

EDITORIAL

The Journal of Contemporary Pasifika Theologies

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Bula Vinaka and Talofa! Welcome to the second issue of the Journal of Contemporary Pasifika Theologies (CPT). I write this editorial message as the Pacific Church Leaders meet in the Pasifika Communities University (PCU) to discuss the future of the Pasifika household, which is threatened by a convergence of multiple crises, both regional and global. One of the immediate concerns is whether there is enough articulation of these crises and issues from a Pasifika theological perspective to assist our churches in their responses, and how coordinated we are in disseminating these articulations. This journal provides a response to such expectations.

In Issue 2, we are continuing with great passion on our course to bring you research articles, book reviews, and other contributions to theological talanoa from and about Pasifika. One unique thing about this issue is the passion to continue the search for alternative theological paradigms to assist the church in addressing the current issues faced by both Christianity in the Pacific and the world today. The PCU, where CPT is based, aims to be more than just an institution for higher education. Our vision is to be the home of ‘whole of life’ theological articulations, a place for sharing wisdom and transformative learning that recognises our interconnectedness with all of creation in the household of God. At PCU we are ecumenical, communities-based, relationality-focused, and justice-oriented.

At times of polycrisis, when we are facing diverse but often interconnected threats from neoliberalism to the climate catastrophe, I am convinced that it is important for theologians in the Pasifika Household of God to come together with both a sense of urgency and the spirit of hope to articulate these issues. CPT aims to amplify prophetic voices, to offer space for reflection, and to foster a Pasifika community of readers and writers that defies the narrow categories that often mark academia. In this issue, we once again bring to you a wide range of topics, from textual interpretations to real-life crisis applications.

In “Decolonising the Institutionalised Approach to Theological Education in a Pasifika Context: Learning from a ‘Whole of Life’ Participatory Approach,” **Gwayaweng L. Kiki** focuses on relational ontology as the basis for theological learning that reflects indigenous realities and knowledge systems, such as Papuan Melanesian existentialism.

Faafetai Aiava draws our attention to the fundamental role that languages play in Pasifika identities. In “Our Mother Tongues: Liberating Indigenous Languages in Contextual Theology,” he argues for linguistic reclamation as an act of liberation and calls for education and contextual theology to take languages, translations, and differences in meaning seriously.

Retelling the stories of Pasifika history, including the history of Christianity, is one of the key tasks for Pasifika scholars. In “Veiorogoci: Re-imagining a ‘Whole of Life’ Historiography for Pasifika Histories: A Baravi Decolonial Approach,” **Marika Bale** contributes to this vital discussion, presenting a critique of Eurocentric narratives and offering an alternative indigenous reading of Pasifika histories of Christianity.

Supongmayang Longkumer’s “Negotiating Spaces Hermeneutics: Integrating Mutual Philosophies of the Mats of the Ao-Naga and iTaukei” is a deep reflection on the meaning of mats in two

indigenous communities. It offers a research framework of interwoven spaces and negotiating spaces hermeneutics that is inspired by these traditional processes of mat making.

In “Can Pasifika Theologians Convert Neoliberal Cannibals?” **Brian Dunn** subverts the trope of the Pasifika “cannibal.” He argues that rather than being an Islander from the past, the real cannibals are the neoliberals of today, who need to learn from Pasifika communities and their life-affirming worldviews.

Communal sharing and donations to the church play a significant role in the life of Samoan congregations. **Apineru Lafai Tavita**, in “A Fa’atoetoemuliola Reading of Mark 12:41–44 with Reference to the Methodist Church of Samoa,” draws on the biblical story of the widow’s offering to call for a fundamental shift in how we understand giving: from an institutional to a relational perspective.

Joerg Rieger calls for renewed solidarity that connects us with people, planet, and the divine. In “Why Global Solidarities are a Matter of Life and Death: The Difference Religion can Make,” he contrasts the shallow solidarity of the Capitalocene with the ideal of the loving, justice-oriented solidarity that can be found in the Abrahamic religious traditions.

Peter Walker applies the theological language of sin in “Original Sin and Fossil Fuel Industry Spin” to contemporary discussions of the fossil fuel industry. His contribution shows how theologians can find a language for confronting contemporary challenges and speaking truth to power.

Two books are under review in this issue. *Lived Theology for the Whole of Life*, by Lydia Johnson is reviewed by **Nike Franken**, and *ReSTORYing the Pasifika Household*, edited by Upolu Luma Vaai and Aisake Casimira, by **Eyingbeni Humtsoe-Nienu**. The issue closes with a poem by **Nikotemo Sopepa**, “You are the People of Moana.”

I hope that you will find these contributions stimulating and inspiring to sit alongside your own theological constructions and aspirations. Together, I believe, we can bring the ‘whole of life’ vision into all of the discussions where technocratic or theory-restricted reasoning currently dominates, and where more life-affirming, loving approaches are needed.

Upolu Lumā Vaai

Editor