Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish

Te Aroha Rountree &
George Zachariah (editors)

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Editors

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HE WHARE TAPU (NĀ TE ATUA I HANGA)

Ngā pou, ko te aroha, ko te rangimarie, ko te whakapono

Māu anō e hanga tō tātou nei whare.

You shall fashion our own house.

Ko ngā pou o roto te aroha, me te rangimarie.

The pillars will be made of love and peace.

Ko te tāhuhu ko te whakapono.

The ridgepole of faith.

He whakatupu ki te hua o te Kupu, me whakapakari ki te hua o te mātauranga Māori.

Those who dwell in this house will be nurtured by the Gospel,
and cultivated by Māori wisdoms.

These three *kohatu* (stones) symbolise the foundations of a metaphorical *whare* (house), built on love/compassion, peace/reconciliation and faith/truth. A whare made to withstand strong winds and climates, torrential rain and floods, hardship and struggle, adversity and deprivation much like the house which was built on rock (Luke 6:46-49). This metaphorical "whare tapu" (spiritual house) is shaped and moulded by God's word, formed and modelled with mātauranga Māori for our Aotearoa New Zealand context. We are the "living stones" of God's creation. called to build a spiritual house, to be followers of Christ, and to live out the word of God (1 Peter 2:5).

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Emily Colgan is Manukura/Principal at St John's College, Te Wānanga o Hoani Tapu te Kaikauwhau i te Rongopai, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research focuses on the relationship between the Bible and contemporary social imaginaries, exploring the ways in which ideologies contained within biblical texts continue to inform communities in the present. Emily is particularly interested in ecological representations in the Bible, as well as depictions of gender and violence. Her recent publications include *The Routledge Companion to Eve* (co-edited, 2023).

Jione Havea is a co-parent for Diya Lākai, native pastor (Methodist Church in Tonga), migrant to the clusters of islands now known as Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, and senior research fellow with Trinity Methodist Theological College (Aotearoa New Zealand) and with the Centre for Religion, Ethics, and Society (Charles Sturt University, Australia). Jione is energised by opportunities to collaborate and excuses for theological (broadly conceived) revol-u-ting.

Gillian Laird is descended from the tribal groups of Ngai Tuteauru and Ngā Puhi, Hokianga (Aotearoa New Zealand) and from the Kōtimana clan, Laird. She is a lay leader in Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa Methodist Church of New Zealand. Gillian is an artist, a weaver, and a sculptor. Her recent work has been focused on mahi uku (clay sculpting) that speaks to the origins of Māori people and our Connexions to the whenua and tangata.

Michael Mawson is a Pākehā theologian and the Maclaurin Goodfellow Associate Professor at the University of Auckland/ Waipapa Taumata Rau. He has published widely in Christian ethics and on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. His current research focuses on theology and aging, decolonisation, and liberation theologies.

Te Aroha Rountree is descended from the tribal groups of Ngai Tuteauru and Nga Puhi, Hokianga (Aotearoa New Zealand). She is a lay leader in Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa Methodist Church of New Zealand. Her recent research focus is decolonizing Māori/Tangata Whenua theology and exploring intertextual readings of Māori creation narratives and biblical texts.

Tara Tautari is Māori and comes from Te Tai Tokerau. She is Ngatihine on her father's side and Te Whakapiko on her mother's side. Tara serves Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand) as its General Secretary.

Nasili Vaka'uta is currently the Principal of Trinity Methodist Theological College, Auckland. He is a proud resident of the Moana with research interests in Biblical Studies, Moana hermeneutics and interpretation, indigenous methodologies and epistemologies, and issues that matter to Moana islanders such as climate justice. Nāsili is also the Research Lead for a Pacific project funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealands that examines the impact of delusional religiosity on Tongan well-being in New Zealand.

George Zachariah is a migrant worker from India. He currently serves Trinity Methodist Theological College, Auckland, New Zealand as Wesley Lecturer in Theological Studies. He earlier served the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai, India, and the United Theological College, Bangalore, India. His recent publications include *Decolonizing Ecotheology: Indigenous and Subaltern Challenges* (co-edited, 2022).

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FOREWORD

TARA TAUTARI

The Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has embarked on a decade of focused reflection and engagement with climate justice. As a faith community, we need resources to help us better understand the issues which are vitally significant for our existence on this planet and our intricate relationship with creation. We require resources that can both enrich our intellect and nourish our spirituality.

Within these pages, you will discover a collective knowledge and wisdom for understanding and participating in the conversations surrounding climate justice. I have had the privilege of collaborating closely with each of the contributors, and I continue to give thanks to God for the unwavering passion and rigorous dedication they bring to this critical subject. Their commitment to raising awareness, challenging our old understandings, and inspiring change is a blessing to our church and to the wider community.

Climate change is a global crisis that is inextricably interwoven with our moral and ethical obligations. The Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, guided by its steadfast commitment to social justice and compassion, is ideally positioned to lead the way on this critical journey towards climate justice. This book stands as a testament to our commitment to creating a more equitable and sustainable world for future generations.

As we immerse ourselves in the pages of this book, my prayer is that we will be stirred, motivated, and empowered to enact meaningful changes within our own lives, our congregations, and our communities. May this book serve as an endless source of inspiration and enlightenment, enriching our minds with knowledge and our spirits with hope.

INTRODUCTION

NĀSILI VAKA'UTA

In an era of unprecedented environmental challenges, humanity faces an urgent call to address the pressing realities of climate change and environmental degradation. The world's ecosystems are in peril, and the consequences of our actions, or inaction, have profound implications for both the planet and its inhabitants. Recognising this critical moment in history, the academic staff of Trinity Methodist Theological College have come together to present *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish*, a profound and timely curated volume aimed at equipping congregations with the spiritual guidance and practical tools to embrace climate justice as an integral part of their ministry.

As the world grapples with the complexities of climate change, faith communities find themselves at the forefront of the movement for environmental stewardship and justice. The recognition that "Earth is our parish" (to borrow John Wesley's terminology) reflects the universal call to action, as people of all faiths are summoned to participate in the sacred task of preserving and healing our shared home. Drawing from diverse theological perspectives, this edited volume offers a comprehensive and compassionate approach to climate justice, which addresses the moral and ethical imperatives underpinning our collective responsibility to safeguard the planet.

Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish brings together the collective wisdom of the contributors. With their expertise in ecotheology (George Zachariah) and biblical studies (Emily Colgan, Jione Havea), the contributors explore the intersections of faith and environmentalism, unveiling the transformative power of faith communities to address the global ecological crisis. Rooted in the Methodist tradition while embracing interfaith

dialogue, this volume extends an inclusive invitation to all those who seek to embark on a journey of healing, advocacy, and reconciliation with the Earth.

Moreover, *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish* acknowledges the profound wisdom and perspectives of Indigenous Māori communities (see Te Aroha Rountree) and Moana communities (see Jione Havea). Their spiritual connection with the whenua and moana has sustained these communities for generations, fostering a deep sense of respect and reciprocity with nature. The volume pays homage to the traditional ecological knowledge of these communities and highlights the significance of learning from their lived experiences and relationship with the environment.

This invaluable resource offers a rich array of tools and resources designed to empower congregations to become catalysts for change within their communities and beyond. From theological reflections and biblical interpretations to practical guidance on sustainable practices, the contributors delve into the spiritual depths of climate justice, urging congregations to re-envision their roles as caretakers of God's creation.

Furthermore, *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish* addresses the interconnectedness of environmental issues with social justice, recognising the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, including Māori and Pacific peoples. The volume advocates for equity, solidarity, and inclusivity in the pursuit of climate justice, amplifying the voices and concerns of those who have historically been marginalised in environmental conversations.

In this era of ecological urgency, this volume stands as a call to action, grounded in the wisdom of diverse perspectives and enriched by Māori and Moana worldviews. It serves as a guidebook for congregations seeking to integrate climate justice into their spiritual journey and to cultivate a profound sense of responsibility for the Earth and all its inhabitants. Together, let us heed the call to act, embracing our shared humanity and envisioning a harmonious future, where our collective actions resonate with love and reverence for the Earth, our parish.

1 EARTH OUR PARISH: A Call to Planetary Solidarity

GEORGE ZACHARIAH

I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.[1]

This oft-quoted statement of John Wesley has been used frequently to explain his passion for field preaching to spread the gospel of salvation to the "unreached." However, it is important to understand the context in which Wesley started his unique ministry of field preaching and affirming the world as his parish.

Wesley's theological affirmation "the world as my parish" needs to be understood in the context of rejection and exclusion. Even though Wesley was an ordained minister of the Church of England, many of the parishes were upset with his preaching and his diaconal ministry among the downtrodden. They therefore stopped welcoming him to preach. So, Wesley started field preaching, not out of choice, but necessity. In his journal, he describes witnessing this form of preaching for the first time after being invited to Bristol by fellow preacher Mr Whitefield:

> **I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; I had been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.[2]**

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[1] Journal of John Wesley, June 11, 1739, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.iii.v.html.

[2] Journal of John Wesley, March 29, 1739, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.iii.i.html.

At the same time, through his affirmation "the world as my parish," he rejected the dominant understanding of "parish" as a club of elites who were insensitive both to the plight of the poor, the orphans, and the working class and also to the gospel imperatives of equality and hospitality. "The world as my parish" is thus a profound theological statement that contested the dominant understanding of the church and offered an alternative model for being a church at the margins of society.

It is in this context that we need to engage with the affirmation "Earth as our parish." This affirmation does not stem from the logic of mainstream environmentalism, which valorises pristine nature and demonises human beings.

Rather, it is an affirmation of planetary solidarity, celebrating planetary relationality—humans, animals, trees, moana, whenua, atmosphere—and celebrating our togetherness.

The book of Genesis presents the primordial Earth as "void," "dark," and "deep" (Gen 1:2). Yet creation theology propagates the idea that the universe's creation is the act of a sovereign God creating everything "out of nothing." The European colonial theology of conquest was founded on this creation theology, and it legitimised the duty of the chosen race to civilise and Christianise (colonise) the heathens and their lands. The Doctrine of Discovery testifies to this. The creation theology of the sovereign omni-God continues to play a significant role in the colonisation of the whenua, moana, and Indigenous communities.

Our theological reflections on the biblical testimony "And God saw that it was good" (Gen 1:9, 12, 18, 21, 25) should explore and identify what God saw as good in the creation. But how do we understand the goodness of creation? Mainstream creation theologies propose that the goodness of creation is God, the creator, creating the Earth out of nothing. But Indigenous and subaltern communities contest this view and affirm instead that the goodness of creation is the planetary solidarity shared among the community of creation, which creates, sustains, heals, and celebrates life through creative collaboration. The goodness of creation is a theological affirmation of a relational God and relational beings. Creation, therefore, is not a once-and-for-all event initiated by the sovereign God, which marked the origin of everything. Rather, creation continues to take place when the movement of life is able to flourish through planetary solidarity.

"God, the creator" is a fundamental faith affirmation of the church.

Jewish and Christian creation theology projects a sovereign God, the omni-God, who has authority over creation. Some Christians believe that ecological disaster is God punishing us. They hold that God is testing our faith and teaching us lessons through disasters and tragedies. They also propose that, since God is in control, God will fix the problem in God's time, and we need to patiently wait for God's time. They have the audacity to exhort the faithful in the low-lying atolls to wait for God's ark to save them from the rising waters. A decolonial ecojustice theology contests this understanding of God.

The Genesis creation narratives testify that God creates, not by affirming God's sovereignty but by letting creatures be themselves and create themselves: "Let the Earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the Earth of every kind… And God saw that it was good" (Gen 1:24). What we see here is an alternative cosmogony, like the cosmogonies of Indigenous communities—a planetary collaboration in creating, sustaining, nurturing, restoring, and celebrating life. As we see in the Māori cosmogony of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, creatures emerge in this creative planetary collaboration and organise themselves to sustain and maintain the wellbeing of people and the planet. Unlike the sovereign omni-God of dominant creation theologies, here we see God as the enfolding of the world: "And God saw that it was good."

The vision of planetary solidarity is engrained in the politics of contemporary grassroots social movements as they engage in the struggles to destabilise the prevailing unjust socio-political order, which perpetuates the destruction of people and the planet. These social movements expose the correlation between ecological/climate crises and class/white/male privilege; planetary solidarity thus becomes an alternative political witness to redeeming the Earth and the earthlings by "turning the world upside down." Differently said, planetary solidarity is the work of decolonising the commons and the commoners from the shackles of the empire. In our context, we see this planetary solidarity in movements such as the Save Our Unique Landscapes (SOUL) campaign to protect Ihumātao and the Pacific Climate Warriors.

Planetary solidarity is the theological affirmation of a relational God and relational beings outside the logic and control of the empire. In the anti-imperial apocalyptic vision of the book of Revelation, we see this vision of planetary solidarity:

> **Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life… flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life… and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Rev 22:1–3)**

When the water bodies are redeemed from the control of the empire, they become agents of redemption. The God whom we meet here is not the Creator God and Redeemer God of classical theism. Rather, we experience the Divine in the blossoming of life facilitated through the creative collaboration of the relational God and relational beings. Planetary solidarity practiced by grassroots social movements is revelatory, as it discloses the Divine in the subversive work of redemption undertaken by relational beings.

The planetary vocation of Earth healing (*tikkun olam*) is not the monopoly of the church. People and communities with diverse religious affiliations (and none) are engaged in the task of repairing the world. We see this deep solidarity at the ground zeros of ecological crises. The planetary solidarity that we witness today is a "life-centred syncretism," where we negotiate our non-negotiables to annihilate the viruses that devour life.

Planetary solidarity is more than a rainbow initiative by people of goodwill transcending boundaries for the sake of life. It is a celebration of our planetary relationality—humans, animals, vegetables, water bodies, elements, minerals—and a celebration of our togetherness. Archbishop Desmond Tutu tried to broaden the African Indigenous concept of ubuntu[3] to include the wider community of creation, and he named it "planetary ubuntu." To practice planetary ubuntu means to widen and deepen the circle of relationality and to act with love towards all that we are, including our entire community *and* our extended planetary whānau. I am because you are. We are because the planet is.

