



FORMATIVE EVALUATION

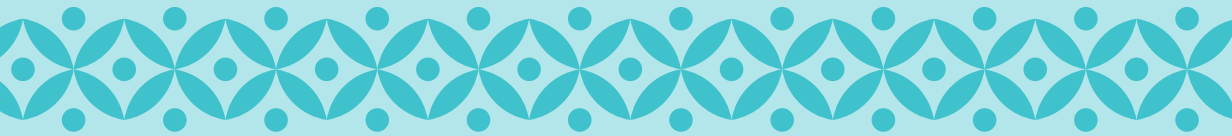
OF PACIFIC FAITH-BASED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES



SEPTEMBER 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



THIS REPORT OF PACIFIC FAITH-BASED FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES HAS BEEN PREPARED BY DR SIAUTU ALEFAIO-TUGIA AND SESIMANI HAVEA OF THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, MASSEY UNIVERSITY.

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for collective wisdom through Pacific in-depth discussions).

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Your voices form the basis of this report and shed light on the reality of family violence. Your narratives provide faith, hope and love.



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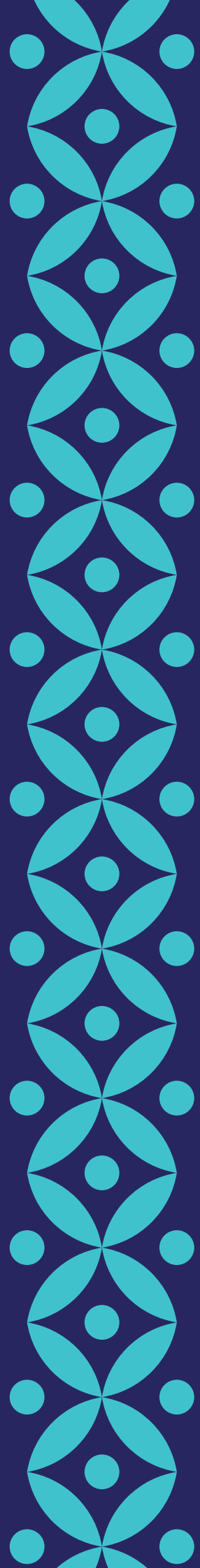
SEPTEMBER 2016

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**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This formative evaluation documents the development and progress of two Pacific faith-based initiatives addressing family violence prevention and intervention in Aotearoa New Zealand. The evaluation also addresses gaps identified in the Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu research agenda by contributing to ethnic-specific Pasefika knowledge on social and kin relationships. It also provides narratives from practice and of innovative programme design and delivery.

Literature was reviewed to explore the role of faith within Pacific communities. Pacific Church communities are settings where spiritual-faith is nurtured, expressed, lived and sustained. Pacific Church communities are significant places to engage, challenge and potentially transform Pacific communities.

PACIFIC FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES

Two Pacific-faith based initiatives were spearheaded by the vision-bearers at Affirming Works (Auckland) and Churches Unite (Wellington and Auckland).

Affirming Works is a faith-based organisation that worked in close partnership with four Tongan Church denominations (Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, Methodist and Pentecostal) on the Kainga Tu'umalie (KT) initiative. Kainga Tu'umalie (translated as "prosperous family/souls") is the vision for the prevention and restoration of families from family violence. This initiative integrates Tongan cultural knowledge and biblical faith-narratives. The programme is run with families from selected Churches and includes a retreat and follow-up sessions.

The Churches Unite initiative is a Pacific collective of nine Church communities coming together for the first time on a shared vision of preventing and intervening in family violence. Its approach is underpinned by a faith-based position paper written by one of the vision-bearers. Each Church developed their own plan of action (e.g. Pastoral care, counselling, prayer support, family mentorship), utilising different strategies of support and engagement.

THE APPROACH OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of these initiatives was undertaken through:

- Participant observations, talanoa/interviews with families, Church ministers, Pastors, vision-bearers
- Analysing relevant literature and other documents, e.g.

programme outline, position paper, progress reports and conceptual frameworks)

- Fa'afaletui-dialectical analysis (assessing the truth of a theory)

KEY FINDINGS

There was transformational change for families who participated in both initiatives.

Pacific faith-based initiatives have the potential to deliver positive and sustainable outcomes for Pacific families.

The programme identified the key phases of development and the evolving nature of faith-inspired creativity in a dynamic environment. The role of enablers, vision-bearers and champions was essential to respond proactively, collaboratively and appropriately to family violence.

KT initiative:

1. The retreat, which was an important part of the programme, is a peaceful and harmonious setting and invited families into a safe place where they are able to share their challenges. The structure of the retreat blends cultural frameworks (Fofola e fala ka e talanoa e kainga) with faith (Jesus as the reference point) and encourages vibrant and honest dialogue that is the heart of the transformative change.
2. The retreat and follow up sessions reawakened dreams for a brighter and a more prosperous future and develops plans to achieve goals. The challenge to dream again and believe that one can attain their aspirations produced life-changing impacts for the whole Kainga (family).

3. There was also increased focus on effective communication within the marriage relationship. A key aspect is the ability to understand the spouse's love language, and what makes them happy.

"I used to think my responsibility was just to go to work to earn money for the family. I'd come home and get drunk. After the programme I gave up drinking and smoking because I knew I needed to take care and provide for my children. I believe that it was God leading me and my family to attend the programme ..."

- Father, Kainga Tu'umalie participant

"We've realised the difference between poverty thinking and positive, prosperous thinking. It's better to think positively and work towards it so we can better ourselves."

- Mother, Kainga Tu'umalie participant

The Churches Unite initiative

1. Many families experienced a sense of excitement and purpose through encountering God. There is the sense that families felt they were not alone - through the unity of Churches Unite purpose, of Pastors coming together and working it out together.
2. The initiative highlighted the central role parents and Church leaders have to lead by example. CU's approach of coming alongside families to understand where they are and continuing to preach, teach and role model from the biblical narrative are effective support mechanisms for bringing about change.
3. There was a sense Church leaders were inspirational, not only in leading by example, but in possessing a broader vision themselves.

"[It] excited me that men of God are willing to come together and not just look at the problem, but see past it and look at where our (troubled) families are at and solutions on how to bring them out of it. Not to put focus on the actual problem itself, but put focus on what avenues you can go down. That really excited me from the beginning; it's solution-based. When there's domestic violence or suicide, we tend to put so much focus on those. It's really depressing and becomes like a phase, a message that just gets blown in the wind. A solutions-focus is needed - that channels excitement."

- Mother

But some issues were identified

During implementation of these initiatives issues emerged around capacity and capability to deliver effective programmes and services. In particular these included

- Adequate resourcing, funding and support to sustain transformative family engagement
- More time was required from enablers, champions, Church ministers, Pastors, vision-bearers and staff.
- More training and support is required for Church ministers, Pastors and leaders.

There was also a risk of quantifying outcomes too early in the development phase. Being able to discuss realistic deliverables with the funder as the initiative evolves is necessary.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report highlights the innovative practices of Pacific faith-based initiatives and recommends further support, given the immediate transformative impact that had been achieved for many of the families who participated in the initiatives.

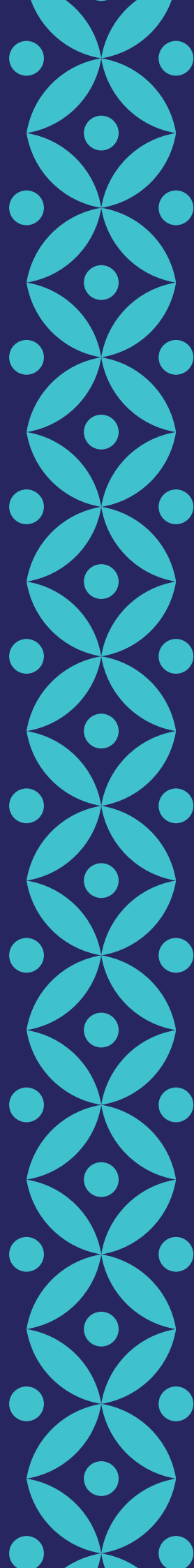
Further recommendations include:

- Ensuring adequate resourcing to enable faith-initiatives to build on current initiatives and not feel stretched to deliver beyond their capacity and capability
- Pacific faith-based initiatives being open and transparent with their capacity and capability needs for the appropriate support to be provided
- Continuing to build research collaborations with Pacific faith-based initiatives to document developments
- Acknowledgment by donors and policy makers that Pacific faith-based initiatives are partners in family violence prevention and intervention
- Ensuring representation of Pacific faith-based communities in policy and strategy development, and in key events relating to family violence
- Facilitating and providing opportunities for collaboration within and between Pacific faith-communities and with mainstream family violence organisations
- Encouraging learning opportunities and forums for sharing learnings/findings

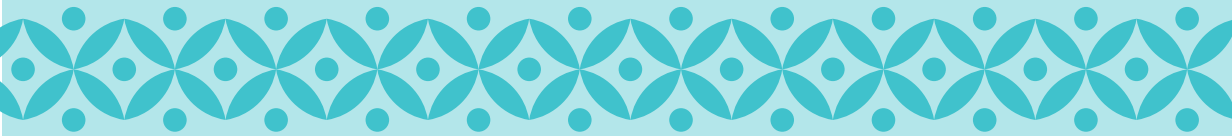
02



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION



THE DISRUPTION OF HARMONY WITHIN FAMILY LIFE OFTEN REVEALS ITSELF THROUGH FAMILY VIOLENCE. IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND, FAMILY VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO BE A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE, WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN BEARING THE BRUNT OF VIOLENCE. PACIFIC COMMUNITIES IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM THIS.

There are several contributing factors that define the unique circumstances of Pacific families in Aotearoa New Zealand, including social and economic inequalities, the impact of migration on families and identity and culture .

The initial partnership between government (Ministry of Social Development - MSD) and Pacific communities (led by Pacific Advisory Group) culminated in the development of a Pacific conceptual framework – Nga Vaka o Kāiāga Tapu in 2012, to address family violence in the eight main Pacific ethnic communities of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Churches as faith-based communities in Aotearoa New Zealand have long been engaged in supporting vulnerable Pacific families in need and at risk of family violence. In 2012-2013 Samoan Churches in South Auckland ran family violence awareness-raising workshops. These developed into

training workshops with Church leaders from across Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific region (Children’s Commissioner, 2014, pp. 9-11). Supporting the development of Pacific faith-based initiatives to address family violence prevention and intervention has potential to achieve significant outcomes.

The main aim of evaluation was to identify areas for improvement through a Pacific-indigenised strengths-based approach. The objectives focused on:

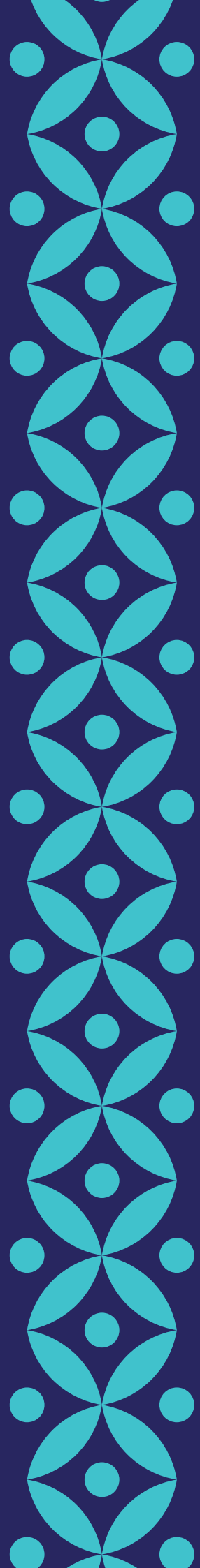
1. Understanding and documenting service delivery initiatives through Pacific-participatory cultural engagement
2. Reviewing the development and progress of Pacific faith-based initiatives
3. Identifying engagement strategies and areas for improvement

¹ Nga Vaka o Kāiāga Tapu, 2012, p. 6.

² Pacific Advisory Group to the Taskforce on Action Against Violence within Families members (Nga Vaka o Kāiāga Tapu, 2012, p. 84).

03

**OVERVIEW OF
LITERATURE**



OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature explores the role of faith, identified within Pacific communities as spiritual-faith³. The evaluation also addresses gaps identified in the Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu research priorities⁴ by contributing to ethnic-specific Pasifika knowledge on social and kin relationships. It also provides narratives from practice and of innovative programme design and delivery. The detail of the review is further outlined in Appendix 1.

With migration to Aotearoa New Zealand, Churches have become settings for communal village life where spiritual-faith, cultural values and beliefs are nurtured, expressed, lived and sustained. Literature clearly highlights the fundamental importance of spiritual-faith in Pacific communities (Siataga, 2000; Tiatia, 2008). Pacific Church communities are significant places to engage, challenge and potentially transform Pacific communities.

Pacific faith-based approaches have great potential to positively impact family violence prevention and intervention. The strength of this approach is that Pacific

people are communal and well connected with other Pacific peoples - when one person is influenced, the rest of the family is impacted.

Challenges are abound for faith communities and organisations in the prevention and intervention of family violence. But international literature highlights the need to document faith-based initiatives and provide opportunities to grow and develop their strengths.

By capturing the innovative Pacific faith-based initiatives attempting to curb the tide on family violence, this report contributes to the knowledge base.

FIGURE 1. LITERATURE REVIEW



³ Spiritual-faith is explained further and is based on Christian belief in God.

⁴ Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu Pasifika Proud Family Violence Research Plan 2013-2018, October 2013

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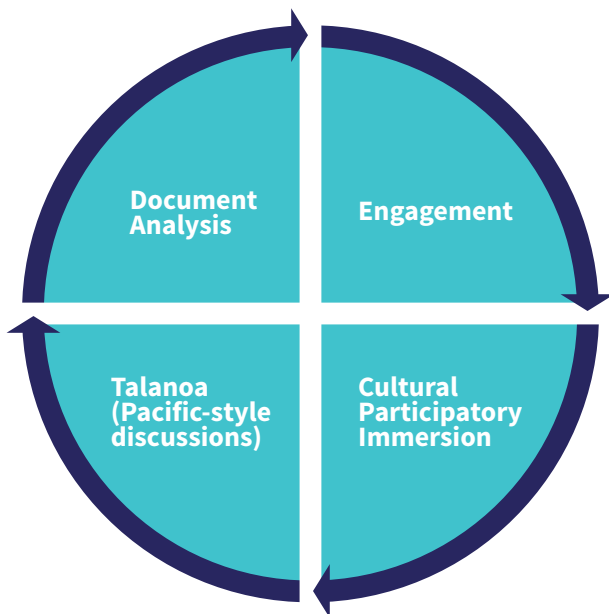
**CULTURAL
COLLABORATION
APPROACH**



CULTURAL COLLABORATION APPROACH

The evaluation approach used is through cultural collaboration, partnering with families, Church ministers/Pastors, faith-based service leaders and MSD to review and reflect on how the initiatives evolved. This includes relational engagement, cultural-participatory immersion, talanoa (Pacific-style discussions) and document analysis.

FIGURE 2. CULTURAL COLLABORATION APPROACH



CULTURAL-PARTICIPATORY IMMERSION

Observation and participation in key programme sessions, such as retreats, is crucial. In acknowledgement of relational engagement, cultural-participation and immersion in key programme sessions of the initiatives were undertaken. This involves sharing one’s own history, family, lineage and life-challenges and active-participation through collective prayer.

