AN ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY OF MOANA (CREATION): AN OCEANIC PERSPECTIVE

Level: 2 & 3 - Bachelor of Divinity Programme
Duration: 1. Term (10 Weeks)
Credit Points: 4
Generic name: Theology 221/231

Academic Year 2002
Term: Term 3, 2002
Lecturer: Dr. Ama'amalele Tofaeono (and others)
Class Sessions: Monday and Wednesday; 9.00-10.45am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Moana is often taken for granted. She is perceived and treated as a passive agent of God to be scientifically invaded and inhumanely exploited by mismanaged developments. For us, Oceanians, Moana is our home. It is our root and the stronghold of life. We claim the great Moana as a place where we live, move and find our beings. Inevitably however, Moana is constantly being violated of her own integrity.

This course attempts to (re)direct the students to the roots of their own religio-cultural land-sea-air-based experiences. With reference to Moana as 'important motifs,' if not central to biblical and systematic theology, Moana will be seen as the 'fountain' of theological and scientific articulations. This means that the reality of 'life,' 'livelihood,' and 'well-being' of Moana are examined, called into question, analysed and critiqued constructively.

Unveiling the prevailing mores and values the oceanic societies construct for themselves in relation to Moana, the course attempts to firstly explore related theological themes. Myths, symbols, signs and experiences of the time will be taken up as the basis of theological articulations.

We will also examine the current scientific discussions and findings related to the invasions of Moana. A dialogue between theological and scientific findings will be mapped out as points of departure for constructing appropriate theological response/s that offer life-promising alternatives for the so-called 'densely poor majority' in Oceanic communities. It is the hope that an Ecological-Theology of Moana will not only be theological in its approach but also scientific in its content and intent.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is planned that, at the completion of this course, the students will be exposed to theological (religious) and scientific themes and able to:
* identify and describe the significant theological and scientific meaning of Moana in the oceanic cultural-contexts. Students are to be reminded of the specified contextual issues related to Moana;

* critically analyse and expose the determining theological and scientific factors that lead to the many abuses of Moana. The contemporary debate on theological and scientific perspectives must be explored in detail and brought into dialogue;

* discover strengths and the weaknesses of identified issues in relation to traditional (missionary) theological and scientific understandings / theories related to Moana;

* reflect on 'how and what' theology/ies and scientific findings could offer as alternatives or solutions for oceanic communal and societal problems;

* research and write in a constructive manner, one's own Ecological-Theology of Moana. This theological articulation must reflect an ecological life-affirming theological construct and a scientifically-welcoming kind of contextual approach.

COURSE OUTLINE / SYLLABUS

The course outline is framed in such a way that it could cover a wider spectrum; ranging from the reality of Moana, the economic and political dimensions, scientific adventures and findings, the historical face/interface, the biblical perspectives, the impacts of philosophical thinking on the use and/or abuse and finally the theological significance of Moana.

Part I:
Wk.1 Introduction - Traditions of Moana Lecturer
Dr. A. Tofaeno

We attempt in the first part to introduce students to the main aims, objectives and the requirements of the course. After a brief review of the course syllabus, the students will be exposed to the contemporary etymological studies of the concept, what it literally portrays and its significance in scientific and theological studies. Some issues of concern are listed as follow:

Aim, Objectives, Content and Requirements
Etymological Studies of Moana
Literal and Symbolic Meanings of Moana

'Moana' - A Religio-Cultural Heritage: An Exploration
Myths, Legends and Oral Traditions of Moana
Sacramental Views of Moana

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings:


Part II: Theology and Sciences of Moana

The students are exposed in this part to the scientific studies and the religious proponents of scientific findings. It is the hope that after exploring the main theme from both perspectives, the bridges can be built in their understandings as a way of harmonizing the reality of Moana in its wholeness. This part is planned to cover two Weeks.

