

# Joel Bulu

## A musical play

Words and Music by Cheryl Reid Artistic Direction by Bethany Eloise

### **Cast** (in order of appearance)

Joeli's Mother and Baby Joeli (Scene 1)  
Boy Joeli (a child – Scene 1)  
Joeli (in twenties through to older)  
Dancers (any number)  
Tongan Man  
Village Men (about 4 or 5)  
Heathen Priest  
Village Women (about 5)  
Children (about 7)  
Mr. Thomas (1<sup>st</sup> white missionary) – possibly needs a 'translator'  
White Missionary (2<sup>nd</sup> white missionary)  
Christian Men (about 4 or 5)  
Isaac  
Warriors (about 4 or 5)  
Head Chief  
Joel's Grandchildren (same children as before)

**Total male Fijian actors: about 20**

**Total male white actors: 2**

**Total female actors: 6**

**Dancers: any number, male and female**

**Children: 8**

**Musicians: to play accompaniment for songs and also traditional music for dances etc.**

**Singers: any number**

### **Scenes**

Scene 1: The Land in the Stars  
Scene 2: No other god  
Scene 3: The Parable of the Weeds  
Scene 4: Rewa  
Scene 5: God in the Storm  
Scene 6: Spiritual Warfare  
Scene 7: Epilogue

### **Songs**

"Take me to that land" by Cheryl Reid 2014  
"I will serve no other god" tune by Andre Kempen 1989 (words adjusted)  
"Amazing Grace" by John Newton and William Cowper 1779  
"Sailin'" by Phil Moore 2014  
"Pass me not, O gentle Saviour" sung in Fijian, Frances J. Crosby and William H. Doane 1868

### **Props**

Boat, clubs, spears, carved god, (see p. 14), cooking pots, utensils, cassava, old black Bible, a length of blue fabric for the dancers, boat supplies, whale's tooth necklace

### **Costumes**

Fijian men: sulus, grass sulu over a fabric sulu, bare tops  
Women: traditional patterned clothing with grass skirt over top  
White missionaries: a suit and maybe a hat

## Scene 1: The Land in the Stars

### **Props: Boat**

**Cast:** there are three Joelis (to show Joeli at different stages of life). These are: 'Baby Joeli', 'Boy Joeli' (a child), 'Joeli' (adult), Joeli's mother; dancers; Tongan man

**Background scenery – Pacific Island scene – trees, sand, plants, with a few images of 'gods' .**

**Narrator:** My name is Joeli Bulu. I was born on the island of Vavau, one of the friendly islands of Tonga.

I had a loving mother and a happy childhood. Island life was good. I had good friends and there was always plenty to eat.

### **Music: Traditional Fijian Music**

*Joeli's mother enters carrying Baby Joeli in her arms then exits.*

*Joeli's mother enters holding the hand of Boy Joeli, walks across the stage then exits. Boy Joeli plays a game with a few friends. They exit.*

**Narrator:** When I was 23, I heard a report that the Lotu had come to my land. The "Lotu" is the word that we used to describe the faith of the Christian missionaries. When I first heard that the Lotu had come, I firmly declared that I would never forsake the gods of my own ancestors. I had been taught from childhood that we must worship the gods of the spirit world...Limu and Kele, the gods of creation, Tangaloa, the god of the sky and sea, and Maui, the god of fire. I knew these gods possessed dark spiritual powers, that caused fear among our people, but we could never forsake them, fearing that something terrible would happen to us.

*Joeli (age 23) enters and looks at the 'gods' in the background scenery.*

*Dancers enter and join Joeli in a traditional dance, dressed in traditional clothes.*

*At the end of the dance, Joeli and the dancers sit on the stage.*

**Narrator:** Then one day a man came to our village – a Tongan man, one of our own people. He had heard about the Lotu, and told us that people of the Lotu have a Promised Land where they go after death... a beautiful land among the stars. This sounded wonderful to me... a land among the stars where there is peace and happiness. The fighting among my own people worried me. I wanted to go to that land where there was no fighting. I decided that from that day onward I would choose the Lotu and throw away the gods of my own people.