TALANOA (PACIFIC-STYLE DISCUSSIONS)

Talanoa with families, Church ministers/Pastors and vision bearer/s were conducted. Talanoa was transcribed then analysed through the process of fa’afaletui - dialectical analysis where transcripts were discussed, identifying themes through talanoa within the evaluation team and with cultural matua.

ENGAGEMENT

Initial whole group meetings led by MSD enacts relational engagement. This is paramount in Pacific cultures. By upholding respectful cultural protocols of engagement, such as acknowledgement of Pacific Church ministers, cultural matua, community leaders, the greater good of the initiatives, and identifying one’s own Pacific cultural lineage, mutual respect and reciprocity is achieved.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

A review of the programme outlines descriptions of each initiative, together with reports, Pacific conceptual frameworks and relevant research and literature. This then formed the development of the formative evaluation (refer to Appendix 1 for a list of documents reviewed).

05

**AFFIRMING
WORKS - KAINGA
TU'UMALIE**



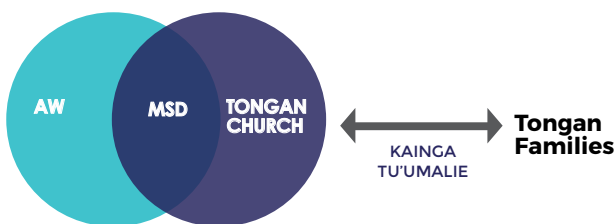
AFFIRMING WORKS - KAINGA TU'UMALIE

CHURCH-PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The Affirming Works (AW) Kainga Tu'umalie (KT) initiative uses a partnership approach with Tongan Churches illustrated by Figure 3. Within the Church-partnership approach, AW (faith-based organisation) partners with nominated Tongan Churches (faith-communities) to deliver KT.

The development, delivery (engagement, facilitation, administration) and monitoring (evaluation and follow-up) of the programme is managed by AW and enabled through MSD funding. Tongan Church leaders partner with AW to engage the initial participation of families in the KT programme and co-lead the retreat.

FIGURE 3. AW-KT CHURCH-PARTNERSHIP APPROACH



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Kainga Tu'umalie means “prosperous family/souls” and is the vision for the prevention and restoration of families from family violence. The programme was developed by AW Founder Emeline Afeaki-Mafile’o.

This vision of KT is shared in partnership with Tongan Churches along with Tongan community elder Ika Tameifuna. *Vision bearers* is used in this report to describe those who bear the main responsibility for envisioning (writing/developing) and operationalising (delivering) the programme.

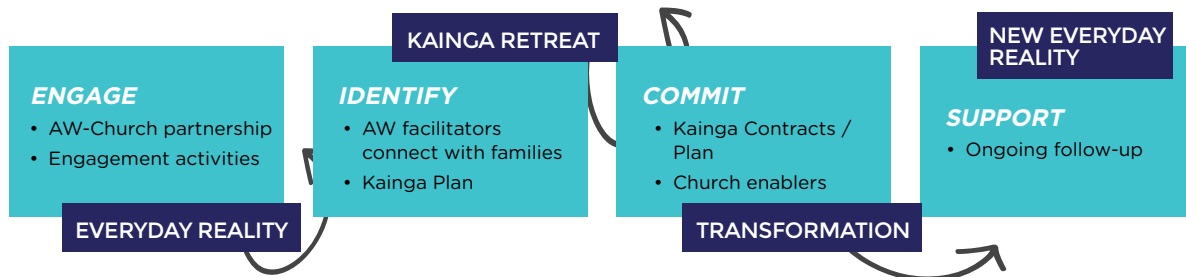
The programme’s strength is based on a Pacific indigenised faith-based approach, where indigenous Tongan cultural knowledge is interweaved with Biblical faith-narratives.

Kainga Tu’umalie⁵

- Before the start of the programme, each selected family member completes a survey questionnaire and ongoing follow-up is monitored through the AW social worker in collaboration with the Church enabler.
- Families are invited to participate in the 3-day Kainga Retreat, where they develop a Kainga plan.
- After the Kainga Plan is developed a Kainga Contract is signed between the family and AW which details the support that will be provided to achieve the Kainga Plan.
- There are 8 post-retreat follow-up sessions.
- Figure 4 illustrates the main processes involved in the service delivery of KT.

⁵ KT Programme Information, 2015; KT update report, October 2015

FIGURE 4. KT SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



Programme process

ENGAGE – KAINGA REGISTRATION

- The initial engagement process involves the AW-KT team consulting with the Church minister to identify Church members that fit the criteria to participate in the KT family violence programme and obtain their consent.
- Once the Church leader (Minister/Pastor) endorses the programme, there is generally no hesitation from families to participate.
- Families are invited to participate, beginning with the family retreat. This requires the whole family to spend time away for a weekend to recuperate, share and design their very own Kainga Plan.
- This process allows for the building of relationships and development of tools that the kainga can use to affirm their value and worth.
- The aim is to have the kainga engage not just in a programme, but in a new pattern of life towards solutions to their own problems.

IDENTIFY – KAINGA RETREAT

- This three-day retreat with two nights away allows families to build relationships and identify issues they can work on. This time provides a way of self-assessment for the families.
- The retreat provides families a safe environment to begin their deliberations on how they may become healthier, happier and more resilient towards adverse situations of everyday life.
- At the end of the KT retreat, families will each develop a Kainga Plan they have worked on with the AW facilitators.
- The Kainga are then empowered to implement the actions identified with the AW facilitators; developing a sense of shared responsibility amongst the Kainga.

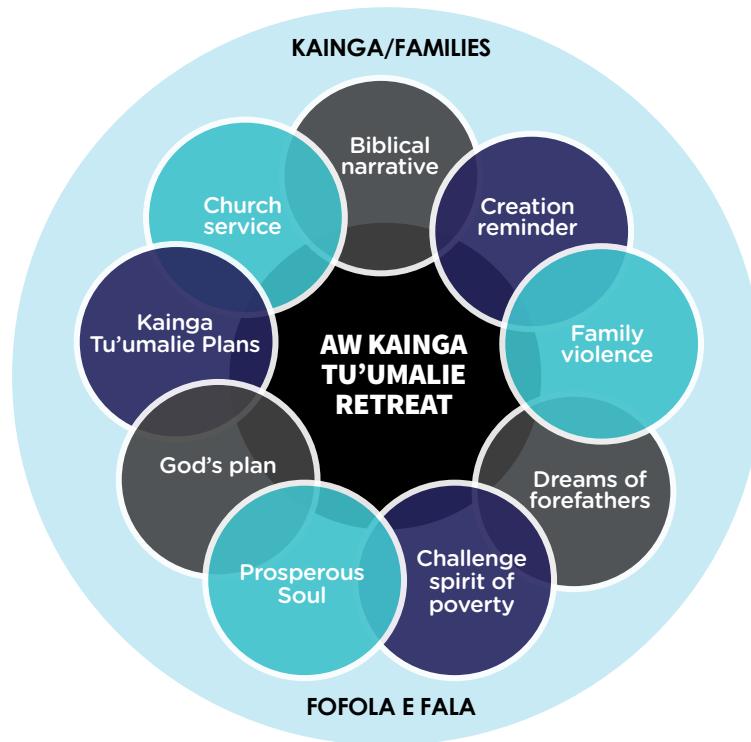
COMMIT – KAINGA CONTRACTS

- Using the assessment and Kainga Plan from the family's participation at the KT retreat, the facilitators/practitioners develop a contract with each family. These identify ways to provide assistance to the families.
- The AW facilitators/practitioners assist each kainga to support them in social skills, negotiate resources and favourable attitudes, review progress and arrange to terminate, extend or monitor the original contract.
- Kainga Plans may require further assistance from other organisations or enablers within the Church.
- The topics for the follow-up sessions are determined by the needs identified by families in their Kainga Plans. As an example, in the first church community, communication was highlighted as a need, so the session on Love Languages⁵ was implemented.
- There is a variation on the content and format of the follow-up sessions for each church community, which is determined by the needs as identified within the Kainga Plans.

SUPPORT – ONGOING FOLLOW-UP

- Discussions are held with Church leaders and the wider church community to ensure each kainga participating in the programme are well supported post the KT programme.
- AW facilitators provide further education on areas for development in the follow-up sessions as well as supporting enablers within the Church to assist with access to other social services or faith-based agencies.
- The KT programme information provides two months as the follow-up time period post-follow-up sessions. In reality, however, this is ongoing and the AW team continue to connect with the church communities that participated in their programme.

FIGURE 5. THE TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT OF THE KT RETREAT



The KT Retreat

The KT retreat is fundamental to the overall KT initiative. It is a time of solace away from stress and the pressures of everyday reality, providing families with new opportunities to engage with each other in a safe environment.

The faith-based sessions delivered through Tongan indigenous cultural protocols provide families with an impetus for transformation (Kainga retreat programme, 2015).

The KT retreat sessions can have a deep and enduring impact. The highly skilled AW faith-based team competently facilitate the sessions, connecting Biblical narrative through Tongan indigenous metaphor 'Fofola e fala ka e talanoa e Kainga' with the aim of healing and restoring families from the effects of family violence.

An important time of the retreat programme is the meals and down time which allow families to share, to encourage and be encouraged by one another. They are reassured that they are not alone in the inevitable trials and tribulations of their lives.

A key component of the Kainga Retreat session is the biblical narrative, where families are reminded of God's good purposes for His creation of humankind – to prosper and to multiply.

Another is the impact of family violence. Families are introduced to this session through the Tongan indigenous metaphor 'Fofola e fala ka e talanoa e kainga'.

This metaphor of 'laying out the mat' provides a safe and confidential space for each family member to speak freely and openly.

Through biblical narrative, families are challenged to talanoa about the impact and the outcomes of violence upon their lives. The effect of violence on health, education, church, culture, community and the future are also canvassed.

After the kainga talanoa (family discussions), each family is invited to provide feedback to the rest of the group.

Through the collective group talanoa, vibrant discussions are shared. It is a raw, vulnerable and highly emotional talanoa, where parents acknowledge their weaknesses and areas for improvement and change.

There are also tears of joy, worship and gratefulness for being part of the experience, as well as laughter, joy and even singing of hymns of praise and worship.

The whole family participates and there have been instances when the children have led the feedback sessions.

The session on locating our place in the world - in our Tongan context, in NZ and within our community/Church and Kainga – the role God says we have versus the Spirit of Poverty is another key session.

It reinforces God's heart and the value of His creation of humankind. This is contrasted with the "poverty mind-set" that may exist because of experiences working in low paid/ low skilled jobs, stereotypes and discrimination associated with the Dawn Raids 70s.

In the session 'Dreams from our forefathers, hope for migrations', families are encouraged, through biblical narrative and personal testimonies, to express the dreams of their forefathers; their dreams of a 'better life' for their Kainga.

The concept of a 'prosperous soul' is introduced reminding families that there is a way out of the poverty mind-set; that God's purposes for them is to prosper, not just materially but more importantly holistically, in mind, body and spirit.

During the final sessions of the Kainga Retreat, the focus is on the development of KT Plans.

Families are encouraged and challenged to consider some key themes that could be limiting them from achieving their dreams and aspirations, such as poverty, hardship, bitterness, and hope deferred.

The final day of retreat is a special time of worship. Families gain a strong sense of pride in having their Church leader leading Sunday morning worship.

During a KT closing circle, each member of the family reflects and shares on their personal experienced. Most of the families are very emotional during this time.

This emotional time of reflection and acknowledgement helps families identify areas they need to work on.

06



CHURCHES UNITE



CHURCHES UNITE

COLLECTIVE-CHURCHES APPROACH

MSD has funded the Churches Unite (CU) initiative which is a collective churches approach as illustrated by Figure 6. The central core of the model illustrates service delivery being provided through a collective of Churches.

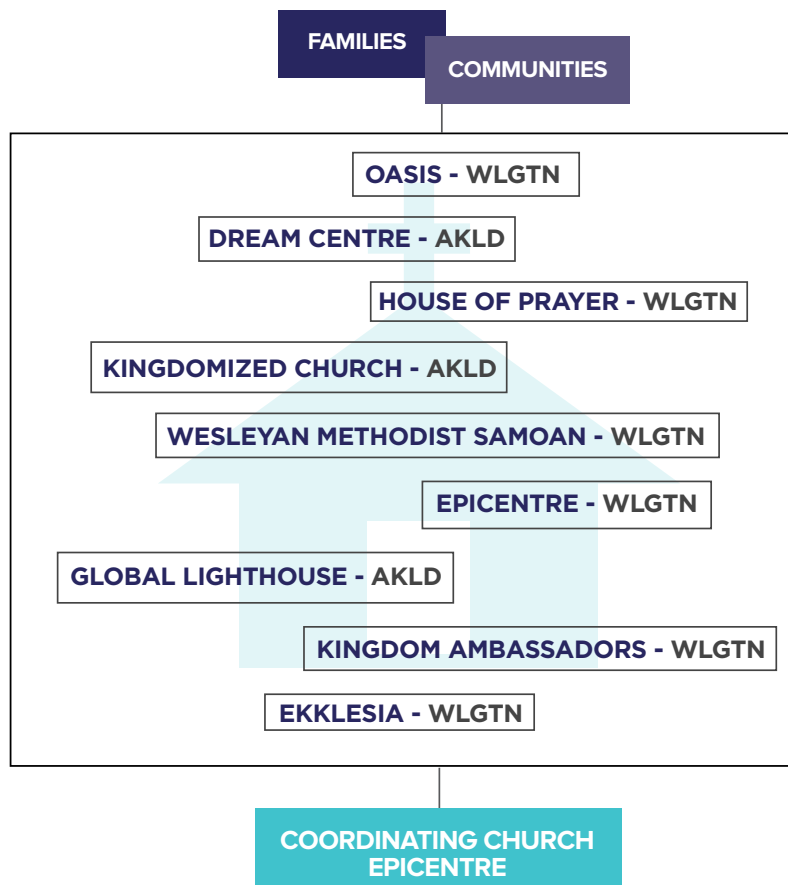
As the initiative develops, various programme service delivery models from the different Churches are envisaged.

The CU approach uses a nominated Church within the collective – Epicentre, to administer and manage the MSD contract requirements.

Each Church is responsible for their own unique delivery of family violence prevention and intervention programmes within their community context.

Churches identified families within their Church and the wider community they worked with.

FIGURE 6. CHURCHES UNITE COLLECTIVE-CHURCHES APPROACH



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

CU is a collective-Churches approach involving nine⁷ Church-community group entities working collaboratively on a shared vision of family violence prevention and intervention. The vision-bearers of the CU initiative are Pastors Andrew Perez, Tofilau Kerupi Tavita, Chris Sola, Max Faletutulu, Sitiveni Tuinasau, Fale Leilua, Sefo Alaga, Avaia Le Mamea, Peter & Tili Leilua and Rev Tavita Filemoni⁸.

A vision statement flowing from the faith-based tenet of 'love' was discussed during an initial CU collaborative meeting⁹ and progressed through a key cornerstone development of the CU initiative - the CU position paper.¹⁰

The paper developed by Pastor Chris Sola, titled Looking at love from a Biblical perspective, forms the fundamental faith-narrative approach of the CU initiative.

Churches from Auckland and Wellington were brought together to collaborate as communities of faith to "respond to families who are vulnerable and most in need of support, information and quality services" (CU Work Programme Guide, 2015, p. 3).

The CU collective approach envisaged utilising a range of activities to engage and support families. These included:

- Interactive workshops
- Use of music for the promotion of strengths-based messaging
- Use of vignettes of short video clips for recording the families' journey of change
- Individualised family action plans¹¹
- Coordination and referrals determined by the initial assessments and individual family plans

In addition, the CU initiative included a weekend retreat with the aim of recording their messaging theme song 'Hold on, change is coming' with a combined service.

