HISTORY IS MORE, MUCH MORE, THAN A SET OF FACTS TO BE
COMMITED TO memory. Yet this audience, I am sure, is familiar
with the fact that many seem still to believe that, and sometimes
even to teach and write that way. Let us remind ourselves and
others that our knowledge of the past is no more than a fragment,
and we have yet to use even that fragment to answer many of the
questions that today’s students, and tomorrow’s, want answered.

There is work to be done, important work, not just for trained
professionals, but for every interested human. The fundamentals
of the historian’s craft are simple, and “every man his own
historian” is not just rhetoric. If I understand the purpose of
these sessions correctly, it is to invite as many as possible to
join in the task of increasing and improving our understanding
of the past particularly, in this case, as it has involved a
church and a region of the world.

Now our speakers today and tomorrow will tell us much about
specific sources of information, particular problems, and some
things that others have already learned before us. I look forward
to learning from them, as you do, I am sure. My task is the happy
one of dealing more in generalities, as befits one who considers
himself only a beginner in the study of man in the Pacific. So,
on with it. What are some of the questions left for you and me
to explore?

First of all, I should like to suggest that we need to know
still more about the state of Pacific cultures and the peoples who
lived them before men from the Western nations came among them.

Now that, you will say, is the province of archaeology and
anthropology and their auxiliaries. Written documents, the
historian’s materials, are lacking. That is true. But anthro-
pologists use the written accounts of explorers, travelers,
merchants and missionaries who have tried to describe and explain
what they saw at different times in the past. I, for one, am not
altogether satisfied with the way some of them have used these
materials. We need to know more about the preconceptions that
these men, and the few women among them, brought to the Pacific,
which affected their reactions to Polynesians and other islanders.

Bernard Smith’s European Vision and the South Pacific suggests
some general outlines on that side, and there are studies of
individual westerners that try to measure their qualifications
for understanding what they saw.

I think there is still more insight to be gained from
analyzing and comparing the statements of Englishmen, Frenchmen,
and Russians, to name only three nationalities, on what they
thought the islanders were, where they had come from, and where
they were going. Were the Polynesians at the peak of their
cultural development? Were they on the rise? Toward what? Were
they past the peak of the material and political development that
the island environments made possible? Would they, if left to
themselves, have followed patterns of development parallel to
those which Europeans or Asians had known? Did 19th century
European views on these questions one more to European bias than
to understanding of the men and women they encountered in the
Pacific?
YOU ARE THINKING, NO DOUBT, THAT STUDIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DONE ALONG SUCH LINES. I SUGGEST THERE IS NEED OF MORE, PARTICULARLY WITH A VIEW TO EMPHASIZING THE IDEA OF CHANGE AS A FACTOR IN PACIFIC ISLAND LIFE IN THE PAST. I AM TIRED OF READING FLAT, TWO-DIMENSIONAL ACCOUNTS WHICH DEAL WITH THE ANCIENT HAWAIIANS AS THOUGH THEIR SOCIETY, RELIGION, POLITICS AND MATERIAL CULTURE WERE SET IN STONE FROM THE DAY OF THEIR FIRST ARRIVAL HERE UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF CAPTAIN COOK, AND "THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED." NO! THE HAWAIIANS WERE GOING SOMEWHERE, AND SO WERE SAMOANS, TONGANS, COOK ISLANDERS AND FIJIANS, AND THE MOMENTUM OF THEIR CULTURES HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED AFTER CONTACT. BY ASKING NEW QUESTIONS OF OLD RECORDS I AM SUGGESTING THAT WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS.

CLOSER TO THE THEME OF THIS MEETING IS THE STUDY OF CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MODERN CONTACT WITH THE WEST. HERE IS A FIELD OPEN TO THE INVESTIGATIONS OF EVERY STUDENT OF HISTORY, AMATEUR OR PROFESSIONAL. THERE IS DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL IN GROWING ABUNDANCE, AS WE MOVE FROM THE EARLY RECORDS TO THE PRESENT. AND IN THE PRESENT WE CAN SUPPLEMENT THE WRITTEN AND PRINTED PAGE WITH ORAL INTERVIEWS. SOME SKILL IS NEEDED IN THE GATHERING AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA FROM THESE SOURCES, BUT HONEST INQUIRY, THE HEART OF SCHOLARSHIP, IS THE KEY TO THE WHOLE.


