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A THEOLOGY OF *TE PAKAU*:

The Problem of Disunity in the Kioan Community

A Thesis

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Bachelor of Divinity

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts, firstly, to visualize the process of weaving of the *pakau* and its significance in the lives of the people of Kioa. Its emphasis is on how culture unites people as symbolized in the *pakau*. Secondly, the emphasis is from the biblical perspective on how Christians should live as seen in the Church and its sacraments. This is referred to as the *pakau* of God. God is expressed as a God that unites its people into oneness. Thirdly, we will look at how Jesus Christ is seen as the *pakau* of God that reconciles people to God and to one another. Jesus is stressed here as the God who reunites his alienated people because of their sins.

The overall objective of this thesis is to propose emphasis is on a theological approach on how the leaders of the community and the Church (Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu in Kioa) should approach the problem of disunity in the community of Kioa. Even though culture and Christianity are two different disciplines, they are inseparable in the lives of the people. They are both gifts from God which serves the purpose for the harmonious living of the people. This thesis seeks to encourage and recommends some solution for the people and leaders of Kioa to reflect on, especially refocusing on the original *pakau*.

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N.B.: All biblical texts and references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, U.S.A. World Book Publisher, 1977.

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INTRODUCTION

It is often said that there is no other place like home. Home here means more than one's own family, and it includes the whole of his/her village and even his/her island. This aspect of communal living is evident in this work. Home means the island of Kioa. An island that geographically and politically belongs to the Fiji Islands. This home was perceived as Paradise to all the Kioans living on the island and abroad, but this Paradise is now tainted by the evil of disunity caused by a complex of forces impacting upon the lives of the people.

This thesis offers a theological response to the problem of disunity that threatens the harmonious nature of communal life that our people used to enjoy since they first settled on the island. The problem is real and is increasing rapidly. The Kioan community will soon be in turmoil if people pretend that nothing is wrong and all is going on well. This work digs deeper into the culture of the people for a cultural element that bears any cultural significance in a message of unity. The *pakau*, therefore, is taken up in this work and my aim is to forward a connection with the nature of the Church, especially its sacraments, as unifying, reconciling and redemptive.

Thesis Statement

The *pakau* plays an important role in many aspects of the lives of the people of Kioa. Its nature and significance can certainly be related to the nature and significance of the Church and its sacraments, so that the Christian Church of Tuvalu may understand the deeper meaning of her calling to unite people in the family of God. The interweaving of the many leaflets of the coconut leaves to form the *pakau* speaks so much about the meaning of community and

communal living. Moreover, it reminds the Church of her own nature as One Church, as well as the nature of its mission of bringing people together in oneness in the Kingdom of God.

Aim and Objective

The aim of this paper is to explore the dynamic interaction of the Gospel and the culture of the people of Kioa. This is an attempt to let the people of Kioa see how they can become a successful community in all their endeavours. How the unique form and design of the *pakau* unfolds unity in the spirit of togetherness. This is what Kioans ought to observe and pursue if they wish to enjoy peace and solidarity in their community.

The main objective is to demonstrate how the form and design and usefulness of the *pakau* highlight the interwoven essence and nature of the Church as well as the community. The interrelatedness of the different leaflets and leaves which form the *pakau* represents something that should be a reminder to the people of Kioa, about the importance of maintaining unity in the community. Kioa is a place that was founded in a communal effort and established by self-offering of the people for the betterment of the Vaitupuan – people of the island of Vaitupu, an island of Tuvalu.

The interconnectedness of the Church's different aspects and sacraments represents a community that is neatly woven together. Christianity and culture are woven together in the lives of the people of Kioa. How they interact and interconnect with one another is an imperative aspect of unity. Within this interaction we may notice some of the weakness of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu in Kioa in its ministry and traditions. The problem of disunity challenges the leaders of Kioa, both cultural and religious, to reflect on the significance of their calling as leaders of the community. They cannot be ignorant to what is happening, for it can lead to more problems that will lead the community to total confusion. The proposed

recommendations are given with the hope to eradicate the problem of disunity and refocus on oneness and togetherness as people work together for the well-being of the community.

Methodology

The need to contextualise theology as we do theology in a particular context is inevitable. Stephen Bevans gives five different models for doing theology contextually – the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the transcendental model and the synthetic model. All of these models are useful in doing theology contextually, but certain models are relevant and appropriate within certain sets of circumstances.¹ In this paper, one of Bevans approaches, the synthetic model, will be taken up to clarify its point of argument. This does not mean that other approaches are irrelevant, but the synthetic model will best describe the issue in this particular context. Bevans points out that “no model is exhaustive or applicable to all situations of faith. One may choose a particular model in a particular context, but one must also be aware that other models may be equally valid in other context.”²

Structure

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter discusses the nature and significance of the *pakau* in the everyday life experiences of the people of Kioa. It also highlights the meaning of the *pakau* and its role in the history of Kioa as it came into being as a community. The second chapter contains a theological analysis of what the Christian Church is and the significance of its sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist, in the life and faith of the community of God's people in Kioa. The Christian Church is seen as the *pakau* for the

¹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of the Contextual Theology*, General Editor Robert J. Schreiter, (New York: Orbis Books Maryknoll, 1996), 23-112.

² *Ibid*, 28.

people of Kioa to sit on and be one in the spirit of unity. Then Chapter Three sees the development of a theology of the *pakau* as a theology of weaving. Jesus is seen as the *pakau* of God for the people of Kioa as well as the whole world to sit on, and to experience the fullness of life in the true *shalom* of God where people live in unity and tranquillity. In the Conclusion, some recommendations are given for the Church and people of Kioa to consider as they face the problem of disunity. The Church must be God's agent of unity – as God's *pakau* in the life of the people of Kioa.

The Weaving of the *Pakau*

The *pakau* is a product made from the leaves of a coconut tree. The selection of the leaves for the *pakau* is based on the maturity of the tree, as well as the leaves' durability, length, strength and health.¹ The leaves are dried in the sun for at least a day or two. When it is half dried, the leaves are then ripped from the midrib with a thin shred of the midrib allowing the leaves to uphold the actual arrangement and preventing the leaflets of the leaves from falling apart. There are two ripped sides from each leaf. Thus, the *pakau* is woven from four detached sides from two of the three coconut leaves selected. Weaving is easy when the leaves are only half dried.

When weaving, the two opposite sides are positioned together on a flat ground or floor facing the same direction with the slim shred facing each other. The other two sides are placed directly on top of the first two. The weaving begins by bringing the leaflets from the bottom to pair with the top on the opposite side and then woven together. The weaving starts at the centre in order to join and take hold of the ripped leaves. The

¹ Nona Taisiolo interviewed by author, 22 August 2003.

CHAPTER ONE

TE PAKAU O KIOA (THE PAKAU OF KIOA):

THE COMING INTO BEING OF KIOA

This chapter explains briefly the weaving of the *pakau* and how it is used, together with its significance in the lives of the people of Kioa. It also highlights the history of Kioa and some of the reasons proposed by Donald Gilbert Kennedy for a new settlement for the Vaitupuans. The current problem of disunity the community is facing is also taken into account.

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¹ Sosea Tusialofa interviewed by author, 22 August, 2005.

remaining two ripped sides of the third leaf are cut into parts of twos, threes or more leaflets depending on the required amount needed during the course of weaving. The leaflets are crimped in halves along its length in the process of weaving allowing only a minimal space when the leaflets are completely dried. When there is an excessive space between the leaflets or a leaflet is too short for the required length, the cut pieces are inserted and woven together, so that the formulated pattern will maintain its neatness and spacing. The tips of the leaves are then braided to hold everything together and to maintain the pattern of the *pakau*. When the *pakau* is completed, it is taken back into the sun to dry fully.²

The Realization of Kioa

In 1945 while accompanying the Banabans who were being resettled on the island of Rabi in Fiji, D. G. Kennedy persuaded the captain of the British Phosphate Commissioner's vessel *Triaster* to put in at Vaitupu.³ During that brief call, Kennedy invited the chiefs on board to express his intention for a new settlement for the Vaitupians. The chiefs agreed and then called an urgent community meeting and Kennedy told the people that they, too, might be able to buy land in Fiji, and settle on it. He gave three main reasons for his proposal. Firstly, for better education opportunity for the young of Vaitupu since Fiji have more schools, as compared to the Ellice group (now Tuvalu). Secondly, Kioa as a second settlement helps counter the problem of over population that Vaitupu was experiencing. Thirdly, exposure to other cultures, economic,

² Eseta Tautala, Interviewed by author, 10 December 2005.

³ Kalaaki Laupepa, "Vaitupu" in *Tuvalu a History*, Edited by Hugh Laracy, (Fiji: The Institute of the South Pacific Studies and Extension Services USP and The Ministry of Social Services, Government of Tuvalu, 1983), 85.

social and political ideas will enrich their future development. The community expressed many thoughts when discussing the subject and then finally agreed with the proposal.⁴

Kennedy then sent a telegram to the secretary of the Western Pacific High Commissioner saying, "I have been requested by the people of Vaitupu to assist them in purchasing Kioa Island."⁵ After considerable discussions, the Colonial Secretary of Fiji approved the purchase on the 15th of June 1946. Kioa was bought for three hundred pounds. Here, it is sufficient to say that Kioa is a freehold land owned by the *matai* of Vaitupu. Although they have become Fiji citizens, they still retain strong links with the island from which they originated.⁶

Te Pakau o Kioa and the First Settlers of Kioa

On June 1947, the island community of Vaitupu held the first meeting to select the first group to travel and establish Kioa. But those nominated refused to go. In September, the second meeting for the same purpose was called, but again it was in vain. In October the same year they were informed that the MV Avahou had departed Tarawa bound for Vaitupu to uplift the first group to Kioa. An urgent meeting was called and the community reached an agreement to use the *pakau* as a mean of selecting the first settlers. "This is a traditional practice to seek for those who are willing to sacrifice themselves on behalf of the community."⁷ The *pakau* was spread in the middle of the house where the meeting was held in the midst of the whole community. The challenge was, whoever decides to go to Kioa must step forward and sit on the *pakau*. A group of four elders, five

⁴ Lisati Petueli, Interview with author, 8 October 2005.

⁵ Laupepa, 85.

⁶ Ibid, 85.

⁷ The original spreading of the Pakau is not seen anymore, but has become a saying referring to the original practice.

married couples, seventeen young men, two young girls and two children responded to the call.⁸ They were the first settlers who travelled and established Kioa.

Before they left, they requested for a pastor to go with them. Siueva, a Samoan pastor of the island parish appointed Asuelu Fakamua as the pastor of the group. On Monday the 20th of October 1947, the Avahou departed Vaitupu and arrived at Kioa on the 26th of October at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Despite the urgency to develop Kioa, the community appeared to have favoured the Ocean Island and Nauru because of their wealth. Most people are drawn to these two destinations for financial support for their families. This was the main reason for the difficulties faced in the establishment and development of Kioa.

The idea of *pakau* is really a system of persuading and appealing to the people for assistance. The *pakau* appeal for people to establish Kioa was called "*Te Pakau o Kioa*." The first settlers were those who sat on *te Pakau o Kioa*. They offered themselves to fulfil what the community had struggled for.⁹ Although there is a spirit of desperation, an eagerness to solidify their unity, but the *Te Pakau o Kioa* as observe by some does not confirm a promising future. All they knew were fragments of information from those who investigated the island earlier, but the whole truth was still a mystery to be uncovered. This mystery strengthened the faith of the first settlers in God and gave them the courage to enter the *pakau*.

The first settlers saw Kioa as a blessing from God that should not be ignored. They also believed whole-heartedly that God would lead, guide and provide them with

⁸ Siapo Paka Nimo, Information gathered from correspondence with author 26/10/2005. Siapo was a member of the first settlers and she is the only female still living now. She is 82 years old.

⁹ This practice has recently disappeared. I used to hear about this practice from my grandparent and other old people and especially the first settlers of Kioa.

the necessities of life. According to Fepuali Tapeua, "Progression is essential, but how can we know its effectiveness if we refuse to move?"¹⁰ Faith and trust in God was their only hope for the unknown destination. They may have left and lost every possession but their faith and trust in God was their only life long possession they took with them.

