

CHILDREN OUR FIRST CONCERN AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

By Agatha Ferei
SIGNIS Fiji

Parents and leaders need help to prepare children to live in and cope with the new media culture as there is little doubt that the mass media is the dominant media culture throughout the world. This is no less the case with the small isolated Pacific island nations, including the Fiji Islands.

At Fiji Media Watch, where I am Media Education Coordinator, our aims are to foster public awareness of the role of the media, to promote media education and to monitor the media for quality of content. Established in 1993, its members are educational and religious organizations and concerned citizens.

We try to empower people to become pro-active media users rather than passive consumers, to equip them with the skills they need to be critical, selective as appreciative readers, listeners and viewers. This has the added effect of building personal autonomy and developing critical thinking skills in a country where the 'culture of silence' still holds sway. It encourages people to participate in community and public policy decision-making and so grow into mature responsible citizens.

Fiji Media Watch is non-denominational and embraces all of Fiji's multi-cultural and multi-religious people. It is committed to promoting

dignity of the human person by empowering the use of the media in a way that enhances rather than diminishes that dignity. Some see this endeavour as a valid form of pre-evangelisation.



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VALE BISHOP MICHEL



It is with great sadness that SIGNIS Pacific members acknowledge the death of Vanuatu's, Bishop Michel Visi who died, aged 52 years, at his home in Port Vila on Saturday May 19, 2007.

Bishop Visi was also the Vice President of the the Pacific Episcopal Conference (CEPAC). He came

from the Vanuatu island of Ambae, north of the archipelago and trained at New Caledonia's St. Leon de Paita and the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva.

He was ordained priest in 1982 and studied Canon Law in Canada. Later he was appointed Rector of the Seminary in Suva. He then became

the first indigenous bishop of Vanuatu in 1997.

Bishop Michel Visi was a great supporter of communication's work in Vanuatu. His media staff and volunteers from the Katolik Media Center have and continue to make a great contribution to SIGNIS Pacific. May he Rest In Peace.

WELCOME TO NEW BISHOP IN TONGA

On October 4th Soane Patita Mafi became Bishop of the Diocese of Tonga and Niue in a ceremony at the Malia Tupu 'Imakulata Cathedral in Ma'ufanga.

Guests included His Majesty King George Tupou V, the Queen Mother, Halaevalu Mata'aho, Princess Pilolevu Tuita, members of the Royal Family, the Hon. Prime

Minister Dr Fred Sevele and government representatives, Nobles and commoners.

The Vatican appointed Bishop Soane Patita Mafi as the co-adjutor a few months ago to replace the ailing Bishop Foliaki.

SIGNIS Pacific members offer Bishop Mafi our very best wishes and prayers.



FILMMAKER HEADS UP NEW REGIONAL MEDIA CENTRE



Larry Thomas is the new Coordinator of the Regional Media Centre, South Pacific Commission, based in Suva, Fiji. Known throughout the Pacific as a playwright and filmmaker, he gained his degree in Communications from the University of Canberra.

His most recent documentary film, featured on Fiji television, "Bitter Sweet Hope" is about the history of the sugar industry in Fiji and the expiry of land leases and how this is affecting both land owners and cane farmers. Larry Thomas was featured in the SIGNIS Pacific production, "Media, the Pacific Way."

SOME PACIFIC FACTS ...

- The Pacific covers a third of the world's surface, 165,250,000 Square Kms and has an average depth of 4,280 metres.
- Highest mountain peak in the Pacific is Mt. William in Papua New Guinea, 4,509 metres.
- Driest place in the Pacific is Mulka, Australia, annual rainfall 103 mm.
- Wettest place in the Pacific is Madang in Papua New Guinea, annual rainfall, 3,344 mm.
- Smallest country in the Pacific, Nauru, 21 square kilometers.
- Total population of the SIGNIS Pacific countries, 30,215,000.



Madang

NEWS IN BRIEF

TONGA: Tonga, like many Polynesian and Melanesian nations, has an insatiable diet for Rugby, so in July when Tongans could watch the Rugby World Cup live, it was a great boost to the national morale. The equipment to encrypt the Rugby to paying customers didn't arrive in time, so for a while Tongans enjoyed their rugby free. Rugby comes to Tonga via Fiji's Sky TV through China Central Television Channel. (CCTV)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: With the entry of the telecommunication's company, Digicel in August, the mobile phone usage in the PNG has risen by 69%. In the first three weeks of operation the number of mobiles in PNG went from 160,000 to 315,000. Meanwhile, according to the BBC World Service, 16/8/07, the descendents of 19th century PNG cannibals have expressed sorrow

for the actions of their forefathers who killed and ate four Fijian missionaries in 1878.

