



Pacific Conference of Churches

www.pcc.org.fj

G.P.O Box 208, Suva.
4 Thurston Street, Suva, Fiji
Tel: (679) 3311 277 / 3302332
Fax: (679) 3303 205

General Secretary

Rev. James Bhagwan
e-mail : GenSec@pcc.org.fj
Mobile (679) 5085487

4th April, 2024

The Ocean In Us
Epeli Hau'ofa Memorial Lecture
By Rev. James Bhagwan

(Check against delivery – video available from AAPS and Edmund Rice Centre)

Acknowledgement of Country

Appreciation... AAPS and Edmund Rice Centre

Respects to Epeli and Barbara Hau'ofa.

Dressed by Maelin and Antonia... work clothes ..not my Pacific Climate Warriors shirt...

My talanoa this evening starts with 3 words in the last paragraph of Epeli Hauofa's seminal work, *Our Sea of Islands*: "Oceania Is Us."

One early morning, during the COVID19 lock downs of 2020 in Suva, I was awakened by the roar of the waves breaking on the reef. In the imposed silence of a curfew, the rhythmic sound travelled from the reef almost 3 kilometres away. It was the sound of power. The power of a primordial force that has ebbed and flowed since before our islands were mythically fished out, before the peaks and highlands emerged in fire and smoke.

That morning, as soon as the curfew was over and we could go out of the confines of our COVID-19 created islands for physically distanced exercise, I paddled out in the pre-dawn light to the source of that elemental roar.

As the sun emerged from the horizon and began its journey, I knelt on my board and observed, in awe, the swells from the dark blue ocean, hitting the reef and rolling into the lagoon.

I recalled a favourite saying of my now late friend Captain Jonathan Smith, the first Skipper of Fiji's traditional voyaging icon, the Uto ni Yalo.

"The sea has no love, no mercy and no compassion. The more a person goes to sea, the greater respect they have for it."

The Ocean is a powerful elemental force. It is to be respected.

Oceania is to be respected. It is a power that has not yet reached its peak.

A power glimpsed in the use of celestial navigation, the design and sailing of huge ocean going double hulled canoes across a blue continent millenia before those who would wander into the solwara, the moana pasifika and "discover us".

A power glimpsed also when our Pasifika elders, youth, politicians, civil society, scientists and churches come together to form a unique coalition to stand and hold the red line of 1.5 degrees at COP after COP against wave after wave of climate injustice, balancing the vulnerability of the life of our island communities, and the resilience that comes from indigenous knowledge and wisdom, cultures of reciprocity and spirituality that acknowledges our deep connection with creation - the land, sea and sky.

The ocean is the great humbler - I have seen esteemed leaders of thought and spirituality, virile youth full of strength and energy reduced to cargo, lying on the deck of a voyaging canoe trying to remember to vomit downwind as we sail from Suva to Kadavu in Fiji, or to the Lau group, or my motherland of Vanua Levu.

I remember my first solo stand-up paddle outside the reef from Makuluva island Passage to Nukubuco Sandbank Passage. Standing on my board I was literally on the surface of the ocean - not up on the deck of the Uto Ni Yalo or a interisland ferry or fibreglass launch - the Suva coast and skyline disappearing behind rolling ocean swells that towered over me one moment and raised me up to the sky the next.

None of my roles, titles, status in church or community, or academic qualifications mattered. I was an insignificant creature on a fancy piece of styrofoam just trying to ride the waves, the current and find my way back inside the lagoon, my safe space.

I'm surprised that I had time to think during that almost 45 min long 6km paddle outside the reef, the intensity of focus required led me into a hyper consciousness of time - my thoughts sparking and fading almost instantaneously.

I all but cursed the spirits of my dearly departed friends Skipper Johnathan Smith and Colin Philp, whose voices I was so sure I heard moments ago, telling me, as I scanned the sky and ocean to judge conditions - to go beyond the reef.

I wondered what those of my great-grandparents who were brought to Fiji in that great British colonial enterprise of modern slavery - the Indenture System, must have thought about the waves, wind and rolling seas.

They were isolated from the land they called Dharti Maa - mother earth, the Indian subcontinent. Crossing the Kala Pani (the 'Black Waters') which meant they lost relationship with land, with identity, status and caste. They were casteless - even lower than lowest caste.