THE HAGLE, THE PALAGI, TOO, CAN BE STUDIED IN THIS WAY. HARRY MAUDE AND SOME OF HIS STUDENTS AND SUCCESSORS HAVE SHOWN THE WAY, BUT EACH OF US HERE COULD THINK OF A DOZEN SUCH INDIVIDUALS WHOSE STORIES NEED TO BE TOLD. HERE IS AN AREA FOR CHURCH HISTORIANS, TO STUDY THE LIVES AND THE THOUGHTS OF MISSIONARIES, CHURCH LEADERS, AND THEIR IMPACTS UPON THE PEOPLES WHOSE LIVES THEY, IN TURN, HAVE TRIED TO INFLUENCE. I WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO NAME ANY OF THOSE OF THE MORON CHURCH, FOR FEAR OF EXPOSING MY IGNORANCE EVEN FURTHER. BUT WHAT OF SUCH MEN AS HIRAM BINGHAM, DR. JUDD, OR NATHANIEL EMERSON? HAS ANYONE INQUIRED HOW CONTACT WITH THE HAWAIIANS INFLUENCED THEM?

THERE IS A SPECIAL, VERY EMOTIONAL PROBLEM INVOLVED IN STUDIES OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES. IT IS THE STRONG TEMPTATION TO TAKE SIDES, TO TRY TO JUSTIFY, DEFEND OR CONdem THE INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION, IMPUTING TO HIM OR HER MOTIVES THAT SPRING MORE FROM THE WRITER'S MIND THAN FROM THE SUBJECTS. BUT SUCH PROBLEMS OF BIAS ARE THE HISTORIAN'S CROSS WHEREVER HUMAN MOTIVATION ENTERS, AND WE MUST TRY TO BEAR IT WITH HONOR.
THEN THERE ARE INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES, EVOLUTIONARY AND COMPARATIVE. HERE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR STUDYING INTER-ACTION OF CULTURES SEEM GREAT. WE HAVE HAD A GOOD DEAL ABOUT WESTERN IMPACT ON ISLAND INSTITUTIONS, BUT MUCH LESS, I FEEL, ON THE COUNTER-INFLUENCE OF PACIFIC CULTURES ON THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN MISSION WORK, POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.


ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE ANOTHER AVENUE OF APPROACH. I WAS GOING TO SUGGEST THAT A STUDY OF LAIE'S PLANTATION HISTORY MIGHT BE USEFUL, BUT THEN I DISCOVERED THAT PROFESSOR ABBINGTON HAS ALREADY TAKEN THIS UP FOR US. I LOOK FORWARD TO THAT. BUT THEN I WANT TO ASK HOW THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THIS COMMUNITY RELATED TO THE SURROUNDING AREA OR TO OTHER MORON CENTERS IN THE ISLANDS. WAS IT TYPICAL? DIFFERENT? WERE LESSONS LEARNED HERE APPLIED ELSEWHERE, OR VICE VERSA?


THERE IS A WEALTH OF MATERIAL IN PUBLIC RECORDS OF HAWAII, FIJI AND OTHER ISLAND GROUPS WHICH HAS ONLY BEEN LIGHTLY USED IN AN ANALYTICAL WAY THUS FAR. MARSHAL SARLINs AND MARION KELLY, I UNDERSTAND, ARE WORKING ON THE SUBJECT FOR HAWAII IN THE LATTER 19TH CENTURY. PETER FRANCE'S CHARTER OF THE LAND GIVES ONE VIEW OF THE STORY IN FIJI. BUT MUCH OF WHAT HAS BEEN DONE LATELY SEEMS TO BE RATHER DOCTRINARIE, CHIP-ON-THE-SHOULDER WRITING. LOOSE GENERALIZATIONS DEPENDING EITHER CORPORATE HOLDINGS OR ACCOUNTS OF LOST PATRIMONIES NEED TO BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED AND BACKED UP WITH SOLID DATA. THE PICTURE THAT THEN EMERGES MAY BE BLACKER THAN EITHER SIDE, OR ANY SIDE, THINKS, OR IT MAY BE ONE MUCH EASIER TO COMPREHEND AND TO CORRECT IN TERMS OF HUMAN FAILINGS.

