



# Pacific Conference of Churches

www.pcc.org.fj

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## **Dear servant-leaders of the Body of Christ in the Pacific,**

Warm Christian greetings from your PCC Secretariat in Suva!

I apologise for not communicating earlier this year but we at the PCC Secretariat have been on the go since the very beginning of the year to ensure we maximise on the World Council of Churches Pacific focus for 2020.

### **1. WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Pacific focus**

As shared are both the 2018 General Assembly, and 2019 Executive Committee and Pacific Church Leaders' Meetings, this year (2020), the World Council of Churches' Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace focuses on the Pacific. This means all programmes and major activities have a Pacific Focus and there will be a number of visits to our region.

- The first of these was the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) Reference Group and Theological Study Group visits, held in Fiji from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of January. Pacific representatives included WCC Pacific President, Dr. Mele'ana Puloka.
  - The Reference Group of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the Theological Study Group of the pilgrimage met at the Pacific Theological College, in Suva, Fiji, 19-22 January, with the goal of reflecting on the situation in the Pacific through the lens of a global thematic focus on climate change and cooperation with churches, national councils of churches in the region, the Pacific Conference of Churches, and others. Prior to the meeting in Suva, four pilgrim team visits took place in various parts of Fiji on 16-19 January, focusing on climate-induced displacement, indigenous land rights and extractive industries, gender justice, people with disabilities, interfaith dialogue, climate change, ecological justice, ocean health, and care for creation. During their visit to various communities in Fiji, delegation members met leaders of indigenous communities, local church leaders, victims of human rights violations and conflict, and champions of transforming injustices. Each pilgrim team visit expressed solidarity with those who reside in coastal areas, relying on natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being, and forced to survive the tidal waves of injustice.

- The pre-launch of the Lenten campaign “Seven Weeks for Water” was held in Suva, Fiji, on 21 January, under the theme “A Pilgrimage of Water Justice in the Pacific Region.” Lenten reflections on the theme of water, prepared by Pacific islanders, will be shared globally.
- The Church Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) pilgrim team visit to Solomon Islands has been cancelled due to the Solomon Islands precautionary response to the Corona Virus. I hope to visit the Solomon Islands at some stage this year and include the locations for the visit in my programme. The CCIA reference group meeting is in Brisbane this coming week and Rev. Francois Pihatae (President, EPM) and Mr. Holland Sikou (ACOM) are members of this committee. I will also attend as West Papua and Maohi Nui are on the agenda.
- There is also an upcoming visit to Kiritimati (Kiribati) by CCIA to visit the site of and community affected by Atomic Bomb tests.
- Other WCC visits for 2020 will be:
  - Tuvalu – April/May (Economic and Ecological Justice Reference Group)
  - Tonga – June (ECHOS Commission on youth in the ecumenical movement)
  - Possible visits also include PNG / Kanaky / Maohi Nui – TBC (Just Community For Women and Men / Mission from the Margins)

## **2. Pacific Ecumenical Community formation process**

You will recall that one of the outcomes of the PCLM in November 2019 was that the Structure Working group be appointed and begin its work and report to the PCLM 2020. The members of the PEC Structure Working Group are as follows:

- **Convenor and Chair:** Rev. Dr. Tevita Nawadra Banivanua – *President Fiji Council of Churches / Divisional Superintendent – Davuilevu, Methodist Church in Fiji (Former MCIF President / Former SPATS GS)*
- **Working Group Member:** Deaconess Tamalesi Makutu – *Administrator Deaconess Order MCIF / Deputy Moderator PCC*
- **Working Group Member:** Rev. Dr. Donald Bruce Yeates – *Moderator, Presbyterian Church in Fiji / Resource Person PTC-IMR / IMR Advisory Chair/ Member Finance and General Business Committee PCC*
- **Working Group Member:** Mr. Livai Tuisaravere – *Trust Secretary MCIF / SPATS Finance Support / Chairperson Finance and General Business Committee PCC*
- A Legal practitioner as required
- Any additional expertise as required

The Structure Working group will meet and discuss with, but remain independent of, the Principal PTC, GS SPATS and GS PCC. Their aim is to provide draft structures and timeline / process to the PCLM at the end of November 2020.

### 3. Staffing

We are slowly bolstering our team here at PCC to ensure that we have a strong team to deliver our programmes and responsibilities.

