

Smol Toktok

Long 1839, John Williams ibin fol daon long Dillon's Bay long Erromango. Ded blong hem wetem James Harris ibin jenjim histori blong New Hebrides big wan. Afta samting ia, taem blong ol fes misnari we oli bin kam long ol aelans blong saot ibin stat. Ol misnari ibin kam long New Hebrides, mo fulup man mo woman ibin kam insaed long jioj. Be hemi long taem we ol man oli faetim jioj olsem. Sam man ibin mixim jioj wetem kastom olsem. Histori blong jioj long 1800s i olsem.

Blong tingbaot histori blong jioj long Vanuatu, hemi gud blong tingbaot sam difren tingting. Igat ol difren staels blong histori blong bifo. Sam histori istap insaed ol buks, sam we oli bin raetem long 1800s. Be igat wan difren kaen blong histori we istap insaed long graon. Buk ia, hemi wan buk blong 'akiologi'. Akiologi hemi wan saens blong save sam niu wes blong save wanem ibin hapin long histori, we i yusim ol difren samting we istap long graon.

Blong save wanem ibin hapin long histori blong ol misnari blong Presbyterian Jioj long 1800s mo earli 1900s, yu save ridim sam samting long ol buks blong olgeta. Be olsem, yu save lukim akiologi blong olgeta blong save wan difren we blong save wanem ibin hapin evri de. Akiologi i kivim yu janis we yu save luk long graon, mo yu save lukim wan samting we ol man oli no bin raetim long ol buks. Istap long graon nomo. Akiologi i yusim doti blong bifo blong save wanem nao ibin hapin bifo.

Buk ia, hemi wan histori blong wan projek blong five ias we Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS) wetem Dr James Flexner we i wok long saed blong akiologi blong Australian Nasonal University (ANU) i bin mekem tugeta. Oli bin wok long Erromango mo Tanna. Oli bin lukaotem ol olfala ples blong ol misnaris mo man ples long 1800s. Oli bin lukim long sam kastom mo tabu saets olsem blong save wanem ol bilif blong ol man ples bifo ol misnari ibin kam long New Hebrides. Oli bin dig long graon long faev haos blong misnari (tu long Tanna, mo tri long Erromango), mo oli bin dig long wan kastom vilej blong bifo long Tanna. Afta, oli bin kaontim evri smol pis blong ol samting blong bifo we oli bin katimaot long graon. Naoia, ol samting we oli bin faenem, istap long VKS long Port Vila. Narfala pat blong projek, hemi wan studi blong ol museum long Scotland, Canada, mo Australia mo sam narfala ples we ikat sam samting blong New Hebrides.

Wan diskovri blong projek, hemi blong talem ol waes we ol samting we hemi 'material', hemi bin mek wan impotan wok long histori blong taem we ol man mo woman blong New Hebrides, oli bin kam insaed long jioj. Ol misnari, ibin talem stori blong Gospel long ol man mo woman, be oli bin askim olgeta blong jenjim kalja blong olgeta olsem. Oli sud jenjim ol bilifs blong kastom. Be olsem, oli mas jenjim ol nambas mo gras sket wetem kaliko mo aelan dres. Oli sud jenjim ol waes blong bildim haos, plantim katin, mo mekem kaekae. Be sipos yu luk long histori ia, sam samting ino bin jenj nating. Ol man ples long Vanuatu tidae istap kontinu wetem ol stael blong haos mo kaekae blong olgeta. Sam samting blong kastom istap yet long laef blong ol aelans.

Las wan, we hemi impotan big wan, ol man ples long Tanna mo Erromango, oli bin holem taet long kastom even long taem we fulup samting ibin jenj long aelan blong olgeta. Fulup man ibin ko long jioj, be ol man mo woman istap kipim sam samting blong kastom, olsem ol danis, bilif, tabu ston, mo ol narfala samting we hemi wan pat blong kastom. Bigfala tingting blong projek i olsem: Christianity ino bin kaekae kastom. Kastom ibin kaekae Christianity, mo kastom istap strong yet long Vanuatu tidae. Christianity, hemi bin kam wan pis blong kastom blong planti man mo woman long Vanuatu.

This text is taken from *An Archaeology of Early Christianity in Vanuatu: Kastom and Religious Change on Tanna and Erromango, 1839–1920*, by James L. Flexner, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.