Towards a SAVED and SAFE Community of Faith

Men and Youth commit to addressing Gender-based Violence and Child Protection

This month an important step was taken by the Methodist Church in Fiji in addressing gender-based violence and violence against children.

Three departments of the Church – the Men’s and Women’s Fellowships Departments and the Department of Christian Citizenship and Social Services have come together to hold the first of three awareness workshops on the issues relating to gender-based violence and child protection and care specifically for ministers, Men’s Fellowship leaders and young men who come from Methodist Youth Fellowships.

In opening the workshop, Methodist Church in Fiji president, Rev. Dr. Tevita Banivanua said that these men were at the “frontline of the struggle against a form of evil in our community.” The evil of gender-based violence and violence against children.

Rev. Dr. Banivanua pointed out that the churches in the Pacific have been addressing this issue for some time.

“When I was the General Secretary with the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools, or SPATS, I was privileged to support the development of a curriculum for theological schools on Domestic Violence – for PRS, PTC, Davuvu, Fulton, St. John the Baptist and other theological schools in Fiji as well as around the Pacific. I hope this curriculum, which has been translated into the I-Taukei language is being used for the training of our trainers,” the president said.

He said that this first training programme by three of our departments – marking a serious commitment by the church to raise these issues with the men in our communities.

“When we have sent participants to attend workshops on gender-based violence. Today we claim this responsibility to educate our members and our leaders and call our Church to ensure that it is a church in which every person feels not just safe, but loved, welcome and valued.”

Read the President’s address and more on the workshop on page 3.

Also inside

Na Veiqaravi Nei Jone Wesele
Ena Veitabana Ni Bula Raraba

Nasikawa Vision College turns 20 years old

SOCIAL MEDIA
A GUIDE FOR RESPONSIBLE USE

GAMBLING
A METHODIST PERSPECTIVE

"i-Taukei Language New Testament a joint effort"

Nasinu Wesley Church commits to being a disabled-inclusive community

AI vakananumi ni yabaki 277 ni Nona a Vakabulai Vakayalo ko Jone Wesele

Pictorial:
On tour with the President
The Children’s Sunday Cyclone Pam Appeal:

The United World Sunday Pledge: $24.49 for the children of Vanuatu.

Church General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewosova said that they had extended the appeal beyond the original date to give time to divisions in rural and maritime areas to send their collections to the head office.

“We allowed some extra time to give our members time to collect their funds and send it to us either as a local church, as a circuit or as a combined division collection following the divi-

dional annual meetings. We closed our collection on the 15th of May.”

“We know that even as time goes by, our children and sisters and brothers in Vanuatu will need our support in rebuilding their lives and becoming more self-sufficient for the future as the Pacific can expect more extreme weather patterns as a result of climate change.”

The Methodist Church in Fiji will now hand the funds to the United Church in Australia’s mission arm, United World for disbursement through its relief work and projects in Vanuatu.

“As a Church, we felt it was best we give our donation to a Church group. As there is no Methodist Church in

Vanuatu we will work through our mission partners, United World and the UCA who are part of the Methodist family in the Pacific. United World has a team on the ground in Vanuatu working with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu and will identify where our donations will be put to the best use. Working with United World and PCV we believe that we are able to receive reports and account to our members, where and how these funds are being spent.”

“We are very grateful to our children and families who have so generously for the children in Vanu-

au. We pray that this small gift will benefit them in a practical way.”

United World National Director, Rob Floyd said that United World was delighted to receive such a significant gift from their partner the Methodist Church in Fiji towards their disaster response in Vanuatu.

“This is a true sign of partnership that the Meth-

odist Church in Fiji have entrusted their dona-

tions to UnitedWorld for our work with our partner church in Vanuatu. As the overseas part-

nerships agency of the United Church in Australia, we were very pleased to be able to provide a link between our two Pacific Church partners to help and support each other in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam.”