[3] Ubuntu is generally translated as "I am because we are." It perceives human beings as relational and connected.

2 TAIAO, TANGATA, AND TIRITI: A Call to Planetary Solidarity Ecology, Humanity, and Treaty

TE AROHA ROUNTREE

Ko au te taiao, ko te taiao ko au.
I am the environment, and the environment is me.

This kōrero articulates a Māori understanding of a creation-centric ideology/theology. It reflects the interrelationships between humanity and te taiao (the environment) and communicates the spiritual interconnectedness of God's creation. I am the environment, and the environment is me; this speaks to kaitiakitanga representing not only guardianship but also intergenerational sustainability. Kaitiakitanga is part of a whakapapa (genealogy) of creation; essentially, we have reciprocal responsibilities to care for one another, generation after generation. This is our tiriti[4] with God as a community of creation.

Climate change is the single greatest threat to public health globally. To say this in the face of a global pandemic speaks to the seriousness of the climate crisis. According to Rhys Jones et al., the leading health threats include "water and food shortages, extreme weather events, changing patterns of infectious disease, and mental/psychological stress."[5] These adverse impacts are disproportionately borne by the most disadvantaged populations, including Indigenous peoples. As a result, Māori are exposed to harmful social and economic conditions, with consequent higher rates of morbidity and mortality.

[4] Tiriti in this context is our commitment, our kawenata (covenant) with God, embodied in our responsiveness to being in a community of creation.

[5] Rhys Jones, Hayley Bennett, Gay Keating, and Alison Blaiklock, "Climate Change and the Right to Health for Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand," *Health and Human Rights Journal* 16, no.1 (2014): 54–68 (citation p. 55).

This means that climate change is literally a life-or-death situation for Māori; the future of our whakapapa is at stake, and our mokopuna (grandchildren) may not see another generation if we do not act now. As my mokopuna stand at the foot of Tane Mahuta, it is devastating to think that, in their lifetime, it could be gone. In te ao Māori (the Māori world), this is the equivalent to the sounding of the pahū (drum), a warning of an impending crisis.

Mātauranga Māori, traditional Māori knowledge systems, have, for generations, informed our ecological responses to the climatic changes in our natural environment. The ecology of various species of plant and animal life has been adversely impacted by a warming climate; subsequently, our traditional seasons for planting, hunting, gathering, and harvesting of kai and rongoā (food and medicinal resources) have become more and more unpredictable. The destabilising of our ecosystems has meant adaptation of both practice and spiritual connection to our natural environment and therefore our tikanga (customs, practices) and mātauranga of te taiao.

Like many Indigenous peoples globally, we have been at the coalface of climate change. We have used our own native wisdoms to respond to the crisis, and we continue to challenge government policies and corporations that have impinged on our kaitiakitanga. India Logan-Riley, a young Māori activist addressing the COP26 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow, made this statement about Indigenous contributions to the climate crisis: “We’re keeping fossil fuels in the ground and stopping fossil fuel expansion. We’re halting infrastructure that would increase emissions and saying no to false solutions… What we do works.”[6] What we hear from our rangatahi (young people) is that they feel government forums lack trust in Māori ways of being and knowing about te taiao and creation.

Our traditional Māori conservation measures, such as rāhui (resource restrictions), have provided for the preservation of both our resources and the ecological systems that sustain them. However, a lack of understanding, trust, and respect for Māori ecological knowledge and practice has seen these traditional wisdoms be either ignored or dismissed as both irrelevant and inconsequential to the crisis. India Logan-Riley puts it plainly:

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[6] Quoted in “COP26: Māori Climate Activist India Logan-Riley Gives Stern Warning to G-20 Leaders,” *New Zealand Herald*, 1 November 2021, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/cop26-maori-climate-activist-india-logan-riley-gives-stern-warning-to-g-20-leaders/C3SWX4Q3L4XP5EOJVBPW7AYMAU/

"I cannot put it more simply than we know what we are doing, and if you are not willing to back us or let us lead, then you are complicit in the death and destruction that's happening across the globe. Land back, oceans back."[7]

We have been reliant on our fundamental knowledge systems to guide our lives and sustain our resources. When those knowledge systems are threatened, so too are our ways of life and our connections to creation and to God.

According to Jones et al., losing traditional resources from the moana (sea), awa (river/waterways), and ngahere (forests) is not just a loss in the present; it affects future generations too.[8] Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, recently launched the new eco-travel non-profit organisation Travalyst, which was designed with sustainable travel in mind and inspired by Māori values of kaitiakitanga. Prince Harry shared his vision with Moana Maniapoto in a recent interview: "Māori culture inherently understands sustainable practices and taking better care of our life-giving land, which are critical lessons we can all learn, and that is why I'm here with you on 'Te Ao [with] Moana' to share a new kaupapa." According to Prince Harry, young people, Māori in particular, are leading the way: "They are rightly determined to make this world a better place for the next generation. Guided by Māori knowledge and practices, Aotearoa is a country of sustainability pioneers."

We are privileged in Aotearoa to be surrounded by abundance. Te taiao provides for us, and we must learn to be good kaitiaki (Guardians/Caretakers/Sustainers). As Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (MCNZ), our Mission Statement holds us to the principle of ecology, and we are committed to caring for creation. Therefore, we need to be conscious of and upstanding about this climate crisis. In Aotearoa, we have the capacity to make small changes that can have life-affirming impacts for us in the present and, more importantly, for the future of our mokopuna.

Let me rephrase the whakataukī (proverbial saying) that I began with:

Ko tātou te taiao, ko te taiao ko tātou.
We are the environment, and the environment is us.

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7 Quoted in "COP26."

8 Jones et al., "Climate Change," 62.

3 SEA-LEVEL RISING: A Response from Te Moana Nui

JIONE HAVEA

Sea-level rising is not new to te moana nui ("the big ocean,"[10] also referred to as Pasifika, Oceania). One of my memories from the 1970s was seeing in one of the Fiji newspapers a picture of what i remember as the remains of a place of worship being in the sea. The structure did not walk into the sea, but instead, the sea had eaten into the land, and something that used to be on dry land ended up in the sea. I may be wrong in saying that it was a place of worship, but i am certain that the newspaper article was about land erosion.

I later came to learn of the burial ground (on the left in Figure 3.1) at the village of Togoru on Fiji's largest island, Viti Levu. These tombstones did not walk into the sea. The graves used to be on the island, with an ocean-view, but the sea has gnawed the (is)land, and the burial ground is now in the sea, looking back onto the (is)land. The tombstones mark the graves of the wealthier people, most of whom were Europeans (missionaries and businesspeople) and a few locals from chiefly families. The normal people did not have tombstones, and there is no certainty if their remains are still there where they were buried.

Climate exodus

Sea-level rising is no speculation, and it is certainly not a theory. Sea-level rising is an ancient reality, and it has been part of Pasifika experience since before the 1970s. The relocation of coastal villages across te moana nui has been in response to sea-level rising, pushing islanders to move inland to higher grounds.

[10] Seventy-one percent of the surface of the globe is covered by ocean. Te moana nui represents 45 percent of the global ocean coverage.

Figure 3.1: Burial ground at Togoru, Fiji (2019). Photo courtesy of Marcelo Schneider.

Migration has also been a reality in te moana nui. Our legends celebrate our ancestors as navigators, but we do not usually ask why they left their homes to roam the currents of te moana nui. Did they migrate in response to sea-level rising? The real reasons may never be known, but more recent migrations are known to be in response to detrimental environmental and ecological circumstances. The 1945 resettlements of natives from Vaitupu (Tuvalu) to Kioa (Fiji) and from Banaba (Kiribati) to Rabi (Fiji) were due to the detrimental conditions of the home(is)lands. Vaitupu and Banaba had been ruined, and so the natives were resettled to Fiji. Navigation, migration, and resettlement were options for the ancestors and for natives in the recent past, so why are those not entertained in the face of sea-level rising in modern times?

The strongest response to sea-level rising from island church communities has been to hold onto the Noahide covenant (Gen 9:8–17): God promised not to destroy the world again as had been done in the flood, and God gave the rainbow as a sign of that covenant. Trusting in God, many fundamentalist Christian islanders would not consider resettling to another

(is)land. To migrate would portray them as people who do not trust in God, and this is not an option. There are, however, two problems with this stance. First, the flood in Noah's story was due to rain sent from above (by God), compared to sea-level rising being due to waters breaking through barriers below. The Noahide covenant does not apply to the situation of sea-level rising. Second, migration as response to ecological disasters is not considered a sign of faithlessness in the Bible. For instance, Abram and his family arrived at Canaan in Gen 12:5, and five verses later they migrated to Egypt in response to a famine. There were other stories of famine, and the responses were the same—migration.

Exodus is a strong motif in biblical literature, with people moving away from oppression and enslavement by different empires at various times, and this is an option for modern situations of sea-level rising. In the shadows of the memories of navigation and migration in te moana nui, exodus is a reasonable response to sea-level rising and to other climate-induced ecological disasters.

Climate injustices

Climate exodus is an option, but it is not easy. To get up and move away from home is one thing, and to settle down and build a new home at a different location is another thing—both are opportunities for injustice (in thoughts and practices).

The 1945 resettlement of communities from Banaba and Vaitupu to Fiji was difficult for the people who had to learn a new language and survive in environments quite different from their home islands. And the Fijian (iTaukei and Indian) locals had to learn to make room for, and live alongside, new neighbours with different languages, mannerisms, and practices. Behind the pains of resettlement are hidden powers: for instance, the operators of phosphate mines, who benefitted from the removal of Banabans; and the British Empire, which controlled the three island groups—Gilbert Islands (which became Kiribati, among which was Banaba), Ellice Islands (which became Tuvalu, among which was Vaitupu), and Fiji. Engaging with the hidden powers (empires) will expose aspects of (in)justice that need to be taken into consideration when one contemplates the option of exodus (or climate migration).

Behind the exodus option are two further issues relating to (in)justice: the first issue relates to responsibility—who contributes to the causes of sea-

level rising, and to climate change in general? And who as a consequence has to exodus? While all humans and animals contribute to climate change, some contribute more than others due to their diet and carbon footprints; as a result, those people and animals who live on low-lying islands and coastal areas need to exodus in order to survive. It is unfair and unjust that a few bear most of the burden (read: punishment) for a situation that they did not request nor fully deserve. The second issue relates to capacity and resources—who can afford to migrate and resettle? There is a simple answer to this question: the ones with wealth or who have the opportunity to borrow. The ones without resources feel more of the burden—the natives in te moana nui are among the—and this too is unjust. Sea-level rising, and climate change in general, reveal injustices in terms of both the heavy lifting (of the burden) and the capacity to respond appropriately to these crises.

4

KAITIAKI: The Human Vocation to Till and to Keep

EMILY COLGAN

For a long time, Genesis 1 has functioned as the dominant narrative in shaping ideas about the relationship between humanity and our surrounding environment, thus determining the vocation of human beings for (Western) Christianity. In one of the most well-known passages of the Bible, humanity is spoken into being on the sixth day of creation (Gen 1:26–28). Humanity is disconnected from the existing created order and presented as the climax of God's creative activity. Unlike Earth and Earth's other-than-human creatures, humans are made in the image (*tselem*) of God (v. 26), a designation which sets them apart from the rest of creation and implies a distinctive and superior relationship to God. Indeed, like God in the world, humans are given the mandate to dominate (*radah*) and subdue (*kabash*) the Earth (v. 28): "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the Earth'" (Gen 1:26–28). Thus, this text has been read as an affirmation that humanity has priority in their relationship with God, compared to other living creatures and to Earth itself.[11]

In recent years, however, concerns have been raised about this text and its history of interpretation, particularly in the context of the climate crisis. For example, in his seminal essay entitled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," scientist Lynn White Jr. argued that the ecological segregation found in Genesis 1 establishes humankind as "master" of the

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[11] Norman C. Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 1–8 (citation p. 6).

environment and depicts as God's will the exploitation of "nature" to serve human interests.[12] Western Christianity, he insisted, "bears a huge burden of guilt for the kind of behaviour in the world that has been so ecologically disastrous."[13] Biblical scholars also note that the language used in this text to describe the relationship between humans and the Earth community is problematic. The Hebrew term *radah* ("to dominate"), for example, involves the forceful exercise of power.[14] It is what kings and taskmasters do: they dominate their subjects and their enemies (see 1 Kgs 4:24; 5:16). Similarly, the Hebrew term *kabash* ("to subdue") is a harsh verb that reflects the use of violence. It is used elsewhere to mean "to crush under foot" (Mic 7:19), "to subjugate" (Josh 18:1; Jer 34:11), and "to rape" (Esth 7:8 Neh 5:5). These are words that convey hierarchy and violence. These are actions that explicitly silence and suppress Earth and the Earth community. As it stands, these verses seem to devalue Earth and its other-than-human inhabitants, justifying the use of human violence and subjugation.

While "traditional" interpretations of Genesis 1 have typically upheld the unique place of humanity and our superiority to the other-than-human community, a majority of contemporary Christian readers soften the force of this text, claiming instead that it mandates responsible stewardship—even kindness and caring. Broadly speaking, Christian stewardship understands humans as responsible for wisely managing all the resources within the world entrusted to us by God. For many Christians, stewardship includes caring for creation, protecting it, conserving it, and reducing the harmful human impact on the environment. Again, however, the model of stewardship is troubling, because it assumes a socio-economic hierarchy. As Clare Palmer notes, this model positions God as an absentee landlord and (some) human beings as managers of the divine estate.[15] For

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12 Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7.

13 White Jr., "Historical Roots," 1206. I appreciate that this summary—and indeed the article itself—is reductive and somewhat simplistic. It is not my intention to critically analyse the cogency of White's work here; rather, I wish to acknowledge the importance of this article for compelling biblical scholars to re-examine the biblical depiction of humanity and the environment.

14 While the term *radah* might not appear exclusively in contexts of violence throughout the Hebrew Bible, its use here, in close connection to the verb *kabash* ("to subdue"), suggests violent overtones.

15 Clare Palmer, "Stewardship: A Case Study in Environmental Ethics," in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives—Past and Present*, ed. R.J. Berry (London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 63–75. Palmer notes that the idea of stewardship comes from feudal societies, where landlords left managerial slaves in charge of their property.