The retreat highlighted the importance of time away for families from everyday activity for crucial informal times of open talanoa. It provided an environment to form new relationships and develop rapport and trust within families, as well as Church leaders and their congregations.

The networking and faith-community collaboration is an area highlighted in literature as important for sharing knowledge and resources in faith-based settings.

As a newly-formed initiative, Churches Unite is in its early stages of development. Each Church operates on its own accord within its community sphere of influence under the leadership of Church Pastors/leaders. Therefore, co-ordination of the CU initiative is of vital importance. The initiative is co-ordinated by the Epicentre Church based in Wellington.

It is a major administrative load on top of existing Church ministry responsibilities. This area was identified as requiring further resourcing support to ensure continuity, capacity and capability of the CU initiative.

Churches Unite (CU) collective programme

The CU collective programme is described through services provided by each Church, which were captured in their progress reports.

Figure 7 illustrates the range of services delivered by CU and highlights the focus each Church developed, with their own approach to family violence prevention and intervention with their families in response to their own community's needs.

Three families participated in talanoa (interview-discussions) from three Churches of CU while services and strategies were in still in development.

⁷ The original proposed collective consisted of 10 Churches. One Church was unable to participate

⁸ Churches Unite Work Programme Guide, 2015

⁹ CU collaborative meeting held on 10 August 2015, evaluation team were invited and in attendance

¹⁰ refer to appendix 4

¹¹ CU Work programme guide, 2015

FIGURE 7. CHURCHES UNITE - COLLECTIVE CHURCH PROGRAMME

Key activities are outlined according to the progress reports submitted (CU progress reports, 1/7/15-31/1/16). Further descriptions of the multi-faceted services and strategies developed by the CU initiative are outlined.

EPICENTRE	Champions work alongside families providing advice, support and parenting skills through mentoring
DREAM CENTRE	Family mentors developing family plan for building a better future together
EKKLESIA	Scriptural teaching, prayer and building Godly families based on intergenerational responsibility and reciprocity
GLOBAL LIGHTHOUSE	Wrap-around mentoring service for parents and caregivers to nurture strong and united Pasifika families
HOUSE OF PRAYER	Spiritual counselling and resourcing families through communication and connecting to appropriate services
KINGDOM AMBASSADORS	Coaching and teaching on better disciplinary practices and communication skills
KINGDOMIZED CHURCH	Marriage seminars and counselling focused on building healthy relationships in marriage and effective ways of communicating
OASIS CHURCH	Relationship workshops focused on values of love, respect and trust; individual and group mentoring
WESLEYAN -METHODIST Samoan Church	Regular pastoral care visits and sessions combined with mentoring facilitate access to professional services with advocacy and prayer support

Churches Unite collective programme delivery

EPICENTRE (WELLINGTON): CHAMPIONS WORK ALONGSIDE FAMILIES

The Epicentre Church community works alongside families through identified champions providing advice, support and parenting skills through mentoring.

Champions initiate and facilitate the development of educational action plans, the provision of family action plans and brokering services. The champions provide ongoing advice and support through mentoring and parenting skills.

Additionally, five champions are working alongside the families and inform much of Epicentre's strategic approach, the nature of the conversations, and timing of meetings.

There is also the provision of transportation to ensure that families are included in weekly programmes such as youth, Sunday services, fitness programme (Core-X), and Home Grown Heroes, a study support initiative.

Strategies of engagement and support include the strengthening of partnerships with families who are already in the "space for this work." Knowing these families' networks was critical in Epicentre's engagement strategies.

EKKLESIA (WELLINGTON): ASSISTING FAMILIES THROUGH SCRIPTURAL TEACHING, PRAYER

Ekklesia's strategy of support and engagement is based on the church community's ongoing Christian biblical teachings and on prayer.

Implicit in the services provided by Ekklesia is working alongside families through support, encouragement, scriptural teachings and prayer, building Godly families based on intergenerational responsibilities and reciprocity.

Ekklesia Church supports its families to define their own pathway to move forward alongside the teachings of Scripture. The focus of support is on parents acknowledging their responsibilities to their children and children recognising their responsibility to continue the legacy of their parents and their grandparents.

The approach is based on a genuine sense of love and commitment to families. This is combined with an understanding that the families determine their pathway with the Church's support.

DREAM CENTRE (AUCKLAND): FAMILY MENTORS AND FAMILY PLANS

Dream Centre's services are based around establishing and developing individual family plans. The most important elements are prayer and creating a strong sense of community through collective sharing, connection and strengthening families. The strengths-based approach is reinforced with the families being reminded of their Pacific values of faith, families and communities.

The Dream Centre works alongside families to develop a family plan by setting goals towards shared family dreams. Family plans are a new concept to many families. They introduce families to intentionally pursue dreams of a better future together. Families are encouraged to look towards a better future by learning from the past, so that their children can enjoy a better future.

Family mentors are appointed to initiate, facilitate and monitor the process of developing family plans. Family mentors facilitate building of stronger communities through stronger families.

HOUSE OF PRAYER AOG (WELLINGTON): SPIRITUAL COUNSELLING AND RESOURCING FAMILIES

The House of Prayer AOG Church (HOP-AOG) supports families through connecting to appropriate services and deliberate communication.

It works alongside families to set realistic and achievable goals and provides families with the necessary resources. These include networking with other services in order to achieve their goals and monitoring the families' progress by constant communication through emails, Facebook and fortnightly visits. Church ministers and leaders initiate, support and monitor the setting of goals and strategies for achieving the families' aspirations.

Part of this programme includes spiritual counselling tailored to the needs of each family. The strategy of support and engagement for HOP-AOG includes using prayer and the reading and sharing of Scripture. This engages the families to discuss their aspirations. The Church also demonstrates love and care for the families by building relationships through children's activities.

KINGDOM AMBASSADORS (WELLINGTON): COACHING AND TEACHING

Kingdom Ambassadors (KA) provides coaching and teaching for its families on better disciplinary practices and communication skills, Spiritual teachings and prayer, and social interactions with other families. The Church also provides support and advice on budgeting and children's homework.

Kingdom Ambassadors facilitate the sharing of issues and concerns of families, referring to professional advice when deemed necessary.

Support and engagement strategies adopted by the Pastors include talanoa sessions, personal interviews, informal social gatherings, discussion, home visitations for families that are more challenging to engage with, and follow-ups with families to the extent that child-minding and after-school care are offered.

KINGDOMIZED CHURCH (AUCKLAND): MARRIAGE SEMINARS AND COUNSELLING

Kingdomized Church (KC) provides marriage seminars and counselling focused on the sanctity of marriage, the beauty and essence of marriage under God, how to build a healthy relationship in marriage, controlling anger and effective ways of communicating.

KC preaches the love of God and the message of salvation from the pulpit. The KC Pastor applies the strategy of care and love through her marriage seminars, counselling and preaching the word of God to support and engage the families.

The Pastor is continuing to communicate with other Church leaders on ways to engage families in the Marriage Seminar.

GLOBAL LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH MISSIONS (AUCKLAND): WRAP-AROUND MENTORING SERVICE

Global Lighthouse (GL) Church provides a wrap-around mentoring service for parents and caregivers to nurture strong and united Pacific families in health and wellbeing.

It is achieved by using biblical principles and values, reinforcing the message that Faith can be utilised to overcome the challenges and barriers families face within.

The Church also refers families to other groups or services. The youthful husband and wife team of Pastors of GL Church support and engage with families by building rapport and trust with ongoing follow-ups.

Regular follow-ups and establishing and building relationships are strategies used to engage with more disengaged families. If their children are involved in the Church's community programmes, Pastors use this as a vehicle to maintain a connection with the families.

WESLEYAN/METHODIST SAMOAN CHURCH (WELLINGTON): REGULAR PASTORAL CARE VISITS AND SESSIONS

The Wesleyan/Methodist Samoan Church provide families with regular Pastoral care visits and ongoing mentoring sessions. The Pastor believes knowledge and understanding of the Samoan language is vital to engaging the families.

Family support services, such as referrals to professional services to receive counselling are also provided, with advocacy and prayers from the Church community.

The Church also provides information to raise awareness and understanding of the services available to support families, especially children and young people.

Key strategies include person-to-person engagement with individuals and families using the method of 'talanoa', and tailoring the Christian message on Sundays and at bible studies to reflect key messages.

OASIS (WELLINGTON): RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOPS

The Oasis Church community focuses on the values of love, respect and trust to provide individual and group mentoring for support, advice and encouragement to families. It covers key issues such as quality time with the family, especially the children. Biblical principles are reinforced and made relevant to the challenges faced by families in relationships, education and health.

The husband and wife, team Pastors and their older children are all involved in supporting and engaging families with one-on-one and group mentoring sessions. The Pastors believe the key to engaging the families is developing a rapport and trust, and by consistently following up.

CU position paper and song recording

In the initial engagement meeting with CU leaders, the shared purpose of the initiative's vision was discussed. The development of a position paper was proposed to outline the CU position regarding Pacific family violence.

The CU position paper (refer to Appendix 5), authored by Pastor Chris Sola, provides a core understanding for the initiative and draws attention to Pacific peoples as faith-cultural peoples.

The development of a song as a messaging tool for the CU initiative saw Churches attend a retreat to record the song and participate in a combined service where the vision was shared. This reinforced their shared community purpose in the prevention and intervention of family violence and inspired collective engagement of the Churches involved.

07

**PROGRAMME
INNOVATION:
THE FAITH TO
CHANGE**



PROGRAMME INNOVATION: THE FAITH TO CHANGE

This section outlines the context in which Pacific faith-based initiatives are developed. In doing so, the key factors that develop, support and sustain these programmes of innovation are identified.

PACIFIC FAITH

In the NZ Census 2013, 73% of Pacific peoples stated they had affiliate with at least one religion, considerably higher than the overall New Zealand population (44%).

The vast majority of Pacific peoples (97%) identified as being Christian. Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational and Reformed remained the most common Christian denominations for Pacific peoples.

The Census data also identified the most common Christian denominations for specific Pacific ethnicities. For example:

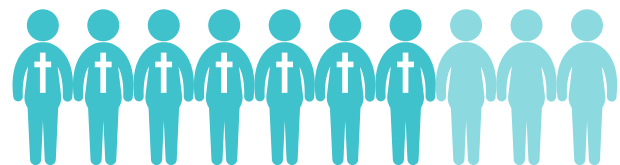
- Samoan (29,607), Tokelauan (2,289) and Fijian (2,016) ethnicities identified more with the Catholic denomination
- Cook Islands Maori (15,066), Niuean (6,771) and Tuvaluan (1,353) ethnic groups were affiliated more with Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed
- Tongans (18,858) mainly identified as Methodist

The fact an overwhelming majority of Pacific peoples identify as Christian highlights the need to understand the integral nature that the Christian belief systems have in shaping Pacific communities.

The basis of faith (core beliefs, values, morals) for Pacific peoples is inextricably linked with the Christ-centric narrative upheld by Christian Churches.

The focus and potential of developing initiatives for family violence prevention and intervention through Pacific faith-based communities is therefore vital.

FIGURE 8. MORE PACIFIC PEOPLES ARE CHRISTIAN



73% of Pacific peoples affiliated with one or more Christian religions in 2013 compared with



44% of the total New Zealand population

POTENTIAL REACH

The Pacific faith-based initiatives involve four Tongan church groups from Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic and Pentecostal traditions, and nine Church groups throughout the Wellington and Auckland regions. These Churches are representative of the wider faith community of Pacific Churches.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the potential reach that the KT and CU initiatives have within the broader context of Pacific Church communities.

Families impacted through the faith-based initiatives have the ability to reach other families through the Pacific Church context. The flow-on effect of the initiatives through the Pacific Church communities has enormous potential.

TABLE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLD AND ESTIMATED HEADCOUNT OF CHURCHES INVOLVED IN THE KT INITIATIVE

CHURCHES	AUCKLAND	HEAD COUNT	FAMILIES
Seventh-day Adventist	4 congregations	285	117
Catholic	20 fellowships	4200	700
Methodist	16 fellowships	5380	1468
Pentecostal¹²			
Total	40 congregations / fellowships	9865	2285

NB. Estimated reach of the Tongan Auckland population (47,000): 20.9%

TABLE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLD AND ESTIMATED HEADCOUNT OF CHURCHES INVOLVED IN THE CU INITIATIVE

CHURCHES	FAMILIES HOUSEHOLDS	HEADCOUNT (APPROX.)	LOCATION	PACIFIC ETHNICITY
Epicentre	13	65	Wellington	Mixed Pacific & Maori
Ekklesia	15	75	Wellington	Majority mixed & Pacific
Dream Centre	60	300	Auckland	Pacific
House of Prayer (AOG)	17	85	Wellington	Pacific
Kingdom Ambassadors	20	100	Wellington	Fijian
Oasis	20	100	Wellington	
Global Lighthouse	20	100	Auckland	Mixed Pacific & Maori
Wesleyan Samoan	22	110	Wellington	Samoaan
Kingdomized Church	20	100	Auckland	Samoaan
Total	209	1035		

¹² Difficult to estimate given data from 2006 census does not identify Pentecostal numbers

PROGRAMME INNOVATION CONTINUUM

Operating within the Pacific faith-based context has far-reaching potential, given the majority of Pacific peoples are affiliated with church communities.

From programme descriptions, models of service delivery and illustrated programme approaches, it is clear Pacific faith-initiatives are innovations of practice. They have created a vision for the prevention and intervention of violence in Pacific families and communities through the dimension of spiritual-faith.

Figure 9 shows a developmental continuum of the phases of innovation created by faith-based initiatives. This Pacific faith-based ‘programme innovation continuum’ illustrates the evolving nature of the environment in which faith-initiatives are being developed. The continuum is flexible enough to capture the constant movement in everyday Pacific communities.

The continuum highlights “conceptualisation - formation – implementation” and the evolving nature of creativity that

comes from faith-initiatives responding to community needs, specifically to prevent family violence.

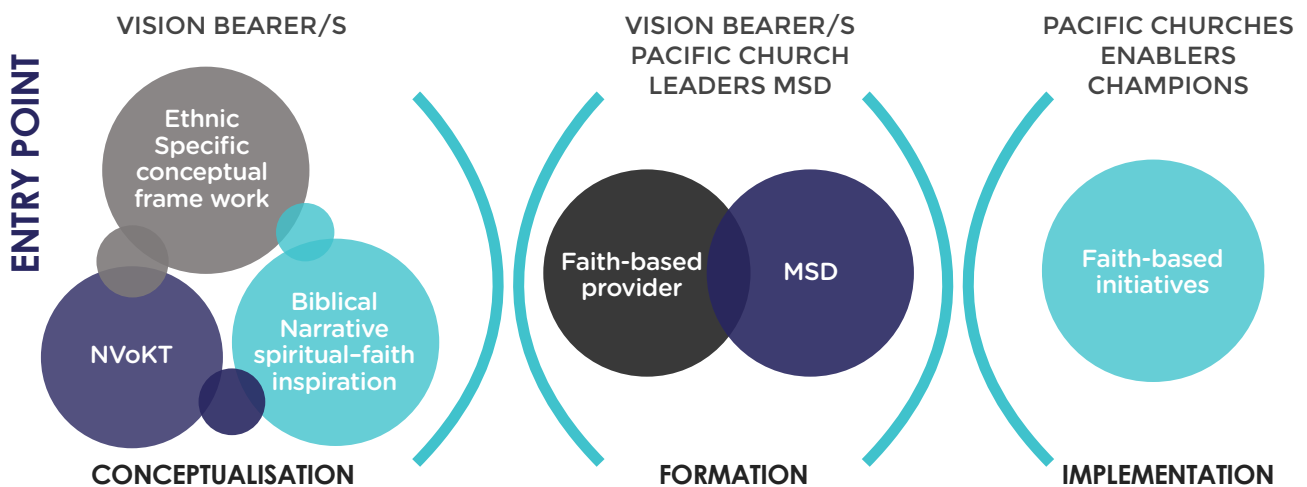
At the point of entry vision bearer/s conceptualise the vision of initiatives inspired by faith and informed by knowledge (i.e. Biblical narratives, spiritual-faith inspiration, Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu (NVoKT)). This determines the expected outcomes that initiatives aim to achieve.

