

# MISSION POSSIBLE PROJECTS

Focus on Pacific Islanders in NZ  
and What Presbyterians Are Doing



Part Two: Stories & Background

Prepared for the National Mission Office by Mike Crowl, 2008  
*This is a work in progress - Dec 2008*

## Part Two: Stories & Background

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## What are the Connections between Pacific Islanders and the Presbyterian Church?

There is a Pacific Islanders Synod within the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Their Constitution [can be found here](#), and some relevant points from it are listed below:

The Pacific Islanders' Synod is a recognised body within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and is subject to that body's General Assembly.

Membership in the Pacific Islanders' Synod is open to anyone who is:

- i) A member of one of the Pacific Island Groups within the Synod and
- ii) A member of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Pacific Islanders' Synod recognises and is a means of expression and communication for each of the distinctive Pacific Island groups represented in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Pacific Islanders' Synod encourages each constituent group to develop its own culture in the light of the gospel and its own distinct structure. Each group is expected to hold at least one major meeting per year.

### Pacific Island Churches within the Presbyterian structure (from the Presbyterian Yearbook 2008):

North Shore Presbytery:

Glenfield – Pacific Islanders, Glenfield, Auckland

Auckland Presbytery:

Auckland Central – Newton Pacific Islanders

Glen Eden – Pacific Islanders

Henderson – Pacific Islanders' Church

Mangere – Pacific Islanders

Mt Eden – Pacific Islanders

Owairaka – Pacific Islanders

Ranui – Pacific Islanders

Tamaki - Pacific Islanders

South Auckland:

Manukau – Cook Islander Presbyterian Parish

Manukau - Pacific Islanders (Samoan)

Otara - Pacific Islanders

Papakura - Pacific Islanders

Waikato:

Tokoroa – St Luke's Pacific Islanders

Wellington:

Newtown – Pacific Islanders ([history](#).)

St James' Presbyterian (Niuean)  
Petone – St David's Multicultural Parish  
Porirua - Pacific Islanders – Church of Christ the King  
The Cook Islands Presbyterian Church (Wellington Region)

Dunedin:

North Dunedin Pacific Island Presbyterian Church  
Congregation within The First Presbyterian Church of Otago

Invercargill:

Invercargill - Pacific Islanders Samoan  
St Andrews' with Invercargill Cook Island Presbyterian Church

### **Pacific Island Ministers working with European congregations**

Rev Tokerau Joseph, a Cook Islander, is completing a doctorate, through the University of Otago, on how ethnicity and culture impact on church ministry. He had "really appreciated the different relationships which he had developed with the very good people at First Church" he said.  
His appointment as senior minister was another step in First Church's journey, reflecting its multicultural commitment, he said.

Rev Joseph is one of a number of Pacific Island ministers who also work with palagi\* congregations, in whole or in part. These include:

Rev Makesi Alatimu – Lawrence/Waitahuna Presbyterian (Clutha)  
Rev Asora Amosa – Avondale Union Parish (Auckland)  
Rev Uili Aukuso – St David's, Gisborne (Gisborne-Hawkes Bay)  
Rev Tau Ben-Unu – Maitai Presbyterian Church (Maitai)  
Rev Soti Enari – Khandallah Presbyterian (Wellington)  
Rev Tom Etuata – Titahi Bay (Wellington)  
Rev Mika Fa'amausili – Waiheke Island (Auckland)  
Rev Karima Fai'ai – St Andrew's Presbyterian, Gore (Maitai)  
Rev Keleva Faleatua – St James, Pukekohe (South Auckland)  
Rev Fakaofu Kaio – Onehunga Co-operating Parish (Auckland)  
Rev George Kopa – Tapanui Presbyterian (Maitai)  
Rev Bobby Kusilifu – Palmerston/Dunback Presbyterian (North Otago)  
Rev Alofa Lale – Otago Peninsula Presbyterian (Dunedin)  
Rev Fogatia Levi – Otorohanga (Waikato)  
Rev Elama Maea – St David's Multicultural Petone (Wellington)  
Rev Doug Pa'u – Lower Hutt (Wellington)  
Rev Hana Popea-Mauigoa – Lower Hutt (Wellington)  
Rev Sa Si'itia-Asi – Eastbourne (Wellington)  
Rev Les Solomona – Seatoun Presbyterian Church (Wellington)  
Rev Talosaga Su'a – Mt Albert Presbyterian (Auckland)  
Rev Ere Talai-Ikitoelagi – Knox Presbyterian, Parnell (Auckland)  
Rev Fei Taule'ale'ausumai – St Andrews, Henderson (Auckland)  
Rev Obed Unasa – St Stephen's, Ponsonby (Auckland)