Palmer, stewardship encodes a political message of power and oppression, signifying a relationship of benign dictatorship, where the Earth and Earth's other-than-human communities are entities who depend for survival on the decisions made and implemented by human managers.[16]

The assumption derived from this model of relationality is that human domination of the other-than-human is natural and obvious. This model maintains a hierarchical distinction between humans and the rest of creation. The Christian narrative of who we are (our human vocation) is disconnected from the narrative of plants, other-than-human animals, and oceans. This narrative is removed from the grand context of the cosmos, the planets, the stars, and space. The combination of this disconnection and hierarchical superiority has the potential to serve as the basis for the exploitation, oppression, and abuse of the Earth community.

Given the difficulties identified with these dominant narratives, are there alternative models of relationality in the Bible that might point towards other ways of engaging with the world around us?

Surprisingly perhaps, we need look no further than the very next chapter of Genesis. As the text opens, we learn that there is no vegetation on Earth because there is no one to "serve" Adamah (Land/Ground) and nurture her (Gen 2:5). In verse 7, however, this situation is rectified when God takes soil from Adamah and moulds it into a figure called the *adam*, a human being. It is important to note the strong linguistic connection between Adamah and the *adam*. The *adam* is an Earth being. Humans were created from Earth for Earth.

In Gen 2:15, God gives the human the task of completing what was absent at the beginning of the story: the human has the task of greening Adamah: "Then the Lord God took the human and put them in the garden of Eden to serve (*abad*) and preserve it" (Gen 2:15).

Here, the specific role of the human (the *adam*) is to "serve and preserve" Adamah.[17] The Hebrew term abad is often translated as "to till" (NRSV), but it literally means "to serve." In the Bible, serving is what people did when they devoted themselves to a person or task—members of the court served the king (2 Kgs 25:24; Jer 25:11), and priests and worshippers served their

[16] Palmer, "Stewardship," 69

[17] Norman C. Habel, The Birth, *The Curse and The Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis* 1–11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 49, translates this phrase as "to care for and conserve."

God (Exod 3:12; Deut 11:13). In Gen 2:15, humans are to devote themselves to Earth by attending to Earth's needs.[18]

As the narrative progresses, Earth helps to create the animals of the fields and the birds of the air, thus establishing a kinship between these creatures and the human being. Earth becomes the common ancestor of all through the soil that is the basis for both human and animal life (Gen 2:7, 19). Here, Earth is the parent, and all who dwell on Earth share a common origin.[19] Within Genesis 2, then, humanity is depicted as part of a single unfolding reality. Human beings are not separated from Earth; rather, there is a deep continuity of life. This understanding resonates with contemporary scientific understandings of the human place within the cosmos. As Daniel Hillel writes, "This view of humanity's role [vocation] accords with the modern ecological principle that the life of every species is rooted not in separateness from other forms of life in nature, but in integration with the entire living community."[20] Moreover, this alternative model of relationality sits more comfortably with Māori and Oceanic understandings of creation as inherently unified.[21] While these systems of knowledge do not correspond in all aspects, there are certain resonances, for example, between this reading of Genesis 2 and the concept of kaitiakitanga (custodianship) found i te ao Māori (within Māori worldviews).

At the heart of the term kaitiakitanga is whanaungatanga—the interrelatedness/kinship of all creatures within all species. All plants, birds, rivers, lakes, sea, mountains, hills, animals, and insects have value in themselves and are to be respected and honoured. Kaitiakitanga respects the mana (influence/authority) of all living things and seeks to uphold their mauri (essence) with tapu (sacredness), aroha (love), and manaaki

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[18] Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 69.

[19] Mark G. Brett, "Earthing the Human in Genesis 1–3," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 73–86 (citation p. 82). Some interpreters note that the naming of the animals by the *adam* denotes hierarchy and human dominance. In the biblical tradition, the process of naming serves a range of different functions. In Gen 17:5, for example, a new name articulates a new experience. In Ruth 4:13–17, the process of naming is a celebration of life and a reflection of communal connection. It is important to note that in Gen 2:19 there is nothing in the text that points to a hierarchical relationship between the *adam* and the animals.

[20] Daniel Hillel, *The Natural History of the Bible: An Environmental Exploration of the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 243.

[21] For seminal works in this area, see Winston Halapua, *Waves of God's Embrace: Sacred Perspectives from the Ocean* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008); Ilaitia S. Tuwere, *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 2002).

(care/hospitality). Kaitiakitanga situates human beings in creation, not as supreme masters over the Earth community but as interdependent members of the Earth community. Humans are urged to offer aroha and manaaki to all other living things. As interdepended whānau (kin/family) and members of the Earth community, we serve and, in turn, are served in a reciprocal pattern of respect and mutual custodianship.

The interweaving of these (counter)narratives works to interrupt the dominant Christian theological position that has long maintained a hierarchical distinction between human and other-than-human and upheld a relationship of mastery and subjugation. And from this site of interweaving and interruption, we find a framework to re-envision a more appropriate understanding of human vocation, which comes out of and speaks into our churches in Aotearoa.

5 KIA ORA: Towards a Life-Flourishing Economy

GEORGE ZACHARIAH

John Wesley declared "the world as my parish" in a context when people from rural England were migrating to the cities for their survival. The early Methodists initiated field preaching and works of mercy to serve these people, who were ignored, if not excluded from the mainline churches. These people had to migrate to London and other big cities because they were uprooted from their abodes and livelihoods by the enclosure laws. They supplied the labour force for the factories and the mining companies in the cities.

The British enclosure movement marked the nation's transition from a medieval peasant economy to an early industrial economy. The enclosure laws provided absolute property rights to the landowning class and authorised them to fence off their lands, alienating the peasants from their commons and livelihood. From being an organic commonwealth of the community that ensured peasants' wellbeing and flourishing of life, the commons were converted into agribusiness farms that cultivated cash crops and raised carriage horses to maximise the wealth of rich landowners. The uprooted peasants had to leave their self-sufficient subsistence economy of the commons and migrate to the capitalist economy of burgeoning cities in order to sell their labour for survival. Wesley considered them his borderless parish, and the early Methodist movement was a transformative and therapeutic presence in these communities. Many leaders of the labour movement in nineteenth-century Britain were Methodist preachers and lay leaders.

Beyond Britain, the colonialism during this period further contributed to the destruction of the subsistence ethics of Indigenous and subaltern

communities by alienating them from the commons. Colonial legal systems drew on the Doctrine of Discovery[22] to declare the commons "tera nullius" (land belonging to no one) and to justify the occupation of this land by the colonial state. Alien legal and administrative systems were imposed and enforced, desecrating the commons by destroying the Earth-healing sacred ethos and practices of Indigenous communities. For colonialism, nature was either a resource pile waiting to be plundered and engineered or wilderness needing to be fenced off from the tangata whenua.

In the age of the capitalocene,[23] colonisation of the commons and forceful displacement of Indigenous and subaltern communities are the primary causes of the ecological and economic crises we face today. When commons are commodified and converted into private property, production and profit become the objective of human engagement with nature. As Karl Polanyi rightly observes, this marks a shift from a society wherein economic relations and practices are "embedded" in socio-ecological relations to a society colonised by the hegemonic logic of accumulation and private property.[24] An economic system that puts profit before both people and the planet eternalises the experience of the "impossibility of life"[25] for the community of creation. This context makes it imperative for us to consider "Earth as our parish."

The ka ora theology developed by members of the Te Taha Māori of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa is instructive here. They envision ka ora as a movement of people who are committed to the struggle "to survive, to redress past injustices, to realise new socio-religious and economic conditions, whereby all may experience and enjoy fullness of life, here and now, in this very earthy and materialistic world."[26] Ka ora theology is all about ka ora relationships and ka ora ways of being, and this life-flourishing economy entails "developing policies to manage our own reserves and waterways, harbour pollution, working to implement a long-awaited sewage reticulation system. Also educating our own in te reo Maori, supporting and caring for whānau, keeping families together."[27] This is the

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[22] Tina Ngata, "James Cook and the Doctrine of Discovery—5 Things to Know," https://tinangata.com/2019/06/01/james-cook-and-the-doctrine-of-discovery-5-things-to-know/.

[24] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), 73.

[25] Enrique Dussell, *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 216.

[26] "Toward Life not Death," *Crosslink*, n.d.

[27] "Toward Life not Death."

vision of an economy of life, where life and commons are considered sacred. The commodification of life is ka mate, and hence against the spirit of ka ora. Ka ora theology is a movement towards an economy of life.

When the neoliberal market economy propagates its culture of disembeddedness, an economy of life strives to re-embed the human in the commons and the community. Subaltern and Indigenous communities are agents of an economy of life in our times. For these communities, an economy of life means reclaiming their commons, their identity, their Earth-honouring practices and rituals, and their self-determination to create a world devoid of greed, discrimination, and exploitation. In the age of the capitalocene, an economy of life is an absurd vision, as it envisions the flourishing of life amidst the "impossibility of life." Primarily a critique of the dominant economy of greed and accumulation, it

> **engenders participation for all in decision-making processes that impact lives, provides for people's basic needs through just livelihoods, values and supports social reproduction and care work done primarily by women, and protects and preserves the air, water, land, and energy sources that are necessary to sustain life.**[28]

We come across different expressions of the economy of life in Indigenous and subaltern communities. For example, *Buen Vivir* is a social philosophy from the cosmovision of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala in Latin America. *Buen Vivir* is foremost

> **a decolonial stance… It calls for a new ethics that balances quality of life, democratization of the state and concern with biocentric ideals… a lived practice against commodification, a way of doing things differently… a new paradigm of social and ecological commons—one that is community-centric, ecologically balanced and culturally sensitive. It's a vision and a platform for thinking and practicing alternative futures based on a "bio-civilization."**[29]

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[28] World Council of Churches, "Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action," WCC, 20 July 2012, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/economy-of-life-justice-and-peace-for-all-a-call-to-action.

[29] Juan Francisco Salazar, "Buen Vivir: South America's Rethinking of the Future We Want," *The Conversation*, 24 July 2015, https://theconversation.com/buen-vivir-south-americas-rethinking-of-the-future-we-want-44507#:~:text=Gudynas%20sees%20Buen%20Vivir%20as,a%20%E2%80%9Cbio%2Dcivilisation%E2%80%9D.

This economy of life is profoundly theological, as it provides us with an alternate understanding of God. In the context of the "impossibility of life," God is not an impassable, transcendent reality detached from the struggles of the planetary community; rather, God is a comrade who shares the community's pain and hope. Said differently, members of the planetary community experience God as a fellow refugee, displaced from the commons due to ecological and economic injustice. An economy of life has the audacity to believe in alternatives. It empowers communities to believe in the possibility of life beyond the present. An economy of life is, therefore, a gospel of alternatives.

As Arundhati Roy succinctly articulates:

> **Can we expect that an alternative to what looks like death for the planet will come from the imagination that has brought about this crisis in the first place? It seems unlikely. The alternative, if there is one, will emerge from the places and the people who have resisted the hegemonic impulse of capitalism and imperialism instead of being co-opted by it. If there is any hope for the world at all, it does not live in conference rooms or in cities with tall buildings. It lives low down on the ground, with its arms around the people who go to battle every day to protect their forests, their mountains, and their rivers because they know that the forests, the mountains and the rivers protect them.**[30]

Such a reimagination is the foundation for an economy of life, and our resolve to consider Earth as our parish entails the commitment to realise this economy of life in the here and now.

We see this same vision reflected in the Scripture that emerged from the colonised people and colonised whenua and moana in first-century Patmos. In the eschatological vision of Revelation, the redeemed Earth has no sea: "And the first Earth had passed away and the sea was no more" (Rev 21:1). This is a problematic vision for the Moana people. So, a deeper engagement with the book of Revelation is important. Revelation portrays the sea as a political and economic category, and the disappearance of the sea in the New Jerusalem is thus a critique of the political economy of the Roman Empire. The sea was the means for colonising the commons and the

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[30] Arundhati Roy, "The Trickledown Revolution," *Outlook*, 20 September 2010, https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/the-trickledown-revolution/267040.

commoners in the Roman-occupied territories. The list of cargos mentioned in Revelation 18 reveals how the commons and the commoners were colonised and commodified by Rome. The list includes the following items:

> **cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and human lives. (Rev 18:12–13)**

The list reveals how the fruits of the commons and the fruits of the labour of the commoners were colonised and plundered by the Roman imperial powers. The list of cargos also included "slaves and human beings." Artisans and farmers engaged in the creative vocation of tilling and keeping the commons were enslaved and commodified to maximise the wealth of the empire. So, the disappearance of the sea in the redeemed Earth is not the disappearance of water per se; rather, it is the alternative vision of an economy of life, which is antithetical to the imperial political economy of greed, commodification, and accumulation.

At the same time, Revelation proposes an alternative vision of water: water is a free gift for all: "To the one who is thirsty I will give to drink from the spring of the water of life as a gift" (21:6); "Let everyone who is thirsty come. Let everyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift" (22:17). The economy of life that Revelation proposes is the restoration of the water commons by de-commodifying them and offering them as a free gift to the entire community of creation. Here, the water commons are brought out of the logic of neoliberal capitalism. This economy of life is a prophetic judgment on the capitalist economy of plunder and destruction; it is a gift economy, where nature's bounty is available to all, not just to people with money. The promise of free access to clean and pure water is the divine rejection of the prevailing political economy that privatises and commodifies water and coastal commons.

The economy of life invites us to practice a subversive act of witnessing, which defies the market forces commodifying and annihilating life for profit. Neoliberal capitalism is an idolatrous system that desecrates and destroys life. Our resolve to consider Earth as our parish requires us to have the audacity to engage in insurrectionist witness that will abolish neoliberal capitalism and heal the world with an alternative economy—an economy of

life. A life-flourishing economy is an economy which embodies *celebration of* abundant life and *defiance against* the economy of death that perpetuates the "impossibility of life."