At the formation phase, the partnership with MSD (as principal funder) is conceived and provides the opportunity for implementation.

The responsibility for leading the initiatives also evolves, while the primary vision lies with the vision bearers, it becomes shared as partnerships are formed and faith-based communities, with their respective church leaders, begin to thrive and take on their own form of sustaining the initiatives.

The expanded group of vision bearers and faith-leaders are responsible for carrying the vision to fruition. They are drivers of innovation, change and transformation. They play a key role in the overall development of faith-initiatives, and showcase how faith inspires change for all involved.

FIGURE 9. PACIFIC FAITH-BASED PROGRAMME INNOVATION CONTINUUM



08

**NARRATIVES OF
TRANSFORMATION**



NARRATIVES OF TRANSFORMATION

The overall impact of Pacific faith-based initiatives is described in this section through qualitative narratives which capture the transformative experiences of families (children and parents).

In many of the stories shared, a common experience was for many to share meals around the table with either their own family or others from their communities. Meals were shared in the past within their family homes and communities, but what changed through the initiatives was the environment. The meals were at a table amid an enthused environment which encouraged open and honest talanoa (in-depth discussions).

Time was also provided for reflection and contemplation away from the hive of activity that families are usually accustomed to.

TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTERS

This research has highlighted the need for multi-faceted approaches in the prevention and intervention of family violence and these should be celebrated.

Descriptions of success stories and transformative encounters are documented through narratives of experiences provided by families.

The initiatives are unique in their own approaches. No comparison is made between them as both differ in their formation and implementation.

KAINGA TU'UMALIE

Three key themes capture some of the most prominent highlights of transformational change for families who participated in the KT initiative.

Retreating away

The introduction to the KT programme is centred on retreating away together as a family. The success of families retreating away cannot be underestimated, given the socio-

economic burden of everyday living and the conflicting demands of work, Church/community and extended families.

In being part of the KT retreat, a peaceful and harmonious setting invites individuals and families into a safe space where they are able to be open and frank about the challenges of their life-journeys.

The structure of the family retreat in blending of cultural frameworks (Fofola e fala ka e talanoa e kainga) and faith (Jesus as the reference point) encourages vibrant and honest dialogue. The openness created in this environment is devoid of any fear which enables children to have their voices heard.

The retreat was so safe that it allowed a Tongan Church minister to express his vulnerability in front of his family and congregation. For such a leader in this community, this is not the normal practice.

The retreat also provides the opportunity to 'be together' in family intensive sessions that are focused on developing in-depth family relationships. The family-focused programme fosters stronger relationships between husband and wife and between parents and children.

A teenage daughter spoke of how the programme brought her closer to her parents. She gained a greater appreciation of their aspirations for her and her brothers.

“The most important lesson I learned is the significance of family and to take care of them. I used to think my responsibility was just to go to work to earn money for the family. I’d come home and get drunk. After the programme I gave up drinking and smoking because I knew I needed to take care and provide for my children. I believe that it was God leading me and my family to attend the programme ...”

- Father

Relating their everyday issues to their faith journeys in a relaxed and peaceful environment, where there is no financial burden or pressure to do anything but enjoy the experience, made a positive impact for the families:

“The thing about peer support is that you’re not speaking directly to their issues. You’re speaking to it through the word of God. It makes them feel safe and therefore more open. Maybe there’s some familiarity of how they feel in their times of worship and faith, when we are open and most vulnerable... Our hope is that it’s delivered according to their beliefs and their faith. There are a number of plusses for the families. There were no (financial) costs to them. They’re not the facilitators, so there is not a worry to them or a headache about organising it. It’s really about just coming and being, which they probably don’t get a lot of time to do in an everyday life.”

- AW vision bearer

Dreaming again

Reigniting the dreams and visions of Pacific peoples migrating to the land of Aotearoa New Zealand is a key theme of both the KT retreat programme and follow-up sessions.

Dreams for a brighter and a more prosperous future are also reawakened through identification of plans to achieve their goals.

The challenge to dream again and believe that one can attain their aspirations is an exciting aspect of this initiative. It has produced life-changing impacts for fathers, mothers, children and the whole Kainga (family).

“It was the session on ‘Dreams’, where families were invited to write all of their dreams, that I realised that I had been selfish by insisting everyone in the family follow my instructions and do what I want. The environment gave everyone the freedom, including my own children, to write down their wishes. I realised my own shortcomings and I needed to change my ways ... the ways I’ve been relating to my children. If I don’t change and be attentive to their wishes and dreams, there will be a time, when they are older that they’ll leave home because they don’t have that joy and sense of belonging (lata ‘I ‘api) at home.”

- Father

“We’ve realised the difference between poverty thinking and positive, prosperous thinking. It’s better to think positively and work towards it so we can better ourselves. It beats the attitude of, ‘Let’s just stay poor because that’s the way we grew up and we’ll be like that for the rest of our lives.”

- Mother

Visual resources, biblical narratives, personal testimonies, and encouraging families to list and share their dreams had a profound impact. These activities prompted a desire to dream for oneself and kainga, but also a strong desire to influence other family members.

This ripple effect of transformation through Pacific families, where families impact families, is a significant phenomenon that initiatives within faith-communities have the potential to draw on.

“I just wish my brothers in Tonga were here to attend and experience it (KT). Their life in Tonga is the same old thing of drunkenness. I hear of my brother’s wife always ‘escaping’ to her parent’s home. I tried to talk to my brother, but he just makes a joke out of it. I really wish that he was here to learn so they can see the importance of looking after their families.”

- Father

“Our dreams and goals are to own a home and then have a business helping young families who come over or need help. We give them a job and then help them move on. We’ve been through it ourselves, so that’s about helping others who are in the same position that we were in when we started. We are not perfect, but still we want to be able to help others who are maybe still trying to find their feet.”

- Mother

The languages of love

One of the keys to building strong marriages and all relationships is communication. In response to the need for improved communication within the family, the KT programme conducted follow-up sessions exploring ways of expressing love.

A key aspect of effective communication within the marriage relationship is the ability to understand the spouse's love language, and what makes them happy.

"My husband and I used to argue all the time. I am the sort of person that ok, when I clean, I'll clean. And when I'm just plain lazy and tired, I will just leave it. I used to get so frustrated, and we would argue over me not doing it, and I said to him, 'What's wrong with you? I am not a perfect wife for blah, blah, blah?' Then we came to the five languages of love and took this quiz. It just made sense to me. That's his language of love. I said, 'I've made dinner, can't you just be happy with that?' He says, 'No. I would be happy with if you just have the house clean, even if I just come home and eat kapaika (tinned fish) with bread!..I realised that's all I had to do – speak to him. How sweet is our home now - me knowing how to speak his language of love, having a clean home...when we both speak it to each other, it makes all that difference..."

- Mother

The following quote suggests how prayer can be an expression of not only one's love for God, but a longing for peace and harmony in relationships with spouse and children:

"It gave me a lot to look at with my behaviour, especially towards my husband and my children. Then I tried....because I get to the point when I'm praying and asking, 'Lord, help me to be a mother who speaks words of love and peace. Lord, help my children to forgive me for yelling at them, especially Sabbath morning when we are getting ready for Church'. Before this, I used to think that my husband was the one who was being violent to me. I used to always point the finger at him, and I wasn't looking at myself. Through this programme I learnt a lot about myself ... that I had to change me, just let God work upon him (husband) and change him. And I had to stop pointing the finger and blaming others, but rather pray for forgiveness..."

- Mother

This approach has the ability to transcend cultural norms and restore peace and harmony in both marriage and Church community relationships:

"I was clashing with my husband because I never understood what his language of love was. My husband comes and serves me lunch. Some of the other ladies say, 'Oh, you're so lucky your husband does that for you.' I just smile, and inside I am so happy. Even our relationship with other people at Church has made a huge difference because of this programme."

- Mother

TABLE 3. OVERALL IMPACT OF KT - TABLE OF HONOUR - FAMILIES EXPERIENCES OF INITIATIVES

KAINGA TU'UMALIE (KT)	OVERALL IMPACT
<i>Retreating away</i>	
Family-focused nature of the programme to foster stronger relationships between husband and wife as well as parents and children	Stronger, healthier familial relationships sustained through strengthening collective family values and beliefs.
<p>Greater awareness of Christ-centric principles for living as foundational for building strong families i.e. power of prayer and a realisation of Christ's sufficiency</p> <p>The benefit of being within the collective faith-based community provides the safety and reassurance of feeling 'we are not alone'</p>	<p>Change of perspective/mind-set enabled through a safe environment</p> <p>Sharing lived experiences within the same community of spiritual-faith and culture created a safe environment to change</p> <p>Shared beliefs and values i.e. relationship with God, creates a safe village-communal context to challenge perspective/mind-sets.</p>
An immediate parental conviction and sense of urgency to address changing their own behaviour and attitude to stop the cycle of violence	Acknowledgement of the impact of violence and the urgency to change. Fostering greater awareness of the different forms of violence
<i>Dreaming again</i>	
Encouragement to have dreams leads to a desire to develop their own family and reciprocate what they have learned with their families and others	Greater desire for all to realise their dreams. Recognition of the importance of living a balanced life
Heightened awareness of the significance and value of providing for your children and a willingness to change one's lifestyle to achieve that	Re-awakening the value of children and the need to take responsibility for their wellbeing
<i>The languages of love</i>	
<p>Recognition of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various ways to express love; that it is ok to dream; • the causes of conflict over differing values and expectations, and • a willingness to be content with what you have 	Recognise communication needs and family aspirations to create a loving, peaceful and harmonious environment at home before it's too late for the next generation

CHURCHES UNITE

There are two key themes that illustrate the transformational impact families felt in their journey of change in the CU initiative.

Broadening heart desires

This was a common theme, reflected through many families' narratives. Many families experienced a sense of excitement and purpose through encountering God. This common vision enabled many families to discover that new heights can be achieved:

"Just to see what God has really done for this family is why I'm so passionate about helping others. He can do it for us. It's just bringing everybody back to their original pattern that God had already ordained...."

- Mother

"...God has taken us from that place and put us where we are now ... [we look at] how people view us. It's the word that God has given to us that enables us to be who we are now. That's a strength... and it's reality because we've accepted God as our Father..."

- Father

"Our upbringing wasn't the best. We used to yell at each other, or hide away and keep everything inside instead of talking about it as a family. Finding God was such a nice change. We now have family time, spending time with our parents. Having them talk to us properly is nice. We can actually have a conversation instead of yelling at each other how we used to. Then we'd hide away and just keep everything inside instead of talking about it as a family. We finally see our parents are happy. I thank God for coming into our family."

- Oldest daughter

"I was probably the most mischievous one out of us three. We started going to Church and I didn't really believe the first couple of years ... I was still doing what I usually would do. It took me a while to believe in what mum and dad were believing in. It was rocky, but I had to stop being selfish and put God first. He was the one who made us. Putting God first has actually changed my life. If I hadn't found God then I probably would have had my first child or ended up somewhere else. I thank God, mum and dad and Pastor."

- Teenage daughter

There is the sense that families felt they were not alone - through the unity of CU purpose, of Pastors coming together and working it out together.

"[It] excited me that men of God are willing to come together and not just look at the problem, but see past it and look at where our (troubled) families are at and solutions on how to bring them out of it. Not to put focus on the actual problem itself, but put focus on what avenues you can go down. That really excited me from the beginning; it's solution-based. When there's domestic violence or suicide, we tend to put so much focus on those. It's really depressing and becomes like a phase, a message that just gets blown in the wind. A solutions-focus is needed - that channels excitement."

- Mother

"For me, there's no darkness, just families - strong, healthy families. You can even hear their moko [grandchildren] from afar. You can hear their voices; that's what I'm seeing through Churches Unite. It's good that our Pastors are together. We can move forward as one."

- Father

"As a Church, we can all come together and say, 'Yes we can do it! I can see that pattern, pushing the project forward and seeing families coming through. That really signifies what God is ... he's all about family....'"

- Father

“It was like God gave us a chance to not force, but to walk alongside these families and help them to see where they are and what their aspirations are. Hopefully, as a resource, we can kia kaha or help bring them to a place where they need to be. My wife said that because our people are in that poverty mind-set, many can’t break out. Before the Churches Unite Project even came along, it was like all this stuff had been brewing up inside of us. Now with us being on the ground with the project, they can see evidence that we can do it.”

- Champion, Church Elder, Father

“One of my goals is that I sit down in my [own] house...a big one or a small one. You can achieve dreams if you put your mind to it - together with God’s will, always telling and explaining, talking to Him about your dream. They do happen.”

- Mother

Walking the talk: role models

An important theme reflected in the narratives with CU families is the central role parents and Church leaders have to lead by example.

The power of role models influencing lives can never be under-estimated, particularly the impact of Church leaders among their Church families when they ‘walk the talk’ with their own families first.

CU’s approach of coming alongside families to understand where they are and continuing to preach, teach and model from the biblical narrative are effective support mechanisms for bringing about change:

“Pastor always manages to steer us back to: ‘Don’t follow after me, the man. Follow after the heart of what I carry, which is God’. The good thing about being under the covering of Pastor is that they give us principles and ideas. They live by their example, so we see. Then it’s not a matter of comparison, it’s like it can be done. Just don’t think it’s all about you – sometimes it’s about your children, it’s about where you see the younger generation”

- Father

There is a sense Church leaders are inspirational, not only in leading by example, but in possessing a broader vision themselves:

“...Churches Unite has given us a broader vision of what really is out there ... because sometimes we get too shy to ask or we think that it’s that real poverty mentality. The Project is trying to give us the aspirations to dream big and go for it. Don’t just stop where you are, thinking that’s the only level that you can get to and there’s nothing past it. It pretty much widened our vision - it’s like our dreams are doable. The only limitation is us...we’re the ones that really stop the inspiration becoming a reality...”

- Mother

The conviction of parents to be united as role models living out a violent-free lifestyle in order to positively impact their children was highlighted.

Disunity in purpose, vision and practices in the marriage relationship only leads to dysfunction and discord in the family:

“If you want your kids not to come away from what you try to teach them in your home, both parents firstly have to be one...because it is in the Word of God. Husband and wife are one - they are not separate. Most of the time, we just want to do our part. Only God can change them, not you. I do believe you have got to be a role model first. So touch their heart so they can be changed and follow you to where you are going. You should be a role model, a leader who leads by example...”

- Mother

“We have to lead by example. We have to show them what they are missing so they can see a good role model in us...”

