

Summary of final Session APTO-CEPAC Conference 17-21 November 2018 .

Session facilitated by Dr Debra Snoddy. Notes prepared by Dr Snoddy.

Talanoa, sharing!

During our time together we had an intense dialogue about the need to weave together our ideas and to do this in time and space. Weaving is sometimes considered a feminine image as mothers we've and give life and talk and pass on the life of the community while they weave. However, main image coming through is not just the weaving of mats but also rooftops and sails so that mat weaving is not just woman's work but men also contributing to the well-being of the community. So weaving could become a communal thing that strengthens the loose ends of the mat of our culture and environment that is currently being torn up.

A very strong image here is the image of Fanua meaning umbilical cord Which after birth is buried in the ground that's connecting the new child with the earth from which they have come. In a similar way the gardener becomes a symbol of the interconnectedness with Mother Earth which has anthropological spiritual and theological dimensions. One aspect that is very striking is using waste to make the land fertile and this gives our gardener great joy. And then at harvest joy abounds even more! The gardener image then can become a symbol for our accompaniment of Mother Earth and the people we serve.

If we think of mother Earth as a coconut tree the human being then need to care and support so that the coconut tree will grow well. To do this we need to begin with the Earth within us – like Mary – and renew our selves internally so that we can work externally. We need to solve our own disconnectedness from self first before we can go out and help mother Earth and the people we serve. Once we have done this week and goes back and do something in our work and in our daily lives instead of just preaching about it.

There is a story of an aboriginal woman going to the water and swimming with the tide instead of against it. This story serves to remind us of the need to listen to the spirit who moves us. Dancing with God and God is creation cannot make us happy. The gift of salusalu (garland) is a form of embodied practical theology which shows the respect and acknowledges the dignity of the person to whom the garland is given by the giving of the very best to the visitor.

Weaving after lunch is not good as the strands become stiff. But we need to remember the things of our culture, the spreading of the mat and the whole clan gathering to talk, the cava ceremony which has stages of a journey in it. The first stage is about teasing and enjoying each other's company. The second stage is when people are a little bit drunk and then begin to talk about themselves. But it is the third stage that is the most important this is the sharing of beliefs and ideas, family and life. It is the time for TALANOA and the richness of our culture that was there before Christianity needs to be recovered. Everything in a lot in life is talked about except for of course "the two things". Messiness

is part of reality and the need for something more. There is a tension between messiness and laughter. But both are needed in human life and in there lies the mystery.

Moana (the sea) beckons us to her and Beckons us beyond. And so we need to be a canoe of theologians from country to island and island to country on an ocean of Mercy wear our salvation happens. We need to weave together. To do this we need songs from all the islands and the country songs of hope and happiness. However, we also need to include songs of lament the amount of mother nature as she is torn apart. In this way our work much like Talanoa Is left open ended and ongoing.