

ISRAEL FOLAU: The devil's party vs the God of Mammon

Ten Commandments for Passing the Ball

1. Like all his people, Folau is the victim of cultural colonization. Tonga is the only nation-state with Methodism as its official superstition. Gawdelpus! Before the Wesleyans turned up, his heathen forebears committed the sins that he now fears will send us to hell. Our efforts should go into converting him to true-blue Aussie Paganism. That won't be too difficult since he's already gone from Mormonism to the Assembly of God and even more scandalous in his apostasy from League to AFL to Rugby. Is the round ball next for this Vicar of Bray?
2. *Drunkenness* Before the wowsers took charge, Tongas drank *kava* with breakfast and at any other time of the day that they felt like.
3. *Fornication* Okay for girls once they reached puberty but not so free and easy for the upper caste. That constraint was to limit the chances of a chieftain's bride carrying the sperm of a commoner. Chiefs were serial polygamists. Women could divorce by saying: 'It's over.' They went bare breasted though it was indecorous not to wear a wide band just beneath.
4. *Homosexuality* The academic summary of the journals of the early European explorers and beachcombers says nothing either way about same-sex activities. SOURCE: Edwin N. Ferdon, *Early Tonga 1616 to 1810*, University of Arizona Press.
5. The actions that Israel says will land most of us in Hell are the same as those that are drummed into anyone who comes within coo-ee of almost all religious instruction. That's as true for Islam as it is for Pentecostals. Stay God-aphobic.

Off the islands

6. Like all wage-slaves, Israel has been what Marx calls 're-ified', in plain language, turned into a thing, another commodity. Why are the theologues not jumping up and down about such de-humanisation – and not just for Israel but for billions of wage-slaves?
7. One difference is that he gets more in a season that most of his fans see in a lifetime. Still, the principle stands even if there are many far more cases deserving our concern. In particular, thousands of Pacific Islanders are rounded up as athletic try-outs only to be cast aside in a contemporary version of 'Black-birding'.
8. A bible-believing Christian might reflect on the words of his Lord and Saviour: 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had a \$7m. property portfolio.' (Mark 11: 21-22) 'And again I say unto you. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' (Matt. 19: 24)
9. Falou didn't get the boot for calling on us sinners to 'Repent, Repent!' but for breaking one of the terms of his employment. The need is not for more laws to practice religious bigotry but to repeal of laws which criminalise workers for expressing our views – by flying Eureka flags, for instance. Thugby bosses allege Folau damaged their corporate brand. Here is a further commodification of life – this time of sport. We saw it with ball-tampering under the watch of the union-busting CEO flown in from CRA in the Pilbara. We saw it at Essendon doping furor. And it began with Kerry Packer and the re-writing of the rules of cricket to boost earnings from telecasts.

How to be Born Again

10. If the celestial goal-keeper hands out nighties and harps to the likes of Abetz, Bernardi, Morrison and Pell, we should join a chorus of Hosannas to Israel for shining a light on how to escape an eternity of excruciating boredom.

BETTER TO REIGN IN HELL, THAN SERVE IN HEAVEN

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*