I remember my late father, a Methodist Lay Preacher and Tuirara Levu (divisional chief steward) among other Christian leadership roles, telling me of how his father's father, an inland fisherman or "machua" from the River Rapti had brought their ancestral spirit - what in the iTaukei language of Fiji would call Kalou Vu - from India to Fiji in the form of a giant fish. Whale? Shark? Something more metaphysical?

My daughter as a little child told me of the “ocean creature” that she would often see when she was out on a boat or looking out from the shore. Had I told her the story?

There were moments when the reef and coast were obscured by ocean mountains. I hoped, rather than prayed, that Jesus might appear walking on the water to guide me to the next passage in the reef. Maybe my ancestors Kalou Vu, whatever it was, might guide me.

In the end it was the familiar landmarks that I have used in the past when paddling in conditions where visibility is limited – the 20metre tall Angel Moroni atop the Suva Fiji Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the still incomplete WG Friendship Plaza, a tower that is the bane of the Suva skyline that perhaps represent the next strategy of Belt Road Initiative takers.

The ocean above is rolling waves that rise and fall, squalls, strong breezes and periods of dead calm. The ocean below is huge interconnected ecosystems, currents regulating the temperature of the planet. The ocean is phytoplankton that absorb carbon dioxide and transform it into oxygen that is 50 to 70 percent of what we need to live. One breath from the seas, one breath from the trees.

The ocean is traditionally designed and sailed canoes that have traversed the region, sailing the equivalent of 3 times around the planet celebrating ancient knowledge and wisdom that is part of the equation of the formula to save our planet. The ocean is rich in unique biodiversity. The ocean is life. The ocean is alive.

Yet the Ocean is also King Tides, storm surges which drown coasts and atolls. The ocean is also massive fleets of fishing vessels and vessels of war. The Ocean is the final frontier for exploitation and extraction. It is floating shipments of methamphetamine and cocaine awaiting pick-up from a local fisherman out of work because all the fish are being taken.

Perhaps the Ocean is literally becoming kala pani - black water - choking in radioactive waste of the equivalent of 9000 Hiroshimas spreading from Maohi Nui, Kiritimati, the Marshall Islands, and even here in the land now called Australia, choking on waste from Fukushima. The ocean is choking on plastic - a fossil fuel product. It is choking in carbon dioxide created acid. It is choking from boots of hyper militarization, lovingly pressed down in the toxic relationship of soft and hard power that is a new cold war.

For me these images are representative of Oceania, Pasifika, Wansolwara, the Pacific Household of God and the promises she holds and the challenges she faces. They serve as a reminder to pay attention to the currents, winds of change, and that there is a big difference between what is on the surface and what is happening underneath.

This understanding of Oceania is to illustrate that issues are often more complex and multi-dimensional than many would prefer to articulate. Most perspectives of regional issues tend to focus at the high level, at the political implications, excluding the voices of the community. There is a need for a critical attitude towards the narratives (text, counter-text, subtext, pretext, context and deeper text) is necessary in order to understand the facts in terms of the wider truth, balance in terms of attention to all goals of all parties, people as well as elites and deciding whether perspectives promote conflict or promote peace.

For the past few months I have been reflecting on the term, “Indo-Pacific”.

As someone with strong Indian ancestry, 84% according to Ancestry.com, raised in the Pacific and married to someone with Chinese, Fijian, Irish, Welsh, iKiribati, Samoan and again according to the DNA people, Tongan and Maori ancestry - our children are definitely "Indo-Pacific" - therefore while my dearly-loved and very patient wife do discuss Pacific Issues at the dinner table.. Often an Indo-Pacific Strategy is just really the management of our household - and our kids- well the newly adulated fruit of our loins.

In all seriousness, as people who have been impacted by such geo-political contestations for the last two and a half centuries, there is a need to pay attention this latest wave.