*A Tongan man walks on stage and 'talks' to the group of dancers.*

*Joeli stands and walks towards the Tongan man.*

*They both stand centre stage as the Tongan man points upward and the dancers look on.*

*Joeli and the dancers look upward in awe.*

### **Song: Take me to that land**

*Verses can be solos if solo singers are available. All join in the chorus, including Young Joel and dancers. Harmony if possible.*

*Joeli, Tongan man and dancers exit.*

## Scene 2: No other god

**Props:** Club, carved god

**Cast:** Village men (about 5), Heathen Priest, Joeli

**Narrator:** In my village, people were talking about me because I had cast away the gods of my people. The village priest decided that I should be clubbed to death.

### **Music: Drumming**

*Village men enter and form a circle side stage.*

*The heathen priest enters and 'speaks to' the group, holding up a club in anger.*

*He gives the club to one of the men and exits.*

**Narrator:** My friends decided that they would warn me because my life was in danger. They wanted to convince me to give up the Lotu.

### **Music: Traditional Fijian Music**

*Joeli and dancers enter and perform a traditional dance.*

*One dancer is holding a carved 'god' and hands it to Joeli while dancing.*

*Joeli quickly passes the carved 'god' to another dancer.*

*The dancer hands it back to Joeli.*

*This repeats several times until the carved 'god' is passed amongst all the dancers.*

*Joeli is left holding the carved 'god' and dancers exit.*

*Joeli holds up the carved 'god'*

**Narrator:** I told my friends that I would no longer believe in the Lotu. But deep in my heart I knew that I had only spoken these words with my lips. Really, I did believe in the Lotu. Truly I would not worship the gods of my ancestors. I knew that the God of the Lotu was real, and I would only worship Him.

*Joeli looks upward and throws the carved 'god' to the ground.*

*Joeli sits.*

### **Song: I will serve no other god**

*(There can be solos on the verses if soloists available)*

### Scene 3: The Parable of the Weeds

**Props: Cooking pots and utensils, cassava, Bible**

**Cast: Village people, Joeli**

#### **Music: Traditional Island Music**

*Village people enter.*

*Women sit, cook and prepare food, children play and men harvest cassava.*

**Narrator: One day, a white missionary, Mr. Thomas came to my village.**

*Mr. Thomas, white missionary, enters dressed in 19th Century European clothing (a suit). He opens his Bible and 'reads' as some village people gather around and listen. Joeli sits down to hear Mr. Thomas.*

**Narrator: I listened to what he had to say. He told us about a man who planted good seed in his field, but while people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds in the field. The weeds grew thick and tall and the good plants could not grow. He told us that God's enemy is Satan. Satan wants to plant weeds among the good seeds. The weeds are like the evil in the world - the fighting, the killing, and the stealing that I see in my own village. But God's Spirit is the good seed. His Spirit can live in the hearts and minds of those who are willing to accept Him. He will forgive those who come to Him.**

*Mr. Thomas continues to 'read' to the group.*

**Narrator: I thought about the many wrong things I had done in my life. I feared that I would never see the land in the sky.**

*Village people exit.  
Mr. Thomas 'talks' to Joeli centre stage, then they bow their heads to 'pray'*

**But Mr. Thomas explained to me that I could ask God for forgiveness and God would accept me. So that's what I did. I knew that from that point on, God was in my heart.**

**Song: Amazing Grace verses 1, 2 & 3**

*Solos on verses if soloists available*

*Joeli exits after song.*

## Scene 4: Rewa

**Props:** Clubs, spears, blue fabric

**Cast:** Joeli, another white missionary, village men; women and children; dancers

**Narrator:** One day I met another white missionary on the path. He had been working in Fiji, telling people about God and trying to get the Fijian people to make peace, not war. When the missionary heard that I had become a Christian he asked if I would go with him to Fiji. I was now married. My wife and I prayed and decided that we would join him, so we prepared our boat ready to sail to Fiji.

*A white missionary enters, walks to the boat and starts preparing it.*

*Joeli enter and prepares the boat with the white missionary.*

### **Song: Sailin'**

*Soloists on verses if available*

*Dancers use blue fabric in their dance to this song.*

*Dancers, Joeli and White Missionary exit.*

### **Drumming: Death Drums**

**Narrator:** We arrived in Fiji, at Rewa where there was much fighting and killing going on. In Rewa there was no sense of peace, day, or night. These were terrible times.