- Father

TABLE 4. OVERALL IMPACT OF CU - TABLE OF HONOUR - FAMILIES EXPERIENCES OF INITIATIVES

CHURCHES UNITE (CU)	OVERALL IMPACT
<i>Broadening heart desires</i>	
Provided a broader vision and a 'Can do' attitude	Opportunity to implement heart desires/goals and dreams
Excitement and encouragement of being part of a new project, a new model of Pastors working together and focusing on strengths rather than issues	Shared vision of 'working together' for change
Reinforced passion to help other families, given what God has done for them. Strengthened commitment through faith and faith community to help others	Mentors within Church communities identified to support families both in Church and the wider community
<i>Walking the talk: Role models</i>	
Walking the talk for the younger generation	Role modelling violence-free leadership
A cultivation of grateful hearts for the impact of God/faith upon their lives as individuals and as a family	Nurturing of a strong faith to seek and trust God to heal and restore family from the impact of violence and all family issues
Providing wisdom for parents to acknowledge their need to be role models so they can positively impact their children and others	Parental development through faith-wisdom. Role modelling one's own spiritual-faith values and beliefs within family

09

**FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
AND SUPPORT:
THE SACRIFICE
OF GRACE**



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT: THE SACRIFICE OF GRACE

This section highlights strategies and practices in the engagement and support of families which are time-intensive and go beyond the ‘call of duty’. The ‘Sacrifice of Grace’ metaphorically describes the time-intensive roles and responsibilities that faith-initiatives endure.

Immediate transformation for families during programme implementation raises the issue of sustainability and vulnerability. The early phases often require full-immersion support.

This includes in time, availability and presence that faith-leaders, vision bearer/s, their families, enablers, social workers (practitioners), champions and Church leaders sacrifice.

The informal (un-funded) support activity is an enormous undertaking, such as family support activities outside of programme sessions, availability for support conversations and impromptu visits resulting in shared meals, all add to strengthening families resolve and commitment to change.

These Sacrifices of Grace, whilst generally un-funded, have a significant impact on sustaining transformative change.

KT ENABLERS AND SOCIAL WORKER (PRACTITIONER)

The KT initiative includes ‘enablers’ who are described as the ‘safe-house go-to leaders’ within each Church community.

Aside from the Minister/Pastor of the Church, a Church elder/leader was identified within the church community as an enabler who visited with families prior to the start of the KT programme. This was done sometimes with the AW social worker to explain the KT initiative and confirm the whole family’s commitment. The enabler visited all families prior to attending the family retreat.

This strategy of engagement was paramount in achieving family engagement, attendance and commitment to the KT initiative:

“It was significant learning about the importance of quality time, a time to ‘fofola e fala ka e talanoa e famili’ at home, a time of prayer and devotion, a time of sharing (talatalanoa), of bringing each members voice to the family circle. I rejoice in this as this is the proper forum for constructing and nurturing of the Tongan family. No wonder our ancestors practiced this method...”

- Father, Church Leader

The roles of enabler and social worker (practitioner) within the KT initiative are elaborated further in Table 5. The roles illustrate the amount of time required to engage and fully support families in the initiative. It is an example of the funded and non-funded partnership approach, with AW bearing the weight of resourcing for both the enabler and social worker (practitioner).

TABLE 5. ELABORATION OF KT ENABLER AND SOCIAL WORKER (PRACTITIONER) ROLES

THE ENABLER AS A COMMUNITY INVESTMENT	ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER / PRACTITIONER
<p>The enabler role within the KT initiative is a key community elder who contributes from the initial engagement phase through to the post-sessions follow-up. The enabler supports the family’s restorative process and is a sustainable influence on the whole community towards the prevention of family violence (AW update report October, 2015).</p> <p>The enabler works together with the social worker (SW) over a four-week period prior to the retreat in recruiting and engaging families, ensuring commitment to the programme.</p> <p>Enablers also assist with empowering families to access other services, such as housing, education and employment. During retreat enablers assist with the leadership with AW facilitators. In follow-up sessions enablers are also involved in assisting SW’s and facilitators to sustain and maintain transformative encounters during the retreat.</p> <p>Enablers are an alternative safe-house ‘go-to’ leader within the Church community for families who are more comfortable with discussing their most vulnerable issues with someone else apart from their Church leader. The elder role and spiritual faith, wisdom and character of enablers allow them to connect, relate and form rapport and trust with families.</p> <p>The enabler models the KT philosophy with strong faith as their foundation, and lives out and/or aspires for social, physical and emotional wellbeing. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) and Pastoral/spiritual care are qualities that enablers possess and practice as they engage and impact families.</p> <p>Enablers are highly respected within their Church community. Additionally, they also have the specialist skill of speaking Tongan, enabling them to effectively connect and relate to the families where the majority of the parents communicate in the Tongan language.</p> <p>Enablers are envisaged as being so passionate about their Church and community groups they will go above and beyond the call of duty. Every Church community is different.</p> <p>Sometimes the nature of the community and their level of need will determine who the enabler will be. With the first Church community, the enabler was from this faith community and was also the main facilitator of the KT programme.</p>	<p>The Social Worker (SW) plays a key role in every phase of the KT Programme delivery, from the engagement of families through to the final phase of ongoing follow-up.</p> <p>The SW works with the enabler in communicating the KT initiative to the Church leader and following up with families to ensure ongoing commitment to the programme.</p> <p>The SW also plays a key role in facilitating some of the retreat and follow-up sessions.</p> <p>The SW shares the values of spiritual faith, wisdom and character, which enable connections and the development of rapport and trust with the families.</p> <p>The SW supports the completion of Kainga plans and Kainga contracts. The Kainga plans identify information of family knowledge of the causes of family violence; their hopes, dreams, values and beliefs and barriers to achieving their dreams and aspirations.</p> <p>The SW has the important role of working with other practitioners in analysing the Kainga plans and identifying key areas and mechanisms to provide assistance for the families.</p> <p>The identified needs for achieving this are implemented as part of the Kainga contracts.</p> <p>The SW supports the family to develop their contract for implementation and monitors the implementation phase.</p> <p>Collaboratively, the SW and the AW facilitators form a strong and trusting relationship with families. They continue to work alongside them to achieve their goals set out in the Kainga plans (AW update report, October 2015).</p> <p>The SW works collaboratively with the Church enabler for two months post-follow-up. This is to ensure families who participate in the programme are well supported by their Church leaders and wider Church community.</p>

Significance of spiritual leadership

The positive impact of the significance of spiritual leadership is compelling. It provides evidence that adequate resourcing and support is required. This includes realistic funding levels to accommodate priority areas of sustaining transformative, family engagement.

It requires more time from enablers, champions, Church ministers, Pastors, vision-bearers and staff, training and supports for Church ministers, Pastors and leaders.

“I thank God that I grew up in a family where my father was also a head elder. I observed the way he served the Lord diligently. That is the way that I want to serve the Lord. For me, the key is ‘How can I, as a spiritual leader, guide and instruct the families who attended the programme?’

First, it is vital we share and practice what we have learned with the next generation, for the parents to pass on their knowledge to their own children, they will pass it on to the next generation, and so forth.

Secondly, that we build the family with faith in Jesus as the foundation of all things, allowing Christ to control everything in their lives, including controlling violence. The motto of the school I attended in Tonga was ‘Learn for now and eternity’.

It is vital we pass on this knowledge and foundation to the next generation and that we live life here on earth with a view of eternity, which is what we’re all aiming for.”

- Father, Church Leader

Gratitude for sustaining change

The positive impact of the gratitude described for sustaining change is compelling, and supports the requirement for adequate resourcing and support.

“The timing of the training of the KT programme to these families with young children is perfect. This is the age group where a strong foundation (fakava’e ‘a e tu’unga) needs to be built, so when they are older, they’ll know and understand what living in harmony (nofo fe’ofo’ofani) is like and how violence is evil.

Violence is not only bad for the family and individual, it is evil for the wider community and the Church family. I’m grateful and happy for the timing of the programme because these families can pass on what they have learned to their young children to build a strong foundation for the family.

I’m also grateful the programme is structured on faith in the Lord and delivered to communities of faith. I sincerely believe teaching couples who are believers in Christ and are part of the Church community is different from teaching non-believers who are not part of the Church family.

It’s different in the sense that people who belong to the Church community have the wisdom, ongoing support and encouragement of the Church family on ways of building a strong family foundation, which is only found in Christ.”

- Father, Church Leader

CHURCHES UNITE CHAMPIONS

CU identified champions within each Church. Some were leaders, others were the Pastor and wife team as a whole. These leaders were champions within the Church community that led the engagement with families and development of family plans:

“As a young Pastor, I initially wondered how I can deal with the older ones. But our people are very respectful to Pastors, so even though I’m young, they see me as a Pastor so they have that respect.”

- Father, Pastor

Pastoral vulnerabilities and ongoing development

Within the faith-initiatives, Church Pastors, leaders and ministers acknowledge their own failures and shortfalls. Through the safe environment created within the initiatives, faith-leaders acknowledge their own vulnerabilities in front of those they lead.

There is recognition that they should be role models at home first because without a strong family, a strong Church and strong ministry is at risk:

“Even though I am a Pastor, we are not perfect. I still have my own shortcomings, just like other people in other families.”

- Father, Pastor

“If I want change for the better at home, I need the changes to start with me. I also know that the positive impacts at home will have positive spinoffs with the spiritual role that I have for the Church family. I know the importance of building that strong foundation at home first before I can effectively address the issues of the families in my congregation. If the community turns you down, that’s ok, but if your family turns you down, you have nothing.”

- Father, Pastor

“My upbringing was a violent one and I was taught to never talk back. I realise that I need to change my ‘mentality’ as I’m allowing my upbringing and the hardships to dictate my leadership at home ... and it’s not good for my children. There were times in Tonga when I unconsciously gave corporal punishment to my kids.”

- Father, Pastor

“After the programme, my wife and I recognised that we need to work together to build our family and that I need to listen to my wife and children’s voices. I’m not saying we are now perfect, we still have our conflicts. But I know our family needs to be solid before we can be effective in what we have been called to do. I have to humble myself, like the verse which says, ‘If my people would humble themselves and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear’... I need to communicate better with my children.”

- Father, Pastor

“Before I share stories about the families from my Church, I want to share about the forms of violence that were happening in my own family. The wisdom and knowledge that was shared on the different forms of violence and their effects were not new to me – they were forms of violence that I have practiced at home.

Even though I didn’t physically abuse my wife I know for certain that my to’onga mo’ui (behaviour, attitude) and the language that I used were forms of violence that caused emotional hurt in my family...”

- Father, Church Leader

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DISCUSSION



DISCUSSION

A key feature of this formative evaluation is documenting the innovative development of two Pacific faith-based initiatives: Kainga Tu'umalie and Churches Unite.

For Pacific Churches, who are the communal-village contexts for Pacific families, responding to family violence is an everyday activity.

Enabling the development of Pacific faith-based initiatives and capturing these in motion is paramount.

PACIFIC FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES AS PRACTICE-INFORMED EVIDENCE

Research highlights the need to document faith-based activities in responding to family violence as “more is being done than what is being documented” (Le Roux, 2015, p. 9).

By documenting these approaches, innovative practices are being captured. These approaches are practices that now inform evidence, termed in this report as ‘practice-informed evidence’.

This new practice-informed evidence, developed within Pacific faith-based approaches, potentially forms a new baseline for which future programme development can be measured. The context of programme innovation or the environment in which faith-based initiatives are being developed is therefore made visible.

IMPACT OF SPIRITUAL-FAITH IN ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE FOR PACIFIC FAMILIES

Faith-based initiatives use language of the heart (core) inspired and informed by spiritual-faith. As Pacific families, communities are well-versed with the Biblical narrative, this same narrative is used to challenge ‘hard to reach’, embedded core beliefs.

Utilising spiritual-faith narratives within their own communities create communities of change where families journey alongside other families. Fathers are not singled out as perpetrators and mothers/children as victims.

Families share their vulnerabilities together within the safety of their own Church communities. Safe environments of change enable vulnerable fathers, mothers and children to acknowledge they need help.

Within the KT initiative, the open, shared exchange provides families with help, not only from KT facilitators and enablers, but most importantly through the other families within their own Church context. This enables families to be supported by the wider faith-community.

The practice-informed evidence illustrated through narratives of transformation highlights the transformative impact of Pacific faith-based initiatives.

The KT retreat effect is an example of practices that have immediate transformative impact for families. The response of families to the retreat was significant, especially as families were surprised at how such a simple programme could make a huge difference in their lives.

The safe environment provided by going away on retreat enables the open and frank talanoa through ‘Fofola e fala’. While seemingly simple, the seamless integration of spirituality, faith and culture involves significant resources to enable the transformative effect.

MULTIPLIER EFFECT

The phenomenon of families impacting families and church communities impacting other church communities has far-reaching implications for the prevention and intervention of family violence in Pacific faith communities.

Given the Pacific diaspora, families reaching out within their own families has the potential to stretch across the Pacific region and beyond through the Pacific global diaspora.

The Multiplier Effect is termed to capture the potential of this phenomenon within Pacific communities. Just as the term ‘coconut wireless’ describes how news in the Pacific spreads like wildfire, the multiplier effect demonstrates the impact beyond the individual.

Families and whole communities have the potential to be impacted. This is illustrated through the narrative of a Tongan father in the KT initiative who wished his brothers in Tonga could attend the programme and proceeded to try and share his own transformative experience:

“I just wish my brothers in Tonga were here to attend and experience it (KT) because their life in Tonga...is the same old thing of drunkenness and I hear that my brother’s wife is always ‘escaping’ to her parent’s home.”

This demonstrates how families beyond the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand in the Pacific region can be impacted. Supporting these initiatives to develop and thrive is therefore vital.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Further development to support the evolving nature of Pacific faith-based initiatives is paramount given Pacific Church contexts are the everyday communal-village contexts for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Understanding the complexities of service delivery within Pacific faith-based contexts and resourcing these appropriately, with training and support for all leaders/practitioners within Pacific faith-initiatives, i.e. Church Pastors/ministers (Faith-leaders), are areas for further development.

Complexity of service delivery

Quantifying impacts or outcomes in terms of volumes delivered versus volumes contracted is not recommended, particularly at this early phase of innovative development. In the KT initiative, the average-sized family was 5-7 members, so while 15 families per Church were contracted, the average number of people per programme averaged more than 50. These resource-intensive programmes therefore deliver beyond the contracted deliverables.

Resourcing to develop and sustain Pacific faith-based initiatives

As identified through literature, the dilemma of faith-based contexts, specifically Pacific Churches, is that the Church can be both a solution and the problem.

There are a myriad of challenges that Pacific Churches encounter, such as the broader issue of “culturalising Christianity” as highlighted by Pastor Chris Sola in the Churches Unite position paper¹³. Pacific people culturalising Christianity rather than Christianising culture presents culturally-embedded issues.

Over time, Pacific cultures have considered Churches and religion as part of their culture, therefore the Churches become more cultural than Christian and many of the practices (including violence) are not what the Bible teaches (Vailaau, 2005).

Recognising and acknowledging these challenges provide opportunities for Pacific faith-based initiatives to develop in a more transparent and open environment.

Key issues include weak infrastructure with service delivery carried out in most cases on a voluntary basis with poor or no supervision, and no support.

Failure to acknowledge issues around governance and management could result in early failure of these initiatives.

Properly resourcing faith-initiatives - not only through funds, but more importantly via training, support, capacity-building, collaborative learning and networking opportunities; is vital for sustainability.