AUSTRALIA: When you go online to www.australianscreen.com.au you will get a good look at the Australian film and television industry, from its earliest days to the present. There are clips from Australian feature films, documentaries, TV programs, home movies, newsreels, advertisements, other historical footage and much more. The site currently contains 1,489 clips from 573 film and TV titles and is constantly being added to.

FIJI ISLANDS: In August the Fiji Cabinet gave their approval for three additional free-to-air television broadcast licences. If all the stations go to air this will mean people in Fiji will have five free-to-air services. Cable is also available.



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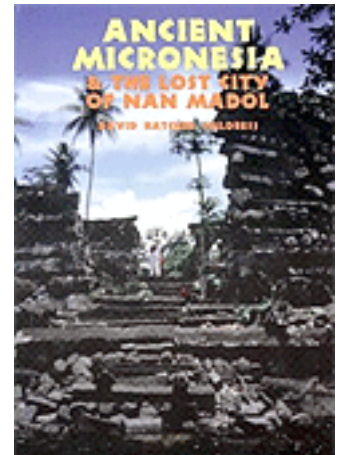
A second Maori TV channel, to broadcast 100% te reo Maori during primetime, 7.30–10.30pm, will be launched in early 2008. Maori Television Chief Executive, Jim Mather, said the second channel will suit fluent Maori speakers and those learning the language. "Fulfilling our statutory obligation of promoting te reo Maori me nga tikanga Maori in both Maori and English is our priority." The new channel is to be programmed to complement the successful Maori channel currently on-air.

WORTH READING ...

Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol: Including Palau, Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Guam.

This is a rather lengthy title to David Hatcher Childress' 1998 book published by Adventures Unlimited Press. "Ancient Micronesia" explores the astonishing array of megalithic ruins found in the Northern Pacific, including the Latte Stones of the Northern Marianas, the menhirs of Paulau, the megalithic canal city on Kosrae Island, and the ever-mysterious Nan Madol on Pohnpei Island. Intrepid

adventurer and author David Childress researched Nan Madol to discover that it contains over 250 million tons of basalt columns strewn, partially submerged, over an 11 square mile area of artificial islands. Strange underwater buildings of this incredible city are found at 80 feet. Local legends insist the huge volcanic rocks, weighing up to 50 tons, were levitated into place by mysterious island ancestors. A book of adventure and a book that reveals something of the great richness of these ancient cultures of the northern Pacific.



RECOMMENDED WEBSITES



www.dioceseofthecarolines.org/news.htm

The official website of the Diocese of the Caroline Islands is attractive with a menu that is very easy to navigate. It has the usual diocesan listings of ministries and religious congregations together with plenty of news from the diocese, which because of its vastness and distinctive culture of different islands, e.g. Pohnpei/Kosrae, Palau, Yap and Chuuk, is very important. Graphically imaginative there are just enough photographs to compliment text.



www.pacificmagazine.net/people

'Pacific Magazine' is an important media and information publication with an equally impressive online presentation. Currently in 'Pacific Magazine', available online, is a list of "293 Pacific Leaders You Need to Know". Community leaders, business, entrepreneurs, church personnel, politicians, human rights activists, academics and more are in this list of people from across the Pacific. The entries are ordered by country or territory for ease of reference.



www.catholicvi.com/new-pages/pages/signis.html

Those of us in the countries of the Pacific have much in common with our Island brothers and sisters in the Caribbean, so it is with much joy that we welcome them to the SIGNIS family. SIGNIS Caribbean was 'born' in Port of Spain in August, 2007. Its membership includes representation from nations across the region, including Trinidad, Grenada, Belize, Virgin Islands, Barbados, Suriname, St Vincent & Grenadines, St Lucia and Antigua.

PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINARY COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR



SIGNIS Pacific President, Viliami Falekaono and World Vice President, Peter Thomas with Archbishop Charles Balvo, Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand, Cook Is, Fiji Is, Marshall Is, Fed. States of Micronesia, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Palau, Vanuatu and Apostolic Delegate to the Pacific Ocean.

PRS students learning the finer points of radio presentation at the 2007 Seminar



Enthusiastic scholars at the SIGNIS Pacific PRS 2007 Communication's Seminar