According to Tapeua, in his traditional speech (*lauga*) in commemorating the day when they set foot on the island of Kioa, he said,

...our isolation from our mother land is the strongest drive that unites us together and strengthens our relationship with our beloved God who really gave us everything we need. The courage we possessed during the time of uncertainty and the will to do what ever was possible for the community was so enormous, proves the presence of God in whom we trust.¹¹

Siapo Paka Nimo also reflects on this saying, "The God that unites, guides and provides for us with whatever we need on our way and during our struggle on the new land is a living God"¹²

Even though Kioa had no financial revenue during its initial stages of settlement but it is an island of certainty. The first settlers trusted that God would provide and would continue to provide even more than just the financial support. The early stages of their stay on the island was so difficult, as Nimo explains emotionally how they were rationed 12 oz of sugar and 12 oz of flour per person a week. "This is all that we can afford from our collective collection. But these hardships we faced re-enforce our unity and faith."¹³

¹⁰ Fepuali Tapeua. Reason for Coming, Speech at the Leleti Falekaupule, during the celebration day of the first arrival to Kioa Island, Kioa Island, 26 October, 2004. (Fepuali is the only male from the first settler still alive.)

¹¹ Tapeua.

¹² Nimo.

¹³ Nimo.

An island that was seen as an alternative to the problem of over population in Vaitupu, was in the eyes of the first settlers has been a place of perseverance and hardship. despite all these hardships, Kioa is a life investment property for Vaitupu people.

One of the priorities for the community leaders during the settling of people on the island was how they were going to survival. They did not have any financial support after their arrival. Those back home in Vaitupu failed to support them in their endeavour. This failure, however, solidified the settlers in maintaining their unity.¹⁴

Te Pakau o Kioa is indeed a challenge for those willing to weave and adapt to the new environment. However, the Vaitupians had already begun weaving them within the Pakau. But the continuation of the weaving and the braiding of them were on their own hands. The new settlers have woven themselves through their faithfulness and commitment to each other. Thus the *pakau* signifies the truth of their interweaving of the blessings they are enjoying now and in the future. It reveals the living spirit that exists in the community which enables people to work towards their goal – to be in unity.

Other Significant Usages of the *Pakau*

The significance of the *pakau* can be seen in many aspects of life in Kioa. The many ways in which the *pakau* is used reflects not only its diverse and dynamic nature but also as a symbol that unites people as seen in the selection of the first settlers.

Wedding

The practice of traditional wedding is still part of the life of Kioans today. On the first evening of the wedding day, the preparation of the newly married couple's bed takes

¹⁴ Nimo. 26/10/2005

place. The female relatives of the married couple carry out this preparation. They gather what they have prepared for the married couple to the bride's residence. The collection consists mainly of bedding items including the *pakau*. All the *pakau* are arranged to form a base equal to the size of a double bed, then fine mats are spread on top. This would be the bed of the newly wed couple. In any marriage occasion, unity and co-operation of both families is essential.¹⁵ This is reflected in the preparation of the newly married couple's bed.

The *pakau* in this case is significant to the new couple because it expresses a deep feeling of responsibility. This feeling encourages the married couple. The *pakau* represents the fact that they have been woven together to oneness in marriage. Within this union in marriage the couple shares mutual fellowship in the sense of true belongingness to one another.

The tasks performed by members of the families symbolize the different leaflets of the *pakau*. These different leaflets symbolised the efforts put together with the intention of everlasting unity not only between the new couple but also between the two families. Unity revealed in marriage is a life pattern that is recognised and accepted in the community.

Feast

Feasting is always part of communal living in Kioa. It is a communal effort of showing appreciation of what have been done or achieved by the Church, the government or any group in the community. In such occasions, the formal way of eating is sitting on mats while having meals. The *pakau* is used for arranging the food. The *pakau* is first

¹⁵ Tusialofa, 22 August 2005.

spread and then covered with green banana leaves, and then the food is arranged on it. The purpose of the *pakau* is to contain the food during the meal and for removing the leftover after the meal. Those responsible would just lift the *pakau* from underneath and take it to the place set for sorting out the remaining food and crumbs.¹⁶

The *pakau* is the symbol of the collective appreciation of the people for the guest. This collective offering shows the relationship of the individuals in the community. Within this collective appreciation it confirms the interrelatedness of the individuals. The bringing together of their offerings, shows oneness of the community. The offering of the food represents a leaflet or a leaf within the *pakau*. Participating in the offering, confirmed the spirit of thanksgiving as a holistic effort from the community.

Shelter

The *pakau* is also used for shelter. *Pakau* are used for covering the canoes to protect them from the heat of the sun. Canoes are important family possessions for obtaining seafood; hence their protection is vital to the very livelihood of the families and the community as a whole.¹⁷ The *pakau* represents the maintaining of the quality of what is needed for survival. Losing the quality of the canoes exposes life to the danger of uncertainty.

Cooking and Preservation of Food

The using of local oven is a primitive method of cooking and preserving food. When cooking, raw food is placed on heated coral stones and then covered with green

¹⁶ This tradition is still practised today, although there are changes seen due to the impact of modernity.

¹⁷ This practice is still used today.

banana or breadfruit leaves. The *pakau* is then spread lastly over on top to keep the heat in. Only one *pakau* is normally used because of its softness and it can easily envelop the oven preventing the heat from escaping.¹⁸ The *pakau* represents the important of working together. The different leaflets which form the strands of the *pakau* have to perform its duties in protecting the heat from escaping. Maintaining their unity fulfils the purpose of what they are designed for.

Security

The *pakau* is also important when one goes out fishing. The *pakau* is often placed on top of the outrigger. It serves three main purposes on the canoes. Firstly, fish used for baits are placed on the *pakau* to avoid mixing with the rest of the fish, for there is simply limited space for movement in the canoe. Secondly, the *pakau* can be thrown overboard to distract any attacking fish, giving the fisherman a chance to paddle ashore. Thirdly, the *pakau* can be used as a sail.¹⁹

Faiva (Fishing Expedition)

There are two types of *Faiva*; firstly, as a group and secondly, as a competition. *Faiva* as a group is lead by a well-known fisherman. All those involved depart as one group; they fish together and then return together. The catch of the day is placed on the *pakau* outside the community house of gathering and then it is distributed among the families of the community.

¹⁸ This is a well-known and widely used method of food preservation and cooking which is still used today.

¹⁹ Enosa Liapaneke Interviewed by author, 18 January 2006.

The other type of *Faiva* is a fishing competition. The two competing groups leave together on a set time and return together on the allocated time for the counting of the catch. The winner of the competition is the group that catches the most fish. The *pakau* is again placed outside the house of gathering for the counting of fish. The important thing here is the number of fish caught regardless of their type and sizes. After the counting, the fish is then distributed among the community.²⁰

The reason for the *Faiva* is for communal sharing and especially for the unfortunate families. It is an obligation that is freely accepted by the strong for the benefit of others. Offering ones ability for the benefit of others is a vital element in a community. It is an indication of true love and a sense of belonging. It gives a sense of identity within their community. Giving without counting the cost gives an indication a united community. One should also be aware that, to be a member of a community he/she has commitments to fulfil, which could only be experienced if there is a living spirit of togetherness from within the members.

The fishing is a communal effort and it means the offering and distribution of fish is a result of individual efforts and abilities woven together. The binding feature is their love for fellow members as witnessed on the *pakau*. The *pakau* is the focal point where all are expected to meet and share the blessing that has been received.

Sport

In the traditional sport of *Telekaga*, men go out early in the morning to fish and will return at the allocated time. When the allocated time is called, the group leader will raise his paddle facing upside-down. This is the sign for all the competitors to join the

²⁰ This practice is still effective today and often seen.

leader for the counting of fish. The man who catches the most fish will lead the fishing group ashore.

The women will be waiting ashore for their part of the game. Once they know they can reach the first canoe, two women, one from each team will dash to the first canoe and grab any fish and relay it to the *pakau*. The winner would be the first group to place their fish on the *pakau*.²¹

The coming together of fishermen corresponds to their oneness in their efforts. Women, rely on their teamwork and how truly they are committed to attain success. Enjoying the sharing in a community is experienced when one is true to ones duties, and the reward for full commitment to the task is happiness. To give and take gives a clear picture of allowing one to be woven into a community. Each individual has his/her own commitment, but allowing ones most precious time for others is a true symbol of oneness in free offering of self.

Discipline

The well being of the community depends totally on the chiefs and the elders and how they lead or govern the community. Serious offences are dealt with accordingly. There are traditional ways of punishment. The punishment depends on the nature of the offence committed. In cases such as frequently committing the same type of offence that disturbs peace, endangering the lives and safety of the community, the punishment is much harsher than misdemeanour.²² The offender is called into the house of gathering

²¹ Petueli, 8th October 2005.

²² My grandparent and many other old people witness these practices. They say that this practice is common throughout Tuvalu, but it has disappeared today. Now the courts deal with such issues.

after the verdict has been decided. Then the *pakau* is laid at the centre for the offender to sit on and to hear the announcement of the verdict.

The *pakau* represents judgement. It is also a sign of the rejection of rebellious and self-centred attitudes from within the life of the community. The *pakau* requires respect, honesty and trust from all members of the community. The attitude that a person possesses determines his/her acceptance or rejection in the community. The weaving of lives within any community is only possible when people possess the same quality of attitude towards others.

Reconciliation

The *pakau* that the culprit sits on during the disciplinary session is also opened for relatives to enter before or after the verdict for the reconciliation. This reconciliation determines whether the verdict should be revised or if the victim(s) needs compensation. This is usually the last resort the relatives can perform on behalf of the culprit.²³

Reconciliation is a process of reweaving a member into the community. The culprit represents a leaflet that has gone astray or left behind, for it has produced a life pattern that does not qualify to be woven into a community. This person needs a new beginning in order to be able to continue with the rest of the community. Thus, reaffirming ones status reminds the culprit of the life pattern needed in a community. The mending of the broken links requires total devotion of a person and the total surrendering of the culprit.

²³ I use to hear the practices from the old people. Since the house of gathering has abstained from disciplinary matters, this practice has also vanished. This practice was still effective until independent (1988) when the government's laws and orders fully took control of criminal cases.

As a Floor Mat

The floor of a local house is usually made from sand and loose gravel to raise the floor from the ground level. Large flat slabs of limestone are then arranged and buried in upright position behind pillars to avert the filled area from sliding. The *pakau* are laid on the floor surface and then the mats are spread on top of the *pakau*. In other words, the *pakau* covers the roughness of the floor.²⁴

In the village house of gathering known as the *Falekaupule*, when the *aliki* (chiefs) meet, only the *pakau* are used for covering the floor. The village house of gathering is specially designed to cater for the needs of the village community. The building columns are about three meters in from the wall of the whole building, which support the main structure. A designated column of an elder signifies his status in the community. Whenever there is a gathering of the whole community, *aliki* and other prominent figures sit on the *pakau* leaning to the columns and the rest of the community sits behind them. The central area is vacant for entertainment, disciplinary matters and other cultural activities. The *pakau* spread at the centre of the *Falekaupule*, serves many purposes depending on what it signifies.²⁵

The *pakau* represents the status of the individual chief or leader. But status is followed with obligations to the members of the families or community. Thus, the *pakau* is there to soothe, maintain and to promote confidence in unity. Since the *pakau* is present in the people's houses as well as the house of gathering, it is therefore a constant reminder to the individuals and to the community of the need to maintain their oneness in unity.

²⁴ This was the normal site of villages but recently most houses are modernized.

²⁵ This is a common site and still seen today.

Te Pakau o Alik (The Chiefs' *Pakau*)

Chiefly leadership is the traditional system that has been practised by the people of Tuvalu and Kioa since time immemorial and it is still very effective today. The unity of the community depends entirely on the decision making of the chiefs. There are times when the community has to face external forces and especially in complicated situations. During such matters, the chief sits on his *pakau* and speaks about the subject on behalf of the community. What he decides during the session is the final decision of the community. This is because the issue had already been decided beforehand.²⁶

Te pakau o Alik signifies power. This power is not of personal achievement but a given authority for the protection of the dignity of the people. The chief is only a spokesperson that conveys the message. This power or authority has a great impact in uniting the community. The well-being of the community relies on how the chief would exercise this power. It is through this power that the community finds a stable foundation for future development. Abusing this power causes corruption that sometimes leads to an extremely violent dispute within a community. So this *pakau* is a *pakau* of patience and compassionate love. It reflects a continuity of good vision for the community.