**Palagi** (pronounced *Palangi*) or **Papalangi** is the Samoan word for a white person or Caucasian. The term has gained widespread use (usually as "palangi") throughout much of the south Pacific.

## The Cook Island Influence in New Zealand

There are some 20,000 Cook Islanders in the Cook Islands themselves, with about half of them living in the Avarua, the capital. More than 20,000 Cook Islanders also live in Auckland, New Zealand.

About 70% of the population of the Cook Islands belong to the [Cook Islands Christian Church](#) (Presbyterian). The next largest group is Roman Catholic, estimated at the end of 1994 to have 3,086 adherents. The following are also represented in the islands: Anglicans, the Assembly of God, the Baptist Church, the Church of Latter-Day Saints, the Apostolic Church, the Baha'i faith and Jehovah's witnesses.

*The following is a list of the Cook Island Churches in NZ – as expected, the majority are Presbyterian. It is taken from the Cook Island churches site listed above, and doesn't necessarily fit exactly to the list from the Presbyterian Year Book.*

Christchurch Cook Island Christian Church - New Zealand  
Dunedin - First Church Presbyterian Church  
Edinburgh Street Pacific Islanders Church - New Zealand  
First Church Cook Islands Assembly of God - Mangere East  
Hamilton CICC (Cook Island Christian Church)  
Hastings Cook Island Christian Church  
Holy Trinity Anglican - Otahuhu, Auckland  
Invercargill - Cook Island Presbyterian Church  
Mangere CICC (Cook Island Christian Church) - Manukau, South Auckland  
Manurewa, Cook Islands Christian Church, South Auckland  
Motu Tapu, Cook Islands Christian Church, Auckland  
Mt Roskill CICC (Cook Island Christian Church) – Auckland  
Manukau - Cook Islander Presbyterian Parish, South Auckland  
Otago - Pacific Island Presbyterian Church  
Otago, South Auckland CICC (Cook Island Christian Church) – Manukau  
Palmerston North CICC (Cook Island Christian Church)  
Papatoetoe, Manukau Cook Island Presbyterian Church  
Papatoetoe / Otago CICC (Cook Island Christian Church) - Manukau, South Auckland  
Porirua CICC (Cook Island Christian Church)  
Porirua East CICC (Cook Island Christian Church)  
Rotorua CICC (Cook Island Christian Church)  
Tokoroa, St Luke's Pacific Islanders Church

*The following joint article first appeared in Spanz, Feb 2003. It makes the point that people living in New Zealand often have little idea of the Pacific Island culture on their doorsteps.*

## **A Church with Thirteen Choirs**

By George Kopa

Thanks to School of Ministry and to others concerned for the opportunity for four ordinands to spend two weeks in Auckland experiencing the life of our Pacific Island Presbyterian churches.

One of the questions asked of me as a Pacific Islander, prior to heading for Auckland was, "Why are you going?" In brief, I wanted to support my fellow ordinands and I felt that the best way was to go with them. I was placed in my home church (Newton PIPC) in Edinburgh St to experience Cook Island, Niuean and Samoan worship and culture.

One of my first new learning experiences occurred on Thursday 14 November 2002 when I hit the airwaves on Radio 531 PI. I opened the Cook Island programme with a 15-minute devotion so I had to strictly follow what I had written, prayer included.

