



Pacific Conference of Churches

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2025 Pacific Church Leaders' Meeting Outcome Statement

INTRODUCTION

From the 25th to the 31st of March 2025, leaders from 23 national denominations across 19 Pacific Islands States and Territories gathered at Kanana Fou Theological College in Pago Pago, Amerika Samoa to pray together, discuss key issues affecting our region and discern the transformative work the Pasifika Household of God is called to engage in at such a time as this.

We acknowledge that we gathered at a time:

- *when the world is terrorized by war and the politics of power and greed;*
- *where self-determination is no longer viewed as a God-given right;*
- *where our identities are challenged in the very lands our ancestors call home;*
- *where women and children are still being abused;*
- *where discrimination and inequality still exist; and*
- *where our lands are being washed away by the impact of climate change, caused by nations geographically far away from us but who use the rhetoric of neighbour and family to garner support geopolitically.*

*We receive and affirm the words of the leader of our host church, Rev. Elder Faateete Saifoloi, Moderator of the Congregational Christian Church in Amerika Samoa (CCCAS/EFKAS), we must “**Expect to be Hated**” (Matthew 10:22) in our task of being God’s instruments of salvation as liberation and discipleship for transformation in our communities and the region.*

THEOLOGICAL FRAMING: DO KAMO AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PACIFIC HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Our gathering became a sacred talanoa shaped by the Spirit of Do Kamo—**Christ of the Islands—who calls us into authentic humanity**. As prophets and pastors, we are summoned to transform ourselves, our communities, and the fenua and moana that cradle Pacific life, recognising even the creatures of the ocean as part of God’s household. Under the twin banners Do Kamo: Transformation and Do Kamo: Liberation, we wrestled with the shifting realities our peoples now face.

Pacific societies stand at a confluence of ancestral wisdom and global modernity. For many young people, identity is forged in a third space—a creative, hybrid realm where tradition and innovation meet. Hybridity is not a threat but a gift, offering spiritual resilience and fresh ways to live faithfully amid diaspora, digital culture, and rapid change.

For the church, entering this space requires toefuata’i—renewal rooted in culture yet open to surprise. Pacific languages, poetry, navigational metaphors, and oral storytelling must be

woven into theological education, digital worship, and participatory leadership. Intergenerational dialogue and contextual responses to justice, migration, and climate change keep the Gospel credible and embodied.

Yet transformation demands courage. Like Stephen, we must speak truth when entrenched norms resist. Silence, fear, and ignorance—the tools of oppressive culture—must be named and disarmed. Healthy congregations practise open dialogue, lead with compassionate conviction, and cultivate lifelong learning, becoming sanctuaries where justice, mercy, and truth breathe freely.

The Pacific Household of God embodies communal belonging: people, land, ocean, and Spirit woven together in Christ and sent to serve. When we dare to live Do Kamo, liberation ceases to be a concept and becomes daily practice—protecting creation, uplifting the marginalised, and re-imagining identity with hope. Trials will come, yet our calling is clear: transform, liberate, and embody the Gospel so that our islands and their children may flourish.

With thanks to - Rev. Dr. Safue Ulufaleilupe and Rev. Craig Masaniai of Kanana Fou Theological College for their theological reflections during our morning devotions.

KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED AND OUTCOMES FROM THE 2025 PAIFIC CHURCH LEADERS MEETING

A PEACE-FULL PASIFIKA

We affirm the work of the Pacific Conference of Churches on ensuring the voice of Pacific Churches in the development of the regional Ocean of Peace Declaration. The “Ocean of Peace,” introduced by Pacific Islands Forum leaders in 2023 and slated for formal declaration in 2025, calls the region to transcend militarised security and seek holistic, relational peace. Drawing on Pacific concepts such as filemu (Samoa), melino (Tonga) and sautu (Fiji), together with biblical shalom, it envisions harmony among peoples, land, ocean, and Creator.