Kioa today

Kioa from its original stages of development until recently has been very effective in its development because of the unity founded on the faith of the people who stepped in and sat on *te Pakau o Kioa*. But in recent years, this unity has been shattered by the adoption of the new religious movements by some members of the community. These

²⁶ I use to hear this practice from my grandparents and from old people of Kioa.

minority groups have been using their new beliefs to oppose culture and tradition. They have abstained themselves from communal activities and developments claiming that these things are heretical and evil.

Kioa is recognised by the government and other donors in its development as a community. Traditional practices of working together have been the chief means used for social, economical, political and religious development. The tradition of self-sacrificing of time, effort, skills and abilities is very much needed now due to the financial hardships the island community is experiencing. New Christian denominations have been a barrier in development and yet they share the profit from whatever is implemented. This is a problem that is experienced and felt by the majority of the community. Foreigner and outsiders would never be able to detect the problem in Kioa, simply because the people are cautious in preserving their reputation and they are also desperate for development in order to compete with neighbouring islands and village communities.

Competition is high and the eagerness to grasp any possible opportunity has been the main focus. This new attitude of ignorance introduced by these new movements has caused a lot of friction not only to the smooth running of development, but in people's relationship with others. Since the majority of the community belongs to the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, they are the very people feeling the effects of the newly introduced attitude. This is because of their concern to maintain and preserve their cultural identities and their traditional values.

Trying to maintain peace and harmony as well as uniting the community is becoming increasingly a difficult task. Some active participants are also abstaining from

community activities not because of their faith but because of the negative attitude against culture. The majority viewed this attitude as being selfish, self-centred and abusive. Many are exploited while the few reap the profit. Kioa is becoming a place of personal interest rather than a place of future hope. The whole purpose of purchasing and establishing Kioa and the hardship the settlers faced seems to be neglected and ignored.

Concluding Remarks

We have seen the significance of the *pakau* in the lives of the people of Kioa. The different aspects of the life of the community represented by some of the traditional values and practices signify how unity is revealed in the culture of Kioa. This very truth is brought out into the light clearly by the form and design or the nature of the *pakau*, especially the meaning and significance of *te pakau o Kioa*. In the next chapter, the attempt is to see the Church as the *pakau* of God that seeks unity amongst his people within the Church which includes the whole community of Kioa.

The Church is One

The word church came into existence after the resurrection. It is derived from the Greek word *ekklesia* (belonging to the Lord) and *ekklesia* (assembly). In its primary sense the word church is the worshipping assembly called forth by God.

Ekklesia like congregation means both the actual process of congregating and the congregated community itself. An *ekklesia* is not something that is formed and founded once and remains unchanged; it becomes an *ekklesia* by the fact of a repeated concrete people coming together and congregating, in a particular congregation for the purpose of worshipping God.

Hence the Church is a community of believers. According to Marinus de Jonge he says that only in the Gospel of Matthew (16:18, 18:17) that the Greek word *ekklesia* referring

CHAPTER TWO

TE PAKAU O TE ATUA (THE PAKAU OF GOD): THE CHURCH AND ITS SACRAMENTS

The previous chapter highlighted the significance of the *pakau* in the life of the community of Kioa, especially the *pakau* being a symbol of unity and oneness within the community. In this chapter the Church is seen as the *pakau* of God for his purpose of unity and oneness among his people in the context of Kioa. The Church has many aspects but those associated with unity and oneness will be highlighted. The people are interrelated in the Church and their faith is seen as the binding factor in their life together as God's people. The word that is preached and the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) that are administered are important aspects of the ministry of the Church which promote unity.

The Church is One

The word *church* came into existence after the resurrection. It is derived from the Greek word *kyriake* (belonging to the Lord) and *ekklesia* (assembly). In its primary sense the word church is the worshipping assembly called forth by God.

Ekklesia like congregation means both the actual process of congregating and the congregated community itself. An ekklesia is not something that is formed and founded once and remains unchanged; it becomes an ekklesia by the fact of a repeated concrete, people coming together and congregating, in a particular congregation for the purpose of worshipping God.¹

Hence the Church is a community of believers. According to Marinus de Jonge he says that only in the Gospel of Matthew (16:18; 18:17) that the Greek word *ekklesia* referring

¹ Hans Kung, *The Church*, (London: Search Press, 1971), 84

to the Church is used. This community is a closely knit community that strives for righteousness, right relationship to God and others in accordance to the teachings of Christ.² Therefore, the Church is a community that seeks for Gods' will to be fulfilled in its communal effort. Their gathering together is done in respect to show their relation to God in whom they had placed their trust. Everett Ferguson says,

It must be noted that the characterizations of the church in the scriptures brings it into relation to the deity: some to God the Father (people of God, family of God), some to Jesus (body of Christ, vine, sheep), and some to the Holy Spirit (community filled with the Holy Spirit, temple in which God dwells through the Holy Spirit).³

Thus the Church is made up of people that have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. In their confession of faith in Christ they are one as a Church and become one people.

Ferguson believes that "The Church offers an example to society, a vision of a better way."⁴ The Church aims to change the conscience of the individuals to influence their conduct. In the process of changing their conduct, people are made to be aware that they too can become true members of the community. Furthermore, the Church should live not only by example in how they associate with others and God, but also through the proclamation of the word of God in Jesus Christ.

The Church has a foundation and its goal to achieve. In achieving this goal, the church has different roles to play based on its foundation. Regarding the role of the Church, Hans Kung says,

² Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, (Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1988), 93.

³ Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, (U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 1996), 71.

⁴ Ferguson, 398.

The church must constantly reflect upon its real existence in the present with reference to its origin in the past, in order to assure its existence in the future. It stands or falls by links with its origins in Jesus Christ and its message; it remains permanently dependent, for the ground of its existence, on God's saving act in Jesus Christ, which is valid for all time and also in the present.⁵

He goes on to say, "The church is made up of individuals. But the church can only be seen in terms of the individuals; in as far as the individual is a member of the church from God's point of view."⁶ The other important aspect of the church that is to be witnessed in the wider community is unity. This unity is God's aim for all humanity. According to Ferguson, the clear image of the Church is oneness in the body of Christ.⁷ There is no division among individuals but all are part of one body guided by the Holy Spirit.

Kung further explains that the Church is both visible and invisible. It is visible because it is made up of people and invisible for it is a building in the Spirit. "Faith in both Old and New Testament senses does not exclude the visible, but proves itself in the visible. Being the people of God, a spiritual building, and the body of Christ, the Church can be recognized as the Church."⁸ Thus the Church unites people in and with God.

One People

In English, the word "people" can refer to an individual or all human beings. However, in the bible the word "people" customarily means a single corporate whole, a nation or a collective entity. The word "people" is often referred to in the Bible as the

⁵ Kung, 15.

⁶ Kung, 128.

⁷ Ferguson, 399.

⁸ Kung, 264

People of God, Israel, although the word may be used of other people as well. The most important thing said about this people as mentioned in 1 Peter 2: 10 is that it is God's.

Israel was the chosen people of God for a purpose. The disciples saw themselves as true and new Israel because of their faith in the risen Christ. Kung clearly defines it by saying, "Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel."⁹ This means that there are those who are Israel by flesh but not Israel of the promise. This understanding shows that, there is a freedom of choice whether to be people of the promise or not.

The community has a leader that provides salvation for its people. The closeness of the community makes their leader's salvation act effective to all its members. This is because the "community lives in fellowship of love; the *koinonia* (Acts 2:42) linked together all members in brotherly fellowship, which found expression in mutual help, shared sufferings and to a certain extent in common ownership."¹⁰ In other words, the people have responsibilities in and beyond their own community. Their mutual fellowships are also seen with other things of nature. They recognise things of nature as part of their lives. Jurgen Moltmann says,

People become responsible persons before God on earth. That makes their life unique and repeatable. That raises them over other created beings, with relative freedom for a special task given them in the name of that transcendent God. And it also burdens them with special responsibility for other living things.¹¹

The involvement of people with things of nature makes them realised that they are all part of God's creation.

⁹ Kung, 143.

¹⁰ Kung, 110.

¹¹ Jurgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (London: SCM Press, 1999), 80-81.

One Word of God

The preached word of God is one of the central aspects of the Church. It is a human verbal response to the saving act of God. The act of preaching the message is the fruit of the faith of the Community. It is the proclamation of the community's faith that Jesus Christ is their Saviour and Lord. The believers are not only required to witness the saving act of God and to live by examples, but also, they are to proclaim the word of God to all people. "This preaching is not only performed in good conduct (1Peter 2: 9) but also in words."¹² In the words of Peter, "*Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you*" (1Peter 3:15).

The preached word contains the power and secrets of God's love. This love brings hearers to recognise the truth of the saving act of God.

The word of God is associated with power (e.g., Hebrews 1:3). The power of God that works for salvation is identified with the gospel (Roman 1:16) and more specifically with the word of the cross (1Corinthians 1:18). The word of God has the power to save, but it must be implanted in the human heart (James 1:21).¹³

This saving act of God through the word gives new hearers the opportunity to have faith in God, and to strengthen those who have experienced God. This preached word of God gathers people together and invites the willing into the community of believers. This gathering is inclusive in nature where all of creation is connected together by the word of love from God.

¹² Kung, 375.

¹³ Ferguson, 163-164.

One Faith

The Encarta Encyclopaedia defines the term Faith as an attitude of the entire self, including both will and intellect, directed towards a person, an idea, or – as in the case of religious faith – a divine being.¹⁴ William Ames describes faith as “the resting of the heart on God, the author of life and salvation, so that we may be saved from all evil through him and may follow all good.”¹⁵ In the Old Testament, the word faith is rare but it may denote loyalty or faithfulness. It is often said that the Old Testament looks for men to be saved on the basis of their deeds. Faith is best described in terms of trust in and obedient to God rather than depending on human power. People of the Old Testament placed their trust in God as one worthy to be trusted. Abraham trusted God as a man of righteousness upon whom he totally depended on with deep faith.

In the New Testament the word faith is best described in Hebrew 11:1, “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*”. The Greek word for faith is *pistis*, which denotes the act of giving one’s trust. The Hebrew idea of faith is that quality of stability and trust that informs the living relationship between two beings. The word faith comes from the Hebrew word *emet* which means “to lean on something with all of one’s weight”.¹⁶ It implies leaning on God totally trusting that he is always there for us. For the New Testament writers, faith has found its centre in Christ Jesus.¹⁷ Thus, faith is an attitude of complete trust in Christ, of reliance on him alone for all that salvation means.¹⁸ According to Soren Kierkegaard, the main difference between

¹⁴ Article “Faith”, Microsoft Encarta 2006 [CD] Microsoft Corporation, 2005.

¹⁵ William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, edited by John D. Eusden, (Michigan: Bakers Book, 1997), 80.

¹⁶ J. J. Mueller, *What Is Theology*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988), 33.

¹⁷ Microsoft_(R) Encarta _(R) 2006

¹⁸ Microsoft_(R) Encarta _(R) 2006.

human reasons and faith is that faith must make a 'leap of faith' across the unknown to find salvation.¹⁹

The Sacraments of the Church

The sacraments of the Church have been instituted by Christ to communicate the grace or power of God through the use of material objects. In St Augustine of Hippo's definition, the sacraments are "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace."²⁰ In the early 3rd century, Tertullian translated the Greek word *mysterion* ("mystery") by the Latin *sacramentum*, which in pre-Christian time, it denoted a pledge of future performance, as in the oath of loyalty taken by soldiers to their commander; the emphasis fell on the thing that was given in pledge. In the Christian case, the word *sacrament* came to focus attention on the water of baptism and on the bread and wine of the Eucharist.²¹ According to Robert S Paul, sacrament "cannot lie at the circumference of Christian worship but must stand at the center, as a means whereby man approaches God and appropriates the blessings of Christ's self offering."²²

Sacrament In The New Testament

The word *sacrament* does not appear in the Bible, although Baptism, Eucharist, and perhaps other rites that fit the definition are reported there. The New Testament basis for sacraments is found in its teaching about mystery. In the New Testament, the word *mystery* refers to God's plan for the redemption of the world through Christ, a plan that is

¹⁹ Article "Sacrament," Microsoft® Encarta® 2006 [CD] © 1993-2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

²⁰ Microsoft® Encarta® 2006. © 1993-2005

²¹ Microsoft® Encarta® 2006.