As Wesley Morgan puts it:

A tendency to view the Pacific Ocean as a maritime 'theatre' of competition is not a new phenomenon. For centuries major powers have struggled for naval supremacy in the Pacific. Pacific islanders have seen the Spanish, British, French, Dutch, Germans, Japanese and Americans all vie for control of their ocean, and these contests have indelibly marked the region, none more so than World War Two. In the decades following the war, strategic thinkers continued to view the islands through a lens of maritime power projection.¹

Post World War Two, the Cold War and neo-colonialism in the form of economic globalisation, as each successive wave has continued to exploit and extract - albeit in different styles, there is always a denial, or active suppression of the agency of Pacific people for the Pacific. There is a constant renaming or refashioning of patron-client politics. Relationships are transactional.

Today, communism has been swapped with the Belt Road Initiative, but the premise of the "defense of the Pacific" for the current world order is the same. A New Cold War under the name the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Perhaps even AUKUS can be seen as a reboot of ANZUS.

What my friend Wesley calls 'Aqua Nullius' to describe Pacific islands through the lens of maritime competition, which in turn exacerbates a tendency to see Pacific islands as small and isolated—as pawns in a naval 'great game' - has also been described as Mare Nullius in the context of resource extraction in the high seas - in denial of the fact that in the Ocean, unlike on land, impacts under the sea are transboundary.

Pacific people's understanding of place and space of land-sea continuity - in the words of Dame Meg Taylor - uttered in this talanoa space last year - reach from Highlands to High Seas. As the Pacific Regional NGO Alliance has previously stated, the Blue Economy narrative is a scramble to control the Pacific Ocean and its natural resources through a second wave of economic and political colonisation – a blue colonisation. The imposition of the Blue/Green Economy, and the inadvertent territorialisation of oceans for geo-political and economic gain, have confounded valuable efforts to protect critical life-giving ecosystems, and rebuild and promote long-term ocean health and integrity to sustain life for generations to come.²

¹ Wesley Morgan, "Oceans Apart? Considering the Indo-Pacific and the Blue Pacific," in *Security Challenges*, 2020, Vol. 16, No. 1, Special Issue: How does the 'Pacific' fit into the 'Indo-Pacific?', Institute for Regional Security(2020), pp44-64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26908767>

² PRNGO Alliance, "Currents of Contradictions in the Blue Economy," A framework on the Blue Economy by the Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations Alliance (PRNGO), 2020.

Dame Meg has articulated much on the Indo-Pacific, not just at last year's Epeli Hauofa Memorial lecture/talanoa but also during her tenure as Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, where in our interactions, I had the honour of learning from her wisdom. She continues to do so now as Pacific Elder.

There are a number of Indo-Pacific strategies which are really just an excuse for what the Pacific Network on Globalisation has termed "Enduring Colonisation. France's Indo-Pacific considerations paint China as the villain and thus the reason why it cannot allow Ma'ohi Nui and Kanaky - currently known as French Polynesia and New Caledonia to become independent.

However, as Nic Maclellan points out, France gains seven million square kilometres of exclusive economic zone from its Pacific territories. "As a 2014 French Senate report noted, 'Present in both hemispheres and at all points of the compass, the French EEZ is the only one on which the sun never sets.'" He also points out that the French Indo-Pacific strategy does not interest Kanak and Ma'ohi communities and leaders who seek political self-determination to claim their place in the Pasifika Household.³

Although set against a backdrop of the past 3 decades, the image of Epeli Hau'ofa's "Our Sea of Islands" has served to counter the neo-colonial view of the Pacific as small island developing states with an alternative, celebrating the "large liquid continent" of Oceania, indigenous wisdom, science and economics, which is still used by theologians, anthropologists, and development specialists. It is used in self-determination. It is a protest chant, a cry as loud as, "We are not drowning, we are fighting."

It is used in Pacific ecumenism, articulated in the Pacific Churches ecumenical concept of the Pasifika Household of God - which includes not only all people but all creation. And it is used in Pacific regionalism - with the articulation of the Blue Pacific Continent.

It is also in danger of corporate and political capture, which unless resisted will reduce it to rhetoric or brown-washing or militarization.

The indo-pacific strategy is a direct challenge to the concept of the Blue Pacific continent. It is counter to the vision of self-determination for Oceania, for the Blue Pacific that the Pacific island countries' leaders, and ultimately, its people, hope to have.

Perhaps the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' adoption of a vision for a 'Zone of Peace' or 'Ocean of Peace,' at last year's meeting in the Cook Islands is a step towards protecting Pacific concepts such as the Blue Pacific from being captured by geo-political and geo-economic interests.