FINALLY, AND I MAKE NO SUGGESTION THAT THESE REMARKS BEGIN TO EXHAUST THE LIST OF WORK TO BE DONE, LET ME SUGGEST THAT POLITICAL CHANGE AND VARIATION STILL NEEDS FURTHER INSTITUTIONAL STUDY, ESPECIALLY FROM AN ISLAND POINT OF VIEW. HOW WERE PACIFIC PEOPLES PERSUaded TO ACCEPT FOREIGN CONTROL? TO WHAT EXTENT? DID ISLAND CONDITIONS ALTER OR VARY THE ADMINISTRATIVE AIDS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE FOREIGN POWERS? HAS THE MOVEMENT TOWARD INDEPENDENCE BEEN CONDITIONED MORE BY PURPOSE OR BY ACCIDENT OF HISTORY? IF PURPOSE WHOSE? AND ONCE INDEPENDENCE IS ACHIEVED, ARE DIFFERENT ISLAND GROUPS FINDING DIFFERENT BALANCES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN WAYS? WITH WHAT LIKELY RESULTS?

AGAIN THE TASK OF ESTIMATING MOTIVATIONS MAY BE THE MOST DIFFICULT PART. THE AIDS OF COLONIAL POLICY WERE Seldom CLEARLY STATED, EXCEPT IN TERMS THAT BETWEEN GOOD REASONS RATHER THAN REAL ONES. IN THE FIRST STAGES, BEFORE BUREAUCRATIC SELF INTEREST OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS DEVELOPED, WE CAN SEE MORE CLEARLY, PERHAPS, THE DESIRE TO MANIPULATE ISLANDERS FOR FOREIGN BENEFIT. LATER THE MANIPULATION WAS FREQUENTLY COVERED WITH A BLANKET OF RHETORIC, WOVEN FROM THREADS OF ALTRUISM, CHRISTIAN CONCERN AND THE WORK ETHIC. A MINGLING OF ISLAND AND FOREIGN SCHOLARS IS NEEDED YET TO FIND THE TRUTH FOR OUR TIME, AND PARTICULARLY TO JUDGE TO WHAT EXTENT WESTERN POLITICAL AIDS AND METHODS HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED BY PACIFIC REALITIES.

NO, IT IS NOT ALL CUT AND DRIED. WE STILL NEED TO LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PACIFIC, IF WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON TODAY. HAPPLY THERE ARE OTHERS ALREADY IN THE FIELD READY TO WELCOME YOU AND ME AS COLLEAGUES IN THE CAUSE. REVIVING ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG PACIFIC PEOPLES HAS ALREADY HAD A STRONG IMPACT ON THE WORK OF WESTERN HISTORIANS. ONCE SEEING THE PACIFIC ONLY AS A MINOR FIELD OF WESTERN INFLUENCE, A GENERATION OF THEM NOW HAVE TRIED, OFTEN AGAINST GREAT ODDS OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE BARRIERs, TO SEE THE SUBJECT FROM THE OTHER SIDE. THE WORK OF THE CROCOMBES AND THE YOUNG SCHOLARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC GIVEN US MODELS, SIONE LATukeFU AND OTHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA FORM ANOTHER CENTER ALREADY LONG AT WORK. AND IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOLARS ARE WELL AHEAD OF US.

HERE IN HAWAII WE HAVE VIRTUALLY THE ONLY CENTERS OF STUDY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS TO BE FOUND IN AMERICA TODAY, LET US HOPE THAT HERE AMONG US MAY SIT ONE WHO WILL REVEAL MORE CLEARLY THAN ANYONE HAS YET DONE THE MUTUAL INFLUENCES OF OUR CULTURES UPON EACH OTHER AND THEIR COMMON POTENTIALS FOR A FULLER LIFE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLES;

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