²² Robert S Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961), 312.

hidden from the understanding of unbelievers but revealed to those who have faith (Ephesians 1:9-10). In the Christian experience, the saving action of Christ is made known and accessible to the Church especially through certain liturgical actions such as Baptism and the Eucharist. Therefore, these actions came to be known among the Greeks as mysteries, perhaps by analogy to mystery cults.²³

Robert S. Paul writes that Paul seems to have seen all Hebrew religion as under Christ. It unites the baptized with Christ and with his people.²⁴ John H. Leith describes the prefigured images of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10: 1-4). It is evident that the deliverance of the Israelites by crossing the Red Sea is a saving act of God, which Paul sees and understands as corresponding to the baptism of the believers into the cross and resurrection of Christ. Similarly, Paul understands the manna that the Israelites received while in the wilderness as the bread, and the wine as the water that sprang from the rock. This Rock refers to Christ.²⁴ Because Baptism and Lord's Supper are "of God's institution it is of the greatest necessity for believers to use these sacraments diligently and devoutly"²⁵

Sacraments As Signs

Sacraments are sometimes called signs. In Roman Catholic and much Protestant theology, sacraments are regarded as "communicating signs". That is, the sign itself actually conveys the reality for which it stands. However, sacraments are not thought to

²³ Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2006.

²⁴ Paul, 364 - 365.

²⁵ Ames, 210.

be the vehicles of divine reality; rather, they are "arbitrary signs" that simply call to the believer's mind the inner reality of grace.²⁶

Baptism Into Oneness With Christ

The term baptism is derived from the Greek word *baptizein* which means 'to dip' or 'to submerge' something into anything. Baptism is a "sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the baptized with Christ and with his people."²⁷ John H. Leith describes baptism as something which "serves our faith as a token and proof of our cleansing; it is a seal document to confirm to us that all our sins are abolished, remitted, and effaced."²⁸ It is through faith that the baptized is cleansed and united with Christ. In the Gospel of Matthew (28:19) Jesus commanded his disciples, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Therefore, Jesus re-emphasises the practice of baptism but with a deeper meaning that is oneness of the baptized with the presence of the Holy Spirit. In his baptism, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. It was in his baptism as Michael Green says that Jesus "perceived his status as Son and his role as Servant."²⁹

Baptism, as Green states, corresponds to circumcision under the Old covenant. "It is a mark of the covenant or agreement between God's grace and our response. It is the seal both on his initiative and our response."³⁰ In 1 Peter 3: 20-22, the saving of Noah is referred to as baptism. It is a saving act of God. Peter compares the safe journey through

²⁶ Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2006. © 1993-2005 Microsoft Corporation.

²⁷ World Council Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper, 111 (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 2.

²⁸ John H. Leith, *Basic Christian Doctrine*, (Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press Louisville, 1993), 154.

²⁹ Michael Green, *Baptism*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), 46.

³⁰ Green, 25.

the water of the flood with one's journey through the water of baptism.³¹ Physical act of baptism is an indication of the inward washing of sins.

According to Millard J. Erickson, "Baptism is a spiritual circumcision through faith. The baptized publicly indicates one's commitment and testified that one has been united with Christ."³² Karl Barth also points out that, participating in baptism is a sign of man's renewal by the power of the Holy Spirit.³³ Moreover, Millard further says, "Baptism is a symbol, not merely a sign, for it actually pictures the believer's death and resurrection with Christ."³⁴

Initiation Into The Church

Baptism emphasises and deepens the sense of the covenant. Christian baptism is the initiation and acceptance into the New Covenant with God. This initiation is based in the ministry of Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord. Green believes that to be baptized is our total response to the grace of God and bringing us together into the church.³⁵ John Macquarrie claims that "baptism confers total membership in Christ, including the gift of the Holy Spirit."³⁶ Thus, it is confirmed that in baptism we are baptized into Christ and his visible body the Church. Since we participate in Christ, we are bound together with one another through faith in Him.³⁷ In baptism, "The believer does not baptize himself,

³¹ Green, 26-27.

³² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (1987, 4th printing, Michigan: Baker Book House Grand Rapids, 1987), 1101.

³³ Erickson, 1101., citing Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, trans. Ernest A. Payne, (London: SCM, 1948), 9.

³⁴ Erickson, 1101.

³⁵ Green, 20.

³⁶ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, (London: SCM, Press, 1999), 82.

³⁷ World Council of Churches, 2

but offers himself for baptism."³⁸ Therefore to be baptized we are accepted into the church and it is a mark of belonging. We belong to one another under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We are not isolated from others but are in close fellowship with other believers. According to Macquarrie, "baptism is given once and once only and is said to imprint a permanent seal or character."³⁹

Cleansing And Reconciliation

Christians use water in baptism as a sign of purification, it is similar to Jewish rite of cleansing which they also use water. The immersing from the water was also associated with John's baptism in the River Jordan. "It is most probable that John's baptism was related to the ritual washings of the Essences; it was a rite administered to each convert once and once only, and it was intended for the whole nation."⁴⁰

John's baptism is also assumed to have links with the Baptism of the proselytes that was practiced by the Jews during the time. "Besides signifying a cleansing in preparation for judgment, John's, baptism was also a preparatory rite for a future baptism with the Holy Spirit."⁴¹ Therefore, baptism is an absolute turning away from evil ways and accepting Christ. John's baptism is a call for reconciliation of self and to be united with God. To Robert S. Paul, baptism was for "sinners in need of cleansing before they could become the sons of God by adoption."⁴² It is evidentially clear that unless we are cleansed and reconciled we cannot be God's people.

³⁸ Kung, 208.

³⁹ Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacrament*, 89.

⁴⁰ G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), 23.

⁴¹ Lampe, 27.

⁴² Paul, 355.

Baptism, according to Barth, is a free act of Christ Himself. Therefore he invented it and is administered by the Church. It is Christ himself who "makes water-baptism powerful for repentance and the forgiveness of sins."⁴³ Since the baptized are liberated from their sins in baptism, they are called free in Christ (Roman 6:3-11). "In baptism, sins are forgiven and the baptized person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁴

However, "faith is closely connected with repentance and it is the first step toward salvation."⁴⁵ Only through faith in Christ that one is baptized and therefore cleansed and reconciled with Christ. As Rudolf Schnackenburg correctly puts it, "For only out of faith comes forgiveness of sins."⁴⁶

Participation In Christ's Death And Resurrection

Jesus was also baptized. It is clear in view of the voice from heaven why Jesus must be baptized with other people. He was baptized not to the baptism of sinners but to the task that was assigned for him to fulfil. This task was for him to suffer for the sins of others. Jesus' baptism points towards the future of his life. His death and resurrection is "where all baptism will find its fulfilment."⁴⁷

In Mark 10:38 Jesus says, "... *Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*" Here in his statement it is evidently clear that Jesus is referring to his suffering. A suffering that is beyond our human

⁴³ Paul, 326

⁴⁴ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 89.

⁴⁵ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, translated by O.C. Dean, Jr., (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press Louisville, 1995), 165

⁴⁶ Schnackenburg, 166.

⁴⁷ Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (London: SCM Press, 1973), 18.

imagination for he has done no wrong but willingly accepted to pay the price for the sins of humanity.

To the Apostle Paul, baptizing into Christ is participating in his death and resurrection, which means participating in his salvation. His death on the cross marks the end of the bondage of sin and his resurrection gives a new hope of attaining eternal life. Michael Green puts it plainly saying, in baptism God closed the account of his past life and when raised on first Easter Day we enter new life. This life is shared and governs by Christ forever.⁴⁸ He further states that, in baptism we are in "union with him in his death and resurrection. Baptism plunges us into the dying and the rising of the Lord Jesus, and this aspect is particularly clearly emphasised by full immersion".⁴⁹

Baptism As Unity

In baptism people enters into fellowship with one another in Christ. There is no individual baptism. In baptism, all baptized into the community of believers. "Baptism which unites us to Christ in Faith is thus a basic bond of unity."⁵⁰ However according to Cullman this holds good for all persons baptized, whether as adults or children, and whether they had faith previous to baptism or not,⁵¹ but as long as they have the right intention based on their faith. We can only be united with Christ if we are free from our sins. This is our human responsibility to commit ourselves to baptism as a sign of repentance. Jesus made it clear that unless we make an effort to be united with him we will never bear much fruit (John 15: 4-5).

⁴⁸ Green, 49.

⁴⁹ Green, 49.

⁵⁰ World Council of Churches, 3

⁵¹ Cullmann, 50.

"Baptism is also a sign and seal of our common discipleship where Christians are brought into union with Christ."⁵² According to Barth, the only difference between baptism with water and the baptism by the Holy Spirit is that, baptism by the Holy Spirit is a divine work whereas baptism with water is a human work.⁵³ To be baptized is a free act showing eagerness to be united in oneness with Christ and others.

Baptism And Faith

One can not guarantee that faith alone is enough for baptism, for baptism is more than just a sign of repentance. Likewise for baptism, it cannot be effective without faith, for faith is not a sign of baptism. Both faith and baptism are part of the saving act of God. "In this common basis the two are linked: baptism comes from faith, and faith leads to baptism."⁵⁴

"Through the gifts of faith, hope and love, baptism has a dynamic, which embraces the whole of life, extends to all nations, and anticipates the day when every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father."⁵⁵ What is needed in baptism is a personal commitment to the grace of God. It is a call that needs a response in faith.

In baptism believers accepted the free grace of God. It is the beginning of a new life in Christ. A new life that sprang from offering self to be guided by the power of the Holy Spirit fulfilling what is required of the individuals. This is an act of faith. Baptism involves the surrendering of self to Christ in faith. It requires personal commitment to be received as a member of those that have accepted Christ.

⁵² World Council Churches, 2.

⁵³ John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 71.

⁵⁴ Kung, 207

⁵⁵ World Council of Churches, 3.

Baptism is the entrance into the community of believers which is the Church and Christ is the head. Our personal commitment through faith in Christ through baptism is the entrance to be united with God in his salvation.

The Lord's Supper

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is central in the life of the Church. It is in fact the heart of the Church. It is a sign of unity and fellowship as the faithful followers of Christ come together to celebrate the presence of their risen Lord and Saviour. The sacrament is also known in other names and interpreted in several ways.

Eucharist

The word Eucharist derives from the Greek word *eucharistia*, which means 'thanksgiving'. It was used in the New Testament times to translate the Hebrew *berakah*, which means 'blessing'. Shortly before his death, Jesus shared a last supper with his disciples, in the course of which he offered praise and thanksgiving to God as in the Jewish ceremonial occasions. Jesus pronounced this blessing over the bread and wine and identified himself with the food thus being offered to God and shared by his followers.⁵⁶

William Barclay believes that, the occasion is of thanksgiving and every word in the Eucharist means thanksgiving. It is a time of thanksgiving to God for his gift of creation and in his redemption through Jesus Christ. It is a demonstration of unity with Christ who died for all, and the table we share in the Lord's Supper is the table of Christ.

⁵⁶ "Eucharist Theology", in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson and John Bowden, Sixth impression. (London: SCM Press, 1983), 214.

