

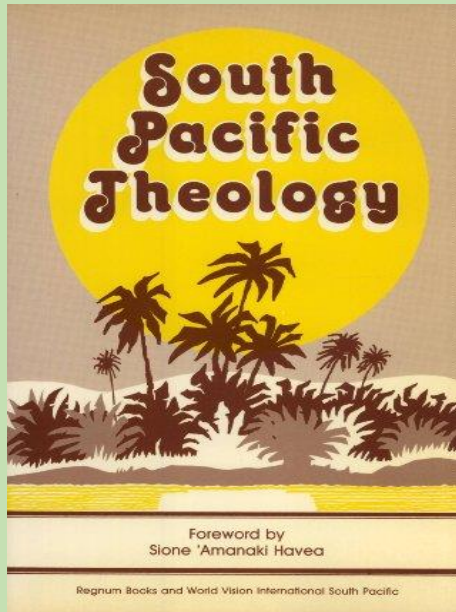


UNIVERSITY OF
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CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR
CHRISTIANITY
WORLDWIDE

Seminar – Michaelmas Term 2025



The Paradoxes of the Regional and the Local in Pacific Theologies and Christianities

Dr Richard Davis, Wesley House, Cambridge

Wednesday 5 November 2025, 4.00–5.30pm GMT

Lightfoot Room, Faculty of Divinity, West Road & Online

Pacific Christianity has an identity crisis. On the one hand, Pacific Christians speak of the “Pacific Way” or a common “Pacific Culture” in their perennial quest for a Pacific contextual theology. Such theologies have been based on the common experience of the sea, the communal, or “relational” nature of Pacific cultures, or the (largely) shared colonial/post-colonial experience. On the other hand, the Pacific region's diversity makes such commonalities highly questionable, while at the same time ecumenical commitments are waning. The regionalists speak in ideological and regional terms, which cut across ethnographic methods, leading to regional theologies and frameworks which local theologians and churches are expected to adopt. In response, local and parochial theologies and Christian institutions are in the ascendancy, which ultimately threaten the regional institutions that provide the scholars and leaders of national churches. Yet while the regional approaches are failing or intellectually weak, they are needed to support regional and ecumenical Christianity in the Pacific. This paper will explore these questions and ask whether regional theologies can mediate between the universal and the local for the advantage of all.

Dr Richard Davis is the Vice Principal and Director of the Centre for Faith in Public Life at Wesley House, Cambridge. A New Zealander, Richard taught theology and ethics for several years at the Pacific Theological College in Fiji Islands. At Wesley House he teaches African contextual theology and supervises PhD students from around the world. His own research is in Decolonial Settler Theology, being a contextual decolonising theology for and by settlers in settler colonial societies. He has authored several publications on themes including Christianity in Oceania, political/public theology, settler colonialism, and climate justice.