#### *Renewed Appointments*

- Ms. Frances Namoumou has renewed her contract as Ecumenical Animator – Stewardship and Climate Justice & Co-ordinator for Programmes. Her position is now funded through the Nationals in Mission Appointments Programme of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- Mrs. Julie Chang Tusulu has renewed her contract as Finance and Administration Manager.
- Mr. Netani Rika has also renewed his contract as Communications and Development Manager.
- Mr. Elia Rakavono has renewed his contract as Maintenance Officer.
- Mr. Geoffrey Nainoca has renewed his contract as Finance Officer



#### *Moce Lai*



At the end of January we bid farewell to Mrs. Laisani Baleloa who has served at PCC's receptionist since 2007. I am sure you join me in thanking her for her service to our Pacific faith community for the last 13 years.

#### *We have 2 new appointments:*

- Adi Mariana Waqa has come onboard as a Child Protection Officer for a year, supported by UNICEF. Adi Mariana, who holds a Bachelor in Theology from United Theological College in Sydney, Australia, will be responsible for our developing our Pacific Safe Church Programme in partnership with UNICEF, as per our 2018 General Assembly resolution.



- Ms. Iemaima Va'ai, who has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Management from the University of the South Pacific has joined our Ecological Stewardship and Climate Justice Programme



### ***Decentralising Self Determination Work:***



With Kanaky preparing for a referendum in September this year we are working to support the Protestant Church of Kanaky/New Caledonia (EPKNC) in ensuring a peaceful positive process – particularly working with Youth. EPKNC has kindly seconded Rev. Billy Wetewea on a part-time basis to PCC for our Kanaky programme and also to assist with Francophone translations. Rev. Billy will be our liaison also for preparations for the 2023 Assembly in Lifou, Kanaky.

### ***Vacancies:***

We are looking for a new *Ecumenical Animator for Women and Gender Issues* – funded by UN Women as well as an *Ecumenical Enabler – Coordinator, Regional Ecumenical Youth Council*. Terms of Reference and Job Descriptions will be available soon on our website [www.pcc.org.fj](http://www.pcc.org.fj) and will also be forwarded to you. While Fijian immigration presents challenges, we hope to have some regional balance with these appointments.

## **4. Women / Children Partnerships with UN**

Our partnerships with UNWomen and UNICEF are almost finalised which will see funding for the Women and Gender Issues Desk and programmes (including Weavers Coordinator role from SPATS which will be incorporated into the Desk) and the Child Protection Officer and Safe Churches Programme.

## **5. Reweaving the Ecological Mat**

Following a retreat organised by the PTC/PCC Institute for Mission and Research at the end of last month regarding the Reweaving the Ecological Mat project (see Appendix I), plans are now underway to introduce the REM Project, the Ecological Development Framework at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu in August as well as introducing the concept to Pacific Leaders during the Pacific Island Development Forum Leaders meeting in July. This is an important project that connects Self-Determination, our Pacific Spirituality, Indigenous Wisdom and Science and Wellbeing to challenge harmful economic structures and policies.

In the lead up to these important forums, we will be visiting key Pacific communities to meet with both Government, community and church leaders.

Following the PIFLM in Vanuatu, the project will be transitioned over to PCC to be developed into a movement for communities and governments.

## **6. Australian Church Partnership**

Following the introductory meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, a group of Pacific church leaders and representatives travelled to Canberra to meet with the Australian government, including their Prime Minister Scott Morrison to discuss the Pacific Church Partnership Programme and participate in Micah Australia's Voices for Justice advocacy campaign in the Australian parliament (see attached report). We are still in discussions for the project design but a keeping in mind the Church Leaders' views to ensure that this is an equal partnership. On that note, our sincere appreciation for those who are making contributions to support relief efforts in the wake of the bushfires in Australia. It is a great example of our Pacific compassion, generosity and reciprocity that is the epitome of the Pacific family, that Australia seeks to be a part of.

We will continue to keep you updated of our activities and plans. Please keep in touch so we can support our common mission and most importantly, pray for you, your families and churches and communities.

As we approach the season of Lent, may this spiritual journey provide us with the strength, discernment, open hearts and courage to walk along the way, speak the truth and live and invite others to receive the life eternal in Christ Jesus.

With deep love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Shri Bhagwan', written in a cursive style.

**James Shri Bhagwan (Rev)**  
**General Secretary**