*A man enters running across the stage screaming and exits. Another man with a club enters chasing him and exit. Village men enter with clubs and spears, 'talking' and looking aggressive. Women and children enter and exit quickly, frightened. Village men exit.*

**Narrator:** Day after day we saw bodies of the murdered brought to the king. We saw dead bodies floating by on the river. The sound of the death drum was relentless.

**The chiefs hardened their hearts and set their faces against the Lotu, but still our work went on.**

*Village people (women and children) can be heard screaming and crying off stage.*

### **Drumming: Death Drums**

## Scene 5: God in the Storm

**Props: Boat supplies**

**Cast: Joeli, Christian men, Isaac**

**Narrator:** Despite the hardened hearts, some Fijians did become Christians. These new followers joined our team to spread the light of Christ to other parts of Fiji. A Fijian named Isaac and a Tongan named Abraham were sent to the island of Kandavu where there were some people who wanted to know about Christianity. But the chief of Vusanamu made trouble. I heard reports that this chief had ordered for a canoe to be made ready to go to Kandavu to kill Isaac. I decided to sail to Kandavu to warn Isaac. I took a few Christian friends with me. The wind was strong, the sea ran high and the rain came pouring down all day. But the Lord watched over us and brought us safely to land.

*Joeli and a few Christian men enter carrying supplies and load them into the boat.  
They sit and join in singing the song.*

*Joeli and the Christian men exit at the end of the song:*

**Song: Pass me not, O gentle Saviour** (Fijian language) Solos if available.

**Narrator:** It was late at night when we reached Kandavu. We went to the town, not knowing whether Isaac was dead or alive. When we arrived, the smell of burning human flesh filled the air. Through wind and rain, we desperately searched for Isaac's house. We found it and crept inside, fearing that his murderers might be sleeping there. But God had protected Isaac. He was peacefully asleep.

*Joeli and Isaac enter, and search for Isaac.*

## Scene 6: Spiritual Warfare

**Props:** Clubs, spears, whale tooth necklace  
**Cast:** Joeli, Warriors, Young Christian men

### Music: Drumming

**Narrator:** I went back to Rewa, but back in Rewa things grew worse. The houses had been burnt to the ground and many people murdered. Things were so bad that I finally had to leave Rewa. I decided to sail to Vanua Levu, to a place where the Christian message might be received. On Vanua Levu, many people listened eagerly but the heathen priests there hated me and spoke evil of me. I needed help, so some young Christian men were sent. But the heathen priests made life difficult. They dug up our plantations, upturned our bread pits and killed our livestock.

*Warriors enter with clubs and spears, waving them dangerously around the stage.*

**Narrator:** One day our best pig was taken. The young Christian men wanted to take revenge but I would not allow it. Things became serious. The heathen priests had persuaded the head chief to prepare a group of warriors to kill us.

*Young Christian men enter and stand on one side of the stage, staring at the warriors.*

*Warriors stop waving their clubs and spears and stand on the opposite side of the stage.*

*Both groups stare at each other. Joeli enters and stands centre stage, arms wide, as if to stop violence.*

### Music: Drumming

**Narrator:** “Do not fight!” I said, “No matter what happens, we will keep the peace.”

*The warriors give a war-cry.*

*They march toward the young men with clubs and spears raised high.*

*Joeli and the young men creep slowly backwards, afraid, then sit down.*

*The warriors do not attack.*

### Song: *Amazing Grace* (One verse sung quietly unaccompanied by a soloist)

*While the song is being sung:*

*The warriors stop suddenly in front of the young men then in fear, turn around and exit. The young men give thanks to God, arms raised to heaven, then exit.*

*After song:*

*Head chief enters and walks to centre stage. Joel walks towards the head chief.*

**Narrator:** I asked the head chief why his warriors did not attack us. This is what he said: “A power took over us. A power so great that we couldn’t use our clubs or spears. Our arms could not move. It was then that we knew the power of your Lotu God. Now, let there be peace between us, and please tell me about your God!”

