cosmos. With Pacific Islanders navigating and settling of Oceania, humanity came to understand the movement of the stars at night and in turn create a navigable understanding of our place in a much wider universe – quite possibly humanity's first headings on a celestial sail plan which is still unfurling today (Howe 2007: 21).



## 1.7 Regionalising Oceania

Unique in its marine, terrestrial and temporal history, the Pacific has long held the fascination of academics, artists and the public in Asia, North America and Europe. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Oceania was the fieldwork destination of many ground-breaking ethnographic studies in the emerging field of anthropology, with the likes of Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead's post-Pacific fieldwork publications captivating a collective global imagination.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the forces of globalisation and decolonisation radically impact and further reshape the Pacific (Knauft 1999). Critiques of the often-seeming arbitrary nature of "culture areas" and the ways in which these geocultural spaces are reproduced in scholarship are worthy of careful consideration in the broader understanding of Oceania, as the Pacific is often portrayed as isolated, distant, exotic, erotic and untouched by the passage of time (Rafael 1994; Said 1979; Spate 1963).

For one geographer writing in the 1960s the Pacific Islands were "little universes, ready-made isolates for study, each capable in appearance at least of being readily grasped as a whole" (Spate 1963: 253). This idea of isolation fails to grasp the centuries of exploration and exchange within the Pacific itself, as well as with Asia, Europe and the Americas, most especially from the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Hau'ofa 1993; Veitayaki 1993).

The complex process of defining and representing Pacific cultures and locales has been the focus of many indigenous Pacific authors' work, as well as offering critiques of historic and more recent anthropological fieldwork in the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1975; Wendt 1987; Hereniko & Teaiwa 1993; Trask 1991; Osorio 1995; Mahina 1999; Smith 1999). While it can be illuminating to understand the commonality of "the blue continent" it is vital to explore regional differences and contradictory narratives, to deepen understanding of the vastness and richness of the Pacific, as well as avoid homogenous stereotypes of Pacific Islanders. Traveling theory is one way of considering the way in

which ideas traverse space and time (Clifford 1989; 1997), and can be helpful in the vastness of the Pacific; still it can distract from the nuanced and multifaceted experiences of scholars, artists and the Pacific Islanders themselves who traversed Oceania for their own reasons over the centuries.

As scholars have extensively discussed, colonisation brought widespread change to the Pacific, specifically pre-existing exchange networks (White & Tengan 2001). Systems of western capital remade the Pacific, at times extinguishing indigenous systems of exchange, for modes of production – economic, social and cultural – at newly formed centres. These new centres of economic power promoted literacy and education in western traditions. The skills of reading and writing, as opposed to traditional oral narratives, further enabled participants to succeed in these newly formed cash economies. Yet, with these new centres of production and capital came distinctive boundaries, new maps of the Pacific – both literal and metaphorical – and fresh dichotomies of “who theorizes and who is theorized” came into existence (White & Tengan 2001: 385).

In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, diasporic communities of Pacific Islanders have created complex migration patterns, flowing between island homelands and the densely populated urban centres of the Pacific, such as Auckland, Sydney, Honolulu, San Francisco and Los Angeles. The transnational routes of these diasporic communities are of significance in a multitude of ways, one of which highlights the connections they provide in a relatively more literate, mobile and digitally connected manner, versus communities that are more oral and digitally unconnected. Representation and “culture areas” have again been made and remade by those in burgeoning diasporic communities.

Presently, eastern and northern areas of the Pacific (e.g. Polynesia and Micronesia) are formed of quasi-autonomous nations and territories with indigenous populations composing minority demographics; while the states of southwest Pacific (e.g. Melanesia) are predominantly independent with indigenous populations composing the majority of the population. Hawai‘i, for example, poses an interesting Polynesian

case study, as it was once an independent nation, then territory, and now state, as the United States sought to fortify its position in the Asia-Pacific region and the world more broadly. The United States established Hawai'i first as a colonial outpost, then promptly militarised the Hawaiian Islands owing to their strategic location (Ferguson & Turnbull 1998). These hostile military actions not only violated the independence of a sovereign nation through military force, but also later violated United Nations' procedures by removing Hawai'i from the list of non-self-governing territories via a "plebiscite" that positioned statehood as the only alternative to a prolonged territorial status (Trask 1994: 80).

Regional differences intensify if we consider that Polynesian and Micronesian states also exhibit high rates of migration to urban communities, such as Auckland, Sydney, Honolulu, San Francisco and Los Angeles as mentioned above, whereas Melanesian states such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu exhibit rural communities with populations who have deep ancestral ties to the land they inhabit. For instance, in the Melanesian states (where roughly 75% of the Oceanian total population resides), some 85% of the population live in rural villages that embrace traditional lifeways (United Nations 2017). Conversely, more Samoans now live in Aotearoa New Zealand than in their home islands, and more American Samoans now reside in Hawai'i and the West Coast of the US than in American Samoa. In considering these brief examples of the complex migration patterns in Micronesia and Polynesia, that is not to say that rural Melanesian citizens are somehow stagnate, isolated and uninvolved with the wider world. The reality is quite the contrary. However, Melanesians are underrepresented in urban organisations, such as governmental bodies and educational institutions, and in turn fewer academic, governmental, and popular culture representations are part of international cultural representations and ultimately regional discourse (Gegeo 2001).

Different ways of delineating, understanding and identifying Oceanian spaces, places and peoples of course continue in the Pacific today. A general dichotomy can be found between indigenous identities located in attachments to land, ancestries and spirituality, and identities informed through travel, relocation, dislocation and the establishment of diasporic communities. Still, the diverse identities simplified into the

above shorthand labels continue to resist conscription to bounded local spaces or traditions that are popularly set in a false opposition to modernity.



In conclusion, this chapter seeks to provide a basis for understanding the *Island of Hope* as a formal study of economic globalisation by the Church, as well as serving as an appeal for all Christians to come together in creating an alternative to economic globalisation and the resulting negative impacts on the environment and impoverished communities. Following on from these points, the origins of the Austronesian expansion and peopling of the Pacific serve as an entrance point in understanding the complex prehistory, history and contemporary milieu of Oceania. In the final section of this chapter – *Regionalising Oceania* – I investigate the historical progression of defining and representing Pacific cultures and locales well as influential indigenous critiques of anthropological fieldwork in the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1975; Wendt 1987; Hereniko & Teaiwa 1993; Trask 1991). Lastly, while it is useful to understand the common origins of much of Oceania, it would be perilous to extrapolate and assume a homogenous unity to the region now or in the past.



## **PART II: ANTHROPOLOGY, CHRISTIANITY & MODERNITY**

*Much of the Bible protests the injustice of political and economic systems. Indeed, perhaps half of the biblical message is political in this sense. Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, Paul and the Book of Revelation protest against human systems of domination and advocate a very different vision of life under God.*

—Marcus Borg, Theologian, 2006

This chapter explores the past twenty years wherein a fledging anthropology of Christianity has developed. That is not to say that prior to 2000 there were no ethnographies that have described and explored Christianity in a regional approach (Glazier 1980, Barker 1990) or in a thematic context, such as through missions and missionizing practices (Hvalkof & Aaby 1981, Huber 1988, Comoraff & Comaroff 1991, 1997, Rafael 1992). Yet, the last two decades have seen a burgeoning interest in a comparative and thoughtful consideration of the many concurrent Christians populations, as well as the histories of Christianity, that exist around the world (Robbins 2003a, 2007, Scott 2005b, Cannell 2006, Engelke & Tomlinson 2006, Keane 2007).

As to why Christianity, the largest of all the world religions with some 2.3 billion converts (i.e. a third of the Earth's population) (Pew Research Center 2017), has remained an understudied area of anthropology can in part be found in the inherent biases that originate in the foundation of the discipline of anthropology itself. One such bias is the very familiarity of Christianity. For example, while discussing my research at a conference at the University of the South Pacific during my Fijian fieldwork one Australian colleague casually remarked that "Christianity was something they got from us, you know, left over from colonialism..." (Gard 2015, np). Indeed, many Australian, American and European anthropologists tend to view Christianity as lacking alterity

and as such is simultaneously too familiar to warrant serious study, while paradoxically for those of a more secular background strangely confusing with something of the faintly ridiculous about it (Robbins 2003a). Thus Christianity is at once both too known and too unknown to merit in-depth academic study (Bialecki 2008).

As alluded to above in the comment by my Australian colleague and in a number of other professional settings I have experienced resistance to the idea that Christianity has academic validity. In part this is due to anthropologists having longstanding resistance to academically considering Christianity and convert communities, as cultural continuity is usually prized over transformation in the discipline. Radical transformation can be both perceived and realised for convert communities, though most anthropologists tend to treat the advent of Christianity as a façade, beneath which the historic culture continues, and it is this historic culture that warrants study as opposed to the Christian veneer (Robbins 2007). This Christian veneer is often suggested to have been constructed for the purposes of personal, political or economic gain. Such is the case in many ethnographies of Melanesia where, until recently, most anthropologists considered Christianity to be a foreign intrusion and sought to find and document “uncontaminated” traditional religious practices (Barker 1992: 165). Christianity is often seen as a destroying and threatening force, unworthy of academic interest.





## 2.1 The Anthropology of Christianity

So then why now have anthropologists cast a self-conscious eye to Christianity? In part, as I noted in my introduction to this dissertation, God and Christianity are everywhere. In the past century there has been a dramatic expansion of Christianity in Oceania, Africa, Asia and South America (Barker 1990, Brouwer et al. 1996; Walls 1996; Jenkins 2002). From this demographic growth and increasing visibility Christianity is now simply unavoidable in many ethnographic fieldwork locales, and I argue this is especially true in the Pacific. As Christianity has become increasingly embedded within communities around the world it is often linked with modernity and globalisation as I will further explore in *Part III: Global Connections, Global Obligations*. Examinations of modernising forces, the individual and Christianity are the focus of much of the anthropology of Christianity literature to date, as are the topics of Pentecostalism, charismatic faith and transformations associated with conversion.

In considering the anthropology of Christianity we must also consider “The Christianity of Anthropology” as Cannell describes it, and consider the influence that Christianity has had on the discipline itself, as well as the development of Western modernity (Cannell 2005). Some argue that Christianity itself has restricted the discipline’s understanding of religion, with the influence of post-Enlightenment Christianity (often portrayed as having a particular emphasis on private devotion) as having a disproportionate influence on how anthropologists view religion in a broader sense (Asad 1993). Others have instead focused on the connections between Christianity, modernity and the social sciences, such as the significance of the nature-culture divide (Sahlins 1996).



## 2.2 The More Things Change...

For some Christians conversion is conceived of as a rupture from a pre-Christian past with a transformation that connects them with a wholly new way of being and enables participants to associate with a global religious body (Engelke 2004, Robbins 2003b, 2004, Keller 2005, Keane 2007). Drawing upon my own experiences in the Pacific and my recent fieldwork I found the reality to be far more complex than one might initially think. Though the trope of rupture is indeed embedded in Christianity in such elements as conversion, the second coming of Christ, and the anticipation of an imminent apocalypse, rupture is perhaps too simple a way of describing the complex synthesis that arise in many Christian populations. For example, this complex synthesis can take the form of continued belief in indigenous deities and spiritual entities (Meyer 1999), such as in Hawai‘i where many of my informants who consider themselves Christian also believe in *Pele*, the goddess of fire, volcanoes and the creator of the Hawaiian Islands. In fact, when I was preparing to leave Hawai‘i several colleagues and friends encouraged me to make an offering to “Madame Pele” or *Ka wahine ‘ai honua* (“The earth-eating woman” in Hawaiian) to make sure I was “right” with her before my departure from the islands, as this was deemed sound advice and would ensure safe travels. My colleagues and friends did not find this suggestion, nor belief in *Pele*, to be in conflict with their Christian faith or religious practices, as “Tutu Pele” (“Grandma Pele” in Hawaiian) is a part of everyday life and coexists within the same worldview as the Christian Trinity.

Though the complex synthesis of Christian ideologies with indigenous life ways can often cause agonising ethical and social representational conflicts for recent converts this is not always the case. Often a false dichotomy between the arrival of a “Christian” way of life and previous life ways and social forms is drawn, and though conversion can be a break with the past, it does not automatically and completely replace previous beliefs and lifeways in converted people. I would argue that converted peoples of the Pacific have been selective, skilled and creative in the process of appropriating Christian scriptures and themes into an Oceanian worldview that serve their own ends, in a spiritual context as well as in a political and economic contexts.

Some scholars argue that Christianity ultimately cannot be understood as a rupture with the past, rather it is a reorientation of local cultural material and can be more fully comprehended in association with a local cultural context (Scott 2005). Consider then that these “ethno-theologies forged by indigenous Christians must be seen as the work of theological bricoleurs who seek to make sense of Christian claims through a series of juxtapositions with non-Christian material that radically alter the representations of Christianity as well as of local society” (Bieleki 2008: 1145). It is of note that self-identified Christians are not only remaking local societies, they are also engaging in a larger global dialogue through the structural organisation of their religious affiliations.



### **2.3 The More Things Stay the Same – Christianity and Gender**

Gender within the anthropology of Christianity, with several notable exceptions, has passed without significant interest from the discipline thus far (Eriksen 2008, Mayblin 2010). Both Annelin Eriksen (2014) and Maya Mayblin (2014) explore what Eriksen calls “the way Christianity... itself is gendered.” Eriksen’s fieldwork is set in Pentecostal-charismatic churches in urban Vanuatu, yet her insights help to inform my own work in fieldwork sites that include Protestant communities, especially Anglican and Methodist churches, in the urban settings of Suva, Fiji and Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand primarily.

While working in Vanuatu Eriksen notes that the Pentecostal tradition is striking in its positive affirmation that all believers are equal before God and can receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Though theoretically equal before God, church leaders are often male and as Eriksen argues Pentecostal “moral transformation” is a practice that is gendered male. Thus those who wish to lead must behave in a male way regardless of the gender of the individual engaging with the moral transformation. Confusingly this gendered transformation is “denied” or “suppressed” under the equality of all believers banner that continues to be stressed in the wider Pentecostal tradition.

Eriksen considers the tensions that such juxtaposing give rise to and what she defines as the “charismatic space” where men and woman commune with the Holy Spirit. In this space men “encounter” the Holy Spirit, while women “mediate” the Holy Spirit. Eriksen further elaborates that for men the “encounter” builds upon their leadership abilities, whereas women submerge their individuality and in turn are connected in a relational network. Thus the “charismatic space” does not simply provide a public space for enacting submerged gendered differences, rather it is a space for expressing and at times challenging these distinct gendered types of engagement.

In my own fieldwork in Fiji at the Pacific Theology College in Suva all of my religious informants were distinguished leaders with advanced credentials who were interested in my research and were willing to be interviewed in regards to the *Island of Hope* and the Church and globalisation more broadly. It is perhaps then not surprising that they were all males of an elite standing in their community and of Pacific Island heritage. It is their privileged voices that have informed my perspectives on the theological and religious intricacies of the *Island of Hope*. That is not to say that I did not have a number of well-respected female informants of Pacific Island heritage and a range of diverse heritages in my fieldwork sites that were interested in the ethical implications of the *Island of Hope*. Though we often held campaign meetings in designated spaces associated with churches, such as fellowship halls, pavilions and recreational rooms, the female informants themselves were not church elders or leaders. In a certain sense then this mirrors and reinforces Eriksen's considerations of “the way Christianity...

itself is gendered” and how elite leadership within Christianity is itself clearly gendered male (Eriksen 2014).

A further consideration of Christianity and gender in my Fijian fieldwork can be found in an example from the *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference* on the campus of the Pacific Theology College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji in June 2016. I served as one of two conference facilitators (with further details of this experience being explored in the last chapter, in the subsection entitled *Steering the Vaka*). The conference dedicated a section to the topic of gender and Christianity. The section was chaired by two female academics based in Aotearoa New Zealand who led the discussion and were quick to point out that all too often “gender” is shorthand for “female only issues”. Though the chairs did their best in leading the discussion it was often stilted with the majority of the male conference attendees remaining silent.

The following morning as I was putting together a recap note to share with the conference attendees on the previous day’s sections and discussions, my mind returned to a conversation I had over lunch with a table of conference delegates earlier in the week. The conversation in question had touched upon a newspaper article that addressed the poignant story of Jeanine Tuivaiki, a Samoan *fa’afafine* (literally translated as “in the manner of a woman” in Samoan), or third gender individual who was biologically male but engaged in a range of feminine-gendered ways, and who had tragically committed suicide in a church hall in Apia, Samoa the previous week. The article was rightly criticized for being deliberately salacious, as a full page photograph accompanied the article and pictured Tuivaiki’s dead body and also the manner of her death. As this still sat heavy on my mind and the minds of other delegates, I choose to mention Tuivaiki’s death in my recap. I urged the delegates to consider that with her final act Jeanine Tuivaiki was crying out to her church community for help, acceptance and ultimately love. I concluded my recap by saying “how can we judge her? For who among us hasn’t thought they couldn’t carry on in moments of deepest despair. Thought that they could not take another step. Not. One. More. Step... Clearly, our work has just begun around gender and the Church. And I suspect we have a great deal of heavy lifting before us” (Gard 2016, np). I echo those sentiments here, as clearly the

anthropology of Christianity has a great deal more heavy lifting to do when it comes to gender.



## 2.4 Christian Plurality

As I noted in the above section certain voices are encouraged within Christianity, as well as in the anthropology of Christianity for that matter, while others are precluded from contributing to emerging discussions. Christianity is no way homogeneous, nor a democratic entity. And in a roundabout way we have returned to where Chapter Two's *The Anthropology of Christianity* starts – considering the academic barriers to the anthropology of Christianity and the deeper enquiry as to the Christian influence on anthropology as a discipline.

The deep heterogeneity of the numerous forms of global Christianity, and even the heterogeneity of Protestant Christian communities I encountered in my own limited fieldwork, are not fully addressed here nor in the rich ethnographies of Christianity that are only now beginning to be undertaken. Presently Pentecostalism in the Pacific and globally has taken the primary focus of the ethnographic research completed to date (Howell 2003). The challenging nature of Christian heterogeneity is not merely thought-provoking for social scientists it is challenging for Christians themselves to form a global community. A global community and consensus building effort can be found in the work of the WCC, PCC and indeed the *Island of Hope* document, as they

are attempts to overcome this incommensurability, while influencing global discourse (Howell 2003, Priest 2006, World Council of Churches 2001). Some scholars have pointed to research by Christian intellectuals addressing difference and similarity among diverse Christian groups as a way to enrich anthropologists own thinking in regards to the challenges that the field of the anthropology of Christianity confronts in the face of such heterogeneity (Robbins 2006). This literature holds promise for future exploration and development within the field of the anthropology of Christianity.

Conclusively *Anthropology, Christianity and Modernity* attempts to examine the flourishing discipline of the anthropology of Christianity. As noted the last two decades have seen an increase of anthropological interest in the many concurrent Christian populations and histories of Christianity around the world (Robbins 2003a, 2007; Scott 2005b; Cannell 2006; Engelke & Tomlinson 2006; Keane 2007). While historically Christianity has been seen to be too familiar to warrant serious study, it has also simultaneously suffered from being deemed too mysterious with aspects of the faintly ridiculous for anthropologists of a secular background (Robbins 2003a). Thus Christianity is at once both too known and too unknown to merit in-depth academic study (Bialecki 2008).



### **PART III: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS, GLOBAL OBLIGATIONS**

*The “Island of Hope” represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity.*

– World Council of Churches,  
2001

This chapter explores the entangled historic factors of globalisation actively pushing and pulling many Pacific Islanders to and from their homes in the Pacific, especially Micronesia. As discussed in the previous chapter, the history of globalisation in Oceania, globalisation as a process, and what the Church deems to be globalisation are of critical importance. From this “macro” approach to globalisation, I now transition to a more “micro” consideration where I seek to “put people first” in bearing witness to the all-too-real impacts of globalisation and extreme environmental degradation on homeless individuals and families in Hawai‘i (World Council of Churches 2001: 15).

In this chapter, Pacific Islanders from Micronesia provide a powerful case study in the harsh socioeconomic conditions faced when immigrating across the Pacific to Hawai‘i in the continuing aftermath of nuclear colonialism in Micronesia. Further, this chapter also provides an entry point into my fieldwork in Hawai‘i, and serves as a reminder that anthropological fieldwork requires intellectual, emotional and behavioural flexibility in engaging the most pressing and at times distressing fieldwork issues. In the concluding sections of this chapter, I explore the political realities of the Compact of Free Association (COFA), which is an international agreement establishing and governing the relationships of free association between the United States and the three Pacific Island nations of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.



And lastly I also look to the future of the COFA nations, as well as the possible future of citizens who are living in Hawai‘i.

I had initially envisioned my Hawaiian fieldwork to revolve solely around my experiences with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, both as a member and an environmental campaigner in relation to the Society’s ongoing *Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage<sup>11</sup> (“to care for our Earth” in Hawaiian). This ambitious act of environmental activism was designed to span the entire Earth – covering some 85 ports, 26 countries and 47,000 nautical miles – as members sailed a traditional Hawaiian voyaging canoe around the world to raise awareness about the degraded state of the oceans. In spite of that, as the days stretched into weeks, I focused increasingly on the *Island of Hope*’s consideration that “the negative aspects of economic globalization are incompatible with the reign of God and our discipleship with Christ. There is something seriously wrong with an economic system that produces so much suffering and poverty...” I felt I could not ignore the humanitarian crisis that was playing out around me on the streets of Honolulu (World Council of Churches 2001: 5) for “the ethics of the *Island of Hope* are based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God’s care for creation and Christ’s teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). With this in mind, I began to explore the homeless crisis in Honolulu, especially seeking to understand the “why” and the “who” of the situation.

From this exploration emerged a case study of Micronesian immigrants facing harsh economic realities, such as homelessness, when arriving in the Aloha State, and it is this case study that is at the heart of this chapter. Troublingly, there is limited awareness in the US and international circles of these newest Americans and the immense challenges they face. Accordingly, this chapter seeks to add to the burgeoning body of understanding on this complex issue, and highlight the hard-won successes of

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<sup>11</sup> My experiences as an environmental campaigner and PVS member are explored in greater depth in Chapter Four – *Turning the Tide*, as I examine the performative aspects of climate-change-focused art, activism and voyaging.

all those impacted by the Compact of Free Association (COFA). It would be challenging to understand this case study without also considering the rising rates of income inequality amid the ongoing homeless crisis in Hawai'i and mainland US. Lastly, I call on the US government to further support all those that continue to live with the painful legacy of nuclear colonialism in the Pacific while simultaneously facing the very harshest elements of economic globalisation.



As I touched upon in Chapter One – *Beginnings* – throughout 5,000 years of exploration the Austronesians travelled over 10,000 miles and established themselves on over a third of the Earth's surface. Let us not forget that all of this was achieved hundreds of years before Captain Cook reached the Pacific Ocean in the 1760s and the “Age of Discovery” by European explorers commenced. Following this so-called “discovery” of Oceania came a period of European colonial expansion with some of the first ramifications of globalisation in the Pacific. In brief, the three basic objectives of colonisation in the Pacific can be summarised as follows:

- 1) expanding economically via the exploitation of resources, the creation of markets and for the maximizing of profit;
- 2) extending and establishing the military and strategic power of the colonizing nation-states by gaining influence over a substantial part of the earth's surface; and

3) to a lesser extent, modernising, educating and converting the indigenous populations “in the image of the west” (Hempenstall 2000: 229).

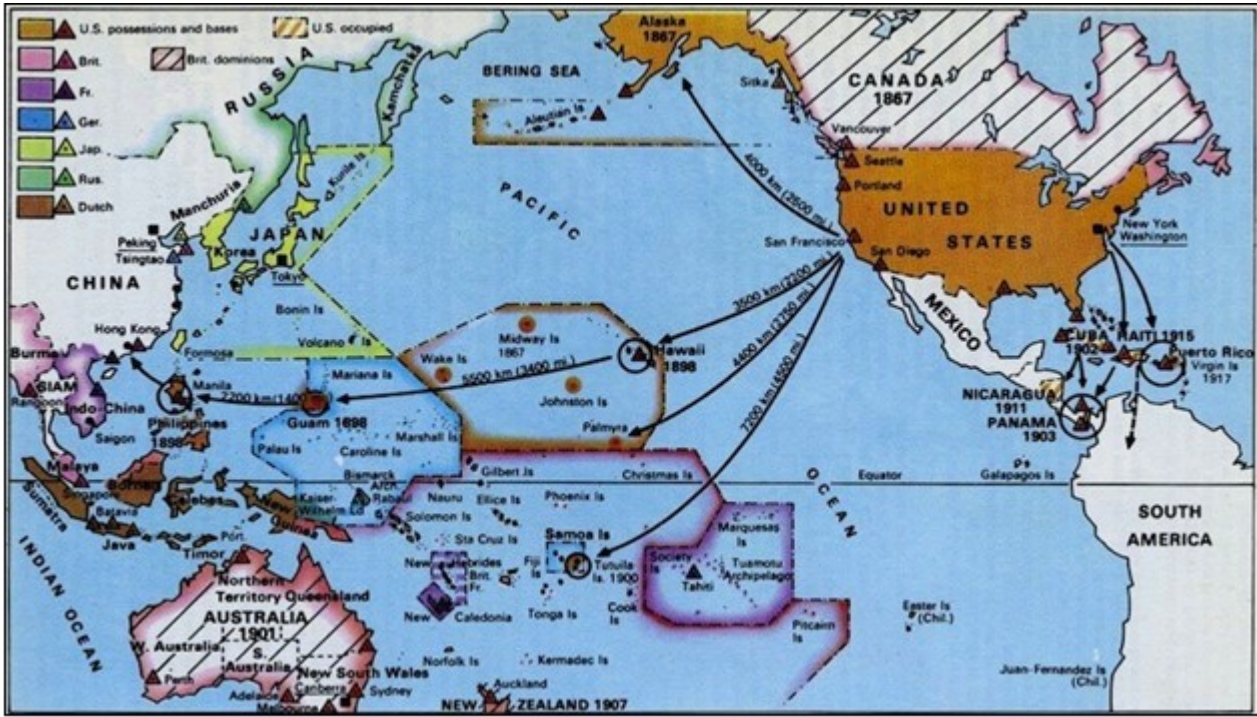


Figure 4. Colonial expansion in Oceania during the late 19th century and early 20th century. Image courtesy of the Trans-Pacific Project.

In the course of the colonial era, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the larger islands and archipelagos of the Pacific (e.g. New Caledonia, New Zealand and Hawai‘i) became European resettlement colonies. This influx of European populations resulted in many indigenous Pacific Island populations and communities becoming increasingly marginalised in their own home islands. For example, the French colonised Tahiti and the surrounding islands, which are today known as French Polynesia, as well as Wallis and Futuna, in addition to New Caledonia (Lockwood 2004: 11), while the British colonised Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, and Gilbert and Ellice Islands (known today as Kiribati and Tuvalu), the southernmost Solomon Islands and the southeastern areas of New Guinea (Ernst 2006: 64). And the Americans helped themselves to Hawai‘i, eastern Samoa and went on to acquire Guam after defeating Spain in 1898.

At the turn of the century, following the defeat of Germany in the First World War (WWI 1914-1918), colonial rule in Western Samoa, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Pohnpei and areas of New Guinea were in flux. The Second World War (WWII 1939-1945) would follow with tremendous impact on the Pacific. Consider that “Japan, by mid-1942, dominated over 450 million people and threatened to expand further to the rest of the Pacific Islands in the south and east, as well as to Australia and New Zealand” (Ernst 2006: 65). For instance, the Battle of Pearl Harbour, which occurred near Honolulu, Hawai‘i, on the morning of 7 December 1941<sup>12</sup>, was a surprise strike by Japanese forces that resulted in the US officially joining WWII. Many military historians regard the battles between Japanese forces and US-led allied forces in the Pacific to be the fiercest and bloodiest battles of WWII, and indeed in the history of warfare.

Micronesia was especially heavily impacted by WWII. This complex and painful history is entangled with nuclear colonialism, and has resulted more recently (i.e. in the last 30 years or so) in over 30% of Micronesians – some 75,000 individuals – immigrating to Hawai‘i, Guam and mainland United States in accordance with the Compact of Free Association (COFA). The reasons vary but nearly always revolve around the desire for a better life. Still, running beneath these individual and family migration histories is the undeniably painful legacy of nuclear colonialism, perpetrated by the US military in Micronesia.

Consider the staggering fact that from 1946 through to 1958 the US dropped 109 megatons of munitions, releasing radiation equivalent to more than 7,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs in the Marshall Islands. Repeat exposure to extreme radiation has resulted in uninhabitable atolls and severe environmental degradation in the region. These bleak environmental conditions have been further exacerbated by climate change, in the form of rising sea levels and resulting compromised freshwater lenses, destructive storms and extreme droughts.

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<sup>12</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> of December is National Pearl Harbour Day of Remembrance and continues to be solemnly observed in Hawai‘i in remembrance of the 2,403 citizens who were killed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. For further information on this see Presidential Proclamation 6758 – National Pearl Harbour Remembrance Day, made by US President Bill Clinton on November 29, 1994.



### **3.1 A View of Globalisation from the *Island of Hope***

At this point it is useful to reflect on the *Island of Hope's* understanding and promotion of the rights of the individual within the context of the community, with the community being envisioned as the perfect ethical cooperative, and seen in direct opposition to globalisation. From such a perspective “individualism” is denounced as fostering consumerism “at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of life” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). Further, “the traditional economies of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives; caring and concern for others within the extended families and compassion for all people, especially for the sick and elderly... Nobody is excluded” (World Council of Churches 2001: 7). Through this lens, the interconnectedness of the community and value of others is the foundation of the WCC’s vision of economic justice, not capitalism or consumerism, or as it has been more simply put elsewhere – “greed” (Efi 2009: 1).

All too often, globalisation, as seen through the *Island of Hope* lens, denies power to the most vulnerable people in making decisions, such as women, children, and minorities. Hence the WCC advocates for political justice favouring power to the poor, emphasizing the following general measures:

- 1.) Sufficient support for vulnerable members of society;
- 2.) Environmental protection;

3.) Accountability in government; and

4.) Individual and groups' rights to contribute and make their voices heard (World Council of Churches 2001: 22).

The WCC does seek to have women and children acknowledged as vulnerable within economic globalisation, but this still remains somewhat vague given the limited view of individuals outside of the cultural communal ideal. This in turn leaves more traditional gender, class, and race issues ambiguous.

Within the *Island of Hope*, the WCC acknowledges the need for political and economic regulation and calls for increased transparency at the international level. However, they propose that international institutions, both political and economic, become subject to national scrutiny. To clarify this point, the WCC would like to “make multinationals accountable and transparent to civil society... make international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) subject to democratic decision-making” (World Council of Churches 2001: 15). This opens significant roles and responsibility for local and national governments in addressing and regulating such massive institutions. Of further concern is if these governmental bodies are too ill-prepared, corrupt, or poorly organised and underfunded themselves for such a massive endeavour. So, in this example at least, the *Island of Hope* is more inspirational than a practical guide. Regardless, for the WCC, ideally, “the economy is to serve and not dominate society” (World Council of Churches 2001: 14).

The *Island of Hope* further suggests that the communal and familial focus of many Asian and Pacific societies suggests a greater sense of collectively owned material wealth, and by extension a stronger sense of societal identity. Multiple cases in point on the alternatives to neoliberal capitalism and economic globalisation can be found in indigenous perspectives and practices from around the world. In Asia we might understand it as “gotong-royong” (togetherness), in Indonesia as “bayanihan”

(collective living), in the Philippines as “panchasila” (five principles of peaceful living), and in India as “daedong yundae” (great solidarity) (World Council Church 2001: 13). Traditionally societies, especially non-western societies, have flourished for millennia with subsistence economies. The above-mentioned examples contrast with our current global economy, which is rooted in individualism, competition and mass consumer capitalism (World Council Churches 2001: 13). It follows on then that the WCC’s perspective is to encourage the development, revitalisation and preservation of traditional economies.

Economic ethics compatible with Christian principles can also be found in many Asian and Pacific societies. Christian ideals relating to inheritance, generosity and reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources are some of the most cherished aspects of life in the Pacific. Total quality of life can be improved for many when communal sharing and distribution of resources is encouraged. While traditionally these values operated mainly within the context of familial groups, Jesus Christ challenges all Christians to encompass the whole human family in these practices, because we are all members of the family of God (World Council of Churches 2001: 7; Scott 2005: 30-31). This is made explicit in the biblical text Romans 12:5, which states, “[s]o we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

It is through these examples and calls for alternative economic solutions to a capitalistic economy that we see the *Island of Hope* challenging economic globalisation and working for alternatives in keeping with God’s vision for humanity. As Jesus Christ urges in the New Testament gospels, all must make a choice in how they will lead their life and be held accountable for those choices. All have a chance to turn their life around and hear the promise of the Gospel. The Gospel assures all believers that through choosing a different life they will create an alternative and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity in response to the prayer “that all may be one as we are one” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). The ethical motivation inherent in these biblical texts, and more broadly in the *Island of Hope* itself, is to inspire alternatives that transcend the acceptance of life as it is, the idea that truly another

future, a re-imagined future, is possible. I will explore re-imagined futures in further detail in the final chapter – *Another World is Possible*.





### 3.2 Economic Globalisation as a Historical Process

In the 1960s, following the wide circulation of NASA's first images of the Earth from space – a precarious blue plant of life revolving in the silence of a dark universe – or “Spaceship Earth”<sup>13</sup> as it was later dubbed, academics and thought leaders of the day speculated that humanity would now see itself in an interconnected and transformational way. If we all share the same air and the same water, then surely we are all in it together, are we not? Some speculated that this realisation and deeper appreciation for the fragility of life on Earth would lead to an anthropological epoch rooted in relationality, perhaps even global cooperation on a scale never seen before.

For the novelist Kurt Vonnegut writing in *The New York Times Magazine* in 1969, “Earth is such a pretty blue and pink and white pearl in the pictures NASA sent... It looks so clean. You can't even see all the hungry, angry earthlings down there—and the smoke and the sewage and trash and sophisticated weaponry” (Vonnegut 1969: 1). The Summer of Love in San Francisco had come and gone two years prior, and Vonnegut's readers were watching the Vietnam conflict, and violent civil rights protests following the assassinations of Senator Bobby Kennedy and Dr Martin Luther King Jr, fill their television screens during the evening news. A deeper appreciation for the interconnected nature of humanity did not resonate in the popular discourse of the day, as the day-to-day in America was filled with violence, racially fuelled hatred and civil discord. In spite of that, the moon landing in 1969 fascinated the general public and anthropologists alike, with space exploration serving as a point of epistemological reconceptualization (Battaglia 2005; Battaglia et al. 2015; Crooks 2018; Olson 2018; Valentine et al. 2009).

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<sup>13</sup> I found a few of my older environmental activists or 'āina warriors ('āina literally means “that which feeds” in Hawaiian in reference to the land, and is commonly used to express a deep emotional connection to a place, used in common phrases such as *aloha 'āina* or *malama 'āina*, with the first referencing a deep love of land, and the second expressing a need to care for the land, to act as a steward), informants or environmental activists in Hawai'i did occasionally use the phrase “Spaceship Earth” to reference the planet, but the majority would use phrases such as “Earth Island” or more simply “our canoe” or “our *vaka*” (Gard 2016, np).

Crook explores the moon landing and another anthropological artefact of that era, known as “earthrise” extensively in his recent *Anthropology Today* article (Crook 2018). Crook’s consideration of “earthrise” – a photograph of Earth with a portion of the Moon’s surface in frame, taken by NASA astronaut William Anders on the Apollo 8 mission, as the spacecraft circled the moon on December 24, 1968 (Overbye 2018; Boulton & Heithaus 2018) – is part of his research on Margaret Mead and her role in the environmental movement of the 1960s-70s, and ultimately the establishment of Earth Day. The impact of the “earthrise” image cannot be overstated, and many, such as the American nature photographer and photojournalist Galen Rowell, consider it to be “the most influential environmental photograph ever taken” (Rowell 1999).

These sentiments are easily understood from an environmental perspective, but why was “earthrise” of importance to Margaret Mead? In the late 1960s Mead was seeking a cultural idea that would unify and create a space wherein difference was safe and diversity celebrated. Mead found inspiration in the “earthrise” image and the understanding of one atmosphere connecting all of humanity (Mead 1972). Mead was instrumental in establishing the first Earth Day on 22 April 1970, and in 1973 Mead eloquently reflected on the importance of the “earthrise” image, summarising it thusly:

And it is only since we have been able to see the earth from the moon, that we have fully appreciated how small, how lonely, how vulnerable our earth is...But at the same time, the exploration of outer space has given us a new understanding of the atmosphere which surrounds and protects life on earth, and has given us a new region to share, in which there are no frontiers, no boundaries, no ways of barricade[ing] one part off from another...the atmosphere is the air we all breathe together ([1973] 2005: 285-286).

