

MESEISET

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION

MIUTY NOKAR — OUR LATEST MASTER

Who is the latest champ on campus? Congratulations are extended to Miuty Nokar who last month received his **master’s degree** from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His degree is in education, and the topic of his thesis work was **ethnomathematics**.

In the past few years Miuty was a participant in a special online program to design and develop culture-based math curriculum and instruction. The program included other participants from Micronesia. Their task began with learning how traditional Pacific islanders used math in their daily lives — such as counting and measuring, thinking, and building canoehouses. Given culture change and loss of traditional knowledge and skills, the participants engaged in re-establishing traditional math as lessons to be taught to our school children today. That is a general purpose of ethnomathematics — a cultural renaissance in math education.

To be sure, Miuty has completed his master’s degree program requirements; however, his task continues into the future. Yes, he is expected to continue math teaching at Chuuk Campus and, in consonance with the Chuuk State Department of Education, to improve math education at Chuuk’s public schools. The improvement will assist today’s children to know, understand, and apply traditional Chuukese math ideas into practical lifestyle.

Miuty, in his younger years, was a student in Chuuk’s first Third-Year Program in Teacher Preparation. He attended the Fourth-Year Program at our National Campus. Then, he completed the fourth-year program requirements through the University of Guam and received his bachelor’s degree. φ

A NEW AND FRIENDLY BOARD

The COM-FSM Board of Regents established in March 2013 a new and separate board to guide the “**Friends of COM-FSM Foundation**”. Its purpose is to raise money for the college’s Endowment Fund, according to an article in the COM-FSM news website in May 2013.

The 5-member board is composed of Floyd Takeuchi (President), Jerry Kramer & Fran Hezel, S.J. (Vice-Presidents), Jerry Finin (Secretary), and Mark Heath (Treasurer).

Good luck, gentlemen! Let the money roll in! φ



Floyd Takeuchi

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MESEISET DISCLAIMER POLICY

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Editorial #1: **GET RID OF COPY-CATS**

by Alton Higashi

Our General Catalog claims, “*The COM-FSM is a community of scholars*”. That may be a general truth, but a number of Chuuk Campus students are guilty of plagiarism. During the last week of instruction, Spring 2013, two students in my SS 150 (History of Micronesia) class committed **plagiarism**. Both, separately, had copied the writings of other people, did not acknowledge the sources of those writings, and submitted essays — pretending that they had written information stolen from other writers.

As far as I am concerned, these two students bring shame onto themselves, their families, the COM-FSM community, and Chuuk State.

Sorry, I will not identify the students by name — **to protect the guilty**. So, I can be accused of being an **accessory to the students’ crime**.

In certain courses, especially English-writing classes, students are informed that plagiarism is not acceptable behavior. Our Catalog adds that disciplinary action against a student plagiarist is appropriate.

Case #1: Two students submitted the same essay on global warming. When I say “same”, the two essays used the same font, the same words — exactly the same (word for word) — and even the misspellings were the same. When I confronted the two — in class — one admitted that the other had borrowed his jump drive (or USB). In effect, the second student stole the essay from the first student. To make matters worse, the thief (or stealer) is a religious leader in his community.

When I say that I myself may be an accessory to the crime, I “helped” the plagiarist by tearing up his essay in front of his classmates to “get rid” of the evidence. Now, what I did — by tearing up the essay — was wrong on my part.

Case #2: Another student submitted his essay, also on global warming. At first, I scanned the essay in class, and I realized that the student’s writing was in perfect (100%) English, and that the information in his body paragraphs was equivalent to what a master’s degree student would write. To be sure, the information was accurate, but the perfection of the student’s writing made me suspicious. So, I asked him to define or clarify

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Editorial #2: **TIME TO KICK BUTTS**

by Alton Higashi

Four Chuuk Campus students — two from one region, and two more from another region — steal money from other students. Surprise, surprise — the four are **female**.