A faith-centred approach is essential. Pacific churches already anchor social cohesion, conflict mediation, disaster response, and climate-justice advocacy. Their ethic of Do Kamo—ongoing transformation into authentic humanity—frames peace not as an event but a lifelong communal journey. Building on the Boe and Biketawa Declarations, this brief calls for “positive peace”: inclusive governance, ecological stewardship, economic fairness, and the full participation of women, youth, and Indigenous knowledge-holders.

Key priorities include embedding climate resilience and a fossil-fuel-free future in regional policy; recognising women’s leadership under the Women, Peace and Security agenda; protecting self-determination movements; and outlawing threats such as nuclear weapons, deep-sea mining, and ecocide. By grounding the Ocean of Peace in these values, Pacific leaders can resist great-power rivalry, advance a people-centred development model, and offer the world a testimony of justice, abundance, and shared guardianship of our Blue Pacific Continent.

SELF-DETERMINATION IN AN OCEAN PEACE

At the same time we acknowledged that we cannot have an Ocean of Peace if our sisters and brothers continue to suffer enduring colonization and neo colonization. Church leaders heard compelling testimonies from **Hawai'i, Ma'ohi Nui, Kanaky, and Aotearoa**. Guided by these voices, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) adopts the following measures as tangible acts of solidarity and decolonising discipleship.

Hawai'ian Sovereignty

We affirm the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches' finding that the Kingdom of Hawai'i—unified in 1810, recognised by Britain and France in 1843, and connected through 16 treaties and 139 diplomatic posts—was invaded and unilaterally “annexed” by the United States in 1898, then placed under the 1900 Organic Act as a U.S. territory.

Hawai'i was listed by the United Nations in 1946 as a non-self-governing territory, yet the 1959 U.S. plebiscite offered no independence option, failing the standard of free, prior, and informed consent. UN Resolution 1469 approving statehood was therefore adopted without due process or the consent of Hawaiian national citizens.

We recall U.S. Public Law 103-150 (“Apology Resolution,” 1993), wherein Congress admitted that the overthrow occurred with active U.S. participation and acknowledged that Native Hawaiians never relinquished their inherent sovereignty or national lands.

Recognising Hawai'i as part of the Pasifika Household of God, the Pacific Conference of Churches commits to stand with our Hawai'ian 'ohana through the following actions:

- **Advocacy:** brief Pacific church leaders, regional bodies, and partner governments on the legal basis for reinstating the Hawaiian Kingdom, and urge an international review of UN Resolution 1469.
- **Representation:** invite Hawaiian Kingdom delegates to PCC forums, summits, and ecumenical consultations on decolonisation, peace, and climate justice.
- **Self-reliance:** support community programmes that strengthen food sovereignty, renewable energy, affordable housing, cultural renewal, and accountable local governance.
- **In covenantal fellowship,** we pledge to uphold the dignity, history, and aspirations of the Hawaiian people as they pursue full self-determination.

Ma'ohi Nui & Kanaky

- **Sovereignty affirmed** – PCC endorses the Ma'ohi Protestant Church's *Declaration of Sovereignty* and calls on France to recognise Ma'ohi independence and end colonial control of church and civic life.
- **Nuclear-justice alliance** – In 2025 PCC will convene a **Pacific Churches Nuclear Working Group**—youth and elders from Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Ma'ohi Nui—chaired by WCC President Rev Francois, to press for reparations, ocean protection, and a fossil-fuel-free Pacific.
- **Pastoral accompaniment** – A PCC delegation will visit Ma'ohi Nui in 2025 and stand with local leaders during UN Fourth-Committee sessions on decolonisation.
- **Freedom Sunday** – The Sunday closest to 14 July is set aside as **Freedom Sunday for Kanaky & Ma'ohi Nui**, inviting every congregation to pray, preach, and advocate for liberation from French occupation.