As Crook clarifies, “Mead clearly took and intended the atmosphere to be not so much a complex, changing and dynamic chemical system, but rather as a cultural idea (or “metaphor” – see Valentine 2016: 514) with which humanity would be able to avoid the self-destruction of all life on earth” (Crook 2018: 9). Clearly “earthrise” and the atmosphere inspired Mead in her recognition of the relationality of all life on earth. Following on eight years from the first Earth Day in 1970, Mead would write in the US Environmental Protection Journal:

Earth Day is the first holy day which transcends all national borders, yet preserves all geographical integrities, spans mountains and oceans and time belts, and yet brings people all over the world into one resonating accord, is devoted to the preservation of the harmony in nature and yet draws upon the triumphs of technology, the measurement of time, and instantaneous communication through space (McConnell 2011: 327).

Though the environmental movement would continue to gain momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, the hoped-for realisation and deeper appreciation for the fragility of life on Earth, which in turn would hopefully lead to an epoch rooted in relationality and global cooperation on a scale never seen before, did not come to fruition. Though the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 ushered in a new era of globalisation. This new era was to be pervasive and defined by neoliberal free-market capitalism, and at times has been conflated with the genesis of globalisation. However, the term and concept of globalisation are far more than vast interconnected global economies as I touched on previously. Academics, governmental officials and journalists have taken markedly different perspectives on the ubiquitous term, and this too speaks to the vague and often blurry nature of the discourse on globalisation itself.

The British political scientist David Held has described globalisation as “a historical process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions... generating transcontinental or

interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power” (Held et al. 1999: 16). While I will remind the reader that the *Island of Hope* acknowledges that “economic globalization has different meanings for different people, groups and communities,” the *Island of Hope* goes on to define economic globalisation as a process of:

Transnationalization of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance capital round the globe, round the clock;  
Process of centralization of capital via mergers and acquisitions;  
Transnationalization of production, e.g. the sales of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) is over \$14 trillion (US) as against an export trade of just half of it; Standardization of consumer tastes; Legitimization of the process by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and World Trade Organization (WTO); Unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed “rulers” in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes (World Council of Churches 2000: 9).

Following 1991 and the advent of the post-Cold War new world order of neo-liberalism and globalisation, civil society organisations have emerged as a powerful opposition to transnational corporations, national governments and international economic blocs, like the European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The global phenomena opposing neo-liberalism and the economic practices which it has given rise to compose an international resistance movement comprising wide-ranging civil organisations, including: social movements, development of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public and religious interest groups, such as the WCC. These organisations have various mission statements, policies and agendas, but all are united in opposition to the socio-economic and political forces that dominated the world stage for the past 30 years, significantly impacting the lives of millions and nearly every ecosystem on Earth (Firth 2006: 23-36).

The past three decades have seen the mobilisation of citizens around the globe, thanks in part to the forces of globalisation itself, such as mass and social media. For example, the World Social Forum that first met in 2001 in Brazil and has now reached a global audience with the slogan “Another World is Possible” unmistakably rejects the status quo and seeks alternatives:

The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth... a global process of research and development of alternatives to neoliberal policies (World Social Forum 2002: 1).

The World Social Forum held its first annual general meeting in Mumbai, India, in 2004, though it is of note the Asia-Pacific region began to experience dramatic changes throughout the 1990s because of new-era economic globalisation and the implementation of neo-liberal policies by various Asian and Pacific Island governments. It was in response to these shifts in governmental policy and implementation that several NGOs and civil society organisations in the region began to critically engage with the economic and trade policies. Through collaboration, made possible in large part by the ever-widening internet, organisations dealing with similar issues created a fledgling Pacific economics-focused discourse and ultimately a movement focused on globalisation emerged (Firth 2006: 23). This movement and discourse are manifested in part in the *Island of Hope* ecumenical document (World Council of Churches 2001).

The response to economic globalisation and neo-liberalism arose following significant concerns over emerging economic crises, wealth inequality and the newly restructured developing nations of the world in general, and in the Pacific specifically. Thus, at a critical time of post-colonialism and emerging independence for many Pacific Island nations, the WCC's counter critique of economic globalisation and neo-liberalism in the form of the *Island of Hope* is of vital importance, not just for Pacific Island peoples themselves but all those seeking alternatives to neoliberal policies and economic globalisation, such as the members of the World Social Forum.

Let us return again to the NASA image of “earthrise” and to the event of Earth Day – both examples “that foreground responses to environmental awareness and globalisation through a dominant Western paradigm, with further connotations of “mastering effects to ecological, social and theological relations” (Crook 2018: 10). It is here I wish to pointedly refocus our attentions on the critical decolonising aspects of the *Island of Hope* and the Polynesian Voyaging Society, with their Oceanian and island-inspired vision of earth and the environmental crisis. For these purposes, I will retell the story of NASA astronaut Lacy Veach and “adze-rise”:

[Veach,] grew up in Hawai‘i and was close friends with Polynesian Voyaging Society [M]aster [N]avigator, Nainoa Thompson. In 1992, Veach was orbiting the earth on the space shuttle Columbia (STS-52) at the same time Thompson was sailing the double-hulled voyaging canoe *Hōkūle‘a* (“Star of Gladness” in Hawaiian) on the *No Nā Mamo* (“for the children” in Hawaiian) voyage to Rarotonga. They arranged to speak by satellite phone in a three-way call with schoolchildren at Punahou School<sup>14</sup> in Honolulu.

One time on Columbia, another astronaut woke Veach and told him they were passing Hawai‘i—Veach looked out and could see all

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<sup>14</sup> Tangentially, Punahou School is located a half-mile from where I lived during my Honolulu fieldwork (2015-2016) and also happens to be the alma mater of former US President and Hawai‘i-born Barak Obama, whose administration would ratify the historic Paris Agreement on climate change and carbon emissions at the time I was conducting fieldwork in Hawai‘i.

the islands, and his whole spirit and soul in the dawn light. He told Thompson how: “The sight of the islands took his breath away.” He saw the islands and the planet in one vision—that planet earth was just an island like Hawai‘i, in an ocean of space, and that we needed to take care of them both if the planet was to remain a lifegiving home for humanity. Veach had taken with him a stone adze from the Keanakako‘i quarry high on the slopes of Mauna Kea<sup>15</sup>—and was able to take a photo of the adze floating in space as they passed over Hawai‘i, with Mauna Kea visible in the cockpit window. This “adze-rise” vision of island earth makes specific cultural connections of its own, and challenges ideas about isolation and vulnerability, just as Epeli Hau‘ofa’s famous essay “Our Sea of Islands” (1993) would do, the following year. Both visions shrug off the privilege of colonial and heavenly perspectives: Veach said “The best place to think about the fate of our planet is right here in the islands.”

Later in 1992, Veach joined Thompson on board the *Hōkūle‘a* as it sailed from Moloka‘i to O‘ahu, and discussed plans for a worldwide voyage that would eventuate in the *Mālama Honua* (“caring for island earth” in Hawaiian) voyage which circumnavigated the globe from 2014 to 2017. *Hōkūle‘a* continues its own navigations by the stars, riding the waves on an island in space, sharing an Oceanic vision of how “man lives in equivalence with the environment” (Efi 2014, Crooks 2018: 10).

From the example of NASA astronaut Lacy Veach, Master Navigator Nainoa Thompson, and the Polynesian Voyaging Society’s recent *Mālama Honua* voyage we find a manifestation of hope for a lifegiving home capable of supporting all of humanity, wherein “man lives in equivalence with the environment” as His Highness and former Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa, Tui Atua Tupua

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<sup>15</sup> For more on the critical importance of the Keanakako‘i quarry on Mauna Kea and lithic tool exchange please see Gard et al. (2011). “Volcanic Glass Quarrying and Exchange in Hawai‘i” [in:] *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Volume 38 (10), October 2011, 2547-2560.

Tamasese Efi calls for in numerous speeches on the climate change crisis playing out presently in the Pacific.

The *Island of Hope* document also serves to articulate Oceanian apprehensions and anxieties around the injustice of developing nations' debt and the increasing dominance in the Pacific of international financial institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and transnational corporations, beyond the control of local governments and other regulating bodies. The *Island of Hope* refers to these organisations and their financial dominance as the “unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed “rulers” in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes” (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). The means to respond to this “concentration of power” by the WCC, the World Social Forum and many other NGOs was found in part in the internet. Beyond the internet, a further means of perpetuating the globalisation-resistant movement was a series of UN development conferences in the 1990s that engaged thousands of NGOs from around the globe, ultimately creating a new global policy creation and advocacy matrix (United Nations System and Civil Society 2003).

Encouraged by two World Bank reports (1991, 1993), the mid-1990s were a time of economic restructuring throughout the Pacific. Neo-liberal policy supporters in Australia and New Zealand pushed for economic reform with a lending programme made possible through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and new monetary initiatives were implemented. In time, these very same initiatives have resulted in oppressive debt for many Pacific Island nations. Presently it is estimated that “1.4 billion people in the [Pacific] region are poor and unable to access essential goods services, assets and opportunities to which every human is entitled” (Asian Development Bank 2015: 1).

From 1999 onwards the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (formerly the South Pacific Forum), which operates as the primary implementing body for externally propelled reforms, began to emphasise trade liberalism and compliance with WTO principles. In 2001 two regional trade agreements – Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement



(PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Relations [with Australia and New Zealand] (PACER) – were drafted and implemented by the Secretariat. Prior to this, in 2000, the Secretariat also entered into a Regional Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. More recently, strong criticism has been pointed at Australia and New Zealand’s manipulations and roles associated with PACER, yet “the Forum Secretariat remains committed to pushing economic ‘reform’ and trade liberalisation in the region, national governments appear to still be firmly on board for the rest of the regional reform voyage, and ‘reform-speak’ has become the dominant discourse in the region, within and outside government” (Firth 2006: 27). It also bears note that there have been few substantial critiques of the economic restructuring in the Pacific in either academia or traditional media sources. Furthermore, the negative impacts of economic restructuring and trade liberalisation have not even received significant consideration and debate in national governmental discourse. Perhaps it is an unsurprising example then that researchers from the University of the South Pacific<sup>16</sup> located in Suva, Fiji, working on an NGOs-focused research project found that 59% of participants in consultations conveyed that they knew “little/nothing about trade” with a troubling 63% knowing “little/nothing about what the Forum Secretariat does” (Sutherland et al. 2005).

For Pacific Island nations, as with most nations, national issues take precedent over broader regional reforms. However, even where NGOs have heavily engaged with pro-democracy, anti-corruption struggles and human rights issues, such as in Fiji with the Coalition on Human Rights, and Tonga with the Human Rights and Democracy Movement, reform and economic justice issues have remained unchallenged. In seeking to understand this more fully, I was speaking with one colleague and informant at the University of the South Pacific – artist and sculptor Ben Fong – and the conversation turned to the suppression that artists and academics faced when producing works that could be seen, in the slightest way, as critical of the government (Gard 2016, np).

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<sup>16</sup> While conducting fieldwork in Suva, Fiji I had the good fortune of living around a mile from the University of the South Pacific in the area known as Suva Point, often making daily visits to the campus to speak with colleagues working on a range of sustainable development and climate change response projects. I continue to appreciate and make use of my research affiliate status with the School of Marine Studies at the University of the South Pacific.

As the conversation flowed, we discussed one of Fong's artworks that critiqued the current Fijian Prime Minister's Bainimarama administration in general and Prime Minister Bainimarama in particular. The artwork in question is a metal sculpture depicting Bainimarama as a long-legged seabird standing on a grenade with the pin pulled. The piece symbolises, as Fong explained to me, the "chaos that Bainimarama has created in Fiji, the violence and disregard for the rule of the Chiefs" (Gard 2016 np). Fong was speaking to the coup of 2006 and the dissolving of Bose Levu Vakaturaga ("the Great Council of Chiefs" in Fijian), which was a constitutional governing body that existed from 1876 to 2012. As we talked he recalled at the time of the sculpture's creation some years before being cautioned by his mentor, Professor Epeli Hau'ofa, who urged him to be careful in regards to the political nature of his work for fear of reprisal (Gard 2016, np). Thankfully Fong's political sculpture seems to have gone unnoticed by the Bainimarama administration.

As we spoke over the following weeks in February and March of 2016 on my visits to the Oceania Arts Centre, he shared with me other stories and violent rumours he had heard. I noted that he knew of several academics who had been critical of the current administration's policies. In one particular instance he reflected on several economists who had written an article or report that was critical of the Fijian government's economic practices and how they were held without charged for a weekend and then released following a warning (Gard 2016 np). With all this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that economic reforms and economic justice issues have remained unchallenged in Fiji and other Pacific Island nations, as governmental corruption and intimidation remain a troubling issue for many in contemporary Oceania.

Despite this hostile environment, one of the leading and most active critics of economic restructuring from within the Pacific church itself has been Fiji-based Father Kevin Barr. Providing thoughtful contributions on behalf of the Fiji Council of Churches' Research Group – Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation Project (PJIC) and the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECEA) – Father Barr has been a persuasive voice critiquing economic globalisation and poverty through a

Christian theological lens in both theological and popular media outlets (Barr 2010, 2012). Father Barr, drawing upon evidence-based analysis of increasing poverty in Fiji and the greater Pacific region, has enabled church-based organisations to track and examine current economic policy and its impacts. Further, Father Barr himself was threatened by Prime Minister Bainimarama with deportation for a letter Barr wrote to a local Fijian newspaper – *The Fiji Sun* – in 2013 (Callick 2013). The letter in question made a humorous remark, suggesting that given the current political and economic relationship with China, perhaps the Fijian flag should reflect that “our old allegiance to Britain is being replaced with a new allegiance to China” and thus should have a small image of the Chinese flag as opposed to the Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner (Callick 2013: 1).

In 2001 the Regional Consultation on Globalisation, Trade, Investment and Debt, organised by ECREA and held in Fiji, brought together regional NGOs working on development and rights, resulting in the creation of the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) with the express purpose of conducting research, analysis and advocacy on economic and trade policy issues (Kelsey 2004A, 2004B, 2004C). The following year the Vanuatu Government, compelled in part by private sector and civil society, expressed concern that it had sacrificed too much financial independence and withdrew from a completed World Trade Organization (WTO) accession package (Kelsey 2004A). The accession negotiations had started in 1995 when Vanuatu applied to join the WTO, and over the course of the following seven years Vanuatu governmental officials had agreed to a number of policies including radical liberalisation of services (Kelsey 2004A). There is often limited opportunity to question the underlying agenda of such economic reforms, which led one Geneva-based analyst with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy to object, stating “no amount of technical assistance in implementing policies that, in effect, handicap and shackle developing countries in the WTO can improve gains towards development” (Mekay 2003: 1).

These sentiments are further underscored by Oxfam New Zealand, which voiced concern regarding joining the WTO under the terms agreed to by Vanuatu, stating that the agreed-to terms would have exposed the country to “the worst kind of corporate

cream-skimming in the education and hospital sectors” (Oxfam NZ 2005: 10). Vanuatu’s economic reform package, which began in 1997 and was underwritten by an Asian Development Bank loan approved in 1998, had been designed to prepare Vanuatu for WTO accession, as indicated by the tariff reductions and value-added tax put in place by the Vanuatu Government as part of the Asian Development Bank terms (Oxfam NZ 2005: 10). Moreover, Fiji’s Trade Minister Kaliopate Tavola expressed disappointment that discussions had not sensitised the larger WTO members to Pacific members’ unique circumstances and size constraints, or to the minimal cost of making meaningful concessions:

The WTO claims to be a multilateral trading organization, which addresses the circumstances of all its Members, and whose rules provide a balance of advantages for all its constituents. However, this is unfortunately not true for the small, vulnerable economies whose limited negotiating capital and small size limit their ability to cope with the complex multilateral rules, does not allow for effective bargaining to secure specific measures which address our development needs, and thus has prevented us from participating effectively in the negotiation of WTO provisions more suited to enhancing our welfare (Tavola 2003: 1).

In another case in 2005, an ambitious civil society challenge to reform trade liberalisation was undertaken in Tonga. A massive civil-servant strike was triggered by impacts to the public sector reforms, which partially manifested in salary increases for high-ranking senior bureaucrats and was partially associated with the implications of Tonga’s accession to the WTO. Under the terms laid out by the WTO, Working Party Tongans were already paying a consumption tax to assist in equalising revenue losses from tariff reduction once Tonga joined the WTO in totality. The coalition campaigned for Tonga to halt WTO accession, as Vanuatu had previously done. Though the striking civil servants combined forces with Tonga’s Democracy Movement, ultimately bringing together a coalition of NGOs, unions and church organisations to consider the WTO campaign in greater depth. Tonga’s Democracy Movement and anti-WTO coalition were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving their goal. That is not to say that their

energies were in vain, though, as their efforts did increase public awareness of Tonga's WTO obligations and the long-term social and economic effects of WTO membership (Firth 2006: 30).

In another case from the early 2000s, Aotearoa New Zealand, in keeping with international best practices standards, created a semi-autonomous body entitled the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID). This agency was charged with fighting poverty, specifically in New Zealand's area of natural interest – the wider Pacific. From 2002 to 2008 the agency worked on this mandate and utilised the following general aims to guide their aid work:

- 1.) Improve wellbeing and access to healthcare;
- 2.) Increase access to educational opportunities;
- 3.) Diversify work opportunities and livelihoods; and
- 4.) Implementation of the previous goals through appropriate channels.

This four-pronged method emulated the current global practices in aid deployment and drew on guiding principles from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Paris Declaration of 2005. The NZAID group, after six successful years of aid deployment, contended in 2008 that “we know where the canoe is heading, and through friendship and hard work, all the countries of the mighty Pacific will have an opportunity to reach their destination – a prosperous and safe future” (Banks et al. 2012: 170). By late 2008, less than a year later, the New Zealand Agency for International Development was no longer a semi-autonomous body and was reincorporated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With this incorporation came a swift shift in focus from poverty relief and diversified livelihoods to economic growth,

with priority given to Aotearoa New Zealand's own interests. The NZAID became caught up in a larger governmental shift reflected in the newly elected 2008 national government. Other nations, such as Canada, took similar actions to Aotearoa New Zealand and moved away from international best practices in aid relief, based in partnership and shared responsibility. Some critiques of this new approach expressed concern, as these actions seem to signal that the notion of paddling on both sides of the canoe is no longer applicable, rather it is as if only a few are paddling on one side of the canoe (Banks et al. 2012: 184).

In conclusion to this section, economic globalisation as a historical process in Oceania is a complex and highly variable field of research that will not allow for a comprehensive consideration within the confines of this dissertation. Yet, it is worthwhile visiting this body of work, however briefly, as it assists in revealing some of the deeper economic histories at work and reveals some of the ways in which “the Pacific has been made and remade” as political analyst Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi described to me over coffee while I was visiting Port Vila, Vanuatu, in 2016 (Gard 2016, np).



### **3.3 Political Justice, the Individual & the *Island of Hope***

Economic globalisation and associated neoliberal financial practices have historically understood the individual as just that, an individual, separate from their community. That is not to say that the individual is not susceptible to the influence of the community though. In juxtaposition to this, the *Island of Hope* understands the individual as being inseparable from their community, fully immersed in a communal worldview and indivisible from their society. Traditional lifeways with a communal focus are understood to be the ideal conception of community. The individual and “individualism” are deemed to foster consumerism “at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of life” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). More explicitly for the *Island of Hope*, the individual is seen to be wholly self-absorbed and negates economic justice. The WCC’s vision of economic justice is tethered to a communal whole, wherein one is together with and simultaneously a part of a larger whole. This communal wholeness is the basis for the WCC’s vision of economic justice.

For the *Island of Hope*, political participation, and by extrapolation, political justice are connected to an individual’s engagement with the community. It is through participation in the political decisions of the community that an individual can find dignity. “The dignity of every person is compromised without the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The WCC has consistently supported these historic struggles” (World Council of Churches 2001: 8). However, economic globalisation all too often prevents the poorest individuals in making decisions and engaging in a meaningful way with the wider community. Numerous examples of this phenomenon can be found in the Pacific, especially those linked to the demographics of ethnic minorities, women and children.

For political justice to be achieved, as described in the *Island of Hope*, the WCC calls for dignity and power to be restored to those that are often most ignored within economic globalisation – the poor (World Council of Churches 2001: 22). For example, “the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank, but also a growing number of national

governments... They demand harsh sacrifices of ordinary women and men. They do this despite reliable evidence that economic growth fails to promote human development unless there is:

Adequate support for the poor, unemployed, and other vulnerable groups; environmental protection; transparency and accountability in government, and effective participation by civil society (including labor unions (World Council of Churches 2001: 22).

From these principles, the WCC insists on democratic forms of decision-making, reaching the “unequivocal conclusion” that:

*No authority inside or outside the region should ever escape its responsibilities to do justice to the poor and the needy by claiming the unavoidability of the requirements of globalization*<sup>17</sup> (World Council of Churches 2001: 22).

This is a clear call for democracy by the WCC – a democracy that stretches from the individual to the village and on to the national level. Transnational corporations, mass media and those that dictate the flows of financial capital now hold the democratic powers that formerly resided in local and national governments, and they operate with impunity (World Council of Churches 2001: 23). It follows then that if local and national governments are going to protect their most vulnerable community members from the various social ills of economic globalisation, they must engage with and regulate the exploitative practices and industries, such as the garment industry. The *Island of Hope* summarises the example of the garment industry and sweatshops as follows:

People in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalization. The rate of unemployed people, poor

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<sup>17</sup> Please note that the italics are from the original document and not added by the author.



people and street children is growing in highly industrialized countries. In the field of employment, the key words under economic globalization regime are informalization, casualization and feminization of labour.

Typical is the case of the garment industry where mostly women (90%) are working under very exploitative conditions. This industry can be found wherever wages are low, including Fiji (World Council of Churches 2001: 10).

Through political participation, the *Island of Hope* envisions the nation as the most relevant and nimble means to secure the greater good for the wider community and justice for those that are most vulnerable. It follows then that the WCC champions strengthening local and national governments, with the understanding that national governments will act in international circles on behalf of their citizens (World Council of Churches 2001: 24). The importance of the many, over the few or the individual, is stressed in multiple ways in the *Island of Hope* with the need to share community resources, as a means of improving the experience of the most impoverished community members, as highest priority. Alternative models to economic globalisation are numerous and can be found in traditional wisdom and lifeways from around the world. The *Island of Hope* explicitly calls attention to the following examples: in Asia as “gotong-royong” (togetherness); in Indonesia as “bayanihan” (collective living); in the Philippines as “panchasila” (five principles of peaceful living); and in India as “daedong yundae” (great solidarity) (World Council of Churches 2001: 13).

The communal arrangements of the *Island of Hope*'s above examples provide proof positive of flourishing non-monetary, non-consumer, and subsistence economies, as do numerous prehistoric examples taken from the archaeological record of the Pacific, Mediterranean, Europe, Africa and Americas (Buckman 2005). These are in contrast to today's global economy that is based on individualism and competition (World Council of Church 2001: 13). From the Church's perspective, aspects of these subsistence economies are ethically compatible with Christian principles and the *Island of Hope* ideology. For example, Jesus Christ calls all Christians to be of “one body”, such as in

the Bible verse of Romans 12:5, where Christ is understood to be the “head” of the “body”, and the “body” is understood to be the Church. From this anatomical analogy Christians are to understand that generosity, reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources nourish the “body.” The desire to accumulate wealth is an incorrect course of action for Christians because all are one, just as the “body” is composed of many organs and limbs but is one living organism. In juxtaposition to this, the economies of Europe, the Americas, China and increasing the developing world revolve around profit and economic growth, while the traditional economies of the Pacific address the total quality of their peoples’ lives. While traditionally the values of generosity, reciprocity and the communal sharing of resources in the Pacific extended to the family and village, Jesus Christ asks all Christians to extend generosity to all, as we are all members of the family of God (World Council of Churches 2001: 7).



### 3.4 Sleeping Rough in Paradise

For the WCC there are numerous values in Asian and Pacific cultures that are life giving and correlate with the ethics of Jesus Christ, as I touched on in examples in the previous sections. This is especially true when we consider the cultural values of sharing and the ethics of Jesus Christ. For example, in the biblical text of Matthew 25:35 when Jesus Christ says, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,” we see again the importance of generosity and sharing of communal resources (Matthew 25:35–40). In the following Honolulu case study we see an example of Hawaiian values and Christian ethics colliding with economic globalisation, prejudice, racism and the painful legacy of nuclear colonialism in Micronesia.



In large purple letters, taller than I am, “No Aloha for the Homeless?” is sprayed across the side of a shipping container in the parking lot of the CVS Pharmacy on South King Street, next to the green expanse of Mo‘ili‘ili Neighborhood Park. This is a sunny Friday in October of 2015, one month into my fieldwork, after I had returned to Honolulu following three years of working abroad, and on this particular Friday the Hawai‘i State Governor David Ige declares a State of Emergency (SOE) in response to the growing homeless crisis in Honolulu. This SOE will stretch through to the end of February 2016 with the intent of giving the State of Hawai‘i, the only state to require such action, increased flexibility in responding to the crisis.

The declaration frees \$1.3 million for assistance and service mechanisms that promote permanent housing, with \$750,000 being put toward temporary shelter for families (National Alliance 2016). “We are making sure that we have options for those who are homeless to move into an emergency shelter, and the biggest deficit in the system is shelter space for families,” Governor Ige shares. “So the emergency proclamation would allow us to stand up shelters for families in an expeditious manner” (Associated Press 2015: 1). Troublingly, Hawai‘i had seen a 23% recorded increase in its unsheltered homeless population from 2014 to 2015, with a 46% recorded increase in the number of unsheltered families (Associated Press 2015). In January 2016 a homeless point-in-time count placed the figure at 7,921 on the streets of Hawai‘i, which also reflects the highest rate of homelessness per capita of any state in the US (Hawaii News Now 2016A, 2016B).

The homeless crisis is by no means in Hawai‘i’s alone. The West Coast of the US, including Washington, Oregon and California, had a total homeless population of at least 168,000 as of November 2017, which reflects an increase of some 19,000 people from 2016 (Flaccus & Mulvihill 2017: 1). Having a full and accurate understanding of the homeless population in Honolulu – or indeed any urban centre – is challenging, and some I spoke with in support services suggested the count was underestimated by as much as 50% (Gard 2015, np).

Regardless of the technical accuracy of the point-in-time statistics, the data does reflect a 25% increasing trend in the homeless population from 2009–2016 (Hawaii News Now 2016A, 2016B). To consider this from another perspective, the homeless population in Hawai‘i stands at 487 homeless individuals per 100,000 people – the nation's highest, followed by New York and Nevada, according to federal statistics (Hawaii News Now 2016B; Bussewitz 2015: 1). While there are shelters and a number of resources in place to help the homeless, there are simply far fewer available beds than are needed. For example, about 550 beds are available on any given night on O‘ahu, where an estimated 4,940 homeless people live (Bussewitz 2015: 1). Statistics are one means of attempting to grasp this new, troubling “normal” in Hawai‘i. However, without consulting the statistics it was self-evident that a human crisis was playing out on the streets of Honolulu. One evening in November 2015, as I was

walking to an environmental campaign meeting at McKinley High School on South King Street, I passed 22 individuals sleeping on the street in a single mile-long stretch. This was not the Hawai'i I remembered. And in the following weeks, and now years, it has been that giant question mark in the “No Aloha for the Homeless?” that has stayed with me.

### **3.5 A Slow-Motion Disaster, Centuries in the Making**

That is not to say that homelessness is new in Hawai'i. Consider, for example, that the Community Mental Health Act of 1963 – put into law at the federal level – impacted many mental care facilities and resulted in the deinstitutionalisation of many of their residents (Associated Press 2013; Watson 2010). As a result, many former institutionally cared-for patients ended up on the streets of urban centres across the US with little to no support structures in place to assist them. It was a harbinger of what was to come in the next three decades.

As a student in the mid-2000s at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, I “couch surfed” with family and friends, and occasionally classmates “camped” at the beach for weeks at a time. I also knew one graduate student friend who lived permanently in her vehicle. All of us worked and most had two or more jobs. Given the fact that Hawai'i has the highest rent in the US according to the US Census Bureau (Eagle 2016; United States Census Bureau 2015A), it is hardly surprising that most of us would have fit into a category now labelled “housing insecure”, a label that is applicable to some 50% of community college students across the US (Goldrick-Rab 2017). In the 2017 report, entitled *Hungry and in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education* findings reflected that some 14% of community college students across the US are homeless (Goldrick-Rab 2017). While in Hawai'i, officials with the Department of Education reported in January 2016 that nearly 3,576 students statewide were homeless. The point-in-time homeless count of the same year reflects just a little more than half of the Department of Education number, further underscoring the likelihood of a severe underrepresentation in the point-in-time count

as was previously suggested by the support service workers I interviewed (Hawaii News Now 2016: 1, Gard 2015 np).

The longer answer to the above query stems, at least in part, from a positive correlation between increasing tourists and homelessness rates, where many have been priced out of everything from a studio apartment to a cup of coffee. In addition, moving from correlation to direct causation, we see that decades of cuts in public housing have compounded and manifested in the current crisis. In short, the homelessness crisis in Hawai'i and the mainland US has its roots in the last century, with only the latest blow to public housing coming from the Trump administration. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), overseen by Cabinet Secretary Ben Carson, released plans for fiscal year 2018 that would result in cuts to low-income housing support funding by \$16,470,143 in Honolulu alone, with \$6 billion additional cuts planned nationwide (Affordable Housing Online 2017).



### 3.6 Voyagers Among the “Sea of Islands”

Let us now turn to the “who” of the Hawai‘i homeless crisis. In 2008, a study conducted at the University of Hawai‘i noted that more than half of the homeless people receiving services in Hawai‘i were not lifetime residents of the state, with 64% of those individuals having lived in Hawai‘i for less than ten years (University of Hawai‘i Center on the Family 2010). Drawing on my own limited research and experiences in 2015 and 2016 of speaking with those in shelters, beach encampments and makeshift shelters on the streets, many of the 64% were from the US mainland or Micronesian region of the Pacific. Nearly all the individuals I spoke with had experienced a series of unfortunate events, such as loss of employment, a car accident, a broken limb, a serious illness or chronic health condition that had pushed them from precarious living situations onto the streets (Gard 2015, 2016 np).



Figure 5: In Honolulu’s Chinatown the homeless sleep in the parks and on sidewalks, while tourists and locals alike look on. Image courtesy of the author.

As homeless populations are primarily a transient group they often do not stay in a fixed location for prolonged periods of time. In Honolulu this was further exacerbated by the city's use of "sweeps". Sweeps<sup>18</sup> are the periodic forced clean-ups of temporary shelters and beach encampments by police, refuse workers and other city employees. Sweeps are employed when and where the City and County of Honolulu chooses to enforce the "SPO" (Stored Property Ordinance) and "SNO" (Sidewalk Nuisance Ordinance). Sometimes there is advanced notice of a sweep, sometimes there is not.

In keeping with the ordinances, the City must give individuals 30 minutes to gather their possessions, provided they are physically present at the time of the sweep. After 30 minutes, individuals must stay back from the designated sweep area – which is typically defined by a yellow plastic tape or rope – or face the possibility of arrest. Police and city employees then move through a given encampment and dispose of much of the materials they find via a garbage truck.

Some personal effects, such as tents, personal documentation and paperwork, such as birth certificates, and other valuables, like medication, may be gathered and tagged for an individual to reclaim at a later point from a designated location. Though retrieving one's personal belongings often can only be achieved by paying a fee of \$200, homeless individuals may petition for a fee waiver via a designated form.

I was surprised to find that there were fees and paperwork associated with homelessness. For example, staying overnight in a shelter is not free in Hawai'i, there is also associated paperwork and a fee to stay. Next, I found out that a controversial ordinance, known as the "sit-lie ban", had recently come into effect in downtown Honolulu at the time of fieldwork. The ban was effective in designated areas of Waikiki, Chinatown and downtown Honolulu, and enabled police officers to issue citations of several hundred dollars to any individual who loitered in a public space within the designated zone. It seemed to me that homelessness, through measures of

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<sup>18</sup> The name "sweeps" reflects how some city officials and citizens see these individuals and how these encampments are treated. As one homeless support worker noted with disgust, "they are treated like little more than rubbish to be swept up." These sentiments were reiterated several times by homeless informants and support staff alike (Gard 2015, 2016 np).



bureaucratizing and criminalizing those who found themselves in a desperate situation, had become an “unfair dominion of strong over weak...rich over poor” as the *Island of Hope* delineates in its call for justice for the poor (World Council of Churches 2001: 22). I struggled to imagine that the forms would truly do much to assist, or conversely that the fees and citations would deter those in the intended demographics. I doubted too that any had the funds to pay the various fees, and many I did not think capable of completing the various forms without assistance. But then that very well may have been the intended consequence.

I was appreciative of the range of perspectives of support workers on this controversial issue, especially Kimo Calvara, Director of Community Relations & Development, with the Institute for Human Services (IHM) – the largest homeless shelter in Honolulu. Calvara and I discussed the more controversial Honolulu laws in place around homelessness, as well as aspects of identity and the deep and demoralizing aspects of homelessness, especially for Pacific Islands who highly value place and ancestral connections with the land. And as the *Island of Hope* reminds us, “[t]he concepts of *whenua*, *fenua*, *enua*, *vanua*<sup>19</sup> all mean that the land is the people’s identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea. The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and distribution of resources with the absence of the selfish pursuit of wealth” (World Council of Churches 2001: 7). For Calvara and others working with the homeless population, the legal ordinances are valuable tools to assist those who are cognitively incapable of assisting themselves. While I felt nothing but empathy for the tremendous challenges of those working with the homeless in Honolulu, I could not help but think surely there must be a better way than this aggressive form of structural violence. How can criminalising the homeless truly help?

In January 2016 during my Honolulu fieldwork, a legal case ruling – *Martin v. City & County of Honolulu* – gained significant attention among support workers and well-informed members of the homeless community. The legal case ruled in favour of the plaintiff noting that the disposal of personal property violated two rights under the US

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<sup>19</sup> These are common words with identical meanings, only differently pronounced in different Pacific languages.

Constitution, namely the right against unreasonable seizures of property under the Fourth Amendment, and the right against deprivation of property without due process of the law under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Tangentially, some researchers address the problem of a mobile population by focusing on a small group of individuals, while others focus on a designated bounded area such as a single park or shelter. I believe the latter would be best suited to the transient, yet frequently returned-to spaces of the beach park encampments. O‘ahu is after all an island and as one of my middle-aged Hawaiian female informants quipped, “I don’t know where they think we’re going to go with these sweeps” (Gard 2016 np). Under these difficult and contested conditions of the sweeps, and given the fluid nature of transient communities, staying in extended contact with individuals can be challenging, as has been previously noted by Parsell (2011). Drawing upon his participant observation, Parsell clarified that he could not provide an exact figure of the total number of individuals he engaged with as many of his observations were made from a distance.

In my conversations with homeless individuals I found it difficult to engage in deeper conversations with those experiencing the harshest of economic situations. I encountered a fair amount of apprehension, guarded reserve and a completely understandable desire to be left alone. Previously, when sweeps were first emerging as standard practice in the mid-2000s, Margot Schrine of Partners in Care noted that “sweeps are conducted throughout the island on an ongoing basis, as well as being instigated by neighbourhood resident complaints...these raids make it difficult for outreach workers to serve people living on beaches or in parks” (National Coalition for the Homeless 2006: 1). And, similarly to Parsell, I too felt my observations were “made from a distance” – a distance at times that was quite literal and also metaphorical. In the four months I was in Hawai‘i<sup>20</sup> I struggled with attempting (and mostly failing) to capture a comprehensive understanding of the homeless individuals’ lives I came into contact with as I was mindful that all too frequently one-dimensional, prerogative and

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<sup>20</sup> My fieldwork in Honolulu spanned from October 2015 through to January 2016, with a brief return of a two-week visit from December 2016 to January 2017, just prior to leaving the Pacific and returning to the UK at the end of January 2017.

romanticizing depictions of those living without and on the margins are the result of one-off interviews and brief exchanges (Snow, Anderson & Koegel 1994). I did not want this, nor my work to inadvertently reduce the complexity of individuals' lives into mere "objects of examination" as Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1979).