¹³ refer to Appendix 4

In summary areas for further development

- Adequate resourcing for these initiatives to sustain transformative family engagement
- Additional support and time for key leaders of these initiatives
- Consideration of more realistic deliverables, and the flexibility to undertake these discussions as the initiative evolves, is necessary. There is a risk of prematurely quantifying the deliverables at an early phase of innovative development.
- Providing opportunities training and for further collaboration between initiatives, within faith-communities, and with secular family violence prevention organisations, to share initiative successes, ideas and grow communities/networks of support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends further resourcing of Pacific faith-based initiatives, given the immediate transformative impact that has been achieved.

Further recommendations include:

- Ensuring adequate resourcing to enable faith-initiatives to build on current initiatives and not feel stretched to deliver beyond their capacity and capability
- Pacific faith-based initiatives need to be open and transparent with their capacity and capability needs for the appropriate support to be provided
- Continuing to build research collaboration with Pacific faith-based initiatives to continue documenting the development
- Acknowledgement by funders and policy makers that Pacific faith-based initiatives are partners in family violence prevention and intervention
- Ensuring Pacific faith-based representation is included in policy and strategy development, and key events relating to family violence
- Providing opportunities for collaboration within Pacific faith-communities, and between Pacific faith-communities and mainstream family violence organisations should be strengthened
- Encouraging learning opportunities and forums for collaboration

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APPENDICES



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENTS ANALYSED

The following documentation was analysed to inform the initial development of the formative evaluation and capture the progress of initiatives.

- AW-Kainga Tu'umalie (AW-KT) programme outline including retreat schedule
- AW-KT 8-session follow-up sessions
- AW-KT progress reports
- Churches Unite (CU) programme outline
- CU progress reports
- CU position paper
- Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu - The Pacific Conceptual Framework
- Falevitu - the Literature Review
- Fofola e fala kae talanoa e kainga - A Tongan Conceptual Framework
- le tōfā mamao - A Samoan Conceptual Framework for addressing family violence
- Turanga Maori - A Cook Islands Conceptual Framework
- Koe Fakatupuolamaoui he tau Magafaoua Niu - Niuean Conceptual Framework
- Toku Fou Tiale - A Tuvalu Conceptual Framework for addressing family violence
- Kāiga Māopoopo - A Tokelau Conceptual Framework to address family violence
- Vuvale Doka Sautu - A Fijian Conceptual Framework

APPENDIX 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of literature explores the role of faith, identified within Pacific communities as spiritual-faith¹⁵. Faith is explored through an understanding of spirituality. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) highlights innovative ways in which transformation can be achieved.

There are many challenges for faith communities and organisations in the prevention and intervention of family violence. It is vital faith-based initiatives are documented, understood, and provided with opportunities to grow and develop their strengths.

Church as a central place for Pacific communities

The Church has become much more than a place of worship. In the Pacific migration to Aotearoa New Zealand the Church became the substitute for village-life (Macpherson, 2012; Tiatia, 1998). It is integral to Pacific peoples' wellbeing as communal life is the indispensable soul of the Pacific culture (Halapua, 1997).

In their homelands, community is built around one's family, Church and the village. In Aotearoa New Zealand the Church community becomes the village and the Church minister holds a position of power and respect, a role similar to that of the village chief (McPherson, 2012). Church becomes a central communal place where spiritual needs are met, cultural values and practices are developed and social values are nurtured and enhanced.

Wherever the global Pacific diaspora migrate, the value of Church as the communal place of sustenance is upheld. This is evident with many Pacific university students who, when travelling abroad, will often find the nearest Pacific Church as their place of community (Thaman, 1988). The Church community provides a place of dignity where Pacific peoples are amongst family. A strong sense of belonging, security, and significance is sustained.

The Church becomes the village – a home and a pillar where relationships, cultural values and practices are developed and maintained. It is a safe-haven for reciprocal fulfilment of obligations and responsibilities; where friendships and relational networks are encouraged and nurtured. It is where Pacific people can learn, practice and maintain their language, songs, dances, and cultural artefacts. It is a community home where spiritual values are fostered and encouraged through what people do for each other and how they relate (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2012; Tiatia, 1998).

Churches are identified as community contexts for engaging and working with Pacific communities and are potentially effective sites for family violence prevention and intervention (Capstick, Norris, Sopoaga, & Tobata, 2009; Dabby & Poore, 2007; Rankine, Percival, Finau, Hope, Kingi, Peteru, & Selu, 2015).

The inter-generational impact of Church village-life is evident in the lives of Pacific young people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Their faith is an integral aspect of their self-identity, and provides them with a strong source of support and sustenance. The impact of spiritual-faith as a relationship with God nurtured within the Church context is captured vividly through this Pacific young person's description:

...Family's important, but it's not the central thing that holds us together. It's mostly our Christian relationship with God and just the fellowship we have with our Christian brothers and sisters....the Church within my life is really important, I really enjoy it, helping me out in my fa'a Samoa (Samoa way).

- Cited in Alefaio, 1999, pp. 39-40

Understanding how faith/belief in God for Pacific peoples can be utilised to engage, challenge and provide impetus for transformation is therefore vital.

Understanding faith-based phenomena

The concept of spirituality is a complex phenomenon. It can be interpreted differently by individuals and communities of people. Although it has varying interpretations, and much diversity amongst ethnic groups, it remains highly relevant and holds integral cultural value for many Pacific people.

Given its growing pluralistic interpretations, there are ongoing challenges for defining spirituality. Some social scientists believe there are challenges of defining spirituality as it is often confused with 'religion', 'religious commitment' and other religious terminologies. They note that religion has often been defined using Christian terminology. This is not always appropriate (Hammond, 1976; Simel, 1996).

Nash and Stewart (2004) suggest there is no clear distinction between religion and spirituality. They define spirituality within the context of both personal and community wellbeing.

¹⁵ Spiritual-faith is explained further and is based on Christian belief in God.

Nash (2002) states that “definitions of spirituality and spiritual well-being vary, but recurrent themes indicate how this is an important aspect of human life, related to, but different from, religion” (p. 137). Another viewpoint is that spirituality is “ineffable”, beyond definition, and therefore beyond human understanding, logic or reasoning. Plunkett (1990) advocates this view, stating that:

“The spiritual is that part of life which holds its mystery, and always will. Reason is not eroding the territory of the spiritual. We will never understand rationally the characteristic paradoxes of the spiritual life: of strength in weakness, freedom in service, completion in self-sacrifice and life in death. The conclusions one reaches from reflecting on such themes may be binding, but not in logic, and their discovery is always a personal one. (pviii)”

While faith and spirituality are used interchangeably, spirituality is unearthed in this review of literature as “paths of faith”. Despite the challenges of defining spirituality in a contemporary context, within the Pacific context, spirituality, faith and culture intersect seamlessly through the Christian narrative.

Spirituality as a cultural means of Pacific wellbeing

Pacific literature on cultural models and key concepts of wellbeing reflect the cultural belief of Pacific peoples that they are “whole beings”, comprising of spiritual, physical and mental dimensions (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave & Bush, 2005).

In attempting to theorise a Pacific-wide paradigm of health, Finau (1996) expresses the need to focus on cultural perceptions of wellbeing that encompass values and obligations centred around the notions of kainga (extended families) and communalism.

The Māori indigenous conceptualisation of health encompasses a holistic perspective. This incorporates spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional dimensions of life that are interlinked on multiple levels and co-exist simultaneously in the past, present and future (Durie, 2004).

In this manner fonofale – one of the first theoretical models of Pacific health – was developed to illustrate the integration of Samoan culture and its holistic view of health, with the key emphasis being the holistic nature of health within a mainstream health context (Pulotu-Endemann & Tu’itahi, 2009, Afeaki, 2001).

Church as the central place for the inter-connectedness of spiritual-faith and culture is core to Pacific peoples’ wellbeing. There is a broad Pacific notion of health that incorporates the linkages between the wellbeing of community and society and those within it. Thus, Pacific definitions of health tend to go “far beyond the physical to include the social, spiritual and more....Pacific conceptions of health are described in terms of relational self, holism, and spiritual components” (Butt, 2002; as cited in Capstick et al., 2009).

Tongan cultural constructions of health are associated within the family, with society and with God. As such, the concept of ‘health’ tends to be far more than just physical health (McGrath, 1999a).

The notion of self, being a bounded, autonomous individual is seen in Pacific cultures as foreign. A Church community based on Christian principles of living is paramount for supporting Pacific wellbeing and being grounded in the notion of engaging with and including others, particularly families (Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995; Lindstrom, 1999). In the Pacific context the social structure of Pacific peoples (i.e. family, Church, organisation) is underpinned by collectivism. You are not an individual but rather a collective being, and communalism is reflected in the traditional value of the kainga (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001).

There is increasing recognition of the positive effects of spirituality on other dimensions of life, particularly in health. Advantages include having the ability to deal with stressful and traumatic events more productively (Balk, 1983; Palmer & Noble, 1986; Pargament, 1990; Seligman, 1991) and that family stability encourages the ability to nurture strong and positive relationships (Filsinger & Wilson, 1984; Shrum, 1980).

Spirituality also helps in the development of social competence (Thomas & Carver, 1990) and encourages a sense of moral responsibility towards others. It fosters an attitudinal shift from self-centredness to displaying compassion, justice and care for the marginalised, the vulnerable and the oppressed.

These positive effects inevitably bring about healthier families, communities and the nation as a whole. Research shows spiritual-faith enhances self-confidence and general wellbeing. It is a source of personal transformation (Wuthnow, 2004) which helps prevent people, especially the young, from engaging in harmful behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse and violence (Ferguson, Wu, Spruitz-Metz & Dyrness, 2007; Prezioso, 1986; Udry, 1988).

Spirituality as core for transformation

Despite varying interpretations and meanings, spirituality is an integral dimension of our humanness (Holthaus, 2003; Plunkett 1990). It is a core dimension that cannot be ignored given its significance and relevance to other dimensions of life (Canda & Furman, 2010; Crisp, 2010). Researchers strongly suggest the world is in the midst of a spiritual revolution, evident by humanity's enduring need to find answers to the demanding questions faced by this post-modern era (Tacey, 2003).

The following is the voice of a young student echoing the revolutionary capacity of spirituality for transformation:

“By refusing to develop ourselves spiritually we are restricting our human potential and our capacity to transform the world. If we could focus more on spiritual realities, greed would no longer control us. Without greed, I think we could achieve greater happiness and peace of mind. Spiritual awakening could have a powerful effect on stopping the downfall of society.”

(Scott, 2001; as cited by Tacey, 2003, p. 67)

Despite the challenges of defining and measuring the impact of spirituality, many researchers maintain these are insufficient reasons to ignore this. Nicholas and Durrheim (1996) and Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina (2005) see spiritual measures, especially if they obtain both internal and external measures of spirituality, as valid and helpful tools to more fully understand the effects of spirituality in peoples' lives.

A key dimension of spirituality that aligns with the working definition used in this evaluation is the notion of a transcendent power, a higher being, a Life-force, the meaning-maker, or a divine relationship (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998; Johnson, 1998; Lerner, 2000; Nolan & Crawford, 1997). It is the notion that is central to our experience as individuals of that which is beyond ourselves.

This common theme in the literature broadens the definition of spirituality beyond an attitude of 'aware-honouring' the Life-force, but one where the Life-force permeates through everything. The Life-force is primarily about wholeness, which is beyond human understanding. This notion is related to the Maori concept of 'mauri' (Life force or life essence) (Tisdell, 2003).

A quantitative study conducted at the University of Utah health department defined the spirit in terms of the influence of a divine relationship. It explored ways to measure the spirit and spiritual attributes of resiliency. The findings suggested that “all individuals share core attributes of intuition, passion, love, hope, and faith” (Johnson, 1998, p. 123).

The notion of spirituality as an internal power is important to understand in light of the transformative processes that bring healing for Pacific families. It is essentially a search for meaning and purpose in life. (Astin, 2004; Canda & Furman, 2010). As noted by Astin (2004):

It has to do with the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here...the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life...and our sense of connectedness to each....

(Astin, 2004, p. 1)

The Spiritual-faith of Pacific peoples

Given there is no single, universally accepted clear definition of spirituality, it is necessary to provide an understanding of spirituality within the context of this formative evaluation. Christianity is the dominant religion amongst Pacific peoples. On that basis spirituality is defined and understood within the confines of the Christian tradition.

Within the context of this evaluation, spirituality is defined as the “supernatural relationship a human being enjoys with God through the personal power of the Holy Spirit” (Inrig, 2001, p. 65). Christian spirituality is distinctive to other religions and other forms of spirituality. It represents a grateful response to the conviction that in Jesus, God has reached down to us. In essence, it is a definition that sets the platform to the values and beliefs which guide our personal identity, our worldviews, and gives meaning and purpose to our lives (Canda & Furman, 2010; Crisp, 2010; MacKinlay 2001).

This definition also embraces the concept of the unseen divine power of the human spirit to endure when the physical, emotional, and mental capacity cannot continue. It is an understanding that provides a framework that inspires one to believe that the challenges ahead are never as great as the power within.

A report on best health outcomes for Pacific peoples by the Medical Council of New Zealand (2010) highlights the importance of spiritual faith defined as the “belief there is greater power than oneself, namely God” (p. 17).

Spiritual faith enacted through Church is central in Pacific communities, with Pacific Churches a meeting place and driving force for community projects (Medical Council NZ, 2010).

Spiritual-faith is used within this report to describe the unique intersecting nature of spirituality and faith experienced and expressed within Pacific communities.

Conventional and Pacific research describe culture as “shared beliefs and values”, “lifeblood”, “ways of making meaning”, “a way of life” of a particular social group (Hofstede, 1997; Thaman, 2003; Tisdell, 2003). In regards to Pacific culture, Thaman (2003) states:

In the Pacific Islands, culture is conceptualised locally as shared values and beliefs and ways of doing and behaving. Hence there is fa’a Samoa (the Samoan way), faka Tonga (the Tongan way) and vaka Viti (the Fijian way). Such idealised ways and emphases are commonly used by the people concerned to explain their (collective) values and behaviour and those of others, as well as the way they see and organize their world.

(p. 3)

Since the introduction of Christianity in the early 19th century, the Christian tradition has been embraced by Pacific nations to the point where it has become the dominant religion. Moreover, Christianity has evolved as an integral belief and value system that is inextricably linked with cultures of the Pacific (Kamu, 1996; Kavaliku, 2007; Mulitalo Lautu et al., 2001; Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984; Tiatia, 1998).

Christianity is the every-day reality for Pacific peoples and an important part of their identity and way of being. At the very heart of Pacific cultures are key values such as *lotu*¹⁵ and *kainga*¹⁶. The term *lotu* has a broad meaning within the Tongan language, referring to prayer, the Church, religion, and is also used to describe a person who is spiritual or a person of faith who believes in God. *Lotu* in essence is all encompassing and embodies all that it means to be spiritual; Christian, Church, prayer – the life of being in relationship with God.

¹⁵ Tongan term for religion, spirituality, Church, Christianity, prayer

¹⁶ Tongan term for extended family

¹⁷ Statistics New Zealand, 2013

Pacific leaders acknowledge the significance of *lotu* in the lives of Pacific peoples as it provides a sense of security, identity and wellbeing, especially in times of rapid change. Therein, however, also lies the paradoxical challenge. There is little to no consideration by governments or development partners of the importance that spiritual-faith or ‘being religious’ has on “individual and/or national development” (Fiji Vice-President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, 2005, Kavaliku, 2007).

For many Pacific people, wherever they are located, *lotu* is still an integral part of their identity. This is true of the Pacific people who migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand. It is reflected in the latest census¹⁷, where a high percentage of Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa New Zealand were affiliated with a Christian Church organization (Statistics NZ, 2013).