I first heard about this matter in early last month and thought, “*No, it couldn’t be true.*” So, I launched an informal investigation of my own — interviewing several students, faculty, and staff on campus, and then two outsiders — all of whom confirmed what I had just heard. So, I decided to write this article and explain what had happened.

In the past few months, the female thieves worked in pairs. Together, they went to the computer lab. They watched their fellow students. If someone left his backpack in the lab and walked out, the pair began their theft. One woman would stand near the door to watch if the victim was returning to the lab. The second woman would put her own backpack on the victim’s backpack. Then, she would pretend to be looking for something in her own backpack while she was actually rifling through the victim’s backpack. Sometimes, the first woman would pick up her own backpack, grabbing the victim’s backpack at the same time and then walking out of the computer lab, sometimes going over to the library. Both women would leave together and then, in the library, take things out of the victim’s backpack — such as money.

In effect, the two women are guilty not only of **theft** but also of **conspiracy** to commit the heinous crime.

Some of the interviewees knew the two women by name. They also identified for me their home islands. The four did not work together as a foursome team. Finally, I found out that the two teams stole money on several occasions, not just once. Some interviewees admitted that they actually witnessed the thieving women in action. Oh, yes, I also learned the names of the hapless victims.

Now, I must apologize to guys on campus, because I falsely assumed that, if we had thieves on campus, women in Chuuk have achieved **gender equity** with men. Women are just as likely as men to commit the crime of theft.

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A Debate: Should We Legalize Prostitution in the FSM?

[Editor's Note: Prostitution is often called "the world's oldest profession". Be it as it may, discussion on this topic is like a debate — for and against. Two students in SS 150 (History of Micronesia) have written articles to discuss the topic. Both exercise their right or freedom to debate, and their viewpoints below reflect this exercise.]

YES!

by Filemino Kilicho

Prostitution is both an economic development issue and also a moral issue. The purpose of this essay, however, is to discuss only the economics of prostitution, not its morality.

Let me begin with the present economic crisis in our nation. Unemployment is very high, especially in Chuuk. According to the FSM Census 2010, about 34% of Chuuk's labor force is unemployed. That is the highest in the nation. Also, among various Micronesian entities, the FSM has a very low "gross domestic product" less than \$3,000 per person, and Chuuk's gross domestic product per capita has remained the lowest in the nation for almost three decades. Workers and companies pay income taxes to the government, and income tax collection in the nation, including Chuuk, is very, very low. Without income taxation, the government depends on the U.S. Compact II funding for education, health, and most social services for the general public.

These are economic development issues, and, since the 1970s, our Micronesian government has done almost nothing to get us out of the present economic dilemma. Here are phrases — all negative — to describe our economy nowadays: economic inertia, defective economy, perpetual problem, vicious cycle of band-aid therapy, infection and sickness of the economy. Then, add to these woes the problem of leaders' misuse of government funds. It is a bad situation getting worse. For instance, Compact I funds amounted to \$1.5 billion total. In the year 2000 the General Accounting Office (GAO) in the U.S. Congress wrote a report and identified how FSM Congressmen were misusing \$500 million of the total \$1.5 billion — one-third of the total Compact I budget was misused!

So, what in the past 35 years has our government tried to do right? Fishing projects failed, agriculture goes nowhere, and tourism works because of the private sector, no thanks to our

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NO!

by Nellie G. Kiteuo

Pleasure — it means the same thing no matter where you come from. However, is it right to use money to give or receive pleasure? Today, throughout the world, both men and women have sex for money. Women who sell their bodies for sex are labeled as prostitutes. As far as I am concerned, this practice is immoral — I therefore stand against prostitution in Chuuk.

First, let me discuss this topic in the context of our personal lives. A prostitute is somebody's mother, sister, or daughter. She brings shame and disgrace to her own family. She has a father and mother. She has brothers and sisters. Just imagine how they would feel to know what she is doing — selling her body for money. Just imagine that she is your own mother, sister, or daughter — how would you feel?