“UnitingWorld are providing support for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu as they rebuild and re-

establish their vital health and education programs - the incredibly gener-

ous donation from the Methodist Church in Fiji will go a long way in enabling us do that. God Bless the generous people of the Methodist Church in Fiji.”

SOURCE—McIF Communication Partnership is a two-way relationship: United World National Director Rob Floyd receives the donation for Cyclone Pam relief from Methodist Church in Fiji President Rev. Dr. Taniela Banivanua. Photo —MCIF Communication

Nai Tabe is the Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Republic of Fiji of the Methodist Church in Fiji. It is produced by the Department of Com-

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$24,000 raised in Cyclone Pam Appeal}
n today's permissive culture, many people openly confess to enjoying gambling, which they say is a form of entertainment, more recreational than to make money.

What is the history of Methodists concerns about gambling? The Methodist Church has a long-established concern about gambling, particularly when it is seen as a way of gaining money at others' expense, and for the victims of gambling.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, summed up the implicit Christian view when he counted gambling as a means of gain inconsistent with love of neighbour. He explicitly condemned gamblers who "made a trade of seizing on young and inexperienced men, and tricking them out of all their money."

Methodists ranked gambling alongside alcohol as a threat to the moral, financial and spiritual well-being of the poor. At a time when many people lived on the margins of poverty, an advised or unlucky gamble could mean the difference for a family between food and starvation, survival and indebtedness. Gambling was and is still a spiritual issue for the Methodist Church.

The 1936 Declaration on Gambling of the Methodist Conference (the decision-making body of the Methodist Church) argued that “belief in luck cannot be reconciled with faith in God”. Furthermore gambling undermined the “binding ties of human fellowship”. Gambling was seen as the desire for gain at another’s loss, in opposition to the Christian life of self-sacrifice.

Today, many people participate in lotteries, and our Government has issued casino licenses. No doubt many of our recreational gamblers are Church going people who see no harm in placing a weekly bet or two. With the setting of goals and analysis of performance being part of revitalization, the Methodist Church has encouraged a rethinking of its worship practices, rules and strategies. So how should we think in light of our Wesleyan heritage when it comes to various social issues - gambling in particular?

Twenty years ago, the ethics and cultural attitude in Fiji was such that as a denomination, the Methodist Church had thought that we would be able to hold off gambling. The stance of the Church against gambling and lotteries appeared assured and the establishment of gambling casinos seemed unlikely.

Today, that assurance has vanished, the landscape looks different. Fiji has legalized gambling mainly to boost state revenues to support the public funding of its services. Rather than being concerned with the social menace that gambling brings, the state looks to revenues from gambling as a winfall.

In the face of this drastic shift in attitude, one wonders if further struggle would be worth the effort, and should we, Methodists, hoist up the white flag of surrender? Just as we have been unable to limit the abuse of alcohol and the spread of social malaise, so it now seems we are unable to stop gambling. The Wesleyan vision of mission to reform the nation and spread scriptural holiness seems to have stalled, if not stopped.

And yet, according to the Policy of the Fiji Methodist Church on Social Issues of Christian Citizenship, it is stated very clearly that “gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive of good government and good stewardship. Christians should abstain from gambling and should strive to minister to those victimized by the practice of gambling.”

Our policy as a Church sets out the Wesleyan emphasis to “do no harm” and “do good” both collectively and individually. However, reform is impossible where we cannot resist. If we, as Methodists, cannot abstain from gambling, then what influence do we really have? If holiness of heart and life doesn’t begin with us, then where will it begin?

Perhaps this is where we can begin to rethink church: First, we can begin by practicing an ethic of resistance as a whole church body. If our holiness is not social holiness, then our efforts, however good, will simply remain invisible. Our witness will have lost its saltiness, its flavour. Viewing gambling as “unredeemable” is one of our tasks of preaching and teaching.

Second, we need to support efforts towards the recovery and restoration of gambling addicts and the families of those victimized by the practice of gambling. Prayerfully, we can find other ways to expand in this area as we offer God’s healing grace.