This has been championed by the Prime Minister of Fiji, Sitiveni Rabuka, who has been reflecting on this for some time. I recall leading the devotion when he was traditionally welcomed by the Fijian Ministry for Foreign Affairs as its line minister in January last year.

At that event he was already showing an interest in peacebuilding in the context of bringing Kiribati back into the Pacific Islands Forum, which he undertook using traditional indigenous Fijian protocols to seek forgiveness and restoration of relationship. The "Ocean of Peace"

³ Nic Maclellan, "Silenced Voices in the Indo-Pacific: Reflections on Australia, France and Regionalism in the Age of AUKUS", *The French Australian Review*, No.75, Summer 2023-24, 8-27
<https://www.isfar.org.au/article/75-1/>

seems to be a Fijian foreign policy and a regional articulation of Mr. Rabuka's key campaign message immediately prior to the 2022 Elections - to "Let Love Shine".

For those of us who worked very hard to ensure that when the thematic area of Security was being introduced into the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, quite late in the game, during all those formal informals... that it was termed Peace and Security and included non-traditional security issues, the concept of an Ocean of Peace is a welcome alternative to the militarised language around security.

Prime Minister Rabuka has said that an aim of a Zone of Peace is to ensure peace and multilateral cooperation in the Pacific in the face of geopolitical rivalries.

It's an interesting concept. Particularly when spoken about in terms of the challenge that Pacific island countries face in having to balance the power by the players in the indo-pacific geopolitical chess game . Yet it's important that when we look at the Zone or Ocean of Peace concept, that it is not limited to traditional peace and security, but to also consider the non-traditional aspects of peace and security such as wellbeing.

In fact, speaking to the ABC in October last year Prime Minister Rabuka articulated a vision of the Zone of Peace as a spiritual approach,⁴ that resonates with concepts such as the Island of Hope and the Pasifika Household of God - recognising that the phrase "vuvale" means more than family - it means household - in greek oikos - the root word for economy, ecology and ecumenicity.

And so I would like to spend the rest of my time tonight trying to unpack and perhaps articulate what an Ocean of Peace might look like.

What would a true Ocean of Peace mean for our region? How can it bring about the well-being of people who seek to flourish amongst the many challenges that they are facing?

An Ocean of Peace in the context of Climate Change was articulated at a recent gathering of civil society organisations working for climate justice for the Pacific, envisioned a "Fossil Fuel Free Pacific" that is a result of a just transition from the use of fossil fuels.

This call underscores last year's Ki Mua report which outline the pathways for a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific which highlighted that the upfront estimated cost of replacing all existing fossil fuel electricity generation in —Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, and Tuvalu—ranges from \$691 million USD to just over \$1 billion USD, depending on the specific technology mix which is only 1/7th the amount of money that Australia gave to the fossil fuel industry in handouts and tax breaks in 2022-23 and less than half a percent of the huge profits the world's top 5 fossil fuel companies made last year alone.

In envisioning a fossil-free future for the Pacific, the "Na i Uli Declaration" takes its name from the indigenous Fijian word for the steering oar (rudder) of the "Drua" the twin hulled ocean voyaging canoe.

The declaration carries the twin aspects of vulnerability and resilience. There is the vulnerability of communities facing an existential crisis caused by climate change - with

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrmsR9Cy04k>

livelihood, community, culture, deep spiritual relationship with land and ocean all at risk of being lost; and the potential for climate induced displacement.

But there is also the resilience of our Pacific people, rooted in their traditional indigenous wisdom and practice of living in harmony with creation, strengthened by their Christian faith which in the face of unsustainable development, and a global culture of extractivism, is a prophetic voice of a counter narrative to the current blue and greenwashing of the fossil fuel industry.

As Pacific Climate Warrior, Suluafi Brianna Fruean states, "A Fossil Fuel Free Pacific is not only a dream for the future, but a memory of our past."

But how do we create the conditions for a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific? How do we ensure that there is a truly just and equitable transition that benefits our local communities and our local industries? How do we ensure that those for whom the ocean is a highway and source of livelihood can travel gently on the waves with low carbon sustainable sea transport? What is the ecological conversion required within our Ocean of Peace to help us wean off unsustainable lifestyles and business practices that have been thrust upon us?