Foucault likens examination to a "normalizing gaze" that "introduces the constraints of conformity... [and that] compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, and excludes" (1979: 183-184). For "[t]he judges of normality are present everywhere....We are entering the age of infinite examination and of compulsory objectification" (1979: 304). Beyond these concerns, I was troubled by the fact that many of the individuals I spoke with were clearly mentally unwell and/or engaging in alcohol and substance use, all of which combined to render this highly vulnerable demographic even more at risk. I worried that many were not capable of understanding the situation they found themselves in or providing informed consent as we would traditionally understand it in a typical ethnographic setting. These concerns and challenges stayed with me throughout my time in Hawai'i while I sought to more fully understand the homeless crisis I focused my attention on the Kaka'ako area of downtown Honolulu, especially the Kaka'ako Waterfront Park, as well as the beach and surrounding city blocks – home to the largest homeless encampments in Honolulu.

The Kaka'ako encampment, which has been in existence since at least the mid-2000s when I had previously lived in Honolulu, has fluctuated in size over the history of its existence. Over the years the population has waxed and waned in part in response to sweeps and various socioeconomic pressures, such as the US economic recession of 2007–2009. During late 2015 and into early 2016 I estimate the encampment at approximately 35 individuals, while a recent report from February 2019 notes the population at approximately 100 (Gard, 2015, 2016 np, Blair 2019: 1).

Sections of Kaka‘ako Waterfront Park, Ala Moana Beach Park and nearby Magic Island<sup>21</sup> are popular outdoor destinations for locals and tourists alike. The Kaka‘ako encampment is all the more distressing for the dissonance of wealth, privilege and unsustainable luxury that exists around its boundaries. The encampment exists in the shadow of the Ala Moana Center – named “the most valuable mall in the US” – and shopping destinations of thousands of international and local visitors each day (Thomas 2018: 1). Ala Moana (literally “path to the Ocean” in Hawaiian) has numerous department stores and high-end designer luxury retail spaces, a centrally located stage for live musical and hula performances throughout the day, and a series of koi ponds with streams that flow throughout the various shopping areas of the property and provide an admittedly lovely retail experience. Ala Moana also has estimated sales per square foot of \$1,450 and a total asset value of \$5.74 billion US dollars (Thomas 2018: 1). Through the lens of the *Island of Hope* I could not help but think that the Kaka‘ako encampment existed not despite the economic success of Hawai‘i’s tourism industry, exemplified in the Ala Moana Center, but precisely because of it.



Figure 6. Dusk at Ala Moana Center. The world’s largest open-air shopping mall attracts 48 million visitors per annum (Setteducato 2018: 1). Image courtesy of Ala Moana Center.

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<sup>21</sup> For example, Magic Island remains a personal favourite swimming spot and the location where I passed my Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) scuba diving certification.



While I appreciated everyone who spoke with me around the issues of poverty, displacement, homelessness, identity and migration, I am deeply grateful to the Micronesian diaspora communities in the Honolulu and Hilo areas and the individuals that so generously spoke with me, especially the students at the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, with the Center for Pacific Island Students. I owe a debt of gratitude to Drs Vidalino Raator and Joeseeph Gentz with the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, for their support and invitation to visit Hilo during my Hawaiian fieldwork. A heartfelt thanks to Jermy Uowolo and all those from Micronesians United – Big Island who so kindly made time to share their thoughts, experiences and insights with me. I remain impressed with the magnificent staff of Goodwill Services in Hilo and am thankful for the time I spent with them, sharing their thoughts, experiences and stories of hardship and hard-won achievements.

The most recent US Census data reflects that at least 20,000 Micronesians now live in Hawai'i (United States Census Bureau 2015B), many thousands of whom have met with success. In acknowledgement and appreciation of the rich languages, cultures and histories of this diverse part of Oceania, I would like to clarify my use of the word "Micronesia" or "Micronesian" as I may at times refer to the region of Micronesia (e.g. similarly to other regional and population descriptors, such as European and Melanesian); while all those that have an ancestral heritage from the islands which comprise the present-day Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) I also refer to as "Micronesian". Additionally, I refer to all those that have ancestral heritage from the present-day Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) as "Marshallese".

Contrary to popular stereotypes in Hawai'i, numerous Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants I spoke with are successful entrepreneurs, educators and professionals, and were concerned with the success of the wider Micronesian diaspora. Many were actively working on ways to further support their local community. I was also impressed with the hard work and passion of high school and university students in Honolulu and Hilo that I spoke with, a number of whom were actively planning on returning to their ancestral islands with ambitious plans to improve these communities. I hope these plans come to fruition as many of the islands and archipelagos of Micronesia are now dealing with pressing issues, ranging from climate change to cultivating sustainable development. Yet, there was one topic that when broached always brought our animated conversations and plans for the future to an uncomfortable silence. Without much surprise the subject no one wanted to discuss was that demographic data reflects some ~20% of homeless individuals living in Honolulu are COFA migrants (Watson 2010).



### 3.7 For the Good of Mankind

So why then are so many Pacific Islanders leaving their home islands in Micronesia to come to the US, even at the risk of an uncertain future on the streets of Honolulu?



Figure 7: Baker Test, as part of Operation Crossroads, 25 July 1946 at Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands. Crossroads involved some 42,000 men; 242 ships; 156 airplanes; 25,000 radiation recording devices; and 5,400 experimental rats, goats, and pigs (Weisgall 1985; Weisgall 1994). Image courtesy of the US Archives.

The answer to this query can in part be found on a sunny Sunday in February 1946, with the visit of the Military Governor of the Marshall Islands, Commodore Ben Wyatt, to Bikini Atoll. Following church services, the Commodore asked the islanders in an open-air town hall meeting<sup>22</sup> if they would be willing to leave their atoll for an unknown period of time so that the US could undertake nuclear-weapons testing. The departure from Bikini was to be temporary, though the exact period was never made clear to the islanders and the Commodore stressed that this was “for the good of

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<sup>22</sup>To see the actual US military film footage of this meeting watch “Bikini – The Atom Island”, a 1946 short that chronicles the evacuation of Bikini Atoll prior to the Operation Crossroads atomic bomb tests. Available via YouTube.

mankind and to end all world wars” (Niedenthal 2001: 2). The 167 residents of the atoll considered what was being asked of them and after debate, Juda, the leader of the Bikini people, declared that “[w]e will go, believing that everything is in the hands of God” (Niedenthal 2001: 2). The nuclear testing in Micronesia would commence in March 1946 with Operation Crossroads and leave a painful legacy that endures today.



### **3.8 We’ve Got the Trust, and They’ve Got the Territory**

In the aftermath of World War II, most of the islands in the geographic area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean known as Micronesia – which includes the Northern Marianas, Palau, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and the Marshall Islands – were held in trust by the US Military leaders. These US Military leaders were fervent in their calls for the continuation of strategic strongholds in the Pacific by the US and the development of the trust. Henry Stimson, the then Secretary of War, maintained, “they are not colonies; they are outposts,” asserting that US annexation of Micronesia would be “merely the acquisition by the United States of the necessary bases for the defence of the Pacific for the future world” (US Department of State 1955). The United Nations issued a mandate known as “Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands” (TTPI).



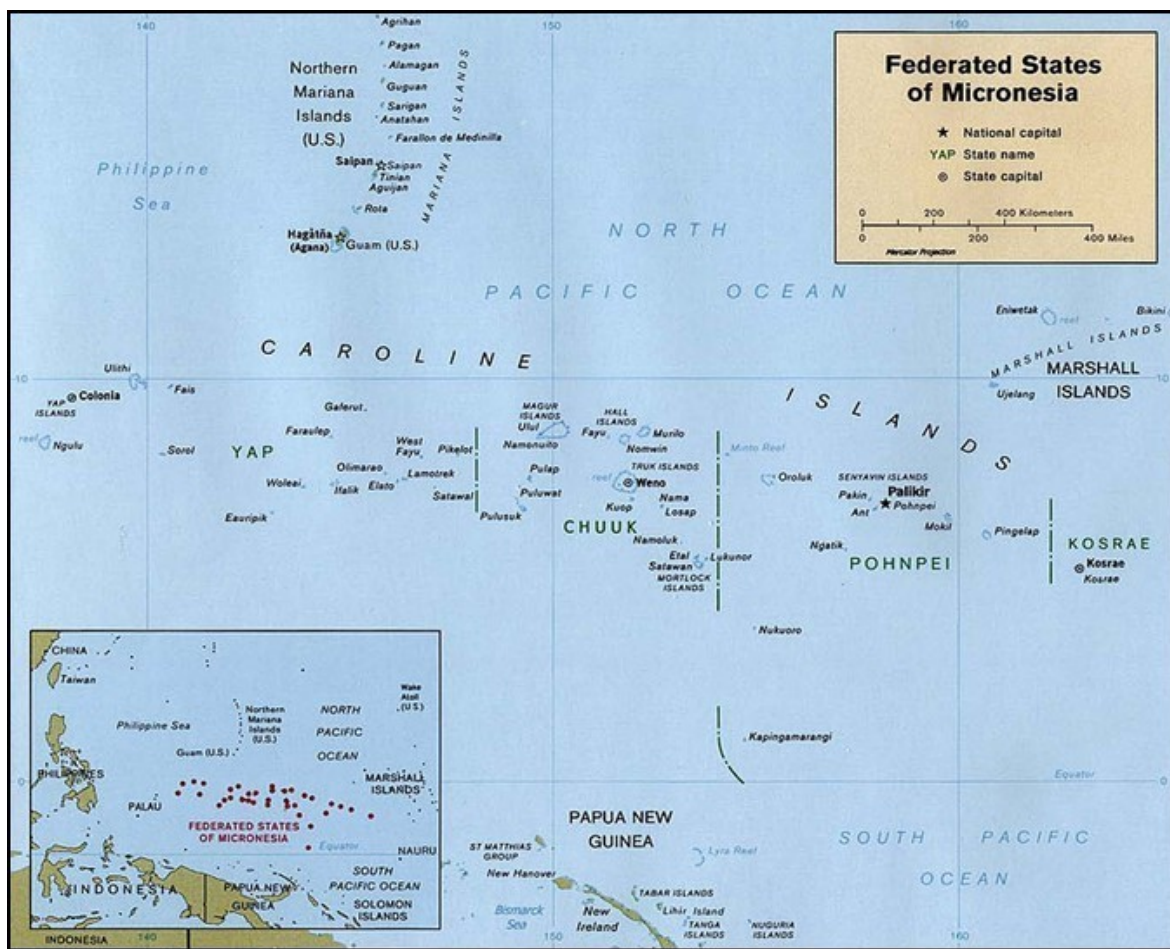


Figure 8: Map of the Federated States of Micronesia. Image courtesy of the US Federal Government 2017.

From 1946 to 1958, the US tested 66 atomic and hydrogen weapons, or the equivalent of more than 7,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs in the Marshall Islands, resulting in unprecedented destruction of the surrounding environment. To break it down even further, that's more than one Hiroshima-size bomb detonated every day. Six islands were vaporised by the weapons and hundreds of people were irradiated (Kuletz 2002: 125-142). The nuclear testing and military activities dominated the focus of the first two decades of US administration in Micronesia, leading some to surmise "US policy towards the islands could best be described as one of benign neglect. In fact, there was no policy" (Weisgall 1985: 47). "Benign neglect" is rather generous, all things considered. Rubon Juda, a former resident of Bikini Atoll, describes the Islanders' harsh reality following their relocation from Bikini Atoll to Rongerik Atoll in 1946:

Another problem we encountered was that we had no source of income. We couldn't make copra, and only the women could make a little money from the selling of their handicrafts to the Americans when they visited us on the island, so we continued to starve. After some time, and a tremendous amount of suffering, there came an American man, Dr Leonard Mason [an anthropologist from the University of Hawai'i], who brought us some food. He understood that we were starving and he could tell that we were in trouble, even dying. He encouraged us to begin discussing among ourselves other alternatives to Rongerik Atoll (Niedenthal 2001: 48).

In total, more than \$20 billion was spent on the nuclear weapons testing at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls. However, the annual budget of the Trust Territory averaged around just \$5 million with little being put toward economic development of the territory (Niedenthal 2001: 123-124). In response to the UN Trusteeship Council's first visit to the region – and a decidedly critical report regarding US administrative duties – the circumstances began to improve in the summer of 1961 (Weisgall 1985). President Kennedy would go on to address the United Nation's General Assembly in 1961 and emphasised the “continuing tide of self-determination” as well as a further confirmation of “the peaceful, expeditious movement of nations from the status of colonies to the partnership of equals” (Kennedy 1961: 1).

The following two decades saw further political developments around the Trust Territory with the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) and the three Freely Associated States (FAS): Republic of Palau (ROP), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) – which includes Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae<sup>23</sup> – forming separate COFAs. Indeed, the movement of these island nations in the 1980s into free association with the US has been suggested as little more than a movement “from covert colonialism to overt dependence and military accommodation” (Weisgall 1985: 55). Consequently, one

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<sup>23</sup> Illustrated in Figure 8, map of the Federated States of Micronesia.

would be hard pressed to summarise the situation better than Marshallese Senator Ataji Balos, who once quipped: “We've got the trust, and they've got the territory” (Weisgall 1985: 55).



### 3.9 A Painful Inheritance

We know that “the Pacific Island region has been used as the First World’s nuclear weapons laboratory and intercontinental ballistic missile testing range for over fifty years. Nuclear activity—consisting of hundreds of nuclear detonations—has occurred almost continuously from 1946 to 1996, and intercontinental missile testing continues today... six islands were vaporized and fourteen others were left uninhabitable” (Kuletz 2002: 125). In addition to the well-known weapons testing, a controversy remains regarding the deliberate exposure of human populations (Marshallese and military personnel) following the Castle Bravo nuclear test at Bikini Atoll in 1954, which had an

unexpectedly high level of fallout.

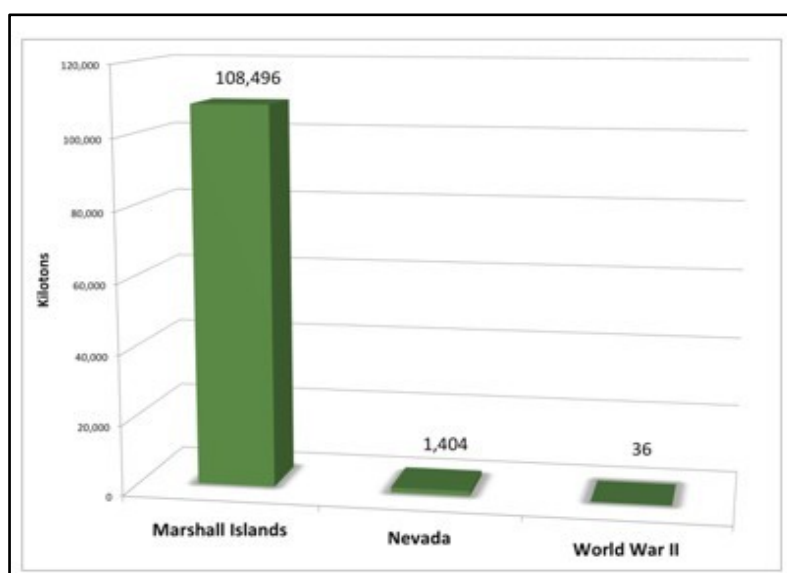


Figure 9: Chart of Nuclear Weapons Yields in the Marshall Islands, Nevada, and all of World War II (Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights 2006).

The US government continues to attest that the fallout was the result of a serious miscalculation. Putting aside if it was deliberate or not (which I appreciate is a massive aside), it is clearly known and documented that the US government studied and chose to conduct additional medical experiments on the survivors of Bravo, without ever obtaining their informed consent. This medical study became known as Project 4.1 – the *Study of Response of Human Beings exposed to Significant Beta and Gamma Radiation due to Fall-out from High-Yield Weapons*. Under the pretence of following those impacted from their initial exposure, the physicians of Project 4.1, from 1961 to 1966, conducted chromium-51 and tritium experiments on the Marshallese, exploring how the human body responded to radioisotopes (Yamada & Akiyama 2014; Conard et al. 1963).

Formerly classified correspondence among researchers, with their offhand remarks preserved for posterity, was freely available on the internet until 2004. In one letter from 1961, Dr Robert A. Conrad, the director of the medical research [project] suggested, “I suppose we could try it on the unexposed people.” Such cavalier attitudes regarding the health and well-being of Marshallese people are clear reflections of racist attitudes and a clear disregard for the medical welfare of the patients in their care (Yamada & Akiyama 2014: 85).

In 1972 the Bikinians returned to their home atoll in the follow-up to the Atomic Energy Commission, under the Johnson administration, determining the atoll was again safe for habitation (Kiste 1974; Niedenthal 2001). In the 26 years since their original departure from the atoll, much had changed with extensive environmental degradation, but still they were delighted to be home (Niedenthal 2001). This happy return was not to last. In 1975 radiologic testing was carried out that indicated elevated radioactivity in the air, soil and locally grown food. Restrictions on the intake of locally grown food were put in place, but by 1978 the entire atoll was again deemed unsafe for habitation and the Bikinians were relocated to another island once again (Niedenthal 2001). It has been argued that the “US government was fully aware of the persistent radiation on Bikini when it resettled people to their home island. Once the US government resettled the community, it treated the people’s exposure to radiation as an important scientific opportunity” (Barker 2004: 63). Regardless if there were those in

the US government and military fully aware of the true nature of the situation on Bikini or not, the prolonged delay in response and relocation of the Bikinians is deeply concerning and reflects gross negligence on the parts of the US government and military administrators (Johnson 2009).

From more recent academic medical studies we know that the physiological and medical history of those exposed to nuclear testing, let alone the staggering yield amounts in Figure 9, is indeed a painful one. It should be noted that no single individual's health can conclusively be attributed to nuclear fallout as health is composed of a great many factors, including physical environment, nutrition, socio-economic levels, education, gender, access to health services and so on. However, the facts are these: we know that cervical cancer is the primary cause of death from cancer for women in Chuuk, FSM (Yamada & Pobutsky 2009), and "cervical cancer mortality in Marshallese women is sixty times higher than in the United States, male liver cancer rates thirty times US levels, breast and gastrointestinal cancer rates five times the US rate, and lung cancer threefold higher" (Blair 2014: 1). Furthermore, a 2004 National Cancer Institute study surmised that the nuclear tests would have likely resulted in 532 radiation-related cases of cancer among the 13,940 Marshallese alive in the 1950s and originally exposed in the nuclear fallout (National Cancer Institute 2004). Perhaps most poignant and painful of all the radiation illnesses studied among the Marshallese is the horrifying phenomenon of "jellyfish babies" where pregnancies result in births with severe abnormalities – "some babies that were born resembled bunches of grapes" – and stillbirths (Barker 2004, Dibblin 1988, Keever 2004, Wypijewski 2004). Consequently, "[r]esearch on health effects of exposure to radiation from nuclear weapons involved gross violations of human rights of people of the Marshall Islands... [a]s a matter of social justice, in order to ensure the human right to health, the federal government should extend Medicaid eligibility to all Micronesian people from the Compact of Free Association nations" (Yamada & Akiyama 2014: 83).

The critical shortage of adequate general healthcare facilities, let alone specialist centres for a range of medical conditions including diabetes and cancer, is drawing many from Micronesia to the US. This is corroborated in a 2010 survey of 2,522

Micronesians in Hawai'i with the most frequently cited reason for migrating being healthcare (35%), followed closely by education (33%) and employment opportunities (22%) (Riklon 2010: 7-12). Yet, the COFA migrants find themselves caught in a terrible form of structural violence, or a wilful institutional catch-22, wherein as they are not US citizens and technically non-immigrants, they do not qualify for many federal programmes, such as Medicaid and Social Security. This means many COFA migrants are not able to access full healthcare and support services in the US. The very medical care many need most desperately, and the exact reason many have travelled thousands of miles across the Pacific in the first place, has been denied or truncated at times.

In the last two decades there has been a revolving door when it comes to full healthcare and support services access for COFA migrants. For example, under Hawai'i Governor Linda Lingle's administration in 2010 COFA migrants were removed from Medicaid healthcare access. This was later overturned in court over the denial of equal protection of the laws (i.e. the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution) and in 2014, under Governor Neil Abercrombie, Hawai'i spent \$163 million on COFA support in the form of social services, education and healthcare, while simultaneously receiving only \$11 million a year in "Compact-Impact Aid" from the federal government (Blair 2014). Expanded federal funding is desperately needed and political leaders in Hawai'i and Guam have pursued funding, including introducing the Compact Impact Aid Act of 2015 to Congress, with few results. All things considered, it is unsurprising, though no less troubling, that there seems to be little political will in Congress to increase aid or indeed discuss the extension of COFA past 2023, when it is currently set to end.

The advent of more reasonably priced health insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act, more commonly known as Obamacare, has opened up healthcare to many, and in 2017 there has been a push to enrol as many COFA migrants living in the US as possible in the programme (Blair 2017). Yet, the concurrent political climate in the Republican-controlled Congress surrounding Obamacare, and the Trump administration's ongoing efforts to repeal it, make Obamacare's future, as well as millions of Americans' access to healthcare, uncertain. It is vital to note the lack of any real concern at the highest levels of US government, as typified by Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, whose concern in the 1970s over Micronesia consisted of the

following: “There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?” (Hickel 1971: 208.). These callous sentiments all too often reflect the US government’s regard, under various presidents, for those in desperate situations and in places that are perceived as far off, whether the crisis be a result of nuclear fallout, extreme weather events, war, climate change or, closer to home (perhaps even just down the street), the escalating homeless crisis.



### **3.10 Dry Our Tears of Sorrow with Dollar Bills**

“We’ve learned to dry our tears of sorrow with dollar bills. But money never takes the place of Bikini,” reflected Lore Kessibuki, a noted storyteller and former resident of Bikini Atoll in conversation with a *New York Times* journalist in the late 1970s (Niedenthal 2001: 42). The COFA nations currently receive ~ \$200 million in direct aid from the federal government in exchange for strategic access to the ~1.7 million nautical miles of Micronesian ocean (Blair 2014). These waters account for the “majority of the trade and energy commodities transiting through Asia. With approximately one-third of the global trade and nearly 50 percent of energy commerce passing through the region, it’s understandable why the US security interests maintain visibility on FSM” (Matelski 2016: 1). Another fact that is especially concerning is that the COFA funding is currently slated to end in 2023. If the federal funding were to stop it is safe to surmise that COFA nations’ economies which are mainly structured around

this aid<sup>24</sup> would be thrown into chaos resulting in deeper levels of poverty (Cook & Kirkpatrick 1998: 845-855).

Although several national and international tribunals have determined that the US government's negligence did indeed violate the human rights of the Bikinians, they have never received just compensation. "On March 5, 2001, the Nuclear Claims Tribunal of the Marshall Islands awarded the Bikinians a total of \$563,315,500 on top of all the compensation paid by the US to the Bikinians prior to 2001" (Niedenthal 2001: 124). Regrettably the tribunal remains underfunded and so the awarded financial compensation remains unpaid to the Bikinians.

Consider too that "a comparison with the US testing in Nevada (and subsequent compensation programme) reveals that despite facing much higher levels of exposure and contamination, the Marshallese have actually been compensated at a lower rate... in comparison to their American counterparts" (Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights 2006: 14). Furthermore, "the average payment to an American victim was \$63,500 as compared to \$34,556 to Marshall Islanders, despite the explosive yield at the Marshall Islands being ninety-three times greater than the combined yield of all the tests conducted in Nevada" (as seen in Figure 9; Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights 2006: 14). Estimates of the area affected within Micronesia indicated that the total area size could be on a magnitude of as much as four times greater than the area in Nevada (Johnson 2009).

Micronesians and Marshallese have come in greater numbers to the US than those from Palau or Guam in greater Micronesia, in part because both Palau and Guam have stronger economies. Shifting from macroeconomics to microeconomics, the various and important contributions Micronesians and Marshallese make to Hawai'i's economy is often ignored in the media and public discourse. "Little has been mentioned about Micronesians' varied contributions to Hawai'i's economy. Direct economic contributions are estimated to be \$50 million annually-in generated income, state

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<sup>24</sup> This is following the US government's inference in and breakdown of indigenous subsistence economies (Sutoris 2011).



income tax, expenditures, and compact impact assistance” (Falgout 2012: 195). Beyond the purely economic contributions, citizens of FSM serve in the US military in great numbers, with one study noting a service rate “at approximately double per capita rate of American citizens” (Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice Policy 2011: 8). Poignantly, many Micronesians, despite not being full citizens, have made the ultimate sacrifice for the US, as more FSM soldiers have perished in the line of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan per capita than those of any US state.



Figure 10: A staff member with the Institute for Human Services Men’s Shelter and US Army Staff Sgt. Gaelen Lowers, speak with a homeless veteran during the Soldier for Life Veteran outreach programme in Honolulu, June 2013. The 2017 midyear point-in-time count found 449 veterans homeless on O’ahu, up 9% from 413 in 2016 (Partners in Care: Oahu’s Continuum of Care 2017:1). Image courtesy of Sgt. Tiffany Fudge.

While a great many citizens of Hawai'i proudly call themselves "mixed plates" with a tendency to think we are past racism in Hawai'i, and that we are evolved and free of such prejudices, this is regrettably untrue. Discrimination, racism, prejudice, racially motivated vandalism and hate crimes are all present in Hawai'i and focused on Micronesians (Perrone 2017). Racism takes subtler forms as well, such as the denial of a rental or job application or a general feeling of not being welcome in a public place, which are not as easily measured or reported. For example, in my own visits to the Kaka'ako Waterfront Park homeless encampment in 2015 and 2016 I noted self-imposed segregation of the Micronesians. The encampment was home to dozens of Micronesians, most of whom clustered their shelters together and were separated from the local homeless (Gard 2015, np). It was a community within a community, an island on an island in the most isolated archipelago in the world.

As increasing numbers of COFA migrants, especially those from more rural areas, make their way to Hawai'i and US mainland urban centres looking for work, largely owing to struggling economies and climate-change-impacted natural resources at home, many find themselves unprepared for urban life. But, despite facing immense challenges in accessing housing, healthcare and education, all the while overcoming prejudice, COFA migrants are meeting with hard-won success. As Asterio Takesy, Ambassador to the US from FSM, points out, "our citizens are 90% employed, the ones that are not employed are either taking care of kids or are in school. We are trying our best...and I am seeing an upward mobility" (Blair 2017). However, given the extreme levels of income inequality in the US presently, I am left wondering if real upward mobility is a thing of the past? (Inequality.org 2017).



### 3.11 Knowing the Past, Shaping the Future

In *The Value of Hawai'i – Knowing the Past, Shaping the Future*, Trisha Kehaulani Watson wisely notes that “addressing homelessness is not about rehabilitating individuals, it is about rehabilitating our community” (Watson 2010: 131). This of course is far easier said than done, sadly, given the lack of political will in adequately dealing with the homeless crisis at the highest levels of government and the troubling levels of ever-rising income inequality.

While there was some positive change in the most recent homeless point-in-time count undertaken in May 2017, which reflects a 14% decrease in familial homelessness on O‘ahu, the overall trend is one of increased homelessness (Partners in Care: Oahu’s Continuum of Care 2017: 1). This trend is likely to continue considering the Trump administration’s current plans to cut some \$6 billion from HUD in 2018 alone (Affordable Housing Online 2017), and the ever-increasing and deeply troubling rates of income inequality in the US, as illustrated in Figure 11.

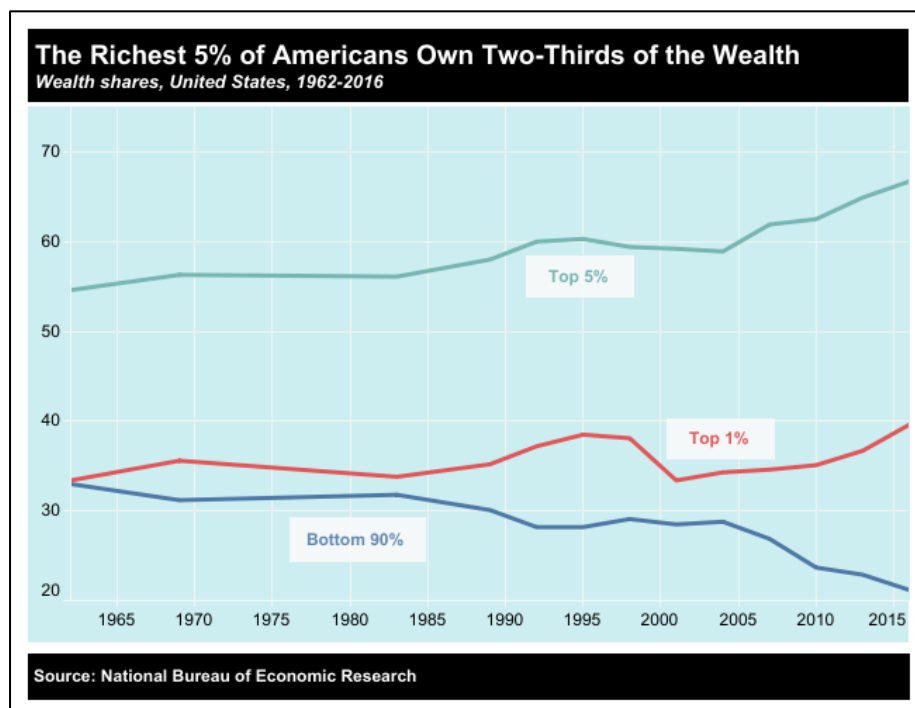


Figure 11: The top 1% of America’s income earners have more than doubled their share of the nation’s income since the middle of the 20th century. Image courtesy of Inequality.org with data sourced from the US National Bureau of Economic Research.

The high levels of income inequality are especially alarming, as more and more wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, and the fairness of political institutions and economic systems for the many are at risk of being significantly undermined. The *Island of Hope* reminds us that the negative effects of economic globalisation are “an expression of the emerging global system of domination, of one ideology, one political system, one international coalition of the wealthy and the powerful” (World Council of Churches 2001: 5).



### **3.12 Hope, Homelessness & Hawai‘i**

For much of the peoples of the prehistoric Pacific, the very soil of their islands was home. Hawaiians of pre-contact Hawai‘i “made do in nature’s many elements. [Their] intimate relationship with the Earth Mother, *Papahānaumoku*, and Sky Father, *Wākea*, granted us exemplary knowledge about navigating the land and utilizing it to survive. To sleep out on the land was to sleep in the land in the bosom of our Mother, and since the dawn of time, humans have known no greater or more comforting rest than when lying against their Mother’s heart” (Watson 2010: 125). The author goes on to clarify that “[t]he land was not only our home, it was our refuge, inscribed in

one of the greatest and best laws of the Hawaiian Kingdom, *Māmalahoe Kānāwai*” (the Law of the Splintered Paddle in Hawaiian):

*E nā kānaka,*

O my people,

*E mālama ‘oukou i ke akua*

Honor thy god;

*A e mālama ho‘i ke kanaka nui a me kanaka iki;*

Respect the rights of all men  
great and humble;

*E hele ka ‘elemakule, ka luahine, a me ke kama*

See to it that our elderly, our  
women, and our children

*A moe i ke ala*

Lie down to sleep by the  
roadside

*‘A‘ohe mea nāna e ho‘opilikia.*

Without fear of harm.

*Hewa nō, make.*

Disobey, and die.

– King Kamehameha I (Watson 2010: 125)

The need for safety and refuge in Hawai‘i is the same now as in prehistory. However, contemporary Hawai‘i is not as it once was, and in this remade Hawai‘i, the world of downtown Honolulu holds very little sense of a shared, relational future. Through the lens of the *Island of Hope* it is right to say that “[h]omelessness in Hawai‘i is the community’s failing, not the failing of individuals. I refuse to believe that any individual ever needs to be, or should be, homeless. The answers are to be found in people, not policies. We must be better. We must restore Hawai‘i as a home for all people – a place where we are inclusive, not exclusive” (Watson 2010: 126).

An inclusive society is built on community and a sense of an entangled, shared future. As one African-American civil rights activist explained it, [t]he working definition of community is the experience of wholeness, of completeness, of inner togetherness, of integration, and wherever this is experienced, at whatever level of life, at that particular level there is community... [T]he individual human being experiences in his organism this definition of community. As if the organism, all the parts, had committed to the memory a sense of the whole, a social sense which is the overtone of the biological inner- continuity. Now this is the heritage.” (Thurman [1961] 2005: 36-37).

For Hawaiians, like most Pacific Islanders, family and kinship is crucially important. Kinship and the understanding of familial relations encompass much more than the nuclear family, as “[k]inship in Hawai‘i extends far beyond the immediate biological family. The terminology of kinship must be thought of against the background of the whole community of kith and kin, including in-law, and adoptive categories” (Handy & Pukui [1958] 1988: 40). This broader understanding of kinship and community in Hawai‘i is known as the *kauhale* (understood as “homeland” in Hawaiian) system in Hawaiian. Throughout the contact period, with the devastating impacts of foreign diseases, the *kauhale* system of community was severely impacted to the point of collapse. As one Hawaiian scholar notes, “over the last 250 years, foreigners systemically dismantled this sense of wholeness within the Hawaiian Islands. The result is the fragmented community we find ourselves amongst today” (Watson 2010: 126). These sentiments resonate with the *Island of Hope* and the advent of economic globalisation, such as in the following passage where “people in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalization. The rate of unemployed

people, poor people, street children is also growing in highly industrialized countries...” (World Council of Churches 2001: 10). For all people of conscience, the *Island of Hope* calls for them to “oppose the ethics of economic globalization and join others who do the same. This choice is costly. It requires us to share what we have. It demands of us a commitment to give up what binds us to the system that exploits and enslaves our sisters and brothers. It leads into conflict and perhaps into persecution. Making this choice is a question of life and death” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). Clearly, it is a matter of life and death for many COFA migrants who are seeking a better life in Hawai‘i and the US mainland.



In conclusion, this chapter explores the entangled historic factors of environmental degradation and economic globalisation actively pushing and pulling many Pacific Islanders to and from their homes in Micronesia. In this chapter, I sought to transition from a “macro” perspective of globalisation to a “micro” and personalised understanding of the harsh socioeconomic realities on the ground for those in “Paradise”. It would be challenging to understand this case study without also considering the troubling and still rising rate of income inequality, amid the ongoing homeless crisis in Hawai‘i and the US mainland. It is my hope that this chapter adds in some small way to the burgeoning body of understanding on this complex issue, and the hard-won successes of all those impacted by the Compact of Free Association (COFA).

Lastly, I call on the US government to properly support all those that continue to live with the painful legacy of nuclear colonialism in the Pacific. Inspired by the tenets of the *Island of Hope*, there are a number of measures that would assist all those in danger of displacement and slipping (further) into precarious situations in Hawai‘i or the US mainland:

- Urge Congress to rethink the 2018 \$6 billion cuts to HUD;
- Advocate for greater power and increased federal funding to states working to support the chronically mentally ill;
- Press Congress to legislate the tenets of the Compact Impact Aid Act of 2015;
- Create tax credits for those caring for elderly parents and family members in their home; and
- Push for full access to Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for all COFA migrants as well as establishing adequate medical facilities in Micronesia.







Figure 12: Suva Point experiencing an unusually high tide following Tropical Cyclone Winston, February 2016. Image courtesy of the author.

## **PART IV: NAVIGATING A CHANGING SEA**

*Developed countries have created a global crisis based on a flawed system of values. There is no reason we should be forced to accept a solution informed by that same system.*

—Marlene Moses, Nauru Ambassador to the United Nations, 2009

This chapter explores extreme weather and climate change adaptation measures in Fiji following Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016, as well as my experiences both as a survivor of Winston and volunteer aid-relief worker living in Suva, the Fijian capital, at the time of the superstorm. Notably, Winston struck five days after Fiji became the first nation to ratify the United Nations climate deal agreed to by 195 nations in Paris in December 2015. And as the *Island of Hope* notes, “[t]he Pacific islands are especially vulnerable. They contribute only 0.6% to the greenhouse gas emissions, yet they will sink, if people in other parts of the world and especially in the most polluting countries in the North do not act. The US government, however, and corporations active in mining, car production and the energy sector, work actively against even modest measures to decrease greenhouse gas emissions proposed by the Kyoto protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” (World Council of Churches 2001: 11).

Many Pacific Island nations have been vital in leading the global dialogue on climate change. In preparation for the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) Paris summit in 2015, Fijian Prime Minister Bainimarama stressed that “unless the world acts decisively in the coming weeks to begin addressing the greatest challenge of our age, then the Pacific, as we know it, is doomed.” This is undoubtedly true and a global response is desperately needed, but equally true is the importance for this reaction to be a cultural and faith-integrated process across multiple scales, ranging from village and community to regional in scope.

When Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji on 20 February 2016, it became the strongest storm recorded in the Southern Hemisphere and the second strongest storm ever recorded in the world. Forty-four people died as a result of the superstorm, and the ongoing governmental recovery plans have estimated nearly three billion Fijian dollars (£1.1 billion) in damages. Fijian Prime Minister Bainimarama, in a national address following Winston, stated that “almost no part of our nation has been left unscarred”. One critical aspect of extreme weather and climate change response in the Pacific is migration. However, the impacts of migration, which include organising, adaptation and urban poverty, are a further source of vulnerability. Consequently human mobility in response to extreme weather and climate change is far more complex than originally addressed and is deserving of deeper consideration.



#### **4.1 The Realities of Climate Change**

The end of the 21st century is likely to experience a “1 meter sea level rise— [it] seems unavoidable... although there may be an increase of 2 meters” given the current levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Carr et al. 2014: 37). For an island that is only a few meters above sea level at high tide this is an exceedingly troubling projection. Beyond this, storms can cause damaging “king tides.” Still, sea level rises, high tides and flooding are not the only means by which climate change is damaging and endangering life in Oceania.

Tropical cyclones are projected to have greater intensity. Both droughts and floods may occur more frequently. The droughts lead to shortages of drinking water and impair food supplies; the floods damage infrastructure, contaminate freshwater and agricultural soils with saltwater, and may compel evacuation. Both can damage local ecosystems and reduce biodiversity. The absorption of carbon dioxide by the oceans is leading to ocean acidification, which harms marine organisms with shells and the coral reefs that are critical physical barriers for atoll islands, serving as protection against storm surges and high waves (Gerrard & Wannier 2014: 4).

In early February 2016, in the two weeks preceding Tropical Cyclone Winston, thousands of dead fish washed up on the Coral Coast of Fiji, which stretches from Suva to Sigatoka. The “fish kills” were a result of the unusually high ocean temperatures of ~35 Celsius in the shallower reef areas along the Coral Coast, according to one local marine ecologist (Gard 2016, np). The Ministry of Fisheries and Forests issued a warning “advis[ing] people living in villages along the Korolevu to Namada coastline to refrain from eating any dead fish along their coasts as they may be harmful to human health.” This warning was issued following some villagers falling ill and then being hospitalised after eating the fish (Gard 2016, np). The Fijian Government instructed citizens to gather the dead fish into piles and burn them, then bury or dispose of the remains. In visiting the beach in the days after the fish kills, the stench of dead fish remained and I had a feeling of having passed into a post- apocalyptic world. Having spent most of my life near the Pacific Ocean, witnessing it being unable to support the marine life within it was one of the most surreal and deeply disturbing experiences of not just my fieldwork, but my life.

Coinciding with the heat wave and fish kills was a coral bleaching event where the thermal stress of the high oceanic temperatures caused the coral to lose its symbiotic algae that live inside its calcium carbonate skeleton. Consequently, the coral turned pale, leaving ghostly white sections of reef. Local experts cited the “calm seas and clear skies [as causes for the]... seawater temps on the nearshore reefs to have heated up to 35-36C+ during low tides, causing corals in these nearshore lagoon areas to become severely bleached over the last week and many have already died. Corals in deeper areas are now also showing signs of heat stress as mean seawater temperature starts to

exceed 30C” (Gard 2016, np). It was a troubling time and as I spoke with friends, colleagues at USP and locals at the beach regarding the fish kills and bleaching event, everyone agreed that they had never seen anything like it before.



#### **4.2 Tropical Cyclone Winston**

I recall, while immersed in the flickering candlelight, staring at the ceiling and wondering if the roof would peel away in the incredible winds of Tropical Cyclone Winston. On this particular Saturday night in Suva the tall palm trees in the backyard crashed to the ground in the devastating winds and it felt as if the world was attempting to invert itself, as Winston generated gusts of wind recorded at 200 MPH and average wind speeds of 143 MPH (Westcott 2016). Winston was a Category 5 superstorm of unprecedented strength and destruction. Forty-four people were killed, buildings were stripped to their foundations and towns were reduced to rubble, leaving many in abject poverty.

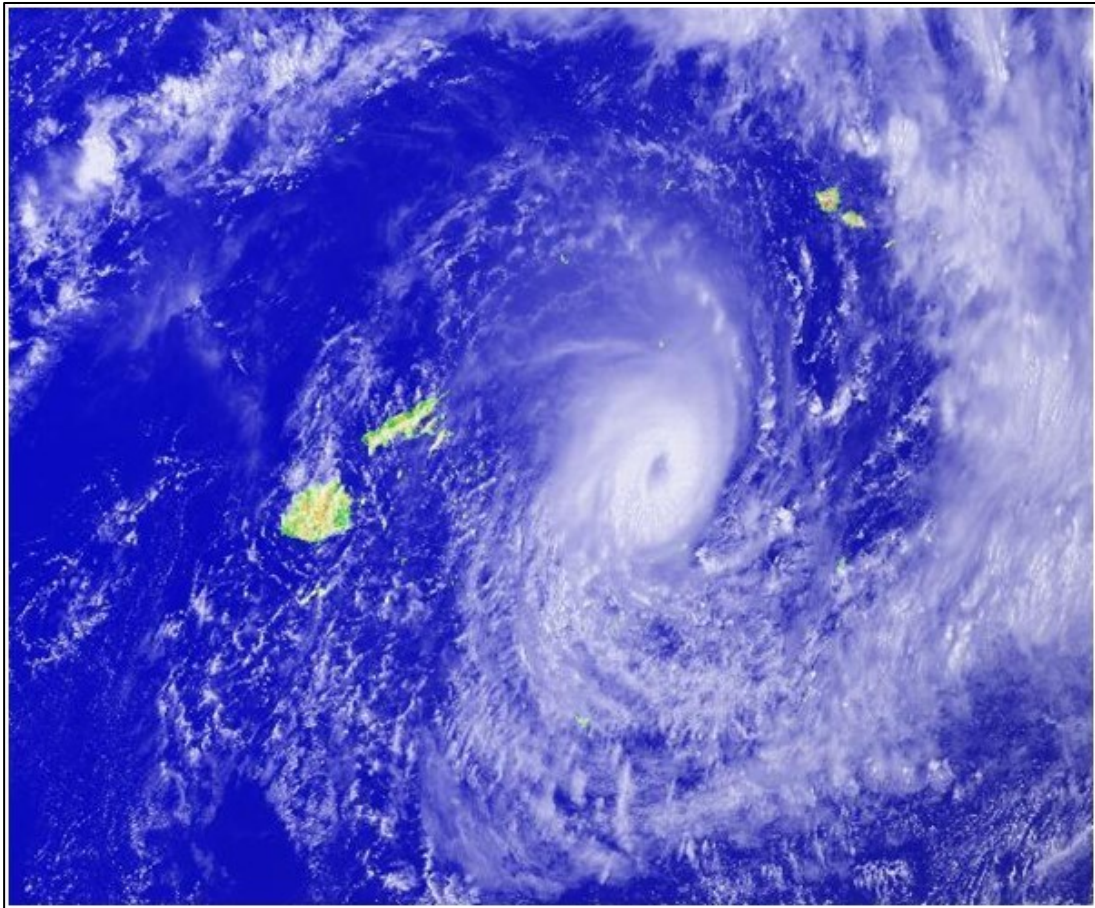


Figure 13: Tropical Cyclone Winston at 02:00 UTC moving toward Fiji on 19 February 2016. Image courtesy of the National Institute of Informatics.

For months after Winston, families struggled to procure basic necessities, such as food and clean drinking water for their children (Bolatagici 2015). My own neighbourhood of Suva Point was without electricity for one week after Winston. This situation was nothing when compared to rural communities that faced far worse difficulties, going weeks and months without electricity and running water (Round 2016). It is clear that this is the beginning of what is to come for the Pacific.



### **4.3 Rising Tides in a Changing Climate**

Globally more than 600 million people, or 8.6% of the world's population, live in coastal zones (i.e. generally considered to be zero to ten metres elevation), which comprises only 2% of the world's land area. Of these 600 million people more than half, ~ 360 million, live in urban centres. This amounts to 13% of the world's urban population living in the highest-risk zones of sea level rise (McGranahan et al. 2007: 17-20). Pacific Island nations, most especially the low-lying atolls, are presently experiencing the adverse effects of human-induced climate change. Pacific Islands and their urban centres are vulnerable to the extreme weather events, such as Tropical Cyclone Winston.

The dense urban and economic centres of the Pacific are located in coastal zones and are furthermore vulnerable to rising sea levels and other extreme events. Beyond tropical cyclones, these include floods, tidal surges, droughts and landslides. I would also like to note that sea level rise is commonly misunderstood as being a uniform process. However, it is a far more complex process with various factors, such as the formation of the Earth's crust, ocean temperature and salinity reflecting regional variability, as well as the gravitational and rotational changes driven by the ice-ocean mass exchange that all influence and exacerbate sea level in regional areas (Farrell & Clark 1976; Mitrovica et al. 2001:1026-1029; Mitrovica et al. 2009: 753). Ultimately, this results in uneven rises and falls in overall sea level rise, with some areas experiencing an amplified rise, especially in the equatorial region (Milne et al. 2009).

While these processes have occurred for millennia, humans have affected sea level rise via direct means of manipulation of ground and surface water flows and indirectly through greenhouse gas emissions that increase global temperatures (NOAA 2016). These warmer temperatures impact the mass and volume of seawater through increased terrestrial ice melt and warmed ocean temperatures, both of which compound rising global sea levels.



#### 4.4 Staying Afloat in Fiji's Economy

Tropical Cyclone Winston severely impacted the lives and livelihoods of 540,000 Fijians or 62% of the population of the island nation. An estimated 30,369 houses or 22% of households were destroyed or damaged, forcing some 131,000 people into temporary shelter. Further destruction of infrastructure included damage to 495 schools and 88 health facilities (Asian Development Bank 2016).

The estimated damage from the cyclone was £1.14 billion or nearly three billion Fijian dollars, roughly 31% of the gross domestic product (GDP). With such an extensive loss and the Fijian economy being based primarily on agriculture and tourism, it was unsurprising that the Fijian government issued a month-long state of emergency (SOE) (World Bank 2016). Early economic assessments indicated agriculture, especially sugar, which comprised one third of industry activities, was seriously impacted (Fiji High Commission 2011). Fiji Sugar Corporation Chairman, Abdul Khan, specified, “[o]ur all up losses in the sugar cane industry add up to 163.35 million Fijian dollars. The loss of workers’ livelihoods is 53.3 million Fijian dollars” (Qalubau 2016). Unsurprisingly the tourism industry suffered high cancellation rates of 30–40% immediately following Tropical Cyclone Winston, as well (Dateline Pacific 2016). However, with recovery and reconstruction activities continuing and the Government prioritising spending to address the emergency needs, the Fijian economy was anticipated to grow by 3.6% in 2017 and 3.2% in 2018 (Asian Development Bank 2016).

National statistics indicate that 31% of Fiji’s population lived below the poverty line prior to the devastating effects of Winston (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017). However, in urban areas, such as Suva, the statistics show a drop to 19% of the population, when compared with 43% in rural areas living below the poverty line. Yet, the statistics belie a more complex reality. I argue that indigenous Fijian or *I Taukei* lifeways be



contemplated and reflected upon when seeking to understand poverty in Fiji pre- and post-Winston.

Traditionally, Fijian land is held communally and all members of a village have access to support and feed themselves from various horticultural and maritime practices (Ryle 2010). This more nuanced consideration can be summed up by Papuan New Guinean writer Martyn Namorong (Namorong 2016) as he discusses traditional Melanesian life and ideas of poverty:

The environment was the source of their physical, spiritual and intellectual nourishment. While individuals had certain property rights, such as the ownership of personal artifacts of value, the land was owned communally... Is it poverty, if a rural [man] only wears astanget and does not own a laptop?

... How do you define poverty and wealth in this present time when Melanesians live in two realities? We live in the reality of our ancestral land and in the reality of the modern State that exists on that land.

Statistics indicate that there are higher rates of poverty in rural areas; however, those communities are generally better placed to support themselves through traditional subsistence practices. Urban poverty is a pressing concern as individuals and families living in urban centres often lack the means to support themselves. Contributing to this are multiple factors, such as lack of education, skills training, and the harsh fact that 65% of those in full-time employment in Fiji are earning wages below the basic needs poverty line (Barr 2014). Subsequently, the international aid community's understandings and forward movement, especially around climate-change-related economic and mobility policies, must take into account the pressing reality of Oceanian contemporary urban life, such as in Fiji.



#### 4.5 After the Storm – On-the-ground Response

In the days and weeks following Tropical Cyclone Winston I volunteered with Fiji Red Cross and also joined a dozen colleagues from the University of the South Pacific (USP) in gathering and purchasing relief supplies for the fishing community on Qoma Island located to the northeast of Suva. The island was especially heavily hit and after gathering supplies we made the two-hour trip to the island via car and then boat. As we arrived via motor boat I stared at the palm trees. Their fronds looked to be permanently bent, as if as if they were experiencing the catastrophe still.



Figure 14: The remains of a family home on Qoma Island. Image courtesy of the author.

After we had unloaded the relief supplies from the boats, which ranged from freshly baked bread, to plastic sheeting, to a football for the children to play with, we were formally greeted by the village leaders on the concrete foundational slab that had once

served as a community gathering space and village hall. We sat in a large circle and were invited to partake in a *kava* ceremony. *Kava*, also known as *yaqona* in Fiji, is a mild narcotic beverage known for its calming effects and is made from combining the root of a shrub, *Piper methysticum*, with water; *kava* is used in a range of political, religious and social practices throughout the Pacific, though I noted even the large *kava* bowl had been damaged with one leg broken off and was propped up with a plastic cup.

Following our formal greeting, I wandered through the community, spoke with the villagers and listened to their Tropical Cyclone Winston or “the big monster” survival stories. It was clear that the devastation was near-total on Qoma. Many homes and buildings had been stripped to the concrete slabs, while other buildings, such as the Methodist Church which had been the largest building on the island, had a roof that had collapsed and was unsafe to enter. As I surveyed the damage and spoke with villagers, I was especially touched by the story of one family who had sheltered together in the bathroom, which had partial concrete walls and thus was stronger than the rest of their home. As I spoke with the middle-aged father he shared with me that “God kept us safe; he is always with us” and it was the love of his family that had enabled him to face the future (Gard 2016, np). Drawing upon faith and family, he was already in the process of rebuilding his family’s former home.

After we had spent the afternoon on Qoma, my USP colleagues and I piled back into the boats we arrived in for the short ride back to Viti Levu. On the drive back to Suva, we discussed ways in which the villagers on Qoma, and all of Fiji could be made more resilient for future extreme weather events. In previous fieldwork on Qoma, one colleague had encouraged the villagers to plant mangroves as a means of stabilising their shoreline. Indeed, much of their shoreline was in far better shape than that belonging to their neighbours, though the villagers’ commercial seaweed gardens had been destroyed. They asked for assistance in securing more seaweed starters to replant their aqua gardens, as well as seeds for their terrestrial gardens.

The need to rebuild and replant is a powerful one for those who live through the trauma of an extreme weather event, and the need to positively plan for the future is vital. It occurred to me how markedly different sharing seeds and plant starts with a community was when compared to more typical Western aid deployment. This style of aid often provides multiple rounds of canned Western food items for immediate consumption. Though immediate needs are met, the future is not considered in the same way, nor does it offer hope the same way that planting seeds in a garden encourages the gardener to imagine a bountiful harvest. This also reminded me of an observation my colleague Lucie Hazelgrove-Planel, who survived Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu the previous year, noted: “Does the food aid package as a whole unintentionally include a concept of adaptation to climate change which promotes a Western diet, lifestyle and economy?” (Hazelgrove-Planel 2015: 21). The deeper connotations of this insight are well worth considering, especially around issues of physical and mental health, as Fiji continues reconstruction and future resiliency measures and other Pacific Islands will undoubtedly face similar natural disasters in the future.

In a more immediate sense, help that comes as standard international aid isn't always necessarily helpful. As was expanded upon by Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi,<sup>25</sup> a survivor of Tropical Cyclones Pam and Winston, and political analyst based in Port Vila, Vanuatu:

When a disaster happens...they send second hand clothes, they send electrical kitchen appliances to places that don't have electricity. They send high heels, to people who get them and don't have anything to do with them. After the disaster in both Vanuatu and Fiji there was food past its use by date that came. These gifts sit in containers on wharves, and we are not too sure what to do with them. Sometimes we have to sell the clothes, to get some

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<sup>25</sup> Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi was kind enough to speak with me and share his thoughts on economic globalisation, extreme weather and slow-onslaught climate change response, and the role of the Church in cultivating a home-grown response based in Pacific resilience over the course of several days while I was in Vanuatu in May of 2016.

money for the things we need (Anglican Communion News Service 2016).

In the days and weeks following Winston there were further issues around organising and deployment of relief assets. When speaking with friends, colleagues and community member working in relief deployment, there were rumours of Fijian military personnel consuming and selling supplies intended for Winston victims. It was also known that representatives of the Fijian government had distributed faulty information associated with the national declaration of emergency and aid request. More specifically, some of the bank account numbers for donations had been altered so that funds were being syphoned into third-party accounts. Though this information is anecdotal, I do not doubt it. Some of these corruption charges were briefly acknowledged by the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in a press release in March (Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) 2016). In relation to this, it is significant that the freedom of the academic and artistic communities, and the freedom of the press in relation to issues of investigative journalism and critiques of the government in Fiji, remain suppressed with censorship and full blackouts (Simmons 2016), as was the case in the 2014 elections (Agence-France Presse 2014). Little wonder then that I observed those seeking assistance beyond their own families and trusted community members, to be most comfortable going to their local churches, parishes and faith-based organisations.



## **4.6 The Buoyancy of Faith & the Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Humanitarian Aid**

In the past, religion and the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) have often been ignored by those involved with humanitarian aid and development. Sociologist Kurt Alan ver Beek went so far as to call it “a development taboo” after completing a study that explored the paucity of research on the roles of religious organisations in development (Alan ver Beek 2000: 31). In the past 20 years the academic stigma associated with FBOs has lessened, and now the academic community and the wider international aid community have begun to explore in greater depth the role FBOs play in humanitarian aid (Peterson 2010).

Though FBOs have a long history of humanitarian works, ranging from Christian hospitals to Hindu meal programmes, a recent proliferation in religious charities, NGOs and other associations has resulted. Importantly, the World Bank has estimated that as high as 50% of all health and educational services globally are provided by FBOs (James 2009: 7). The World Bank’s 2000 study entitled *Voices of the Poor* concluded that many people in lower socioeconomic conditions demonstrated more confidence in religious organisations than in secular, governmental or military governing bodies (Narayan, D. et al. 2000).

Presently there are some 33,500 international NGOs in the world with 3,183 being granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the United Nations (UN) (Boli & Brewington 2007: 207). Embedded within Article 71, Chapter X of the UN’s Charter, authority is given to “make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence” (United Nations Charter 1945). This is advantageous as many FBOs often have deeper histories than other NGOs, which can in turn strengthen their connections with local communities.



Figure 15: A Bible is open on the arm of a sofa in a living room with one wall on Qoma Island in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston. The image is courtesy of the author.

In times of crises, FBOs are able to build on established foundations of trust and expedite response in emergency situations. I observed this first-hand while in Fiji, in particular while engaging with the congregation of Saint Luke's Anglican Church and the aid they provided to the wider community following Winston. For example, the members and Church staff collected supplies and donations – both local and international – and redistributed the goods and money to those in rural communities most heavily impacted by Tropical Cyclone Winston. Still, it should be noted that past relationships and pre-established sympathies may impact the FBO's abilities to engage with the wider community in an unbiased and unpolitical manner given the competitive dynamics of religious organisations in some Pacific communities<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, an increased integration of FBOs at all levels of extreme weather and climate change response may prove advantageous, as they have much to offer the communities in which they are embedded, as well as the wider humanitarian community.



#### **4.7 Strings Attached – the Politics of Humanitarian Aid**

The international response to Cyclone Winston was significant not just for the pressing humanitarian relief aspects, but also the political influence exerted by various nations vying for Fiji's affections. Australia committed \$35 million dollars in assistance to recovery, including supplies and health services to over 200,000 people.

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<sup>26</sup> For a more in-depth consideration of the competitive dynamics between churches in Fiji, see Newland 2006: 383-385.



The HMAS *Canberra* and over 1,000 Australian Defence Force and humanitarian personnel were deployed with 341 tonnes of relief supplies including 30,000 litres of drinking water; 10,000 hygiene kits; and 7,000 shelter kits; as well as undertaking repairs to seven primary schools, two medical centres and one secondary school (Australian Government 2016).

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with the support of Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, committed to supporting Fiji in a long-term recovery plan. Australia has prominently highlighted their humanitarian efforts with a spokesperson noting, "Australia has a longstanding friendship with Fiji and we acted swiftly to support the Fiji Government response to the devastation of Tropical Cyclone Winston. Australia remains the largest donor to the response effort and we will continue to be there for the long-haul to help Fiji recover" (Wyeth 2016: 1).

Political tensions following the Fijian coups in 2000, and again in 2006, and the slow governmental response to restoring democracy, have led to a strained relationship with the governments of Australia and New Zealand. In 2014, Australia lifted the last restrictions on the Fijian government. Fiji was also reinstated in 2014 into both the Commonwealth and Pacific Island Forum. These shifts likely enabled Australia and New Zealand to provide substantial aid following Winston and politically reengage with the Fijian government after an approximate 15-year gap. Further, the then New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, described the aid thusly: "New Zealand's response to Cyclone Winston is shaping up to be our largest humanitarian response in the Pacific" (New Zealand Herald 2016: 1). Disheartening though it may be to consider the political opportunities that natural disasters yield, especially with an eye to the future of climate change in the Pacific, the international aid Fiji received following Winston is deserving of critical consideration.

Shortly after my arrival in Fiji in January 2016, 20 shipping containers containing weapons arrived in the Port of Suva from Russia. It seemed likely that this shipment was intended for use by Fijian peacekeeping forces, given that 45 Fijian UN peacekeepers were captured by the al-Nusra Front in Syria in 2014 (ABC/Reuters

2014). It has been suggested that the peacekeepers' capture was partially related to obsolete military equipment and technology (Madaus 2016: 1). The recent donation of arms to Fiji from Russia was likely noted by the international community, as it may well signify a greater geopolitical realignment by Fiji. Significantly, while still operating under coup sanctions by the international community, the Prime Minister Bainimarama fostered a "Look North" political mind-set within Fiji and turned to other nations, such as Russia and China, less concerned with the state of democracy and human rights in Fiji. Political commentators have also noted that Russia is currently using "chequebook diplomacy" in the Pacific. For example, in 2008, Nauru, Vanuatu and Tuvalu recognised Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia following a Russian invasion and border reconfiguring, and following international aid support from Russia (Madaus 2016: 1). And again in 2014, these nations along with Fiji and Tonga recognised the annexation of Crimea (Madaus 2016: 1).

While Australia, New Zealand and the European Union continue to dominate aid relief in the South Pacific, Russia and China's continuing contributions are notably expanding. While discussing the Fijian economy one afternoon, a Fijian friend specifically referred to the foreign powers' presence in the Pacific Islands as "sharks in the water." It does seem as though China and Russia are taking bites out of a great many Pacific Islands.



## 4.8 Building a Better Tomorrow

In an increasingly warming world, frequently cited figures estimate that by 2050 the number of people forced to move primarily because of climate change will range between 200 million (Myers 2005) and 1 billion (Christian Aid 2007). Much of the literature to date on mobility in response to environmental degradation often assumes that migrants are a monolithic group making similar responses to environmental crises and moving to international destinations as yet unknown. This assumption is out of step with a more nuanced view of migration; a view in which migration is a vital adaptive strategy in response to environmental and socioeconomic mutability. I argue that we need to work toward a more comprehensive view of mobility and migration, and that understanding the duration, destination and composition of migration flows is essential in achieving a deeper knowledge of their impact on both origin and destination communities. If policy and practice can successfully support individuals and communities on the move then surely a deeper understanding of mobility and migration is the place to start (Tacoli 2009; United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 2016).

Extreme weather events, such as Tropical Cyclone Winston, force people to leave their homes as they are no longer habitable. Yet we know most displaced people return to their homes as soon as possible, seeking to literally rebuild their lives (Perch-Nielsen & Bättig 2005; Raleigh et al. 2008; Global Environmental Change and Human Security 2008; Piguet 2008). Increasing levels of mobility in response to extreme weather events are likely, though the mobility may be cyclical in nature. For example, Fijian colleagues and friends who lived in Suva returned to their home villages following Winston to assist in the rebuilding of rural communities with whom they had familial connections. In turn, villagers sent women and children in to Suva to stay while the village repairs were carried out. This demographic transfer was based in health and safety concerns, as the capital had electricity, clean water and fresh food long before the villages. However, within weeks of Winston, many Fijians returned to the altered normality of a post-Winston world within their rural or urban spheres respectively. Ultimately circular mobility is a part of the solution to climate change and extreme weather events, not the problem.

Assumptions are often put forward that transnational migration is the major form of migration, when this is simply not true. Consider that in conversations with Fijian friends, colleagues, relief workers and community members, not a single person mentioned emigrating after Winston, even in lengthy discussions on climate change and the bleak future many Pacific Islanders face in regard to increasing extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Though, it should be noted that Fiji does have advantageous highland topography when compared with other lower-lying atoll nations. Nevertheless, contradictory perspectives are put forward by American and European politicians around concerns of migrants from low-income nations arriving on wealthy shores in “swarm(s)” (Elgot 2016: 1) is oversimplified and incomplete, not to mention based in xenophobia and racism (Yakushko 2009), especially when it comes to issues of environmental change (Tacoli 2009). Adaptation to limited-range and cyclical mobility within national boundaries reduces the necessity to move great distances away from impacted zones and enables those affected by extreme weather disruptions to return more quickly to their homes and communities.

According to the International Institute for Environment and Development “there is growing evidence suggesting that mobility, in conjunction with income diversification, is an important strategy to reduce vulnerability to environmental and non-environmental risks—including economic shocks and social marginalization” (Tacoli 2009: 514). Development and policy that support mobility and differentiate the variability within migration is an important step forward. For example, the European Union (EU) funded Pacific Climate Change and Migration (PCCM) project, in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has been recently implemented by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and is positively supporting Pacific Island nations such as Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu, which are subject to troubling future sea inundation (UNESCAP 2015B: 1-2). The primary goals of the PCCM which commenced in 2014 are twofold:

- 1.) To increase protection of individuals and communities that are vulnerable to climate change displacement and migration through targeted national and regional policies; and

2.) To increase labour mobility opportunities for Pacific Islanders, through well-managed labour migrations schemes (UNESCAP 2015B: 2).

The former President of Kiribati, Anote Tong, speaking about the realities of slow-onset climate change and the PCCM project, noted: “We are providing options for those that want to migrate now as a matter of choice, to do so as worthwhile citizens. We are providing training [and] up-skilling so that they can apply to different countries to seek migration status on merit” (Singh 2015: 1). This training provides greater opportunities for those that will have increasingly limited choices as their atoll island nations face increased sea-level rises and saltwater intrusion in their island’s freshwater lenses.

Attempting to predict human actions and agency in the advent of climate change and extreme weather events is tremendously challenging. It can be useful to extrapolate migration patterns from previous natural disasters, as a means of making analogous parallels. Studies (McLeman & Smit 2004; Massey et al. 2007; Morrissey 2009) of migration patterns within wealthier, social-networked and better-educated groups point to this group remaining mostly unaffected by environmental degradation, while younger groups with fewer dependents and possessions are increasingly likely to permanently resettle in new areas than those with land ownership in the impacted zones. However, this should not be confused with impoverished groups who have limited ability to invest in migration and are therefore less likely to employ mobility as an adaptation strategy. For example, “Approximately 10,000 people across Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu attempted to migrate between 2005 and 2015 but were unable to do so, primarily due to financial constraints” (UNESCAP 2015B:2, UNESCAP 2015A). For those too poor to migrate who are dealing with both short-term environmental degradation and slow-onset climate change, the ability to survive will be determined by the accessibility of local opportunities for income diversification. Simultaneously, those individuals and groups who are socioeconomically and politically marginalised will be least able to compete for the increasingly sought-after resources and opportunities.



#### **4.9 The Anxious Edge of Now**

As the *Island of Hope* notes, “[g]lobal warming is a threat to communities all around the world... the Pacific Islands are especially vulnerable,” and in grappling with that, this chapter seeks to give a first-hand account of the impacts of extreme weather in Fiji, the roles faith-based organisations (FBOs) can play in community resilience schemes, and further elucidate the role of mobility within short- and long-term climate change situations (World Council of Churches 2001: 11). Next, analogous parallels on the predicted impacts of climate change suggest that environmental degradation does not necessarily result in migration. Where mobility does occur, as with extreme weather events, it is often shorter in duration and distance, similar to what I experienced and observed in Fiji. My findings mirror the behaviour of previous researched episodes of drought in other regions of the world.

Still, in regard to slow-onset climate change and rising sea levels, considerably less is known. The total populations required to move in the Pacific – most notably citizens of Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands – will greatly depend on adaptation and resiliency initiatives and the support and planning of wider international strategies (UNESCAP 2015A, 2015B). In the future, there is an opportunity to research in greater depth the correlations between environment, cyclical mobility and income diversification within national boundaries in the Pacific, as these types of trends and movement tend to go undocumented in national census data (Tacoli 2009).

Finally, predicting the impact of climate change on population distribution and movement is fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely the political

alarmist claims of a wave of millions of environmental refugees will occur. Critically a paradigm shift is needed when understanding migration as it is a part of the solution, not the problem. Mobility and the promise of returning home generates hope for many who just survived the trauma of a natural disaster or extreme weather event. Many migration management policies try to control the volume and types of population movement, when they would be wise in supporting more nuanced migration patterns that result from extreme weather events, economic growth or crisis, while simultaneously integrating appropriate cultural and faith precepts in an attempt to support individuals, families and communities on the move.



## **PART V: TURNING THE TIDE**

*Everything that's affecting our island is going to be affecting the rest of the world.*

— Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, Micronesian Spoken Word Artist & Activist, 2014

### **5.1 Thinking like an Island**

In this chapter I argue that Pacific Islanders are actively embodying the *Island of Hope* through embracing, celebrating and, indeed, “thinking like an island”. Through working from this island mindset, one that is markedly different than a continental world view, Pacific Islanders are actively creating hope through nature-focused art, performance and environmental campaigning. As you may recall, “the ethics of the Island of Hope [are] based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). Further, I argue that it is through this “thinking like an island” while holding a “deep respect for the whole community of life” that the Pacific Climate Warriors, voyagers with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and artists with Oceania Dance Theatre and Pasifika Voices at the University of the South Pacific are manifesting hope on a global scale (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). By denying others’ notions of the new world order of economic globalisation, and the narrative of helpless “sinking islands” and “climate change refugees” these activists and artists are generating hope and providing alternative models to neoliberal economic globalisation for their island communities, the wider Pacific, and the world.



In the following sections of this chapter I seek to analyse the images, messages and meanings selected by Pacific Island creators, performers and campaigners to imbue their performances and campaigns with *mana*<sup>27</sup>, whether those performances be in the theatre or on the street. Firstly, I explore the public performances and enacted “thinking like an island” environmental campaigning with 350.org Hawai‘i’s ‘Aina Warriors in Honolulu prior to COP 21 in Paris in 2015, and throughout the concurrent Polynesian Voyaging Society’s *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* of 2014-2018. Secondly, I consider the Pacific Climate Warriors’ campaign in the Oceania, focusing on major events from 2014–2017, from the peaceful blockade of the Newcastle Coal Port of Australia in 2014 to the lignite coal mine shutdown associated with COP 23 near Bonn, Germany, in 2017, led by the youth-led grassroots organisation of 350 Pacific. Thirdly, I analyse *Moana: The Rising of the Seas*, a multimedia dramatic theatrical production which premiered in 2013 at the Japan- Pacific Theatre at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva, Fiji, and made its United Kingdom premiere at the Byre Theatre in St Andrews, Scotland, in 2015.



While in Honolulu from September 2015 through to January 2016 I attended weekly environmental campaign meetings associated with 350.org Hawai‘i. Many members of 350.org were interested in and discussing *Thinking Like an Island: Navigating a Sustainable Future in Hawai‘i*, which was published by the University of Hawai‘i Press at the time I was conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Hawai‘i (Chirico 2015). The book made an impact in environmental activist circles at that time and many

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<sup>27</sup> As previously mentioned *mana* means “power(ful)” in many Pacific languages; it is understood that *mana* has the power to animate, manifest and bring things to fruition.

environmental campaigners or “*ania warriors*” (“warriors of the land” in Hawaiian) as they refer to themselves, shared the authors’ perspective that “there are lessons to be learned and shared from our experiences living on an island... Given that Earth is more like an island than it is a continent, who better to learn from than those who have successfully lived on islands for thousands of years?... Lessons that might serve our island Earth community as much as it will our community in Hawai‘i” (Chirico 2015: ix). Thus “thinking like an island” resonates with the *Island of Hope*, which “is life-centred...The land, the sea and the people are integral parts of one entity” (World Council of Churches 2001: 7).

With members of 350.org Hawai‘i, I also participated in the Honolulu Global Climate March on Sunday, 29 November 2015 in solidarity with millions of other marches carried out around the world in anticipation of the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris in December. The Honolulu branch of 350.org had several hundred members, though I observed that most did not attend regular meetings.

Relatedly in 2008, 350.org was founded by Bill McKibben, an American environmentalist and writer, who authored *The End of Nature*, one of the first publications on climate change for the public (350.org 2018; McKibben 1989). In naming the organisation 350.org, the group calls attention to the safe concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is 350 parts per million. Troublingly, the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere for 2017 peaked at 410 parts per million according to scientific recordings carried out at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’s Mauna Loa Observatory on Hawai‘i Island (Kahn 2017). A decade ago now, one of 350.org’s first global actions was linked to the International Day of Climate Action in 2009, followed by actions for Global Work Party in 2010, and Moving Planet in 2011 (350.org 2018). From these actions 350.org burgeoned into a global collaboration of community-focused groups, acting locally for global goals. While conducting fieldwork in Hawai‘i, Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as in the US and UK, I have contributed to 350.org campaigns across all locations, especially with the Global Divestment Movement (GDM) campaign.



Figure 16. The central message of the Global Divest Movement (GDM), Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, 2016. Image courtesy of the author.

The GDM has become one of the fastest-growing political campaigns in human history, surpassing similar campaigns against the tobacco industry and apartheid in South Africa. The goal of the GDM is for fossil fuel reserves to stay in the ground, as this is the only way to avoid catastrophic climate change and dangerous levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Environmental campaigners launched the fossil fuel divestment campaign in the early 2010s with the hopes of generating a stigma around fossil fuel corporations (Gard 2018). The GDM argument focuses on curbing fossil fuel consumption by removing financial investments from those most responsible for extracting fossil fuels from the ground. Creating a significant enough stigma, campaigners argue, brings increased awareness and in turn popular pressure to the political agenda around issues of climate change and the unfolding climate crises.



Figures 17 & 18. The Global Divestment Movement's thoughts in chalk at a peaceful protest outside of the Australia New Zealand (ANZ) Bank, Downtown Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, 2016. Images courtesy of the author.



The last five years especially have seen impressive traction for the Global Divestment Movement with investment funds, public institutions and individuals collectively divesting some US\$6.15 trillion (£4.6 trillion) in fossil fuel assets (Gard 2018: 1). Prestigious institutions such as the British Medical Association and the WCC – representing more than half a billion Christians globally – have furthered the reach of the campaign. More recently a London-based think tank has pointed to the economic implications of a looming “carbon bubble” with fossil fuels becoming an increasingly bad investment as the true costs of environmental and societal damage from fossil fuel burning have not yet been adjusted for or negated (Carbon Tracker 2011, 2017, 2018).



Figure 19. “CLOSED” is spelled in large letters across the front of the Australia New Zealand (ANZ) Bank in downtown Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, 2016. Image courtesy of the author.

As you may know, 350.org is also the organisation that supports the Pacific Climate Warriors – a network of young Pacific Islanders who are united under the umbrella of 350 Pacific, and which is active in 15 of the Pacific Island nations empowering young people to “take action to protect and enrich our islands, cultures, and oceans” (Pacific 350.org 2018). The 350.org organisation calls on the international community to continue to support and stand with the Pacific Warriors literally, such as at COP 23 in Bonn, Germany, and metaphorically through petitions, local actions and artistic climate change response events, all of which will be expanded upon in sections in the following sections of this chapter.