To Barclay, the Lord's Supper is a "place where memorial, realization, appropriation end in encounter, because they are compelled to become aware of him there."⁵⁷

The Eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the church speaks on behalf of the whole creation. Indeed the world that God has reconciled to himself is present at every Eucharist: in the bread and wine, in the person of the faithful, and in the prayers they offer for themselves and for all people. Christ unites the faithful with himself and includes their prayers within his own intercession so that the faithful are transfigured and their prayers accepted.⁵⁸

Family meal

Christianity at its early stage was poor and moreover it was illegal. Therefore most of the gatherings were done in private houses and not in public places. The Lord's Supper first took place in a privately owned house (Luke 22:11-12). It is no doubt that the Lord's Supper began as a family meal similar to the Jewish Passover which is a festival celebrated within families. Later on, the Lord's Supper began to move to the Church. Schnackenburg describe the connection saying,

The connection of the breaking of bread with (full) meals in houses, which presupposed in Acts 2: 46, requires the entire rite of the Lord's Supper, as it is described in 1 Corinthians 11: 20-25, although the accents (joyous meal, remembrances of Jesus' death) are placed differently. The Jewish custom of the father of the house beginning a meal with the breaking of the bread and the distribution of the bread with a blessing becomes, through Jesus' action at the Last Supper, profoundly significant and reality-filled sign: the bread handed the disciples by Jesus is his body, which is given for the participants (Luke 22: 19) - a reference to the atoning death of Jesus, which is expressed even more clearly in the statement over the cup.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 107.

⁵⁸ World Council of Churches, 10.

⁵⁹ Schnackenburg, 169.

This movement from privately owned houses to specific locations also changed the real meal to a symbolic meal. The Lord's Supper then became central in the worship of the Church. Since the Lord's Supper is a symbolic meal it is a continual occasion. According to Paul, "Baptism has particular reference to the individual in one decisive unrepeatable act of God's grace, but the Lord's Supper is a repeated and continual of grace to us at the heart of the congregation's worship."⁶⁰ In the continual partaking in the Lord's Supper families and communities continue to gather and experience the spirit of togetherness with God and others.

Sharing

"Bread and wine have always been symbols of the truth that human beings are dependent on something besides themselves."⁶¹ This means that human beings are dependent beings. They depend on other things to provide them with full necessity of life physically and spiritually. Sharing is an important aspect of living. Sharing at the table of the Lord's Supper represents the spirit of oneness experienced by all members who accepted Christ. They share the pride of being dependent on Christ. As in baptism, Jesus commanded his followers to do what He has commanded them to do. This is also reflected in the Lord's Supper. The breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup (Luke 22: 19) also give light to the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to the Jewish understanding, the Last Supper indicates the presence of

⁶⁰ Paul, 360.

⁶¹ Leith, 257.

Christ and his saving act. But in the Hellenistic understanding the Lord's Supper is seen "as a magic transformation."⁶²

However, according to Kung, the Lord's Supper is a fellowship with Christ and with other Christians. "For this reason the Lord's Supper has been called a 'synaxis', a joining together of Christians, which reveals the true nature of the community. By the meal they share members of the Church are united with the Lord and with each other".⁶³ He further claims that the proclaimed words in the Lord's Supper gives meaning and testify the meaning of the sacrament. "It is certain that bread and wine are symbols and with words of proclamation it will fill the element with reality."⁶⁴ The proclaiming words of the Lord's Supper give power to the presence of Christ that has brought people together to share in Him. This proclaiming is said not because of the elements but because of Christ presence that unites the believers together. The Lord's Supper is a gift given by Christ for all who believes in him to share and guarantees salvation for them through obedience to the Lord.

Act of Love

The words that are used do not simply mean recalling the past, but they reflect the depth of the event done, which is now being brought into the present. It is a memorial of what has been done through his act of love. Christ has reconciled the world to himself by accepting the sufferings that he had endured. Christ accepted his body to be the vessel of the will of the Father. Even though the original event was filled with pity and sorrow as a

⁶² Kung, 219.

⁶³ Kung, 223.

⁶⁴ Kung 219.

result of what took place, but soon after Easter it became a joyful event, for victory had been witnessed in the resurrection of the Lord.

In the Lord's Supper we are called to celebrate the act performed by God through Jesus. It is a union in Christ in faith for the grace that has been bestowed on every believer. Having faith in the love of God that is shared on the table of the Lord's Supper is the ground of unity that binds every individual to Christ and to one another.

Unity

Browne declares,

The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament or mark of apparent Church, sealing unto by the breaking and eating of the bread and drinking the Cup in one holy communion, and by the word accordingly preached, that we are happily redeemed by the breaking of the body and shedding of the blood of Christ Jesus, and we thereby grow into one body, and church, in one communion of grace, whereof Christ is the head, to keep and seek agreement under one law and government in all thankfulness and holy obedience.⁶⁵

He goes on to articulate that the Lord's Supper in its spiritual sense is feeding on the body and blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper is the outward sign, "to feel effectually the remedy of our miseries by that partaking and growing together in one body of Christ and the spiritual communion."⁶⁶ Thus the Lord's Supper is a sacrament where willing individuals offer their total being to accept and share in Christ. It is the declaration of one's faith. As William Ames expresses the use of the bread and wine as "nothing more fitly expresses the very close union we come to enjoy with Christ, a union founded on the sacrifice of his body and the shedding of his blood."⁶⁷ The Lord's Supper is the sharing

⁶⁵ Paul, 359-360.

⁶⁶ Paul, citing Browne, sec. 62.

⁶⁷ Ames, 212.

with one another in fellowship in Christ body and blood. It is a sign of mutual friendship whereby every one is committed to the other. They share the gift of grace not as individuals but in true fellowship with one another.

Spiritual Nourishment

According to William Ames, the spiritual nourishment in the Lord's Supper requires only the spiritual presence of Christ in faith and not the actual changing of the elements into the body of Christ.⁶⁸ Since this sacrament of the Lord's Supper is for the spiritual nourishment and growth of believers. It should therefore be done often as an indication of full acceptance and at the same time a reminder of his great love for humanity. It should also be an indication of eagerness for the spiritual satisfaction of life.

According to Millard J. Erickson, those who participate in the Lord's Supper "see it as conferring a spiritual growth."⁶⁹ He further states, "that we do not take the elements merely because the Lord obligates us to do so. Participation actually has a beneficial effect upon the communicant. It leads or contributes to growth therein"⁷⁰

Theological significance

The church contains many different aspects that make it as a complete whole. This complete whole is the fruit of being one in every commitment they make. Each aspect is part of the whole that is bound by faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. They are

⁶⁸ Ames, 212.

⁶⁹ Millard, 111-112

⁷⁰ Millard, 112.

called to be a people of God. Proclamation of the word of God is a sign of their faith in Christ.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper bring to us sacramentally in deeds God's action in Christ for our redemption. In the words of Neville Clark both sacraments are extensions of the Atonement: "both are concerned with incorporation into Christ, with death and resurrection; both are made powerful by the operation of the Holy Spirit; both stand under the sign of the cross; both are sacraments of inaugurated eschatology."⁷¹

Faith is an essential aspect that should be present in all and it is the binding factor of the unity. Millard J. Erickson describes faith as "the very heart of the gospel, for it is the vehicle by which we are enabled to receive the grace of God."⁷² Without faith people cannot share the free grace of God. As Kung says, "Without faith no one can receive the blessing of the Lord's Supper."⁷³ It is trust in God as the provider of the blessing that premeditated the way of their commitment. As John H. Leith further explains, "The content of faith is fixed by its object."⁷⁴

Furthermore sacraments mirrored the history of the salvation act of God that saves Noah and his family from God's judgement. It saves the Israelites through the Red Sea from the approaching Egyptians. All the saving acts of God were achievable because their trust rested on God alone.

⁷¹ Paul, 360. citing Neville Clarke, 83.

⁷² Erickson, 938.

⁷³ Kung, 221.

⁷⁴ Leith, 175.

Concluding Remarks

We have seen the different strands in the Church that unveils unity. The Church as the *pakau* of God means that the church should be the sphere where the people come together in oneness and in unity. It should be the place where the called people find security and hope, faith and love. The nature of the Church itself should reflect this reality, especially its sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper. In the next chapter we will explore the possibility of a theology of the *pakau* and how God through Christ weaves communities and the whole of creation. Jesus Christ would be looked at as God's *pakau* who weaves together the people and the whole of God's creation into unity and oneness in community.

CHAPTER THREE

TE PAKAU O TE ATUA (THE PAKAU OF GOD): JESUS CHRIST

In the first two chapters, the attempt was to highlight the meaning and significance of the *pakau* in the life of the Kioan community (Chapter One), and to interpret the meaning of the oneness of the Church and its sacraments in the light of the *pakau* (Chapter Two). In this chapter, the focus is on Jesus Christ as the *pakau* of God. The aim here is the possibility of formulating a '*pakau* theology' highlighting in particular the aspect of 'weaving', in an attempt to find meaning and relevance of God's act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ in the context of Kioa. The *pakau* in many ways has become a uniting factor in the life of the community of Kioa from its beginning until today. Thus, the *pakau* speaks to the people of Kioa in many ways regarding family as well as community life. It is therefore possible for the Kioans to speak of God and His purpose in creation and in life using the metaphor of the *pakau*.

Te Pakau theology is Ecclesiological as well as Christological. It is ecclesiological in the sense that the Church is seen as *te pakau o te Atua* (the *pakau* of God) as discussed in Chapter Two. It is clearly discerned that the Church is a gathering of people being called by God to be His people. The sacraments of the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, serve the purpose of bringing people together as one family and community, in true spirit of sharing in oneness and unity. The Church should play an important role in all aspects of the life of the community not only in the walls of the Church buildings but also beyond them.

The *Pakau* Theology is Christological in the sense that God in Jesus Christ reconciles the world to himself, uniting the whole of his creation in oneness and in love through his death and resurrection. Through Christ, God has woven together His creation which has been disintegrated and alienated from God because of sin. The purpose of the *pakau* in reconciliation, which includes forgiveness and restoration of broken relationships, is taken up in this chapter as we attempt to see Christ as the *Pakau* of God. The use of the *pakau* in weaving together the community is the point where we should see God weaving together the Kioan community through Christ.

The *Pakau* Theology as a Theology of Weaving

Jesus is the *Pakau* of God through whom God weaves or creates his creation. The Gospel of John (1:1ff) bears witness to the truth that God weaves his creation through Christ: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*" The writer of the Letter to the Colossians affirms this about Christ when he says,

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created...all things have been created through him and for him...and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:15-20).

The reconciliation of the alienated creation to God is indeed the reconciliation of all things of creation to one another and to each other. This, however, was possible only through Christ.

The weaving of the *pakau*, as discussed already in Chapter One, is about the actual weaving of a *pakau*. Weaving here in this chapter looks at the purpose of the

pakau in the life of the community. The *pakau* weaves new relationships as well as broken relationships within a community.

Christianity and cultural traditions have been the central forces interacting with one another in the weaving of the lives of the people, both within their families and within the community as a whole. The two are inseparable in the lives of people within a particular context as that of Kioa. Since the arrival of Christianity, the transformation of culture has been tremendous. All the traditional gods were eliminated and replaced by the God of the Christians. Thus, Christianity has dug deep into the culture of the people and made changes to many cultural and traditional practices. These changes were always regarded as the transforming power of the love of God for humanity revealed in Christ.

When the first settlers of Kioa departed from Vaitupu, Tuvalu, they came as Christians and as Tuvaluans. They settled in Kioa as a community of God's people, a community already been transformed and woven by God to be one people. Christianity has enriched their culture. Thus, the integration of Christianity and cultural values and practices is unquestionable as seen in the practices of marriage, funerals, reconciliation and many others. This is the way of life that is completely accepted in the community.

Trevor Hart suggested that "deep down we crave some sort of unified picture of and approach to things, some integrated account in which all the different threads of our lives are woven neatly into an identifiable pattern, furnishing us with coherent basis for living in the world."¹ Christianity values culture as God's gift for his people in any context and location. One can say, therefore, that God has been weaving every community, enabling them to live as a community in oneness and unity.

¹Trevor Hart, *Faith Thinking*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press Downers Grove, 1995), 192.

As gifts of God, culture and the Church weave communities. It is in the course of this process that both culture and Gospel unfold God's intention for humanity – to live in harmony and in love as one people of God. Donald B. Bloesch speaks of the Church as always "...unified in its mission to the unbelieving world and dedicated to the dawning of social righteousness brought about by the Spirit of God on earth."² But in this chapter, something of culture is taken up to show the working of God through the power of the Holy Spirit in uniting community. So the use of *pakau* to speak metaphorically about God weaving and reweaving the community of Kioa is relevant and meaningful to the Kioans.