Secondly, I was aware of how busy and dedicated my minister, Rev Abera Abera and his family were especially during my two weeks there. They were preparing to host a national Cook Island Women's Conference that weekend, and after opening the conference on Friday night, Rev Abera received word that his mother had passed away. As host, he focussed on the task at hand that night till everything was done before visiting his family. (Matt 12: 46 - 50)

Another new learning for me was the rightful claim from our Niuean group that PIPC Newton was the only church in the world where all the 13 villages of Niue are represented and as such, each village sings a hymn at their service. Yes, 13 hymns! "Tell them, this is the only church in the world that has 13 choirs!" was their request. After the service, their elders and deacons met to de-brief the past week, share pastoral concerns, and the Rev Kon-Tiki Makani prays for those concerns.

And finally, I have been given a criterion by our Samoan minister Rev. Dr T. Filemoni, should I visit again, "Learn Samoan!" I will endeavour to fulfil this criterion and hopefully my Samoan wife will now help me to that end.

So my two weeks of Pacific Island Church experience in Auckland, though busy and in many ways familiar, was informative and provided me with some new learning.

*George now ministers at a palagi church in Tapanui, Southland. Rev Abera Abera has moved to NSW, Australia, and Rev Makani is the minister of the Auckland Central Pacific Islanders Church.*

## **A Palangi Perspective**

By Cameron Sinclair

I was hungry when I arrived in Auckland on Monday, 11 November: I had forgotten that Air New Zealand no longer serves breakfast. It was the last time I was hungry in the two weeks that I spent in Auckland! My first meeting that day - of the Pacific Island Synod Executive - ended with a 'cuppa tea' that included raw fish in coconut cream, crab, baked fish and taro. This was perhaps the least substantial community meal I shared in while spending two weeks hosted mainly by Niuean ministers.

I spent the first week with Rev Uea Tuleia, staying with him and Mrs Sela Tuleia for the two weeks. I spent a Saturday with Rev Tokerau Joseph, attending a hospitality event for a visiting group from the Cook Islands and a birthday party. The second week I spent mostly with Rev Ere Talagi-Ikitoelagi at Knox Presbyterian Church Parnell.

I want to thank these ministers for patiently talking me through the many experiences that I had. I shared a little of their responsibilities as I preached, led prayers and gave speeches. I was even required to dance, though my movements did little justice to the drumming. The responsibilities of the Pacific Island ministers are huge, as is the honor accorded to them; I came away with a great respect for the work they do and the load they carry.

I have spent nearly all of my life in Auckland, growing up in Mangere and then Takapuna; this is a side of Auckland that I have only been dimly aware of. It was at times an almost overwhelming experience in its variety and in the number - and length - of the events I attended. I spent many hours in the two weeks feasting, and longer hours listening to speeches in Pacific Island languages. The way that the people used their gifts and their lives within the community was very moving for me having come from a very individualistic background; the celebrations and events which allowed people to express their gifts of singing, dancing, food preparation, and traditional crafts made for a great richness. One of the things which impressed me most was the tradition of speech-making and the way that individuals and groups are acknowledged and honoured. I certainly felt honoured as I walked back into my Dunedin home tired, well-fed, and wreathed in the flowers that I had brought back with me.

*Cameron now ministers at the North East Valley (Dunedin) Redevelopment Unit: Blue Lagoon.*

## The Changing Face of Mission

Graham Redding, principal of Knox Centre for Ministry and Learning, in a [speech to the WARC Conference of Presidents, June 2007](#)

*Some quotes (my italics):*

We are mindful of a myriad of other missiological issues of a global nature. Some of our Pacific Island students, for example, come from small island nations that are literally being swallowed up by the sea. For them, climate change is not merely an inconvenient truth – it is a life-threatening reality. *What does it mean to be missional in this context?*

...the growing influence exercised by Asian and Pacific Island voices. In New Zealand, *the largest and fastest growing churches in the Reformed tradition are those comprising Asians and Pacific Islanders*, reflecting immigration patterns of recent decades. A Pacific Island Synod and a Council of Asian Congregations were formed recently to encourage and facilitate mission in culturally specific ways. Their formation was a consequence of a prior recognition of the importance of a contextual approach to theology, ministry and mission.