Aotearoa New Zealand

- **Standing with Māori: Beyond Symbolic Partnership**

All churches in Aotearoa are heirs to historic missionary covenants with Māori—covenants now embodied in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori presenters reminded the meeting that this partnership is not a courtesy but a theological mandate: the gospel insists we honour the mana of *tangata whenua* and share power justly. Current moves to pass a “Treaty Principles Bill” would dilute Treaty protections; PCC therefore pledges critical solidarity with Māori churches, iwi, and community leaders resisting the bill.

Forty years of dialogue have laid groundwork for reconciliation, yet true transformation depends on **rangatahi Māori**. A new generation, fluent in *te reo* and grounded in whakapapa, also navigates digital technology, climate activism, and global justice networks. The wider Church must open decision-making tables, budgets, and pulpits to their leadership—or risk irrelevance in their eyes. Supporting Māori language ministries, land-back initiatives, and co-governance models are concrete steps toward a bicultural future where Gospel justice is seen and felt.

- **Te Tiriti Sunday – 2 February 2025** – The Sunday before Waitangi Day will centre prayer and study on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, challenging churches to uphold its promise in every sphere of life.

West Papua

- **Freedom Sunday – 1 December** – Marked region-wide as a day of prayer and action, recalling West Papua’s original independence proclamation in 1961.

- **Women and Creation first** – While West Papuan political structures stabilise, PCC will prioritise women’s ministries and systematic reporting of ecological devastation and human-rights abuses that endanger both land and people.

By embracing these resolutions, the PCC renews its commitment to a decolonised, intercultural Pasifika Household of God—where every nation’s dignity is protected, creation is treasured, and the liberating hope of Christ is proclaimed in word and deed.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT – MENTORING OUR FUTURE ELDERS

We endorse the outcomes of the inaugural Regional Ecumenical Youth Council gathering (Fiji 17-22 February, 2025).

There was strong appreciation expressed for the emphasis on youth leadership, particularly regarding institutions dedicated to training and equipping young people as future leaders. The clarity and articulation of our outcome statement received notable commendation, and requests were made for both digital and printed versions for further reflection and distribution.

During intergenerational discussions, participants explored the crucial question: What do young people desire from their leaders? Central themes emerged around youth empowerment, the importance of youth voices being actively heard, and the provision of spiritual guidance and opportunities that enable young people to influence their generation positively. A significant challenge identified was the need to shift certain leaders’ mindsets toward providing genuine spaces and supportive environments for youth participation. Examples were highlighted of churches successfully encouraging youth involvement by assigning them roles in services, such as reading scripture, leading prayers, and sharing reflections, thereby fostering deeper theological understanding and spiritual growth. The overarching belief expressed was that youth engagement is essential to cultivating future leaders who can guide families and communities spiritually. It was emphasized that

continued support and follow-up activities are necessary to sustain and enhance the impact of youth-focused initiatives.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen Youth Participation:** Leaders and institutions should actively create spaces for meaningful youth participation in spiritual and community activities, such as roles in church services and theological discussions, thereby empowering young individuals and fostering their leadership potential.
- **Establish Structured Follow-Up Initiatives:** Develop structured follow-up programs, such as regular mentoring sessions, leadership workshops, and feedback opportunities, to maintain momentum from initial youth engagements and ensure sustained growth and continuous skill development among young people.

TRANSFORMATION AND RESTORYING THE PASIFIKA HOUSEHOLD

We affirm the transition of the Pacific Theological College into the Pasifika Communities University and its work of ReStorying our Pasifika narratives for a whole of life flourishing for our region.

We affirm the Pacific Ecumenical Community (PEC) Charter which guides our three Regional Ecumenical Institutions of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Pacific Theological College/Pasifika Communities University and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools. We call on the PEC to develop collaborative actions for the implementation of our Pacific Church Leaders Meeting outcomes.