6 A MOANA READING OF GENESIS 1

JIONE HAVEA

I was invited to contribute a short reflection on “the sea,” a subject that is close to my heart as a native islander from Pasifika (for Pacific, Oceania)—as islanders, we are people of the sea—and in light of the threats that we face with the sea level rising on our shores due to the forces of climate change. The low-lying narrow strips of (is)lands in Pasifika will be among the first to drown in the rising sea.

There are seas and island(er)s in other parts of the world, and climate change is a global threat, but i come to this reflection as a native of Pasifika. And I come under the shadows of the affirmation of the seas and rivers by one psalmist (Ps 24:1–2):

> **The Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,**
> **the world, and those who live in it,**
> **for the Lord has founded it on the seas**
> **and established it on the rivers.**

Notwithstanding, i cannot think and speak of the sea independent of the land, the sky, and the underworld. They interweave in Pasifika and in Moana worldviews. This reflection thus offers a reading of Genesis 1 that spotlights the interweaving of sea, land, sky, and underworld. First, though, let me share my thoughts on Moana worldviews, readings, and theologies.

Celebrating Moana

“Moana” is one of the native terms for a physical space, the deep ocean that links the “sea of islands” in te moana nui (see Chapter 3). The term Moana refers to our sea-world, but it is also used in reference to our native people,

native ways, and native worldviews—we are Moana people (people of the sea), who think according to Moana ways and operate according to Moana rhythms and time. To avoid confusion, I use Pasifika in this reflection for our world (space) and Moana for our ways and worldviews.

In this chapter, the term Moana also serves as a label (register) for worldviews that natives of this watery physical space favour and exhibit in our thinking and practices. There are four qualifications that i quickly add.

First, te moana nui is so expansive in all directions—from east to west and from south to north, as well as across and around—that diversity is expected. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all for the sea of islands[31] spread across a wide watery context that covers over 30 percent of Earth's surface (te moana nui is larger than the landmass of all the continents combined). Moana worldviews are multiple, and they are unavoidably fluid (like the Moana context).

Second, some Moana worldviews will be shared across native communities of te moana nui due to the movements of our navigating ancestors as well as the relations that developed since. It is thus unfair for one cluster of islands to claim a worldview as *unique* to them, for we all share the *currents* of Moana. It is also unfair for one cluster of islands to claim originality (indigeneity, aboriginality), because our people (whānau, kāinga) crisscross—across and around, then back again—te moana nui. Our ancestors did not follow one route or migrate in only one (prescribed) direction. Many routes connect our whānau, and so our worldviews are shared among the sea of islands.

Third, as in all human societies, Moana worldviews emerge from specific contexts then journey into other contexts where they adapt and settle down, and then, at some point, they move on or die out. Worldviews arise and accumulate; they infect as well as become infected by other worldviews and other contexts. It is thus unfair to expect, or to proclaim, a worldview to be free of external influences or coercion—as though it is "pure." Moana worldviews are contexted and shared among, but not by all, Moana people.[32]

Fourth, and in the context of the foregoing qualifications, Moana *identity* and *boundaries* are difficult to fix. The term "fix" here carries

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[31] For further discussion of the term "sea of islands," see 'Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 148–61.

[32] Cf. Jione Havea, "Diaspora contexted: Talanoa, Reading, and Theologizing, as Migrants." *Black Theology* 11, no. 2 (2013): 185–200.

three connotations: to define or delimit; to attach or anchor; to repair or reconstruct. Asserting that Moana identities and boundaries are difficult to fix (in all three connotations of the term) is controversial because, for most people in most contexts, identity and boundaries need to be fixed or fixable. In the context of te moana nui, on the other hand, fluidity is one of our native characteristics, and so it is necessary to revisit and interrogate some of the identity and boundary markers that have been imposed upon us and over our ways.

Moana nui

ʻEpeli Hauʻofa problematised "Pacific Islands" as a reference to te moana nui, preferring "Oceania" instead.[33] More recently, Seini Taufa revisited the insult in the designation "Pacific Islanders."[34] The name "Pacific" was imposed upon our waters, as were the divisions into groups based on colour, size, and numbers: Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia. Our ancestors crisscrossed te moana nui and we have followed in their routes, so any demarcation would be fraud.

The drives of regionalism and nationalism divided te moana nui up, and those divisions exhibit the tendencies and workings of coloniality. Geopolitics has divided te moana nui further with various associations (e.g., Pacific Islands Forum, Melanesian Spearhead Group). At the proverbial end of the day, the hold of coloniality is difficult to release from te moana nui, for each cluster of islands has their own agendas and interests to pursue; but this hold could at least be named and interrogated.

A point that encourages this reflection is the fact that colonisation is, for the most part, land based. Nations claim and raise their flags over solid grounds (lands, reefs), while claims over the seas and oceans have to do primarily with access to resources (fishing, mining) and colonies (e.g., Taiwan in the South China Sea, Diaoyu/Senkaku in the East China Sea). In this regard, te Moana nui provides the link between clusters of (is)lands, but that does not mean it is under the dominion of the powers that exercise sovereignty on the (is)lands. Moanamoana nui is in the mix, but it is not under the authority of land-based colonial authorities.

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[33] Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands."

[34] Andrew McRae, "'Pacific Islander' an Insulting Umbrella Term, Researcher Tells Royal Commission," *RNZ*, 22 July 2021, https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/447392/pacific-islander-an-insulting-umbrella-term-researcher-tells-royal-commission.

Te moana nui is the context and the model for Moana readings and Moana theologies. Moana readings and Moana theologies seek to break away from the drives of coloniality and to orient toward fluidity and wetness.

Moana readings and theologies

One of my uncles (Sione Leisi Finau) once explained something to me, but i only understood his argument after his death. He told me that the Tongan world(view) is made up of four interconnected spheres: fenua (Tuvaluan for "land"), tari (iKiribati for "sea," as well as "brother" and "sister"), lani (Hawaiian for "sky"), and pulotu (Tongan for "underworld"). The key sphere is the sea, which is the meeting point for all spheres. The sky and the underworld meet, he explained, at the edge of the sea (where the sun sets)! My uncle's explanation is not scientific, but it expresses a key characteristic of Moana worldviews—that the spheres and horizons of the world intersect. These four ecological bodies—land, sea, sky, and underworld—are in constant motion, and as they move, they interconnect and interweave. It is therefore not fair, according to Moana worldviews, to speak of one body without taking into account the other three bodies. What happens or manifests with one body relates to what happens, or what has happened or is about to happen, in and with the other bodies. Put sharply, Moana worldviews resist speaking of tari (sea) without also considering how it interlinks with fenua (land), lani (sky), and pulotu (underworld)—and vice versa. They all are connected.

Moana readings and theologies will orient to the waters and, at the same time, emphasise the interconnections between the spheres of the world. For instance, the sea level is rising (Chapter 3) because of what happens on land, in the sky, and in the underground. These spheres interconnect, so the ailment of one sphere flows over into the other spheres. Similarly, the wellbeing of one sphere influences the wellbeing of other spheres.

A Moana reading of co-creation in Genesis 1

Biblical critics have celebrated the Gen 1:1–2:4a creation story as one of the accounts of the mighty acts of God ʻElohim. But God ʻElohim is not the sole creator in this biblical story. A Moana reading of the Genesis 1 narrative will draw attention to the strong presence of water bodies (often overlooked by land-based readers) in the narrative. Listing the references to water (with

emphases added) suffices to make the point:[35]

- Narrator: "a wind from God swept over the *face of the waters*" (1:2b).
- God: "Let there be a dome in the midst of *the waters*, and let it separate *the waters* from *the waters*" (1:6).
- Narrator: "So God made the dome and separated *the waters* that were under the dome from *the waters* that were above the dome" (1:7).
- God: "Let *the waters* under the sky be gathered together into one place" (1:9a).
- Narrator: "*the waters* that were gathered together [God] called *Seas*" (1:10a).
- God: "Let *the waters* bring forth swarms of living creatures" (1:20a).
- Narrator: "God created the *great sea monsters* and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which *the waters* swarm" (1:21a).
- God: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill *the waters in the seas*" (1:22a).
- God: "let [humankind in our image] have dominion over the fish of *the sea*" (1:26b).
- God: "have dominion over the fish of *the sea*" (1:28b).

The waters and the sea thus play significant roles in the creation narrative. But reading the text with Moana worldviews, it is glaring how four Moana bodies are named as co-creators with God 'Elohim in the opening verses of this text—fenua (land, Earth), tari (sea), lani (sky), and pulotu (underworld).

> **When 'Elohim began to construct the *skies* [lani] and the *Earth* [fenua]—the Earth was chaotic, and darkness covered the face of the *deep* [pulotu]—a wind from 'Elohim swept across the face of the *waters* [tari]. (Gen 1:1–2, my translation and italics)**

In Gen 1:2, i read *the deep* as a figure for pulotu (underworld), whose face is covered (read: blindfolded) by darkness (see below). And in terms of the Hebrew word choice, *the waters* (*ha-mayim*) echoes *the skies* (*ha-shamayim*). It is therefore not surprising that the story continues into Days 2 and 3, with God 'Elohim constructing a dome to separate the waters into two bodies—a body of water above the dome *in the skies* and a body of water under the

[35] Unless indicated otherwise, quotes from the Bible are taken from the NRSVue.

dome *in the seas* (Gen 1:6–10). The *mayim* (waters) links the *shamayim* (skies above) to *the seas* (below), and these bodies connect in Moana worldviews with *the* (is)*land* and *the deep/underworld*.

During Days 1 to 3 of this biblical creation story, the four ecological bodies in the Moana world/views come into play in relation to one another. It is important to note that the linear nature of language and narrative means that the ecological bodies are presented separately, but they interweave in and with the Moana world/views.

Pulotu is the first co-creator: Before Day 1, "the Earth was complete chaos" (Gen 1:2), primarily because darkness had covered the face of *the deep* (pulotu). It therefore makes sense that the first act of creation was a request from God ʻElohim for darkness to "let light be" (1:2). The light was already there, but it was under the cover of darkness. This was not a magical act of "creation out of nothing," but a request by God ʻElohim for darkness to lift itself up and move aside—thereby removing the blindfold from the face of *the deep* (pulotu)—so that light may *be* and shine forth. In this Moana reading, the light came from pulotu. When darkness lifted, the light from pulotu allowed the creation to become visible and to be less chaotic.

This reading is consistent with Pasifika legends—for example, that Maui brought fire from Pulotu—and Pasifika geography: a volcanic ring of fire flows under the sea of islands in Pasifika. Associating fire with light, the Moana world/views find the way that the biblical creation story locates light in the deep very meaningful. And thanks to the willingness of darkness to lift, there was light for the creation to proceed to Day 2.

Lani as co-creator: On Day 1, the waters were at one place—under the cover of "a [sweeping] wind from God" (1:2). Then on Day 2, God ʻElohim called for a "dome" to come up "in the midst of the waters" (1:6). The dome rose up, in the midst of the waters, to play a significant role—it separated "the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome" (1:7). In this reading, the dome was named Sky (1:8) in honour of its contribution to creation—the dome/Sky "parted the waters" into two bodies (above and below). The body of water that was below then gathered to one place, where it became tari (the seas, 1:10).

Lani (sky) is not an empty space (above) but a bank or levee that holds the waters above in their place, similar to the way the "dry land" called Earth holds the waters below to their place (1:10). The contribution by lani (sky) to the creation was not a one-off event. It is not watertight, but every day, as

the world turns, lani holds the waters above to their place.

Fenua as co-creator: God ʻElohim affirmed the life-giving energies in fenua (land, Earth) with a straightforward request: "*Let the Earth put forth* vegetation" (1:11, my italics). This request was directed at fenua (the Earth). God ʻElohim asked fenua to "put forth vegetation" and "it was so. The Earth *brought forth* vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good" (1:11b–12, my italics). God ʻElohim approved of the co-creation that fenua contributed to.

This Moana reading is consistent with our experience of fertile fenua in Pasifika—and also in other fertile lands across the world—where all kinds of vegetation grow, including many weeds, without the help of natives. Life comes from the ground below. In the context of climate change, with sea-level rising and the sea of islands in Pasifika being besieged by saltwater, the fenua is not as fertile as it used to be. The capacity of fenua to co-create has been strangled by the human-induced climate change.

Tari as co-creator: God ʻElohim also requested the waters to participate in co-creation: "*Let the waters bring forth* swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the dome of the sky" (1:20, my italics). This request was *to the waters*, which would include both the waters above and the waters below. It was so, and the capacity of tari (sea) to co-create was affirmed. Toward the same populating end, God ʻElohim also made a request to fenua: "*Let the Earth bring forth living creatures of every kind*" (1:24, my italics).

There are living creatures that fly across lani, living creatures that live in tari, and living creatures that dwell on fenua. What is significant in this biblical creation story, and meaningful in Moana worldviews, is that those creatures were created by the ecological bodies that serve as their home. They were not created from foreign powers but from local homing bodies.

In closing

Humans were the last of the living creatures to be created in this biblical story (compare with the Gen 2:4b–25 story). This last act of creation was in response to another request by God ʻElohim: "Let us make humans *in our image*, *according to our likeness*" (1:26, my italics). Biblical critics and theologians have given many explanations for the plural subject whom God ʻElohim addressed here. Who is the "us"?

In my Moana worldviews, the “us” refers to the co-creators in this biblical story. That “us” include pulotu (the deep, underworld), lani (sky), fenua (land, Earth), and tari (sea, waters). It was in the images of these co-creators that humans were created. And when the days of humans expire, they/we return to our co-creators.

A moana theology will not let God have all of the credit for creation, nor the full responsibility for the wellbeing and demise of creation. At the same time, a moana theology will not let humans off the hook!

7

DECOLONISING WHENUA! KO PAPATŪĀNUKU TE ŪKAIPŌ!