Weaving And Reconciliation In Christ

"To reconcile" originally meant, "to exchange" and later on meant "to change from enmity to friendship, to make friends again."³ According to W. de Gruchy reconciliation is for recovery, "Reconciliation has to do with the recovery, not the loss, of culture or other identities, and at the same time encouragement of multiple that build bridges rather than reinforce divisions."⁴ However, in the Tuvaluan culture, reconciliation refers to the act of disciplining someone who has done wrong and disturbed peace in the community. In the process, the culprit sits on the *pakau* and he/she also expresses his/her feeling of remorse on the same *pakau* when seeking the forgiveness of the chiefs and the whole community. On the *pakau* one feels unworthy and lowly before the community. In order to be able to maintain one's status, one has to confess openly the wrong that has committed and then seeks to adjust one's life to the accepted norms

² Donald G. Bloesch, *The Church*, (Illinois: IVP Academic, 1994), 44.

³ Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, (Great Britain, W.B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1996), 152.

⁴ John W. Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, (Great Britain: SCM Press, 2002), 30-31.

within the community. The culprit's open and genuine apology will be able to reinstate him/her back into the community. He/she offers no excuses as David W. Augsburger says, an apology offers no excuses for an account being done, an account is an excuse. An apology is also an appeal to soul that "point's inward in sorrow and sadness at the injury done."⁵ In an apology, he/she totally admits he/she had broken the relationship. Thus the *pakau* reconciles the culprit with the victims and with the rest of the community.

In the Samoan culture, as Rev. Faapaia Tariu explains, the weaving has been and is still a vital element of the custom. It signifies customary linking with others in many occasions. One of the products of weaving is the *ietoga* or fine mat which is referred to as the most valuable entity (*measina*) of the Samoan culture. If a severe felony is committed the culprit is covered with the *ietoga* in front of the victims' residence as a sign of regret, obeisance and begging the victims' forgiveness.⁶ Whereas in the Tongan culture as Rev. Siosifa Mafi explained, the culprit (*popula*) is encased with fine mats in seeking forgiveness from the victim and the victim's family.⁷ This is an obvious verification that reconciliation seems to be a common practice among the communities of the Pacific. It shows how central unity or oneness is in many if not all cultures in the Pacific and around the world. For the Kioans, the *pakau* weaves and reweaves relationships within the community.

God through Jesus Christ not only creates but also reconciles the whole of creation to him (Col. 1:15-20). Reconciliation in the Bible also means atonement and forgiveness of sins. It is thus understood in the context of God's saving act in the history

⁵ David W. Augsburger, *Helping People Forgive*, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 40.

⁶ Rev. Faapaia Tariu, Interview with author, 5 May, 2006.

⁷ Rev. Siosifa Mafi, Telephone conversation with author, 10 May 2006.

of Israel and culminated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a *pakau* in the context of reconciliation, Christ bears the weight of the guilt of our sins and through whom we are able to confess our unworthiness and seeking God's forgiveness. His redemptive work brings people and the whole of creation back into unity with God and with each other.

In addition, the *pakau* symbolizes healthy living, family and community that maintain consistent space between them. Another most important aspect in weaving the *pakau* is the consistency of the spacing of the leaflets. Reconciliation is also an effort of minimizing or removing excessive space created by differences between people. Also in reconciliation the alienated parties have to face each other and the space between these two parties becomes a critical issue.⁸ In reducing these spaces, it needs someone who has the art and ability to reconcile.

Healthy living here refers to the living relationship between members of the community. We cannot deny the fact or assume that the initial settlers on Kioa never experienced any differences between them. Neli Lifuka explained that they sometimes had contradictions in opinion that led to their differences, but they managed the problem escalated.⁹ Reflecting on the *pakau o Kioa* had always been a solution to their differences.¹⁰ This is because it was symbolically the centre of their togetherness and the reason why they were at *Kioa* as a community. Since they were all human beings individually, and collectively they had weaknesses, in which from time to time they failed to live and act according to what they had sacrificed for.

⁸ Gruchy, 148.

⁹ Neli Lifuka, *Logs in the current of the Sea*, edited and introduced by Klaus-Friedrich Koch, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978), 72.

¹⁰ Siapo. Nimo. Correspondent with author.

However, the presence of the *pakau* in their lives had a great impact in their relationship. The *pakau* had been a reconciler that reconciled them through minimizing and removing the excessive space between them. This reconciliation was possible through their personal and community experiences. The *pakau* was once a visible reconciler but now its symbol still carries its presence. They maintained their communal life through their experience of the *pakau o Kioa*.

God through Jesus Christ has incarnated and experienced life with his created beings. In Genesis 1:27 it says "*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.*" God the creator has been the centre of our beings. In Jesus' ministry on earth, human beings experienced his sovereignty over his creation. He made personal contact with people, reconciled them and reinstated them into the community. Their experiences through personal contact with Christ had made them true members of the community. Jurgen Moltmann says, "The different experiences of life influence faith, and faith influences the different experiences of life."¹¹ In Jesus' life he re-established consistent spacing between the ignored with those who lived the normal life. Even death Christ was able to re-establish the consistent spacing between the raised and living and most of all with God, for death is the consequence of sin. In John 11: 43-44, "*he cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth. Jesus said to them, unbind him, and let him go.*" And in John 12: 17 it says, "*So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued testify.*" They testified because they have personally witnessed and experienced what Jesus had done. Jesus had reconciled Lazarus. Christ had reconciled both the living and

¹¹ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, (Great Britain: Fortress Press, 1997), 34.

the dead to be his people. Christ truly weaves all of his creation not only through his life but also through his death and victorious resurrection. He had removed the excessive space between individuals, communities and even human beings with God. "*And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to the present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him* (Colossians 1 21-22)." Christ had died for our sins. He have sacrificed his own life for all creation. As the Son of God; he is the mediator and the reconciler that acted on our behalf. Since we had been reconciled, we are completely acceptable to God and are completely accepted by God. Although we are *men of flesh* as Paul called it in his letters to the Corinth, but we are born of the spirit, "and equipped with all provisions in Christ."¹²

Forgiveness In Reconciliation In Christ

Reconciliation is about forgiveness. But forgiveness is central in the nature of God because of his grace and it is a Godly act. It is an act that springs from the heart which is filled with the Spirit of God. Forgiveness requires soul searching before one can forgive. It is indeed the free gift of God. God's forgiveness precedes human forgiveness for God's forgiveness is eternal and unconditional. Forgiveness transforms hatred into love and reconciles us to be in close fellowship with Jesus and others. The history of Israel is understood by Enda McDonagh as "the history of a forgiving God in search of a repentant people".¹³ Moltmann says, "Forgiveness and reconciliation have a central place in the Christian gospel. In Jesus' own ministry, a pronouncement of the forgiveness of

¹² Robert S. McGee, *The Search for Significance*, second edition, (USA: Rapha Publishing, 1994), 76.

¹³ Enda McDonagh, 'Forgiveness', in Alan Richardson and John Bowden et. al., *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (London: SCM, 1983), 214.

sins might accompany an act of healing, as in the case of the paralytic (Mark 2:9)."¹⁴ The whole life of Jesus is about God's forgiveness. That is why the forgiveness of sin was a critical feature of the Kingdom of God that Jesus announced.¹⁵ The kingdom itself is even referred to as the kingdom of forgiveness (Matt.18: 22f.). At his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies (Luke 23: 24).

The Gospels contain examples of the forgiveness and compassionate love of Jesus extended to human beings from all backgrounds and circumstances in life. One clear example of the forgiveness and love of Jesus is found in John Chapter 8:

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again' (John 8:2-11).

In extending forgiveness and his compassionate love to this woman, Jesus certainly released her from all past and future condemnations, at the same time silenced the self-righteous attitude and arrogance of the Pharisees. But his final words to this adulterous woman was a the firm admonition, "Go your way, and from now on do not sin

¹⁴ Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 89- 90.

¹⁵ Mcdonagh, 214.

again." The gift of wholeness Jesus granted to this previously broken woman required that she mend her ways and lead a different lifestyle thereafter.

Forgiveness is the acceptance of the guilty person to be woven back into relationships – between individuals, within families and within the community. It is a process of transformation where relationships are renewed and people are drawn together in oneness. Augsburg claims that forgiveness is "not a moral victory for the offended; it is not a self-serving mercy that controls, obligates, or morally judges the offender; rather it transforms the relationship."¹⁶ In the Epistle of James, Christians enjoined to confess their sins to one another. "The unity of the Church, conceived in personal and social terms, is completely open ended, both on time and space."¹⁷ Thus, total acceptance through forgiveness breaks barriers between people. It also directs one's life into the realm of God's salvation. On the *pakau* for reconciliation, the barriers that divide individuals are broken down through forgiveness. The *pakau* is therefore a symbol of forgiveness and acceptance of one another within the community. Jesus in his life and ministry was accused of forgiving sins. But he did it with authority and with compassionate love.

Responsibility In Reconciliation In Christ

The *pakau* offers freedom to the people to be responsible for their own differences in the community. Macquarrie believes that "A human community depends for its existence on the fidelity of its members to the commitments they have freely taken on themselves. A person, in his turn, is shaped by his commitments and by the way in which

¹⁶ Augsburg, 167.

¹⁷ John. Macquarrie, *Christian Unity and Christian Diversity*, (Britain: SCM Press Ltd., 1975), 42.

he stands by them.”¹⁸ The *pakau* during the act of reconciliation signifies this spirit of commitment to the responsibility of establishing unity and oneness in the community.

Jesus in his life and ministry never went astray from the responsibility which he believed was given to him by the Father. Even at the verge of giving up he prayed, “*Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want*” (Mk. 14:36). He committed his life to do the will of the Father in reconciling the world to him, knowing that it would lead to his death. This *pakau* of God for reconciliation signifies the meaning of responsibility and commitment, not only of his own, but also of those who sit on him in faith to be reconciled to God and to one another.

The same is seen in the life of the Church which is the extension of the life of Christ. As G. W. Bromiley explains, “The Church is one in its faith in the Lord, its one use of the common means of grace and its one dedication to the common task.”¹⁹ Everett Ferguson also says, “The Christian life is both a gift and a task.”²⁰ He goes on to say that the task is not in a self-help sense, but “The Church is the sphere or realm for actualization of the new creation, the new humanity, and it provides mutual help for this task.”²¹ This task is the responsibility for oneness which should be seen through the life of the people within the community who believe and have faith in Jesus Christ. This responsibility of the people of faith is indeed the responsibility of Jesus through them and it is directed towards others and God.

¹⁸ Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 223.

¹⁹ G. W. Bromiley, *The Unity and Disunity of the Church*. (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 1958), 62.

²⁰ Ferguson, 352.

²¹ Ferguson, 352.

The *pakau* in reconciliation is always responsible for unity and oneness. It continues to weave together members of the community giving them the responsibility of committing themselves to oneness of the community. The nature of God as forgiving and reconciling is the main binding factor which should be revealed in the *pakau*. God is a God who cares and unites everything in his creation in unity and in oneness. Within this oneness in creation there is the interweaving of species. "Every species and every member of species are connected to others by complex webs of interrelationship."²² They depend on each other not only to maintain their unity but also for a better future. Moltmann further explains, "All things are mutually dependant; they live with each other and for each other, and often enough symbiotically within each other. Life is community, and community is the communication of life."²³ This is the purpose of God, for his creation and for every community which was central in the life and ministry of Jesus. In Jesus, God forgives and reconciles communities and the whole of his creation, and that, by itself calls the whole of creation to responsibility. As Gruchy says, God's primary concern "is the establishment of human community in which the uniqueness of the individual person is not lost in the mass but discovered in relationship to others"²⁴ which means in the establishing of a community he/she may find how special he/she is to God. So in a community he/she will enjoy God's gift which was attained by his love. Without a community, there is no realization of one's uniqueness. In realising one's uniqueness in a community, it becomes a burden of responsibility for the individual in the community.