Consequently, if we are truly to “think like an island” around issues of the climate crises then “sustainability requires us to view the world and all its processes from a systems perspective: everything is interconnected, and everything is interdependent” (Chirico 2015: 2). These sentiments call to mind Bernard Narokobi’s notes in *The Melanesian Way—A Total Cosmic Vision of Life*, wherein he states “as Melanesians, we are a spiritual people. Even before Christians came onto our shores, we felt and knew the forces of a source greater than ourselves. That was our divine power, the Melanesian way” (Narokobi 1980: 14). Similarly, the Bible verse John 17:11, also referenced in the *Island of Hope*, speaks to the cosmic vision of life in Jesus Christ so “that all may be one, as we are one.”

In the remaining sections of this chapter I explore the imagery and meanings of the messages being created by Pacific Island performers and activists instilling their work with purpose, and ultimately hope. Now, let us consider the Pacific Warriors’ campaigns in the Oceania spanning from 2014–2017. We will start with the peaceful blockade of the Newcastle Coal Port of Australia in 2014, and we’ll conclude with the lignite coal mine shutdown associated with COP 23 near Bonn, Germany, in 2017. Both of these peaceful and highly successful major campaign events garnered international media and general public attention.



## 5.2 Pacific Climate Warriors

Since the 1990s, Pacific Island leaders have called for reduced global fossil fuel dependency<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions still rising each year, Pacific communities are acutely aware of the costs of inaction. To advance action, in 2011–12 a group of young Pacific Islanders from a number of different Pacific Island nations formed a network called 350 Pacific (also known as the Pacific Climate Warriors), which is linked to the global non-governmental climate action organisation 350.org, discussed in the previous section.

The active focus that animates much of what 350 Pacific does is the desire to pressure world leaders and businesses to reduce their GHG emissions to maintain a safe level of 350 parts per million (ppm) atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide. To achieve these ends, Pacific Climate Warriors are dedicated to finding ways to keep coal and gas in the ground. As Mikaele Maiava, a Pacific Climate Warrior from Tokelau, explains, “people all around the world are recognising this and taking action to challenge the power of the fossil fuel industry. For us Pacific Islanders, there is nothing more urgent or necessary” (350 Pacific.org 2014a: 1).



Figure 20. The author with the Pacific Climate Warriors at the start of the People's Climate March prior to the start of the 23rd Conference of the Parties (COP), Bonn, Germany. November 2017. Image courtesy of the author.

<sup>28</sup> As the *Island of Hope* notes, “[t]he devastating social effects are accompanied by destruction of the natural environment. The United States, the single largest polluter alone accounts for 25% of the world’s total carbon emissions. Global warming is a threat to communities all around the world” (World Council of Churches 2001: 11).

Maiva continues, “It is very important for us to take direct actions against climate change because it is threatening our lives and our islands. Our land is the most valuable treasure in our lives and the impacts of climate change will destroy it. We don’t want this to happen and we will not allow it to happen” (350 Pacific.org 2014A: 1). Another Pacific Climate Warrior from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Milañ Loeak, shared, “I’ve seen my people and my islands suffer the impacts of climate change through droughts and floods from high tides... None of us who have felt the impacts of climate change should continue to suffer through them just to fulfill others’ interests. We don’t deserve to lose our Islands and we will do what we must to ensure we won’t (350.org Pacific 2014a: 1). Through these statements, participant observation at numerous environmental campaign events, and in casual conversations I shared with various Pacific Climate Warriors at the Peoples’ Climate Summit at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change international negotiations – also known as the UN’s Conference of the Parties (COP) – in Bonn, Germany in 2017<sup>29</sup>, I do not doubt the warriors’ determination and absolute conviction to advocate for the rights of their Pacific Island homelands and cultures.

The Pacific Climate Warriors call for environmental justice, especially as it relates to GHG emissions, and the troubling truth that the Pacific Island nations have historically and concurrently emitted negligible GHG emissions when compared to the historic emissions of the UK’s industrial revolution, or the US and China’s concurrent massive GHG emissions. Conversely, the island nations, such as Tuvalu and Kiribati in the Pacific, along with the Maldives and the Bahamas, will be among the hardest impacted by the consequences of the increasing global GHG emissions. It is through peaceful direct actions taken by the Pacific Climate Warriors, in collaborative partnership with 350.org environmental campaigners across the Pacific and around the world that the warriors are calling for change urgently. It is through annual participation at high-profile events, such as the UN’s COP, that the Pacific Climate Warriors continue to passionately advocate for “system change, not climate change”. The warriors’

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<sup>29</sup> The Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bonn, Germany, in 2017 was the 23rd COP of its kind, with the first COP occurring in Berlin, German, in 1995. The next COP, which will be the 25th COP, will take place in Santiago, Chile, in December 2019.

sentiments echo the *Island of Hope's* call for change, such as in the following passage from the *Island of Hope*:

The project of economic globalization pretends with religious fervour that economic growth, free flow of capital and the allocation of resources and goods through the market mechanism serve the common good. But the market as an instrument is amoral and does not automatically lead to more justice and quality of life. It rather aggravates existing inequality and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12).

At this point I would like to momentarily return to the Austronesian Expansion that I discussed in Chapter One's *Pacific Origins & the Austronesian Expansion* section. In the prehistory of the Pacific the navigator-cum-warrior<sup>30</sup> armed with a paddle that also doubled as a club, was the physical embodiment of both *mana* and patrilineal land claims to the islands of the Pacific as they were settled. It follows then that the “warrior” as an icon and a model worthy of emulation has served to empower those seeking to reclaim sovereignty in the Pacific in the postcolonial time period. Once more the “warrior” is serving to inspire Pacific Islanders-cum-Pacific Climate Warriors and Hawaiian citizens-cum-‘Aina Warriors in the “war” against climate change.

One would be remiss in assuming that the “warrior” of the Pacific climate change movement is a masculine figure. The majority of 350.org's Pacific Climate Warrior promotional media materials feature female warriors. One well-regarded Pacific Climate Warrior is the Honolulu-raised Marshallese poet, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, who

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<sup>30</sup> For more on the Pacific warrior see *Lua: Art of the Hawaiian Warrior* by Richard Kekumuikawaioke Paglinawan, published by Bishop Museum Press in 2005.



gained international acclaim following a poetry recital and speech at the opening ceremony of the United Nations Climate Summit in New York City in September 2014.



Figure 21. Representatives of the Friends of the Earth Scotland with the Pacific Climate Warriors at the People's Climate Summit, Bonn, Germany. November 2017. Image courtesy of the author.

I also had the good fortune of meeting Jetnil-Kijiner while attending COP 23 in Bonn, Germany, in 2017. I have admired her poetry and environmental activism for several years and when I saw her sitting alone at the People's Climate Summit<sup>31</sup>, I could not resist introducing myself and sitting with her. After a few minutes of shared commiserations on jet lag and the deep exhaustion that sets in when you travel from the Pacific to Europe, and idle chat about which neighbourhoods we had previously lived in while in Honolulu, Jetnil-Kijiner disclosed that it had been a “hard year” with the death of Tony deBrum<sup>32</sup> on August 22, 2017. Tony deBrum was a beloved leader of

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<sup>31</sup> The People's Climate Summit was an event that occurred immediately prior to, and in parallel with, the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Bonn, Germany, in 2017. The People's Climate Summit provided a space for campaigner networking and information exchange that inspired and strengthened work on issues related to climate justice. Evening panels occurred on 3rd, 4th and 5th November, addressing the following topics: “Global Climate Justice”, “Leave it in the ground: how to go on with decarbonization,” and “Who is making the transition?” On the 6th and 7th of November over 50 workshops grappled with how to achieve a social-ecological transition, and considered struggles for climate justice from around the world. I was grateful for the opportunity to attend the People's Climate Summit and COP, while representing Scotland as part of the Friends of the Earth delegation.

<sup>32</sup> Tony deBrum was a Marshallese governmental minister and civil rights campaigner, who worked tirelessly to organise the Marshall Islands' independence from the US in 1979. He was an outspoken leader on climate change issues. For example in December 2015 he represented the Marshall Islands at COP 21 in Paris. At that COP he succeeded in forming a new coalition known as the “High Ambition Coalition”, which brought together 90 developed nations and developing nations with a conference goal of holding global temperatures to a 1.5°C increase.

the Marshall Islands and it was clear Jetnil-Kijiner felt his death keenly. She went on to explain that in the days prior to his death he had spoken with Jetnil-Kijiner and urged her to continue to work on behalf of the Marshallese people and Marshall Islands, to fight for a future and take up his mantle, as it were. It was clear as we spoke that deBrum's mantle hung heavy on Jetnil-Kijiner's shoulders; yet, she wore it well.



Figures 22, 23, 24 and 25. In a dawn ceremony with various representatives from frontline and indigenous communities from across the Pacific, the Pacific Climate Warriors hold a traditional Fijian *kava* ceremony in the German village of Manheim. Images courtesy of the author. See the subsection *Ende Gelände – Here and No Further* for additional details.

Writing several years earlier on her blog Jetnil-Kijiner described her grief regarding climate change in the Marshall Islands, thusly:

I've never allowed myself, even when I wrote *Tell Them* even after *Dear Matafele Peinam*<sup>33</sup>—I never really allowed myself to feel the full emotion of what losing our islands would mean [until] I sat outside in the sun and I wept. My cries were more than my own cries—I felt my ancestors sitting beside me, weeping with me. I heard their echoes, reverberating in my sorrow. I felt their/our anguish over our islands, over the next few generations. I felt the shuffling feet of our future generations—floating adrift, the hopelessness and inability to go on... I have foreseen the loss and the sorrow that awaits our children and grandchildren, because I have fallen into that abyss ... I will drown the wound in salt. I will do anything to save my islands (Jetnil-Kijiner 2015, np).

In speaking with Jetnil-Kijiner and the other Pacific Climate Warriors, such as Brianna Fruean and Litia Malikano Maiava, warriors from Samoa and Tokelau respectfully, at the People's Climate Summit, I did not doubt their willingness to do anything to save their islands. A few minutes after I had spoken with Jetnil-Kijiner, Litia Malikano Maiava took the stage and addressed the summit. Maiava gave an energizing speech where she shared:

Although we are the smallest island in the world, we are the first nation in the world to rely on 100% renewables. If we don't do something about this, we, Tokelau will be the first nation to go under water. We don't want that. That is why, I, a Tokelau Climate Warrior, am here to fight—to deliver my message to the world: The

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<sup>33</sup> Both *Tell Them* and *Dear Matafele Peinam* are poems featured in *Moana—The Rising of the Sea* theatrical production.

Pacific is here in Bonn because we are not drowning, we are fighting!” (Gard 2017, np).



Figure 26: The Pacific Climate Warriors with *tapa sei* flower that reads “End Fossil Fuels Now” The Warriors are standing on the edge of the open-pit lignite mine of Hambach, Germany.

Another well-known Pacific Climate Warrior is Milañ Loeak, daughter of the former President of the Marshall Islands, Christopher Loeak. Loeak is often featured in promotional media for 350.org and the Pacific Climate Warriors with powerful imagery and messages such as: “Join me in the fight to keep my home above water,” “Indigenous voices must be prioritized,” and “I’m here to bring a human face to climate change” (350.org 2014A). In a blog post Loeak explains that:

My passion for climate action is stemmed from the love I have for my family, my fellow Marshallese people, our islands and our culture... most importantly, share your stories with the children. Teach them. Educate them. People say we need to create a better world for our children, but I believe we should be creating better

children for the world that God has already blessed us with. Through our children, we will see the fruition of our work (Loeak 2015, np).

Through these narratives there is a fierce determination that also embraces feminine style and associations, such as being aesthetically appealing, ideas of “home” and emotional connections to family and ancestors (McNamara & Farbotko 2017). The “warrior” of the Pacific Climate Warriors is a powerful iconic figure, which is less about brute masculine power and violence, and much more about strength, collaboration and finding a peaceful path to the envisioned future described in the *Island of Hope*.



### **5.3 We Are Not Drowning, We Are Fighting**

As discussed previously in Chapter 3.1 *The Realities of Climate Change*, the outlook for the Pacific is concerning, with one estimate suggesting that by the year 2050 a forced migration of some 75 million people within the Asia-Pacific region will be necessary as Pacific Island nations and territories struggle to respond to the growing pressures of climate change (Oxfam 2009: 9). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has also published increasingly more dire reports (IPCC 2014A, 2014B, 2018) highlighting the everyday realities of the climate crisis in the Pacific Islands.

In section 3.8 *Building a Better Tomorrow*, I touched upon the dramatic strategies of Kiribati's President Anote Tong (who served as President from 2003–2016) to tackle a daunting future for many *I-Kiribati*. At the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, in Honolulu, at an East-West Center presentation, held in March of 2014, President Tong described his ongoing efforts in a speech entitled *The Impacts of Climate Change on Kiribati and the Pacific Islands Region: Risk and Resilience*. Through worker education and skill training schemes, in addition to early relocation, the Kiribati government is focusing its energies on preparation and execution, in the hopes that these processes will enable migrants to immigrate with dignity and purpose (Singh 2015, Tong 2014, UNESCAP 2015B). One designated relocation area for the *I-Kiribati* is the Fijian Island of Vanua Levu, where an area of land was purchased for US\$ 8.77 million (Griggs 2014). As previous chapters have discussed, the contemporary Pacific is entangled in complex constructs, issues, ideas and relationships that tie the past – both prehistoric and colonial – with the globalised postcolonial present and envisioned future. For the peoples of the Pacific a literal future that consists of rising sea levels, compromised island habitats and the forced migration of entire communities, is no future at all. This dilemma is eloquently put forward in the powerful theatrical production *Moana: The Rising of the Seas*:

For anyone who has lived or lives on an island surrounded by the deep, beautiful, but dangerous sea, the thought that one day your island will be submerged under water and everyone and everything on it will disappear is a possibility too cruel to contemplate. And yet, this is happening in several islands in Oceania already, with more Islanders contemplating their imminent demise and what that would mean to them as a people, a culture, even a nation. How does it feel to be forced by the rising sea to abandon everything you hold dear and to flee to another country to live among strangers? If you had to choose, would you go, or would you stay? “I would rather die here. Without this piece of land that defines who I am, I am nothing.” Is that what you would say? And should you choose to flee, how will you fare? Can you live with the knowledge that you have abandoned the “bones of your ancestors”? (ECOPAS 2013).

*Moana: The Rising of the Seas*, written by University of Hawai'i professor and playwright Vilsoni Hereniko, grapples with loss, identity and connections with the past through an intense blend of contemporary choreography, traditional dance, poetry, music and song. Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's poetry is centrally featured in *Moana: The Rising of the Seas*, with *Tell Them* addressing the deep anxiety that Pacific Islanders feel at the prospect of losing their islands – “We are nothing without our islands.”

## **Tell Them**

I prepared the package  
for my friends in the states the dangling earrings woven  
into half moons black pearls glinting  
like an eye in a storm of tight spirals the baskets  
sturdy, also woven  
brown cowry shells shiny intricate mandalas  
shaped by calloused fingers

Inside the basket a message:

*Wear these earrings to parties*

*to your classes and meetings*

*to the grocery store, the corner store and while riding the bus*

*Store jewelry, incense, copper coins and curling letters like this one*

*in this basket and when others ask you where you got this*

*you tell them*

*they're from the Marshall Islands*

*show them where it is on a map tell them we are a proud people toasted dark brown  
as the carved ribs of a tree stump*

*tell them we are descendants*

*of the finest navigators in the world tell them our islands were dropped from a basket  
carried by a giant*

*tell them we are the hollow hulls of canoes as fast as the wind slicing through the  
pacific sea we are wood shavings*

*and drying pandanus leaves and sticky bwiros at kemems*

*tell them we are sweet harmonies*

*of grandmothers mothers aunties and sisters songs late into night  
tell them we are whispered prayers the breath of God  
a crown of fushia flowers encircling  
aunty mary's white sea foam hair  
tell them we are styrofoam cups of koolaid red waiting patiently for the ilomij  
tell them we are papaya golden sunsets bleeding  
into a glittering open sea we are skies uncluttered  
majestic in their sweeping landscape we are the ocean  
terrifying and regal in its power  
tell them we are dusty rubber slippers swiped  
from concrete doorsteps we are the ripped seams  
and the broken door handles of taxis  
we are sweaty hands shaking another sweaty hand in heat tell them  
we are days  
and nights hotter  
than anything you can imagine  
tell them we are little girls with braids cartwheeling beneath the rain  
we are shards of broken beer bottles  
burrowed beneath fine white sand we are children flinging  
like rubber bands  
across a road clogged with chugging cars tell them  
we only have one road  
and after all this  
tell them about the water how we have seen it rising flooding across our cemeteries  
gushing over the sea walls and crashing against our homes  
tell them what it's like  
to see the entire ocean level with the land tell them  
we are afraid  
tell them we don't know  
of the politics or the science  
but tell them we see  
what is in our own backyard tell them that some of us*



*are old fishermen who believe that God made us a promise  
some of us  
are more skeptical of God  
but most importantly tell them  
we don't want to leave  
we've never wanted to leave  
and that we  
are nothing without our islands.*

In June 2015, through the creative energies of the Oceania Dance Theatre and the Pasifika Voices, both based at the University of the South Pacific's Oceania Centre for the Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies, and an EU-funded research collaboration on the social dimensions of climate change facilitated by the University of St Andrews' Centre for Pacific Studies, the University was pleased to host a *Moana* troupe of artists, performers, storytellers, musicians and vocalists for a collection of performances and educational workshops in St Andrews. The artistic performances and workshops explored the social dimensions and personal impacts of climate change. These events were enhanced by a pop-up Oceania artefact and media exhibition which explored Pacific cosmology and worldview across all three main floors of the Byre Theatre. My contributions to this ambitious and rewarding project included curating the pop-up exhibition in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, Museum of the University of St Andrews (MUSA), and National Museums Scotland, as well as organising a series of outreach events, school and dance workshops and a research symposium. Taken together, these events and cosmological underpinnings produced a holistic experience where the Byre was recreated as a Pacific island home for the artists. The ground floor of the Byre Theatre became an embodiment of the ocean teeming with sea creates – the *moana* – on the ground floor, *wao kanaka* – the realm of people and everyday life, and the second floor – *wao lani*<sup>34</sup>– the realm of the gods.

The performers later shared with me while I was in Fiji during my fieldwork that this recreated island home inspired their most powerful performances of the 2015 *Moana*

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<sup>34</sup> This phrase literally translates as “heavenly nature” in Hawaiian and is the home of the gods.

European tour. We might also consider too that this further underscored the core message of *Moana* – the inseparability of people and the land, which gave them life, while also embodying the *Island of Hope* – “which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings” (World Council of Churches 2006: 5). The Pacific cosmological connections of the *Moana* experience also made manifest the entangled nature of relationships between European and Pacific communities whose life choices are intimately entwined, as is our collective global future.

*Moana* offers an in-depth consideration of the loss of land and forced migration from island heritage sites for Pacific peoples, which in turn would precipitate a vast rupture in the lives and identities of these Pacific Island communities and the region as a whole (Steiner 2015). The Reverend Tafue Lusama from Tuvalu, sums it up thusly in the film *Land: is Life*, where “[l]and is equivalent to life in our culture. [If] you lose your land, you are dead. So, if your land has been gradually eroded by the sea, you are literally seeing or looking at your life being eaten away. It tells you that you won’t be able to give life to your children and your grandchildren” (Dekker 2011: 1).

It is this stark reality of vulnerability that is often mentioned in climate change literature on the Pacific (Gerrard et al. 2014, Janif et al. 2016, McMillen et al. 2014, Mimura 1999, Nunn 2013, Pelling & Uitto 2001). Still, a vital consideration that often goes ignored is that island habitat vulnerability does not negate strength, nor does it relegate Pacific Islanders to little more than helpless bystanders ankle-deep in brackish water. While world leaders discuss, debate and obfuscate the appropriate far-reaching responses to climate change, such as at COP 23, which I further discuss in Chapter Five – *Another World is Possible* – Pacific Islanders have already begun to experience the impacts of climate change (Gard 2017, 2018). Indeed, many communities have already started to take action, refusing to only be perceived or act as victims (Gerrard et al. 2015, Remling & Veitayaki 2016, Veitayaki & Holland 2018).

Critically, Pacific Islanders have embraced traditional Oceanian narratives and performance arts, such as dance, song, storytelling and poetry, alongside

contemporary environmental campaigning and activism to share their personal experiences of living with climate change. It is through these performances that Pacific Islanders are able to shun the often well-meaning mantle of victimhood that the wider environmental campaigning community and at times the world places upon them. Through each performative event, I argue that Pacific Islanders are dynamically and determinedly engaging with the realities of climate change in the region and globally, and through this engagement becoming warriors who are “not drowning, but fighting”; fighting for a future that is filled with hope (350.org Pacific).

At this point I would like to note that anthropologists have recently called for an “expanded notion of engagement” that merges ethnography and “public, activist, or engaged anthropology” (Osterweil 2013: 599). I have found this “expanded notion of engagement” especially helpful in working with activists associated with the above-discussed events and campaigns.

The grassroots network that stretches across the Pacific, including the ‘Aina Warriors in Hawai‘i, 350 Aotearoa in New Zealand and the international Pacific Climate Warriors, all of whom are actively defying the hegemonic narrative of “drowning islands” is of special interest in relation to the *Island of Hope* as these Pacific Islanders are the embodiment of the *Island of Hope* and its core message:

The ethics of the *Island of Hope* is based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God’s care for creation and Christ’s teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor (World Council of Churches 2001: 12).

The “warrior” is further recast as anyone who will stand beside Pacific Islander environmental activists and politicians, as “warriors” defending their home, world and future. Though it might seem counterintuitive, the warrior ideology is rooted in a

defensive and inclusive feminine solidarity that re-envisions and seeks to shape an authentic and uniquely Pacific future that is global in scope.



#### **5.4 Countering Perceptions of “Drowning” in the Pacific**

European and North American media descriptions of the Pacific, around both slow onslaught climate change and dramatic extreme weather events, are often described as “doomed” paradises, with a self-replicating narrative of “sinking” and “drowning” leaving “climate change refugees” adrift in rising tides (Connell 2018). These images and descriptions are by no means restricted to popular culture; they are also present in academia and civil society (Biermann & Boas 2008, Friends of the Earth 2007, German Watch 2014). The *Island of Hope* document refers to “sinking” at one point, as [the islands] “will sink, if people in other parts of the world and especially in the most polluting countries in the North do not act” (World Council of Churches 2001:11). Yet, these often well-meaning reductionist stereotypes of the Pacific Islands as “drowning” and “sinking” can unintentionally obstruct response and resilience in the Pacific Islands through presuming that both immediate and long-term strategic adaptive capacity is futile. On the contrary, I argue that the fragile nature of Pacific Island ecosystems and climate change vulnerability does not necessitate that Pacific Islanders are powerless and rendered helpless.

While attending the Oceanic Modernism Conference in Suva, Fiji, at the University of the South Pacific in February of 2016, one scholar's work focused on the noted academic Epeli Hau'ofa's vast contributions to Oceania scholarship and reminded all those in attendance that "smallness is a state of mind", and so too I argue is powerlessness (Hau'ofa 2008: 31). As briefly discussed in Chapter 3, in situ adaptation with approaches that embrace indigenous knowledge and practices, mobility, and income diversification seem best poised to support communities as they proactively plan for future environmental challenges. Others have rightly expressed concerns that a focus primarily based on a "drowning" narrative does not place the appropriate attention on the pressing need for global emission reductions in heavy greenhouse gas emitting nations (e.g. China, US, EU, India, Russia, Japan, and Brazil in descending order according to World Resources Institute 2017) (Farbotko & Lazrus 2012).

In the last decade the Pacific has seen a rapidly rising movement which seeks to throw off the mantle of victimhood, while embracing the science of climate change. This movement places Pacific Islanders' lived experiences as primacy and recasts "victims" as "warriors", as previously discussed, and focuses primarily on agency, resilience and collaboration. Through utilising connections and relationships, a strength of Pacific peoples – as Hau'ofa famously highlighted in the distinction between "viewing the Pacific as "islands in a far sea" and as "a sea of islands"... Focusing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships" this movement too is strengthened (Hau'ofa 2008: 31).

Pacific Island communities have a long history of adaptation and thriving in fragile ecological zones, as discussed in Chapter 2, and it is through indigenous knowledge and practices that the coping capacities and resilience of communities is well known (Bridges & McClatchey 2009, Gard 2010, Herman 2016, Hunt & Lipo 2011, McNamara & Prasad 2014). Considering the long and successful exploration and habitation of people in the Pacific, scholars are now increasingly championing the importance of indigenous knowledge and practices in combination with scientific methodologies, though I would argue that this is a false dichotomy, in that they are often one and the

same<sup>35</sup>. Consider that “with global interconnectivity and global environmental issues, of which climate change is the most important by far, the Earth is the canoe, the Earth is the island. It is not just a metaphor... It is time to promote a culture that unites science with wisdom. Otherwise, we are lost” (Herman 2014: 1). I argue that it is this promotion of a culture that unites science and wisdom that the Pacific Climate Warriors, the artists of *Moana—The Rising of the Sea* and the Polynesian Voyaging Society, through their performances, climate change campaigning and awareness raising are creating.



## 5.5 Performances, on the Street and in the Theatre

350 Pacific, which is an organisation that criss-crosses some “15 Pacific Island nations to highlight the vulnerabilities of our island countries to climate change while showcasing our strength and resilience as a people... [with the ultimate goal being to] share in our vision for the Pacific and the planet” (350 Pacific 2018). I argue that this shared vision for the Pacific and the planet is a manifestation of the ethics at the core of the *Island of Hope*. Next, while being a part of the global 350.org network that has

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<sup>35</sup> At some point while I was working at the Bishop Museum – when and how I cannot exactly say – the idea of science and culture complementing each other and at times strengthening each other – much like the double hulls of a deep sea voyaging *vaka* – entered my consciousness. I’m sure through my colleagues that this idea took hold, as it’s almost taken for granted idea now, as it’s so ingrained. The commonness of the idea now stems from creating numerous educational materials and outreach events that sought to achieve this balance between science and wisdom, as well as highlighting practices where both elements composed one whole.

more than 300 organisations internationally, 350 Pacific has active members from communities in Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, New Caledonia, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Aotearoa New Zealand and Vanuatu (350 Pacific 2018). Through acting in solidarity and using traditional performing arts and actions, such as songs or posturing dance – such as the *haka* in the Maori tradition – these campaigners/performers are creating their version or form of the *Island of Hope*. How, you might ask?

In part, it is through the overarching and often-repeated unifying mantra of the Pacific Climate Warriors – “We are not drowning. We are fighting” (350 Pacific 2018). Part of this mantra of “fighting” is the identification and image depiction of the “warrior”, which was further manifested in the Warrior Day of Action which was held on 2nd March 2013 by 350 Pacific. The Warrior Day of Action was carried out by 350 Pacific to educate and empower youth and communities throughout Oceania, and building on this event the Warriors held the Canoe Building Day of Action on 12th April 2014. This day of action focused on readying the traditional *vaka* or sea-going canoes for a journey to Australia, where the Warriors planned to deliver a powerful message to the fossil-fuel industry.

On 17th October 2014, 30 Pacific Islanders in traditional voyaging canoes accompanied by hundreds of environmental activists on shore and in various modern sea-going vessels and craft, such as kayaks and paddle boards, blockaded the Newcastle coal port along the coast of New South Wales, Australia (350 Pacific 2014). The Port of Newcastle was deliberately selected for the blockade for several reasons, one of which is that it is the largest coal port in the world, with some 90% of New South Wales ports servicing the coal industry in general, and Newcastle Port, in particular, offering a massive shipping capacity of 211 million tonnes per annum (Slezak 2017, Port of Newcastle 2018). Annual records from 2013 indicate that the Port achieved a record 150.5 million tonnes in coal exports, which is an increase of some 12.5% over 2012 (Transport for NSW 2014). In 2014, there was also an expansion plan in place to increase the capacity of the Port by 70 million tonnes (Buckley 2014). Considering the 2013 export data, the Pacific Climate Warriors and 350 Australia environmental activists hoped to successfully block the path of some 578,100 tonnes of coal that would

otherwise have moved through the Newcastle Port on 17th October (Buckley 2014). Moreover, the Day of Action, was especially designed to draw critical media attention to the role that the coal industry is playing globally in literally fuelling climate change and associated sea level rise.

Coal is considered the “dirtiest” of the fossil fuels with the Union of Concerned Scientists publishing the following statement in 2014: “Coal plants are the [US] nation’s top source of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, the primary cause of global warming” (Union of Concerned Scientists 2014). Research has also linked air pollution from coal-fired power and production plants, such as those in New South Wales, to a range of public health impacts and illnesses, such as asthma, cancer, heart and lung diseases, and neurological problems, in addition to environmental degradation associated with acid rain (Union of Concerned Scientists 2014). Growing concern and anger from the low-lying Pacific atoll nations has been heightened by the Australian Government’s noncommittal position on the issue. Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony de Brum was reported in September 2014, as indicating that:

He and the leaders of other Pacific Island nations were bewildered by what he called “backsliding” on climate change by Australia, which the region had considered to be its “big brother down south.” Probably one of the most frustrating events of the past year for Pacific islanders is Australia’s strange behaviour when it comes to climate change ... Island nations had watched with dismay not only the abolition of the carbon tax in Australia, but also the defunding of scientific advisory bodies... Pacific Island nations no longer have time to debate climate change or even to engage in dialogue about how it might be mitigated—they need immediate action. Failure to act for us would mean disappearance under the sea by the turn of the century (O’Malley 2014: 1).



Clearly then, the blockade of the Newcastle coal port was of strategic and personal importance for the Pacific Climate Warriors. On the day of the blockade Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner issued the following statement for the Pacific Climate Warriors and in solidarity with fellow environmental activists campaigning around the world:

On behalf of my Climate Warrior brothers and sisters from across Oceania, I want to challenge world leaders to put an end to the era of fossil fuels once and for all. United we will stand up to the fossil fuel industry and world leaders must join this fight in order to stand on the right side of history. With our heads raised high the people of the Pacific are not drowning, we are fighting. The biggest threat to our homes is the fossil fuel industry and we will not rest until our very existence is no longer threatened by their greed and endless extraction (350.org 2014A).

Further, Australia is one of the world's largest coal exporters. In 2016, it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the world for coal export, behind China, India and the US respectively, with some 503 million metric tonnes (MT) exported (Smith 2018). Prior to the Day of Action, in 2014, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot and his administration worked to curtail environmental and climate protections in Australia, while working to further support the expansion of the coal industry. This is especially critical, as Josh Creaser, 350.org Energy spokesperson, shared, "at a time when Australians are feeling the worst impacts of climate change, including catastrophic bushfire conditions and more extreme bleaching expected on the Great Barrier Reef, there's no room for the Big 3 [EnergyAustralia, AGL and Origin] to be spewing more carbon pollution into the atmosphere" (350.org 2017).

The Australian government's continued support for the Big 3 has pushed the divestment movement forward in Australia and more broadly in the wider Pacific. For all of the members of 350.org and the Pacific Climate Warriors, it was tremendously concerning that the Australian government showed little concern for the implications of their actions, especially as coal was forecasted to "replace iron ore as Australia's most

valuable export this financial year [2018] as supply concerns lead to a steep price rise for the core commodity” (Latimer 2018). In response to these concerns, the Global Divestment Movement has found support from the Australian National University and the Australian Anglican Church.

On the Newcastle Port Day of Action, Milañ Loeak, a Pacific Climate Warrior from the Marshall Islands that I have previously mentioned, urged action and reminded all those in attendance that “climate change is not an issue that the Marshall Islands or Tokelau or any other island in the Pacific should be doing alone because this is a global problem. None of us who have felt the impacts of climate change should continue to suffer through them just to fulfil others’ interests. It’s wrong and it simply doesn’t work that way” (350.org 2014C). For Pacific Islanders it is especially grievous that Australia, home to many members of the Pacific Islander diaspora and which many consider part of Oceania, is pressing on with coal extraction and continued international sales to India and China, while blatantly ignoring international efforts to embrace a carbon neutral economy and climate change mitigation.

In blog posts, media interviews and an Australian speaking tour following the successful blockade of Newcastle, the Pacific Climate Warriors describe that only four ships were able to pass through the blockade and enter the port, with eight other vessels successfully blocked (350 Pacific 2014A). The *vaka* that were used in the blockade were traditionally crafted sailing canoes which were transported to Australia specifically for the day of action via cargo ships. The port police were present and attempted to stop the action; this resulted in some warriors’ and environmental campaigners’ water craft capsizing and individuals being detained by the police (350 Pacific 2014A).



Figure 27. The Climate Warriors with 350.org environmental activists continue the Newcastle coal port blockade despite port police presence. Image courtesy of the 350.org Pacific.

As I previously discussed in the sections on the origins of the Pacific, the Austronesian expansion and importance of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, the long-distance double-hulled canoe is of tremendous importance to Pacific Islanders. The gravitas of *Hōkūle‘a* and the revival of navigation and seafaring skills among the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and more recently established and less well-known societies, such as the Tahiti Voyaging Society, the Samoan Voyaging Society and the Micronesian Voyaging Society, is not to be overlooked here. The image and inspiration of the double-hulled voyaging canoe reverberates with indigenous Pacific values, which are in turn the core values of the *Island of Hope* (Hau‘ofa 1994, Herman 2016, World Council of Churches 2001). The traditional *vaka* being used in this blockade is symbolic of Oceanian identity, the cultural renaissance that *Hōkūle‘a* inspired and the critical importance of postcolonial Pacific unity inspired by the hope of a re-imagined future. In a word – *mana*.



## 5.6 Ende Gelände – Here and No Further

Three years later, in 2017, when members of the Pacific Climate Warriors and I, as well as thousands of other environmental activists from around the world, were taking action in the coalfields of Germany just prior to COP 23, Loeak’s words came back to me: “climate change is not an issue that the Marshall Islands or Tokelau or any other island in the Pacific should be doing alone because this is a global problem.”



Figure 28. Marchers with banner proceeding to the open-pit lignite mine of Hambach. November 2017. Image courtesy of the author.

The words reverberated in the actions of thousands of people who blocked the open-pit lignite mine of Hambach (350.org 2014C). In a dawn ceremony with various representatives from frontline and indigenous communities from across the Pacific, the Pacific Climate Warriors held a traditional Fijian ceremony in the German village of Manheim. The village of Manheim was selected for the sunrise ceremony as it is scheduled to be demolished and cleared to make way for the expansion of the Hambach mine. I and four friends from Friends of the Earth Scotland served as stewards on the cold, grey morning, organising refreshments, directing volunteers to tasks, and briefing the press, all of whom were keen to see the Pacific Climate Warriors.

Early on in the preparations for the event a German environmental activist from *Ende Gelände*<sup>36</sup> thrust a megaphone into my hands and said, “Please direct people.” I replied, “Okay, but I don’t speak German.” She assured me that was fine, so drawing upon years of project management and childcare experience, which are more closely associated than you might initially think, I directed volunteers and media representatives to form queues for the refreshment table and to seek shelter from the rain in our large event tent, as well as where to find the nearest bathroom.

As the sky lightened slightly and the cold rain of the November morning eased, the Warriors emerged from the nearby community centre with offerings for the local community of Manheim and *Ende Gelände* representatives. The mood of impatience shifted and was replaced with a silent anticipation as the Pacific Climate Warriors prayed (see Figures 22–25) and blessed the land. One of my duties as steward was to hold a demarcating line so that the press and community members would not crowd the Pacific Climate Warriors. At one point I was standing next to Brianna Fruean, a Samoan Pacific Climate Warrior whom I mentioned in the previous section, who was

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<sup>36</sup>*Ende Gelände* is a broad alliance of people from the anti-nuclear and anti-coal movements, the Rhineland and Lausitz climate camps and the Hambach Forest anti-coal campaign. The members are from a range of grassroots climate action groups, large environmental organisations, left political groups and other networks. The alliance works in partnership with Friends of the Earth, and is motivated by the “belief that to stop climate change we need to take action ourselves, using civil disobedience as a powerful signal for real action to put our climate before profit.” For more information see [www.ende-gelaende.org/en/](http://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/).

part of a group of Warriors unfolding and then carrying a massive *tapa*. The *tapa*<sup>37</sup> in question was red coloured and was stylised to represent the petals of a flower. Brianna and I discussed the quality of the *tapa*, as I joined her in unfurling it for display and presentation in appreciation of the preparation work of the representatives of *Ende Gelände*. Indeed the *tapa* in question reminded me of many of the *kapa* I had seen at Bishop Museum in Honolulu. In fact, I have never seen a *tapa* that size outside of a museum setting. The size and bright red colour of the *tapa* were breath-taking, with Brianna sharing with me that the worth of the particular *tapa* we were holding was comparable to the worth of a family home in Samoa.