Here in Chuuk everyone knows everybody else. Everyone in town will know what she is doing, and her family will feel the social disgrace. I do not need to know any prostitute personally, but just knowing that her behavior as a Chuukese prostitute reflects badly on me as another Chuukese. I would be ashamed or embarrassed to call myself a Chuukese.

Second, I may be conservative or traditional in the way I think and feel, but I believe that the human body is not a playground for sale. There comes a time, in the life of a woman, when she gets married. At that time, she may enjoy the pleasure of her mate's company, and that is the sacred bond between a husband and a wife.

Now, let me go one step further — and discuss the relationship between a girlfriend and a boyfriend. They are not yet married, and in Chuuk they sometimes engage in sex. However, no boyfriend would pay his girlfriend for having sex, and, if he does, he definitely does not love her. Rather, he cheapens the relationship and treats his girlfriend like a prostitute. That kind of relationship is sick, and she should dump him!

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TIME TO KICK BUTTS

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So, what do we do now? I interviewed several students and asked them the question. Most responded, “*Give these girls and other students a second chance.*”

Well, from my point of view, a second chance is not to change from bad to good or from wrong to bad. No, in my opinion, a second chance is to give thieves another opportunity to continue stealing. Since I am against this kind of second chance, I strongly recommend that we just kick their butts. Let them learn that they must accept the consequences of misconduct. If we choose not to kick butts, let the police take care of these women by locking them up in prison. After all, there are already too many men in prison, and we need gender equity among prisoners.

What I am really saying here is that we need to make the consequences severe and frightening, so that potential thieves will understand the power of **deterrence**. Φ

Should We Legalize Prostitution in the FSM? — YES!

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government. So, now, what can we do to help alleviate the crisis? I say, legalize prostitution and give it a chance to eradicate the problem, and bring economic development up.

Step One is for the legislative bodies (such as FSM Congress and Chuuk State Legislature) to pass laws to legalize prostitution. The laws must regulate, monitor, and tax the business of prostitution. Now, be aware that many Chuukese men travel abroad and visit brothels (where prostitutes wait for their customers). In other words, these Chuukese men are customers of prostitutes outside of the FSM. So, if they argue that prostitution is immoral, then they themselves are immoral liars and hypocrites because they support prostitution outside of our nation.

Okay, Step Two is for all of us to know certain facts. There are places in America, such as Las Vegas, where some expert prostitutes earn up to \$5,000 an hour. Beginning prostitutes can earn only \$50 to \$100 an hour. In fact, a U.S. governor used to visit his favorite prostitute three times a month and paid her \$5,500 each visit — that is about \$16,500 a month!

Now, change from America to the Netherlands (Holland) in Europe. Prostitution is legal there in the city of Amsterdam where prostitutes are required to have physical check-ups once every two weeks — to make sure that they have no sexual diseases to pass on to customers. Since prostitution is legal, prostitution is a business, and the government collects income taxes from the brothels (private businesses) and their prostitutes

(individual employees), it is good business.

What about Micronesia? Yes, in traditional Palau, each village had a men’s clubhouse (bai). A woman from a neighboring village was sent by the chief to live in another village’s bai and to provide sexual service to the men. The men gave to the woman gifts, land, and other valued items. When the woman returned to her own village, she was rich, shared her wealth with her family and villagers, and gained cultural respect for doing what she did. As far as I am concerned, that seems to have been “cultural prostitution”.

Now, go back to Biblical times. In Genesis 38 we read about Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. Not recognizing Tamar as his daughter-in-law and thinking that she was a “harlot”, Judah had sex with her. He gave her gifts in exchange for having sex with her. Of course, God knew about this and did not punish Judah and Tamar.

I am aware of the international problem of human trafficking. Legalized prostitution is not the same at all. The laws can set the age at 20 years old to become a legal prostitute, and so only adults can become prostitutes. Also, if some men do not accept prostitution, they do not have to visit any prostitute at a brothel. Since it would be a business, customers can decide to visit the business, or not. It is up to the customers.

