

## FIJIAN AND PAPUA NEW GUINEAN PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARIES<sup>1</sup>

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Scholars argue that Christians from the Global south will shape world Christianity as they come to dominate demographically. Pentecostals speak of a shared kingdom culture and see transnational networks as flat and decentralized. But Pentecostal rhetoric often draws on Euro-American neoliberal theories of individual “mindset transformation” and corporate management and resonates with earlier colonial rhetoric. This suggests that Christians from the global south might embrace Euro-American ideas instead of offering a significantly different vision. This paper examines an independent Fijian Pentecostal church that sends Fijian and Papua New Guinean missionaries to several areas of the world. Shared kingdom culture is undermined when each local church transforms common ideology to construct a positive local identity. The same process undermines the dominance of Euro-American neoliberal and neocolonial ideas and constructs an imagined world community of Christians based on submission to local leaders rather than promoting individual entrepreneurialism and global hierarchies. (Globalization, Pentecostal churches, Fiji, Papua New Guinea)

In 2012, an independent Fijian Pentecostal church, called here the Harvest Ministry, commissioned five of its pastors to visit Latin America. The Fijian pastors were to train their Latin American counterparts in the Harvest Ministry method of sending missionaries to “unreached peoples groups,” something the Harvest Ministry had been doing for twenty years. In the group to be commissioned was Pastor Jone, a Fijian serving as a missionary in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Asked by the senior pastor to “share his heart,” Ps Jone spoke in resonant tones announcing that it was the fulfillment of a life’s dream to be sent on a one-month mission to Latin America. He declared his mindset had been transformed and he was ready to take “this product made locally to a global market.” “The vision is so clear. I stand on the foundation of a million dollar anointing,” he continued, referring to a fundraiser the day before when the church had raised over a million Fijian dollars to build a new secondary school. He concluded that he was ready to “reproduce the productivity of the Harvest Ministry” in Latin America by training the pastors there in the Harvest Ministry method.

Ps Jone’s words echoed those of speakers at that year’s annual Harvest Ministry conference in Suva, Fiji. In the Suva conference, Harvest Ministry members from Fiji and other areas of the world gathered to hear pastors from the U.S., Sweden, Canada, and New Zealand, invited by Ps Vili, the senior pastor, to talk on the year’s theme, anointing. One American Pentecostal

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bishop stressed the importance of reproducing one's productivity, a phrase that clearly resonated with Ps Jone who had echoed these words many times when he returned to Papua New Guinea and repeated them again in Suva six months later. The American bishop explained that one first created a successful "product," a local church where anointing flowed and empowered everyone. Several speakers stressed anointing as something given to individuals, empowering them to lead a healthy and successful life and fulfill their roles in God's master plan. But anointing also came in a corporate form, when a group acted as one. This could be enhanced under the direction of a powerful man of God and a strong institutional structure. After achieving a strong local product, one institutionalized this structure, giving it a distinctive "brand name" ensuring that people behaved in a consistent fashion so the brand would be recognizable and reliable. This process could potentially get one's church on the Forbes Top Ten list of charitable organizations. The next step was to "reproduce one's productivity" by exporting the successful brand to other places.

Ps Jone later repeated this blend of religious agency and management strategy when he returned to Papua New Guinea and conducted a morning prayer session for a group of young men working for a Fijian entrepreneurial couple who housed and fed them, provided employment, and effected a "mindset transformation" needed to prosper in business. Ps Jone reminded the young men that one should "understand the heart, dreams, and lifestyle of the leader, who is the heartbeat of the company. His dreams, vision, and attitude must become yours." He concluded, "This business is anointed by God. With or without you this business will prosper. You need to connect yourself." Ps Jone and Papua New Guineans working with the Harvest Ministry in Port Moresby stressed the importance of strong local leaders whose vision would connect you with a global community.