CLIMATE CHANGE – SOLIDARITY WITH AND ACTION BY THE MOST VULNERABLE

Pacific Church Leaders first **received and unanimously affirmed the Tuākoi Lei Declaration**, outcome of the 2024 *Otin Tai + 20 Churches’ Climate-Change Conference*, before embarking on a **Climate-Change Solidarity Pilgrimage to Aunu’u Island**. The Declaration proclaims “neighbourly love, compassion, and hope” as antidotes to fossil-fuelled greed that is driving creation back toward chaos. Aunu’u’s eroding coastlines, salt-scorched taro, and sinking seawall then offered visceral proof that every Pacific Island—not only coral atolls—is now on the climate front line.

Core commitments in the Tuākoi Lei Declaration

- **Eco-communal theology** – weave Scripture, Indigenous wisdom, science, and the groaning of creation into a shared “mat where no one is left behind.” The South Pacific Association of Theological Schools is urged convene a workshop so every college can embed eco-theology and local climate knowledge in its curriculum.
- **Decolonised language** – translate technical climate terms into heart language, speak of vulnerability and resilience on Pacific terms, and resist jargon that mutes frontline realities.
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration** – create a PCC Climate Working Group, link churches with CSOs, governments, women, youth, diaspora, and channel frontline demands through UNFCCC and WCC platforms.
- **Reweaving the Ecological Mat** – judge development by ecological health and communal well-being rather than GDP, and integrate these principles into national plans.
- **Pastoral trauma care** – build a regional counselling network to address climate-related grief, fear, and displacement.
- **Innovation for justice** – harness AI, resilient agriculture, and digital media to boost adaptation and awareness.

- **Prophetic solidarity** – push for a fossil-fuel-free Pacific, divest church assets from oil and gas, champion a global ecocide law, and uphold a moratorium on deep-sea mining.

With the Ecumenical Decade for Climate Justice to be launched this year, Pacific Church leaders urge the World Council of Churches and Australian partners—should COP 31 convene in Australia—to amplify Pacific voices. Tuākoī Lei calls all peoples to become good and loving neighbours, turning the tide toward climate justice, compassion, and hope.

WELLBEING – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES, DRUGS **Transformation of Disability Inclusivity in “Whole of Life”**

The **Pacific Disability Forum’s Inclusive Resilience Strategy** challenges churches to become laboratories of radical welcome. Its vision is simple: congregations that plan with persons with disabilities, buildings that offer universal access, leadership tables that include disabled voices, and disaster plans written alongside Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

Reality check: Most Pacific churches have never surveyed their membership, adopted an inclusion policy, or audited their facilities—even though many double as cyclone shelters. A recent audit of ten churches in Fiji and Tonga exposed critical gaps: no disability parking or safe drop-off zones; three compliant ramps out of ten; scarce, low-contrast signage; zero tactile paths; two sub-standard “accessible” toilets; and no evacuation plans that account for disability. Only exterior lighting scored well.

Five questions every congregation must answer

- 1 Do we have a disability-inclusion policy?
- 2 Do we know how many members have disabilities and what they need?
- 3 Which accessibility upgrades are in place, and how were they funded?
- 4 Will we invite an independent access audit?
- 5 If we serve as an evacuation site, can every body reach safety?

Priority actions

- Partner with OPDs for low-cost training and design advice.
- Follow universal-design standards when upgrading carparks, doorways, ramps, and corridors.
- Offer information in Braille, large print, and digital formats; install captioned screens for Deaf worshippers.
- Reserve front-row seating and use high-contrast colour schemes for way-finding.
- Produce embossed, large-print emergency plans and clear signage.
- Budget for compliant ramps and washrooms—high-impact investments in dignity.

Without concerted, ecumenical action, physical and informational barriers will keep sidelining people Christ calls central. Hope is rising: the **Pacific Conference of Churches** is about to appoint its first *Ecumenical Enabler for Disability Advocacy* to guide audits, policies, and theology of inclusion. Simultaneously, the **South Pacific Association of Theological Schools** will review curricula so future pastors embed universal design and radical welcome. Together these steps launch a new chapter in Pacific mission: infrastructure, liturgy, and leadership that truly mirror the body of Christ—every limb honoured, every voice heard.