Wk.2 The Evolution of Oceanic Eco-Systems Guest Lecturer
Oceanic Studies and Discoveries U.S.P.
Marine Biology and Gifts from the Moana

Wk.3 The Evolutionary Defects of Oceanic Eco-Systems Lecturer
Pollution and Defects of Human Developments U.S.P.
Nuclear Testings, CFC’s and Rising Sea-Level etc…

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


Part III:
Wk.4 Moana: The Historio-Cultural Perspectives Prof. E. Hau'ofa

The students will be dealt with the historical and the anthropological studies of Moana. The main themes to be explored in this quest are closely related to the origin of the Oceanic communities, their socio-cultural adaptations, their subsistence economies, as well as the formation of a religiously-oriented Oceanic identity which can be defined as a reciprocating lifeway. The themes to be covered are:

Our Sea of Islands
The Ocean in Us; We are the Ocean
Affirming our Oceanic Identity
Economics and Socio-Political Dimensions of Moana.

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings:


Part IV:
Wk.5 & 6 Biblical Motifs and Ideologies of Moana
A solid biblical foundation for an Ecological Theology of Moana is greatly needed. In this regard, some biblical texts will be explored from an Oceanic perspective. The participants will therefore be engaged in a critical-exegetical exercise as a prerequisite to profound and holistic interpretations and understandings of Moana in the Bible. Thus the biblical themes will be approached from the hermeneutical suspicious point of view.

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings


Part V:
Wk.7-10 An Ecological-Theology of Moana: Dr. A. Tofaeono
Dr. K. Solomone

The last four Weeks will be spent on the articulation of an Eco-Theology of Moana. The students will be exposed to a series of theological discourses, ranging from Moana in the Life of the God-Head, the transcendental and immanent nature of the God of the Moana, some Panentheistic and Feminist ideas and experiences of God and moreso, the liberating power of God or God's life-giving and permeating Spirit in Moana. Some theological implications (which are more scientific-welcoming) of the Ecological Theology of Moana will be identified for the ministries of the Oceanic Churches.

Wk.7 Moana in the Life of the Trinity Dr. A. Tofaeono Systematic Theological Perspective

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings


Wk.8 God outside Moana and Moana outside God Dr. A. Tofaeono
A Transcendental Device - Theology and Science
Dichotomy of Spirit and Nature - A Philosophical-Theological Analysis

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


Wk.9 Moana and the Incarnation: An Immanental Device. Dr. A. Tofaeono
A Feminist Eco-Theological Perspective Joan. F. Tofaeono
Moana - The Womb of Life

Required Readings:


Wk.10 Moana as New Heaven and New Earth Dr. A. Tofaeono
Moana will be Forever: An Evolutionary-Theological Approach
The Spirit of God and Moana
Spirituality of Moana - A Postmodern Perspective

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings


TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The students will be drawn to participate in the process of doing theology and scientific researches by way of mutual or active participatory learning. This does not only help to refrain from a monologue-type of learning, but it also encourages the participants' creativity, originality and openness to analytical as well as constructive critiques. The course therefore, will consist of a combination of lectures, reading reports, seminars as well as writing research papers. Exposures to video screening and other practical/scientific experiments and researches are also encouraged.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Participants will be assessed on their attendance, active participation in class, reading reports and seminar presentations, together with two well-research essays of 5000 words each (15-20; 1.5 typed-well documented pages). As previously mentioned, the assessment is based on the participant's creativity and originality, logical of
argumentations, the wise use and incorporation of reading or researched materials as well as clarity and soundness (relevancy) of one's own theological articulation/s.

Grading

The students will be graded on their active participation in class activities, their presence in class, as well as summary reports of reading assignments, seminar presentations and two term papers (12 to 15 well typed and researched pages). Practical implications of these papers, identifying a strong synthesis of scientific findings and theological constructs are highly valued and appreciated.

Reading Reports / Summaries ........................................................... 20%
Seminar Presentations (2*10) ............................................................. 20%
Term Paper 1 .............................................................................. 30%
Term Paper 2 .............................................................................. 30%
Total ........................................................................................... 100%

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Dissertations, Thesis and Projects:

Frederix's, Teriia tetetoafa. Integrity of Creation with reference to the Maohi Concept of Land. BD Project, PTC, Suva, 1980.


Consult also Journals of Biblical Studies (esp on the theme - Land); Journal of Polynesian Societies (Land issues); as well as BD and M.Th Projects and Thesis - PTC Library.

Access to internet information are also highly recommended.