The rhetoric of institutionalization, mindset transformation, connection, and anointing raises questions about the place of Christians from the global south in transnational religious networks. Pentecostals speak of a universal "kingdom culture" where individuals transcend cultural boundaries to spread God's kingdom to all areas of the world (see Brison 2007a, Coleman 2007, Martin 2002, Miller and Yamamori 2007, Robbins 2004, Robertson 1992, Vasquez and Marquardt 2003: 50). Jenkins (2006) and others predict that Christians from the global south will shape world Christianity as they come to form the majority of believers. Vasquez and Marquardt (2003) argue that Pentecostal churches form global networks that are decentralized, or "flat," and where marginal peoples are privileged to a much greater extent than in global economic and political communities. Csordas (2009), similarly, suggests that religious globalization is independent of economic globalization and

that there is evidence of significant “reglobalization” involving the spread of religious ideologies from “peripheral” to “center” nations. He cites in illustration the spread of West African, particularly Yoruba, religions to Europe and the US and the significant contribution of African, Indian, and Brazilian congregations in shaping Catholic charismatic ideology and practice (see also Anderson 2001 on the growing influence of African initiated Christianity).

Particularly interesting are the indications that ties between churches in the global south have become increasingly important (Miller and Yamamori 2007), suggesting a flat Pentecostal world no longer focused on Western Europe and North America. Missionaries no longer move from “the West to the rest,” but instead go from “everywhere to everywhere.” Freston (2001) says that missionaries from the global south, largely from places like Brazil, Nigeria, and Korea, have become common in the past few decades.

Coleman (2007) and others acknowledge, however, that the “imaginaire” of membership in a world community often accompanies a reality where many congregation members belong to local communities, have few international contacts, and where the focus of beliefs in local congregations differ, raising questions about the extent to which Pentecostals truly form a transnational community beneath the level of a small group of senior pastors. Englund (2001, 2003), Marshall-Fratani (2001) and others, for example, argue that Pentecostals in Malawi and Nigeria often imagine themselves as integral members of transnational communities through the use of mass media and other resources, but are keenly aware of real inequalities in access to resources in the supposedly flat and equal Pentecostal networks.

The role of Pentecostals from the Global south as equal voices in a flat transnational Pentecostal community is also called into question by the predominance of rhetoric, such as in the opening examples, clearly drawn from North American and Western European neoliberalism and neocolonialism. If Pentecostals from the global south predominate in world Christianity, will they produce a vision that is significantly different or will they embrace Euro-American ideas, moving themselves up to spots in a world hierarchy once occupied by Europeans? An early wave of research on Pentecostal churches saw them as agents of American imperialism (e.g., Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose 1996), often springing up in areas dominated by neoliberal reforms (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 2001), directing attention away from international and local structural inequalities and promoting a superficial focus on individual initiative and free market forces. The rhetoric of the opening examples in some ways supports this interpretation but in other ways suggests a world where unquestioning submission to leaders is more important than individual initiative. The vision of Papua New Guinean youth faithfully and unquestioningly serving middle class Fijian entrepreneurs is couched in a

language of free enterprise but also seems to construct a hierarchy resembling those of a colonial past, with Fijians in a slot once reserved for Europeans.

This essay examines Fijians and Papua New Guineans involved in the Harvest Ministry network to analyze the way a transnational Pentecostal community is imagined from the perspective of a mission-sending nation outside of North America and Western Europe. While many studies examine churches promulgating the prosperity gospel in various areas of the world (e.g., Coleman 2007), few have focused directly on the nature of ties between Pentecostal churches in the global south or looked directly at the way such churches imagine their role in a world community (cf. Freston 2001, 2005). Analyzing the Harvest Ministry network suggested that the ideology of a transnational kingdom culture was in some ways illusory as each regional group focused on different aspects of the rhetoric of connection, anointing, vision, and mindset transformation. Furthermore, Pentecostals had strong localized identities and there were tensions between people from different regions.

The lack of consensus within the network also pointed to a similar lack of ideological hegemony from Euro-American sources. Each group embraced transnational Christianity for its own purposes, reinforcing local identities. Fijian concepts of anointing were, for instance, similar to traditional Fijian concepts of religious agency as articulated in village kava ceremonies and Methodist church services. Both traced spiritual efficacy to a strong community, with a strong authority structure and clear, shared guidelines for individual behavior. Fijian Pentecostals talked in business metaphors, but had in mind a version of global kingdom culture that was in many ways a Fijian *vanua* (a traditional ranked community) writ large. Fijians, in other words, formulated a place for themselves as uniquely powerful participants in a global Christian community by transforming a local “product,” (the spiritually empowered, ranked community) into an exportable commodity.