Following the ceremony, the Warriors went to the edge of the coal mine and unfurled the large flower petals to make a *sei*<sup>38</sup> or flower worn behind the ear – their symbol of fossil fuel resistance for this particular environmental campaign – while members of *Ende Gelände*, myself included, marched to the mine a little more than a mile or so from the village.

For all gathered there, environmental campaigners and members of the press alike, Brianna would go on to clarify that:

The *tapa* came from Tonga. It was painted by Pacific Islanders in Australia. And with great care and love we brought it to Germany. These *sei* petals carry with them the love of our communities and are also a symbol of our resistance to the fossil fuel industry. In the face of an ugly coal mine, we opened this massive flower to spread our spirit...Today, people from the Pacific, Germany and all over the world have come together as an internationally united climate justice movement to demand the end of fossil fuels now. In the Pacific we feel the impacts of climate change already and eventually it's going to affect everyone on this planet. We're all

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<sup>37</sup> *Tapa*, or *kapa* as it's called in Hawaiian, is a form of barkcloth made from the pulp of mulberries and common throughout Oceania.

<sup>38</sup> The Pacific Climate Warriors explain that they chose the symbol of the *sei* "because we want to showcase the beauty and resilience of Pacific cultures" (350.org 2017).

different people but it is one struggle (Gard 2017 np, 350.org 2017).

Standing on the edge of the Hambach open-pit coal mine, gazing down into a great earthen pit devoid of life, I found a terribly irony in the fact that the very coalfields where I was standing are among Europe's largest source of CO<sub>2</sub> production; while a mere 50 km (or approximately 31 miles) from this mine, in Bonn, the 23rd COP was just starting, with Fiji presiding over the talks.

Some estimates in the press put the number of environmental activists at the Hambach mine that day at 4,500. Though I do not know the exact number of individuals, the march stretched into the distance, both ahead and behind me. When we arrived at the edge of the mine, which was more like a vast crater on an alien world than the surface of our Earth, the landscape was so deeply transformed all that you could see was brown soil, devoid of life. It was into this monogram landscape that thousands of activists rushed past me and down the walls of the mine. Creating a mass act of civil disobedience they proceeded to stop the mine for the day, including the three coal excavators and one of the conveyors belts in the lignite mine (Gard 2017A, np). As one Pacific Climate Warrior later stated, "Germany's lignite mines are among the biggest coal mines in the world. If we don't shut them down, we have no chance as Pacific Islanders. We're here to protect our land, our culture and our identities as Pacific people" (350.org 2017).



## 5.7 Moana – The Rising of the Sea

Now I would like to transition from the powerful performances of civil disobedience and activism, to the multimedia dramatic Pacific performance piece entitled *Moana: The Rising of the Sea*, which toured internationally in 2014–2015. *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* grapples with identity, place, loss and resistance on the frontlines of climate change. *Moana* came to fruition in a desire to place humanity back at the centre of our understanding of climate change, while simultaneously moving away from the popular culture imagery of emaciated polar bears on miniscule ice floats. This is not to say that environmental impacts of climate change in the Polar Regions are not of tremendous import – *they are* – yet any discussion that is so reductionist in nature as to become a stereotype is in terrible danger of becoming little more than a disheartening social media meme, stripped of all nuance and urgency.

*Moana* then confronts this popular culture stereotype of climate change. It is through telling the story of the fictitious island of Marawa and all those that make the island their home that *Moana* alters the climate change narrative. Marawa is being slowly swallowed by the ocean, and the audience watches the painful reality of this for the island inhabitants. This theatrical production parallels the all-too-real experiences of many Pacific communities on islands such as Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Niue. Elements of contemporary Pacific dance, aerial acrobatics, photography, choral singing, original musical scores and storytelling are combined to create a powerful narrative that enables the audience to engage with the Pacific Islander characters, and to personally feel the deep connection the characters feel for their island home.

Through this emotive theatrical production the audience then feels a sense too of the fear and horrifying heartbreak of losing their island home. Consider also that in the *Island of Hope*'s “concept of *whenua, fenua, enua, vanua* all mean that the land is the people's identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea” (World Council of Churches 2001: 7). The land is people. And to lose it is to lose one's self and all that you love in this life.



*Moana: The Rising of the Sea's* theatrical production and European tour was brought to fruition by the European Consortium for Pacific Studies (ECOPAS) network, which is “a multidisciplinary project designed to provide coordination and support to research and policy communities on issues connected to climate change and related processes in the Pacific Islands region, in order to define better options for sustainable development” (ECOPAS 2014). The ECOPAS network is housed at Pacific research centres at four European universities (i.e. *Universitetet i Bergen* in Norway, *Aix-Marseille Université* in France, *Radboud University Nijmegen* in the Netherlands, and the University of St Andrews) and by the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and the National Research Institute in Papua New Guinea. For the ECOPAS Coordinator Edvard Hviding at the *Universitetet i Bergen* in Norway, *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* “is destined to become a fountain of inspiration from which new initiatives of scholarship, activism, policy, education and culture will follow. The ECOPAS agenda that we share realizes its full potential for creating understandings at the crossroads between the local and the global precisely as the drama of *Moana* unfolds and reminds us of what it means to be human” (ECOPAS and USP 2013B). This too can be said of the *Island of Hope* as it is at the crossroads of the local and the global, seeking to establish a re-imagined world that celebrates life, and continues to inspire scholarship, activism and policy advocacy today nearly 20 years after it was first published.

Subsequently, the environmental campaigner/performers of the Pacific Warrior environmental campaigns and *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* are constructing hope not just for themselves, but for all of the Pacific. Through an identity anchored in Pacific *mana* and unity, these campaigners/performers use stories, music, fine art and photography, and dance to publicly celebrate what it means to be Oceania. Through these celebrations of life and faith, how can the audience view these warriors as anything less than fighting?



Now let us transition from the theatrical stage to an aquatic stage that is truly global in scope. As previously mentioned in Chapter One the Polynesian Voyaging Society has been increasingly visible on the world stage in their actions to raise awareness about the degraded state of the oceans.

“The sail plan we’re on is not sustainable,” according to Nainoa Thompson, traditional Hawaiian Master Navigator and leader of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and this idea is the impetus for the Polynesian Voyaging Society’s recent (2014-2017) undertaking – sailing a traditional voyaging canoe around the world. The canoe *Hōkūle‘a* (“star of gladness” in Hawaiian) covered over 47,000 nautical miles, 85 ports, and 26 countries as part of the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* (“to care for our Earth” in Hawaiian). For the Polynesian Voyaging Society and many peoples of the Pacific the “sail plan” of neo-liberal values, economic globalisation and environmental exploitation is resulting in the destruction of their homes, nations and beloved Oceania.

I argue that for the Polynesian Voyaging Society the *Island of Hope* is embedded in their very existence and mission, for they consider the *Mālama Honua Voyage* as a “means by which we now engage all of Island Earth—practicing how to live sustainably, while sharing, learning, creating global relationships, and discovering the wonders of this precious place we all call home” (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2014). The double-hulled voyaging canoe or *vaka*, in addition to being a powerful symbol of Pacific identity and unity, is also an apt metaphor for global environmental stewardship, and some would say life itself. Consider the Hawaiian proverb, “the canoe is an island, the island is a canoe.” The same principles apply in both cases, and for the Earth as a whole: we are limited to one vessel with nowhere else to go. What we have is all we have. How do we make it sustainable?” (Herman 2014). Here we see that the *vaka* has become a microcosm of the Earth itself, which is reminiscent of Mead’s work on the atmosphere and creating a global perspective in keeping with the establishment of Earth Day in 1970, as previously discussed in Chapter One.

The comments of His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, Head of State,

Samoa, in regards to deep ocean voyaging are especially pertinent here as,

[n]avigational history and practices are not only important for educational and technological development, but also for our development as people. We need to rediscover the great feats of our forebears, particularly in the current context where we seem to be overwhelmed by globalization and alien heroes. We need to celebrate the heroic and epic achievements of our own forebears as a reference for our own development moving into the future (Efi 2009).

The impacts of contact with Western societies and the first tendrils of globalisation, which actually began in the late 18th century in the Pacific and which I have touched on previously in Chapters One and Two, have resulted in massive cultural change and loss. The pronounced and dramatic alteration of a traditional maritime lifestyle for many people of the Pacific is among the most severely affected aspects of daily life.

Still, over the last 50 years awareness of the ancient feats of Austronesian navigational and sailing prowess have been rising. The largely lost oceanic arts of long-distance sailing and traditional navigation have surged. *Vaka* building coupled with traditional navigation have become more than prehistorical re-enactments; they are themselves central to a cultural renaissance and widely shared indigenous nationalism developing through many parts of the Pacific. However, this cultural renaissance is not just about the past and present, as expressed through the *Mālama Honua Voyage*; it is most vitally about the future.

The *Mālama Honua* global sail plan included more than 150 ports, 23 countries and territories, and eight of UNESCO'S Marine World Heritage sites, with the objective

being to engage local communities at all locations and practise how to live sustainably. During the voyage 245 crew members participated, with more than 200 of them serving as formal and informal educators (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2018). Through their community engagement efforts they have connected with more than 100,000 people in locales as far flung as the Tasman Sea, Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil, Cuba, Canada, Panama, and the Galapagos Islands.

As a member I had been invited to attend the Polynesian Voyaging Society's return celebration for *Hōkūle'a* in June of 2017. Regrettably I was in the UK at that time and was unable to attend. However, media publications and blog posts from PVS indicate that nearly 50,000 people gathered at O'ahu's Magic Island harbour to celebrate the conclusion of the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage*. Excitingly, *Hōkūle'a's* triumphant return to Hawai'i marks the first time that a Polynesian voyaging *vaka* has sailed around the world. "The wisdom and knowledge of our ancestors coupled with inspirational, forward-thinking about connecting people and cultures to preserve our Island Earth, allowed us to create an unprecedented movement called *Mālama Honua* and navigate toward a more sustainable world," said Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. "Our voyage continues. We must keep inspiring the stewardship of our earth, perpetuation of our culture and learning how to care for environment and the people around us" (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2018).

The celebration was themed *Lei Ka 'apuni Honua*, meaning "A Lei Around the World," and honoured the voyagers for working to connect cultures and people across the globe. This historic celebration was composed of a welcoming ceremony followed by music, entertainment and refreshments for the entire community gathered at Magic Island. As part of the welcome ceremony dignitaries and officials, such as Hawai'i State Governor David Ige spoke:

The State of Hawai'i is tremendously proud of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, crewmembers, volunteers and community partners of the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* for their

efforts to share our knowledge and values and work collaboratively with cultures around the world to protect our environment. As a global leader in sustainability, Hawai‘i and its people will continue to support environmental conservation and preservation initiatives that make our world a better place (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2018).

Kirk Caldwell, Mayor of Honolulu, shared that “[t]he Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage is a shining example of what we can accomplish together and the change we can initiate to realize a brighter future for Hawai‘i and the world” (Polynesian Voyaging Society 2018). “This global movement has not only encouraged stewardship of our island Earth, but also has inspired the next generation of navigators, explorers and engaged citizens who are proud of where they come from and what our culture stands for. The value and lessons from this voyage will continue to help our community thrive for years to come,” concluded Mayor Caldwell (Polynesian Voyaging Society). With such a tremendous response globally, and locally from within Hawai‘i nei, the Mālama Honua voyage and movement stimulated a resurgence of cultural pride and hope; how can anyone view these voyagers as anything less than fighting?



## 5.8 Pacific Futures

In conclusion, I argue that the Pacific Climate Warriors, Polynesian Voyaging Society members and the *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* performers of the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific all act as environmental campaigner/performers while strongly resisting ideas of being “climate refugees’ in waiting” and victimhood more generally (McNamara & Gibson 2009: 477). Crucially, the Pacific Climate Warriors, PVS and the *Moana* performers do not deny the troubling worst-case scenarios for the climate crisis in the Pacific and that some Pacific Islanders will have to leave their homes – some in a short-term circular pattern, and others, from the lowest lying atoll areas, permanently. Still, these campaigners/performers do not see the future of the Pacific as inevitably doomed. The Pacific Climate Warrior or ‘Aina Warrior, then, is “fighting iconic battles against the fossil fuel infrastructure” and it is through these symbolic battles that greater awareness and, indeed, hope is created (350.org Pacific). As I touched on previously in this chapter, the peaceful blockade of the Newcastle coal port was much more than a David and Goliath situation, wherein the Warriors in their *vakas* took on the coal ships. Rather, it was also an affirmation and celebration of Pacific life and faith, as too was the Hambach open-pit coal mine protest associated with COP 23, wherein Warriors demonstrated the significance of prayer and kinship with those “fighting” for environmental justice and system change in Europe and the rest of the world.

The iconic symbol of the Pacific warrior has been transformed by the Pacific Climate Warriors into a “fighter” of both male and female genders, which blurs boundaries around specific gender identities. Notably, women, such as Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, hold positions of great esteem within the 350.org global community, and throughout all the campaigns I have participated in, in Aotearoa New Zealand, US and the UK. Through re-envisioning Pacific futures, blurring gender lines and Western ideas of hierarchy the Pacific Climate Warriors, 350.org more broadly, and the other environmental campaigners/performers mentioned in this chapter have crafted a global movement, rooted in the ideology of the *Island of Hope* – this movement is one of solidarity and a symbolism that conveys cohesion – and that all that stand, dance, sing or speak with the Warriors are they themselves warriors who are “fighting.”



## PART VI: ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

“Our Challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference, a world of solidarity or domination and oppression, an ocean of hope or despair. The *Island of Hope* challenges us to recognize God’s presence in all of the cultures of the world. When we affirm the integrity of local culture, we resist the temptation to stand alone, each on our own island, for as disciples of Christ we are called to stand together.”

– *The Island of Hope*, World Council of Churches, 2001

In this chapter I argue that Pacific Islanders are re-envisioning, re-imagining and indeed re-creating Pacific futures in exciting place-based and faith-based ways, such as those outlined in the *Island of Hope*. Consider that “the ethics of the *Island of Hope* [are] based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). We have seen this “deep respect for the whole community of life” in the environmental campaigns of the Pacific Climate Warriors, *Mālama Honua* movement of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and in the performances of the Oceania Centre for the Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies artists. These environmental campaigners/performers are refusing to engage with narratives of Pacific Islanders as passive victims of climate change, which is all too often well-meaningly portrayed in mainstream media<sup>39</sup>. By this resistance and refusing to yield to others’ notions of “sinking islands” and “climate change refugees” these activists, through a range of activities, art and performance-

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<sup>39</sup> For a further exploration of this topic in Australian media see Carol Farbotko’s 2005 article entitled “Tuvalu and Climate Change: Constructions of Environmental Displacement” in *The Sydney Morning Herald* [In] *Human Geography*.



focused events, and campaigns as I discussed in Chapter Four – *Turning the Tide*, are generating hope for their island communities, the wider Pacific and the world.

Critically, these Pacific Islanders do not deny the possible catastrophic climate change scenarios for the Pacific that would render many low-lying islands inhabitable (Edwards 1999); rather they choose to confront the irreducibility of a doomed fate and change the narrative. Just as the Pacific Climate Warriors have come together to protect their island homes and way of life, by calling for accountability by the major international polluters and demanding action on the world stage, so too have theologians, politicians and concerned citizens. One such example can be found in the following section, 6.1 *Power, Not Just Energy*, wherein Hawaiian citizens take action to make use of solar energy abundant in the islands and in the process confront an international corporation intent on controlling the means of generating energy in Hawai‘i.

In this concluding chapter I further argue that the “war” of the Pacific Climate Warriors, the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and indeed the Church, is metaphorical ‘with many enemies, such as explained in the *Island of Hope* as the “unprecedented concentration(s) of power in the hands of the self-appointed ‘rulers’ in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes” (World Council of Churches 2001: 9). Through symbolic battles designed to illicit attention and discourse around the pressing issues at the foundational bedrock of the *Island of Hope*, which entail “responsibility, justice and sustainability”, we can see that many are “warriors” such as island-nation leaders, civil society organisations and concerned citizens (World Council of Churches 2001: 7-8). For example, in Section 5.1 *Power, Not Just Energy*, concerned citizens in Hawai‘i challenge the powerful Florida-based corporation NextEra for “a better solution” to the energy challenges facing Hawai‘i, a solution based in the rich renewable energy sources of solar, thermal, wave and wind power available in the Hawaiian Islands (Gard 2015, np).

In Section 6.2 *The Ocean Pathway* I join with the Pacific Climate Warriors at the 23rd UN Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017, whereby

the Warriors further challenge the traditional climate change narrative. This COP was of special significance as Fiji<sup>40</sup> hosted and provided Pacific leadership that was demanding of global change on their own terms. Through these events we can see that an active re-envisioning of Pacific futures, solidarity, and symbolism is used not just among the Pacific Islanders themselves, but with all those willing to stand by their side, to express and reinforce a collective identity of the warrior – who is someone willing to fight for the very survival of our world.

In Section 6.3 *Steering the Vaka* I explore a golden moment in my fieldwork, wherein I served as a facilitator with the Institute for Research and Social Analysis (IRSA) at the *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference* on the campus of the Pacific Theology College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji, in June 2016. Relational hermeneutics is of tremendous importance within Pacific theological circles, as Reverend Dr Upolu Va'ai, a Samoan theologian at PTC, explains “relationality governs our decisions and expectations... it is the best initial horizon out of which Pacific Islanders are comfortable in understanding the world” (Working Documents, *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2017*). At this conference leading indigenous thinkers from around Oceania discussed how best to re-imagine a future for the region. As to why relational hermeneutics is critical to the process of reshaping the Pacific, it was explained thusly:

The concept of relational hermeneutics is drawn from the wells of faith and culture—as foundational pillars of the relationality idea. In the Pacific, relationship is the overarching value that encompasses most, if not, all of life. Hence, relationship is the key to nurturing and preserving life with the self, other human beings/the community, God, and the environment. Consequently, relationality is the initial horizon out of which we should understand, analyse and interpret what is happening around us. It basically informs our lens of understanding and our perspective of everything: approaches, consciousness, thoughts, desires and

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<sup>40</sup> Fiji is the first Pacific nation to ever host a COP.

imaginings—in order to get closer to get a true picture of what constitute our lifeworlds (Working Documents, Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2017).

In the concluding sections of this chapter I will consider the *Hawaiki* concept, important in many cultures of the Pacific, in relation to deep sea voyaging, the oneness of life and in understanding Jesus Christ as the *Island of Hope*. I will conclude with reflections on the Oceanian national independence movement as some of the last governmental vestiges of colonialism give way, and the influence the *Island of Hope* continues to exert in the Pacific, especially in nature-based and people-maximising solutions to various pressing environmental and social issues.



## **6.1 Power, Not Just Energy**

It may come as a surprise, given the abundance of natural resource, such as solar, wind, wave and thermal energy at its disposal, but Hawai‘i is over 90% dependent on imported fossil fuels for its energy needs (Hawai‘i Clean Energy Initiative 2018). It is unsurprising then that many Hawaiian environmental activist organisations, such as 350.org Hawai‘i and the Blue Planet Foundation, are focused on transitioning Hawai‘i to a renewable energy economy.

While I was conducting fieldwork in Hawai‘i in 2015, the citizens of Hawai‘i voted into law the most aggressive clean energy policy in the US – with the goal being 100%

renewable energy by 2045 (Hawai'i State Energy Office 2018). As this important and legally binding decision was being undertaken, I observed Hawai'i residence pondering if they would continue with their patronage of Hawai'i Electric Co. (HECO), the long-time provider of energy in the islands following electrical usage being encouraged by King Kalakaua in the 1880s. Following King Kalakaua's 1881 meeting with Thomas Edison in his New York home, where he experienced incandescent light for the first time, the streets of Honolulu were lit with electrical light in 1886. This narrative is a source of pride for many Islanders and they are found of mentioning that Iolani Palace in Honolulu was one of the world's first royal residences to be lit by electricity. Despite this rich and culturally important history, HECO has more recently found itself failing to meet customers' needs and charging the highest usage rates in the US (HECO 2017).

As HECO had a historic grid that had been engineered to accomplish a relatively simple task – supply customers with one-directional energy flow from several power plants – it now needs to transition to a grid that is capable of supporting energy flowing in multiple directions from an array of energy sources, including more than 70,000 solar systems in use by HECO customers (Yerton 2017). The challenge was and remains how to go about doing this? One option considered at the time of my fieldwork was a merger with NextEra Energy, a Florida-based energy provider with the bulk of its energy being generated through nuclear facilities.

On the evening of 28th October 2015 a public hearing of the impending merger of HECO and NextEra Energy was held in downtown Honolulu at the President William McKinley High School. I walked from my accommodation at the Buddhist Shinshu Kyokai Mission Dormitory a mile or so away, and filed in to the large high school auditorium with amphitheatre seating with hundreds of other locals curious to hear the public's concerns regarding Hawai'i's energy future. The stage was literally set to receive the public. Long collapsible tables were placed end to end across the stage and were beset on either side by a 6 feet tall feathered *kāhili*,<sup>41</sup> a potent symbol of the

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<sup>41</sup> I note that, as historically in formal settings, the feathered *kāhili* is paraded before the chiefly individual to indicate their lineage and status. Tangentially, King Kamehameha I (circa 1736–1819) was the first Hawaiian to unite all of the Hawaiian Islands under his rule, and with this monumental achievement he ushered in the use of the feathered *kāhili* for the Kamehameha Royal Family to indicate

Hawaiian *ali'i* or chiefly class. Representatives of the Public Utilities Commission walked across the stage and sat at the long table between the *kāhili*. Opening remarks were made in regards to the nature of the meeting and inviting the public to provide feedback on the prospect of the NextEra merger.

Following a prayer in English and a blessing in Hawaiian, the public began to queue. Individuals were asked to restrict their comments to three minutes each. Impassioned speech followed impassioned speech, with one young man who worked in solar energy stating, “This is what selling out our islands looks like.” Another middle-aged man demanded to know, “Why are we going the American way?” as opposed to pursuing a model more closely resembling the ambitious renewable goals in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Concerned students from Kapi‘olani Community College (KCC) challenged the Commission’s representatives to explain why less than 1% of Hawai‘i’s electricity came from solar energy. Troublingly, it had been reported in the local media that NextEra had required HECO to keep newly installed residential solar power systems from being brought online with HECO’s existing energy grid. Brodie Lockard, the founder of 350.org Hawai‘i, called this issue out, stating that as many as 40,000 residential solar panel systems were waiting to be added to HECO’s grid, and he expressed concern over the aggressive political campaign NextEra was waging. Over the course of the next three hours, some 136 individuals spoke, most voicing concerns and calling for a delay to the merger, so that other options might be explored. One local woman challenged the representatives with the query, “What if we lose control of our energy? What impact will it have on our islands? Our lifestyle here, where we lucky we live Hawai‘i – we still lucky?” (Gard 2016, np). These questions went unanswered by the panel and they stayed in my mind as I attended one of the formal hearings in the following weeks over the \$4.3 billion HECO buyout by NextEra. Unlike the public hearings that had been animated affairs with locals in bright Aloha wear, the formal hearings were sombre proceedings, presided over by business executives dressed in dark colours from HECO, NextEra and the Public Utilities Commission.

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their status, so that in formal settings the *kāhili* would always precede them, reminding all in their presence of their importance.

Isaac Moriwake with Earthjustice found troubling information when researching NextEra's past, such as a history of "opposition to clean energy in Florida and failure to chart a different path in this state, NextEra is not what Hawai'i wants or needs" (Simmons 2016: 1). At that time NextEra executives publicly stated they supported Hawai'i's clean energy ambitions, yet that support was clearly conditional on NextEra owning the solar generation power rights, as they maintained in Florida through political lobbying (e.g. with some \$27.5 USD million being spent on Floridian politicians between 2015–2016 alone) and legal manoeuvring in the form of a statute that gives an "absolute monopoly on electricity sales" (Simmons 2016: 1). Hence the reluctance to bring individually owned residential solar power panels onto the main electrical grids of O'ahu and Maui (Gard 2016, np). At the time the Hawai'i Solar Energy Association's President, Christian Adams, expressed deep concern at the hearings and in media, arguing that "NextEra is pro-solar and wind. However... they are for renewable energy as long as NextEra owns and controls the power source" (Simmons 2016: 1).

Following the public and formal hearings, the Hawai'i Governor, David Ige, publicly announced his thoughts on the proposed merger, calling it "unacceptable" and going on to describe NextEra's preplanning around Hawai'i's 100% renewable energy goal by 2045 as "vague and noncommittal, to say the least" (Simmons 2016: 1). These public statements further fuelled the public protests and calls for cancellation of the merger. Consequently, in July of 2016, following more than a year of public protests and in-depth campaigns by 350.org Hawai'i and the Blue Planet Foundation, the Public Utilities Commission surprisingly ruled against the merger. The Commission indicated it doubted NextEra Energy's intentions to deliver on the 2045 100% renewable energy goal. Excitingly, HECO is now finding a different way forward, as are the people of Hawai'i themselves, one that is based in innovation, self-reliance and the natural resources of Hawai'i.

Though some might not consider this Hawaiian energy case study a manifestation of the *Island of Hope*, I argue that it is indeed a manifestation of the guiding principles of the document. For:

[T]he project of economic globalization pretends with religious fervour the economic growth, free flow of capital and the allocation of resources and goods through the market mechanism serve the common good. But the market as an instrument is amoral and does not automatically lead to more justice and quality of life. It rather aggravates existing inequality and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent (World Council of Churches 2001: 12).

Through the engaged efforts of thousands of Hawaiian citizens around the HECO/NextEra merger they were able to counter and force an alternative to be created *in lieu* of the false dichotomy that was placed in front of them. It is this “restor[ing of] national and people’s control over development” – a vital ambition of the *Island of Hope* – while simultaneously retaining control of the ability to generate solar-based renewable energy in Hawai‘i, that is a uniquely Pacific response (World Council of Churches 2001: 15).



## 6.2 The Ocean Pathway

As I discussed in Chapter Five—*Turning the Tide*, I felt fortunate to attend the 23<sup>rd</sup> UN Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bonn, Germany. Though the COP was held in Germany in November of 2017, the host nation was Fiji – the first Pacific nation to host

a COP. In preparations for the COP, media commentators repeatedly noted the “smallness” of Fiji’s population (i.e. less than one million) and land mass (i.e. 18,274 km<sup>2</sup> or 7,056 sq. mi.) (Fiji Bureau of Statistics). However, as I noted in Chapter One, “smallness” and “remoteness” in the Pacific is more of an imposed mindset than an actual reality. Through utilising connections and relationships, such as with Germany in the case of the COP, which is a strength of Pacific peoples – as Hau‘ofa famously highlighted in the distinction between “viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands’” – a more holistic perspective is useful, “in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships” (Hau‘ofa 2008: 31). It is no surprise then to scholars of the region and Pacific Islanders themselves that they have taken an “outsized” role in the United Nations and on the global stage around the pressing issue of the climate crisis.

As the COP proceedings got underway it was clear that Fiji had brought the Pacific to Europe in that the conference décor, banners, literature and such all had a Fijian aesthetic and utilised a blue wave pattern throughout. “Bula<sup>42</sup> Zones” and “Talanoa Spaces” were positioned throughout the conference facilities as places to rest and talk with fellow delegates. *Talanoa*<sup>43</sup> is a Fijian word used to describe the process of dialogue wherein knowledge is shared, empathy is cultivated and trust is built between all present. The Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama<sup>44</sup>, held a pointedly public role at the COP, though he opted to delegate the formal proceedings so that he could play “a roving role” and be on hand “to resolve any difficulties in the formal negotiations” (Rowlands 2017: 1).

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<sup>42</sup> *Bula* means hello in Fijian.

<sup>43</sup> *Talanoa* is an important part of Fijian culture and leadership. I mentioned *talanoa* in reference to leadership, as it is often an informal and more personal space where hierarchy can be put aside for a time. For example, a *talanoa* event occurred most evenings of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference at the Pacific Theology College, and allowed for participants to get to know each other in a more “friend to friend” way without the formal burden of chiefly titles, or other Western titles such as reverend, professor and so on. Tangentially, in Hawai‘i the process of *talanoa* is literally called “talking story”.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Bainimarama has held the post of Prime Minister since 2007. Prior to that he held power as a Fijian naval officer, where he served as the Commander of the Fijian Military Forces from 1999 to 2014. Bainimarama led the 2006 coup that resulted in his becoming acting Fijian President (2006–07) and later acting Prime Minister (2007–14) and now Prime Minister (2014–present) of Fiji.



The focal point of the COP was a *drua* – a Fijian voyaging canoe or *vaka* – positioned in the main foyer of the conferences facilities. The *drua* served not just as a reminder of the rich history of discovery in Oceania, as I discuss in the first chapter’s consideration of the Austronesian expansion, but that in a very literal sense “all 7.5 billion people on earth are in the same canoe” as Prime Minister Bainimarama stated multiple times throughout the COP (Rowlands 2017: 1; Gard 2017, np).

Fiji’s message of “one canoe, one island, one planet” echoes the message of the then simultaneously occurring *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* by the Polynesian Voyaging Society and the *Island of Hope* when it says, “[w]e also hear the promise of the Gospel that choosing life will create an alternative and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity (Mt 14: 13-21; Acts 2: 41-47) in response to the prayer ‘that all may be one as we are one’ (John 17:11).” Still, these messages, while being championed by many around the world, fell too on deaf ears, most notably American ears. In June of 2017 the US’s Trump administration announced that it would withdraw from the Paris Agreement and the associated commitment to climate change mitigation, sadly only two years after the Paris Agreement was achieved at the 21<sup>st</sup> COP. The victory of the Paris Agreement was in part due to Fijian and Pacific leadership, such as Tony de Brum<sup>45</sup>, the noted former Marshall Islands Foreign Minister. Fiji became the first nation to sign the Paris Agreement in April 2016, as I note in Chapter Four – *Navigating a Changing Sea* – on the first day the agreement was available for signing and only four months after it was conceived at the 21<sup>st</sup> COP in Paris. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol developed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> COP, the Paris Agreement was not legally binding and as such was not nearly as contentious. Every country on Earth, save for war-ravaged Syria, has signed the Paris Agreement. To date, the US and Syria remain the only nations on Earth who are not abiding by the Paris Agreement.

Fiji’s leadership and quick action regarding the Paris Agreement cannot be separated out from the concerning effects of climate change already impacting the island nation, such as coral bleaching, fish kills and extreme weather events like Tropical Cyclone

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<sup>45</sup> The well-regarded Marshall Islands Foreign Minister worked tirelessly on Marshallese independence in the 1970s and 1980s, and more recently on the landmark Paris Agreement, becoming an internationally recognised voice in the fight against climate change.

Winston, all of which I discuss in Chapter Four – *Navigating a Changing Sea*. The extensive damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016 also prevented Fiji from hosting an Oceans Conference in 2017, as Fiji has shown Pacific leadership around the health of the world’s oceans. For example, Fijian diplomat Peter Thomson served previously as the 71<sup>st</sup> President of the United Nations General Assembly and now serves as the UN’s Special Envoy on Oceans.

Fijian leadership continues with renewable energy. For example, Fiji and many other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have made insignificant contributions to the global greenhouse gas emissions, especially when compared to the largest emitters such as China and the US, with the former presently the largest emitter and the latter being historically the largest emitter. Nonetheless, Fiji has made a commitment to transition to 100% renewable energy by the year 2030, and in another bold move of Pacific leadership, Tuvalu, has made a commitment to transition to 100% renewable energy by the year 2020 (Rowlands 2017). Regrettably, another Pacific neighbour – Australia – as I touched on previously in Chapter Five’s *Performances, on the Street and in the Theatre*, has higher emissions with continued use and export of coal. Further, Australia shows little interest in curbing emissions or transitioning to a renewable energy economy, even with such remarkable natural wonders at risk as the Great Barrier Reef.

Prior to the 23<sup>rd</sup> COP in Bonn the climate crisis was everywhere you looked, and increasingly more undeniable by those who would wish it were otherwise – the ones who the *Island of Hope* describes as “one international coalition of the wealthy and the powerful.” Unprecedented floods, hurricanes in the Atlantic, and wildfires all left ravaged and impoverished communities in their wake. Consider that a “full one-quarter of all category five hurricanes to make landfall in the Atlantic Ocean since 1851 made landfall in 2017” (Rowlands 2017: 1). Another Pacific national leader, Tommy Remengesau, the President of Palau, pressed home the point for swift action on these issues, as “this means life or death for us.” Helping all those impacted by climate change, especially extreme weather events “is a moral question, and it requires a moral answer” (Friedman & Plumber 2017: 1).



### 6.3 Steering the Vaka

While environmental activists<sup>46</sup> and politicians work to made headlines around the world, such as at the 23<sup>rd</sup> COP, Pacific theologians often opt for a quieter approach when re-imagining the future; you might say their approach is more of “influencing the influencers”. One such significant example could be found in the *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference* on the campus of the Pacific Theology College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji in June 2016.

The “concept of relational hermeneutics is drawn from the wells of faith and culture” – they serve as foundational pillars of the relationality idea, according to Reverend Dr Upolu Va‘ai<sup>47</sup>, a Samoan theologian at PTC, whom I met and worked with while facilitating the conference (Gard 2016, np). In Oceania, as I discuss in Chapter One’s *A Total Cosmic Vision of Life*, “relationality is the overarching value that encompasses most, if not, all of life” (Gard 2016 np). It follows then that relationship is vital to nourishing life, nature, the divine and the environment. For “relationality governs our decisions and expectations... it is the best initial horizon out of which Pacific Islanders are comfortable in understanding the world” (Working documents of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2016, np). Relationality is a lens through which those in the Pacific see that all that constitutes their “lifeworlds” informs consciousness, desires and imaginations (Gard 2016, np).

The Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference is part of the ongoing “re-thinking Oceania” process recently undertaken by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and the Pacific Theological College (PTC), both ecumenical

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<sup>46</sup> See 5.5 Performances, on the Street and in the Theatre for reflections on my experiences as an environmental activist and Scotland representative at the People’s Climate Summit in the run-up to and at COP 23 in Bonn, Germany.

<sup>47</sup> Reverend Dr Upolu Va‘ai has been named Principal of the Pacific Theology College as of January 2019.

organisations that have worked to decolonise Oceania “through rethinking and reshaping the Pacific from the ground up” (Gard 2016, np). For both the PCC and PTC there was been a desire to respond to the “loud voice of indigenous Pacific spirituality” and to connect this spirituality to biblical truths and Christianity (Gard 2016, np).



Figure 29. *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference* delegates at the Pacific Theology College in Suva, Fiji. The author is pictured at the centre of the image. June, 2016. Image courtesy of the Pacific Theology College.

It was this impetus that prompted the creation of uniquely Pacific approaches to understanding and epistemologies, researching and decision making in Oceania, as Professor Kabini Sanga with the Victoria University of Wellington explained: “Pacific thinkers are at the crossroads of intellectual dynamism, creativity and opportunity. The call to rethink our assumed ontologies, interrogate our epistemologies, examine our methodologies and question our axiology is therefore timely” (Gard 2016, np).

The conference also sought to confront a “one truth ideology” that had become “rooted” in the Pacific through various globalisation forces, including: political, economic, legal, educational and religious systems. From these one-size-fits-all approaches the Pacific continues to experience top-down hierarchical frameworks, such as in the well-meaning, but ultimately poorly conceived climate change response programmes, and other more sinister economic approaches “that benefit only a very few at the expense of the majority of Pacific Islanders, including their environment” (Gard 2016, np). This one-size-fits-all mentality rubs up against diversity, multiplicity and relationality, and can in turn find dissimilar cultures, religions, and worldviews as inferior.

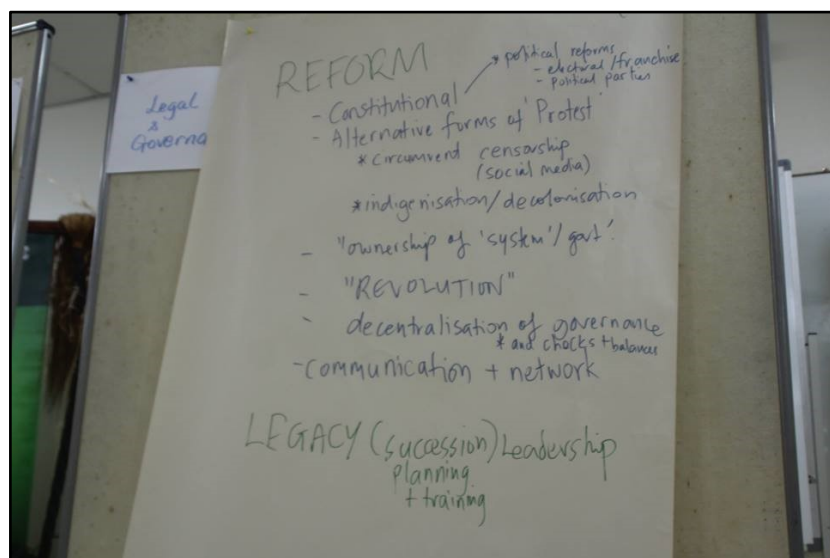


Figure 30. Notes from the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference. Image courtesy of the author.