## Scene 7: Epilogue

**Props: Whale tooth necklace**

**Cast: Joeli (Joeli now has grey hair and grey beard), grandchildren and Boy Joeli, Joeli's mother**

*Joeli walks centre stage, looking at the whale tooth necklace around his neck.*

**Narrator: Everything was peaceful after that. (Joeli sits.)**

**Many years have passed since those days and I am now an old man. My body is weak, but my soul is as strong as ever, rejoicing in the work of the Lord. When I look forward to the Good Land which is now so near to me, my heart burns and my eyes fill with tears of joy as I think of the glory which I shall soon behold, for the Lord is ever present with me, both night and day. When I look around, I see the great things the Lord has done, and I can say, "I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I'm convinced that he is able to protect what he has entrusted to me until the day that he comes."**

*Joeli's grandchildren and Boy Joel enter and sit around Joeli.*

**Narrator: My name is Joel Bulu. I am 63, and I wait joyfully for that glorious day, when we will live together among the stars.**

*Joeli looks upward.*

**Song: Amazing Grace**

*Solos on verses if possible.*

*Joeli's grandchildren stand and help Joeli to stand.  
Joeli holds the hands of other grandchildren.  
They all exit except Boy Joeli.  
Boy Joeli sits centre stage, alone.  
Joeli's Mother enters, walks to Boy Joeli, holds his hand and they exit.*

## *Lyrics*

### **Take me to that land**

#### **Verse 1:**

I look into the stars  
And think about a land of beauty  
No fighting death or war  
Just happiness forever more

#### **Chorus:**

Beautiful land  
Land in the stars  
Take me to the land to live forever

#### **Verse 2:**

To live among the stars  
That's where I want to be forever.  
Somewhere up above  
A land of peace and love

### **I will serve no other god**

#### **Verse 1**

I lift my head to the God of love  
Who made the stars, the sky above  
For You're the One who reigns within my heart

#### **Chorus**

And I will serve no other god  
Or any other treasure  
You are my heart's desire  
Your Spirit without measure  
Unto your name  
I will bring my sacrifice

### **Amazing Grace (First time)**

#### **Verse 1**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind, but now I see

#### **Verse 2**

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

#### **Chorus**

My chains are gone  
I've been set free  
My God, my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy reigns  
Unending love, amazing grace (Repeat last line on last chorus)

#### **Verse 3**

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

CHORUS

## Sailin' (taking the Light to Fiji)

### Verse 1

We push our canoe into the ocean  
Some waves crash over me  
So sad to leave my friends and family  
So glad to sail for Thee

### Chorus

Sailing, we are sailing  
Sailing across the sea  
Sailing, we are sailing  
Ta-kin' the light to Fi-ji. (3x last time)

### Verse 2

No land behind, no land in front  
But the stars shine to give us light  
The sun set low, but our hope is high  
We're sailin' on this lonesome night.

### Verse 3

The land rises slowly out in front of us  
Our hearts are bouncing like the waves  
We thank the Lord for His guiding hand  
Now we're safely at this land.

## Jisu, au kerea tiko

### Verse 1:

Jisu, au kerea tiko  
Kivei kemuni  
Me'u sa bau rogoca mada  
Na domomuni.

### Refrain:

Jisu! Jisu!  
Me'u kacivi mai:  
Na domomuni me rogo  
Kivei au e dai.

### Verse 4:

Me'u sa bau kacivi mada  
Me'u sa nomuni,  
Me sa bau serauni tiko  
E Matamuni.

### Refrain:

## **Amazing Grace (Second time)**

### **Verse 1**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost, but now I'm found

Was blind, but now I see

### **Verse 2**

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear

And grace my fears relieved

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed

### **Chorus**

My chains are gone

I've been set free

My God, my Savior has ransomed me

And like a flood His mercy reigns

Unending love, amazing grace

### **Verse 4**

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow

The sun no longer to shine

But God, who called me here below,

Will be forever mine.

Will be forever mine.

You are forever mine.

## **Narrator's play script (for practice reading)**

### **Scene 1**

My name is Joeli Bulu. I was born on the island of Vavau, one of the friendly islands of Tonga.

I had a loving mother and a happy childhood. Island life was good. I had good friends and there was always plenty to eat.