The growing influence of these Asian-Pacific voices is consistent with the massive shift in the centre of Christianity from the North towards the South and from the West towards the East. As Andrew Walls puts it:

*On the one hand, the church is more widely spread throughout the world than ever before, the withering in its old Western heartlands more than compensated for by the new growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. On the other, the end of the great European migration, which took millions of Europeans to the rest of the globe and established a world order we once knew, has been followed by the great reverse migration. This has brought millions of people permanently from the non-Western to the Western world. These two events have transformed the Christian situation.*

## **Celebrating Pasifika in New Zealand.**

### The [Pasifika Festival](#)

One of the largest community events in the South Pacific, the Pasifika Festival, takes place in early March every year. It's recognised as an important celebration of the art, culture and lifestyle of Pacific Islands communities of Auckland.

Ten Pacific Islands (Tangata Whenua, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Tahiti, Tokelau, Tonga, and Tuvalu) showcase their culture in a village setting. Each village offers an insight into cultural practices and ceremonies, traditional food, (such as the umu earth ovens), arts and crafts, music and performance. In the village ceremonies and activities there is flax weaving, lei (flower necklace) and 'ei making (circlet of flowers for the head), firedancing, fashion parades, performances and traditional cooking,

There are also over 300 Pacific flavoured food, craft and information stalls at the festival. The festival is part of the Celebrate Pasifika programme of events which take place throughout March.

### Tangata o le Moana: The [Story of Pacific People in New Zealand](#)

This Te Papa exhibition is the story of Pacific people past and present, in all areas of life – on the street, on the sports field, in the recording studio, on the political stage, and beyond. It looks at the dawn raids of the 1970s to Tana Umaga becoming first Pacific captain of the All Blacks. Exhibits range from ancient vaka (canoes) to contemporary jewellery, to 'Pacific Beats', an interactive that lets you remix the sounds of Pacific musicians like Bill Sevesi, Fat Freddy's Drop, and OMC.

A major new sculptural work by acclaimed Tongan-born artist Filipe Tohi overarches visitors at the start of the exhibition. The Cook Islands' vaka Tauhunu, is one of only three such vaka to survive worldwide.

One of the greatest feats of Pacific people in New Zealand was when they became the first people to step foot in these islands around 800 years ago. There are also little-known stories of Pacific people who came here in the 1800s, at a time when New Zealand's leaders dreamed of creating their own empire in the Pacific.

Many Pacific soldiers fought and died for New Zealand in the two world wars. The exhibition also allows visitors to hear Pacific migrants from the 1960s and 1970s talk about their experiences – good and bad – of moving to New Zealand.

A highlight of the exhibition is the Samoan fine mat gifted to Helen Clark in 2002. The gift acknowledged Clark's apology for injustices during New Zealand's almost 50-year administration of Samoa (1914–62).

## Media Perspectives

### Television: Tagata Pasifika

*Tagata Pasifika* is a weekly half-hour programme on Television New Zealand. Fronted by presenters Robbie Magasiva and Beatrice Faumuina and produced by Stephen Stehlin, the dedicated team that produces and presents the programme provides the only window on New Zealand's Pacific community seen on mainstream television. Although it screens late at night, it is rebroadcast on Maori Television and Freeview, is available on their website and is watched throughout the Pacific and beyond. This year the programme celebrates its twenty-first birthday.

Meanwhile, major NZ broadcasters have been investigating the possibility of a Pacific Island television channel (similar to the Maori channel) for some time.

The idea of a Pacific channel has been on the radar screens of TVNZ and TVWorks (TV3) for some time. In October 2008 a Pacific Islands media conference was told of an approach to members of Parliament in February with a proposal for a station.

That approach by TVWorks, if approved, would lead to a station featuring programming bought from around the Pacific and local content that would include entertainment, educational programmes, current affairs and music.

Before it was defeated in the latest elections, the [Labour party was making serious 'noises'](#) about fostering such a channel.

