

AFTERWORD

MOANA: WATER OF LIFE

Come and See: An Invitation to Life-giving Engagement

The words ‘Come and see’ are words of Jesus to his disciples in John’s Gospel (John 1.30). They are an invitation to life-giving engagement. They are an invitation to experience a new kind of living and being and to set out on an adventure. As I look back, I recall with gratitude the work of the United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) and its worldwide mission; I look back and recall the response of the Council of the USPG when I extended an invitation to the Council (comprising archbishops, bishops and other leaders in the Anglican Communion) to visit Fiji for the first time. There was deep concern in the Council over global warming and the impact of climate change on the environment and the lives of so many people. My invitation was for the Council to meet in the Diocese where the effects of climate change in terms of intensity of cyclones and the threat of rising sea level were a growing reality. The Diocese of Polynesia embraces some of the most vulnerable nations to climate change. The USPG Council responded to an invitation to come and see.

The Rt Rev Christopher Lowson was a member of the USPG Council, and he came to Fiji as representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Chris not only came for the first time to Fiji for the USPG Council, he returned to explore the

establishment of a partnership between the Diocese of Lincoln and the Diocese of Polynesia. At that time he was putting forward the idea of an International Conference to address climate change. Bishop Chris travelled widely sharing our experience in Fiji and Tonga. He travelled by air and by boat. He travelled along bumpy roads into the interior of Fiji and to the coastal regions. He sat with our people. He listened. During his time and experience in the Diocese the seeds for the International Conference began to grow in his heart and mind. Bishop Chris had already a vision for an International Conference on Climate Change. This vision was strengthened as he saw that the Diocese of Polynesia could also contribute and so the Conference which combined the efforts of the Diocese of Lincoln, the universities in Lincoln and the Diocese of Polynesia was conceived. In Polynesia, we give thanks for Bishop Chris' vision and passionate commitment.

An invitation from the Principal of Westcott House to my wife, Reverend Sue Halapua, to be Chaplain at the Westcott House facilitated a time for both of us to be in England. This enabled me to be part of the Committee planning the Conference. It was proposed that a delegation from Polynesia to International Conference included members from the wider Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia. The delegation was to include people from the different ethnic groups and from different situations. The delegation was to include laity and clergy, students of St John' Colleges in Suva, Fiji, and Auckland, New Zealand, and academics. There was a large group of young people, some of whom are actively involved in providing help in time of tropical cyclones. As Polynesians, we were intended to demonstrate working together to address the serious issues of climate change and committed to working together with Lincoln, the Diocese and the universities.

We were grateful for the welcome expressed by the Rt Rev Dr David Court, Acting Bishop of Lincoln. We were grateful for the huge hospitality of Lincoln.

I introduced the conference and the delegates to one another. I explained how *Moana: Water of Life*, the Polynesian word for 'ocean', is hugely significant for the peoples and environment of the Pacific. The five oceans of the world flow constantly giving life. They are interconnected and speak of our interconnectedness as people of this Blue Planet Earth.

My introduction was not an isolated contribution but formed part of the Polynesian contributions, which included a Biblical Paper by Dr Emily Colgan. Our young people presented a dynamic way of working together to meet the needs of people in time of tropical cyclones. Our young people, towards the end of the conference, demonstrated their faith and leadership as they participated in worship at the Thanksgiving Service of the Cathedral. They used their voices and the movements of traditional Polynesian dance to pray the Lord's Prayer. Movingly and indicating ongoing leadership, the new Archbishop, the Most Rev Fereimi Cama, led them in the Prayer.

I am deeply aware of the efforts of Pacific people and others to achieve an agreement in Paris COP21. A significant number of people attending the Conference, including Professor Elisabeth Holland, a key member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, had worked hard and together behind the scenes to influence and to achieve an agreement to reduce emissions to meet global temperature targets among the nations gathered in Paris.

Moana: Water of Life called for deep listening and a new intentional togetherness across disciplines and diversity as we navigate into the future and tackle huge challenges. The listening across the disciplines of science and theology, the listening to the perspectives and sharing of the experiences of different peoples are put forward in order to enable new visions for our Planet Earth and moving forward actively in solidarity. We are called not to be locked in narrow ways of thinking or limited perspectives as we

address with courage the great challenges of our time. We are to be open to larger horizons.

This publication has recorded some of the contributions to meeting that challenge. However, there is much more still to be done. What is clear is the continuing need for deep listening, to the climate scientists, to the educators, to the youth and perhaps most of all to Moana. We need to take seriously and to respect the God within nature, to hear the pain that is generated by human misuse and to redress this. However, there is more potential benefit than simply halting the difficulties caused by global warming. If we listen deeply, we can perhaps hear and learn some deep lessons for what it means to live a good life, in balance with creation and with God's will, however defined. My hope is that this book will provide the launch pad for these discussions.

Winston Halapua
(Retired Archbishop of Polynesia)