When I was 23, I heard a report that the Lotu had come to my land. The "Lotu" is the word that we used to describe the faith of the Christian missionaries. When I first heard that the Lotu had come, I firmly declared that I would never forsake the gods of my own ancestors. I had been taught from childhood that we must worship the gods of the spirit world...Limu and Kele, the gods of creation, Tangaloa, the god of the sky and sea, and Maui, the god of fire. I knew these gods possessed dark spiritual powers, that caused fear among our people, but we could never forsake them, fearing that something terrible would happen to us.

Then one day a man came to our village – a Tongan man, one of our own people. He had heard about the Lotu, and told us that people of the Lotu have a Promised Land where they go after death... a beautiful land among the stars. This sounded wonderful to me... a land among the stars where there is peace and happiness. The fighting among my own people worried me. I wanted to go to that land where there was no fighting. I decided that from that day onward I would choose the Lotu and throw away the gods of my own people.

### **Scene 2**

In my village, people were talking about me because I had cast away the gods of my people. The village priest decided that I should be clubbed to death.

My friends decided that they would warn me because my life was in danger. They wanted to convince me to give up the Lotu.

I told my friends that I would no longer believe in the Lotu. But deep in my heart I knew that I had only spoken these words with my lips. Really, I did believe in the Lotu. Truly I would not worship the gods of my ancestors. I knew that the God of the Lotu was real, and I would only worship Him.

### **Scene 3**

One day, a white missionary, Mr. Thomas came to my village.

I listened to what he had to say. He told us about a man who planted good seed in his field, but while people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds in the

field. The weeds grew thick and tall and the good plants could not grow. He told us that God's enemy is Satan. Satan wants to plant weeds among the good seeds. The weeds are like the evil in the world - the fighting, the killing, and the stealing that I see in my own village. But God's Spirit is the good seed. His Spirit can live in the hearts and minds of those who are willing to accept Him. He will forgive those who come to Him.

I thought about the many wrong things I had done in my life. I feared that I would never see the land in the sky.

But Mr. Thomas explained to me that I could ask God for forgiveness and God would accept me. So that's what I did. I knew that from that point on, God was in my heart.

#### **Scene 4**

One day I met another white missionary on the path. He had been working in Fiji, telling people about God and trying to get the Fijian people to make peace, not war. When the missionary heard that I had become a Christian he asked if I would go with him to Fiji. I was now married. My wife and I prayed and decided that we would join him, so we prepared our boat ready to sail to Fiji.

We arrived in Fiji, at Rewa where there was much fighting and killing going on. In Rewa there was no sense of peace, day, or night. These were terrible times.

Day after day we saw bodies of the murdered brought to the king. We saw dead bodies floating by on the river. The sound of the death drum was relentless.

The chiefs hardened their hearts and set their faces against the Lotu, but still our work went on.

#### **Scene 5**

Despite the hardened hearts, some Fijians did become Christians. These new followers joined our team to spread the light of Christ to other parts of Fiji. A Fijian named Isaac and a Tongan named Abraham were sent to the island of Kandavu where there were some people who wanted to know about Christianity. But the chief of Vusanamu made trouble. I heard reports that this chief had ordered for a canoe to be made ready to go to Kandavu to kill Isaac. I decided to sail to Kandavu to warn Isaac. I took a few Christian friends with me. The wind was strong, the sea ran high and the rain came pouring down all day. But the Lord watched over us and brought us safely to land.

It was late at night when we reached Kandavu. We went to the town, not knowing whether Isaac was dead or alive. When we arrived, the smell of burning human flesh filled the air. Through wind and rain, we desperately searched for Isaac's house. We found it and crept inside, fearing that his murderers might be sleeping there. But God had protected Isaac. He was peacefully asleep.

## Scene 6

I went back to Rewa, but back in Rewa things grew worse. The houses had been burnt to the ground and many people murdered. Things were so bad that I finally had to leave Rewa. I decided to sail to Vanua Levu, to a place where the Christian message might be received. On Vanua Levu, many people listened eagerly but the heathen priests there hated me and spoke evil of me. I needed help, so some young Christian men were sent. But the heathen priests made life difficult. They dug up our plantations, upturned our bread pits and killed our livestock.

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“Do not fight!” I said, “No matter what happens, we will keep the peace.”

## Scene 7

Everything was peaceful after that.

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My name is Joel Bulu. I am 63, and I wait joyfully for that glorious day, when we will live together among the stars.