A Healthy Pasifika Household of God:

Transforming wellbeing in the Pacific requires addressing the high prevalence of deaths from Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). Recognizing that “Whole of Life” encompasses physical health, a partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community is essential.

Churches have a unique capacity and profound responsibility to influence health outcomes due to their widespread presence across all communities. Enhancing church involvement in NCD prevention and control is crucial, as it transcends socio-economic divisions.

Faith-based organizations can powerfully advocate holistic wellness, encouraging healthier choices aligning physical and spiritual well-being. Recommended strategies include conducting regular educational sessions using sermons and workshops to raise awareness of NCD risks and prevention methods. Promoting healthy lifestyles through community events like fitness classes, health fairs, and cooking demonstrations further embeds positive habits.

Establishing support groups for people with conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease offers emotional support and aids treatment adherence. Collaborating with health authorities and joining national committees amplifies health promotion, while policy advocacy for healthier environments can utilize church influence effectively. Church leaders modelling healthy lifestyles can significantly inspire congregational behaviour, reinforcing the collective commitment to improved health outcomes.

Recommendations

- **Holistic Youth Wellbeing Programs:** Establish comprehensive programs that address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of youth. This could include activities like wellness workshops, mental health support groups, and regular physical exercise sessions integrated with spiritual guidance, fostering balanced personal growth.
- **Leader Role-Modelling for Youth Health:** Encourage church and community leaders to actively demonstrate and promote healthy lifestyles. By modelling positive behaviours, such as nutritious eating, physical activity, and mindfulness practices, leaders can influence youth to adopt sustainable wellbeing habits.

Responding to the Rising Drug Crisis in the Region

After a sobering briefing on American Samoa's drug crisis, Pacific church leaders acknowledged that a region-wide drug crisis is unfolding. The methamphetamine ("ice") emergency now threads its way through a lattice of overseas cartels, criminal deportees, and local brokers. Deportation policies in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States return offenders to islands with scant support; many resume trafficking, paying helpers with product that is then sold locally. Addiction spreads and a domestic supply chain rapidly takes root. Meth use fuels mental-health disorders, violence, and high-risk sexual practices. Needle sharing, chemsex, and "bluetoothing" — injecting another person with drug-tainted blood — have accelerated HIV and hepatitis outbreaks. Under-resourced health systems now treat addicts as young as nine. Criminal networks built on fear, cash, and dependency erode the moral authority of families, elders, and churches alike.

Poverty and social dislocation are the tinder. When illicit trade flourishes in the shadow of our sanctuaries, the Church's vocation is called into question. Police in several jurisdictions have urged emergency measures; church leaders agree that an equally urgent, coordinated response is required.

The Pacific Conference of Churches is encouraged to:

- **Form a regional task force** that links churches, health agencies, law-enforcement, and youth services to map trafficking routes and share effective interventions.
- **Develop contextual prevention tools** — culturally rooted liturgies, peer-support circles, and family-healing curricula that speak to local realities.
- **Advocate with deporting states** for rehabilitation funding and humane resettlement protocols so returnees are less vulnerable to criminal recruitment.

- **Equip clergy and lay leaders** with training in trauma-informed pastoral care, addiction referral pathways, and mental-health first aid.
- **Tackle root causes** by expanding livelihoods programmes, quality education, and policy advocacy that offer hope beyond the drug economy.

Confronting “ice” is gospel work — protecting life, restoring dignity, and rekindling hope across the Pasifika Household of God.

We commend this statement to our Pacific Ecumenical Community for incorporation into their ongoing work of Transformation and Liberation of the Pasifika Household as well as to our representatives to the World Council of Churches Central Committee in Johannesburg in June, 2025 to bring to the attention of the global ecumenical household.

We express our deep appreciation to our host church, the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, our host community, Kanana Fou Theological College, members of the American Samoa Council of Churches and the communities who opened their hearts to us, in the spirit of loving service, during our gathering.

FA’AFETAI TELE LAVA AMERIKA SAMOA