And third, we can find creative ways of reengaging in a mission of reform that works to promote standards of justice and advocacy. Although the odds appear to stack against the Methodist view on gambling, we are indebted to those who continue to stand against gambling and its evils. But we can only imagine what would happen if others join hands with us to begin to make noise with our public officials. It takes the church to engage the principalities and powers, not simply a few passionate servants. “Speaking the truth in love” to the false claims of gambling’s so-called benefits to the common-good is a long-term commitment.

In short, all three of these strategies are necessary if we are to be true to our own Wesleyan understanding of ministry. We cannot separate resistance, recovery and reform then expect otherwise. Surely, the Methodists of Fiji can begin to rethink church along these lines. Hopefully, we can imagine new ways to continue this vital witness and mission.

Rev. Naivalu is the Methodist Church in Fiji’s Secretary for Christian Citizenship and Social Services. Email: iliesan@methodistfiji.org

Text and Win Competitions: Gambling with your mobile?

How many times in a day do you get text (SMS) messages on your phone to “Text and Win”? A new car, a house, cash prizes; “free credit”... the list goes on. Although many of these competitions are not seen as gambling, all these competitions are games of chance. And at 99 cents (usual charge), they can be expensive games - especially when they use “real” credit as opposed to the “free” credit you win (which not only expires but also is limited to calls and texts on the same network).

Earlier this year, the leader of the Free National Movement (FNM) political party in The Bahamas, Dr Hubert Minnis raised concerns over whether “text and win” promotions indiscriminately exposed minors to addictive games of chance. Although The Bahamas Telecommunications Company rejected the accusations, Dr Minnis concern raises the issue of whether “school-aged children are prematurely exposed to a form of gambling that would prey on their meagre resources.”

Many mobile phone companies and businesses now use “Text to Win” marketing model, attracting participants with prizes and money. It is common to hear competitions on radio stations and see promotions on television - often made to look like it is a way to support a particular team or contestant. In reality it is a way to make money - for the mobile phone company and the company promoting the competition.

According to an article in the New York Times, the issue at hand, whether the text message contests are promotions or lotteries, is a tricky one. “Advertisers and media companies routinely run promotions where users pay to enter contests. Losses in premium text message campaigns are left with zero. They gambled – like they would in a lottery or at a casino – and lost.”

In 2002, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) called the attention of both Globe and Smart telecommunications corporations for not securing proper permits after introducing raffle games via text messaging. Pagcor argued that since the raffle games were a form of gambling, they should fall under their wings. A subsequent inquiry by the Lower House of the text games mechanics corroborated the view that since the telecommunications companies’ text games do not demand skill or ability, they should likewise be considered as games of chance.

And then of course there is the “vote and win” - vote for your favourite contestant, personality or sportsperson… and also go into the draw to win a prize.

In 2008 a class-action lawsuit was filed in California, USA against telecommunications company Verizon and several third-party companies, alleging that they promoted illegal gambling by enticing customers to pay to enter contests in which there was an “infinitesimally” small chance of winning. “The lawsuit centred on 99-cent charges levied on wireless consumers who played contests associated with popular TV shows like ‘Deal or No Deal’ and ‘Soled Survivor.’” The plaintiffs claimed that the contests were less promotional sweepstakes than “illegal lotteries designed to generate revenue from the value of the cash awarded.”

In New Zealand, to help protect children and teenagers, the Gambling Act has banned almost all forms of gambling using cellphones. This can have implications for text competitions.

The reasons for the ban are that modern technology can allow easy access to 24-hour a day instant gambling via cellphones, and children and teenagers are very high users of cellphones.

The immediate danger of such gambling is that young people, and others, are less likely to know how much money they are losing when it appears that no money is changing hands, i.e. the losses are charged to a telephone account or at times a credit card. Long term, and more particularly nowadays, the younger people are when they start gambling the more likely they are to develop gambling problems.

So the next time you receive a text message, hear an announcement, see a poster or a television commercial inviting you to “text and win” - take a breath, think about whether you are competing or gambling and when total cost all the entries are added up, who is the real winner?