### Negative Media Perspectives

*In a summary of a 2004 University of Waikato survey of **Portrayals of Pacific Islanders** in the NZ press, researchers found that a negative picture of Pacific Islanders was generally produced. This may not have changed substantially in the four years since, although the founding of the **Pacific Media Centre** in 2007 (see below) may have improved viewpoints. Some of their points follow:*

- Portrayals of Pacific Islanders reflect processes whereby media monitor marginalized groups and give prominence to negative attributes.
- News reports often reflect the stigmatizing of Pacific communities.
- In a broad definition of health to include social determinants the survey of newspapers found there were 184 instances associating Pacific Islanders with health concerns.
- Combined with the 52 references to considerations of governance, the focus on health issues reflects a storyline in which Pacific Islanders are characterized as unhealthy people to be managed by public institutions.
- Coverage associated both negative and positive attributes with Pacific people, but favoured negative attributes.
- The survey showed 99 instances of negative attributes characterizing Pacific people as dependent, lazy, violent, criminal, and drug abusers.

- The largest category consisted of 52 references to Pacific Islanders as foreigners or inferior others who are out of place in Aotearoa.
- There were only 38 positive references to Pacific Islanders as hardworking and community-orientated individuals who have leadership qualities and are generous and honest people.
- In regard to frequencies for the appearance of news sources, the majority of sources were
  - non-Pacific researchers and educators (48),
  - government representatives (37),
  - health professionals (33),
  - and police or lawyers (5).
  - Only one 'expert' was identified as a Pacific Islander
  - only 9.6% of all sources (13) were Pacific sportspeople, artists or community leaders.

*These trends raise issues around the ability of certain groups to access the media and thus influence the portrayal of Pacific peoples. It appears that Pacific Islanders are a group to be talked about and administered, rather than communicated with or encouraged to participate in public deliberations.*

**The Pacific Media Centre** - Te Amokura - is the only media research and community resource centre of its kind in Aotearoa/New Zealand and has a strategic focus on Māori, Pasifika and diversity media and community development. It was established by AUT University's Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies in 2007.

PMC also collaborates with other Asia-Pacific media centres, including the [Australian Centre for Independent Journalism](#), engaged in research and cultural production and develops cultural and research publications, building on the success of the peer-reviewed publication *Pacific Journalism Review* and the news monitoring service [Pacific Media Watch](#).

<http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/index.shtml>

**The NZ Film Archive** has two lists of films, documentaries, television programmes and advertisements, and news reports that show various ways in which Pasifika is represented in the media. The first looks at [Pacific People as The Exotic Other](#), and the second as *Immigrants*.

The second focuses on [Pacific People as New Zealanders](#).

Many of these items have made serious attempts to show positive pictures of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand.

## **New Zealand Movies with a Pacific Island focus:**

### [No 2.](#)

*Life in NZ from the perspective of a Fijian extended family, mostly well-integrated into the community.*

*Synopsis:* The heart has gone out of Nanna Maria's family. There are no parties – they don't even fight anymore. Inspired by a dream of her childhood back in **Fiji**, Nanna demands that her grandchildren put on a big feast at which she will name her successor. The grandchildren reluctantly turn up, but as the day progresses their preparations unravel into chaos and an outraged Nanna calls the whole thing off. That's when everyone realises they have to pull out all the stops and give the crazy old lady what she wants, and what they all need. Infused with the heat and vibrancy of the South Pacific, **No.2** is a big-hearted, exuberant story about what it takes to bring family together.

### [Sione's Wedding](#)

*Life from the perspective of young Samoans in New Zealand.*

*Synopsis:* Best friends Michael, Albert, Stanley and Sefa are respectively the ladies' man, the good boy, the weird one and the party boy. They're all about to hit thirty, but still act as if they're sixteen. They get drunk, they chase the wrong women and they have a remarkable record of misbehaving and causing chaos at every wedding they attend. Michael's younger brother Sione is now about to get married, and everything is about to change. Sione is their boy, the kid they used to look after, who grew up while they were still partying. To ensure his big day isn't spoiled by the boys and their idiot antics, Sione, via his pastor, has issued an ultimatum: the guys all have to bring dates to the wedding. And not just any dates; real girlfriends, someone they've made some commitment to. They have one month.

*In both these movies, the church is visible, but treated quite ambivalently by the younger generation: they respect it (or at least respect the elders), but don't appear to follow its Christian tenets in any effectual way. The second of the two movies is particularly casual in its attitudes towards sexual mores.*

*By clicking on the links in the titles, you can see a trailer from both these movies.*

## **Language**

Notes from the article, [Language and Religious Publishing](#), found on the **New Zealand Electronic Text Centre** website, which offers a free online archive of New Zealand and Pacific Islands texts and heritage materials.

