TALOFA MA AFIO MAI HELLO and WELCOME

"AS I AM, SO IS MY NATION" CHANGE STARTS WITH ME

"FAAPEI O AU FAAPEA FOI LOU NUU, O SE SUIGA E AMATA IA TE AU"

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT - IC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE APIA SAMOA

Wednesday 20th Oct, 2004 - 6.00pm Sunday 24th Oct, 2004 - After Lunch

As I am, so is my nation

Change starts with me



Apia, Samoa, was the venue for the conference **"As I am, so is my Nation Change Starts with Me".** It provided an opportunity for each individual to make a difference. In Samoa and the world many things are changing. People are dissatisfied with their way of life. God has an unfolding plan to solve problems. For this to happen men and women from different countries and races need to learn to listen to the "inner voice" and to one another and together to put right what is wrong.

"Not who is right but what is right. Not who is wrong but what is wrong."

In the flower bedecked Fetuolemoana Hall, following an opening dinner, the conference was officially launched by the **Prime Minister the Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi.** Addressing the participants he said, "We have tried to bring integrity, to use the action word of your conference, to the business of government through our reform program. That has now been on-going for several years. However, while the international view of Samoa may be upbeat we are the first to admit that a lot remains to be done and we have a long way to go." Referring to accusations of corruption, which appeared in the paper that morning, he continued, "It is the people allegedly involved in the corruption and dishonesties who need a big dose of personal integrity and would have received a valuable lesson from your conference. I wish you successful and fruitful deliberations."



The Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi



The Catholic Archbishop of Samoa Alapati Mataeliga, whose inspiration has led to the creation of a 120 member cultural Christian musical show drawn from all denominations, spoke of his recent overseas trip. "I come from a country where we enjoy peace, where we are free. But when I went overseas and realised what is going on in other parts of the world, then I changed my attitude and my mind and realized the whole world is not like Samoa or the Pacific. We are no longer free and because of that, much has to be done and it's no longer the responsibility of just diplomats and politicians. It is the responsibility of all of us. I believe this is one of the reasons for the efforts of all of you who are involved with Moral Re-Armament - Initiatives of Change."

Joses Tuhanuku MP and Johnson Fangalasu of Solomon Islands, and Alan Weeks of Australia, met with The Hon Misa Telefomi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. They spoke with him and other Samoan leaders of a recent conference - "Winds of change" - held in Solomon Islands, June 2004, convened by MRA - Initiatives of Change. The conference aimed to rebuild personal and public integrity and ethnic harmony in that country. They also expressed a vision of convening a group of leaders from around the Pacific who would commit to and support each other in the building of integrity in the South Pacific area.



Clean Hearts

Can Samoa be a society that chooses clean hands, free of corruption, open to care ?

Ulamanaia Faaiu Sialaoa, Principal Immigration Officer, Human Resource Management and Development and Information Management, opened the session Clean Hearts-Clean Hands. Using a most imaginative power point presentation he had designed to stimulate thinking, he demonstrated the practical application and choices presented by Clean Hearts and Clean Hands. He highlighted the particular choices that make an impact on the Immigration Department of Samoa, including the questions of integrity and corruption. Ulamanaia began with ideas on how to change.

"To be a happy man or woman - free your mind from worries, free your heart from hatred. Live simply, give more, expect less."
Taking the theme of the conference, he continued,
"AS I AM - my spirit, my health, my skills, my wealth, my life,

SO IS MY NATION - Effective - what is good and useful Efficient - do it right Transparent - tell all, show all Accountable - we are responsible

Sustainable - keep it going



"Integrity is a religion of its own... and every man and woman is a preacher of his/her design. Our children form part of the congregation.

"In the world of corruption, the most endangered species is the honest man or woman."











Joses Tuhanuku MP, Solomon Islands, Opposition spokesman on Finance, speaking from his own experience when a minister in an earlier government, told how he had turned down a bribe and refused to continue illegal logging contracts. "Until you are in a corruptible position, you cannot say, 'I am not corrupt.' It does not take a lot of corruption in small countries for the economy to hit rock bottom. We must have a national commitment to stamp out corruption." Referring to the results of corruption in his own country, Joses concluded that, "Corruption is the biggest third world enemy... It is the minority that are corrupt, but the good ones are asleep. The only way to stop corruption is for the good people not to let it happen."

On the final day of the conference, **Onolina loane**, a young woman who is a carpenter, spoke of what Clean Hearts - Clean Hands meant to her. Working in a furniture factory, she decided to tell her boss about the materials she had helped herself to and taken home. Following her apology, her boss unexpectedly entrusted her with the keys to open up the factory each day.





The Family as Peacemaker

Does the future of peace in the world depend on families who trust one another and care for their neighbour? Where does trust in the family begin? This was an issue of significance for everyone, Samoan and non Samoan.

Father Penitito Mauga, a priest for 18 years and very involved in running workshops and seminars for all ages, spoke of the family as the centre and uniting factor of every society. He pointed out that broken families can result from "doing my own thing". "To keep peace there is a need to understand the wants and needs of each other, to dialogue, to say sorry and forgive. Love is sacrifice. 1+1=1. A husband plus a wife equals a whole. In Samoan culture the father is the head of the family. In Christianity the father is the head of the family, but the mother is the heart. Both have to work together. Peace can only be obtained if we sacrifice for each other. Peace starts with the family."