TE AROHA ROUNTREE

Ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku

Ko tātou ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku
Ngā pou tangata o tō tātou Ūkaipō
Ko ia te koha i waiho mai e ngā Atua,
Ko ia te mana, te ihi me te hā
Tāna ko Tāne-mahuta, hā ki roto, hā ki waho
Nāna te wao te nehenehe, Tāna ko Rongomatāne
Nāna te māra, te huarākau, Ka puawai, ka tipu, ka ora
Ko ia te maunga, te whārua, Te koraha, te mano whenua
Nāna te wai (ka) poipoia ki te moana, Hauhakea he kumara
Nō te uma o te whaea, Ko taku Ūkaipō, Papatūānuku
Nā te kore, ko te pō, nā te pō ko te ao mārama.
Ko Ranginui kei runga. Ko Papatūānuku kei raro.[36]

[36] "Ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku" is a song composed by Siu Williams-Lemi and performed by Leah Williams-Partington and Siu Williams-Lemi, featuring Ana Faau, taonga puoro artist Ruby Solly, and a chorus of eight tamariki. It can be viewed on YouTube, posted by Loopy Tunes Preschool Music, 30 November 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp-lDfbmvvc. An English translation is provided at the end of the chapter.

Our Māori creation narratives, known as Te Orokohanga o te Ao, tell us of the creation of the world. Described in the narratives is the progression of the world, from Te Kore (void) to Te Pō (darkness) and ultimately to Te Ao Mārama (world of light). The natural world is personified by the ancestors Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother). Papatūānuku is manifest in the whenua (land) and embodied in the one (soil) and all those things born of the whenua, which are, in turn, nourished and sustained by the whenua. This Māori worldview encapsulates the relationships between creation (in our particular context, humanity) and the natural and spiritual worlds. It delineates those worlds within a holistic framework of relationality. It calls us to be in relation, one to another, humanity and creation.

The waiata (song) "Ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku" ("Guardians of Papatūānuku") by sisters Leah Williams-Partington and Siu Williams-Lemi of Loopy Tunes (featuring Ana Faau) reflects a similar theological understanding of Papatūānuku. The waiata speaks of the abundance of Papatūānuku, in the rākau (trees) that provide the very air we breathe, in the huarākau (fruit) and huawhenua (vegetables) we eat, and in the maunga (mountains), awa (rivers), and moana (seas) that give us sustenance. This waiata speaks of the wisdoms of Papatūānuku, te mana, te ihi me te hā,[37] which inform our tikanga and mātauranga.

The colonisation of Māori has devastated every aspect of life, including independence and self-determination, for generations. As Helen Moewaka Barnes and Tim McCreanor suggest,

> **Maori sovereignty, arguably a natural entitlement ratified in He Wakaputanga in 1835, has been under attack since before the ink was dry on te Tiriti o Waitangi, as a central practice of establishing the colonial order in Aotearoa. Through land alienation, economic impoverishment, mass settler immigration, warfare, cultural marginalisation, forced social change and multi-level hegemonic racism, Indigenous cultures, economies, populations and rights have been diminished and degraded over more than seven generations.**[38]

[37] Mana means power, influence, or authority. Ihi means force, charm, or magnetism. Hā means breath of life.

[38] Helen Moewaka Barnes and Tim McCreanor, "Colonisation, Hauora and Whenua in Aotearoa," *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 41, no. S1 (2019), 19–33 (citation p. 19).

The overwhelming disparities experienced by Māori in Aotearoa can often be measured by how well the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are applied. The principles of partnership, participation, and protection provide a guide to redress and reconciliation. When Māori are able to work collaboratively with government agencies, when we have the capacity to participate in decision-making that impacts upon us, then we are better equipped to protect taonga (treasures, resources) for all who consider Aotearoa home.

The colonisation of whenua has been incapacitating for Māori; from physical dispossession to identity dislocation, spiritual deprivation, and economic deficiency, we as Māori have been consumed. As Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor argue,

> **Land loss separated people from their whenua, destabilising place-based whanau, hapu and iwi identities, breaking long established knowledge-practices around land use, resulting in dependence on colonial economic systems and undermining the very fabric of Maori society. But it is not just material damage that occurred and continues to reverberate. The lived experience of the loss of Maori relationships with whenua includes wide affective impacts in debilitating sadness, grief, anger, identity damage and cultural erosion.**[39]

The inequities of contemporary society in Aotearoa are a direct result of colonisation and, more specifically, what the New Zealand Productivity Commission has termed "persistent disadvantage."[40] An example can be seen in the inability of Māori to grow intergenerational prosperity due, in large part, to the lack of an economic base—whenua (land). This stands in stark contrast to generations of Pākehā who have accumulated significant wealth from whenua raupatu (confiscated lands), including large tracts of land taken in Waikato under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863.

These disparities and inequities are a consequence of an on-going process of substantive violation and abuse of Māori and whenua. As Leoni Pihama proclaims, "The act of colonisation itself is an act of violence.

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[39] Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor, "Colonisation, Hauora and Whenua," 24.

[40] Haemata Limited, "Colonisation, Racism and Wellbeing: Final Report," New Zealand Productivity Commission, 9 June 2022, https://www.productivity.govt.nz/publications/colonisation-racism-and-wellbeing/.

Colonial ideologies and practice are embedded politically, socially, economically, culturally and spiritually."[41] If we accept the violence of colonisation as an on-going process, then we must undertake a healing to restore the imbalance caused by the act of violence, no matter how persistent or pervasive.

In 2020, the Ministry for the Environment (Manatū Mō Te Taiao) put out an online advertisement entitled "Papatūānuku Is Calling":

> **She has always been there for me from the moment I was born. I seriously wouldn't be here without her. She has a special way of making me feel better. I turn to her when times are tough, her presence can be so calming, like being hugged by a warm breeze. Sometimes she can be unpredictable too, but always so beautiful and nurturing. When I get sick, she is there with her medicine, her rongoā. She's my inspiration. She moves me to create, to hope, to grow. She holds me in her arms. She's always in my heart. She is my tūrangawaewae. She takes great care of me. Now it's our turn to take care of her. Arohanui ki a koe Papatūānuku—we love you, Papatūānuku.**[42]

The personification of Papatūānuku has served as a significant model for the legal protection of whenua in our contemporary Aotearoa context. According to Barnes and McCreanor,

> **In Aotearoa in 2013, Te Urewera (an area on the East Coast of Te Ika a Maui/North Island) was invested with the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person and in 2017 the Whanganui River was declared a legal person and "an invisible and living whole" under the name Te Awa Tupua.**[43]

The framing of this ecological wisdom of whanaungatanga (relationality) is derived from te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and has been adopted and adapted for the purposes of informed government action in partnership

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[41] Leoni Pihama, "Positioning Ourselves within Kaupapa Māori Research," in *Decolonisation in Aotearoa: Education, Research and Practice*, ed. Jessica Hutchings and Jenny Lee-Morgan (Wellington: NZCER Press, 2016), 101–13 (citation p. 102).

[42] Ministry for the Environment (Manatū Mō Te Taiao), "Papatūānuku Is Calling," YouTube, posted by Ministry for the Environment, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDcJwu64p4w.

[43] Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor, "Colonisation, Hauora and Whenua," 24.

with community and iwi organisations.[44] There have been collaborations between government, iwi, and community entities for many years, and there have also been significant changes in the regeneration, remediation, and restoration of lands, waterways, and plant and fish life. These collaborations have included the Kaipara Moana Remediation project, developed to reduce sediment and increase water quality in the Kaipara district; Te Hoiere Restoration of the Pelorus catchment in Marlborough, which brought together the local Council and Ngāti Kuia iwi/ hapū; and the Tasman Fish Passage Remediation, which is a collaborative effort between the local council, landowners, and Ngāti Apa iwi/hapūto to replenish native fish species. These are examples of successful and engaging responses to the call of Papatūānuku to reflect, reconcile, and restore our relations.

"The Guardians of Papatūānuku" (English translation of "Ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku")

We are Kaitiaki of Papatūānuku, the Guardians of Mother Earth our Whenua.

She's a gift bestowed upon us from Atua.

She's our mana, she's our ihi, she's our hā.

She gives us trees to help us breathe, hā ki roto, hā ki waho.

Trees in the forests and the jungles too.

There are trees that give us food, there are huarākau and trees with ngā putiputi too.

She's our mountains, she's our valleys, she's our deserts and our countryside, she holds our awa and our moana.

She gives us food within the Earth, it's our huawhenua. She's our Mother Earth, Papatūānuku.[45]

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[44] For further discussion about these and related issues, see Jacinta Ruru, "Listening to Papatūānuku: A Call to Reform Water Law," *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 48, no. 2–3 (2018): 215–24; Rowan Ropata Macgregor Thom and Arthur Grimes, "Land Loss and the Intergenerational Transmission of Wellbeing: The Experience of Iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand," *Social Science and Medicine* 296 (2022); Helen Moewaka Barnes, E. Eich, and S. Yessilth, "Colonization, Whenua, and Capitalism: Experiences from Aotearoa New Zealand," *Continuum* 32, no. 6 (2018): 685–97; Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2012); Sacha McMeeking, Helen Leahy, and Catherine Savage, "An Indigenous Self-Determination Social Movement Response to Covid-19," *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 16, no. 4 (2020): 395–98; Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[45] Siu Williams-Lemi, "Ngā Kaitiaki o Papatūānuku" ("The Guardians of Papatūānuku").

8 DECOLONISING KŌHAUHAU! ECOTHEOLOGICAL WISDOMS OF MATARIKI!

TE AROHA ROUNTREE

He Karakia mō Matariki

Tuia i runga, tuia i raro
Tuia te here tangata i a Nukuārangi
Ki a Puanga Kai Rau,
ki a Matariki Ahunga Nui
Tō mata tini me pā ki roto,
Tō mata tini me pā ki waho
Kia horahia te kura, he kura nui, he kura roa
He kura takatū mai i a rongotaketake
Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te ao
Ka rongo ki te ahi kā roa i tūārangi te whakaeke nei
Ka whakaeke te haukai kia tina,
Ka whakaeke te haukai kia toka,
Ka whakaeke te haukai kia uru ora
Whiti, whano, tau mai te mouri
Haumi e! Hui e! Tāiki e![46]

[46] Ben Ngaia, "He Karakia mō Matariki," YouTube, posted by Te Wharewaka o Pōneke, 17 July 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgO07wfIgXs. English translation provided at the end of the chapter.

"He Karakia mō Matariki" reflects a Māori ecotheology based on a yearly cycle of the seasons of life. The beginning of the calendar year is signified by the appearance of the cluster of stars commonly known as Pleiades or Matariki, or, in some traditions, the rising of Rigel or Puanga. Each star is aligned with the environmental elements of the Earth, which indicate the seasons of planting, harvesting, and gathering of kai. Each season marks the gathering of people in reflection, in celebration, and in connection. For generations this was the way in which time and seasons were ordered for Māori. This sense of order and process connected us to one another and to both the natural and spiritual worlds.

Matariki ecotheology has an exponential capacity to inform our responsiveness to modern-day issues of climate change. The wisdoms found within Matariki ecotheology are part of a mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) whole that has been lived, experienced, and rigorously refined over many generations. The potentiality of such wisdoms to provide alternative perspectives on environmental sustainability has already been identified and implemented by international forums and government agencies, as well as community organisations and entities. The basis of Matariki wisdoms about tangata/taiao hauora (human and environmental wellbeing) are reflected in the whakataukī (proverb, saying), "Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te oranga o te tangata, he whenua." (While food provides the blood in our veins, our health is drawn from the land). As tangata whenua (people of the land), our health and wellbeing are interlinked and interconnected with the environment, indicating a duty of care to/with/for one another. This in turn connects us to our cosmology of Te Orokohanga o te Ao (Creation of the World) and the elemental Atua Māori identified through whakapapa (genealogy), including Ranginui and Papatūānuku, Tāne, Tangaroa, Tāwhirimātea, Tūmatauenga, Rongo, Haumia-tiketike, Rūaumoko, Tāne Mahuta, and Rongomatāne.

When we think about our environment, we are forced more now than ever to consider the elements of whenua (Earth), moana/wai (water), and hau/kōhauhau (wind, atmosphere), which are manifest during the time of Matariki. The arrival of the stars Pōhutukawa and Hiwa-i-te-rangi can indicate the seasons of mate (death, past, remembrance) and ora (life, future aspirations). The emergence of Waitī and Waitā correlate with the fresh water and saltwater ecosystems and indicate a time to gather/harvest kaimoana

and kai from awa/roto (rivers/lakes) or, alternatively, a time to allow for regeneration. Tupuānuku and Tupuārangi connect us with the ecology of the soil and the sky, indicating a time for seasonal hunting, foraging, and harvesting crops, or, again, a time of replenishment. The ecosystems that give us the rains and provide much needed sustenance for crops, animals, and humans can be understood through the appearance of Waipunarangi. The winds and the very air we breathe, which are constantly and consistently under pressure from climate change, correlate with the time of Ururangi.

The kōhauhau is under siege; however, unlike the pollution of whenua and moana, the contamination of the kōhauhau is perhaps more insidious because it is often invisible. The wellbeing of the kōhauhau, like the wellbeing of much of the environment, has been corrupted by the intrusion of humanity and our propensity for industrialisation. Global warming has had significant impacts on climate change and has required a global response. In a recent report from the United Nations Environment Programme entitled *Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Closing Window*,[47] nations around the globe are well behind the Paris Agreement goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C by 2030. As part of this effort, the UN is advocating far-reaching societal changes to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 45% in the hope that this will lead to a system-wide transformation. There has been a radical return to the wisdoms of Indigenous peoples for guidance during this climate crisis, often leading global discussions in forums like the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In a Statement of the IIPFCC in Bonn, Germany, in 2015, it was declared that

> **Indigenous peoples' territories are home to many of the world's remaining diverse eco-systems and 80% of the planet's biodiversity. Indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources provide subsistence, livelihoods, food security, cultural survival, distinct identities and overall wellbeing of millions of people. However, indigenous peoples' lives, livelihoods, culture and identities are at risk because of the adverse impacts of climate change.**[48]

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[47] United Nations Environment Programme, *Emissions Gap Report* 2022: *The Closing Window – Climate Crisis Calls for Rapid Transformation of Societies*, 2022, https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/40874.