In his conference paper entitled *Leadership Development Through Friendship and Storytelling*, Professor Kabini Sanga draws attention to the importance of “relational hermeneutics for Pacific peoples” and states that these “must be founded on the intrinsic dignity of each person. Such a foundation reflects the belief that by design, each person is born free and equal in dignity... a dignified person is a credible agent of personal renewal, brilliance and communal reformation” (Working Documents of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2016, np). This is remarkably similar to the Island of Hope in that it “represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity” (World Council of Churches 2001: 5).



Figure 31. Reverend Dr Upolu Va'ai addresses the conference delegates. The author is seated to the right-hand side of the speaker. Image courtesy of the Pacific Theology College.

Professor Sanga continued:

In Pacific relational hermeneutics, naming is vitally necessary. Done through language, naming opens new possibilities; thereby allowing people to create new agencies and find voice especially given the historical marginalization, systemic neglect and demeaning of Pacific people's sense of dignity... In Pacific relational hermeneutics, storytelling is a key pedagogy. It offers for Pacific peoples contextually rich learnings of complex worlds. More so, future stories might be contextually embedded; grounded in Pacific peoples' core principles, informed by our pedagogical traditions and enhancing our scholarship on Pacific storytelling (Working Documents of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2016 np).

The *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference* objectives were for “the church and society to...work together to sketch the similarities and differences contained in the Pacific idea of relationality...critique the ideologies that have frames colonization and; retrieve and reconstruct relational principles that could assist with reshaping the Pacific from the ground-up” (Working Documents of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2016, np). Further emphasis was placed on “constructing Pacific relational frameworks that will assist with understanding the colonization process and with the task of decolonization and rethinking in the region, to challenge the isolative nature in such a process” (Ibid). Goal setting revolved around the advancement of research, education, training and publishing, as well as “strengthening current efforts in facilitating an effective and meaningful rethinking and reshaping process currently being implemented by churches and civil society organizations” (Ibid).

As I mentioned previously, I served as a facilitator at this conference assisting Ms Rosa Koian, a skilled facilitator from Papua New Guinea, and Reverend Aisake Casimira, Director at the PTC. We sought to guide the process of deliberations around the key concept of rethinking the Pacific, which is based on the idea that “the Bible is the greatest reframer of a given historical narrative – i.e. the narrative of governance for example. It has impacted how we now look at issues of social relations, social justice, economic justice and the relationship between humans and the environment” (Ibid). Central to the facilitation approach was to bring out the “Pacificness” in our ways of understanding, and living in the world, so that we might “lay the foundations of Pacific indigeneity for more relevant applicability into education, research and development discourses. This has been termed the Pacific *itulagi*<sup>48</sup> – looking at and interpreting things from our side of the heavens” (Ibid).

Beyond these facilitation goals, the role of facilitator was an especially unique and fascinating experience for me, in that I provided the previous day’s summation at the start of every day of the conference. Through this process participants’ ideas, words and reflections became my words and reflections the following day, though filtered through

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<sup>48</sup> *Itulagi* is Samoan for region.

my perspective and in turn with my emphasis placed on the issues I thought most pressing and in need of further reflection, such as gender equity in the church.



Figure 32. Emele Duituturaga, Pacific Island Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO) Executive Director with the author at the conclusion of the conference. Image courtesy of the Pacific Theology College.

Though the facilitation process was at times surreal, I considered it the high-water mark of my fieldwork, in that I had never understood the ramifications of the *Island of Hope* more fully. Perhaps Reverend Dr Upolu Va'ai summarised the conference best when he said:

The Pacific, more than ever, needs to rethink alternatives that were taught to us and perpetuated through the education system, to what we always have which are relational, healthy and holistic... while political, economic and religious institutions in the Pacific are moving to divest from relational principles found in Pacific cultures and faith traditions, it is time to invest in those principles in order to shape, or propose possible solutions affecting the region (Ibid).

Reverend Dr Upolu Va'ai's sentiments and many of the other conference presenters' papers echoed the foundational bedrock of the *Island of Hope*, such that this re-imagined Pacific will be based in "spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural



values, mutual care and respect”, which are all “components of the concept of the *Island of Hope* which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things” (World Council of Churches 2001: 5). These thoughts reminds me of a Hawaiian proverb or ‘ōlelo no ‘eau – “*I ka wā ma mua, ka wā ma hope*” – or in English, “The future is in the past.” Another useful way to consider the proverb may be found in the quote from William Faulkner’s *Requiem for a Nun*: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”



Figure 33. Dancers celebrate the conclusion of the Conference. Image courtesy of the author.



## 6.4 Mana Moana

The natural world is of tremendous importance throughout the Pacific, blurring the lines between the realm of humanity and that of divinity, such as in the origins of the coconut in Chapter One. Consider the importance of the stars to such essential activities as fishing or navigation techniques for long-distance voyaging. Consider that upon arriving in the Pacific, missionaries recorded Polynesians consulting the night sky with diligence for guidance on all things related to planting, sailing and fishing. Reading the stars was then performed in such a way that respects their service to humanity and for their genealogical and divine associations. “The use and reverence given to *Tapuitea*, the morning and evening star, is an example in point. The *soa* or companion of *Tapuitea* was, as recorded by Reverend Stair, believed by Samoans to be an augury that a chief is about to die. When Samoans point out: *Ua pa’ū le la* (literally “the sun has fallen”) or *ua gasetoto le masina* (literally “the moon has died from hemorrhaging”), both speak honorifically to the death of a chief” (Efi 2010: 3). The merging of the realm of men and gods is perhaps best personified in the heavens where one’s place in the cosmic order of things is reinforced through the bonds of genealogy and mythology, while being simultaneously reduced to near insignificance through the vast grandness of the celestial bodies themselves.

Another example of this reinforcing relationality can be found in the *Hawaiki* concept, which is a complex historical, geographic and religious symbolic concept that further merges the heavens and earth. Cognates of the name appear across Polynesia, referencing both a geographic place of origin and a spiritual threshold or portal between the physical and immaterial. Scholars propose that the Austronesian explorers named new locations *Hawaiki* as they travelled, ultimately transforming the name into a spiritual concept once the location of their island homeland was forgotten with the passage of time (Orbell 1987). However, a more likely proposition than the historic happenstance previously described is that as the Austronesians expanded across the Pacific they named one island after another; simultaneously the explorers used the equivalent names as labels for the spiritual threshold because they regarded the ideas of geographic and spiritual origin as mutually analogous (Howe 2007: 49-53). For

instance, the Tahitians regard *Havai‘i* (a regional variation of *Hawaiki*) as the origin of the ancestors and the spiritual birthplace of the land, gods and humanity itself:

*No Havai‘i fanaura ‘a fenua*                      Havai‘i is the birthplace of land

*No Havai‘i fanaura ‘a atua*                      Havai‘i is the birthplace of the gods

*No Havai‘i fanaura ‘a ta‘ata.*                      Havai‘i is the birthplace of people.

This origins chant continues with “all things, the sun, the moon, stars, seasons, weather and all life come from *Havai‘i*” (Williamson 1933: 299-300). For many Tahitians *Havai‘i* is also the final destination of the spirits of the deceased.

With the advent of Christianity in the Pacific, spiritual practices, religious ideology and even the very idea of the divine were forever altered. But for some, the paradigm shift is not nearly as cataclysmic as you might initially think, for “the conversation between God and Samoans predated Christianity” (Efi 2010: 4). This sentiment was echoed by several presenters at the *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference*, including Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi, a political analyst, conference presenter, and one of the original contributors to the *Island of Hope* (Gard 2016, np). Certainly these sentiments can be expanded to include the greater Pacific; as Bernard Narokobi notes in *The Melanesian Way – A Total Cosmic Vision of Life*, “as Melanesians, we are a spiritual people. Even before Christians came onto our shores, we felt and knew the forces of a source greater than ourselves. That was our divine power, the Melanesian way” (Narokobi 1980: 14). The Bible verse John 17:11, also referenced in the *Island of Hope*, speaks to the cosmic vision of life in Jesus Christ so “that all may be one, as we are one.”

The *Island of Hope* is also understood as Jesus Christ; “Jesus is the *Island of Hope* who gave the whole world what it hopes for, Jesus... is the *Island of Hope* for Humanity”

(Bereteni 2013: 91). For the WWC a unifying motivation can be found in interpreting the theological vision of the *Island of Hope*, with Jesus Christ at the core, into the everyday realities of life. One might say too that *Hawaiki*, in its ability to be both a geographic and spiritual location simultaneously, is a way of understanding and manifesting “heaven on Earth”.



## **6.5 The Land is People**

The *Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference*, as I explore in 6.3 *Steering the Vaka*, sought to “critique the ideologies that frame colonization and retrieve and reconstruct relational principles that could assist with reshaping the Pacific from the ground-up” (Working Documents of the Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific Conference 2016, np). While the *Island of Hope* advocates for “putting people first” and “restoring national and people’s control over development” (World Council of Churches 2001: 15), a manifestation of all of these complementary ideologies may very well be seen in the emergence of the newest nations on Earth in the next several years.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2016, the Pacific Island nations of New Caledonia, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville – currently a province of Papua New Guinea – and French Polynesia all had active independence campaigns underway. Even Aotearoa New Zealand, while I was living in Auckland in 2016, democratically considered changing its flag from its traditional blue background and Southern Cross, complete with the Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner, to a design that might better reflect

their independent national status. As we consider these independent movements, I would also like to draw attention to the *Island of Hope*'s "concept of *whenua, fenua, enua, vanua* all mean that the land is the people's identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea" (World Council of Churches 2001: 7). So that as each of these Pacific Island nations arise from a complex history of colonisation and move toward self-governance, one might even say a reimagining of selfhood, there is much to consider in terms of the political, economic and cultural ramifications both at the local level and for the wider Pacific as a region.

New Caledonia, a Pacific Island which is held as a territory of France and covers some 3,623 square miles, undertook an independence referendum on 4th November 2018. The independence vote followed a turbulent history of civil unrest and violent clashes in the 1980s between the Pacific Islander *Kanaks* and European settlers with French loyalties. In 1986 the United Nations listed New Caledonia as a non-self-governing territory, and after increased violence and assassinations in the 1990s, the French government negotiated and signed the Noumea Accord in 1998, which mandated that a vote on independence must take place before 2019.

In 2015 the New Caledonian electoral eligibility laws dictated that only the *Kanak* population and individuals who were registered to vote in 1998 would be eligible to vote in the 2018 referendum. This legal precedent was unsurprisingly met with protests among French loyalists groups, as many believed they were being side-lined due to a lack of long-term residence in New Caledonia. Census records indicate that of the 260,000 New Caledonian population, some 39% are indigenous *Kanaks*, while 27% are European, and 34% are "mixed race" migrants from other Pacific Islands, or of Asian ancestry (Fisher 2018). Consequently, the November 2018 vote had an:

Unprecedented turnout of over 80 percent of eligible voters, the strong participation of the young, especially young *Kanaks*, and the peaceful relaxed atmosphere (at least during polling hours) are remarkable enough. But the result, 56.4 percent against and 43.6

percent in favour of independence, is a timely reminder to the three principal players—France, the independence, and loyalist groups—of local realities and the seriousness of the task ahead (Fisher 2018: 1).

The results of the referendum, though not what many *Kanaks* wanted, underscore the significant voting response and tremendous support for independence from the indigenous community. The data and “pattern of voting—strong turnouts and support for independence of 80–90 percent in *Kanak* heartlands—suggests that the 43.6 percent supporting independence were *Kanak*. Thus, only around 3 percent of *Kanaks* appear to have favoured staying with France” (Fisher 2018: 1). The independence leaders who negotiated the Noumea Accord in the 1990s drafted in two additional independence referendums in case the first vote failed to carry the sufficient numbers to achieve independence the first time around. The New Caledonian Congress now has the power to authorise a second referendum vote in 2020 and potentially a third time in 2022, provided they have the congressional numbers. Though the first independence referendum failed in New Caledonia, as too did the Aotearoa New Zealand flag referendum in 2016, these democratic and highly public forums create a space wherein citizens can engage with critical ideas of self, national identity and how best to re-imagine a future.

Another hopeful case study on independence can be found in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, currently a province of Papua New Guinea. Bougainville will hold a referendum on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The referendum has been brought to fruition by the Bougainville Peace Agreement negotiated and agreed to in 2001, following a violent civil war<sup>49</sup> that stretched from 1988 to 1998. Long decades of hostility and alienation from Bougainville’s population of some 250,000 indicates that the 2019 referendum will be strongly in support of independence (Andrews 2016). “In fact, Bougainville presents one of the rare success stories of peace-building in today’s world, and it looks

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<sup>49</sup> Following ten years of fighting, the civil war resulted in as many as 20,000 dead. For a further exploration of this see Volker Boege’s 2009 article entitled *Peacebuilding and State Formation in Post-Conflict Bougainville* and Catherine Wilson’s 2014 article entitled *Seeking Closure, Bougainville Confronts Ghosts of Civil War*.

like it has a good chance of becoming one of the equally rare success stories of state-building” (Boege 2009: 29). This may very well mean that Bougainville will be the Pacific’s next new nation.

Regardless of the overwhelming support for independence among residents of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea remains vehemently opposed, and in turn, independence remains uncertain. For example, in 2015 the Australian government in anticipation of the 2019 referendum attempted to establish a diplomatic outpost in Bougainville, much to the displeasure of the Papua New Guinea government (Andrews 2016). The Papua New Guinean Foreign Minister Rimbink Pato publicly called the proposal “outrageous” and the PNG government went so far as to ban Australians from travelling to Bougainville (Andrews 2016: 1). As the world awaits the independence referendum in October 2019, it is worth keeping in mind that the Papua New Guinean Parliament have authoritative power over the referendum results, which is to say that Bougainville independence may well necessitate parliamentary approval. Legal experts are uncertain as to how this would come to fruition at a local level, or how Pacific nations and the United Nations would respond should the Papua New Guinean Parliament refuse to ratify a successful independence referendum (Andrews 2016).

Similarly to New Caledonia, another example of emerging independence can be seen in French Polynesia, which is composed of 118 islands and atolls that are spread across more than 1,240 miles of Pacific waters. Just as in New Caledonia, French Polynesia has a divided parliament roughly split along the twin lines of pro- independence with those of indigenous heritage vs. loyalist leanings with those of European heritage. A further aspect of complexity in French Polynesia is the extensive nuclear testing<sup>50</sup> carried out from 1960 to 1996 in the region by the French government. Many French Polynesians continue to demand compensation and apology for the painful legacy of nuclear testing that they continue to experience. For example:

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<sup>50</sup> There are many troubling similarities between the nuclear testing in French Polynesia by the French government and in Micronesia by the American government as discussed in Chapter 2—*Global Connections, Global Obligations*. For a further exploration of the painful legacy of nuclear testing in French Polynesia see Bengt Danielsson’s 1984 article entitled *Under a Cloud of Secrecy: The French Nuclear Tests in the Southeastern Pacific* and Kim Feldmann’s 2018 article entitled *Beyond Radioactivity: How French Nuclear Tests Changed Polynesia Forever*.

Due to poor infrastructure and a lack of access, many cases [of various cancers] in Polynesia remained unreported for a long time and until 2009, most cancer patients were evacuated either to New Zealand or France for radiation therapy. Data released by the French Polynesian Ministry of Health earlier [in 2018] shows a steady increase in the number of radiation-induced diseases, with 93 new cancer cases reported in 1992 compared to 467 in 2017 (Feldmann 2018: 1).

The anger associated with the history of nuclear testing has fuelled the independence movement in French Polynesia. After decades of campaigning for independence and following a historic vote in support of the country being added to the “decolonization list”<sup>51</sup> the UN re-classified French Polynesia as a non-self-governing territory in 2013<sup>52</sup>. This successful vote was brought about by the continued vocal support of regional Pacific Island leaders, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC). Importantly, the WCC called on France directly to “fulfil their obligations and provide all necessary means for the economic, social and cultural development of the Maohi people” (Reeves & Hunt 2012: 2). Unquestioningly this was a distinct victory for the independence movement, as the UN Special Committee on Decolonization reviews this list annually and works to implement the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (United Nations Resolution 1514).

For many French Polynesians, such as the former President of French Polynesia, opposition politician and independence advocate, Oscar Manutahi Temaru, nuclear testing and the continued struggle for self-determinism cannot be disentangled. In October of 2018 Temaru spoke at a United Nations meeting in New York and announced that a complaint had been filed against France for “crimes against

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<sup>51</sup> Other Pacific Island nations on the UN’s non-self-governing list include Guam and American Samoa, both under US jurisdiction, and Tokelau which is governed by Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>52</sup> French Polynesia was previously on the non-self-governing territory list in 1946 and was under consideration for independence, when shortly thereafter in 1947 France removed French Polynesia from the list. At that time France was anxious to maintain control over its territories in the Pacific, regardless of the international pressure to relinquish colonial holdings.



humanity” in the International Criminal Court on behalf of “all the people who died from the consequences of nuclear colonialism” (Feldmann 2018: 1). “We see French nuclear tests as no less than the direct result of colonization,” Temaru said, adding the testing was imposed upon the Islanders “with the direct threat of imposing military rule if we refused” (Agence France-Presse 2018: 1).

Opponents to independence often cite the financial benefits, such as the relative economic stability they have thanks to their connections with France; this is especially true for Tahiti and its thriving tourism sector. For Temaru self-determinative governance has much more to give the people of French Polynesia as there are important cultural, spiritual and environmental ramifications for independence. “We have to prepare, educate our people how important [it is] to us, to us as a nation to be able to control our own destiny, to be ourselves. We have so [much] wealth and resources in this huge Pacific Ocean. It belongs to us” (Reeves & Hunt 2012: 2). This echoes the *Island of Hope*, as it states:

Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea. The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and distribution of resources with the absence of the selfish pursuit of wealth. While Western economic growth the traditional economics of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives; caring and concern for others within the extended families and compassion for all people, especially for the sick and elderly are values of the communities; respect, hospitality, generosity, and forgiveness are other marks of the traditional communities. Nobody is excluded (World Council of Churches 2001: 7).

New Caledonia, Bougainville, and French Polynesia are by no means the only nations continuing to fight for independence in the Pacific. There are a number of independence movements gathering momentum including West Papua (currently held as a territory of Indonesia), Rapa Nui (Easter Island, currently held as a territory of

Chile), Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Rotuma Islands in Fiji, Banaba Island in Kiribati, and the Cook Islands (currently in free association with Aotearoa New Zealand). In many ways the independence movements currently building momentum in Oceania point to a re-imagined future that draws inspiration from the cultural, spiritual and environmental understanding of the Pacific's prehistoric past.

As the above excerpt from the *Island of Hope* illustrates, independence and self-determinative governance will be closely tied to fiscal responsibility and resource management. For example, New Caledonia has significant nickel reserves, while Bougainville has significant copper serves, and both mined resources would be dramatically renegotiated upon independence. It is also not surprising that monetary value of these natural resources and associated Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) make the controlling nations disinclined to relinquish these assets. As the *Island of Hope* notes on the meaning and logic of economic globalization:

Making no reference to basic needs of the community, this economic paradigm assumes that wants are unlimited, while the means to satisfy them are limited. The most efficient allocation of these scarce resources is secured through setting the prices via the competitive market mechanism. The recurring theme of IMF, World Bank, WTO literature is summed up in the expression “set prices right.” Given this organizing principle, earth's resources become raw materials and the global commons, such as the ocean, atmosphere, forests, and even individual labour power are subordinated to capital...The big truth that development of a community is culturally rooted is simply thrown overboard (World Council of Churches 2001: 9).

The independence movements gathering force across all of the Pacific – in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia – can also be seen as a rejection of economic globalisation and environmental exploitation. As the global market “aggravates existing inequality

and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent” (World Council of Churches 2001: 12). The Oceanian independence movements are defiance of and resistance to the status quo, and are a manifestation of a desire to create an alternative to the present. The future is re-imagined and re-made in culturally, spiritually and environmentally appropriate understandings of “Pacifness”.



## 6.6 Landfall

Like all good voyages, let us now return to the same shore where we started. As I stipulated in the introduction of this document that the divine and hope in the Pacific are intimately connected. In every island of the Pacific, in every village, in nearly every home you will find God. Importantly, then, religion, spiritual practices and God have tremendous influence on those who call the Pacific Islands home and hope for a long and prosperous future in Oceania.

In pursuing a deeper understanding of the divine and hope in the Pacific in my own research, I have used the *Island of Hope* as a lens through which to guide my undertaking. For the *Island of Hope* is many things – an ecumenical document, a formal study of globalisation in Oceania, and a Pacific renaissance ideal, which offers unique Oceanian insights, and calls for all people of conscience to engage in nature-based and people-maximising solutions to environmental and social issues. These “wicked” socioeconomic and environmental issues are a manifestation of human selfishness and greed, as is made explicit in the *Island of Hope* and through the scholarship of His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, the Head of State of Independent State of Samoa (Batie 2008; World Council of Churches 2001: 9-12; Gard 2016 np).

As we have seen, the *Island of Hope* also critiques the entangled historic contexts of colonialism, capitalism and globalisation in Oceania, while in parallel offering a means for viewing the social relationality of the present and a possible, re-imagined future. Ultimately the *Island of Hope* offers a re-envisioned future in which Oceania is a global leader which serves to navigate the rest of the world to this new, brave future. A future that embraces the “Kingdom of God [and] includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace. Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference...” (World Council of Churches 2001: 8).

Next, I argue that through the *Island of Hope* lens the theological concept of community, interdependence, relationality and solidarity become a metaphysical understanding of the very nature of God. In turn, “[t]he *mana* (energy, power) of our theological and hermeneutical reflections is God. As such, our hermeneutical journey for self-determination about life, creation and humanity must be rooted in the Triune God” (Pacific Council of Churches 2011: 3). It is through this understanding of God that the *Island of Hope* gives Pacific Island theologians, politicians, civil rights advocates, and environmental campaigners the ability – *the mana* – to unify the vastness of Oceania, to push aside the difference and conflicts, to collapse space and time, and focus rather on aspects of unity, cohesion, and solidarity.

Critically, I argue that how we imagine and re-imagine is far more important than how we are imagined. For the French social scientist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu the “symbolic struggle” is the power to impose your vision of the world upon your surroundings over the cultural production of meaning (Bourdieu 1985). The *Island of Hope* then is a way in which Pacific Islanders can re-imagine themselves and their collective future, to include and exclude, to transition between the micro and macro, shift between the individual and the group, the rural and the urban, the village and the region, the past and the future, the piece and the whole – all of which are elements of the global that simultaneously embrace, reject, consume and construct the local. Crucially it is this ability to manifest reality – to “determine, delimit, and define the always open meaning of the present” that the *Island of Hope* inspires and achieves (Bourdieu, 1985: 728). Further, according to Bourdieu, “[t]o change the world, one has to change the ways of world making” which is exactly what the *Island of Hope* advocates, and calls on all Christians to openly change the ways of world-making here and now (Bourdieu 1989: 23).

‘Eveli Hau‘ofa understood how important social imagination and re-imagination was in the Pacific, most especially in the realms of the political and spiritual. For Hau‘ofa a metaphor could and did transform the way in which an individual, community and region viewed themselves. Consider that the Tongan word *heliaki* is similar to the

English word metaphor. The Pacific anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler<sup>53</sup> explains *heliaki* and metaphor thusly:

The important aesthetic concept here is *heliaki*, indirectness (to say one thing but mean another), which requires special knowledge and skill to compose and understand. The composer manifests *heliaki* in metaphor and layered meaning, skirting a subject and approaching it repeatedly from different angles. Hidden meanings must be unravelled layer by layer until they can be understood, for one cannot apprehend the poetry by simply examining it (Kaeppler 1993: 497).

The *Island of Hope* is also a grand *heliaki*, a metaphor with layered meaning, at once knowable and unknown, and an ever-shifting kaleidoscope. As Hau'ofa notes, “[h]uman reality is human creation. If we fail to create our own someone else will do it for us by default” (Hau'ofa 1993: 128-129). This too is why the complex process of representing Pacific cultures has been the necessary and crucial focus of many Pacific Island authors' work (Hau'ofa 1975; Wendt 1987; Hereniko & Teaiwa 1993; Trask 1991; Osorio 1995; Mahina 1999; Smith 1999, White & Tengan 2001).

It follows then that different ways of delineating, understanding and identifying Oceanian spaces, places and peoples continue in the Pacific today. This is what the *Island of Hope* is attempting to do in its own way. As previously touched upon in Chapter One, a general dichotomy can be found between indigenous identities located in attachments to land, ancestries and spirituality, and identities informed through travel, relocation, dislocation and the establishment of diasporic communities in Oceania. It can be challenging to move past this dichotomy and to negotiate the associated tensions, and to ultimately unify such tremendous diversity. Still, consider that as one reads Hau'ofa, it is clear that the sea is not just a practical economic

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<sup>53</sup> Kaeppler is a former Bishop Museum employee whom I had the pleasure of meeting in the mid-2000s at the Museum. Kaeppler is now the Curator of Oceanic Ethnology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

resource or romantic backdrop, but rather it is a *heliaki*, an imaginative resource as well – “The sea is not merely our omnipresent, empirical reality, equally important it is our most wonderful metaphor for just about anything we can think of” (Hau’ofa 2008: 51). I argue that the oneness of life and the *heliaki* of possibility are at the core of the *Island of Hope*. Thus, as I have shown in some ways in this document, the *Island of Hope* manifests in dissimilar forms in a variety of areas across Oceania, much like Hau’ofa’s sea, and it too is a wonderful metaphor for anything we can think of and all that we can achieve.



## Epilogue

Following my departure from the field in January 2017, the global climate crisis has only compounded. For example, in May 2019 the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawai'i, reached 415 parts per million (Hawaii News Now 2019). This “comes as scientists are predicting that carbon dioxide levels will increase faster in 2019 than in the last two years... Earth's atmosphere has not contained that much carbon dioxide in more than three million years. Back then, the average temperature of the globe was much higher—and Antarctica had forests” (Hawaii News Now 2019: 1).

There are scientific reports and media headlines regularly noting mass extinctions in various environmental zones of the Earth, news bulletins on the continuing migrant crisis in Europe and Africa, and daily updates on the escalating military tensions in a number of troubled regions of the world. Our fate seems increasingly uncertain with our precious Earth hanging perilously in the balance. And at times of uncertainty, when the political, social and ecological worlds around us are in turmoil, it is understandable to dream of a different world, to create a utopian island where life is reimagined, free from such pressing daily concerns and dire situations. Humanity after all has been re-imagining and re-envisioning new worlds for millennia.

The cynics among us tend to dismiss such utopian dreams and attempts at heavens on Earth as trivial nonsense and little more than the seeds of revolutions that will never come to fruition. As you may know, the word utopia was popularised by Thomas More's 16<sup>th</sup>-century novel of the same name, with the Greek etymology of the word translating as a “no-place” – a perfect, yet impossible place. I argue that utopianism is not a “no-place” – it is a philosophy that can include a tremendous variety of thought and ambitions to create a new and improved world. Furthermore, I argue, utopianism is the first step in “world making” as Bourdieu calls it, and has and does serve to inspire positive change. It is powerful to declare the present is no longer acceptable and things can and *must* be different. I think now of the influential historic examples of Martin Luther-King's dream of a world free of racial hatred and segregation, Ghandi's



campaigning for Indian independence and for the rights of the poor, and the suffragettes around the world who worked tirelessly to achieve a measure of equality under the law and the right for women to vote.

Now it is the environment and humanity's understanding of our one world, our one island, our one canoe, that utopian ideas have coalesced around to create "ecotopian" aspirations. This can be seen with 350.org and the Pacific Climate Warriors, and more recently with Extinction Rebellion, which formed in the summer of 2018 in the UK. Extinction Rebellion has gained global attention following their environmental campaigning in London, where they have blocked roads and bridges, while calling for an immediate and aggressive transition to a carbon-free world. Other ecotopian tenets include affordable healthcare, education, housing and reduced income inequality through taxation and living wages; and these are being brought to the fore in the US with the Green New Deal legislation currently in Congress.

Utopian philosophy breaks through the restrictive worldview of the present and opens up reality to the possibility of a re-imagined future. Surely, as the *Island of Hope* outlines, a just society for all without extreme inequality and environmental degradation is within the bounds of achievable possibility. No one is saying it will be easy, as the *Island of Hope* rightly notes,

[t]his choice is costly. It requires us to share what we have. It demands of us a commitment to give up what binds us to the system that exploits and enslaves our sisters and brothers (Mark 10:17-31). It leads into conflict and perhaps into persecution (Mark 10: 32-34). Making this choice is a question of life and death. We are obliged to choose between serving God or Mammon, power or people. Everyone, politicians and business people included, are responsible for the consequences of their actions. We will be held accountable by the people who suffer the consequences (World Council of Churches 2001: 12).

Distinctively the *Island of Hope* is a Pacific renaissance ideal and unifying force that embraces utopian philosophy from a theological and biblical perspective. For “[r]econciliation with God and reconciliation with the rest of God’s creation are not alternatives but natural partners. In the end they are inseparable...and in the crises of our contemporary world both are urgent needs... And finding our place in the biblical meta-narrative – reconciliation of all things in Christ – will help to sustain hope in dark times” (Bauckham 2010: 178).

Now let me return once more to something I shared in Chapter Six – *Another World is Possible*, where I served as a facilitator at the Pacific Theology College’s *Relational Hermeneutics and Reshaping the Pacific Conference* in Suva, Fiji. The role of facilitator was an especially unique and fascinating experience for me, in that I provided the previous day’s summation at the start of every day of the conference. Through this process, conference delegates’ ideas, words and reflections became my words and reflections the following day. The delegates’ presentations and reflections were filtered through my perspective and in turn with my emphasis placed on the issues I thought most pressing and in need of further reflection, such as gender equity in the Church as touched upon in Chapter Two.

Though the facilitation process was at times surreal, I considered it the high-water mark of my fieldwork, in that I had never understood the ramifications of the *Island of Hope* more fully. On the third day of the conference during the morning coffee break, after I had delivered the previous day’s summation of presentations and discussions, several of the conference delegates expressed how much they appreciated my facilitation. I wasn’t expecting that, but I thanked them and shared what a pleasure it was to be with them. Then one delegate proceeded to call me a prophet, and several others agreed. I was taken aback and for several seconds questioned if they were being facetious, but I realised they were being quite sincere, and embarrassed I said, “No, no, now you’ve gone too far!”

This exchange has stayed with me. I have puzzled over what it might have meant and have concluded it was a respectful way of including me in the conference and making

sense of my presence in their world. In the following years since leaving Fiji and my fieldwork, I have written in various public contexts about my experiences and the *Island of Hope*. One might even say I have proselytised. So in a certain sense the delegates were correct that day. It is my hope that the *Island of Hope* is indeed prophetic and that it is just over the horizon.



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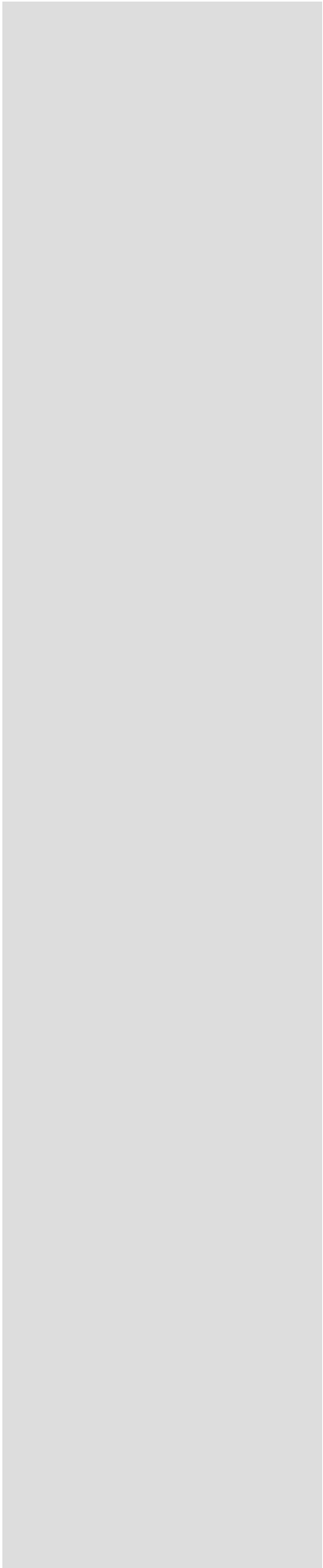
## **Appendix**

THE ISLAND OF HOPE:  
AN ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

DOSSIER NO. 7

**CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction                                    | 3  |
| The Island of Hope Statement- Fiji Consultation | 4  |
| Youth Voices Against Globalization              | 17 |
| Serve God Not Mammon Statement                  | 19 |



## INTRODUCTION

The world Council of Churches, The World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Council of European Churches have in 2001 organized consultations on churches' response to economic globalization. These consultations are part of a series which will take place regionally and globally till 2005. The idea is that after all consultations are done, an ecumenical group will be appointed to prepare a message of the churches on economic globalization which will be presented to churches and subsequently to the WCC Assembly in 2006.

This Dossier is composed of statements made by the consultations which were held in Budapest Hungary, June 2001 and Fiji- The Pacific in August 2001.

The Fiji Consultation was preceded by a consultation of Youth on the same subject. The youth statement is included as well.

This 7<sup>th</sup> dossier is named "The Island of Hope: An Alternative to Economic Globalization", in order to trigger thoughts and actions on alternatives to economic globalization from the islands of the Pacific Region and other regions of the world. A document on the "The Island of Hope" as a concept will be published and shared with the churches.

The dossier is aimed at only availing this information to our readers while inviting comments.



## THE ISLAND OF HOPE - AN ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

**AS** representatives of fifty-one churches, ecumenical and civil society organizations, from twenty-nine countries, we met in Nadi, Fiji from August 12-16 at a Global Conference on Economic Globalization: The Island of Hope. We share the conviction of the Pacific Churches and commit ourselves to this vision as well:

*“Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalization which entails domination through an unjust economic system.”*<sup>1</sup>

As we begin the millennium the churches find themselves confronted by the consequences of the process of economic globalization. It has become apparent to many of us that the negative aspects of economic globalization are incompatible with the reign of God and our discipleship with Christ. There is something seriously wrong with an economic system that produces so much suffering and poverty, exploitation of labour and widespread environmental devastation.

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<sup>1</sup> from the Island of Hope : The Pacific Churches Response to Economic Globalization, p. 13

This global conference met in the Pacific Island of Fiji at the invitation of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Central to the meeting was the presentation of a document called “The Island of Hope” that will be distributed by the WCC together with this statement. For the Pacific Churches “The Island of Hope” represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity.

Today the ecumenical movement is faced with a profound challenge. This challenge is posed by a competing vision to that of *oikoumene*, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth<sup>2</sup>. This competing vision is part and parcel of economic globalization. In its negative effects economic globalization becomes an expression of the emerging global system of domination, of one ideology, one political system, one international coalition of the wealthy and the powerful.

The Christian vision of One World is a vision of compassion for the weak and the marginalized. It is a vision of cooperation with all people of goodwill in defense of creation. It is a vision of solidarity with those forced to survive the tidal waves of injustice sweeping across our globe.

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<sup>2</sup> *oikoumene* is the Greek word for the whole inhabited earth, God’s household of life; the word *oikos* means house or household so that economy is about the ordering of the household and ecology about its logic.

Churches and many people have come to recognize that this is a “kairos”<sup>3</sup> – a time for resistance and a time for alternatives. It is a time for the churches to offer prophetic guidance and leadership to the world. In order to do this the WCC has been consulting its member churches around the world to find acceptable alternatives. Other consultations in Bangkok and Budapest helped churches to better understand and challenge not only the logic of economic globalization, but also the underlying paradigm, the major actors, and the loss of sovereignty and democratic control it entails. In Fiji we were inspired by “The Island of Hope” presented to us by the churches of the Pacific Islands.

