



Congratulations to 2009 Graduates



**Lulan Kae, Diploma
Lutheran, PNG**



**Nafroe Aropio, Certificate
Methodist Fiji & Rotuma**



**Billy Chand, Certificate
Anglican, Fiji**



**Bresin Ruadi, Certificate
Anglican, Solomons**



**Michelle Sali, Certificate
Lutheran, PNG**



**Jonas Tetaronia, Certificate
Etaretia Porotetani Maohi**



**Sumasafu Vilsoni
Certificate
Methodist, Fiji & Rotuma**



**Josateki Vula
Certificate
Methodist, Fiji & Rotuma**

IN ABSENTIA

**Marika Cagi, Certificate
Methodist, Fiji & Rotuma**

**Bro Alfred Mazor,
Certificate
Anglican, Solomons**

Inside

**BTh students share
A word from
the Director**

Students' Column

My name is Rachel Uhila, from the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga. I am married to Rev Senitima Uhila. We have three children; Loumaile 10, Harold 8 and Hikisa 6. We came to PTC in 2008 for my husband to undertake the Master in Theology Programme. I took the opportunity to do the Bachelor of Theology programme through PTCEE.

My life as a Christian, wife, mother and partner to my pastor husband has been very challenging and continues to be a journey that strengthens and deepens my faith. I have come to learn that love is the only key that can motivate me to live an honest and fulfilling life in both sad and happy moments. The love of God challenges me to see every human being as a child of God who deserves to experience his love. *I am willing to be a channel of God's love to others.*

My role as Christian, wife, mother and partner in ministry calls me to first serve my family as servant and expand that service to others who are in need. I believe in beginning ministry at home, as in Paul's letter to Titus 1:8-9 and 1 Timothy 3. Again my motivation must be of appreciation of God's love for me and to extend that love to others.



My name Asena Senimoli. I am married to Rev Mesulame Senimoli, a Methodist Church minister who is serving as Police Force chaplain in Fiji. We have four children (three sons and a daughter) and one grandson. I joined PTCEE early this year to do Bachelor of Theology through PTCEE and so far I have completed three courses.

God is everything to me and my family. We are sinners, weak and failures and yet HIS GRACE IS ALWAYS SUFFICIENT FOR US. I believe God is calling us in his ministry.

My vision is to be a Pastoral Counsellor and evangelist, leading lost souls for the Lord.

I experience God in all that I see, hear, touch, feel and do. I see him in every person's eyes. And I pray that I will deepen that way of looking to another level. God is omnipresent—in everything that surrounds us.

I want to have a deeper understanding of God—especially how I can correctly relate theological and ethically accepted truth in our world as a Christian—to relay God's love to those who desire to learn of God. Our world is becoming too complicated. I need to catch up in how I can deal with complicated situations such as gays, lesbians, etc.

So far I have completed seven courses. The contents have been very interesting: long but very rewarding after completing all required assignments. I have gained so much eye-opening knowledge about the history of Christianity, mission in Pacific, biblical exegesis and the list continues. The 100-level is quite challenging, but I count it a blessing to have gone through with assistance from lecturers, mentors, library resources and the internet.

Major difficulties? Time, Time and Time! As a residential student I am required to fulfil college activities and my roles as a wife and mother also take up much time.

Doing these studies is a great challenge to me in my life as a woman, mother, grandmother, minister's wife and most of all a Christian (lay preacher). I need time to cope up with all the above roles of life and continue to find time for my studies

As I mentioned earlier, I believe God is calling me to his ministry. To study theology means to study about God and to learn more about his life and ministry for the whole world. Gaining more wisdom and knowledge about God and his word is the result of theological studies.

Pastoral Counselling has directed to meet the unexpected, the burdened, the strugglers, the sick, the broken families, widows and orphans, and also to be aware of the different crises that are faced in the nation and in the church.

Biblical Exegesis forces me to read and summarise the different criticisms and analyses of different biblical texts. *Early Church History* demands from me the true information about the early Church and its growth: to have enough knowledge about the Christians of the early centuries.



I am still learning to manage my study schedule. The second difficulty is the length of readings and high number of journals to write, which leaves us little time to concentrate on the core assignments.