*After an introduction giving some history and background on the way written language was produced in the Pacific Islands, individual language groups are discussed, as well as the current difficulties in maintaining these languages when many of the peoples now reside in New Zealand or elsewhere, rather than in their home islands.*

## Cook Islands Māori

- language of the majority of Cook Islanders, mostly Rarotongans,
- now the predominant dialect
- two other distinct languages in this island group are:
  - Pukapukan
  - English (Palmerston Island).

*Efforts to preserve Pukapukan are supported in New Zealand by children's books published from the [Mataaliki Press](#), which also has a Pukapukan dictionary forthcoming.*

- The Bible remains as the most comprehensive published body of literature in Cook Islands Māori.
- Various denominations in the Cook Islands (including Cook Islands Christian Church, Catholic, Mormon) translate and develop their own educational resources for their adherents, including children.
- Within New Zealand, the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church (PIC) is the predominant denomination of Cook Islanders, *but it does not produce material in Cook Islands Māori.*

Cook Islands Māori is threatened by trade, tourism and the formal education system both here and in the islands.

*A community-based Cook Islands language group is currently looking at developing a language curriculum for adoption within New Zealand schools.*

## Niuean

- English has had a major impact on the Niuean language:
  - via missionary work
  - education
- indigenous Niueans are close to being naturally bilingual.
- many New Zealand-born Niueans speak English as a first language

Since 1989:

- Rev Lagi Sipeli has worked on a comprehensive dictionary of current usage with both NZ Niueans and those on the island itself.
- Some differences are developing between the language at home and in New Zealand.
- Niuean isn't taught as part of the formal New Zealand education system
- Learning Media Ltd produces children's stories for use in schools in the language.

Work actively continues to ensure the language is not lost:

- through compiling the comprehensive dictionary
- through a new version of the hymnbook
- through community-based language nests in Auckland and Wellington.

*Niueans in New Zealand are more conscious of their shared culture and collective interests and responsibility than living in the village-based society of the island encouraged.*

- Virtually all religious functions in Tokelau have been conducted in the Samoan language since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Samoan missionaries—Catholic, London Missionary Society, and Presbyterian—established mission schools on the islands, using Samoan.
- Samoan became the language in which all important Tokelau cultural functions were eventually conducted.
- Tokelauan was confined to unimportant and 'mundane' spheres of the culture.
- Even family prayers were conducted in Samoan.

When Western Samoa was declared independent in 1962, Tokelau opted to remain under New Zealand, and the language gradually became one of the topical points for discussions in various village circles in Tokelau. In the early 1960s English became the language of education *until Tokelauan was used from the 1970s.*

The ongoing Bible project is seen as an important step in preserving the Tokelauan language, which is currently taught in New Zealand at language nests and some primary schools.

### **Samoan**

Religious material in **Samoan** such as the Bible, prayer books, theology (as well as the history of some denominations) is produced by several organisations such as the Bible Society of the South Pacific in [Fiji](#); Bible Society in New Zealand, Wellington; Methodist Church in [Western Samoa](#); the Arch-diocese of the Catholic Church in [Western Samoa](#) and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand in Wellington.

- In 1996 the New Zealand Ministry of Education published a bilingual curriculum document for teaching Samoan language in the New Zealand education system from the pre-school to tertiary levels.
- *Taiala mo le Gagana Samoa* has become an important document for the teaching of spoken and written Samoan in New Zealand, with a number of Samoan pre-schools in the main centres of [Auckland](#) and Wellington, others in [Christchurch](#), [Dunedin](#), Tokoroa and [Wanganui](#).
- A growing number of primary and secondary schools are teaching Samoan.