Rev. Bhagwan is the Methodist Church in Fiji’s Secretary for Communication and Overseas Mission.

For comments, suggestions, or to share a testimony:
Email: jamesb@methodistfiji.org
Doing His Home Work

Education Department Report

By Master Waisake Ravatu

It’s been 4 months now since assuming office and while I have been busy, I’ve tried to keep as low a profile as possible, but given the fact that you have to do presentation every week (Secretariats Briefings - optional) and every month (Board and Standing Committee meetings), that is almost an impossible ask.

Anyway it’s been a hectic journey at the office, with all the writings, taking/making calls and meetings), that is almost an impossible ask.

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A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF WEST SCHOOLS

I started my school visit this year with a 2-day tour of West Schools – both our 9 schools and 6 other schools with our appointees (Chaplain/Deaconess) on Thursday 19/03 and Friday 20/03, starting at Naiyala Secondary at 7:30am on Thursday and concluded at Ratu Latianara Secondary at 4:45pm on Friday. The object was to meet School Heads and Church Appointees, discuss need for close cooperation, see the physical state of our schools, discuss new direction and hear concerns, discuss of new visions/mission/strategic plans (2015), discussion of special school statistical return – it was an eye opening tour.

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VISIT TO SUVA/NAUSORI SCHOOLS

The second stage of school visitation, with similar objectives as in earlier visit, was in schools in the Suva/Nausori Corridor – this time it was for our 15 schools only, starting from BMS right to Vatu Methodist Primary through a period of 2 weeks from 23/03 to 02/04, finding gaps in office commitment to visit 1 or 2 schools in a day.

Many thanks to School Heads and Church Appointees for taking their time to meet with me.

SPECIAL VISIT TO LAUTOKA

The General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and I took a special trip to Lautoka on Friday 17th April to meet with reps of the 3 Divisions involved in the attempt to revive the setting up of a Secondary School (Mua-i-ra Methodist High School) at the vacant Church land adjacent to Lautoka Methodist Primary School. We were humbled at the reception we received at the Lautoka General Superintendent residence where we were accorded traditional ceremonies of welcome by the Church representatives – special appreciation to Talatala Qose of Lautoka (Rev P. Kaino), Namoli (Rev M. Ratuwale) and Vuda (Rev Ratu J. T. Uluivudau) and their Church Officials for their generous support. We wish you all the best in this venture.

The day after (Saturday 18th) we took the scenic Kings Road to verify my findings at Ta Methodist High School – in that it had fallen a lot in standard and that special attention was needed on it. Many thanks to Talatala Qose Wasewase Ba for taking us around the school – the school had really fallen into a state of disrepair. It is sincerely hoped the School will rise to its former glory days.

PLANNING CONFERENCE 2014

We have risen to the challenge to work on our schools, such that in 5-10 years, they will set the benchmark for Education Excellence in the country; after all we serve a God who challenges us to be perfect as He is perfect.

NEW CHALLENGE FOR ALL 31 SCHOOLS

A big vinakavakalevu to the 4 Divisions for frequent and easy future consultation, meetings and being thoroughly nourished from eating fish, fish – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Malolo to all my Tosavala Divisions from Bus (Rev M. Rakora), Savusavu (Rev E. Naso- Xavou) and Macuata (Rev S. Daunivala) and the principal of Bus College (Mme. Vakabalobure), Lekutu Secondary and Savusavu Secondary (Mr. D. Kumar). Also to the Chaplains of Bus College (Rev Lepani Raonu) and Nasa Tuirara (Mr. Delia), Lekutu (Rev Apenisa Tawake) and Savusavu Secondary.

ANNUAL MEETING

As part of improving Chaplaincy work, DTC is working closely with our Education Office thanks to the Principal, Rev A. Ruben, and the Dean, Rev T. Balenakorotawa in empowering all the Graduating Ministers.

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Methodist Schools “must set a positive example,” says General Secretary

The General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Fiji has challenged principals of Methodist-run secondary schools to ensure that their institutions are examples of holistic education.