The Ocean of Peace will require what the Pacific Theological College calls a Restorying of the Pasifika Household, a rethinking of development and a reweaving of the ecological mat.

The first steps of this process were taken at the dawn of this century as the "Island of Hope,"⁵ which recognised that while Western economics revolve around profit and economic growth, 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. The iTaukei name for this is *Solesolevaki*..

Nobody is excluded. The land, the sea and people are integral parts of one entity. Subsistence farming, sustainable agriculture and the sensitivity of the sacredness of the trees and the sea are part of their identity.

Taken in this context, and this model, the Ocean of Peace, would be a region in tune with nature and by sharing and caring, to which people want to journey in order to celebrate life in all its fullness.

The Ocean of Peace would have the "mana" (power) to draw human beings together." The Ocean of Peace would be sustainable, wholesome, peaceful and all-embracing.

I am sure many in this room are aware of the more recent attempt to change the story of development has been the "Reweaving the Ecological Mat" Project. Led by the Institute of Mission and Research of the Pacific Theological College this project has been redefining the development narrative, rethinking Sustainable Development and proposing an Ecological Development Framework. In particular I acknowledge the role of Rev. Professor Upolu Luma Vaai, PTC Principal and IMR Director, Aisake Casimira as well as the sterling work of Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird.

⁵ World Council of Churches, *Island of Hope: The Pacific Churches' Response to Alternatives on Globalisation*, (Geneva: WCC, 2001)

Beyond the 2050 Strategy's recognition of the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom the REM project affirms that indigenous and Christian/religious ecological frameworks (knowledge, ethics and practices), can contribute much to addressing the 'ecological crisis' today.

Vaai and Casimira and colleagues at the Pacific Theological College have been working on decolonising development from a Pasifika, "whole of life" perspective, developing communities-based education models and promotion of a Pasifika consciousness as the entry point for development, education and policy. Bird has been working on developing wellbeing indicators that measure what development means at a Pacific community level.

From a conservation and ocean guardianship perspective - a true Ocean of Peace is not only for human beings but for all of the regions' biodiversity - sustainable fishing practices; a ban on deep sea mining; and an ecocide law among other things, led by traditional indigenous and local community leadership and integrated spirituality.

In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the indigenous leaders of New Zealand, Tahiti and the Cook Islands who just this past week, signed a treaty that recognizes whales as legal persons.

The Ocean of Peace is in itself an act of self-determination - for Pacific Islanders to place the political, social, cultural, economic, ecological, physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of their communities at the forefront of regional discourses on development, regionalism and geo-politics.

And here lies perhaps the greatest challenge to the Ocean of Peace concept. The work for not just lagoons of peace, but a whole Ocean of Peace.

The Ocean of Peace requires a strong multilateral regional commitment to the Blue Pacific Continent in which all communities, all states, all people are treated equally.

Commitments to the Rarotoga Treaty for a nuclear free Pacific, and in respect to the quest to the region's long standing quest for nuclear justice, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons must be made by those who seek to be friends of the Pacific and seek to enter the Ocean of Peace; particularly states responsible for nuclear testing in the Pacific who will need to take responsibility for their legacy of destruction and commit to equitable reparations.

At the same time we must acknowledge the struggle over the last 63 years has been for a nuclear free and INDEPENDENT Pacific. This will challenge the Ocean of Peace concept to ensure that the people who are struggling to claim their right to self-determination are able to do so and can claim their place and dive deeply into the Ocean of Peace.

The videos circulated 2 weeks ago of the now acknowledged sadistic torture of a young indigenous West Papuan man is, unfortunately, only the latest in a very long list of acts of brutality, racism and violent human rights abuses and oppression of the Indigenous Melanesian, Pacific islander people of Tanah Papua that is, if not officially sanctioned policy then accepted behaviour by Indonesia's security forces.

What is more disturbing is the selective outrage of those who champion human rights, democracy towards those on the other side of the Indo-Pacific fence but ignore what is happening within it.

The Pacific Conference of Churches has called for the suspension, if not expulsion of Indonesia from the Melanesian Spearhead Group if they do not agree to facilitate a much overdue UN Human Rights visit to West Papua.