[48] IIPFCC, "Statement of International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change," closing session of 42nd session of SBSTA, 10 June 2015, Bonn, Germany. https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_jun_2015/in-session/application/pdf/ipo_sbsta_42_closing.pdf

Later in 2018, in Katowice, Poland, the IIPFCC made a further statement offering to share Indigenous wisdoms:

> **We have agreed to work with you to develop a new Platform for the protection and exchange of Indigenous traditional knowledge, based on equal participation, respect for our rights and recognition of the innovative and time-tested solutions we can offer to the world community.**[49]

We are compelled to consider what this statement might mean for local industries and the Indigenous population in Aotearoa, particularly those most vulnerable to climate change. According to Darren N. King, Guy Penny, and Charlotte Severne,

> **Māori economic, social and cultural systems are strongly tied to the natural environment—with almost 50% of the total Māori asset base invested in climate sensitive primary industries (forestry, fishing, agriculture and to a lesser extent tourism).**[50]

This suggests that the vulnerabilities of the kōhauhau and of Māori society and economy are associated, if not aligned, and they have been/ will be amplified by climate change. This may also indicate that some of the potential solutions for our context can be found closer to home in our own ecotheological wisdoms like Matariki.

In the season of Matariki, we commend to Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa MCNZ a resource produced by the Catholic Diocese of Auckland entitled *A Catholic Prayer to Honour and Celebrate Matariki*. The introduction of the liturgy offers a brief explanation of Matariki and the following theological reflection:

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[49] IIPFCC, "Opening Plenary Statement presented by Ruth Kaviok (National Inuit Youth Council and Inuit Circumpolar Council)," 24th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), 2 December 2018. https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/201812041201---Indigenous_IIPFCC_Opening_Statment_2_Dec_2018.pdf

[50] Darren N King, Guy Penny, and Charlotte Severne, "The Climate Change Matrix Facing Māori Society," in *Climate Change Adaptation in New Zealand: Future Scenarios And Some Sectoral Perspectives*, ed. Richard A.C. Nottage, David S. Wratt, Janet F. Bornman, and Keith Jones (Wellington: New Zealand Climate Change Centre, 2010), 100–111 (citation p. 102). King, Penny, and Severne draw on the 2003 report from the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, *Māori Economic Development: Te Ohanga Whakaketanga Māori* (Wellington: NZIER, 2003).

From Psalm 8 we hear, "When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place, what is humanity that you should be mindful of us? Who are we that you should care for us?" It is difficult to be outside on a starlit night and not be captured by a sense of wonder. The stars have practical uses too, having been used as an aid to navigation and as an indicator of the seasons.[51]

"A Prayer for Matariki" (English translation of "He Karakia mō Matariki")

Woven from above and below.

Interlacing our fundamental virtues to be in balance with the celestial and humane realms.

To Puanga and Matariki, bringing forth aspirations of kindness and generosity.

May your divine countenance be imbued inherently, manifesting itself throughout the community.

So that goodwill is declared, may it be strong and enduring, an enduring gift established on the pillar of peace.

Resounding through times of hardship and times of abundance, resounding are the fires of ancestral connection, from times immemorial that ascend forth.

May the gifts shared from one to another be upheld, may these gifts be affirmed, may these gifts sustain life and vitality, may it be enduring.

Proceed forth with hope, bringing balance to our lives.

Bringing people together as one.

[51] Judith Courtney and Manuel Beazley, "A Catholic Prayer to Honour and Celebrate Matariki," Catholic Diocese of Auckland, 2022, https://www.nlo.org.nz/assets/Uploads/A-Catholic-Ritual-Prayer-to-Honour-and-Celebrate-Matariki.pdf.

9 DECOLONISING KAI AND SOIL: FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

GEORGE ZACHARIAH

Climate injustice is posing a great threat to the food sovereignty of grassroots communities. In mainstream climate discourses, plant-based dietary practices such as veganism and vegetarianism are propagated as the panacea for climate change in general and food security in particular. For grassroots communities, veganism is an apolitical initiative born out of class and racial privilege, because it neither critiques the prevailing order that impoverishes vulnerable communities nor respects Indigenous cultures and food practices. As Isaias Hernandez rightly observes, "non-intersectional veganism is dangerous as it further reinforces colonial mindsets of blaming individuals vs. the system that allowed oppressive systems to flourish."[52] It is in this context that Indigenous and subaltern communities contest such non-intersectional solutions and advocate for food justice and food sovereignty.

According to Dara Cooper, organiser of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance, food justice is

> **a process whereby communities most impacted and exploited by our current corporate-controlled, extractive agricultural system shift power to reshape, redefine, and provide Indigenous, community-based solutions to accessing and controlling food that are humanising, healthy, accessible, racially equitable, environmentally sound, and just.**[53]

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[52] Quoted in Leah Thomas, *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet* (New York: Voracious, 2022), 133.

[53] Thomas, *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, 76.

Based on this understanding of food justice, food sovereignty can be defined as the right of all people to produce their food locally, drawing from their culture and community practices. Food sovereignty is based on the principles of relationality, justice, solidarity, and sustainability, and hence it serves as an alternative to the corporate takeover of agriculture and food production. Our campaign to reclaim Earth as our parish therefore entails the commitment to engage in collective agroecological practices to ensure the food sovereignty of our communities.

La Via Campesina, the global network of peasant movements, is at the forefront of the food sovereignty movement. According to this network, the climate crisis is the consequence of the capitalist colonisation of nature and subsistence communities. So, the crisis of food that we face today is neither a lack of food nor accessibility to food. Rather, it is the commodification of agriculture and food by monopoly corporations. A mere shift to plant-based dietary practices is not going to address this crisis. To reclaim food sovereignty, governments need to work with Indigenous and subsistence communities to transition towards ecologically and socially sound and just farming systems that are informed by Indigenous community practices. It is in this context that La Via Campesina proposes peasant agroecology as an alternative to destructive corporate agribusiness. Peasant agroecology is based on food sovereignty and localised food systems. It not only offers grassroots democratic solutions to hunger and poverty but also reduces carbon emissions drastically.

The alternative practices of peasant agroecology affirm people's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through just and sustainable methods. It further affirms their right to define their own food and agricultural practices. Along with feeding the people and taking care of the planet, peasant agroecology provides landless people access to the commons and also to credit facilities. In short, peasant agroecology is a source of grassroots resilience against capitalism and a way of life that is based on the cosmovision and epistemology of Indigenous communities.

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the legacies of colonisation, settler colonialism, and capitalism are the root causes of the present climate and food crisis. Colonial land dispossession and the introduction and proliferation of European intensive farming methods uprooted Māori from their mahinga kai (food-gathering and cultivation areas) and their "culturally appropriate" and sustainably produced kai. This displacement

and subsequent migration to urban areas significantly changed their diets and adversely affected their health. Colonisation has replaced biodiversity with monocultures, resulting in the degradation of soil and the impoverishment of communities. Colonial and capitalist food systems do not respect biodiversity and the integrity of nature; rather, they have taken away the intrinsic worth of nature. Nature has thus become a commodity for maximising corporate profit.

This story of colonial and capitalist colonisation of the land and food is not just the story of the Indigenous communities in Aotearoa and the Pacific. Karen Washington, the black food justice activist who coined the term “food apartheid,” observes that

> **the term “apartheid” better captures the entirety of the food system and invokes how social inequalities, implicit bias, and the racial worldview perpetuate a broken food distribution system. Racial inequities and capitalism, reinforced by large, industrial food corporations, are the roots of food apartheid.**[54]

Our journey towards food sovereignty, therefore, requires the dismantling of those systems that have degraded Indigenous whenua and violated the rights of the tangata whenua; to do this, we need to learn from Māori initiatives. “Te mahi māra hua parakore” is one such initiative towards food sovereignty. According to Jessica Hutchings, hua parakore food growing is

> **a political journey of asserting our rangatiratanga as tangata whenua… [It is a] way of resisting globally driven, multinational agriculture and food production that does not look after the wairua of the land or the people… Returning to the land to grow and nourish our whanu through the kai we eat is a form of everyday activism and a practical expression of tino rangatiratanga.**[55]

In short, Māori food sovereignty facilitates and empowers whānau and hapū-driven food production, distribution, and consumption, based on environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability.

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[54] Karen Washington, “The Language of our Food System: Food Apartheid and Food Sovereignty,” https://eatwell.healthy.ucla.edu/2021/02/02/the-language-of-our-food-system-food-apartheid-and-food-sovereignty/.

[55] Jessica Hutchings, *Te Mahi Māra Hua Parakore: A Māori Food Sovereignty Handbook* (Ōtaki: Te Tākupu, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, 2015), 16.

Hua parakore, according to Hutchings, is a nature-based Kaupapa Māori knowledge system for growing and producing food, drawing from Indigenous wisdom and practices. It is an attempt to find ways "to elevate the prestige and mana of the soil, by attaching cultural histories and returning whakapapa to them."[56] Hua parakore is also a critique of mainstream organic farming practices. When it comes to the certification process, mainstream organic farming practices impose the same systems and principles on farmers without recognising their diverse cultural and geographical contexts. On the other hand, "hua parakore elevates the importance of the whenua and whakapapa of soil and seeds, and building communities and relationships to support systems that would lead to greater food sovereignty for Māori."[57]

For Māori, food sovereignty is integrally connected with soil sovereignty. The legacies of colonialism and settler colonialism and the continuing plunder of neoliberal capitalism have reduced soil to a commodity. Urbanisation and its by-products, such as infrastructure development and housing projects, continue to destroy fertile tracts of land across the nation. Pesticides and chemical fertilisers, thanks to agribusiness and dairy farm corporations, further take away the nutrients from the soil. In short, the desacralised soil has lost its mana. Recognising the connection between food sovereignty and soil sovereignty, the hua parakore initiative is an attempt to give some aroha to the soil. The affirmation of Earth as our parish entails the commitment to be involved in the creative initiatives and struggles for food sovereignty and soil sovereignty.

Māori soil sovereignty further recognises the intrinsic worth of soil. In a 2020 interview with journalist Charlotte Muru-Lanning, Hutchings suggests that "one of the ways we could elevate the mana of soil is to recognise her personhood status."[58] According to Muru-Lanning, Hutchings's work highlights that, for Māori, "soil is whanaunga, holding ancestral connections and acting as a source of kai, shelter, paint, storage

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[56] Jessica Hutchings, quoted in Mei Leng Wong, "Growing a Model for Māori Food Sovereignty in Kaitoke Valley," *Stuff*, 16 September 2022, https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/garden/129455482/growing-a-model-for-mori-food-sovereignty-in-kaitoke-valley.

[57] Wong, "Growing a Model."

[58] Jessica Hutchings, quoted in Charlotte Muru-Lanning, "A World Beyond Our Feet: Rethinking Our Relationship with Where We Grow Our Kai," *The Spinoff*, 20 October 2020, https://thespinoff.co.nz/kai/20-10-2020/a-world-beyond-our-feet-rethinking-our-relationship-with-where-we-grow-our-kai.

and even as protection in war."[59] The article also mentions two projects that have developed in recent years: both Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae in Māngere, South Auckland, and Te Wharekura o Maniapoto, a school in Te Kūiti, a town in the heart of Ngāti Maniapoto, are involved in the work of combining Māori food sovereignty with sustainable soil practices in order to impart this knowledge to rangatahi (young people). For Muru-Lanning, projects such as these confirm that,

> **by re-establishing this traditional gardening knowledge to protect our soils, Māori are empowered to practice manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga, values and practices often strained by the pressures of rising living costs, urbanisation and the ongoing impacts of colonisation.[60]**

The Indigenous resilience to challenge food apartheid and commodification of soil and food is profoundly theological. As Upolu Luma Vaai observes,

> **poverty is not just an economic issue… It occurs because today we no longer live relationally in the light of the Trinity. "Scarcity of life" is a sign that we have abandoned the ecological and ecumenical "life-giving" principles to serve another god, a tendency that often starts by denying God's life-giving story.[61]**

Vaai further analyses this scarcity of life, interpreting colonisation in relation to the word "colon," which signifies "a digestive system": "Colonialism is when 'one' person, community, or organisation desires to solidify a digestive system that consumes more power, more money, more wealth and more resources at the expense of the many, including taking life away from earth."[62] This solidification of the corporate digestive system is the root cause for food injustice and food apartheid. It is the idolatry of the market god that legitimises the commodification of our land and food, the commonwealth that the God of life has gifted to the community of creation.

Vaai's creative theological reflections on Pacific dirt identity and

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[59] Muru-Lanning, "A World Beyond Our Feet."

[60] Muru-Lanning, "A World Beyond Our Feet."

[61] Upolu Lumā Vaai, "Faith and Culture," in *Christianity in Oceania*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, and Todd M. Johnson. 235–46. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 243.

[62] Vaai, "Faith and Culture," 243.

the dirtified God are likewise inspirational for affirming Earth as our parish in the context of food injustice and food apartheid. The Pacific dirt identity "reminds us of our rootedness in the land and connection to a wider eco-relational web of life."[63] This dirt identity inspires us to reclaim the sovereignty of soil and food. The coconut theology of Sione Amanaki Havea[64] also affirms a theology of God that is "down to dirt."[65] Our commitment to this dirtified God makes it an imperative for us to challenge the commodification of the dirt and kai, which has been unleashed by corporate digestive powers, and to engage in the vocation of tilling and keeping the whenua for a flourishing life.

[63] Upolu Luma Vaai, "A Dirtified God: A Dirt Theology from the Pacific Dirt Communities," in *Theologies from the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea. 15–29. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 16.

[64] Havea believes that the task of Pacific theology is "to put faith and the gospel in the local soil and context, so that they can exist in a local climate." To this end, he proposes a coconut theology because the coconut is a symbol of life in the Pacific. Havea develops the coconut theology based on three themes: Christology, *kairos*, and communion. See Sione Amanaki Havea, "Christianity in the Pacific Context, " in *South Pacific Theology: Papers from the Consultation on Pacific Theology, Papua New Guinea, January 1986* (Paramatta: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1987), 10–15 (citation p. 12).

[65] Vaai, "Dirtified God," 23. Here, Vaai is discussing his reading of Sione Amanaki Havea's work.