Addressing a meeting of Methodist school principals on Tuesday 21st April, held at Davelu Theological School, Rev. Dr. Vakadewa, said that the Church strongly believes that our children need to be holistically educated for education is both liberation and power.

“Regardless of your own spiritual or religious path, and even though you are appointed as a civil servant, the very nature of your appointment as a leader in a Methodist Church educational institution has connected you with a certain Methodist ethos or pedagogy. It is a pedagogy which seeks to liberate and empower our young people, as Christ liberates us and the Holy Spirit empowers us. It is a process that not only makes our children into good citizens of the nation of Fiji, but moulds them into citizens of the Kingdom of God, which enhances their humanity and their contribution to the wider world around them.”

Rev. Dr. Vakadewa, who is also a former principal of the Methodist Davelu Theological College (2006-2012) and served as Deputy Chair of the South Pacific Association of Methodist Schools (2006-2010), said that he and Church president, Rev. Dr. Tevita Bunavanua were deeply concerned with the marks of our students in external examinations and their own observations of what is happening in some of Methodist schools.

“The condition of our schools’ infrastructure is a troubling reflection on what is going on inside our schools. The marks of our students in external examinations and their behaviour outside the school speaks volumes for what they are learning inside – both academically and morally.”

“What I see, our focus seems to have shifted away from providing quality academic and spiritual and moral formation in a holistic educational environment. While sports are part of a holistic education, how many of our schools have made sporting achievements a priority at the cost of academic excellence and positive character building? I believe this is a valid question in the light of recent developments in our school community.”

‘MAKING SENSE OF OUR DIVISIONAL SCHOOLS’

By Rev. Semisi Turagavou

The Divisional School was established for the following purposes:

To be an In-Service Training Centre for church members

To be the primary level of theological and Christian education before proceeding to other church schools, such as the Methodist Lay Training Centre at Davelu

The two streams mentioned from above are very important for the division or divisions to be aware of and use the divisional school as an In-Service Training Centre for the Lay Pastors, Stewards, Lay leaders, Lay preachers and all church members. Training is very important, as we are encountering immerging and very challenging issues from our circuits and divisions. We cannot ignore and bypass social and political issues of the day. However, this is our Cross, and we need to have sufficient training programs in order to address the current issues. The implications of social and political issues are something to be aware of as church leaders and messengers of Christ to everyone. Through proper and advance training programs about the current issues from divisional level will help the whole church mobilize and work as the mouthpiece of God to the nation.

The divisional school can also be used as a Retreat Centre for Church workers, especially the Church Ministers, Deacons and Lay Pastors. Retreat, in its true sense and meaning is very important. It is important to have time out for renewing, re-engaging and re-committing ourselves to God and the work that we are currently doing for the people. Our journey with God is vital, and this requires reflection and action. To my understanding, retreat is a means that people use to re-examine and re-commit themselves to the different tasks assigned for them. It is also an initiative that binds church workers as a team and work towards perfection. It would be a powerful force as we engage ourselves to the ministry, and executing the same mandate, given from above.

I personally recommend the divisional school as the best training ground for the upcoming church leaders. We need to begin somewhere and move to another level of preparation for the ministry. Our church leaders need to learn basics in order to ground themselves better for the upcoming challenges. We have youths in our circuits and divisions and unfortunately most of them are estranged from the current system of the world. They need the loving hands of the church to rescue and train them to be good citizens of this country.

Finally, the divisional school can also be used as a centre for basic vocational training programs. Our church schools are holistic education. We need to train our youths not only with biblical subjects but also for them to survive in a society. The introduction of vocational programs in our divisional schools must correlate with the basic needs of the people within the circuit and division. The Derrick model of education which was first introduced at Davuilevu is perhaps the best model for the day. We need skill training for our church leaders of today, and the best institution to begin with, is your divisional school.