The economic benefits of legalized prostitution would help the FSM. As far as I am concerned, this should not be a moral issue, and I recommend that our legislators and congressmen discuss how we can legalize prostitution. φ

GET RID OF COPY-CATS

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clarify a few words from the essay. He could not do so. He was guilty of plagiarism too.

Since I had torn up the plagiarized essay in Case #1, I did the same in this second case.

I asked my SS 150 class what would be appropriate action for me to take. A classmate of the plagiarists boldly advised me to expel the guilty from Chuuk Campus. A couple of other students advised that I should give the two guilty students a “second chance”. A few more advised that I should just give the plagiarists the letter grade of F but not to submit their names for disciplinary action. Most students remained silent, not wanting to make a public commitment for or against the guilty.

Now, in both cases (as described above) the plagiarists may accuse me of calling them plagiarists — without “proof” to be presented to the Discipline Committee or Student Conduct Board. I should have properly called these so-called crimes as “**allegations**”. So, yes, my first recommendation is for the two “alleged” plagiarists to accuse me of not giving them “**due process**” — I would welcome the opportunity to explain why I did what I did.

My second recommendation is for my own benefit. In the future, I shall not — I repeat, not — tear up the essays. Rather, I shall submit them to any Discipline Committee or Student Conduct Board as evidence of plagiarism. Then, let our administration find them guilty and kick these copy-cats out of college.

My third recommendation is for all instructors to explain in each and every class (in which students are expected to write essays or compositions) the rules of footnoting and/or referencing to avoid plagiarism. If we the instructors are guilty of being lenient toward plagiarists, then we are accessories to the crime.

My mistake was leniency. I actually felt sorry for the two plagiarists. In class and in front of their classmates, they looked so forlorn. I regret my leniency. Next time I will not be lenient, I will be strict, and I will try my best to get rid of copy-cats from our campus. Φ

Should We Legalize Prostitution in the FSM? — NO!

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Third, my discussion now turns to the broader culture in Chuuk. Cultural morality does not justify prostitution in Chuuk. So, even though prostitution is justified and practiced in other parts of the world, it is not justified here, and we should not be practicing it. Just because it is practiced elsewhere, we are not obligated to copy other cultures and bring such practices to Chuuk.

Our SS 150 instructor taught us a lesson during the first week of instruction. He said that, in the history of Micronesia, too much of our history is what foreigners and other cultures have done to change our lives — how they have controlled us. He also said that it is now time for us to control our own lives. We know that foreigners brought prostitution to our islands such as Pohnpei. So, what? Does that mean that, today, we must follow through with it? We need to take a stand against it

and to control our own destiny once again.

Fourth, I recognize that prostitution is a kind of economic development. After all, money is money. All the same, I disagree that it is a kind of economic development for us. There are other kinds of economic development, and we need to get involved in these alternatives. As far as I am concerned, raising and selling African snail, or escargot, is a much better economic alternative than making money through prostitution.

In conclusion, I have to say that I have personal feelings against prostitution. I am also aware that interpersonal, historical, and cultural reasons block me from accepting prostitution. And, of course, I do not accept prostitution as a good enough justification for economic development in Chuuk. Therefore, I say that prostitution in Chuuk is a definite no-no-no! φ

MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY by Buddy Herry

Name of Philosophy = SCIENTHEOLOGY

Fear and ignorance separate Man from his God and the Universe. In my philosophy, I put them together. They are inseparable.

Metaphysics

- Anthropology (science)
- Theology (religion)

The study of philosophy begins with metaphysics: What is reality? It is a combination of science and religion. Many people throughout the world separate science and religion, as though they are enemies. However, taken together, both are the foundation of all knowledge in the world. Now, it does not mean that, today, we have acquired all knowledge in the world. There is still a lot of knowledge – both scientific and religious – waiting to be learned and understood.