At the same time recent protests in Kanaky, with the failure of the Noumea Accord over a disputed 3rd Referendum and the current postponement by French Parliament of local and New Caledonian Assembly and Government while it looks to change voter registration laws for French Migrants raise further of questions of how we can be friends and partners with those who actively and openly subvert the aspirations of first peoples of Pacific Islanders.

And perhaps therein lies the rub.

I think I've done well so far without preaching.

An Ocean of Peace should mean flourishing for ALL the communities of Oceania.

An Ocean of Peace could support visa-free travel, particularly for the tens of thousands who work in other parts of the Pacific Household for the benefit of receiving countries and sending countries as well as those who would need to safely relocate with dignity, because of climate change, without compromising their identity, their culture, their dignity and their sovereignty.

An Ocean of Peace could provide the litmus test of whether the 2050 Strategy delivers what it promises on Political Leadership and Regionalism, People-Centred Development, Peace And Security, Resources And Economic Development, Climate Change And Disasters, Ocean And Environment, Technology And Connectivity.

What will an Ocean of Peace mean for the foreign and domestic policies of our region? What will it mean for a first nations foreign policy if the self determination of first nations are not supported?

Of course, an Ocean of Peace must also mean the flourishing of diverse and local communities, some of whom have faced ethnic and other forms of discrimination.

This is where we need to ensure we move beyond the rhetoric of these terms and policies and phrases which can so easily be captured by political and corporate interests.

This means diving deeper, from a head only exercise to a heart exercise, that adds the voices of communities, indigenous practitioners, and wisdom holders and teachers, women, youth, children, elders, people often marginalised and not just policy makers and policy writers. This means going beyond workshops and consultations to engage in talanoa in its truest form - at national level, at community level and perhaps even at family level.

And it needs to ensure that those involved in the work of peace-making and peace-building, not just peacekeeping are heard.

It also needs investment in not only national social cohesion but also regional cohesion.

The planet is running out of time. And history will continue to repeat itself but in a downward spiral.

But our region is both the most vulnerable but has the greatest gifts to offer to the world from our indigenous spirituality, knowledge and wisdom to the understanding that Peace, Salaam, Shalom, *Bula Sautu*, wellbeing, fullness of life, abundance and flourishing for all is the right of every creature on this planet.

And that communities must be allowed to develop and progress at the speed and the level that they wish to In the way in which they wish to do so and in ways in which Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and culture is celebrated.

Development models in the Ocean of Peace do not have to match the image and likeness set by the Global North. Development must be based in our Pasifika understandings of community and relationship with the environment. Wellbeing of the community not GDP, not profit needs to be the indicator for Pacific development. It must not shy away from spirituality, from reciprocity, from hospitality and it must counter fear of scarcity with an abundance of love.

As I look around the room tonight, I am grateful for your presence to hear what this slightly irrelevant reverend had to say. But I also see those who are of the Pasifika Household. Those who have committed themselves to be the guardians and protectors of our liquid continent.

And tonight, I pay tribute to you, as well as those who do so from our Island homes and our Island communities.

The Ocean of Peace - the OCEANIA of Peace must be embodied by us. It is the only way in which the mana, the energy of our Moana, Waitui, Solwara, can transform our region, just as the ocean transforms our carbon dioxide into oxygen.

But if the ocean, if our region is to be a peaceful place. It must begin. with us being at peace. Here I want to talk about the fact that well-being is both communal and personal. Mental health is one of the most ignored issues in the Pacific. And this is where I see spiritual health as part of mental and physical health - the whole human being.

Again, I know that this is not a mid-week church gathering but we must recognize that the health of our souls affects our relationships with one another. And that love - has been excluded from the development, peace and security, climate conversations for too long.

I'm reminded the words of Cornell West: Justice Is what love looks like in the public space.

Love, overcomes fear and if fear leads to insecurity, then love is a tool for peace-building Loving oneself, loving others, loving the environment.

And so if we are to have an Ocean of Peace - We must be at peace. We must work for peace - the flourishing of life for the people of the Pacific – for ALL people of the Pacific - and for ALL that exists in our Pasifika Household: on land and in the Ocean.

Vinaka Vakalevu.