²² Taipisia Leilua, Lecture notes "The principle of Interconnectedness" in *Eco-Theology*, Malua Theological College, Apia, 15/03/2005

²³ Jurgen. Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 24.

²⁴ Gruchy, 92.

This is because this gift of uniqueness is for maintaining the relationship between him/her and the community.

Christ the *pakau* as Entrance

The *pakau* symbolises the entrance of what it signifies. In the *pakau o Kioa* it is the entrance to the establishing of Kioa. In the *pakau* for discipline it is the entrance into the reweaving of someone into the community. Unless one sits on the *pakau* he/she enters to see the purpose of the *pakau*. It is also clear that behind the *pakau* is the truth of what it signifies. It is always the case that the *pakau* is for goodness of the families and community. The *pakau* always seeks comfort, confidence, blessings and unity of the community. Similarly in baptism, accepting Christ is a sign of entering into the community of believers.

In John 10: 7, 9 Jesus says, "*Very truly, I tell you. I am the gate for the sheep...whoever enters by me will be saved, will come in and go out and find pasture.*" Sheep in the New Testament is sometimes symbolically referred to human beings. They are the ones that enter and go out through the entrance. The immediate response of the sheep to their master's voice reflects their close relationship. Their closeness and understanding of each other with their master reflects a neatly woven community. According to William Barclay, Jesus (in John 10:7, 9) is referred here to a ring of grass surrounded by stone dyke or hedge of thorns. Jesus is speaking metaphorically about himself as the opening where the shepherd lay at night. In order to enter or go out, the only option is to go over the shepherd's body. To Barclay, Jesus is the means whereby

his flock can safely enter and are protected from danger.²⁵ Therefore in correlation to the symbolism, Jesus' people are protected from sin and only through him are people able to be totally free from sin.

It is through Jesus that people enter into the presence of God. He gives freedom to all his people through his saving act on the cross. He weaves his people through his love so that no one may go astray from his flock. Within them is their mutual understanding that they are all part of one group under the leadership of their one master. He protects and provides food and shelter so each of them will share the love that is brought about by their master. They have nothing to fear for it is through him that they are all saved.

Christ as the *pakau* of Authority

Pakau is a common entity seen in Vaitupu. Its frequent sight seems to lessen its value and its importance. But to the Kioan community the *pakau* has so much to say about their origin. It is not only an entity but it is entity with authority that cannot be detected by bare eye. The *pakau* speaks to the Kioans as a community of obedience through free offering of self rather than as individuals. Its physical form may deteriorate and disappear it can also be ignored and rejected but the value of what it symbolizes will still and remain the same from the beginning to the end. This is because the *pakau* has made the people of Kioa to be who they are and what they are. They are born of the *pakau* and in and through the *pakau* they have experienced life. The *pakau* has provided them with every aspect of life. This is the authority that the *pakau* possessed. Melanie

²⁵ William Barclay, *Jesus as they saw Him* (England: SCM Press, 1991), 271.

Klein says, that part-objects have the power to influence pleasure, gratifying experience which is essential to growth and the movement toward selfhood.²⁶

When they are called to establish Kioa through the *pakau* they are at the same time called to continue the work of spreading the Good News. "Christians do know even across denominational as well as geographical, economic, political, and social frontiers, we have to recognize a work of the Holy Spirit."²⁷ They are called to be disciples of Jesus. Their discipleship had comes from their own initiative as reflected on the *pakau o Kioa*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said concerning discipleship, at the moment of being called "men find that they already broken with all their natural ties of their life."²⁸ When Jesus called Levi the son of Alphaeus in Mark 2:14,*he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.* According to Bonhoeffer this response is an act of obedience and not a confession of faith from the disciple.²⁹ Jesus' call resulted with an immediate response without any questioning of what they are going to do. Jesus' words of calling were with full authority. They would eventually possess this authority that when they were ready for the task. Jesus said to his eleven disciples, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,...And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age* (Matthew 28: 18, 19, 20)." The presence of Christ and his authority will always be with his disciples and all those who will continue his mission. As N.T Wright says, "Jesus intended his followers to inherit

²⁶ Melanie Klein "Attachment and Separation" in *Helping People Forgive*, David W. Augsburger, 56.

²⁷ G. W. Bromiley, 35.

²⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, translated from German *Nachfolge*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 94.

²⁹ Bonhoeffer, 57.

all the closeness and mutual obligations that belong with family membership in that close-knit, family based society."³⁰

In this event of calling to be disciples, it seems that it was a calling from security into insecurity as Bonhoeffer says. But to him, as he further explains, the truth is that, it is from security to safety in fellowship with Christ.³¹ Jesus' calling clearly unveils who he is. His calling is for the need not only to spread the Good News but to continue on gathering and reconciling people into God's kingdom. His effort also signifies how to maintain unity within the community. Christ also makes it clear that unless they come under the leadership of God and not of personal interest, unity will never exist. This is because he/she will keep on looking back to worldly possessions. As Jesus says, in Luke 9: 62, "*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.*"

Since we are called to be his disciples we will suffer as Christ suffers. As 1 Peter 3:18 says, "*For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.*" This is not God's intention for us his people to suffer, but because of evil in the human nature, we have to suffer for others in our given task. To be his disciples we are in his kingdom and it is our task to bring others into his kingdom to enjoy his gifts. In weaving together as people of God we will feel the warmth of his presence for he possesses the authority that brings true relationship to members of the community of believers as Bromiley says, "...the unity of the Church must be the work

³⁰ N.T Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, second volume, (Great Britain: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996), 278.

³¹ Bonhoeffer, 58.

of God and not of man.”³² Jesus told the paralyzed man in Matthew 9: 2, “*Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven.*” Here, his authority over his creation is unquestionable because only God can forgive sins and now Jesus is also forgiving sins. Jesus has revealed himself in his word and actions as God. He has full authority because he is God.

Christ as the *pakau* of identity

The *pakau* symbolises a community that has a particular cultural identity. Although the *pakau* may be seen in other parts of the Pacific, what it means and what it symbolises may differ. In the Vaitupuan culture the *pakau* speaks about survival, recreation, status, communication, relationship, health as well as religion. The *pakau* covers almost all aspects in the life of the Vaitupuans. As in the *pakau o Kioa* it is the totality of the Kioans sociologically, economically, politically and spiritually. The *pakau* is deeply rooted, and is, the totality of the people as a family and a community.

In Jesus’ life we cannot separate him from his miracles and in particular his bodily healing. This caused many people to flock to hear Him.³³ His works have revealed an identity of who he is. His miracles have a great impact of witnessing his identity as in John 10: 25 “*Jesus answered, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me.*” Therefore his works as seen in his miracles bear witness to who he is. According to Tim Lahaye, Jesus performed hundreds of miracles but only thirty-nine are described in the Gospels. Many others are not recorded in full details but summarized “*He healed them*” (Luke 6: 91), “*and they brought all who*

³² Bromiley, 33.

³³ Tim Lahaye, *Jesus Who is He?* (Great Britain: Marshall Pickering, 1998), 126.

were sick to him" (Matthew 14: 35).³⁴ Miracles break the law of nature and it is Gods' act. "Jesus often manipulates nature, demonstrating that He had the power over the laws of nature."³⁵

However, the authority that he possessed is from God. Jesus had the authority to perform miracles and to forgive sin which demonstrates the fact that he is more than just a man. Jesus is God in all that he had done. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5: 21 say that Christ is sinless, "*For our sake he made him to be sin who new no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*" Jesus is sinless, that is his identity for only God is sinless. It is through his identity that proves himself to be God and that he loves his creation. His love is fully revealed in his death and resurrection to reconcile us so that we are one with God. His identity convinced his followers but more interestingly those who were responsible for his death (Mark 15: 39). They thought that he really was the expected Messiah that came to save them and the whole of creation. His identity confirms that he is responsible for weaving the community for God.

A Morning Point of Unity

The palm symbolizes unity of culture and Gospel. It represents a place or space of satisfaction. The Church always has its arms open for the world who are willing

³⁴ Lahaye, 129.

³⁵ Lahaye, 129.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the author seeks to re-emphasise the message of unity and oneness by summing up the main points that were touched upon throughout this thesis. This is carried out by discussing the unity in diversity of the Church (its preached word and sacraments) and the culture of the people. It aims at challenging the Christian Church of Tuvalu regarding its role in the life of the community, as well as challenging the community as a whole to embrace the life-affirming aspects of their culture to enrich their life together as a community.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: GOSPEL AND CULTURE

The unity in diversity of the calling and responsibilities of the Church and the culture of the people enables the weaving and reweaving of a community. A *pakau* is actually made up of two separate leaves been woven together, so is the community of Kioa and the kind of life the people live which is very much the weaving together of the teachings of the Bible and of the Church, and the culture of the people. The Gospel and the culture of the people are a unity in diversity. They are two different entities yet inseparable because they are both gifts of God. Within their similarities and likeness they need a platform where they can meet and make contact with each other and therefore with the people at the same level.

A Meeting Point of Unity

The *pakau* symbolizes unity of culture and Gospel. It represents a place or space of satisfaction. The Church always has its entrance open for the people who are willing to offer themselves for God. "Not only does fellowship contribute to accomplishing the

purpose of the Church, it is also created by people's commitment to a common purpose."³⁶ Expression of love shown by these two entities provides a solid platform where individuals meet. Whoever enters the *pakau* must experience the need to unite for they are called people of God. They are people of God for they see God in their culture through obedience. Some theologians explain that there are communicable attributes of God "such as love and mercy which human beings in some measure share."³⁷ Love cannot be separated from God. John H. Leith again strongly emphasizes that, "Love is not a quality or an attribute. Love is the very nature of God."³⁸ It is the Spirit of God that brings people together as a church and stimulates their sharing of God's love. The Spirit of God neatly weaves the inner lives of the individuals to experience oneness on the *pakau* for a purpose. As William Ames defines God as a living God in three ways: first, God is a living God "because God works by himself, not being moved by another; second, because the vital action of God is his essence; third, because he is the fountain of all being and of vital operation in all other living things (Acts 17: 25, 28)."³⁹ This platform is made possible in acceptance through faith. The church is the visual body of Christ where the uniting body can be witnessed.

On the *pakau* one feels the spirit of togetherness and at the same time he/she senses the feeling of maintaining mutual relationships within the community. This feeling of belonging goes hand in hand with the sense of awareness that one is a true member of the community. "True friendship," says Aristotle "rests on the foundation of

³⁶ Joe S. Ellis, *The Church on Purpose*, (U.S.A., Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, 1982), 72.

³⁷ Leith, 51.

³⁸ Leith, 51

³⁹ Ames, 86.

likeness."⁴⁰ In addition the *pakau* signifies oneness in all goodness which is unveiled in a community that is tightly and neatly being interwoven. Love enables the togetherness to prevail. This same love is the nature of the living foundation that the individuals are designed for and built from within. This is because God is a God that weaves.

Point of Departure

"It is worth recalling that from the very beginning the Christian Church has been characterized by unity and diversity and even by division."⁴¹ The traditional *pakau* is a unified object from different strands. The different leaves and leaflets of the *pakau* represent their differences in their behaviour, skills, abilities and family background that contribute to their distinctions.

The rejection of the selection of their superior is a clear indication of their differences. Their point of departure is evident in the rise of individual rights and personal interests. The rapid changes of modern society have influenced these changes. There is no room for God to act in them. Edward Schillebeeckx says, "The rational sphere of understanding became wider and wider and there seemed to be no place for God within its range."⁴² Furthermore, the rejection of the election was also a clear evidence of the superior trying to ignore the diversities of the people that turned out to be their greatest rival. "We shall never attain a unity having any depth if differences are swept under the carpet or treated as matters of no importance."⁴³ The disciplinary *pakau*

⁴⁰ Jurgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 138.

⁴¹ John Macquarrie, *Christian Unity and Christian Diversity*, (Britain, SCM Press Ltd, 1975), 3.

⁴² Edward Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, translated by Shed & Ward Ltd, (1986, reprinted, Great Britain: A. Wheaton and Co. Ltd, Exeter, Devon, 1986), 60.