## [A Handbook for Teachers of Pacific Island Children](#)

Though first produced in NZ in 1982, this handbook is still a valuable starting point for anyone wanting to know more about inter-cultural relationships. Some points to note are:

- The spirit of Aroha (ofa, or aloha): this is the embodiment of all the best attributes of one's concern for the welfare of a fellow human being. Palagi aloofness or coldness can quench this spirit very readily.
- Friendliness gives confidence
- Whakama is the sense of being ashamed, not getting things right, being ridiculed. Polynesian people are perhaps more prone to this than many palagi.
- Giving gifts is a common feature of Polynesian life, and doesn't require something in return.
- Ownership is conceived differently: whereas palagi tend to keep their own goods to themselves, Pacific Islanders see property in a more communal way.
- In the absence of the normal Island hierarchy, church leaders in NZ are highly regarded as leaders.
- Palagi in the Pacific Islands are regarded with respect; here in NZ, with its more egalitarian approach to life, Islanders are often bemused by individualism, materialism and the lack of respect for people in leadership roles.
- Family is very important.
- Children – and adults – who have been upset can often go into a state of withdrawal called musu (in Samoa). They avoid eye contact, or sometimes become tearful and obstinate. In some cases this leads to overtly aggressive behaviour and a refusal to listen.
- Pacific Islanders are more overtly emotional than most palagi.

### **Tupu – new growth**

#### **Expressions of greeting:**

***Warm Pacific Greetings***

**Talofa Lava - Samoa**

**Malo E Lelei - Tonga**

**Fakalofa Lahi Atu - Niue**

**Kia Orana – Cook Islands**

**Bula Vinaka - Fiji**

**Kia Ora - Maori**

## [Pacific worker scheme a no-brainer](#), by Tapu Misa

*Tapu Misa writes a regular column in the NZ Herald. Though of Pacific Island background herself, not all her articles concern Pacific Islanders. She became a Christian in 2007 and wrote about it in one of her columns.*

*This is the beginning of one of her columns, which relates to Pacific Island workers coming to New Zealand on a seasonal basis. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot reprint it here, but the link in the title will take you to it.*

## [ADDING TO THE 'P' IN PACIFIC?](#)

An unusual case raises the usual issues

Lisa Williams-Lahari

*The article which the title above links to was first published in **Islands Business**, a regularly updated current affairs magazine about the Pacific area.*

*This particular article discusses the prevalence of the drug 'P' in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and the way in which it is affecting the young people.*

Most Samoans live in families. The stats in 2001 were as follows:

- 6 percent live as a 'couple only,'
- 24 percent in one-parent families
- 70 percent in two parent families.

Palagi stats are somewhat different:

- 25 percent live as a 'couple'
- 16 percent are one-parent families
- 60 percent are two-parent families.

Maureen Baker, in her book, *Families: Labour and Love* (2001), writes that the statistical concepts of 'family' and 'household' as used by NZ Statistics, is different from the cultural concept as understood by both Maori and Pacific Islanders. She writes:

"Shared households are a common feature of Samoan living, with 37 percent of Samoans in New Zealand living in extended family households compared to 4.3 percent of the general population of the country. Nearly 60 percent of these extended families contain three or more generations."

*She adds that many Samoan parents were unemployed and that there were high rates of poverty. This being data from the late nineties, it's debatable whether this is still quite so relevant.*

"Family life in Samoa is positioned within a supportive village structure. Villages consist of different interconnected family or descent groups, governed by a council of family representatives. Families are united through kinship and ceremonies such as weddings or funerals, where money and goods are contributed. Inter-village marriages are still preferable and the concept of service to the household and the family is highly valued.

"In New Zealand Samoan communities, the involvement and support basis of the village has been modified into church congregations, which sponsor community events and women's and youth groups. Life-style ceremonies continue to involve the exchange of gifts, which can be expensive. Although these gifts are designed to demonstrate and reinforce kinship ties, they also contain elements of status rivalry and 'keeping up with the Joneses.'" (page 44)

*With the gradual shift of emphasis from the home village to the local (NZ) congregation, family commitments are being altered, particularly in relation to remittances sent home to provide for family members. Often these family members have been brought to New Zealand to reduce the expenses of sending money home. Baker quotes Macpherson: "The growth of demands from local churches and associations causes certain conflicts for migrants who must now choose between their village of origin and new urban associations that have come to have increasing relevance for them and their children."*

*Another area of conflict is that while in the islands, respect for and submission to adults was the cultural norm, but here in New Zealand this is changing as the younger generation grows to adulthood. Both language and religious observance are questioned.*