

“Against The Odds: The Audacity To Believe”

A ‘Household’ Academic Writing and Arts Project

Background: The impact of the Covid-19, revealed in a most striking way;(a) **the loss of resilience across all sectors of society, and, (b) the illusion of dependency on a flawed development model.** Much has been written on the flaws of the current model of development since the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in February in the Pacific region. These highlight the extractive nature of development; it’s destructive ethics of ‘more and more’ and ‘growth’; and its anthropological assumptions that the natural environment is merely a commodity for trade and exchange. The consequence has been the depletion of biodiversity and resilience. Interrogative questions are being asked about the prudence of the extractive development model, that on one hand, promises so much and on the other hand, strips away resilience, depletes bio-diversity and deepens the enslavement of the region and its people to debt, poverty, and greater health risks. The new situation has necessitated a new frame of thinking, doing and of being. As such, this is a call for a sustainable and distributive household model of development. One that recognizes the relevancy of indigenous and faith-based values, concepts and worldviews. A model of development that is self-determining which has at its core, the strengthening of resilience and biodiversity in Pacific societies.

The above scenario is the impetus for the ‘Against the Odds – The Audacity to Believe’ project. It is about furthering the vision and mandates of the Pacific church leaders meeting in 2017 and the Pacific churches general assembly in 2018 about the need to conceptualise the region as a God’s household. It implements the Pacific church leaders’ recommendation in 2020 for research and writing about the ‘household’ concept, and to produce materials for faith-based awareness and education.

Strategies: The project comprises **three strategies: (a) academic writing; (b) arts representations; and, (c) an online platform** to profile the writings and the arts, and to facilitate discussions on development issues. **The objectives** of these strategies are to **(a) a space, a platform, in which participants present their views on the present situation/realities of the household, and on what could be done to rewrite the story of development of the household, from their own perspectives and cultural and faith-based contexts, and, (b) facilitate the exchange and discussions of their views (through academic writing, the arts, online discussion, and exchange).** This initiative is an attempt to implement the mandates of the Pacific churches and leaders as noted above in the context of a region that is under the distressing impacts of Covid-19 (as elsewhere around the world). It is also in response to a regional analysis which says that if the Pacific region is not only to survive the Covid-19 and flourish in the future, it must do so by addressing the nexus between the need to capture indigenous and faith-based knowledge and practices, and the range of needs and interests in present day development.

Implementation: Pivotal to the strategies are the **8Cs: covenantal, cosmology, community, custodianship, creativity, consensus, contribution, and cooperation.** These are presented below as the central organising principles upon which the various aspects of the ‘household’ concept to be researched and written or presented in art forms and discussed online as part of a series of profiling the academic essays and arts representations. Below are the criteria for academic writing and the arts representations. The online discussion series strategy will be set up and circulated to the essay writers and the artists.

Strategy 1: Academic writing: A regional call for contributions will be made in May. The 8 Cs provided below are guidelines for the research, analysis and writing of essays. Contributors will apply these guiding principles to frame and ground reflections from indigenous, contextual and or faith-based perspectives.

1. Covenantal: The case for a household biblical re-storying
2. Cosmology: The case for the household theology
3. Community: The case for a household spirituality of relationality
4. Custodianship: The case for a household ecological ethic
5. Consensus: The case for a household politics of consensus
6. Contribution: The case for a household economic model
7. Creativity: The case for a household resilience education model
8. Cooperation: The case for a social ethics of cooperation

The rationale for this guideline is about alternative language, indicating the fact that these principles, while shared across many Pacific societies, are understood and expressed contextually. These concepts also speak to and about the values that Christianity, and indeed other religions, hold dear such as love; compassion; forgiveness; mercy; responsibility; restraint; dialogue; community.

Tentative outline: This first volume will be titled: “**Re-storying the Pacific Household**”. It will be an introductory one while the volumes after will focus specifically on each of the 8Cs. This first volume is to produce 6 well researched essays for each of the 8Cs - aspects of the household - listed above. With the exception of chapters 1, 2, 3, 12 and 13 which will be allocated to individual contributors and the volume editors, each of the other chapters, from 4 – 11, will comprise 6 essays from 6 contributors per chapter. The draft outline of volume 1 is as follows.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Development and its discontent in the Pacific
- Chapter 3: Exorcising the curse of James Cook
- Chapter 4: Covenanting: The case for a household biblical re-storying
- Chapter 5: Cosmology: The case for a household theology
- Chapter 6: Community: the case for a household spirituality
- Chapter 7: Custodianship: The case for a household ecological ethic
- Chapter 8: Creativity: The case for a household education model
- Chapter 9: Consensus: The case for a household politics of consensus
- Chapter 10: Contribution: The case for a household economic model
- Chapter 11: Cooperation: The case for a household social ethic
- Chapter 12: A household covenant on development
- Chapter 13: Conclusion

Writing guidelines: The following need to be considered when writing/revising contributions.

- Essays are to be 7,000 words minimum and 8,000 words maximum, referencing included.
- Structure: 200 words abstract, 5 keywords, introduction, body, conclusion, and a reference list.
- Aim towards how your essay contributes to ‘changing the story of development in the Pacific household’ through an aspect of the household you have chosen to research and write on.
- Explore 3 things in your research and writing: (a) your indigenous understanding of the ‘household’; (b) your indigenous and or faith-based knowledge and wisdom on the household aspect that you have chosen to write on; and (c) the household aspect’s applications to policy.

- Translate/define any indigenous terminologies/proverbs/sayings, etc., provide a separate document of your glossary of indigenous terms used, and do not italicise indigenous words.
- For referencing, use the APA Reference Guide or in-text referencing.
- Authors are encouraged to write for new university students as the target audience. Readership will also include academics, policy makers, development sectors, and the general public.

Strategy 2: Arts Representations: The regional call on this strategy will be for 30 artists to contribute to this strategy. The four genres are: music; poetry; visual arts; and, dance. Whichever genre selected, must be woven into the final arts representations one of the relevant Cs selected from the list of topics above. Artists can select any of the household aspects they wish to contribute their art creations. These must be original. Poets will produce at a 3 - 5-minutes video, maximum of 10 minutes, of their poem, the written poem or if it is a song, a 3 - 5-minutes video, maximum of 10 minutes, the lyrics for it, and a paragraph on the context of the song or the poem. Choreographers must also provide a 3 - 5-minute video clip, maximum of 10 minutes, and a written paragraph or two describing the context, message and meaning of the dance. Visual artists must submit a close-up, high resolution photograph of the painting, and a 3 - 5-minutes video narration of the context and story of the painting.

Timeline: The following timeline is tentative.

- Writers and artists meeting on ZOOM - June 28th – 30th, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm each day.
- Artists only ZOOM for coaching – July 6th – 8th, 10.00am – 1.00pm each day.
- Due date for submission of essays and arts representations: no later than October 30th, 2021.
- Editorial revisions back to the essay authors and artists – December 17th, 2021.
- Final drafts of essays to copy editors – January 31st, 2021.
- Final draft manuscript of volume 1 to publisher – February 28th, 2022.
- Online series to discuss the project, the essays and the arts: August 2021 – May 2022.
- Launch of volume 1 in April 2022.

Assistance: The Institute will provide the following to the contributors to essay writers and artists.

- An online platform to profile your essays and art forms.
- Publication and wide distribution of your essays, through PTC's online network.
- 100.00 Fiji dollars' worth of data to assist with your research, writing or video production.