Papua New Guinean Pentecostals also highlighted connection to a universal vision and ability to humble oneself through submission to leaders as keys to success in a universal kingdom. They also argued that leaders should be equally humble, living in simple circumstances, eschewing earthly fame and glory, and following Jesus in serving those in need. They argued that Papua New Guineans, who were used to hardship and doing without material comforts, were uniquely suited to serve the needy people of the world, thus subverting the image of themselves as occupying the bottom rung in a neocolonial world order.

The result was a loosely knit network in which the experience of a transnational community was confined primarily to leaders. Contra to the common stereotype of Pentecostalism as empowering entrepreneurial individuals,

church members were encouraged to submit to the local man of God in order to tap indirectly into the global flow of anointing. Indeed, church leaders seemed to act as big men, drawing congregants by serving as an example of success in a wider world arena and by offering access to resources from overseas. Despite the lack of solidarity between regions, there was an emerging, shared, vision of self and community that stressed submitting to leaders and playing one's role in a world Christian community, over individual empowerment and defining success in terms of consumption of material goods. The Harvest Ministry network did not ultimately foster a world system based on entrepreneurs and corporations where Papua New Guineans served Fijians. Instead, Papua New Guineans and Fijians both saw themselves as mission sending nations. This was a source of pride allowing people in all areas to see themselves as important contributors to a world community, and causing middle-class Pacific islands to devote substantial resources to funding mission efforts, again antithetical to a "Protestant Ethic" of entrepreneurialism.

#### THE HARVEST MINISTRY

The Harvest Ministry is a good example of what Miller and Yamamori (2007) say is the fastest growing sector of world Christianity, the locally founded, southern hemisphere, Pentecostal church centered on a single charismatic individual. The Harvest Ministry, founded in 1988, grew out of an international para-church organization that emphasizes the Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew (28:16–20) to spread the gospel to the unreached peoples of the world. Many of those currently serving as pastors and missionaries with the Harvest Ministry worked first with this para-church organization. The Harvest Ministry's stated mission is "to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim his gospel, to train and encourage believers to develop a caring and loving relationship among themselves, and to put world mission as a priority" (Newland 2006:362). Sermons emphasized the need to "sow one's seed," to contribute time and money, to support the church's efforts to make "The Great Commission into the Great Completion." Through sowing one's seed, one could "tap in to the anointing" and experience personal prosperity and health.

The Harvest Ministry grew rapidly and now has 50,000 members in Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, Pohnpei, Marshall Islands, and Tonga (Newland 2006:338). The Harvest Ministry also has missions in Papua New Guinea, other parts of Melanesia, Micronesia, East Africa, Cambodia, and Europe. The Harvest Ministry broadcasts its services on TV and radio in Fiji and to congregations in the U.S., the U.K., and Germany via the internet. The Harvest Ministry has a primary school and a Bible college for its pastors.

Harvest Ministry sermons in many ways promoted identification with Euro-American neoliberal values stressing individual initiative and material prosperity (Brison 2007a). Harvest Ministry rhetoric also emphasized the gap between Fijians and unreached people suggesting that Harvest Ministry missionaries lived in remote areas and worked with people who had never been exposed to Christianity, had never seen clothing, never had clean water, schools, clinics, and so on. Congregation members were encouraged to give money to support the “two hands of the gospel”—preaching, and projects to build schools and dig wells to show people the benefits of a Christian life.

The neoliberal and neocolonial tone of much of Harvest Ministry rhetoric raised questions about the extent to which the Harvest Ministry offered a distinctive perspective on world Christianity. Its vision showed both rupture with indigenous Fijian notions of religious agency, and community, and continuity. In innovating on traditional concepts of religious agency, as Ps Jones suggested in the opening example, the Harvest Ministry “institutionalized” a distinctly Fijian brand of religious community and agency and made it exportable, thus crafting for Fijians a special place in global Christianity.

#### FROM VANUA TO KINGDOM: REFORMULATING RELIGIOUS AGENCY

Harvest Ministry pastors advocated a religious agency that was in many ways antithetical to traditional Fijian concepts as conveyed in Fijian *sevusevu*, the requisite speeches accompanying the ceremonial presentation of kava that mark most occasions in indigenous Fijian villages, and in sermons of the Methodist church, the dominant Christian denomination in Fiji. In *sevusevu*, agency accrues primarily to communities rather than individuals and only to proper communities, with everyone respecting chiefs, those senior to them in age, and following traditional customs. *Sevusevu* asserted and effected proper communal order (Brison 2007b). They outlined a chain of command from God, through regional high chiefs, to local clan leaders, lineage elders, and so on. Actions were portrayed as based on proper motivations such as “loving each other” and “serving” the community and God. In short, the *sevusevu* traced blessings to respecting those of higher rank and following time-honored tradition and did not encourage individual innovation.