The connection between unity in the family and peace was underlined by both **Karen Mapusua**, of the Bahá'í religion and **Mohammed Laulu Tanielu Stanley**, leader of the Muslim community. "The family unit is weakening," said Karen. "This is reflected in the world. It is like the world is going through adolescence. We are not sure why we are fighting or what we are feeling. Peace is not possible until we have unity in the family and community. Mohammed Stanley emphasied this. "We believe that the family is the nucleus of everything." He spoke of the need to nurture, water and develop inter-personal communication or it will break down. To prejudge, deny another's point of view and adhere to our own, can lead to family conflict. He warned that we are at risk of "passing on the same seed to our children and their children." He challenged families to be a light that shines out. "When they do that there will be peace because justice will automatically come when the family is united in the spirit of God."

Lolomi Fa'alili works with Yazaki, a Japanese motor accessory company. "There are these things between (me and) my husband and his family. Sometimes my husband's family hurt me. I hurt them too. So one day we got together and talked." At the end of their talk, Lolomi told how she had said sorry for what had happened and what she had done. "When I said that, they said, 'Everything's alright - we forgive you' and I said, 'I forgive you'. Good things come from it."





Married for 18 years, Johnson Fangalasu, Director of Education for the South Seas Evangelical Church and his wife have been living to "advance the cause of marriage". With the recent ethnic tension and armed conflict of the past 5 years in Solomon Islands, the breakdown of marriage has increased. Despite being thought of as a family at peace, following a similar conference - "Winds of Change" - in Solomon Islands, Johnson asked himself, "Is my family a model of peace?" He realised that with his parents having separated when he was very young, he was determined that his own family would not break up. He described, however, how he had brought into his marriage a package of anger, loneliness, rejection, self pity and resentment. "I had to confront these issues and let go - stop them controlling me. I don't have to carry these burdens. I

can be free (of them)." It was liberating. Referring to absolute moral standards he said, "The application of these absolutes (*absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love*) has shed light on my heart. You see I entered marriage with the determination to be different from my father." He recognised his attitude was shaping the way he was bringing up his own children and the way he related to them. "They needed to be liberated, to be freed. To be able to look towards higher values and visions - of living unselfishly for one another, learning to share and to understand each other's fears, concerns and worries. Then in turn learning to bear those burdens and share those burdens with one another. Now as we set these goals for our family, we have seen God's work in ways that have brought so much joy, not only to ourselves, but also to our friends and to those we work with."

Workshop

Tuilimu Solo Brown - Judge of the Lands and Titles Court of Samoa and Founder and President of **O Le Lafitaga** - an organisation she set up first in New Zealand, then in Samoa, to offer welfare support for the poorest of the Samoan community. It has provided assistance to over 50,000 people.



"I was very selfish. In 1989 I had an encounter with God. I know the day, I know the time. I was a changed person. For the first time when I was on my way to work, I saw this man with crutches and I cried. Never before would I cry for anybody else, but I thought, 'God, how can I help this person?' I saw a man in a wheelchair and thought, 'How can I help?' This is what I believe God wanted of me. He gave me His heart, His love. He took away this heart of stone, this selfishness from me... so that I could love people. My family think, 'How could you leave your husband (in New Zealand) and go to Samoa?' But he knows I am helping all these people and he's happy for me. I believe this is why it is so easy for me to do all these things."



Neichü Angami from Nagaland, N.E. India, works in AIDS, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and is a consultant to NGOs.

Coming from a part of the world where violence and conflict are a part of daily life, Neichü led a workshop on "Resolving Conflict Creatively" with a lot of real life experience. By the end of the workshop, through interactive exercises and great humour, it was clear that establishing trust is a major component of resolving conflict. Being aware of the other person and choosing to care for them becomes a focus of how one aspect of trust can be built. To trust is a choice. When trust is established, space may be made for creative dialogue.

Partnership of Races

A world where people have hearts free of hate and fear, with forgiveness the key.

Mina Umar is secretary for the Crop and Animal Science Department at the School of Agriculture, University of the South Pacific. She is a Samoan, married to an Indian, both devout Muslims. "If you look at the Pacific Island countries, the African countries and even South-East Asia, we see and hear problems, and these problems are related to racial conflict. But at the same time, when you look at many countries with little racial polarity, we still see ethnic problems. Some of the countries in the Pacific have many races and from time to time we hear of racial problems. But we also have other Pacific nations that virtually consist of one race and one people, who still have lots of ethnic problems. I have highlighted this to impress upon you that race should not be seen as a problem in itself. In fact a multi-racial community is a very healthy combination of different ethnic groups and can strengthen one another through cultural diversity. Always listen and understand what the other person is trying to say and try to understand the message that is being given to you."



Walda Blow is an Aboriginal Australian, who manages a hostel for girls at risk.