A debate between scientific thinkers and religious thinkers remains unresolved. It is the debate between the “big bang” theory and the Biblical description of “creation”. As far as I am concerned, they are complementary – two sides of a coin. I accept the combination of both sides as one, and I call it science-theology, or, more simply, scientheology. To demonstrate my philosophy, I will compare and contrast the big bang theory and the Biblical creationism.

Epistemology (Sources of Knowledge)

- Empiricism
- Logic and Reasoning
- Intuition
- Undisputed Authority

To know and understand both the big bang theory and the Biblical creationism, I follow the ideas of Saint Thomas Aquinas and cross his bridge several times, as shown below:

First, according to the Holy Bible (Genesis 1:1-31), God created everything in 6 days. According to the Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003, it took between 10 to 20 billion years, but most scientists accept 13.7 billion years for the formation of the universe. According to 2 Peter 3:8, “*one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*”. So, it is possible that six Biblical days could be equal to 13.7 billion scientific years.

Second, before God created light, there was “darkness” – something called “the deep”. In science, according to Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003, before the origin of the universe, there was “ylem” – “*primordial substance from which the chemical elements were formed*”. It was atom-less – protons, electrons, and neutrons were all separated from each other in a dark, red-black field of radiation. Call it what you will – the darkness, the deep, the ylem. For me, they are the same. In effect, God made the heaven and the earth out of whatever was in the darkness or the deep. In my philosophy, God used ylem to make the heaven and the earth.

Third, in science, we have learned that there are four basic forces in the universe and that they follow certain laws. The four are (1) electromagnetism (such as light), (2) gravity, (3) strong force (that holds the nucleus of atoms together), and (4) weak force (that causes atoms to decay radioactively). Scientists today continue to study how these four forces work. As far as I am concerned, God created the laws of science that govern these four forces. However, He did not create the four forces at one time. He created electromagnetism on Day 1.

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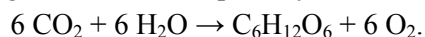
MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY — *(continued from page 6)*

Then, on Day 2, when God created the “firmament” which included matter and mass, He also set up the law of gravity. Finally, on Day 3, He created both strong force and weak force at one time. And, by the way, the strong and weak forces are the causes of all physical changes in the universe.

In effect, on Days 1-3, God established the four basic forces in the universe. I am not presumptuous enough to ask, “Why did he take three days?” If God wanted to do it that way, then that is the way God did it.

Fourth, God did something scientific with plants and animals. He made plants on Day 3 and animals on Day 5. All I know is that God also established the CO₂/O₂ cycle: CO₂ = carbon dioxide, and O₂ = oxygen. Plants and animals could not have been created at the same time. It takes plants to produce oxygen for animals, and so on Day 3 God began the photosynthesis process in order to produce oxygen for animals on Day 5. Plants had to come before animals. In the scientific theory of evolution, plants did come before animals. So, science and religion agree on this relationship.

One question remains: Where did the first plants get enough carbon dioxide from, in order to start producing oxygen? The answer is simple – also on Day 3 God made dry land appear. I do not worry about how dry land appeared. A very successful way for land to appear is volcanic eruptions, and these eruptions produce a lot of smoke containing carbon dioxide. So, plants breathed in this carbon dioxide and breathed out oxygen, according to God’s law of photosynthesis:



Axiology

- Ethics
- Aesthetics

The complementarity of science and religion is beautiful – or, as we might prefer to say by today’s young generation – cool! There is no sense of morality in my philosophy. So, I conclude that my axiology has no ethics but is filled with the aesthetic nature of God’s wonders, as explained in Acts 17:24-25 and Romans 1:19-20.

So, just as Genesis 1 ends on Day 6 with the creation of man and woman, science tells us that human beings evolved over a long, long time. End of my comparison and contrast – thus far.

Value System(s) = big bang and creationism



Photo credit: Allen Green/Photo Researchers, Inc.