The emphasis on respecting chiefs and following tradition was apparent, for instance, in a brief *sevusevu* presented to a village family who hosted Stephanie, an undergraduate from Union College, on a term abroad in 1999. Solo, acting as spokesman, presented the kava offering as both coming from Stephanie, her professors, and the lineage with whom the professors resided (represented by Solo himself), and from the regional chief, the Tui Navitilevu. In turn, Solo gave the offering to Stephanie’s host family, to the Tui Navatu

(chief of the village where she lived), and again to the Tui Navitilevu (who was also the regional chief in this village). Solo portrayed the villagers as acting appropriately in nurturing and supporting each other.

Thank you for looking after her and taking her into your family. Thanks also to our village for looking after her. This is just a small *sevusevu* to ask your forgiveness for anything wrong that she has done while staying here. She is going back again to America. Let her go in good health; let her finish the work she set out to do. This is my message to your chiefly house. This is the offering from my village ... from the honorable gentleman the Tui Navitilevu, the offering of the couple Steve and Karen, the offering of those of us who come to support them, my offering as well. I come as the voice of the kava, and thanks too from Stephanie. Let this offering go straight to the houses of the Tui Navatu and the Tui Navitilevu.

The link to blessings was clear in the acceptance speech by the representative of Stephanie's family. It stressed the proper behavior of having concern for others and submission to God's earthly representatives, the chiefs and government officials.

I receive the chiefly kava that is given from the community, that is given to recognize that we take care of each other, that we are concerned about each other, that this young girl was received into this family and they treated her as if they were her father and mother. It is wonderful the way they respected and honored her. ... The kava presented from the Tui Navitilevu and the clan of the chiefly couple Steve and Karen, from the government of America. This kava is given to God so that he will send his blessing here. Let the girl be blessed. Let the couple be blessed. ... Bless our way of acting toward our relatives. Let the road of the kava be straight.

The *sevusevu* traced blessing to continuity in following a tradition of respecting chiefs and caring for others. In *sevusevu*, senior men were often referred to as those "sitting on top of the esteemed foundations" established by their ancestors, firmly linking a contemporary community to a historical tradition (Brison 2007b).

Village Methodism similarly stressed that blessings flowed to communities living by time-honored tradition, and where each member occupied his or her proper role in a social hierarchy. Tomlinson (2009) argues persuasively that the Methodist church rhetorically portrays itself as constructing a community similar to, yet distinct from, the traditional *vanua*. But he also suggests that sermons in Methodist churches, like *sevusevu*, also assert that the Fijian communities should return to a primordial perfect order, which has been lost. A similar link between blessings and a sacred social order, to which many contemporary communities failed to conform, was evident in Methodist sermons observed by the author in Rakiraki, Fiji.

One speaker, for instance, argued that political problems in Fiji stemmed from Fijians no longer being willing to farm their land, as had been traditional. Words from the *vanua* at the beginning of services also frequently chastised

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people who did not follow traditional dress and behavior codes (see Brison 2007b). Methodist services also reinforced the idea that blessings flowed to a community organized in a traditional way by emphasizing gender- and age-based communal roles, the importance of doing duties for the community, and praising those who put community over self (Brison 2007b).

At first glance, the discourse of Harvest Ministry pastors and missionaries seems antithetical to that of *sevusevu* and the Methodist church. Pentecostals in Fiji, like all Pentecostals, stressed an individual's relationship with God and urged people to leave their local culture to enter a global kingdom culture. Pentecostalism, so the stereotypes go, is about individual empowerment and individual initiative, and Fijian Pentecostalism appeared to fit the mold. Harvest Ministry sermons emphasized that to receive God's blessings for his people, Abraham had to leave his homeland, where he was comfortable, and go forth into the unknown. In East Africa and Papua New Guinea, Harvest Ministry missionaries and their local colleagues often mentioned the importance of leaving one's "comfort zone" to try something new. One Fijian missionary in Manus, Papua New Guinea, for example, expounded on this at length, speaking about how God always moved his intended leaders out of their familiar environment. Using the example of Abraham, the pastor explained that God had a way of "pulling people out" to make them His leaders:

God has a way of pulling people out, from where they are, from their comfort zone, from their society, even from their family. Praise the Lord! He pulled Abraham out from his people. He said, "Leave your people. Leave your family, leave your land, and go to a place I will show you." Amen. Once again God has a way of pulling out people that they never fit in again ... God takes this alienated, this isolated, this in but out ... Hallelujah! [The leaders will say] "I'm not really like them but I'm called to lead them. I don't really fit in with anybody because He drew me out and He has got something to do with my life." Hallelujah. It's this alienation that defines a deliverer, the loneliness of being surrounded by people that you are not really part of.

