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Dear Members of the Anglican Communion,

Bula is the greeting in Fiji. Bula means life. Bula! Life to you!

I address the two questions: What does the Care of Creation mean in our Province? What do you want to say to the Anglican Communion about the Care of our common Home?

Over the last twenty years, the Province has taken the five mission statements of the Province and the wider Communion seriously. ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth’ is one of the statements.

Our theological education and ministry formation strategies are moving to embrace Care of Creation in new ways. At the same time there is a deepening of understanding amongst lay people of the need to care for the environment. Lay people are taking initiatives, for example in addressing the careless throwing of plastic which affects the land environment and thrown into rivers and ocean also endangers creatures like the turtle and the dolphin. In our Anglican Schools curricula are being formed to include Care of Creation and the addressing of violence in our communities.

In Polynesia we acknowledge that within many of our people is a deep affinity with creation. We live closely with the elements and with land and ocean. We celebrate the beauty of creation in the use of flowers and plants. Our cultures are rich in weaving and the use of bark and natural fibers. Handed down are ways of preserving crops and of fishing which make for sustainable living. However, we need to become more aware of behavior that is not life giving and be prepared to change. We confess that there is abuse of creation in smaller and larger ways and the land and the ocean suffer.

One of the ways we seek to honour God’s creation in our context is by use of the word *Moana* – the ancient Oceanic word for Ocean. For example, we speak of Moana Leadership and our Diocesan Centre is named the Moana Anglican Services and Teaching Centre. By the use of *Moana* we are reminded of the sacred trust we have, not only of the land but of the vast ocean. We are people of tiny islands but we are also people of the vast Ocean. We are guardians of the Ocean and its life. The health of the Ocean is vital for the wellbeing of life in many forms. The word Moana reminds us of other oceans and that life on earth – this blue planet is sustained by the diverse oceans which flow one into the other. The oceans are interconnected.



I speak from the Diocese of Polynesia -a part of the Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Within the boundaries of this Diocese, which includes large tracts of the Pacific Ocean, are clear testimonies to the reality of Climate Change which affects our global village. Island nations are being impacted by sea level rising due to Climate Change. Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands are threatened with non-existence as the sea level rises and land becomes uninhabitable. In Fiji, many villages are having to be relocated. In the Tongan island Pangaimotu, where as a boy I used to fish with my father, coconut palms stand stripped of fronds as the salt water encroaches and eats at root systems below the earth and cyclones ravage above.

The Archbishop of York celebrates Eucharist

on the Tongan Island of Pangaimotu – the palms indicating the impact of Climate Change.



We are in the cyclone season now. Many of us are deeply aware of the danger another cyclone could bring our communities. Two years ago Tropical Cyclone Winston, the strongest and most violent cyclone ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere, devastated parts of Fiji. We remember kilometer after kilometer of trees stripped of foliage and standing like crosses on the hillsides. Even now on some trees foliage has not regrown and bare trunks and broken branches remind us of destruction.

Maniava, a remote inland settlement in Ra, was one of the many communities affected badly by Tropical Cyclone Winston. Homes and crops were destroyed

and people's lives and livelihoods threatened. On 7th January this year we celebrated the rebuilding of homes in the inland settlement of Maniava, Ra and consecrated a new Church – the Church of the Resurrection. New leadership has come forward in Maniava, Help has come in different ways. One form of financial help for the Church was from a Trust of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It has taken time and a working together to rebuild. Now there are stronger homes and a Church of the Resurrection for worship and as a centre in times of need and natural disaster.

We speak of the faith and resilience of our people. However, we cannot promise that there will not be another Cyclone of equal or greater intensity affecting vulnerable communities and destroying homes and crops and sometimes lives. People in vulnerable communities need a voice.

Leaders from the Pacific today from different levels of society, including Government and Church, are reading the signs of the times. They are being motivated to speak and act so that world wakes up to the need to address the human greed and exploitation which contribute to Climate Change - to address abuse of Creation.



A conch in the Pacific Islands is blown to signal something of importance. We need to blow a conch to alert the world of danger not only to ourselves but to the whole planet earth. We need to call for a working together to care for our common home. We need to raise prophetic voices today. We face great crises and need to face them together. We have the opportunity to forward a new movement of caring more deeply for God's creation, of celebrating its wonders and of discovering our common humanity.

On this Feast of the Presentation in the Temple, may the Light of Christ illuminate our thinking and guide our actions and bring us to a new dawn.

+ Winston Polynesia

*The Chalice on the Stump
of a Coconut Palm*



