

# KNEE-DEEP in Reality...

*A FIRST-HAND CHRISTIAN ACCOUNT  
OF THE REAL IMPACTS OF  
RISING OCEANS UPON THE LAND,  
FAMILIES, CHURCHES IN THE  
FRAGILE ISLAND COMMUNITIES  
OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC.*

**R**everend Tafue Molu Lusama serves as the General Secretary of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (Tuvalu Christian Church), which comprises about 94% of the country's total population. He loves to tell how and why his South Pacific Island nation embraced Christianity so willingly. "Our ancestors had a tradition, where if one clan committed an offense against another, and tribal warfare broke out, the chief of the offending tribe would go to the chief of the offended tribe and kneel before him, covering his head with a sheet of tapa cloth. He was offering his blood and life as a sacrifice to cover the sins of his tribe and to restore peace and bring healing. So when our people heard about Christianity, how God sacrificed his son as a blood sacrifice, it was an idea they could easily understand and today we have a vibrant church. But I worry about our future if the oceans continue to rise. Our church, our nation, our future and our very lives are at stake."

Re-elected for a second term as the leader of his nation's Christian community, Rev. Lusama earned undergraduate degrees in sociology from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and in theology from the Malua Theological College in Samoa. In 2005 he earned his Master in Theology from the Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan, specializing in the intersection between morality, theology, and climate change in the Pacific Islands.

Rev. Lusama has served as an ordained minister since 1992 and currently holds the highest position within the Tuvalu Christian Church. He also serves as a director within the Council for World Mission. Offering a powerful, visual witness to the loss his people are facing due to rising sea levels, Rev. Lusama focuses less on the causes and technicalities of climate change, but rather



Rev. Lusama (right)



Flooding in Tuvalu during annual spring Kingtide

emphasizes the impacts and injustices his people are facing. Indeed, Tuvalu has become the first nation whose citizens have been given refugee status due to rising seas. Rev. Lusama places a particular focus on the moral and ethical implications of climate change, noting the importance of a biblically based Christian response to this problem.

Rev. Lusama was involved in setting up the Tuvalu Climate Action Network and has served as an official delegate in United Nations climate negotiations. He has been invited to numerous countries and has spoken about climate justice on four continents with universities,

churches, youth groups, community groups, governmental leaders, and pastors. In 2009, while traveling throughout the United States on a speaking tour with Restoring Eden, he met with U.S. Senators and spoke at numerous Christian universities and churches.

During the Sept/Oct of 2015, Restoring Eden is again hosting Rev. Lusama on a speaking tour of churches,



Rev. Tafue and his daughter

colleges and civic groups interested in hearing the bittersweet testimony of a Christian leader trying to help his people prepare both physically and spiritually for an unknown future. A world-renowned speaker on this issue, Rev. Lusama combines a strong understanding of climate science with firsthand experience of its impacts, all within a biblical framework.

According to Rev. Lusama, “The rising sea-level is the biggest temporal challenge our church has ever faced. For me, it is my calling as a Christian and a believer in God to talk, preach and raise awareness about the injustices this issue poses while helping my people grieve the very real

possibility of a diaspora of Tuvaluan’s scattered around the world as refugees. They are not prepared for to see the end the only life they have ever known. They turn to God and his church for answers, comfort and hope. So I, as their pastor and spiritual leader, in turn, plead to the Christian church of North America to stand with us in our time of dire need.

“James wrote that “faith without works is dead” and we need Christians through-out the world to work along-side of us. As the leader of my denomination, I cannot remain silent knowing that the negative impacts of rising seas is the greatest challenge my people will face. The people of Tuvalu are simple people of faith, in love with Jesus and trust him to provide a miracle. We need you to help us with that miracle!”



The rising oceans are rapidly washing away the island

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**During September and October 2015, Rev. Lusama will be speaking and traveling from MA, NY, PA, OH, MI, IL, MN and IA with possible side trips to D.C., North Carolina and Florida, speaking at Christian colleges, chapels, conferences and churches.**

**If you are interested in him speaking in chapel or other venues, please contact Restoring Eden at [peter\\_illyn@restoringeden.org](mailto:peter_illyn@restoringeden.org) or (360) 574.8230**