The Pastor continued in the same vein using Moses, who grew up in a palace among the Egyptians but left to become the leader of the enslaved Israelites, as another example of God's chosen leaders being culturally alienated misfits. Those who were alienated from their fellow humans were better able to follow God's plans unconditionally:

What I am trying to share this morning is the loneliness, the misfit, the Moses-ness of leadership where you are leading people that you don't know, [and they don't know] what you are talking about. You are leading the people who don't like you and sometimes you don't like them either. Hello! You are leading people that you don't [know], that don't like you, and at times you don't like them either because of that human nature that is still within us. Amen! You share your vision; they don't understand. They say, "What the hell in the world [is he talking about]. That thing can't be materialized." It's hard, but in the kingdom of God

[we have to do it]. Without faith we cannot please God. In the kingdom of God, it's about faith.

This rather dark message justifying the missionary going to a foreign land was also part of an emphasis on the importance of not being molded by one's environment but trying to conform to God's kingdom culture instead. This again is antithetical to the sevusevu's message of preserving the straight path of traditional communal life and staying rooted in one place. In another sermon, the same pastor told his congregation to ignore traditional ways of thinking because, as he put it, "we Melanesians felt inferior and felt like we couldn't do anything." One should ignore one's neighbors and look inside oneself, because,

It's about discovering who you are. Amen. It's about settling in your life that you have the seed of greatness. It's about settling in your life that the Bible says that you can do exceedingly abundantly above and beyond. You carry within you the power.

Harvest Ministry pastors in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and East Africa often told people that it was important to transcend one's environment and do "exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond," again a message opposite to the sevusevu's rhetoric of communal harmony through submission to leaders and communal tradition.

The Harvest Ministry also encouraged congregation members to transcend local identities to see themselves as an integral and important part of a transnational community of Christians. Pastors leading the Sunday service emphasized the global audience by extending their greetings to include those watching via television and the internet. Harvest Ministry preachers frequently reminded congregation members that the church "put world mission as its first priority," and that God's kingdom culture transcended boundaries of race and culture to unite all Christians around the world. Annual conferences featured returned Fijian missionaries, to highlight their work and solicit support from the home audience, as well as from Fijians living overseas who attended the conference.

Sermons and conferences also asserted that the senior pastor was recognized by pastors in other nations as an expert in "reaching the unreached." Annual conferences advertised his prominence through bringing in pastors from other nations (many from the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand) who praised the Harvest Ministry's efforts and encouraged Harvest Ministry members to reap the benefits of corporate anointing through submitting to their man of God and receiving God's blessings through him.

While Pentecostal sermons often mentioned rupture and moving beyond one's cultural tradition, in many ways they also showed significant continuity with the kind of religious agency portrayed in sevusevu and Methodist church

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sermons. Continuity was apparent, for instance, in a series of workshops on mindset transformation that Ps Inoke, a Fijian missionary in East Africa, conducted for some local pastors and young men who wanted to join the Harvest Ministry. Ps Inoke reminded his audience that when one entered a new culture, it was important to “go with the flow,” since one had to learn to fit in with the new culture. It quickly became apparent that Ps Inoke was not talking about his own need to fit in with East African culture. Instead, he meant the importance of East Africans learning to fit in with the culture of the Harvest Ministry. Ps Inoke started in a standard Pentecostal way by reminding his audience that they should aspire to be like eagles that soared high and had wide vision, not chickens staying near the ground. People could achieve this kind of vision by laying a good foundation for life in a relationship with God. As Ps Inoke proceeded, however, it became apparent that achieving this good foundation required a thorough mindset transformation that could be achieved through perfect obedience to earthly leaders. He echoed Ps Jone’s words to the young Papua New Guinean when he told his East African audience that they must obey his every word with enthusiasm and without hesitation.