Yes, we have set a goal, which can only be achieved by our zeal to persevere and keep handing in assignments on time. I encourage spouses to support their partners who are studying because we really need support and reminding concerning our studies.

PTCEE could assist by having reading materials/ texts ready before courses are offered, especially for those who are taking contact classes on campus.

My vision is to major in Ministry—pastoral counselling—to help me work alongside as partner with my husband in the church/society wherever we are sent.

My BTh study has helped me a lot as a co-partner in the ministry, in pastoral counselling, in preparing sermons, in teaching youth fellowship, in the Police wives' prayer fellowship and mostly in my family—for my husband and children.

The greatest difficulty I face is how I can manage my time for my assignments and family demands, and especially my grandson who was with me.

My advice to other students would be, "Give your life to him as an instrument for his wisdom. Put your hope in God and don't give up. If there is a will there is a way". 1 John 4:4 says "You dear children are from God ... the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world".

Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord for the Director and staff for their achievements. And secondly, I would like to ask if the extension courses and materials could always be ready so that we would not sit classes with BD students. I would kindly ask if it would be possible to prepare some time to meet with coordinators or tutors of our courses.



My name is Ozias Hatitio. I hail from Maohi Nui, French Polynesia. I have completed first year as a BTh student.

I came to experience God through my parents who are faithful Christians in our local parish. My involvement with the Sunday school and also the youth fellowship has helped me in knowing GOD.

My little knowledge of God has moulded my life a lot. As a result, I have decided to deepen my knowledge of God and my faith has allowed me to get close to him. I want to deepen my knowledge and faith in him through my study of theology, which is the door for me to access the Ministry.

The BTh courses have helped widen my vision about God a lot and affected my life tremendously. So I am grateful to PTCEE for offering BTh courses. They have prepared me for my ministry, although I am not an ordained minister but a lay preacher.

The language is an obstacle for me. My wife and I came three months early to take an intensive English course. I am grateful for that and I still need to improve my English. The community is also an obstacle. PTC is an ecumenical institution and I

have to live my life according to the diversity of cultures.

I encourage other students to strive but not to give up, because there are opportunities offered to those who could not enrol in a recognised institution. BTh program offers study to learn more about God.

It would be good to have a local person in our church to make connection with PTCEE. There are courses offered in the PTCEE extension program to enable students to deepen their knowledge and faith about Jesus Christ.

My experience with BTh courses will help me in my ministry, especially in the pastoral counselling area. Thanks and *maururu* to PTCEE for giving me an opportunity to study theology.

My name is Winston Tarere and I am 35 years old. I come from the village of Loltong on Pentecost in Vanuatu. I am married with seven children (one deceased) and I am a member of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

I experience God with every breath that I take. Into Adam's nostrils God gave him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). That same breath of life we share with Adam as his children. Therefore, with each breath we experience God's gift of life. As long as we continue to breathe, there is hope for change, reconciliation, justice, restoration, healing, peace and salvation.

Life itself is a challenge. We don't know what tomorrow will bring. Therefore it is a challenge to learn from past experience in anticipation of what lies ahead and prepare ourselves physically, socially, mentally and spiritually to cope or adapt to the future. Faith is based on experience and growth: physical, social, mental and spiritual. Blind faith, I believe, is conditional to our experience and personal growth in the various aspects described. For instance, wondering whether I will have the money or a temporary scholarship to fund one or two courses for next semester does not automatically depend on a blind faith that God will provide these things if I am idle. Having faith that I will continue with my studies next semester is dependent on taking stock of how I've erred in the past and using it to bring about changes in my study life, physical, social, mental and spiritual life.

My study has not challenged my faith in a negative way, but has enlightened my faith and that I believe is positively enriching.

Honestly, I never thought theology would be so enlightening. My traditional understanding of theology was a school where people went to learn how to become priests. I never thought it was so academically challenging. But the deeper reason was to search for answers to all the "Why!" questions that I ask about God and his purpose or will. Questions about predestination—why he chooses to heal some over others. And whether our actions, faith and spiritual life have any bearing on God's plan, purpose or will. Do bad things happen to us because we are spiritually inadequate in God's sight? These are some of the questions that I consistently grapple with and therefore, are the *raison d'être* of my studying theology.