10 WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND ECOLOGICAL/CLIMATE INJUSTICE

EMILY COLGAN

In recent years, the global waves of protest denouncing racism (Black Lives Matter), misogyny (#MeToo), and climate injustice (School Strike for Climate) have not only highlighted the profound injustices experienced by members of our human and other-than-human communities; they have also exposed the inherent connections between these injustices. These protests have brought to the fore the intersectional and interconnected nature of oppression. Climate change and environmental destruction disproportionately impact women, children, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) communities; it is predominantly these already vulnerable communities who bear the burden of deforestation, pollution, droughts, floods, bushfires, storms, and rising sea levels. There is a very literal sense in which the plight of the Earth is bound up with the plight of those on the margins. When considering the interweaving of injustices, it is useful to begin by critically exploring the connection between the oppression of women and the domination of Earth before moving to look at the logic of domination more broadly.

The connection between women and Earth will be familiar to most people—even in our own time there is a strong association between women and Earth. Earth is often described in what might traditionally be called "feminine" terms; those attributes that are ascribed to Earth—mothering, nurturing, life-giving, fertile (or barren), pure, beautiful, virginal, nourishing, generous—have long been ascribed to women as well. But this connection is not only present in contemporary usage—we also see it in biblical texts and throughout the Christian tradition. In the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, for example, the two most common words used to talk about

Earth—*eretz* and *adamah*—are both grammatically feminine. The same is true in the Greek Bible/New Testament where the word for Earth—*gē*—is also grammatically feminine. Unsurprisingly then, the imagery associated with Earth in the Bible is imagery that is also stereotypically associated with women—virginal, fertile (or barren), untamed, wild, nurturing, fruitful, desolate, polluted/defiled, and economically valuable as a possession.[66] It is also important to note that rhetoric involving graphic depictions of sexual violation is used in relation to both women and Earth.[67] The identities of women and Earth are inextricably intertwined.

On one level, this connection might seem natural and obvious; indeed, some of the attributes ascribed to women and Earth may even resonate with our own experiences. But on another level, this connection works more insidiously as part of a system of hierarchical dualisms, which enable oppression and exploitation through the logic of domination. In order to unpack this claim, it will be useful to outline briefly what is meant by "hierarchical dualisms" and the "logic of domination."

Dualistic thinking is a way of thinking that understands the world in pairs, or opposites:

God ———————— Earth
Men ———————— Women
Spirit ———————— Material
Human ———————— Nature/animal
Adult ———————— Child
Mind ———————— Body
Civilised ———————— Uncivilised
Western ———————— Indigenous
Rich ———————— Poor
Good ———————— Evil

While this kind of thinking might be familiar, it is problematic because it is reductionist—it reduces everything to a simple binary without accounting for the complexity, diversity, and blurry, fuzzy beauty of our world. But dualistic thinking is also problematic because it is hierarchically

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[66] See, for example, Gen 17:8; Deut 7:13–14; 8:7–11; Jer 2:7; Ezek 35:9; Amos 5:2.

[67] See, for example, Jer 13:22; Ezek 16; 23.

charged. This means that everything on the so-called "superior" side of the pair (the left-hand column) is seen as having power and priority over the inferior side (the right-hand column). God, for example, is understood as separate from, superior to, and having power over Earth. Similarly, by this rationale, men are understood as separate from, superior to, and having power over women. Human beings are understood as separate from, superior to, and having power over our surrounding environment. Adults are understood as separate from, superior to, and having power over children. And Western civilisation is understood as being separate from, superior to, and having power over non-Western and Indigenous communities. From these hierarchically separated categories comes the "logic of domination," which maintains that with superiority comes the right to rule—or dominate. And with domination comes oppression and exclusion, justified by this unspoken but nevertheless very real "logic."

But things get more troubling, because these two different and distinct categories—these binaries—are mutually reinforcing. The superior term of each pair (on the left-hand side) comes to be associated with the superior term of other pairs. So, God comes to be closely associated with maleness, the spiritual realm, the mind, whiteness, adulthood, civilisation, goodness and so on. And this is true for the inferior terms (on the right-hand side) as well. Earth comes to be closely associated with women, the physical realm, animals, children, the body, un-civilisation, Indigeneity, and, of course, evil. Thus, because these connections are mutually reinforcing, the presence of one of these terms on the inferior side of the dualism both reinforces and is reinforced by its association with the other terms. So, for example, the feminisation of Earth (understanding Earth as female) reinforces Earth's place on the inferior side of the dualistic pairing, while the "environmentalisation" of women (thinking of women in earthly terms) simultaneously reinforces women's place on the inferior side of the conceptual hierarchy. It is a vicious and violent cycle, a complex and pervasive web of interconnected relationships of power and oppression. And these structures of thought—in the West at least—combine to form implicit systems of belief that are reflected in our attitudes and behaviour, in our theologies, and in our biblical interpretations.

Any engagement with ecojustice therefore requires close attention to these interconnected dynamics. Intersectional approaches help expose and critique the interlocking systems of power that adversely impact those who

are most marginalised. These approaches recognise that an individual's or community's positioning in the system of hierarchical dualisms will significantly impact how they experience the climate crisis. The increase of floods, fires, droughts, cyclones, coastal erosion, storm surges, and tidal inundations disproportionately impact those situated on the subordinate side of the dualistic pairings.[68] Similarly, marginalised communities are more likely to be concentrated near slash sites, areas of toxic waste, landfill, and other environmental hazards. "Climate change," says Anglican Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya (Diocese of Swaziland), "exacerbates the insecurities of the most vulnerable populations, which includes women and children." Speaking of her own context in Eswatini (Southern Africa), Bishop Ellinah notes that

> **women are the caretakers of water, seeking out and collecting water for our people. With droughts and water shortages brought by changes in climate, women and girls are forced to journey further and further to retrieve this resource which is becoming more and more scarce. The increasing distances travelled to collect water means that women and girls in particular miss out on education, which further marginalises and disempowers them.**[69]

Thus, the climate crisis is not an isolated issue, which can be addressed on its own. It belongs to an intertangled web of injustices, which must be seen and addressed together.

In taking action for climate justice, organisations—including churches—must scrutinise their role in the oppression and exploitation of Earth's vulnerable and marginalised communities. They must also be committed to dismantling those hierarchical systems that enable the logic of domination. In confronting these systems of supremacy, it is vital to centre the voices of those whose perspectives have been silenced and side-lined and to empower these voices to shape the long-term responses to the crucial issues of our time. So, in Aotearoa, climate action might look like turning up to a

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[68] Rawiri Taonui quotes, for example, the Far North District Council, which details how colonisation forced Māori communities off traditional lands and onto sub-optimal river and coastal floodplains with a higher risk of flooding, coastal erosion, storm surges, and tidal inundations. See Rawiri Taonui, "How the Rain Falls Differently upon Māori," Stuff, 29 March 2023, https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/300841045/rawiri-taonui-how-the-rain-falls-differently-upon-mori.

[69] Anglican Indigenous Network, "Prophetic Indigenous Voices on the Planetary Crisis." Tragically, Bishop Ellinah caught Covid and died in January 2021.

student-led School Strike for Climate protest, demanding the government prioritises a comprehensive response to achieve its climate goals. It might look like standing in solidarity with local iwi over land disputes or honouring te Tiriti by advocating for co-governance. Or it might look like ensuring women and young people have access to leadership and decision-making roles in the church and society. Because, on the one hand, climate action involves those efforts typically associated with ecological justice: phasing out fossil fuels, decarbonising transport, creating 100 percent renewable energy sources, ensuring justice-driven migration policies for climate refugees, establishing regenerative farming practices, increasing biodiversity, rejuvenating forests and oceans, reducing pollution, and so on. But it also involves ensuring everyone has access to clean water, sustainable food sources, safe and warm housing, ongoing healthcare and education, and a liveable income. It will also include the recovery of Indigenous lands, language, and cultural identity. For Christians, ecojustice must work to seek genuine reconciliation across these interlocking webs of oppression so that all (human and other-than-human) might have life in abundance.

11 PREPARE AND MANAGE, SURVIVE AND RECOVER: GOOD TO KNOW

JIONE HAVEA

When crises come, some people are caught under- or un-prepared. But to prepare is not difficult, or too costly, IF people manage their situations (contexts), resources, and lifestyles. If people manage and prepare well, they could survive the crises and recover well. Hence the four-part invitation in this reflection: *manage* and *prepare* (before crises), and you have a better chance to *survive* (during crises) and *recover* (after crises).

Managing and preparing well can determine how well people survive and recover, and these acts—prepare, manage, survive, recover—can inter-feed and become a way of life. This assertion reflects a basic religious and cultural teaching: what one does should reflect what one thinks, says, or preaches. Our actions should reflect our words and minds (see Matt 23:2–3). The Buddhist understanding of morality (sīla) also reflects the above assertion. Sīla comprises of three fundamentals: right word, right action, and right lifestyle. A moral person exhibits all three—right word, right action, right lifestyle. The one who says the right word but does the wrong action and lives the wrong lifestyle is not a moral person. Such a person is a hypocrite.

The one who says the right word, does the right action, and lives the right lifestyle will be able to prepare, manage, survive, and recover well. Reflecting this expectation, the next section offers a play/drama—"Good to know"—that may be acted out in study groups (e.g., Sunday School or Youth, Men's or Women's groups). The spirit and rhetoric of "Good to know" crosses over from Pasifika to Aotearoa, and it may be read (on screen or paper) but it would be better if it is acted out so that the words can be seen and heard.

"Good to know" addresses lived experiences and struggles of poor(er) migrant households, and it aims to invite further reflection and discussion. In other words, "Good to know" is a step in a journey rather than the destination.

Good to know

[Setting: a living room. A homemade wooden clothes box sits at the middle, with an old blanket draped neatly over it; to the left is a flimsy table with three chairs. On one chair, a first-year university student squats to keep her feet off the floor. Her brother, in year 9 at high school, walks on stage, whistling as he heads for the box.]

Tema: Leka, that's grandma's seat. You come and sit here… COME HERE… sit DOWN. Look Leka, how many times has mom told you to cook the noodles?

Leka: But mom is not home, and there is no electricity to boil some water.

Tema: What about the stove?

Leka: Where have you been, sis? The gas was cut off two weeks ago. And besides, dry noodles are crunchy.

Tema: This sucks. Mom and dad tell us how easy life is for us compared to when they were growing up in the islands. Last week's flood makes everything damp—the clothes, the floor, the books, the beds—[*as she puts one foot on the floor*] damp AND smelly. Yuck. At least, back in the island, they could put things out to dry. Here, things stink.

Leka: Do they have electricity in the island?

Tema: Of course, they do. They are not uncivilised savages, you know.

Leka: Good to know, sis.

[Grandma walks into the room, takes her seat, then pulls the blanket over her lap.]

Grandma: Isalei, this place is cold for my old bones. Sit properly, Tema. You are not a boy anymore. [*Tema puts both feet on the floor*].

Tema: Sorry, Grandma.

Grandma: When you became Tema instead of Tomu, I was worried. Because there is that Tema who was raped by her half-brother, but I like the other Tema. The one who did what she thought was the right thing to do.

Leka: [*whispering to his sister*] Watch out sis, another BBS coming—BORING bible study.

Grandma: What did you say, Leka?

Leka: Nothing, Grandma. Good to know, Grandma.

Grandma: What you eating, Leka?

Leka: Nothing.

Tema: Dry noodles.

Grandma: Plastic food, ehh? Plastic food cost money, and money don't grow on trees. Back in the old days, we ate real food. We ate real food that we grew in the ground and fished from the sea. Your father's family used to bring good food, and I used to cook it over the fire. Back then, the only time we ate plastic food was when there was a hurricane. Tin fish used to be hurricane food, but it became Grandpa's favourite food—once or twice a month.

Leka: Did tin fish grow on trees?

Grandma: What did you say?

Leka: I hate fish.

Tema: Shhh [*at Leka*]. Don't be silly.

Grandma: We were poor, but tin fish was a special treat.

Tema: The problem with tin fish is that the fish is not fresh. And people don't recycle their tins and plastic containers.

Leka: Where have you been, sis? The real problem with tin fish is that tins don't grow. You put them in the ground, and they just rust

and poison the ground. They used to be hurricane food, but they don't do anything to stop hurricanes. They end up in the drains, blocking the rainwater and causing floods like last week. Don't they teach you this at uni, sis?

Tema: You are so fie poto.

Grandma: Shhh, let Leka talk. He is making sense.

Leka: Like you said, Grandma, back in the island, tin fish was your hurricane food. But tin fish don't grow on trees. And after you eat, the tin rusts and causes problems to the land and the sea. What would be better is hurricane food that is sustainable and that won't damage the land and the sea.

Grandma: Like what?

Leka: I don't know. What did your grandpa and grandma use to do?

Grandma: They used to do a big umu, whenever they see signs of a hurricane coming. And when the hurricane passes over, they open the umu and share with the neighbours. Not sure if that's sustainable, but they did not have tins to bury in the ground.

Tema: Why did you and Grandpa stop doing that? Why did you start eating tin fish as hurricane food?

Grandma: I really don't know why. Maybe because we were too lazy to do the umu. Or maybe we were just fie pālagi and wanted to eat pālagi food. I don't really know why we stopped doing what our grandpa and grandma used to do.

Leka: That doesn't matter anymore, Grandma. We can't do a umu here. We don't even have anything to cook my noodles.

Tema: But we can be better prepared for the hurricane and the flood that come here. If we put some food aside before they come, we can recover better after the hurricane and flood finish.

Leka: That's right, sis. And we have modern forecasts and flood warnings here. We have enough time to prepare to survive and recover.

Tema: But we don't have electricity, so we can't watch the forecasts.

Grandma: Ongo tamaiki, please think positively. My grandpa and grandma used to say that the key to survival and recovery is in how prepared we are before the hurricane comes. Let's take advantage of what we have. Your parents are making a lot of sacrifices to send you to school and to keep our family going.

[Parents enter to the right of the room, and they continued arguing]

Tala: If you paid the bills on time, we would at least have been able to cook at home. It's so embarrassing to go to your sister's house to cook, and they see how poorly we eat. I am so embarrassed for my mother.

Grandma: 'Oiauē!