Be willing to serve, and I believe that is a good qualification for working. If you don’t have any certificate, I believe that because of that attitude [of willingness to serve] that you [will] qualify ... because ... when we don’t have the title, even though it seems like we are low caste or we are poor or we are outcasts [this is not true]. No, no, no. But God sees us because of the good attitude that we have and God will promote us. Amen! We can see in the Bible that there were a lot of people we could learn from, the reason why they were promoted. We can learn and study their lives. They were not just coming from the first step, and then they come under and [succeed] also through the process of serving.

A large part of the training Ps Inoke gave the five young men who lived with his family concerned cooking, cleaning, gardening, and good time management, although he also gave them a great deal of instruction in understanding the Bible, giving sermons, managing a congregation, and leading an efficacious Christian life. In Papua New Guinea, Fijian pastors stressed that young people could work their way up in the church and transform their lives by demonstrating faithfulness in small things such as domestic chores, helping with cooking, and cleaning in church. The mindset transformation rhetoric seemed to repeat colonial ideas of transforming the colonized through inculcating what they perceived as healthy and productive habits in dress, household management, hygiene, cooking, time management, and so forth (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). This kind of thinking resonated with Fijian culture. Young people in Fiji, including the children of the Fijians involved in these examples, did much of the household work. Having your children do the cooking and cleaning was considered good parenting, since it trains those who are young and foolish into appropriate ways of behaving.

Anointing, then, like traditional religious agency, flowed when a community was in proper order with young people subordinate to those who are older and wiser.

The broader similarity of anointing to traditional conceptions of agency was apparent when both Ps Jone and Ps Inoke talked about communal order and blessing. After he returned from the Suva conference, Ps Jone reported to his Papua New Guinean congregation that two of the invited speakers had independently come up with the idea of having Ps Vili, the senior pastor, sit on the stage so that the thousand or so conference attendees could file past and touch his feet to honor him and allow his anointing to flow through them. "It's all about honor," Ps Jone told his congregation. He went on, however, to suggest that honor was not just owed to leaders. Husbands should honor their wives, wives should honor their husbands, children should honor their parents, and vice versa. "The anointing flows," he concluded, "only when there is honor in the community." Ps Inoke similarly told his African audience that the Harvest Ministry was successful because it had a strong foundation based on honoring each other, and a tradition of fasting every year in January, while reading a common set of Bible verses each day. "We have a strong anointing," he said, "because we have this shared foundation that we all agree on. Everywhere in the world you can ask Harvest Ministry people what their vision is, and they will all agree," he concluded.

The theme of submission to authority was central in the Harvest ministry sermons in Suva. Pastors in Suva told the congregation that one should not put too much stock in individual prophecies; one should submit to pastors, who should in turn submit to their senior pastor. The anointing was strongest at the top and flowed down to those who obeyed.

This model clearly resonated with the *sevusevu* and the Methodist church, in which blessings flowed through the chief down through a community that demonstrated proper respect for hierarchy and tradition. The Pentecostal model takes this local "institution" and transforms it into a product that can be "reproduced" elsewhere by replacing hereditary chiefs with anointed men of God. Detaching the community of blessing from the traditional *vanua* was, of course, a significant reformulation of indigenous Fijian notions of religious agency and social structure. But this move had the effect of both highlighting the special spiritual and communal nature of Fijians, and making this quality one that could earn them a prominent place in a global Christian community, rather than a parochial way of life.

Harvest Ministry pastors and missionaries were fond of speaking of Fiji as the smallest country in the world and pointing out what a great accomplishment it was for such a tiny country to play a central role in fulfilling the Great Commission to take the gospel to the whole world. Fiji is a small

country; but anyone in Fiji knows there are many smaller countries, many of them close to Fiji. This rhetoric then, established Fiji as both an integral part of the world community and as having an unusual potency drawn from its communal tradition.

