

Island Revival Time

Building on the successful Ra Revival in the year 2014 Malolo Island seeks spiritual strengthening.

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After the success of the Ra Province's spiritual cleansing and revival program, the Department of Evangelism and Stewardship has received a number of requests for a similar program from a number of communities in the vanua. One such community is the island of Malolo, a popular tourist destination in the Mamanuca group of islands just off western Viti Levu. Secretary for Evangelism, Rev. Samuel Koroi spoke with Nai Tabe about the work he is doing with the vanua of Moala and challenges they face in their spiritual life.

"We received a request from the vanua for the church to run a spiritual revival programme because there was a concern that despite all the development taking place on the island, with new resorts and hotels, the spiritual life of the community is going down. So we are working with them to create a balance between spiritual growth and development and the development of the tourism industry on the island."

The Ra Province's revival program involved all the different denominations in the province. This seems to be the case for Malolo.

"We work with all Christian churches on Malolo. We have a very good relationship with the other churches on the island. In fact they have wanted to do a program like this for some time but they said that only the Methodist Church can come and initiate the program and bring the churches together. So in some ways we have already one success of bringing the churches together. This program also brings the chiefs of the island together and the Tui Lawa is very happy with this."

This program targets all the people of Malolo Island, regardless of whether they live on the island at present, or on the larger islands and overseas were asked to follow this program. The program runs for six weeks and includes fasting, prayer and home visitation. With an abstinence from the consumption of kava, tobacco and alcohol, even those who work in the hotels and resorts on the island are supportive of the program.

"Most of the people on the island work in the tourist industry on Malolo and Malololailai islands. They have busy lives; work shifts and faces a number of personal and family challenges as a result of a lifestyle that develops from working in the tourism and entertainment industry. We noticed that church attendance had decreased as members had to either work on Sunday or were resting after having to work long shifts in almost 20 hotels on just Malolo Island itself. There was a worry in the community of what will happen in the near future if these challenges are not addressed."

The program involves open-air revival services, bible study program and training programs from Sunday school, to Youth and Men's and Women's Fellowships. The program is actually a three year program for the people of Malolo. In the first year we focus on *Vakacabe Rarama* (bringing the gospel message). The program in the second year is *Veivakasavasavataki* (spiritual cleansing) and *Veivakaduavatataki* (unity) and for the third year we focus on *Cavuisasau* (breakthrough).

Rev. Koroi hopes that after the three years, the people of Malolo will be spiritually strengthened to have a balanced life in the face of the developments on the island.

The Evangelism Department will also be running a similar program for the Viwa Circuit in the Bau Division as well as Verata and Nadi Divisions.

“What is interesting is that the Vanua, the traditional leadership is strongly supporting this program, so it is not just a program of the Methodist Church in Fiji, but a program that we coordinate for the whole vanua in a particular area. In particular the number of different denominations now in our communities, sometimes this leads to division in the vanua. So this program is a very strong tool for bringing about unity – first among the churches as we work together and secondly as part of our program itself where we encourage unity in the community.”

Rev. Koroi has used the Lenten season to give an extra emphasis on the need for spiritual development for the people of Malolo. He believes it is a time for all Christians to focus on their spiritual lives.

“It is a good time for the Talatala Qase (Divisional Superintendents) in all our Wasewase (divisions) to work with the congregation and guide their spiritual journey through the Lenten season and make it a time of renewal, revival and spiritual cleansing and strengthening.”