The impact of spiritual-faith within faith-based contexts for Pacific peoples

Within Pacific communities, ‘having a relationship with God’ is often attributed to success. This relationship and sense of connectedness to God not only enhances self-confidence but provides a clear sense of direction, discipline and commitment. Research in the area of academic success with university students illustrates how spiritual-faith, as core to one’s being, provides a sense of purpose and motivation to reach one’s full potential as designed by God (Byfield, 2008; Glaeser and Sacerdote, 2001; Herndon, 2003; Weir, 2000).

Pacific families view education as a way forward for future generations; it is often associated with success. Studies show that academic success has been attributed to a sense of connectedness to God (e.g. Byfield, 2008).

Education aspirations for Pacific peoples go beyond the conventional meanings of education. It is not only about receiving a qualification to attain well-paid employment. It is also about using that knowledge to give back to one’s family and the community. A Pacific person who reciprocates this knowledge is referred to as wise or *poto*. For example, within Tongan culture underlying this ethos for living are the Christian principles of ‘ofa (love) and tauhivaha’a or feveitoka’i’aki (maintaining good relationships) (Mafile’o, 2004; Norsworthy, 2008; Thaman, 2006). The relationship with God is therefore a central tenet of Pacific peoples’ expression of spiritual-faith.

Literature reveals the influence of prayer as a valued form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2007; Byfield, 2008). Through

prayer, people are able to seek support and draw strength from God. They see God as their rock and their fortress, especially in stressful and challenging circumstances. God is viewed as very powerful, very personable, loving and caring, and gives confidence when life's tough challenges arise (Baker, 2010; Byfield, 2008; Cameron & Comfort, 2002; Channer's, 1995; Herndon, 2003; Pattilio-McCoy, 1998).

In the Pacific Church context, prayer is collective and communal as well as personal. Within the context of turbulent times and life's challenges, for Pacific people, families and communities, prayer brings direction, restores peace and creates harmony.

The development of character and values through spiritual-faith shows Christian beliefs provide a platform for developing character and moral values and protects from adverse situations (Byfield, 2008).

Research emphasised how students with a strong sense of religious and racial identity tended to be "highly resilient, socially skilled, intellectually competent, self-reliant and self-accepting" (ibid p. 194). Spiritual-faith therefore potentially acts as a coping mechanism and deterrence from harmful activity such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime and violence.

Spiritual Intelligence

A concept that has gained momentum in the early 21st century is the notion of spiritual intelligence (SQ). This concept is akin to common Pacific constructs of wisdom, such as the Tongan concept of *poto*¹⁸. Similar notions for *poto* in other Pacific cultures include the Fijian term *yalomatua* or *yalovuku*, referring to the culmination of learning or *vuli*. In the Samoan culture, the concept of *poto* refers to a person who uses *iloa* or knowledge in a useful and beneficial way. Within the Tuvalu language, someone who is skilful, knowledgeable and highly esteemed in the community is referred to as *poto*. *Wanawana* is the similar term in Kiribati which implies a strong sense of responsibility. Wisdom in the Solomon Islands is referred to as *manatha* (Thaman, 1998, 2006). Being wise is a highly valued quality within Pacific cultures (Kavaliku, 1966; Thaman, 2006). Wisdom in the Pacific sense is about applying knowledge ('ilo) wisely to life and it resonates well with the notion of spiritual intelligence (SQ).

The concept of SQ integrates the intelligence of the mind, body and spirit. Social scientists originally focused on 'rational' intelligence, then to 'emotional' intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence is the integration of these two notions. It is defined as the intelligence with which we deal with to resolve issues of meaning and value; the intelligence that guides our whole being and behaviour in a wider, richer, more meaningful context; and the intelligence with which we can prioritise courses of action in our life journey (Zohar & Marshall, 2000; cited in Vialle et al., 2005).

Some of the indicators of high SQ include: a characteristic of being stimulated by vision and values; a greater sense of self-awareness; an ability to endure suffering and diversity; and the ability to be flexible. Such qualities suggest a deep power of resilience and determination to succeed and ignite our passion for our work, life, love and meaning. The notion of connectedness is a central theme in this concept of spiritual intelligence.

Connectedness is defined as both an internal and external connectedness, not only to others, to nature or the world but within the individual, integrating mind, body, and soul.

Related to this notion of spiritual intelligence is the role of Pastoral care. A key feature within Pacific communities as Pastoral care is administered through Church ministers, Pastors, priests, and leaders. Pastoral care is commonly associated with the service of love and support that Pastors, ministers, chaplains and other Church leaders provide to their congregation. It is commonly referred to as spiritual care. Pastoral care also refers to people offering support in the form of counselling, friendship, encouragement or material needs to others in the wider community. It is a practice that involves oversight and care of holistic needs to support physical, socio-cultural, emotional and spiritual wellbeing (Butcher, Lim, McGrath & Revis, 2002; Halapua, 1997).

Features of effective Pastoral care approach are relationships based on trust, respect and understanding (Grove, 2004). If Pastoral care is to be effective, meeting cultural needs is paramount. It is most evident from a Pacific communal perspective when dealing with socio-economic issues encountered by Pacific peoples in New Zealand (Halapua, 1997). Pastoral care involves a deeper knowledge and understanding of the culture and worldview of the person/s communities in need (Butcher et al., 2002). The fascination of social scientists with spiritual intelligence or 'SQ' illustrates the innovative potential of Pacific faith-based initiatives where Pastoral care and support nurtures SQ or *poto* as part of everyday life.

¹⁸ Tongan concept for wisdom with the key characteristic of connectedness being core to its definition.

Challenges in addressing family violence in Pacific faith-based contexts

Across the wider Pacific region, a UNFPA commissioned report (Kaybryn & Nidadavolu, 2012) focused on mapping faith-based responses to violence against women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region. The report emphasises the importance of faith-based organisations, given their wealth of experience in addressing practical and spiritual needs for communities.

Faith-based organisations are recognised as local response contexts that deal first-hand with violence prevention and response. Moreover, challenges for faith-based organisations are highlighted, identifying;

The need for resources to support initiatives, training to improve knowledge of violence-related issues, increased networking with other faith-based and secular organisations and, most of all, faith-based resources on violence prevention and intervention. (p. 64)

These findings coincide with a scoping study (Le Roux, 2015) on the role of faith communities and organisations in prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Le Roux (2015) emphasises the need to capture faith-based initiatives as “more is being done than what is being documented” (p. 9).

Proposed recommendations identify the need to:

- document activities
- prioritise rigorous programme development to ensure longer-term, context-appropriate interventions are developed
- recognise faith leaders as key stakeholders
- use multiple modalities by engaging multiple stakeholders in interventions
- actively seek out and develop networking and collaboration opportunities between faith communities/organisations and with secular networks
- develop inclusive policies and strategies that include various faith communities and organisations. (p. 10)

While challenges exist for Pacific faith-based initiatives in addressing family violence prevention and intervention, the more pressing need highlighted by Le Roux (2015) is documenting faith-based initiatives and providing opportunities to collaborate, network and share violence response and prevention activities.

APPENDIX 3: KAINGA TU'UMALIE SESSION SAMPLE

KAINGA TU'UMALIE: DREAM FROM OUR FOREFATHERS, HOPE FOR MIGRATION, CHALLENGE TO DREAM

POVERTY MIND ('ATAMAI PUKUPUKU)	PROSPEROUS SOUL
Creates anxiety	Anxious for nothing
Surrender	Perseverance
Stress overwhelms	Stress brings grace
Hoarding	Conserving
I'm a victim of circumstance	I am significant
Instant gratification	Self-control
You serve money	Money serves you
Feelings of fear	Feelings of contentment
You are provider	God is provider
Mistakes are permanent	Mistakes are temporary
Feelings of invisibility	Apple of God's eye
Can't afford to give	Can't afford to withhold
Held back and demoted	Advanced and promoted

APPENDIX 4: NUMBER OF TONGAN METHODIST CHURCHES IN AUCKLAND

HINGOA 'O E SIASI (CHURCH NAME)	VAHENGĀ 'OKALANI MANUKAU (AUCK. MANUKAU DISTRICT)		
	2013 (Headcount)	No. of Families	% Change 05 - 09
Manurewa	364	98	46.77%
Glen Innes	348	95	43.80%
Panmure	251	65	25.50%
Otahuhu	333	95	22.88%
Pukekohe	189	60	22.73%
Ellerslie	524	124	21.86%
Northcote	347	93	10.16%
Epsom	262	82	8.26%
Ponsonby	595	142	7.79%
Dominion	534	138	4.30%
New Lynn	458	121	2.46%
'Ioke taha	30	9	-0.76%
Waiuku	33	8	-23.26%
Henderson	228	72	-8.43%
East Tamaki	211	65	-21.27%
Onehunga	587	201	-28.24%
Total	5380	1468	7.19%

APPENDIX 5: CHURCHES UNITE POSITION PAPER

CHURCHES UNITE PROJECT 2015

LOOKING AT VIOLENCE FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Pastor Chris Sola

DISCLAIMER

This paper is not an exhaustive or comprehensive research on what the bible says about violence. The topic at hand is too broad and needs a lot more time and effort than I have given it in this discussion. Instead, this paper has been written as a guide and point of reference for the Churches Unite Project only. Its primary purpose is to provide the participating Churches with sufficient information to support their discussions towards a consensus on what they believe violence is. This consensus is crucial to our project. This paper has not been prepared for any scholarly recognition, so proper scholarly practises in using and acknowledging sources have not been adhered to.

My goal has been to provide a biblical perspective on the topic before us, so that enough can be known and said to agree on what the bible says about violence in its most generic form. There is so much that could be said on the topic, but for the sake of time I have chosen the Creation story in Genesis and Jesus' testimony as my main focal points. The creation story provides us with God's original intent and plan for humankind. Jesus provides us with the highest moral standards and teaching on how to live life. At the end I have also added a section on 'Smacking', which seems to be a huge stumbling block for Pacific people when unpacking discussions of this nature. Though I will mention the cultural significance of a discussion paper like Nga Vaka, no room has been made for a cultural perspective. That's another paper.

In order to help us read and critique this discussion, I have purposely highlighted what I believe are key thoughts. I hope in some way this will assist Churches Unite in summarising the discussion paper.

FOREWORD – NGA VAKA AND FAITHS AGAINST VIOLENCE

One of the Key documents that has been presented to our group is the 'Faiths Against Violence: Taking a Stand' by the Children's Commissioner. This document represents the views of six faith communities regarding family

violence, including the Hindu Council of New Zealand. One key observation surfaces from these discussions. The primary activity of these faith communities has been the establishment of various initiatives that identify and address the different forms of family violence and how violence impacts on families especially women and children. Consequently, these faith communities have become hubs of buzzing 'nonviolence' activity. The intent of this increasing activity is awareness and action. What distinguishes a faith community from the rest of the community is its faith component. One does not need to be a faith community to initiate or partake in such activity. Although the activity is good, insofar as it helps increase awareness and remedial action, it does not address the root issue, namely, what does the bible say about violence? In the words of Dr Michael A Roberts, 'The point I am trying to make is that faith communities must use their doctrine to educate their faithful followers as to the absolute unacceptability of domestic violence.'¹⁹ Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that, as the Christian bible depicts a God who is both loving and wrathful, who exercises compassion and destruction. Given this tension, it is needful for a project like Churches Unite to gain a balanced perspective on what the bible teaches concerning violence. This is the main crux behind this paper, to give us an adequate understanding and a starting point on what the bible says on the matter, so that we can draw some united conclusions.

The other document that has played a key role in our discussions has been the 'Nga Vaka o Kainga Tapu: A Pacific Conceptual Framework to address family Violence in New Zealand' document. The primary purpose behind this document is for Pacific people to 'explore the role of our cultures as a solution to ending violence.'²⁰ The document is built around key documents that address violence in seven ethnic specific communities. The general consensus in all seven ethnic groups is that family violence is unsanctioned by our cultures.

Without taking away from the significance and value of this document, I want to make three observations. Firstly, and probably foremost, is the fact that for most Pacific people, culture and faith play equally integral roles in their lives and the lives of the communities they live within. The potential weakness of both documents discussed here is they both ignore the dual nature of Pacific people as a faith-cultural people. In fact, the Nga Vaka document attributes the 'fusion of cultural and religious beliefs and their (mis) interpretations as factors that have contributed to family violence.'²¹ This suggestion in raising a valid point, highlights why the biblical

¹⁹ 'Focussing on the blessings: family violence and the role of faiths,' Dr Michael A Roberts, p19

²⁰ 'Nga Vaka o Kainga Tapu: A Pacific Conceptual Framework to address family Violence in New Zealand' piii

²¹ Nga Vaka, p5

perspective is crucial to Pacific people, probably more crucial than the cultural one. Most Pacific people, when defending acts of (family) violence, would cite the bible as their authority and not their culture. This perspective alone highlights the authority the bible and God has over culture for many Pacific people and the crucial role Pacific Churches play in the matter. This certainly does not downplay the role culture has.

If anything, it affirms the uniqueness of Pacific people as a dual faith-cultural people and that any addressing of violence must recognise this duality.

Secondly, a weakness of culture as Nga Vaka identifies is language. According to Nga Vaka 'language is identified as a crucial entry point to understanding traditional and contemporary worldviews of any one culture.'²² Herein lies a huge problem for many members of our Pacific communities in New Zealand who cannot speak their ethnic languages and struggle with their cultural identity.

Consequently, so much of who they feel they are is lost in translation²³. This problem is further heightened by the increasing inter-marriage between cultures. Many Pacific people have more than just one Pacific and/or non-Pacific culture to identify with, along with the tension attached to being NZ-born. One particular group affected by this are NZ-born Pacific youth. Jemaima Tiatia spends considerable time defending this particular group and highlighting the identity crisis many of these young people face living in NZ. If she is correct in her notion that the NZ Samoan may fall into their own category of culture²⁴, then what does that say to a document like Nga Vaka, where cultural concepts are identified as primarily traditional?

Thirdly, violence extends far beyond the confines of one's family and community. It is a serious problem within and beyond our families. One of the biggest challenges facing any discussion on violence is whether or not there are accepted or justified forms of violence. This is usually the defence of much of the violence perpetuated in Pacific society today. In the bible, our Pacific history and modern-day society violence, albeit justified or not, stretches far beyond the family. In his thesis, Dr Lalomilo Kamu discusses how corporal punishment was handed down by the Village Fono (Council of Matai), a cultural authority established by the village to enforce and maintain unity, harmony and peace within the village. Other forms of punishment handed down were fines, confiscation and destruction of property, exclusion, the death sentence

and banishment²⁵ which, according to Kamu, were all justified forms of violence.