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<sup>3</sup> *Kairos* is another Greek word for the right moment, a moment of crisis and a chance for something new to begin, when a clear Christian witness is required. The “*kairos* document” was a wake up call in the struggle against apartheid.



## VISION

The “Island of Hope” is a fitting expression of the global, ecumenical concept of the Kingdom of God in the Pacific context. Jesus called us into this Kingdom of God. God’s inheritance is one of generosity and reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources. It requires hospitality to the stranger and the affirmation of all human beings as sisters and brothers in the family of God.

The values of globalization as the people of the Pacific experience them, stand in stark contrast to the values of the Kingdom taught by Jesus<sup>4</sup>, while the traditional values of the Pacific Island societies are similar to Kingdom values.

We are not saying that the traditional values of Pacific Island societies are identical with the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus. We are all too conscious that negative forces were also at work and traditional ideals were not always lived out in Pacific societies. However, if the best of Pacific’s lived traditions are put together, they offer viable alternatives to the destructive ways associated with globalization.

“The Island of Hope” is life-centred, affirming the very soul of the Pacific Islanders. The concepts of **whenua**, **fenua**, **enua**, **vanua**<sup>5</sup> all mean that the land is the people’s identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea. The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and distribution of resources with the absence of the selfish pursuit of wealth. While Western economics revolve around profit and economic growth,

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<sup>4</sup> cf. Island of Hope document p.12

<sup>5</sup> This is a common word, only differently pronounced in different Pacific languages.

the traditional economies of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives; caring and concern for others within the extended families and compassion for all people, especially for the sick and elderly are values of the communities; respect, hospitality, generosity, and forgiveness are other marks of the traditional communities. Nobody is excluded.

The land, the sea and people are integral parts of one entity. Subsistence farming, a sustainable agriculture and the sensitivity of the sacredness of the trees and the sea are part of their identity. While traditionally these values operated mainly within the context of the wider family or clan, Jesus challenges us to extend them to all, because we are all members of the family of God.

Over many years the World Council of Church has articulated criteria to help its members discern the difference between islands of hope and reefs of despair. In the presentation on the Island of Hope we recognize our own ecumenical journey. For example:

- Responsibility – one of the oldest traditions of the Christian Church is that power and privilege carries equivalent social responsibility. The most powerful people, churches, nations and corporations bear the most responsibility for addressing the problems of the world. It is also true that we must be accountable for the consequences of our actions.
- Justice – The Christian Churches follow Jesus Christ and the Prophetic tradition in demanding a right relationship with God and with our neighbours. This means recognizing and defending the

human rights of all God's children and an equitable sharing of all the world's resources.

- Participation – The dignity of every person is compromised without the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The World Council of Churches has consistently supported these historic struggles.
- Sustainability – Human technological capacity is struggling with the sin of pride by refusing to acknowledge that only God is without limits. The ecological limits of the globe are being challenged as well as the social limits of human communities.
- Peace – The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Peace, not violence, a Kingdom of Reconciliation not militarism. God can only be glorified when peace on earth is enjoyed by ALL the people of God, especially women and children, minorities and the vulnerable.
- Integrity of Creation – The Kingdom of God includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace.

Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalization represents a world of compassion or indifference, a world of solidarity or domination and oppression, an ocean of hope or despair.

The Island of Hope challenges us to recognize God's presence in all of the cultures of the world. When we affirm the integrity of local culture, we resist the temptation to stand alone, each on our own island, for as disciples of Christ we are called to stand together.

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## ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION: MEANING AND LOGIC

Economic globalization has different meanings for different people, groups and communities. Highlighting the basic characteristics, we may define economic globalization as a process of

- transnationalization of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance capital round the globe, round the clock,
- process of centralization of capital via mergers and acquisitions,
- transnationalization of production, e.g. the sales of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) is over \$14 trillion as against an export trade of just half of it,
- standardization of consumer tastes,
- legitimization of the process by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO).
- unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed “rulers” in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimization by democratic processes.

The theoretical rationale of this process is rooted in the assumptions of neo-classical economics. Making no reference to basic needs of the community, this economic paradigm assumes that wants are unlimited, while the means to satisfy them are limited. The most efficient allocation of these scarce resources is secured through setting the prices via the competitive market mechanism. The recurring theme of IMF, World Bank, WTO literature is summed up in the expression “set prices right”. Given this organizing principle, earth’s resources become raw materials and the global commons, such as the ocean, atmosphere, forests and even individual labour power are subordinated to capital.

Indeed, it legitimizes exclusion and non-participation of the weak and less endowed by its own logic. It rationalizes expansion unto the end of the earth and has coined such widely used phrases like “developed countries”, “developing countries”, “least developed countries” and so on. The big truth that development of a community is culturally rooted is simply thrown overboard. Now what are the consequences?

## THE IMPACT

In the midst of increasing plenty, rapid technological advancement, export-led growth (devaluation, export-zones etc.), we encounter deepening poverty, including unemployment (“jobless” growth), intolerable inequality, destruction of life-support systems and continuing exclusion and marginalization. The number of absolute poor in South Asia has doubled in less than three decades. Although poverty has decreased in East Asia, the number of absolute poor is around 278 million, bigger than the size of USA’s population.

Africa and its people exemplify the worst case of exclusion and deprivation. Environmental degradation puts additional pressure on poor communities. Africa has a large refugee population in distress. The situation is further aggravated by the HIV/Aids pandemic. The number of people who earn less than one dollar per day is over 1.5 billion of which 70% are women.

People in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalization. The rate of unemployed people, poor people, street children is also growing in highly industrialized countries. In the field of employment, the key words under economic globalization regime are informalization, casualization and feminization of labour. Typical is the case of

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While developing countries sink deeper and deeper into debt, the value of finance capital transactions delinked from production in a year is over 600 trillion dollars per annum. This game continues merrily although the East Asia crisis is still not yet over, and Argentine, Turkey,

Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Indonesia are today facing acute foreign exchange crisis and debt problems. This is to be seen along with the fact that the estimated reverse flow of resources to the North by way of debt repayment, royalties, brain drain, adverse terms of trade is over \$500 billion.

Under the rules of WTO regime, but with the whip of sanctions held before them, the

developing countries face food insecurity, depressing agricultural prices and marginalization of small farmer categories. Subsidies to inputs, operating costs, preferential user charges, public distribution system are “actionable categories”, under the WTO Agreements. The interests of developing countries, which are home to the vast majority of known species and

thus very rich in their biodiversity, cannot be served under the regime of the Agreement on Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPs). As it is today, TRIPs can serve only corporate interests such as biotech industries and corporate plant breeders.

Through their voting power and control USA<sup>6</sup> and other G7<sup>7</sup> countries manage the IMF and WB and the economic and financial management in a substantial measure. The US dollar remains the effective reserve currency and international media of exchange. Being the unchallenged super power backed by military and support of G-7, USA is virtually the policeman of the world and controls the empire of finance capital. The impact of economic globalization cannot be evaluated independently of policies of this super power.

All these have to be seen and understood in the background of the crisis of governance the nation-states of the world encounter today. While they have to roll back their intervention in favour of the private sector, which includes even cutting expenditure on vital areas like education, health or social security, or abdicating responsibility in terms of public utilities and governing them efficiently the people of the developing world face their moment of truth.

Youth in particular are affected by the negative impacts of economic globalization.

The lack of new jobs hurts the young first. The loss of jobs make the young vulnerable to violence, drugs and even suicide. Social and environmental dete-

rioration is the struggle for upcoming generations and threatens their future. If youth lose their hope, then the whole society will suffer.

Women are the most victims of globalization in the North *and* in the South because they do most of the unpaid work in the informal sector and the hardest and lowest work in the formal sector. Women often accept any job to help their families to survive. This is misused by the TNCs to undermine efforts regarding the implementation of social standards in their own operations.

The devastating social effects are accompanied by destruction of the natural environment. The United States, the single largest polluter alone accounts for 25 % of world's total carbon emissions. Global warming is a threat to communities all around the world. People in Africa experience changing rainfall patterns with droughts on the one hand and devastating floods on the other. The Pacific islands are especially vulnerable. They contribute only 0,6% to the greenhouse gas emissions, yet they will sink, if people in other parts of the world and especially in the most polluting countries in the North do not act. The US government, however, and corporations active in mining, car production and the energy sector, work actively against even modest measures to decrease greenhouse gas emission proposed by the Kyoto protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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<sup>6</sup> Armed with Super 301 and Special 301, the USA puts itself virtually above WTO or other international regulatory mechanism.

<sup>7</sup> USA, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy.

## MAKING A CHOICE

“Serve God not Mammon” (cf. Mt 6:24) was the title of the message of the Budapest consultation of Churches in Central and Eastern Europe in June 2001. The ethics of economic globalization are ethics of competition and domination, which favours individualism and fosters consumerism at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of the community of life. The ethics of “The Island of Hope” are based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God’s care for creation and Christ’s teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor.

Following Christ, we must make a choice. We oppose the ethics of economic globalization and join others who do the same. This choice is costly. It requires us to share what we have. It demands of us a commitment to give up what binds us to the system that exploits and enslaves our sisters and brothers (Mk 10: 17-31). It leads into conflict and perhaps into persecution (Mk 10:32-34). Making this choice is a question of life and death.

We are obliged to choose between serving God or Mammon, power or people. Everyone, politicians and business people included, are responsible for the consequences of their actions. We will be held accountable by the people who suffer the

consequences. We have a chance to turn around (Mt 6:12.13). We also hear the promise of the Gospel that choosing life will create an alternative and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity (Mt 14:13-21; Acts 2:41-47) in response to the prayer “that all may be one as we are one” (Joh 17:11).

The project of economic globalization pretends with religious fervour that

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economic growth, free flow of capital and the allocation of resources and goods through the market mechanism serve the common

good. But the market as an instrument is amoral and does not automatically lead to more justice and quality of life. It rather aggravates existing inequality and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent.

The movement to struggle against economic globalization is growing. There are many positive examples for action taken by people in North and South. This movement is confronted with the powerful forces of economic globalization that are promoted by global media, massive advertisement for consumer goods and even military presence and interventions. The existing alternatives, however, motivate and inspire the movement to continue its struggle.

## ALTERNATIVES

Churches and communities are defending, affirming and announcing that solidarity and love among human beings are central values in life. These values, although they are not priced at the Market, have the strength of God. Solidarity with the Pacific churches and people promoting “The Island of Hope” is an expression of our common struggle and our common search for alternatives to face economic globalization. “The Island of Hope” and the alternatives inspired by it resonate all around the world:

From Africa we heard about the concept of “UBUNTU”; going back into ourselves and the knowledge of our communities, to find solutions to problems, through sharing traditional values of inclusiveness, sense of community, reconciliation, participation, dialogue, partnership, hospitality and fellowship.

UBUNTU inspires work for a people-centred economy, that provides food security, the exchange of goods and services, especially by women.

Participants from Asia showed us the concepts of “gotong-royong” (togetherness), in Indonesia, “bayanihan” (collective living), in the Phillipines, “panchasila” (five principles of peaceful living), in India, “daedong yundae” (great solidarity), in Korea, against the culture of domination, competition and individualism, taught by economic globalization. Asia’s richness has secured the food and basic needs of the developed countries, leaving people to share the leftovers among themselves. Asia has a potential but neglected and exploited domestic economy that needs to be recovered, protected and maximized.

Sharing and attending to one’s another needs is a central element in the lives of the Pacific people as stated in “The Island of Hope”. Cooperation and partnership recognizing mutual

Subsistence economy is still important for the life of the people and merits much more attention and support compared to the destructive effects of the monetarized economy and the spirit of competition that accompanies it.

interdependence is an alternative to economic globalization based on individualism and dominance. Subsistence economy is still important for the life of the people and merits much more attention and support compared to the destructive effects of the monetarized economy and the spirit of competition that accompanies it.

Western European and Canadian participants underlined the importance of sharing and interdependence in churches’ networks worldwide. Examples were presented of people active in advocacy campaigns and developing alternatives to the consumerist lifestyle, e.g. fair trade and ecological products, or more ecological transport systems. Highlighted were also alternative forms of financial investments like oikocredit and others, which are supported by people in industrialized countries.

The group from Central and Eastern Europe pointed to the importance of protecting the spiritual heritage of the countries in the region, caring for family as a basic unit of society and encouraging the value of sharing. Participants from Latin America and the Caribbean reminded us about communal values shared by their Indigenous cultures. Building on their teachings, poor and unemployed develop alternatives such as bartering systems, communal-collective labour, and the sharing of food. They practice economies of solidarity.

We were also reminded of the vital contributions of women's networks that oppose male domination entrenched in economic oppression. We heard of the enormous experience of Indigenous Peoples communities all around the world that live alternatives of collective labour, bartering and sharing of food and shelter as values opposed to private-corporate neo-liberalism. We also want express our appreciation for the important contributions of the youth participants in our meeting and for the document of the youth consultation on "The Island of Hope" that preceded our consultation. Youth celebrates the joy of dreaming and acting passionately to overcome selfishness and isolation, deadly values brought up by economic globalization.

The rich sharing between the regions shows that there are many different forms of life in community and economies helping people to survive and live in dignity. Christianity had to learn the hard way that the good news of the Gospel has to be contextualized in order to be meaningful for God's people in their diversity. The same applies to the economy. The economy is to serve and not to dominate the society. The concrete shape needs to be different according to the social, cultural, environmental and historical conditions of societies and their value systems. In each situation it has uniquely to be decided, which kind of political framework and intervention is

The economy is to serve and not to dominate the society. The concrete shape needs to be different according to the social, cultural, environmental and historical conditions of societies and their value systems. In each situation it has uniquely to be decided, which kind of political framework and intervention is necessary to make the economy function, how to find the right balance between state, communal and private initiatives, between local and global orientation, production and consumption.

necessary to make the economy function, how to find the right balance between state, communal and private initiatives, between local and global orientation, production and consumption.

Given the formidable challenges thrown up by economic globalization, alternative strategies have to be envisaged on three levels: long term, medium term and short term.

Keeping the vision of a just society and world order as against the corporate utopia now under way, the following measures were discussed during the meeting:

Campaign to restructure global institutions based on a global constituent assembly from which a peoples' assembly and new financial architecture will be created.

Vital issues like global accumulation without responsibility, transparency and accountability to the global community, drug trafficking and money laundering, rampant sex tourism including child prostitution, globalization of crime, global gambling and speculation, unjust international division of labour, widening inequality of income should engage the agenda of any UN assembly.

The dominant technological paradigm that keeps people redundant must yield to one that absorbs more labour and less pollution. This is the value of a new world order which will encompass the following medium term measures:

- work for local self government and participatory governance;



- implement a code of conduct for TNCs;
- introduce a tax on incoming finance capital and a fund to provide for better health for all

“The Island of Hope”, as we experienced it during these days, calls the churches and the ecumenical organizations to:

- Strengthen and continue the process of clarification, critique and work on proposing alternatives to economic globalization.
- Work on a theology of reconstruction and deconstruction that promotes communities of life and wholeness, which affirm human dignity and build confidence.
- Be fully involved in the struggles of the people, specially churches that are rooted in communities where the poor and the deprived live.
- Support regions in their own efforts and outcomes and the exchange among them..
- Call on the churches to provide opportunities for young people to be educated on the implications and effects of a globalized economy so that young people can strengthen their faith, values and dreams and bring them to reality.
- Call on the youth of the world to participate and be active on initiatives by churches and the ecumenical movement. Their gifts as youth are needed in the struggle for justice and abundant life
- Make sure that the Decade to Overcome Violence addresses the economic root causes of violence in its many forms.
- Co-operate with social movements, such as World Social Forum, Focus on Global South, Third World Network, Jubilee South and others.
- Encourage the development of traditional economies. Subsistence economies, for instance, need to be re-evaluated and seen as partial alternatives to globalization-especially in developing countries. Subsistence production ensures self-

sufficiency, sustainability, food security, livelihood for many and it is important that the existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) be acknowledged and applauded. The cash economy alone does not have to dominate the world.

- Organize encounters with International Financial Institution’s and the World Trade Organization not focusing on how to make the prevailing economic model work, but how to make it different.
- Work for radical changes in the current economic system that:
  - Put people first.
  - Restore national and people’s control over development.
  - End protectionism in the world’s richest countries.
  - Give priority to the poor.
  - Make multinationals accountable and transparent to civil society
  - Make international organizations (IMF, World Bank, WTO) subject to democratic decision-making.
  - Build democratic space for genuine debate.
  - Regulate financial transactions with instruments that avoid flying capitals or speculation, such as currency transaction tax.
  - Help in the enforcing of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Every country is responsible on reducing air pollution.
  - Learn from the experience of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) and work towards an Exxon boycott<sup>8</sup> as a method of the work on Climate Change.

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<sup>8</sup> Especially youth supported this initiative to boycott Exxon Mobil by a number of Environmental NGOs, see [www.stopesso.com](http://www.stopesso.com)

## AFFIRMATION OF THE ISLAND OF HOPE

The Pacific Islander delegates have called the churches and ecumenical organizations to be in solidarity and participate in the prophetic voice of the Island of Hope. They have begun to work for an alternative to economic globalization with the small Pacific Islands coming together in solidarity. World-wide partnership in solidarity, which is a reflection of the triune God's partnership, will set free unthinkable potential and positive transformation in the world.

The representatives of different regions brought together by the WCC have received the Pacific Churches' response to economic globalization: Island of Hope. They expressed their thanksgiving and our solidarity with the people and churches in the Pacific. The document on the Island of Hope will be sent to churches and ecumenical organizations all around the world together with this report.

The sharing of stories and values of the Pacific not only inspired all of us together but challenged everybody to accompany the Pacific people in their struggle against injustice. This meeting has helped all of us to better understand the struggle of the people in the Pacific region and also to see how well Pacific values resonate in other parts of the world. We want to assure the people of the Pacific that their struggle is our struggle and their concern is our concern.

Encourage the development of traditional economies. Subsistence economies, for instance, need to be re-evaluated and seen as partial alternatives to globalization—especially in developing countries. Subsistence production ensures self-sufficiency, sustainability, food security, livelihood for many and it is important that the existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) be acknowledged and applauded. The cash economy alone does not have to dominate the world.

## YOUTHFUL VOICES AGAINST GLOBALIZATION

*Participants from thirty countries are meeting in Nadi, Fiji, this week to discuss alternatives to economic globalization. The meeting is being organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) with the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and is the third in a series of regional and global consultations on this topic. Below, Bob Scott of the WCC Public Information team reports on a meeting of young people that preceded the consultation.*

“Never before has it been so important for young people to search for alternatives to the current dynamics of globalization. It is our future that is being threatened.” That was the view of a large group of young people meeting in Nadi, Fiji this week. Brought together by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), they came from fifteen Pacific island states and were joined by other young people from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In their four-day meeting, the young people identified four major areas of concern: global warming, information technology, culture, and the economy.

Participants from the Pacific said that the emission of greenhouse gases, mainly from countries in Europe and the USA, has drastic consequences in their region. A rise in temperature from 1.5 to 6 degrees centigrade will have a devastating effect on the already-fragile ecosystems of the Pacific. If the sea level rises by 80 centimeters, islands that now are only 3 meters above sea level will be threatened with extinction. Already some island people have had to be relocated - refugees not from war but from ecological greed. “Is this a form of racism? The people in Northern countries don’t care what hap-

pens to us as long as they get what they want. Do they believe their lifestyle is more important than ours?” asks 21-year-old Betero Bebia from Kiribati.

As young people, the group acknowledged the exciting possibilities of expanding technologies and recognized the significance of instant access to research results, online

training and studies. But the positive aspects of communications development are balanced by a darker side: the volume of financial transactions

and speculation now possible due to the new technologies leaves their fragile economies even more vulnerable. “As our world expands through technology, so does our vulnerability,” judges Fonofonosefulu Margaret-Marie Maene from American Samoa.

The young people were also clear about the pernicious influence of pornographic sites on the Internet, reaching into young minds and corrupting carefully nurtured values.

Every visitor to any Pacific island is immediately struck by the strength of Pacific culture in song, dance and hospitality. That is the side of the culture tourists see and enjoy. Proud of their culture, the Pacific participants are feeling the increasing influence of western lifestyles and consumerism. Says

“Never before has it been so important for young people to search for alternatives to the current dynamics of globalization. It is our future that is being threatened.”

Makoni Pulu from Tonga, who is a member of the PCC staff, “People in the West understand that poor people are those who have no resources. But because our culture of communal sharing is so strong, for us the poor person is the one who has no family or friends.”

The group recognized the benefits that tourism has brought to their region, especially employment opportunities. “But on the other hand, tourism is robbing the people of the Pacific of income generated in our own islands, because so much of the tourist industry is owned by foreign companies,” says 18-year-old Davina Hosking from the Cook Islands (Raratonga).

“The economic wealth of our islands is being enjoyed by people who have no home here, no stake in what happens to us as people, and who may one day abandon us. How can we trust them?” asks 25-year-old Richard Tatwin from Vanuatu.

A strong and positive vision emerged from the exchange. “Let Christ be the Island of Hope!” the young people said. They called for more intentional education about the effects of globalization, for living out the values of equality, justice, peace and respect for diversity, for the vision of life set out by Jesus Christ, in which each person treats his/her neighbor as he/she would wish to be treated.

What alternatives did the group propose? A return to cooperation and not competition, linking young Pacific people with other

young people worldwide to work for the adoption of international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, a transformation of education systems to preserve and promote Pacific values and cultures despite the impact of globalization.

The meeting ended with a call for an economic boycott. The young people were disturbed to hear that international oil companies like Exxon have cast doubt on the findings of the scientific body of the Climate Change Convention that CO2 emissions do

indeed aggravate global warming. The young participants see this as a life and death issue. They called on churches to initiate a boycott of Exxon and will ask the WCC to follow through on this.

“People in the West understand that poor people are those who have no resources. But because our culture of communal sharing is so strong, for us the poor person is the one who has no family or friends.”

## “SERVE GOD, NOT MAMMON”

### **M**essage from the joint consultation on globalization in Central and Eastern Europe: responses to the ecological, economic and social consequences, June, 24-28, 2001, Budapest

*47 representatives of churches from Central and Eastern Europe, along with resource persons, met June 24-28 in Budapest, Hungary. They were from Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, including a presenter delegated by the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences. In addition, 30 guests and staff persons of regional and international ecumenical and civil organizations from around the world were present. All these came to Budapest at the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the WARC European Area Committee. Also accompanying the process was the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The consultation is part of the joint process on globalization of these organizations that grew out of the call of the WARC General Council in 1997 in Debrecen, Hungary for „covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth (Processus Confessionis)” and the recommendations on globalization made by the General Assembly of the World Council Churches 1998 in Harare. It is the second in a series of regional meetings that began with a symposium in Bangkok and will continue with meetings of churches in the Pacific, Western Europe, Latin America, Africa and North America. The consultation was graciously supported and hosted by the Reformed Church in Hungary, and was held at the Reformed Theological College (Raday) of Budapest.*

### **TO BE MORE VIGILANT**

About a decade ago, we, the people and churches in Central and Eastern Europe rejoiced as we realized we were free. It was as if a deep shadow had passed by and that full daylight had returned.

As we review the past ten years, it becomes clear that the magnitude and content of the problems encountered have been grossly underestimated by both governments and churches. As we listen to reports from those whose suffering is most severe, we conclude that not all their difficulties arise directly out of what happened more than ten years ago. This suggests the need to be more vigilant in our journey with the women and men of Central and Eastern Europe.

The countries in the region enjoy great cultural and religious diversity. We heard that, according to the data available,

some of them show economic growth, increasing employment and environmental improvements. In the region as a whole, however, rising unemployment and the falling value of pensions and wages has plunged millions of women and men into poverty. UNDP statistics report (cf. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS, New York 1999; <http://www.undp.org/rbec/publications>), that:

- 1989 about 14 million people in the former communistic block lived on less than four dollars a day. By the mid-nineties that number had risen to 147 million people.
- At the same time, and in sharp contrast, there has developed a new fea-

ture, that of excessive wealth for a small minority.

- Life expectancy fell significantly in some of the countries.
- Health care, schooling and education standards declined.
- Commerce based criminality grew rapidly.

This ideological emphasis on privatization at any price, has undermined existing infrastructures. Minimizing the role of the state, it left the poor without adequate protection and support and opened the door to criminal and speculative activities. Irresponsible owners who had no interest in the fate of either companies or employees bought out many of the newly privatized enterprises and banks.

## SEARCH FOR EXPLANATIONS

In relation to these facts, we felt a moral duty to search more diligently for additional explanations for the prevailing mood of disappointment and the sense of betrayal. Working in groups, the consultation examined the ecological, cultural, economic and social effects of globalization on the region. The groups produced reports containing the analysis, evaluation and proposals for alternative action that are reflected in this message. They identified two main reasons behind the present difficulties in the region.

First was the way in which the challenge of the transformation of society was handled by most authorities after 1989. Where Communism had relied on unrestricted state planning, politicians and leaders now embraced the unrestrained market-mechanism as the path to a better future. They did not recognize that a market without social, cultural, and institutional frameworks would rend the very fabric of society. External loans and financial assistance were made conditional on privatization, liberalization and deregulation of the market in the name of economic growth. This neo-liberal “shock therapy”, requiring a shrinking role for the state, simply disabled existing social provisions for ordinary women and men.

Second was the dynamic released by the new global information and communication technologies and the phenomenal expansion of new “global” markets. This is often referred to as “globalization”. In fact, “globalization” is a more complex term. Where it refers to growing possibilities for genuine co-operation between nations and peoples with opportunities for communication and common action, it has positive connotations. Our consultation, for in-

stance, benefited greatly from the participation of Christians from many continents.

It has a negative sense where it refers to the dominance exercised by an ideology legitimizing and promoting the unrestrained activities of players in the global markets, and the unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed “rulers” in the economy, the media and other spheres of life. The unregulated flow of capital becomes the arbiter of the economic goodness or badness of all human or political actions. In our consultation we made a clear distinction between this neo-liberal project, which some call “globalism”, and the historic process of “globalization” already referred to. It is driven by powerful economic self interest. It commercializes human and institutional relationships and the very sources of life – earth, water, air – and even the human body itself. The ideology, power structures and practices this project involves account for dramatic changes in the economies and societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Its immediate effect is to put pressure on governments at all levels to cut social, medical, educational and environmental expenditure in order to be “attractive” to “global” capital. Women and other vulnerable groups are the most affected by such policies.

This ideological emphasis on privatization at any price, has undermined existing infrastructures. Minimizing the role of the state, it left the poor without adequate protection and support and opened the door to criminal and speculative activities. Irresponsible owners who had no interest in the fate of either companies or employees bought out many of the newly privatized enterprises and banks. Alternative paths to ownership were hardly considered, nor was the idea that ownership brings social obligations.

## JUSTICE TO THE POOR

This confusion about “globalization” is often used as an alibi, not only by important international agencies, such as the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank, but also a growing number of national governments. They demand harsh sacrifices of ordinary women and men. They do this despite reliable evidence that economic growth fails to promote human development unless there is

- adequate support for the poor, unemployed, and other vulnerable groups;
- environmental protection;
- transparency and accountability in government, and
- effective participation by civil society (including labor unions).

Given this situation, our meeting arrived at the unequivocal conclusion:

*No authority inside or outside the region should ever escape its responsibility to do to justice to the poor and the needy by claiming the unavoidability of the requirements of globalization.*

Policies justified in this way are contrary to both scientific findings and the core of Christian faith. They have to stop unconditionally and immediately. For, as it is stated so well in the recent Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church:

“...the danger of differences that may emerge between people’s

will and international organization’s decisions should not be underestimated. These organizations may become instruments for the unfair dominion of strong over weak countries, rich over poor, the technologically and informationally developed over the rest. They may also practice double standards, by applying international law in the interest of more influential states. All this compels the Orthodox Church to call the powers that be, both on national and international levels, to utter responsibility”. (cf. The Foundations of the Social Concept of the ROC, <http://www.russian-orthodox-hurch.org.ru/sd00e.htm>)

It is vitally important for Christians to recognize that dependence upon this neo-liberal ideology has deeply spiritual implications. It compels every participant to invest his or her faith in Mammon.

It is vitally important for Christians to recognize that dependence upon this neo-liberal ideology has deeply spiritual implications. It compels every participant to invest his or her faith in Mammon. The question for us is a simple one, in whom do we put our trust and in whom do we believe. Faith in the God of life sets us free from domination by Mammon. This is not only a domain where churches can speak, but should speak. This faith, translated into appropriate actions, is the ground of hope against that despair which, until now, so characterizes the present situation – and not just in this region.



## SERVE PEOPLE, NOT POWER

### *A CALL TO GOVERNMENTS AND TO THE WIDER PUBLIC IN THE REGION*

**G**lobalization dramatically transforms the nature of power. Democratically elected governments and their delegates in international organizations lose power to increasingly influential international bureaucracies, transnational corporations, media-owners and actors in the field of financial “global” capital. We challenge these power structures, urging them to become more transparent, accountable and representative. The peoples of the world need to seize control of global political and economic processes. Democracy should be reinstated in the new forms of decision-making, at local, national and international levels.

Many political and economic processes require some kind of regulation at the international level. The need for international agreements, however, should not be employed by the state at the expense of the necessary protection of vulnerable people.

Economic globalization in its present form threatens values such as justice, charity, peace and sobriety which are rooted in Christian traditions. It replaces them with the values of unrestrained consumerism and increasing commercialization of society. Education, health care, arts, sports, the media, the environment

and even safety are increasingly dominated by financial considerations. The culture of economic rivalry is usurping the culture of social co-operation with adverse consequences for weak and vulnerable people.

Many political and economic processes require some kind of regulation at the international level. The need for international agreements, however, should not be employed by the state at the expense of the necessary protection of vulnerable people.

The guiding idea for all our recommendations is the Biblical motif of Jubilee (Lev 25, Dt 15, Neh 5, Jes 61, Luc 4). All people are entitled to the basic resources of life and the public provision that enables them to live in the household (*oikonomia*) of

God’s creation. Economies ought always to be household-orientated.

This insight leads us to the following recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Global finance should not be allowed the decisive role in national and regional economies, rendering them over-dependent on foreign direct investment and speculative capital. We strongly recommend that governments strive for the development of their home-economy, with special attention to the role of medium and small businesses, and warn them against prioritizing export-orientation at their expense.

- Local economic initiatives need to be supported. This requires the strengthening of local governments.
- Public authorities at all levels should insist on the maintenance of adequate social support for the poor and strong environmental standards and resist international financial pressure to eliminate them.

We ask governments to support the international actions of those governments and civil organizations which, in order to democratize the international monetary system, seek to regulate the flow of speculative international capital. We ask the same support, especially from the rich industrialized countries, for international efforts (like in Rio and Kyoto) in favour of the environment.

Nations seeking entry to the European Union should equip their electorate to make informed decisions through accurate and transparent evaluation of the impact on social security and other vital interests of their citizens.

- Governments should safeguard cultural values, the dignity and rights of

all women and men, and their unhindered development.

Public resources, which from a Christian perspective are designed to serve the common good, should not be recklessly privatized, whether in the name of ideology or under pressure from external donors.

- We ask governments to serve their people so that they live in dignity. Power is not an end in itself.

## CHOOSE LIFE, NOT DEATH

### A CALL TO CHURCHES

Today we are confronted by the domination of the idols of competition, consumption and comfort. The Christian understanding of oikonomia, of the world as God's household, embraces relations between people and God, social harmony and peaceful coexistence of human beings with the whole of God's creation. This urges churches and Christians to show the world the example of living according to the principles of cooperation, interdependence and compassion deeply rooted in the Trinitarian basis of our faith. We ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of discernment by which to read the signs of our time and to "distinguish the spirits".

In challenging economic globalization the church is confronted with Jesus' words, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt. 6:24). Will the churches have the courage to engage with the "values" of a profit-orientated way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the "private" sphere? This is the question our churches must answer... or lose their very soul!

The message of the Gospel and our traditions teach us neither to be acquiescent to the dominant powers of this world, nor to seek refuge from our responsibilities in private expressions of faith. Christian communities should radiate love, joy and peace, attracting others to a new way of life. We urge the

churches to raise their prophetic voice so that changes are made for the benefit every person in every part of the world. Our mission is to transform life around us and to respond to the needs of all human beings, especially those who are suffering, oppressed and marginalized. In doing so, we proclaim Christ.

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Churches need to engage in a serious way with the following questions:

- Which processes in international politics and the economy are caused by the intrinsic development of trade, information flow, cultural exchange etc. and which are the result of "forced global transformation" aimed at securing the dominance of the richest countries, as well as economic and political groups?
- What are the positive aspects of increasing international cooperation which can be employed for advancing the Christian mission in word and deed?
- How can Christian values, traditions and cultures be preserved and thrive in the context of globalization?

The global economy and global power needs to be called to account by a global civil society equipped for broad social advocacy. The negative social consequences of globalization must be counterbalanced by effective attention to the needs of the poor, the vulnerable and the powerless. International Christian organizations can provide a basis for coopera-

tion open to and responsive to others, including research bodies, trade unions, environmental movements, and communities of followers of world faiths.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We call upon churches:

- To resist socially counterproductive policies, especially social and tax dumping and to preserve the dignity of labour.
- To support economic and cultural alternatives to homogenization, including small businesses, local credit and savings mechanisms, independent information exchange systems, with efforts to protect and revitalize national cultures and identities, through mutual tolerance and dialogue.
- To encourage a process of “localization”, by having regard for to the expectations, traditions and lifestyles of people in their own place and supporting their initiatives.
- To increase their efforts in the fields of charitable service and social advocacy.
- To raise awareness that integration is accompanied by growing ethnic and religious tension in some parts of the world and separation in others; and to investigate the roots of these conflict situations, which lie not only in these specific regions, but also in the field of international politics and economy.
- To remember that they are founded on families and therefore need them to be strong. The family crises caused by forced industrialization and now by globalization require a rediscovery of moral values, the ties between the generations, respect for parenthood and the place of women in families and society.
- To make the care of the environment a major priority for Christian reflection and social action. It is the “sustainable society” and “sustainable communities”

rather than economics, which matter. The European Christian Environmental Network is a useful contact.

We urge **the churches in the region** to increase public awareness about globalization and its consequences for their population. People need to be informed about the nature of decisions made by their governments in relation to international institutions, and must be able to influence those decisions. Churches can empower the voice of ordinary people by raising their concerns with the authorities.

Churches and ecumenical groups in the region are encouraged to use the expertise and linkages of church related organizations with expertise on economic issues, such as the Centre for Networking, Training and Development being jointly established by European Contact Group, the Work and Economy Network, and the Ecumenical Academy in Prague.

We ask churches in our region to respond more actively to WCC’s invitation to reflect on globalization and to search for alternatives to it; to CEC’s process on the role of churches in European integration and also to WARC’s Debrecen call for a committed process of recognition, education and confession regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction (*processus confessionis*).

We call **the churches in the West** to resist the destructive forces of economic globalization and to be advocates for global social justice.

We ask the churches and the people in the West to influence public opinion and to persuade decision-makers in politics, economy and other sectors of society to stop the exploitation and exclusion of the majority of the population of the world and the destruction of the earth by the “golden billion” – the population of Western industrialized countries.

We ask the churches to help their members to rediscover the traditional Christian values of self-restraint and asceticism (simplicity of lifestyle), and to propagate these values in their societies as a way of counteracting individualism and consumerism, and as an alternative foundation for economic and social development.

We strongly support the Message to the Churches in the North from the participants of the Symposium on the Consequences of Economic Globalization (Bangkok, Thailand, November 12-15, 1999) that was shared at our meeting.

We assure **the churches in the global South** of our solidarity. Our part of Europe bears a considerable measure of responsibility for many developments, with both good and bad consequences, in Southern countries.

Today our peoples share many similar problems and challenges, and we need each other to find solutions. In the spirit of ecumenical partnership, we call the WCC and other ecumenical organizations to support cooperation and networking between churches in Central and Eastern Europe and churches in the global South, in particular, through consultations on globalization.

Global networking between Christians and others on the issues of globalization is urgently needed, especially from parish to parish, from one group of researchers to another, e.g., from a Reformed radio in Hungary to a Catholic newspaper in Indonesia and a Moslem TV studio in Kazakhstan. **Ecumenical and interfaith organizations** will play the key role in this network building. We should not let the spirit of this world separate us. The difficult reality we are facing requires a response which we can only make together.

We acknowledge the work done by Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, as well as international Christian organizations, which have studied the problems of globalization and have acted in this regard. The process started by the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches must be encouraged, continued and broadened.

We commit ourselves to establishing an effective follow-up process to this consultation in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

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