Sisi: Don't blame me. You want us to go to church, and church expects us to give money for this and money for that. So many things that we have to give money for, and it's so embarrassing to give only $5 when everyone else is giving $50 each—$5 is not REAL tautua.

Tala: And how much do you spend on your men's group?

Sisi: That's only $20 a night.

Tala: But you go at least twice a week, and so you spend at least $40 a week on your group.

Sisi: And what about your women's fellowship? You gossip about this and that, and you take food and stuff. How much you spend on your gossip fellowship?

[Leka and Tema giggle]

Tala: That's not funny. The women understand me, and we don't gossip. We tell the truth, and we look out for one another.

Grandma: That's enough. You are embarrassing me, both of you. Your arguing does not change anything. We still don't have electricity or gas, because you spend money on the church and your friends. The problem is not the church or your friends. The problem is that you do not manage your spending according to your earnings.

Sisi: What do you know about managing anything, Grandma?

Tala: Don't talk to my mother like that.

Grandma: Back in the island, we used to manage our resources well. When Papa saw that there are three rows of cassava left, he would plant two more rows. So, we didn't run out of cassava. Before the hurricane season, Grandpa and Grandma would put aside some taro for the hurricane umu. Taro lasts longer than cassava. And when the hurricane came, we cut the cassava branches so that the roots are not affected by the hurricane. Doing these things was basic to our surviving the hurricane. It was about survival then, but I think it could be helpful for managing your earnings here.

[Everyone falls silent]

Tema: Good to know, Grandma.

Leka: What university did you go to, Grandma?

Talanoa

"Good to know" is a starter for reflections and conversations (talanoa) on the need and ways to prepare for and manage (resources and lifestyle) crises and to survive and recover from crises. Groups that decide to perform/act out the drama/play may edit and add lines to suit their situations.

This reflection closes with two cautions. First, the genre of drama/play aims to entertain, but the subject matter here is serious. "Good to know" also seeks to inspire people to find alternative ways to avoid under- and un-preparedness in the face of crises. Second, principles (e.g., the sīla in Buddhism) do not always materialise in life. Accidents do happen, and bad things happen to some good people (see Job 1–2). In other words, people should *prepare* and *manage* but also accept that there are no guarantees. They should also be VERY careful during crises—to avoid accidents—with fingers crossed that they *survive* and *recover*.

Here are some questions for group discussion (questions 1 and 2 for everyone; question 3 for adults) after performing “Good to know”:

1. How might we become better prepared for crises?
2. How do we make our plans sustainable, and less damaging to our environment?
3. How do we ensure that our children and grandchildren will live better lives/lifestyles than us?

AFTERWORD

MICHAEL MAWSON

The world is in crisis. Many of the current headlines in newspapers and on news websites read as if they could be out of the book of Revelation: wildfires, heatwaves, flooding, cyclones, mass migrations, famines, pandemics, and war. Any chance of arresting or even slowing global warming seems to be slipping away. The full extent of the climate crisis is becoming increasingly evident.

These eleven short chapters of *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish*, written by faculty members of Trinity Methodist Theological College, provide valuable resources for reflecting on and responding to this situation. The authors have directed our attention to communities and groups that are already being devasted by climate change. They have invited us to pause and examine some of the core aspects of the anthropology that underlies industrialisation and global warming. And they have drawn upon subaltern and Indigenous knowledges and activism to indicate how things could be otherwise.

Genesis, anthropology, and dominion

Western readings of the first creation story in Genesis have made a significant contribution to the current crisis. In the opening chapter of *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish*, George Zachariah briefly suggests that the idea of "creation out of nothing" provides a pretext for colonisation. In their efforts to "civilise and Christianise (colonise) the heathens and their lands,"[70] European Christians sought to create something new, erasing Indigenous peoples and cultures in the process. In particular, they sought to

[70] George Zachariah, "'And God Saw that It Was Good': A Call to Planetary Solidarity."

create something new at the expense of existing ways of understanding and relating to land and place. As Zachariah makes clear, this process remains ongoing: the "creation theology of the sovereign omni-God continues to play a significant role in the colonisation of the whenua, moana, and Indigenous communities."[71]

In another chapter, "Kaitiaki: Human Vocation to Till and to Keep," Emily Colgan draws attention to a similarly problematic reading of Genesis. God's mandate to "fill the Earth and subdue it" (1:26–28) has led many Western Christians to view human beings as standing *apart* from the rest of creation. As those made in God's image, human beings are understood to have been given dominion over the other creatures and the land.[72] This dominion theology, in turn, has facilitated wider Western and scientific ways of viewing nature as a resource for human beings to utilise and exploit.[73]

If these readings of Genesis have contributed to the anthropology that underlies the climate crisis, a number of chapters in *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish* propose other readings of Genesis and alternative creation narratives. In "A Moana Reading of Genesis 1," Jione Havea refocuses creation around four agencies: land (*fenua*), sea (*tari*), sky (*lani*), and underworld (*pulotu*). He reads these agencies as co-creators who generate and sustain all life. Rather than Genesis being a story about human beings, Havea notes that they appear only at the end of the story.[74] In the following two chapters ("Decolonising Whenua" and "Decolonising Kōhauhau"), Te Aroha Rountree draws upon Māori cosmologies and creation narratives to supplement the Genesis stories. For example, Rountree insists that the personification of Sky (*Ranginui*) and Earth (*Papatūānuku*) in the Māori worldview "encapsulates the relationships between creation (in our particular context, humanity) and the natural and spiritual worlds."[75]

In their own ways, these chapters have each sought to contest and disrupt a Western anthropology that separates human beings from nature and places them above it. These chapters have aimed to return human beings to their proper place: Earth creatures whose existence is intimately bound up with the natural and spiritual worlds.

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[71] Zachariah, "And God Saw that It Was Good."

[72] Emily Colgan, "Kaitiaki: The Human Vocation to Till and to Keep."

[73] See Lynn White, "The Historical Routes of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7.

[74] Jione Havea, "A Moana Reading of Genesis 1."

[75] Te Aroha Rountree, "Decolonising Whenua! Ko Papatūānuku te Ūkaipō!"

Relationality and the Politics of Solidarity

The above discussion leads to a central thread that runs throughout *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish*: an affirmation of connection and relationality. For example, a number of the chapters make use of the concept of whanaungatanga as a way of highlighting familial bonds that exist between human and non-human creatures, including the Earth.[76] The basic claim, then, is that a recognition of other creatures as whānau, or kin, facilitates a better way of being human in the world. According to Colgan, "As interdependent whānau… we serve and, in turn, are served in a reciprocal pattern of respect and mutual custodianship."[77]

In a recent book on Genesis 1–11, Aboriginal theologian Anne Pattel-Gray (with Norman Habel) has likewise affirmed this kind of kinship relationality. "In traditional First Nations Australia culture," she writes, "there is a kinship between all living beings."[78] In addition, Pattel-Gray has drawn attention to the ethical obligations that derive from recognising other creatures as kin: this recognition "requires First Nations people to fulfil certain obligations and responsibilities to their particular animal to ensure its longevity. Australia First Nations people ensure the animal world is respected, protected and celebrated as kin."[79] Like the contributors to *Earth, Our Parish*, Pattel-Gray contests the ways in which colonial Christianity has denied and severed these kinds of kinship relationships, seeking to replace them with hierarchy and dominance.[80]

This affirmation of kinship and relationality also facilitates specific forms of political action. George Zachariah's chapters in *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish* especially emphasise the activism that is needed in response to the current climate crisis. Zachariah locates this activism with the struggles of subaltern and Indigenous communities. This is in part because such communities have been among the first to experience the devastating

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[76] Te Aroha Rountree aptly captures this emphasis in the adapted whakataukī: "Ko tātou te taiao, ko te taiao ko tātou" (We are the environment and the environment is us). See the end of her chapter, "Taiao, Tangata, and Tiriti: Ecology, Humanity and Treaty."

[77] Colgan, "Kaitiaki: The Human Vocation to Till and to Keep."

[78] Anne Pattel Gray and Norman Habel (eds), *De-Colonising the Biblical Narrative, Volume 1: The First Nations De-colonising of Genesis 1–11* (ATF Press, 2023), 15.

[79] Pattel Gray and Habel, *De-Colonising the Biblical Narrative*, 15.

[80] Like Zachariah, Pattel-Gray and Habel identify this as a theology of the sovereign, omnipotent God, which asserts that "God is a faraway king who has ceded control of all the animals and plants to his human servants" (*De-Colonising the Biblical Narrative*, 16).

impact of climate change. Colgan echoes Zachariah's concerns when she notes that "marginalised communities are more likely to be concentrated near slash sites, areas of toxic waste, landfill, and other environmental hazards."[81]

Furthermore, marginalised communities are already attuned to problems with the anthropology that has caused the current crisis. The same anthropology that underlies climate change has already been damaging these communities in other ways. As Zachariah observes, these communities "expose the correlation between ecological/climate crises and class/white/male privilege."[82] In addition, subaltern and Indigenous communities are more willing to "turn the world upside down" or "destabilise the prevailing unjust socio-political order, which perpetuates the destruction of people and the planet."[83] This kind of overturning is what is needed if we are to move beyond current inaction and begin recognising and responding to the crisis at hand.

Earth, Our Parish

The issues that I've highlighted in this Afterword are all reflected in the idea that the Earth is our parish. Traditionally, a parish indicated a very specific human community that lived within a defined geographic area. "The parish" was the name of the area where a priest or minister held jurisdiction and had concrete pastoral responsibilities. At least in theory, the division of larger territories into parishes was a way of ensuring that all of those living in a particular area were receiving appropriate support and care. Everyone living within a parish also had concrete obligations and responsibilities to one another.[84]

What does it mean to suggest that the Earth as a whole is our parish? First, this idea radically expands the kinds of relationships and responsibilities that were once limited and contained. For those of us located in Western countries, this idea helps us to recognise that our responsibilities are not only to the people living in our immediate proximity; we also have ethical and political responsibilities to everyone

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[81] Colgan, "Women, Children, and Ecological/Climate Injustice."

[82] Zachariah, "And God Saw that It Was Good."

[83] Zachariah, "And God Saw that It Was Good."

[84] On the parish system, see Andrew Rumsey, *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place* (London: SCM, 2017).

else, regardless of their distance from us. We have responsibilities, for instance, for communities in places like Kiribati and Tuvalu, who have made almost no contribution to global warming, but whose island homes are nonetheless becoming unsustainable.[85]

The idea that the Earth is our parish can also help us to recognise that our obligations and responsibilities extend beyond other human communities. If we affirm that other creatures are our kin and part of our whānau, then we need to actively strive to support and care for these family members (that is, not just out of fear for humanity's own survival). If the Earth is indeed our parish, then our concrete relationships and responsibilities extend to these other Earth creatures.

Finally, the idea that the Earth is our parish can help to keep us grounded. This idea directs us to ways of living and acting that are concrete and close to the ground.[86] It reminds us that we are creatures who are nourished and sustained by soil and dirt. Put differently, it helps us avoid some of the more utopian and abstract proposals and solutions that are beginning to emerge in the face of the climate crisis. Recognising the Earth as our parish helps us to embrace the slow, messy work of unravelling Western anthropologies and systems and to move towards other ways of being human.

[85] On these kinds of ethical obligations in relation to Tuvalu, see Maina Talia, "Am I not your Tū/Akoi? A Tuvaluan Plea for Survival in a Time of Climate Emergency." PhD Diss., Charles Sturt University, 2023. https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/en/publications/am-i-not-your-tuakoi-a-tuvaluan-plea-for-survival-in-a-time-of-cl.

[86] On ways of doing theology that connect to ground and dirt, see Upolu Vaii's rich proposal, "A Dirtified God: A Dirt Theology from the Pacific Dirt," in *Theologies from the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 15–29.

GLOSSARY OF MĀORI WORDS

Aroha .... love
Awa .... river/waterways
Hau .... wind
Hauora .... wellbeing
Haumie .... God of uncultivated foods
Huarākau .... fruit
Huawhenua .... vegetables
Kai .... food
Kaimoana .... sea food
Kāinga .... home/to eat
Kaitiaki .... guardians
Kaitiakitanga .... guardianship
Ka Ora .... be alive
Kaupapa .... topic/subject/project
Kōhauhau .... atmosphere
Kore .... void
Kōrero .... discussion
Mahinga .... garden
Mana .... influence/authority

Manaaki .... care/hospitality

Mārama .... light/understanding

Mātauranga Māori .... Māori knowledge

Mate .... be dead

Maunga .... mountains

Mauri .... essence/life force

Moana .... ocean/water bodies

Mokopuna .... grandchildren

Ngahere .... forests

Ora .... well

Pahū .... drum

Papatūānuku .... Earth mother

Pō .... night/darkness

Rākau .... tree

Rangatahi .... young people

Ranginui .... Sky father

Rongo .... God of cultivated foods/peace

Rongoā .... medicine

Roto .... inside/lake

Rūaumoko .... God of earthquakes/volcanoes

Taiao .... environment

Tangaroa .... God of the sea

Tangata whenua .... people of the land

Tapu .... sacredness

Tāwhirimātea .... God of winds and climates

Tikanga .... customs

Tino rangatiratanga .... sovereignty/self-determination
Tiriti .... Treaty
Tūmatauenga .... God of warfare/conflict
Tūrangawaewae .... Place to stand/of belonging
Waiata .... song
Wairua .... Spirit
Whakapapa .... genealogy
Whakataukī .... proverb
Whānau .... family
Whanaungatanga .... relationality
Whenua .... land
Whenua raupatu .... confiscated land

Climate change is a global crisis that is inextricably interwoven with our moral and ethical obligations. Within these pages, we discover a collective knowledge and wisdom for understanding and participating in the conversations surrounding climate justice. This book stands as a testament to our commitment to creating a more equitable and sustainable world for future generations.

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These eleven short chapters of *Kōrero Mai: Earth, Our Parish* provide valuable resources for reflecting on and responding to the climate injustice that we confront today. The book directs our attention to communities and groups that are already being devasted by climate change, and invites us to pause and examine some of the core aspects of the anthropology that underlies industrialisation and global warming. The book draws upon subaltern and Indigenous knowledges and activism to indicate how things could be otherwise.

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