

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE HEARING**

Under The Inquiries Act 2013

In the matter of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

Royal Commission: Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)
Dr Anaru Erueti
Ali'imuumua Sandra Alofivae
Paul Gibson

Counsel: Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC, Ms Katherine Anderson, Ms Tania Sharkey, Mr Michael Thomas, Ms Kathy Basire and Ms Alisha Castle for the Royal Commission

Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave and Ms Julia White for the Crown

Ms Sally McKechnie and Ms Brooke Clifford for Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders

Ms India Shores for the Anglican Church

Ms Maria Dew, Ms Kiri Harkess and Mr Lourenzo Fernandez for the Methodist Church of New Zealand and Wesley College

Ms Lydia Oosterhoff for the Survivor Network of those Abused by Priests

Mr Brian Henry for Gloriavale Leavers' Support Trust

Mr Chris Shannon and Ms Clare Sykes for Gloriavale Christian Community

Venue: Level 2
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
414 Khyber Pass Road
AUCKLAND

Date: 13 October 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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15 **MS BEATON:** Now we're having Frances Tagaloa from the Survivor Advisory Group, so I invite
16 her to come forward, Madam Chair, and we also have Tu Chapman and Jim Goodwin on
17 AVL from that group.

18 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koutou katoa ngā mema o SAGE and it's very nice to see you in person, Ms
19 Tagaloa.

20 **MS TAGALOA:** Yes.

21 **CHAIR:** She has been appearing dutifully by AVL from North America and it's good to have you
22 back on home ground. So, Talofa lava.

23 **OPENING STATEMENT BY SAGE**

24 **MS TAGALOA:** Talofa lava, kia ora koutou. Ou te faatalofa atu i le pa'ia ma le mamalu ua aofia
25 i lenei aso matagofie, malo le soifua malo le lagi e mamā, talofa lava. (I extend a warm
26 welcome to distinguished guests present in this wonderful day, greetings to good health and
27 wellbeing). Warm Pacific greetings to Madam Chair and the Commissioners, to my friends
28 Jim and Tu online and to the many survivors watching in here today. I'm Moeapulu
29 Frances Tagaloa, a survivor of faith-based abuse and as many of you know, the first witness
30 in the faith-based hearing in November 2020.

31 Thank you for this opportunity to represent survivors, to give survivors a voice as
32 this Commission has continued to do through all its hearings, for listening and to encourage
33 that.

1 For those who can't see me, I'm wearing a blue dress, a black jacket, I have long
2 black hair and I have a flower in my ear as is my Samoan custom.

3 So this hearing I just believe will reveal that faith-based institutions have failed
4 survivors and failed New Zealand. They have failed to act and have failed to take
5 responsibility for the abuse that's happened. They've not put survivors first ahead of
6 perpetrators and have not put survivors ahead of their own interests.

7 They've not provided appropriate ways forward for survivors to heal and have
8 redress, and that's continued to perpetrate more harm to survivors particularly.

9 So as a survivor, I expect to hear how faith-based institutions have failed to act and
10 take responsibility in more detail. I expect to hear how difficult it has been for survivors in
11 disclosing their abuse, how they've not been believed by so many faith-based institutions,
12 how they've been belittled and also how they've been seen to be their fault somehow
13 because of this abuse.

14 I expect that we'll hear how survivors have been taken advantage of by faith-based
15 institutions because of the imbalance of power. Faith-based institutions have all the power.
16 So when survivors come forward there's a natural imbalance, they don't have power.

17 And I just expect to hear that the many orders and schools and institutions have
18 been managed without adequate supervision, without adequate accountability from the
19 churches themselves, but also from the State. I believe the State abdicated its responsibility
20 to faith-based institutions in their care and by not supervising or holding faith-based
21 institutions accountable.

22 I expect to hear how orders have managed to gain impunity from legal action
23 because often of their complex legal structures. There's no accountability because who
24 knows how -- who do you go to within a church or within an organisation with a claim?

25 I expect to hear how systemic racism was occurring in faith-based institutions and
26 that unaddressed racism pervaded some of these institutions and made them more
27 vulnerable, made children and vulnerable adults more open to abuse because of the racism.

28 I expect to hear how faiths have failed Te Tiriti o Waitangi, they've failed in their
29 partnership, they've failed in their participation of Māori and they've failed in their
30 protection of people.

31 And I expect to hear how faith organisations have lacked record-keeping. This has
32 been profound for me personally – I think I have two pieces of paper of my historic claim –
33 and we will hear, I'm sure, of the lack of record-keeping and often destruction of records,

1 and records for survivors are vital to understand the context of abuse and how this could
2 possibly happen in the historic situation.

3 And I expect to hear how protection of churches and reputation has been paramount.
4 That has been what's been lifted up, and helping survivors heal or obtain justice has taken a
5 back seat to the protection of the church institution itself.

6 And I expect to hear that that culture of silence and tolerance that protects churches
7 was pervasive and even church laity today, I believe, do not know the extent of the abuse
8 that's happened in their own churches, because churches are not disclosing that information,
9 they're not letting their laity, their congregations know what's happened.

10 And my hope is that churches will be brave enough to express support for the
11 recommendations of this Commission, and also support for an independent body that this
12 Commission's desiring to come about.

13 Churches have been quick to give apologies in the past but as I said in the State
14 response hearing, a real apology comes with action, with redress and financial support for
15 survivors, and creating an infrastructure that stops this abuse in care, holding all institutions
16 accountable.

17 Churches need transformational change, which I believe can only happen when
18 churches have this healthy accountability to an independent body.

19 I want to acknowledge the many brave and courageous survivors that have come
20 forward to the Commission, that have shared their stories. It is so difficult to do that, to
21 disclose even your story, but then to disclose it to this Commission. I want to acknowledge
22 them for their bravery and celebrate them and encourage them to keep sharing their stories,
23 to not be silenced by this culture that has come about.

24 I want to celebrate those survivors that have publicly given their story as well. It's
25 helped these difficult aspects of our history come into the light, so that we can have change,
26 so that we can make our futures better. And I want to support those who have fought for
27 standing up for this Inquiry. There are many others who have supported survivors and
28 supported this Inquiry continuing. I just want to acknowledge that we really stand on the
29 shoulders of these survivors and these survivor groups who supported that.

30 We survivors who have shared our abuse stories with the Royal Commission
31 reliving our trauma, sharing our shame and pain, risking family relationships, risking
32 reputation, we do this because we live in hope of change. Because we want justice,
33 because we want wrongs to be put right, because we know that there are other survivors
34 who can't tell their stories, because we need help, financial or otherwise, to navigate life.

1 But ultimately, as Alison Pascoe said – she passed away recently – but she said time and
2 time again, "We don't want what happened to us to ever, ever happen again to anyone else."

3 Thank you, Madam Chair; thank you, Commissioners.

4 **CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Ms Tagaloa. **[Applause]**. Thank you, Ms Beaton.