"The women in Aboriginal communities are very strong but the men really fell down and had no purpose in life. The women then got together and formed things like legal services where our young people can have legal representation when they go to courts, as they had none before. Our people used to go to jail for the smallest things that they would never jail white people for. We now have some Aboriginal lawyers and I also believe that we have 30-50 Aboriginal doctors - facts that we don't often hear about. You only hear the negative things about our people - that we are all dirty, we are drunks and we don't work.

The women set up co-operatives in each area to work and deal with their people, with the women and the children, and to also try and pick up the men and bring them along with us. It was only about 21 or 23 years ago that we took control of our lives. We have a long way to go with the governments and the non-aboriginal people of Australia but what we are asking for are just basic human rights, recognition, respect and justice for all.



"I am on another journey now of reconciliation, trying to build good relationships between non-aboriginal people and my people in Australia. I feel I have a responsibility, that we are all responsible, for what happens in our countries no matter what country we come from. I had to change myself before I could talk about these things but I am not bitter and I don't want to put people on guilt trips.

We can't just sit around and blame the government for everything and blame the white man for everything. I am pointing out where we fell down, why we fell down and we are going to get up and take control. I met MRA-Initiatives of Change over 20 years ago, and I am learning to forgive and to work in partnership with my Australian friends, the nonaboriginal people."

The Heart of Transformation

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A summary of the daily reflections that started each day of the conference.

MRA – Initiatives of Change is a network of people all over the world who share in the process of building a new world, starting with transformation in their own lives.

The Heart of Transformation can be summed up in four steps:

- 1. Start with yourself
- 2. Pass it on to others
- 3. Apply it to the community
- 4. Give hope to the nation

Start with yourself

It begins when we are willing to experience change in our own lives. If we want to see anyone - or any situation - different, in the home, in the community, at work, or in the nation, we need to be different ourselves. **BE the change you want to see.**

How can we change? An effective way is to measure our lives in the light of God's guiding principles. They are not goals to be reached but standards to live by. They are:

Absolute Honesty– showing us where we have not been truthful in our words and actions. Honesty builds trust.

Absolute Purity– freeing us from the control of things like money, sex or power which can misdirect our lives and hurt others. Purity builds right relationships.

Absolute Unselfishness- enabling us to let go of concerns and anxieties about ourselves so that we are free to care for others. Unselfishness builds a spirit of service. Absolute Love– treating everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves, free from blame, bitterness and fear but with forgiveness and friendship. Love builds unity.

They are absolute because they represent the absoluteness of God. With the help of these standards, we can take an honest look at our lives and listen to God - to the voice of conscience - about how to make things different. Put right what you can and leave the rest to God. Apology and forgiveness may be needed. They can help heal the wrongs.

Pass it on to others

Make a habit of listening to God each day for his guiding thoughts. As well as clarity about where we can change, we may also get creative ideas for our friends and communities. We can even write these thoughts down so as not to forget them.

We meet people everywhere – at home, at work, at meetings, in the marketplace. It is natural, if we experience change ourselves, to share this with someone else. Then they have the possibility of change in their life as well. It is important to really listen to them about the needs they have.

Giving real friendship is being ready to: care genuinely, share honestly, listen attentively, question sensitively, learn humbly, challenge wisely, respect fully and be able to keep confidences.

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Apply it in the community with a team

Personal change can affect the wider community. We can identify the needs in the village or the community and - with others as part of a team - see how these needs can be met. Teamwork is essential to be effective. Include people who are key to the answers.

A good team can be more effective than just one person on their own. A team of individuals, with shared values and a common purpose to which they all feel committed and responsible, can change any situation.

With our team we can learn to listen to God together for His thoughts about the situation we may face. Gradually a strategy and plan will emerge.

Give hope to the nation

As a team we can aim to be constructively involved in issues which affect the whole nation.

- To bring reconciliation and rebuild trust where it is needed
- To answer corruption and group favouritism at every level of the community
- To help develop a leadership with integrity
- To encourage a desire in people to work for the good of the whole country



Rev Siatua Leuluaialii, President of the Methodist Church, in closing the conference said, "We are facing a different world today. I believe MRA - Initiatives of Change is ordained by God to proclaim the message of peace in today's world. All religions believe that absolute standards are the key to the health and well being of mankind. It's now time to transfer your learning. I hope you will become ambassadors of peace. Our hope to do that task comes from God - He is with us."









Verse 1 Islands in an ocean blue Hold a beauty and charm that's true

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Land of palms and golden sands Of open hearts and open hands *Verse 2*

Talofa ma, afio mai In this greeting a welcome lies That is warm as days can be In this tropical country *Chorus*

Open hands, open hearts To the world of which you're part Open hands, open hearts This is how it all can start Open hands, open hearts Let the words ring loud and clear Open hands, open hearts To the nations far and near

Verse 3 Families, communities Finding healing through honesty Giving hope to those who care A unity that all can share Verse 4 Faith in God, an anchor strong When the storms of life come along Seeking out His guiding plan For everyone and for this land Chorus Samoa, Samoa Let the words ring loud and clear Samoa, Samoa To the nations far and near Open hands, open hearts So the world may find its way

Open hands, open hearts

To a brighter, peaceful day





Open Hands Open Hearts-by Rob Wood





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