The courses have opened up my mind and allowed me to look at the Bible and interpret Scripture objectively, taking into account its historicity, context, and the different methods of interpreting text.

In this world of constant changes, one of the greatest challenges churches face is how to cope and be relevant to the needs of their congregations. BTh studies have helped me to view the word of God in a broader perspective by trying to make the word of God relevant to issues and challenges that the people of God face in their day-to-day lives—most of which are external influences such as globalisation, destruction of the environment, poverty, etc. People want to hear God speak to them and provide answers to their individual and social problems or directions for change. *Social Analysis* and *Pastoral Counselling* have helped me to familiarise myself with



issues and how to address them.

The most difficult part of my studies would have to be time management. The last time I was in school was 14 years ago so I am still adjusting myself and trying to prioritize my time with studies.

I would encourage other students to draw a study plan at the beginning of the semester and try to stick with it. Give yourselves a checklist of goals that you need to achieve as you progress in your studies. Hand in your assignments on time and you'll be okay.

One way the BTh by Extension can be improved is by putting course materials on CD-ROM and sending them out to those who have access to computers. It is cost-effective because it removes the printing expenses and makes marking easier.

My vision is to continue after the Bachelor of Theology for Masters and eventually a Doctorate in Theology. It is my vision to teach and I hope that I will be able to contribute to the development of theology in the Pacific and the growth of the church through students that I will teach.

We were delighted that so many students graduated this year! Congratulations to all of them! We share the joy of your achievement! Eight were present. Two were not able attend, but I'm sure they were with us in spirit.

Many more students deserve congratulations. We have been flooded with assignments as you have worked steadily through your courses. Well done! We sense a new spirit of commitment, and we praise God for it.

We thank our partners for providing some funds so that students do not have to wait until they have enough money for their next course. And we thank their church leaders and mentors who take an interest in their learning. Your encouragement makes a difference!

Some students tell us that their theology studies are so interesting and useful that they encourage others to start studying, too. This is an excellent way to build up the church leadership!

You know the lay preachers in your parish or circuit, and those involved in pastoral care. You know the Sunday School teachers, the youth group and Bible study leaders. Have they had any training for their important ministries? Would they be interested in doing some study?

From the Director

People do not have to do the whole Certificate or Diploma. They can choose the courses that would be of use to them. For example, lay preachers would be helped by doing the Bible courses and *Introduction to Preaching*. Those involved in pastoral care would find it helpful to do *Introduction to Pastoral Care*. Sunday School teachers and youth group leaders would benefit from *Ministry with Children and Youth* and *Christian Education*. Bible study leaders would be helped by *Bible Study Methods*.

We all know that school teachers need training so they can be effective in helping their students to achieve. We know that agricultural advisers, nurses and accountants need to be trained. Certain knowledge, skills and attitudes are important for every different job, including every ministry within the church.

Training for ministry is not readily available for most people, but it is possible through extension studies. I encourage each one of you to talk to your church leaders about building up the members of your church for their minis-

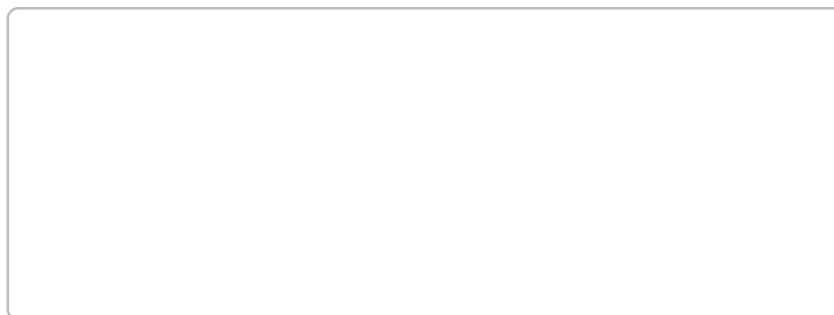


tries. Ask them if they think that PTCEE could be useful for them. We are here to help Christians who want to learn more about their faith and equip themselves for ministry!

The PTCEE office will be closed after 11th December and we will re-open on 6th January. Keep sending in your work, but the markers will be away until the end of January.

As we come to the end of 2009, Sofa and I would like to wish you a blessed Christmas season. May we all become more aware of God-with-us in our daily lives.

Deidre



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