Pacific people are by duality a faith-cultural people. Although we may argue their co-equal existence, in general the relationship is one of a tuakana-teina relationship respectively insofar as for most Pacific people, faith is the tuakana (older sibling) whereas culture is the teina (younger sibling). Therefore, perspectives outlined in papers like Nga Vaka and Faiths Against Violence need some kind of synchronizing in order to maximize their impact on the Pacific context in New Zealand. This is certainly a matter that Churches Unite may have to address as it progresses. Since faith is the tuakana and at the heart of the Churches Unite Community, then violence or non-violence from a biblical perspective needs to be correctly understood. In order for Churches Unite to remain faithful to its name, there must be a consensus on what we believe the bible says about violence. It is to this that we turn our focus to.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Our greatest challenge is trying to explain a bible that seems to promote or encourage violence. In 1 Samuel 15:2-3 the prophet Samuel addresses King Saul with divine directions for how to treat the Amalekites,

"Thus says the Lord of hosts. 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did in opposing the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

According to Jerome F D Creach, this passage reveals at least three crucial dimensions of the problem of violence in the Bible²⁶. Firstly, God is described and portrayed as someone who is vengeful and destructive against those who oppose his will. Secondly, the passage questions the behaviour and moral identity of the people of God. Do those who identify with the God of the bible have license to kill in God's name? Do they have special privileges as God's people to commit genocide to promote their own security? Thirdly, this story highlights a key issue about the unity and authority of the Bible. While 1 Samuel 15 is problematic, many parts of the bible seem to present a message that refutes Samuel's words to Saul. The most obvious example is Jesus' command to his disciples to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44). The challenge is how the Church can read passages like 1 Samuel 15:2-3 which seem to encourage violence in the midst of Matthew

²² Ibid, p4

²³ See Nga Vaka, pp8-9, "One of the challenges in working with English translations is the potential for English words and their definitions to have a levelling effect on the meanings of ethnic specific concepts and principles. The result is that the meaning of the ethnic specific concept is distorted and becomes lost to its indigenous origins."

²⁴ Caught Between Cultures: A New Zealand-Born Pacific Island Perspective, Jemaima Tiatia, p32

²⁵ Lalomilo Kamu, p49

²⁷ Violence in Scripture, Jerome F D Creach, p2

5:44 that includes Jesus' injunctions to non-violence. Such perceived contradictions have caused an increasingly secularised society to challenge the authority of the bible on such matters.

THE CREATION NARRATIVES

The creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:4a presents two remarkable claims that set the stage for an understanding of violence in the rest of the bible. Firstly, this account declares that God created the world without conflict or combat and God called the creation at every stage "good" (1:4, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). This claim is noteworthy because it runs counter to other Ancient Eastern creation stories in which creation results from the creator God doing battle with chaotic or not good forces. Hence, the bible opens with a powerful alternative story about the nature of God who creates, the nature of creation itself and about the way God exercises power over creation²⁷. Secondly, if this is to be taken seriously then the image and likeness of God in humanity cannot be downplayed, especially humanity's responsibility to establish and maintain the peace and harmony of creation. This seems to be the flow of Genesis 2 as God creates humanity and places them in the garden to care for it and not to lord over it. Hence, we discover in the creation narrative a view of God and an expectation for humankind that suggest violence will represent a major disruption of the order God intended²⁸. Creach states that the violence which eventually enters creation and threatens to undo it is an intrusion that results from human rebellion. God's subsequent involvement in violence is therefore an effort to deal with the violence instead of giving creation up to it. The notion that God did not give creation up to violence is interesting in light of the argument of Paul in Romans 8:18-25. There Paul says the creation "was subjected to futility." Paul seems to refer to the curse of the ground that Genesis 3:17-19 says came because of human rebellion. Paul seems to suggest that the curse remains in effect. But Paul argues, nevertheless, that God in Christ is working to restore creation and bring it to fruition. The point is that this redemptive work may be observed in the Old Testament as well. The creations "groaning in labour pains" (Romans 8:22) is seen throughout the Old Testament. Indeed the fulfilment of creation in Christ is anticipated in the Old Testament's insistence that God has been working to redeem and restore the intended order (Isaiah 11:6-9).²⁹

THE IMAGE OF GOD

With this aspect of the creation narrative in mind, the notion that humans are created in the image and likeness of God would seem to have quite a significant implication

on how humans act as God's agents on earth. This opening biblical disclosure of God and humanity constitutes not only a normative framework for interpreting the rest of scripture, but also a paradigm or model for the exercising of human power in the midst of a world filled with violence. When we connect God's image in us with an understanding of God's non-violent creation, the call to peace-making and cooperative living would seem essential. This image represents God as the Jehovah Shalom or the God of Peace and his victory over chaos. Thus the image of God and likeness presupposes a humanity whose divine signature for a natural order is peace or for the sake of this discussion, non-violent. This means that those who bear God's image must practise patience and care towards one another. In establishing a people this way, God has set the stage for a kind of life that guards against violence and a kind of people that is in harmony with him, his creation and his people.

THE KEY IS TO READ THE BIBLE AS A TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST

The key is to read the bible as a testimony to Jesus Christ. The Christocentric nature of the bible encourages a reading of the bible that has an organising centre as a guide to understanding the whole bible. In this sense Christ is the filter by which all scripture is poured. The outcome of course is to be suspicious of anything that does not sound like or look like Jesus. This is particularly helpful when trying to understand passages that seem to promote violence.³⁰

JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

The life and teachings of Jesus are regarded as marking a significant turning point on the issue of violence. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for and love their enemies and not to retaliate against them. Jesus modelled this instruction in his own life, even to the point of death. In doing so, Jesus presented the ultimate truth about violence; it is an affront to God's sovereignty and divine order. In fulfilling the law, Jesus not only abolishes the power of the law to repay evil with evil, but also the vicious circle of violence and counter violence.³¹ Non-resistance to evil shows up the absurdity of evil. Evil's strength is violence.³²

If Jesus becomes our 'perspective' model, can we then read the Old Testament as authoritative as we would the New Testament? How does the bible as a whole knit together its perspective on violence? The difficulty in reconciling both testaments arises from some of Jesus' teachings that seem to contradict the Old Testament. For example, in Matthew 5 Jesus addresses the crowd as powerless, those who suffer

²⁷ Ibid, p17

²⁸ Ibid, p18

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ See Creach, pp3-5 for more discussion on reading the bible with a Jesus centrality

³¹ Ibid, p218

³² Ibid

and those who are victims of injustice (5:3), those who mourn (5:4), the meek (5:5) and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (5:10). The first section of Jesus' sermon ends with an identity of the audience;

"Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (5:11-12).

Although Jesus does not seem to tell his audience not to explicitly retaliate or avenge their oppressors, this seems to be his main emphasis in Matthew 5:21-48 when Jesus begins to emphatically injunction nonviolence. For example, in Matthew 5:21-22 Jesus says,

"21 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."³³

This emphasis on a nonviolent response to adversaries appears again at the end of both the two following sections in Matthew 5:38-42 "Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus says,³⁴

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic,[a] let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."

And in Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus says,

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you', 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers,[a] what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

A distinctive feature of this section of the Sermon is the formula Jesus uses to begin each instruction: "You have heard it said....but I say to you." Here Jesus presents himself as an authority who overturns or nuances other teachings or beliefs.³⁵

This raises a critical question regarding the intention of Jesus' teaching about nonviolence. Since some of the authorities Jesus cites are Old Testament texts, some interpreters have concluded that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is repudiating the Old Testament and presenting a new way of understanding and living. For example, in Matthew 5:21-22 Jesus cites the Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) and presents his teaching as a higher standard. In Matthew 5:38 he cites "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" which appear in slightly various forms in Exodus 21:23-25 and Leviticus 24:19-20 and Deuteronomy 19:21. This law was intended to limit retribution so punishment was meted out in accordance with the severity of the crime. But Jesus again presents a new and greater standard by which the one offended does not retaliate at all.³⁶

The tension between the Old and New Testaments on the matter of violence becomes harder to resolve if Jesus' instructions concerning violence are read as absolute statements. In this case the Old Testament can be perceived as being inferior to the New Testament if Jesus' teachings about violence are understood and accepted as blanket prohibitions against any form of physical coercion. Or the Old Testament can be read as more realistic, as a true portrait of how life really works. Either way, the point remains that the teachings of Jesus are often understood as presenting a much higher moral standard than the Old Testament.

There has been some debate on this matter given the nature of Jesus' predominantly 'oppressed' audience. This aspect of his audience raises the question of Jesus' motives in addressing them the way he did. Were they instructed not to retaliate against their oppressors the Romans and/or religious institutions because that would have been suicidal? Or did he encourage that because that would have been a far better political strategy? If that was the case, then it could be acceptable to believe that Jesus was not commanding nonviolence 'at all times and circumstances.'

The possibility that Jesus' teachings did allow retaliation or retribution is important to consider since the Bible does teach about a wrathful God as well as a loving God, as seen in Jesus' teachings. Jesus himself makes reference to this sterner side of God in response to those who would oppress the innocent and helpless. For example in Matthew 18:6,

³³ Ibid, p220

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

“If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Many have used accenting passages of this nature to legitimise various forms of coercion in order to protect those who cannot protect themselves. This human action, especially in war, may be accepted as just under certain circumstances. Many have identified ‘just wars’ as participation in God’s corrective and punitive work. But does this idea really fit with Jesus’ teachings?³⁷ As we read the gospels and study the life and ministry of Jesus, it is very clear that none of Jesus’ teachings promotes or encourages any forms of violence or force, even against the harshest oppressors. Jesus’ cry for God’s punishment of the wicked is a far cry from any support for any forms of aggression. In saying this we can therefore conclude that nonviolence was Jesus’ absolute standard for his followers.

In saying this, we can say that Jesus’ emphasis on nonviolence is a key theme throughout the New Testament. The Apostle Paul, who had a major encounter with the resurrected Christ, picks up on Jesus’ emphasis in Romans 12:14 when he says “Bless those who persecute you and bless and do not curse them.” Paul is reiterating Jesus’ instructions establishing them as a principle for the Church. So Paul is advocating nonviolence to apply to all Christians in all Churches.

As we study the behaviour of Jesus’ disciples towards Jesus’ pacifist response to his accusers and oppressors and Paul’s obvious revelation of the persecuted and resurrected Christ, we can see that all of them would have taken note and, probably to some extent, exception to Jesus’ willingness to suffer passively and die. It’s in Jesus’ own suffering and death that we see his total embodiment of how to respond to evil and oppression. Jesus embodies his own teachings by refusing to call on his disciples to rescue him with violent action. In fact, when they do try he sternly rebukes them (Luke 22:49-51; John 18:11). In fact, even on the cross Jesus prayed for his tormentors “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34). Thus Jesus embodied his own teachings and instructions to love and pray for your enemies and turn the other cheek.

And finally, in identifying our greater cosmic enemy the Apostle Paul further affirms Jesus’ nonviolence towards one another in Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” In other words, God ultimately deals with violence and humans are not to take it into their own hands.

FINAL THOUGHTS

One of Jesus’ goals was to introduce and model to his disciples a righteousness that was far greater than that already exhibited by their forefathers. Jesus taught a new way and standard for how righteous looks in his teachings on nonviolence. Jesus’ special focus on the concern for violence calls for a similar attention from us about the matter throughout the entire bible. So when Christians read and interpret the Old Testament, they should not by tradition place their focus on the land or the temple or Torah though these are all important. Instead they should read the whole bible with the idea that the life and teachings of Jesus are the goal to which all leads. In saying this, we view the bible as Christocentric or Christ-centred, where all scripture is centred on and then through Jesus who, according to John 1:1, is the ‘word from the beginning.’ Consequently, Jesus shapes for us what the Kingdom of God looks like. If the popular understanding that Jesus’ ultimate goal is to restore humanity back to its pre-fall condition in Genesis 1 to enjoy the presence and peace of God’s reign, then Jesus has rightfully modelled for us the eternal kingdom. In saying this, then the nature and shape of the Kingdom of God is ‘the Lord reigns!’ And if the Lord reigns, then no human being has the right to coercive power.

EPILOGUE – SMACKING: THE PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

One area that seems to trip many Pacific people up when discussing absolute nonviolence is in the area of smacking or the physical disciplining of our children. Although most would agree that all other forms of violence are unacceptable, many consider the smacking or light discipline of our children as an exception. Some of those discussions have centred on the acceptability of the sasa over the fasi. In other words, light physical discipline is acceptable whereas heavy-handed discipline is not.

According to (Section 59) Powers of Discipline: Parent Control of the Crimes Act 1961, no form of physical violence is acceptable when disciplining children, this includes the sasa.

Section 59 - Powers of Discipline – Parent Control

1. Every parent of a child and every person in the place of a parent of the child is justified in using force if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances and is for the purpose of -
 - a) preventing or minimising harm to the child or another person; or
 - b) preventing the child from engaging or continuing to engage in conduct that amounts to a criminal offence; or

³⁷ Ibid, p221

- c) preventing the child from engaging or continuing to engage in offensive or disruptive behaviour; or
 - d) performing the normal daily tasks that are incidental to good care and parenting.
2. Nothing in subsection (1) or in any rule of common law justifies the use of force for the purpose of correction.
 3. Subsection (2) prevails over subsection (1).
 4. To avoid doubt, it is affirmed that the Police have the discretion not to prosecute complaints against a parent of a child or person in the place of a parent of a child in relation to an offence involving the use of force against a child, where the offence is considered to be so inconsequential that there is no public interest in proceeding with a prosecution.

Section 59: replaced, on 21 June 2007, by section 5 of the Crimes (Substituted Section 59) Amendment Act 2007 (2007 No 18).

The following website provides us with some help in trying to understand this bill.³⁸

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

The rules apply to Section 59 of the New Zealand Crimes Act. Use of force for correction is strictly forbidden. The Anti-Smacking Law states that adults who hit children hard enough to be prosecuted cannot excuse their behaviour as 'correction'.

Adults caring for children can still use 'force' (by methods of holding or restraining) to keep children safe – eg. adults can stop a child from running out onto the street, touching a hot stove, hurting themselves or other children and they can carry a protesting child out of a supermarket.

In using 'force', parents or guardians must act in good faith and have a reasonable belief that the force is both subjectively and objectively reasonable.

Police have the discretion not to prosecute complaints made against a parent of a child or guardian where the offence is considered to be so minor that there is no public interest in proceeding with a prosecution.

Many everyday tasks require parents to use force when interacting with their children who are often stubborn and fidgety. When changing nappies, dressing or securing a child in a car seat, the use of reasonable force in performing such tasks is permitted.

This understanding differs from the understanding I have heard at several discussions on the matter insofar as there seems to be an understanding that Police will not prosecute the sasa. Though this may be the case, Section 59 is very clear in sanctioning absolute nonviolence in the disciplining of all children. So to smack our children is breaking the law, which raises the same issue Jesus addressed and modelled when faced with the opportunities to retaliate or respond to evil and/or oppression - don't!

When faced with justifying the sasa most Pacific people quote the bible, namely verses like "Spare the rod, spoil the child." This saying is drawn from Proverbs 13:24 "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them." According to Rev Nove Vailaau, the first saying does not even occur in the bible but is drawn from an anti-Puritan poem which is more about sex than child discipline. In the second saying, he discusses the Hebrew usage of the word shebet as the proper translation of the word rod used in Proverbs 13:24. In using the Hebrew word shebet the word rod is to be understood metaphorically as the authority with love and care similarly to that used by a good shepherd who loves and cares for his sheep. Similar usage of this analogy can also be found in Psalms 23 where the shepherd's rod and staff comfort. This understanding of child discipline and Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 appear to be more conducive to the overall and general biblical understanding of violence and nonviolence as seen through the testimony of Jesus Christ.

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³⁸ <http://howto.yellow.co.nz/legal/consumer-law/how-to-understand-the-new-zealand-anti-smacking-law/>



Pasefika Proud embodies a vision of strong and vibrant Pacific children, young people and their families. Wellbeing for Pacific families occurs when all aspects of the individual and collective are in balance, co-existing with environments, kinship and support systems while recognising mana and tapu.

Pacific cultures are strengths that can be used positively to promote and enhance resilience within Pacific families.

Pasefika Proud mobilises Pacific individuals, families and communities to take responsibility for the issues they are facing, find the solutions and take leadership in implementing them.

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