⁴³ John Macquarrie, *Christian Unity and Christian Diversity*, 47.

is a practice that tries to minimize the dominance of the existing diversities that each individual possessed.

The other aspect that contributes to their differences is their context. The contexts of the participants have a great impact on the sacraments and what they meant. "As in South Africa in baptism, the pouring of water over a South African woman is a symbol of curse."⁴⁴ Their cultures have an influence in the way the sacraments are performed, but the spirit of the sacraments and what they meant is still the binding factor that unites them together. The disunity Kioa is facing at the moment is because the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu in Kioa failed to address it from the very beginning. This issue came into existence because of the ignorance of the church leaders.

Unity In Diversity

Concerning the ideological diversity and social turmoil in South Africa, Johan Degenaar says that, in establishing a nation-building scheme. It should be "of a genuine democratic culture which respects the dignity of the people, the right to dissent and a meaningful political participation."⁴⁵ Respecting the dignity and any personal endeavours are crucial factors to be taken into account within any community. But dignity and personal endeavours must not dominate the community for it can lead to individualism. "One cannot be a Christian in isolation, only in relationship."⁴⁶ People were called to live, share and work together. This is why human beings as image of God

⁴⁴ Rev. Si'u Vaifale, *Contextual and Liberation Theology*, lecture class, Malua Theological College, Apia, 28 February, 2005.

⁴⁵ Charles Villa-Vincencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, general editors Duncan Forrester and Alistair, (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 42., citing Johan Degenaar, *National-Building: An example of Outdated Thinking?* Democracy in Action, June- July 1990.

⁴⁶ Duncan B. Forrester, *Living in Truth and Unity in Ecclesiology and Ethics*, editors: Thomas F. Best and Martin Robra, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 97.

are unique as Augustine says, "the real uniqueness of human existence not in the mind, not in language, not in memory, but in the human self to objectify and to transcend itself."⁴⁷ Serving and putting of others first brings oneness as part of the self. The Church according to Charles Villa-Vicencio "is required to value - generating community committed to such values that facilitate and enable people to live together in mutual respect. It is a community within which people are taught to love one another, to forgive one another and to bear one another's burdens."⁴⁸

The Community Of Weaving Is One Of Commitment

It is our Christian duty to reveal the nature of unity as reflected in the church. They are only vassals of God that should disclose his purpose for humanity. This is the whole reason of Gods' action of love. His love is meant to be utilized by the whole creation. Edward Schillebeeckx says that "through the commitment of love which demands justice for all, and, given the human condition, this is impossible without a concrete social and political order."⁴⁹

The spirit of commitment weaves the believers tightly and it also neatly knitted each other with God. Schillebeeckx says, "Within faith, then, it must be possible to indicate a rational way through our secular experiences towards God, a way which, in itself, does not lead to salvation, but which does make faith in the salvation that God extends to us in Jesus a mature and humanly act."⁵⁰ The first settlers leaving their familiar environment, home, families and what they have inherited from their forefathers

⁴⁷ Leith, 101., citing William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, chapter. 9.; Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1944), 67.

⁴⁸ Villa-Vicencio, 42.

⁴⁹ Schillebeeckx, 145-146.

⁵⁰ Schillebeeckx, 77.

is a big lost, but it mirrored the depth of their commitment in what they believed in. Their faith has determined their future. Everywhere and every time they are responsible for themselves.

Obedience and respect is the end result of their commitment. The *pakau* may be seen as total confusion to the blind but of certainty for the true believers. Similarly as believers partake in the sacraments, they participate without confusion of the saving act of God.

This new united community is a product of tradition and Christian belief. It has braided every element of their lives and draws them nearer to God and his blessings as William Ames emphasises, "...this union is the spiritual relation of men to Christ by which they obtain the right to all the blessings provided by him"⁵¹

Committed To Culture

This feeling of commitment through obedience is part of their culture and has influenced their daily lives. Obedience as Jerry T. Farmer writes, "The task in an open system is an ongoing, ever-renewed responsibility for each person to work out a synthesis between the responsible taking of initiative on the one hand and obedience on the other."⁵²

This commitment is from the freedom of choice in which one is free to choose for one's own future. As William Temple claims that,

The power of self-objectification provides freedom so that human beings are not simply the consequence of instinct and impulse as is the life of animals, but are shaped in part by the power of the human self to reflect on

⁵¹ Ames, 157.

⁵² Jerry T. Farmer, *Ministry in Community*, (Louvain: Peeters Press, W. B. Eerdmans), 99.

the self and to organize all vitalities and energies of the self in the pursuit of a freely chosen goal.⁵³

But behind this free choice is the huge burden of committed responsibilities. These responsibilities stimulate them to sacrifice for the task, for their culture has provided the entrance for them to experience the blessing that has been provided by God. As in baptism it is the entrance to receive and experience the blessing of being chosen by God.

Commitment to the *pakau* is another way of self surrendering to be a vehicle of culture. The *pakau* doesn't offer individual effort but communal commitment. These requirements of the *pakau* made the individual firstly to examine themselves before accepting the call. Jurgen Moltmann emphasizes that "Our new energies for living are awakened by trust: by our selves, by the trust of other people, by God's trust in us. In the free space of trust our powers are awakened and new powers grow."⁵⁴ So their commitment is an effort to fulfil their obligation to their superior and the rest of the community.

A verse of the song composed by their pastor Asuelu Fakamua in remembrance of their leader Paka who led the first settlers to Kioa, translated by Tofiga Foua expresses their deep feelings of commitment to their culture and the reality they faced on their arrival on the island.

*On the solid ground I have set my foot
But no one comes to welcome me.
Trees alone are standing there before me,
And birds are singing.
Come and assemble to offer thanks.
Ready the cargo to be taken*

⁵³ Leith, 62, citing Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 129-134.

⁵⁴ Jurgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 63.

*To the Shelter crudely made.*⁵⁵

A clear evidence of their fully committed life to the *pakau* was that almost all of them never returned to their home land but rested in peace on Kioa Island.

Commitment To Their Belief And Their Culture

The people's life of commitment is based on their faith both in their traditional *pakau* and their Christian belief. Schillebeeckx comments, "As the absolute reality, God by definition eludes direct experience. Because of this, a humanly meaningful faith in God is only possible within sphere of understanding if our human reality itself contains a real reference to God, which is therefore part of our experience."⁵⁶ The presence of God draws them into oneness on the *pakau* in faith. It is also their Christian obligation to work for a betterment of all.

The *pakau* requires obedience for the betterment of the future generation of Vaitupu and likewise for the glorification of God. In addition, this is a subject of the individuals' depth of realization of their obligation that needs implementation. The truth behind this realization is commitment. Within this depth of knowing, one feels the presence of God through one's faith to act on one's behalf. Only in faith, in the death and resurrection of Christ "that we learn that being man - the impossible is nonetheless possible."⁵⁷ This is their weapon and a tool which they acknowledge in whatever circumstance they face. This is not a matter of expression of superiority in the sight of God but an expression of lowliness and emptiness in the sight of God. "The Christ-

⁵⁵ Lifuka Neli, *Logs in the current of the Sea*, Edited and introduced by Koch Klaus-Friedrich, (Canberra: Australian Nation University Press, 1978), 52.

⁵⁶ Schillebeeckx, 71.

⁵⁷ Schillebeeckx, 77.

event, it is claimed, is the truth-event, the event which brings into light the realities of the human condition and the reality of God."⁵⁸

Obedience with commitment to the Christian belief and culture makes them worth to be called Christians "In the Christian church, there are quite specific vehicles for the transmission of the tradition."⁵⁹ Their partaking in Christ's saving act guaranteed them safety in their community of believers. This is because of their involvement in fulfilling and nurturing the will of God on earth. Furthermore, their personal obligation to attain what is best for the glorification of God is a way of drawing people to God. This action reveals the whole purpose of Gods' saving act, that is, to be in fellowship with anyone who believes in him.

The Kioans today have to see Kioa in the *pakau* and not from the *pakau*. For, when looking from the *pakau*, we are again adopting the mentality of what happened to the selection of the first settlers. The people seem to ignore the truth that this community founded its foundation on these two major aspects, the tradition and their Christian belief. This is because they have interpreted and dictated God as the God of their personal desires. The reminding of the presence of these aspects in weaving should create a feeling that they are interwoven with each other. With this understanding they should sense the feeling of belonging and a true member of the community. A true member should be from the inner person and not only in times of needs.

The tradition from the very beginning has been a uniting factor that moulds and offers unity. It has been transmitted through culture for generations. The long process of transmitting reflects its effectiveness to the community. The tradition amplifies the

⁵⁸ Macquarrie, *Theology, Church and Ministry*, 41.

⁵⁹ Macquarrie, *Theology, Church and Ministry*, 38.

identity of the community. No matter how hard we resist we will and still belong to that specific category. The tradition provides a stable uniting society where people can enjoy life. On the other hand, the church has been serving her purposes in relation to society "when she is the embodiment of what a true society ought to be."⁶⁰ The Church as the visual body of Christ has deeply touched the inner lives of the individuals offering them knowledge about their relationship with God and all of creation. The Church has not only live by her example but also with her proclamation. The community of believers has a clear picture of what a society should be like.

The perfect interweaving of different strands of tradition and Christianity reflects the *Pakau o Kioa*. The *Pakau o Kioa* needs to be recalled and be reminded to the people of Kioa today. For without the *pakau* there is no resettling of the island. Kioa is an island of future hope and trust for the people of Vaitupu. It is a gift from God for his people to live in mutual fellowship with one another. This is the understanding that should be present behind every act they perform. Self-centeredness is an attitude that is not accepted in any society. God is not to be interpreted according to what we want but according to what God wants of us.

So it is the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu in Kioa that is being encouraged in its role in uniting its people. As Desmond Tutu says concerning the ecological crisis, it is "no longer a problem we leave to scientist, just as we are part of the problem, we are also part of the solution."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ferguson, 398.

⁶¹ Leilua, 24 February 2005.

Some Recommendations

1. The Church should teach the meaning of faith to the people of Kioa and its purpose for humanity. Since faith is an individual entity, the individual should be aware that faith is a personal obligation to what one believes in. I strongly believe that faith unites people and direct them for a better future both socially and spiritually. That future could only be attained if there is unity. That unity could only be established in the society that one is living in. Ferguson strongly emphasizes this point saying, "Those who want to change society, in whatever direction and whatever scale, often resort to violence. Violence is often itself the problem and adopting it as a mean of redress only continues and promotes the underlying human problems."⁶²
2. The Church should promote the freedom of women in the community. Women are sometimes ignored but the qualities they possess are priceless. Women are regarded as the key behind any successful family development. They too play major roles in the art of weaving. Therefore their skills and knowledge could be of great importance in uniting the community. Their motherly approaches could be of great importance in reuniting those who have been isolated from one another.
3. The Church should promote unity among Churches. Since the community is dominated by Congregationalists, their general attitude should aim for unity. Therefore approaches to other denominations must be flexible rather than too conservative. Even though they are different in their faith confessions they are one in their identity in serving the same God. Their obligation is to promote the kingdom of God on earth.

⁶² Ferguson, 399.

4. The Church should exemplify Jesus' methods of living in relation to personal and community relationship. Whenever there are difficulties, love should be the basis of the proposed solution. In addition the leaders should teach the meaning of the Church and its sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.
5. The Church leaders should be aware that, in trying to cope with changes they tend to forget or ignore the weak in society. But they are the main labour force behind the implementation of any development with very little to say. Additionally they are easily tempted and usually fall behind leaving unnoticed. The Church should review its approaches to the people in the preached word and its activities.
6. The Church should promote the life affirming aspects of culture. In most cases it is the culture that these denominations are targeting and trying to avoid it. In doing so they use their faith as a weapon to counter it. Since Christianity has been woven with tradition, it ought to strongly emphasize the importance of culture in our lives. Their social and their spiritual lives should be balanced in order to be successful in life.
7. The Church should be at the forefront in an effort to establish unity among people. There ought to be an inter-faith dialogue. This dialogue should make them understand more of each other and their duties as people called by God for a purpose.

These are some of the recommendations whereby I do hope will promote a united and harmonious community of Kioa today and for the future.

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