#### HARVEST MINISTRY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Harvest Ministry in Papua New Guinea was founded by a United Church Reverend from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, who attended Harvest Ministry services while earning a theological degree in Suva, Fiji. The Papua New Guinean senior pastor had also worked closely with the same para-church organization that inspired the Harvest Ministry, and had encountered several Fijians working with that organization in Bougainville. He broke with the United Church because he felt that it did not properly support mission. In lieu of creating his own independent church he decided to join with the Fijian Harvest Ministry because he liked its mission statement. There were four Fijian Harvest Ministry missionaries in Papua New Guinea, and numerous Papua New Guinean pastors and elders. The largest Papua New Guinea Harvest Ministry congregations were in Bougainville, many among clans closely related to the senior pastor. The Harvest Ministry also had churches in several other regions of Papua New Guinea, but congregations in these areas tended to be small (often five to twenty families). In Bougainville, the senior pastor had established four small Bible colleges and trained young people from various areas of Papua New Guinea to form “combat squads” to go on missions to unreached people’s groups in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Some combat squads had short-term missions of several months; others were sent out for two to five years to live among remote groups and build schools and clinics.

In Papua New Guinea, Fijians and Papua New Guineans alike spoke of the importance of submission to earthly church leaders and being faithful in small things in order to demonstrate one’s faith and willingness to serve. In fact, Ps Inoke in East Africa was sponsored by a Fijian couple in Papua New Guinea and appeared to be under instructions to implement their model of mindset transformation through service with young Kenya men. Papua New Guineans and Fijians with the Papua New Guinea Harvest Ministry also emphasized the importance of vision. Those involved in the Harvest Ministry said they liked it because it had a clear vision. One Papua New Guinean working with the Harvest Ministry said that youth needed to be supplied with a vision about their “true identity in Christ” so that they could know that God had created them for a purpose and value themselves. Others suggested that the vision connected them to a global vision involving reaching unreached people’s groups. Through their Papua New Guinean church leaders they could gain

access to this wider world and have a clear vision for their lives. The Harvest Ministry in Papua New Guinea focused on training youth from poor backgrounds or who had failed to complete higher levels of education, incorporating them first as low-level church workers. If people demonstrated sufficient faithfulness to small manageable tasks, such as preparing food, decorating the church, joining the music ministry, and submitting unquestioningly to pastors, they could be sent to Bible training programs in Papua New Guinea, and later in Fiji. Several Papua New Guineans had been trained in the Harvest Ministry Bible College in Fiji, and three had been sent to East Africa as missionaries. Several Papua New Guineans had also served as missionaries elsewhere in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands.

The Harvest Ministry appears to have constructed a hierarchy where Fijians were urged to prosper in business (in order to plow their money back to the church), while Papua New Guineans were encouraged to serve and submit unquestioningly to Fijian church and business leaders. Two young Papua New Guineans working with the Harvest Ministry in Port Moresby said that it was clearly important to have a vision and to demonstrate one's worthiness to fulfill this vision through faithfulness in cooking, cleaning the church, chauffeuring pastors around town, and so on. In Bougainville, the senior pastor also emphasized the importance of serving himself and other church leaders unquestioningly by, for instance, being willing to move at a moment's notice to a community to which one was assigned to serve.

Closer inspection, however, shows that the Papua New Guinean church leaders generally emphasized that all Christians—leaders and followers alike—should be humble. This reversed the valences of the Fijian rhetoric by suggesting that it was really Papua New Guineans, the humble ones, who were the superior workers in God's kingdom. Papua New Guineans with the Harvest Ministry complained that sometimes young Papua New Guinean men were sent to work as missionaries under the guidance of a senior Fijian pastor and his family. The Papua New Guineans thought that in some cases their missionaries did the work and the Fijians took the credit. Some Papua New Guineans said that sometimes Fijians were unable to humble themselves, and thus isolated themselves from the people they served by living in urban areas in middle-class houses.

When instructing his combat squad during one early morning session, the senior pastor from Bougainville emphasized that leaders should be humble:

You are not a powerful minister, you are not a powerful pastor, just because you can wear a necktie and things that distinguish you as a powerful leader. No. It is the lifestyle that you live that can distinguish you. Hallelujah. What sort of clothes was Jesus wearing? Was he recognized because of the clothes that he wore? He lived in simplicity and he was accessible. Even sinners were making their way to him. Hallelujah. He was not high up there so that people would find it difficult to go and reach him. He was here so people could make their

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way, even touch him. Even the sinners touched him. I want you to write this down. This is an important heading. You should not copy the style of leadership today. Copy the leadership of Jesus Christ. Amen. Put that with this powerful statement: do nothing out of selfish ambition and vain conceit, but in what? Humility. Humility considering who? Others as better than yourself; others as better than yourself. Can you do that? A proud man cannot do what I tell you. When you have a selfish ambition in you, you do this: "Everyone look at me! To get a name I'm going to do that." That's selfish ambition. But when you recognize the effort of others, "That brother is much better than me; he is doing something greater than myself." See, this is an attitude you must have. Praise the Lord!

Unlike those in Fiji, Papua New Guinean Harvest Ministry sermons, prayer meetings, and Bible classes, placed little emphasis on personal prosperity and focused primarily on discipline. The Senior Pastor, for instance, rose along with the Bible School and combat squad students at three o'clock every morning for an hour of personal prayer. He then met with the students for another hour of "corporate devotion" between four and five a. m. His message to the students generally involved the importance of self-denial, personal discipline, and humbling oneself in order to develop a personal connection with Jesus. He pointed out to the students that he himself lived in a humble house made of bush materials, and had turned down offers from Australians to buy him a car, asking instead for a sawmill to help build churches, aid posts, and classrooms. He exhorted students not to be concerned with lifting up their own names, but instead to think always of serving others; the needs of others should always come first. They must learn self-denial in the form of an ability to go without food, to sleep anywhere, and to live a life of poverty in order to serve others. They should not be tourists always taking pictures of people wherever they went, but should aim to make a difference in people's lives by spreading the gospel and building schools and aid posts. Like his counterpart in Fiji, the Papua New Guinean senior pastor stressed that he was respected in other areas of the world and was treated as an important person in Australia. But he suggested that this respect had been garnered by his humble demeanor.

The Papua New Guinea rhetoric, in short, in some ways turned the Fijian model on its head to suggest that humility and willingness to live a materially simple life were the keys to spreading God's kingdom. These were qualities, furthermore, possessed by Papua New Guineans, who were used to hardship, to a much greater extent than by Fijians.

This was a message that was particularly appealing to young people in Bougainville. The Autonomous Region of Bougainville, a former province of Papua New Guinea, had won semi-autonomous status after a ten-year civil war. The war (roughly from 1988 to 1998), combined with a blight affecting cocoa trees (a major cash crop), left Bougainville without electricity outside of the main urban centers, without mobile phone reception in many areas, with

poor roads, and with an entire generation that received minimal education, having been unable to attend school for long periods during the war. Bougainville dropped from being one of the most developed and wealthiest areas of Papua New Guinea to among the less developed regions.

In urban Papua New Guinea, a small elite group working in government and corporations supported the Harvest Ministry and took pride in the ability of their youth to serve as missionaries, sponsoring three families to serve in East Africa and several to serve in remote areas of Papua New Guinea.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Pentecostals in the global south have forged global networks, and participation in such networks is key to their local success. However, the resultant kingdom culture is an uneven terrain where local churches with strong local identities have distinctive ideologies formed in response to the problems and experiences of their congregation members. Belonging to a transnational kingdom culture does not preclude strong ethnic identities, and indeed seems to strengthen these as each group aspires to become a missionary-sending nation and claim their own special spiritual powers as a way to win support from their middle class. In the process, middle-class Pacific Islanders at home and in diaspora forge a new kind of class identity where success is defined not through consumption but through submission to a larger religious community.

This analysis contributes to an understanding of how Pentecostalism in the global south is shaping world Christianity and constructing new kinds of identities. Harvest Ministry Pentecostal rhetoric seems to be strongly influenced by Pentecostals and para-church organizations in the United States. Sermons and other events appear to reinforce a neoliberal philosophy promoting individual entrepreneurial initiative and a neocolonial world order, where Fijians move into a niche once occupied by European colonial powers to transform the mindset of Africans and Papua New Guineans. Yet closer examination reveals different patterns. While church institutions are portrayed in metaphors drawn from the corporate world, the ultimate message conveyed does not promote entrepreneurial individualism, but submission to particular local leaders and service to a world community instead. Church members are often reminded of the importance of belonging to localized church communities which, in Fiji, in many ways resemble traditional Fijian communities where blessings flow from the top down through a community where everyone shares the same values and plays his or her proper role. In Papua New Guinea, the church community resembles more closely the traditional Papua New Guinean community, where individuals submit to a charismatic big man, but also prosper through hard work and humility. Likewise, the neocolonial

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world order is more apparent than real: Fijians sometimes see themselves as providing spiritual guidance for Papua New Guineans, but Papua New Guineans see themselves as independent agents who are spiritually powerful because of their humility.

### NOTE

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