Rev. Turagavou is the Methodist Church in Fiji’s Secretary for Non-Formal Education. Email: semisi@methodistfiji.org

Towards Quality Theological Education for Lay Members in Fiji

Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewa

Last year’s Golden Jubilee celebrations was not only a historical celebration of the Church’s 50th Anniversary, it also marked a renewed focus on equipping our Church lay members for service in the community of faith.

Not only did the Church specifically collect funds for supporting lay education, the Commissional Plan, also launched last year, places a strong emphasis on developing the human capital of the Church. Given the Methodist tradition of Lay and Ordained partnership, the question of the quality of theological education for the Church must be answered from the perspective of enhancing theological learning at all levels. In a Secretariat retreat at Nausavo, earlier this year, there was some discussion about the divisional schools as well as the issue of the training of Lay Pastors at the Methodist Lay Training Centre.

One of the key issues is understanding adult education in the theological context. Those who are sent to the Divisional Schools, where the bulk of lay pastors and lay preachers are developed and trained, are at the forefront of the process of theological education for the Church. The MLTC has in past years expressed a desire to offer a diploma-level programme which will then become the standard for Lay Pastors.

The Fiji Higher Education Commission is also in the process of ensuring that all award-conferring, post-secondary education providers in the country have recognition and registration status with the Commission. At the moment the focus of the Church and the Commission has been on Davuilevu Theological College and the Deacons Training Centre. However, the mandate of the commission also extends to the MLTC and Divisional Schools.

With the Divisional Schools and Methodist Lay Training Centre evolving new curriculum, the theological training will enhance the lay ministry in the Church. This will also have a roll on effect in the formation of ministers.

As the Divisional Schools develop certificate level programmes, the MLTC begins to offer a diploma level certification, Davuilevu Theological College will begin to explore raising the standard of ministers through the Bachelor of Divinity programme being the ministry standard.

Ministerial formation at DTC has evolved from the Licence in Theology to Diploma in Theology as the core ministerial formation programme. The Bachelor of Divinity programme was established in 2003 to provide second level of advanced theological studies for the purpose of developing future leaders of the church while strengthening the Church’s academic and theological base. In 2004 the Bachelor of Ministry extension programme was established for ministers in the field.

In 2006 the vision of the college acknowledged that a thorough and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and critical analytical skills, to understand and respond constructively to the contemporary world was becoming increasingly important in the formation of ministers. Such a level of theological education was beyond the limitations of the DipTh programme. At the Methodist Church Annual Conference held that year, in Bau, it was proposed that the Bachelor of Divinity programme become the ministerial formation programme for the Church. The proposal was met with general support in principle and is now being further developed in order to prepare church leaders and educators for vocations in a variety of types of ministry.

Rev. Dr. Vakadewa is the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Fiji. Email: epineri@methodistfiji.org

Nai Tabe Issue 4 June 2015

www.methodistfiji.org / www.facebook.com/MethodistChurchFiji
Police statistics show that domestic violence made up around 13 per cent of all crimes against the person between 2003 and 2007. Workplace sexual harassment is also widespread: a 2002 study found that one in three women had been sexually harassed in the workplace. In many cases, the offender is known to the victim. According to Fiji Women's Crisis Centre statistics, the victim knew the perpetrator in 70 per cent of reported rape cases and 94 per cent of child sexual abuse cases.

Many incidents of sexual violence involve young girls. One study found 30 per cent of female rape victims were 11-15 years. Children who are billeted with their extended family are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse e.g. children from outer islands sent to live in urban centres to complete secondary education. Sexual exploitation of children exists in Fiji, including prostitution, sex tourism and pornography.

The aim of the series of workshops is to ensure that ministers, Methodist Men's Fellowship presidents and young men from the Methodist Youth Fellowship are equipped biblically to speak out about the issue of Gender-based Violence and Violence against Children and to learn what they can do to reduce and prevent violence against our vulnerable members of the community.

Genesis 1 reveals God's heart and purpose for humankind. Genesis 1:27 affirms that both women and men were created equally in the image of God. In this light the Church believes in the full equality of women and men in the family, in the community and in the Church, and sees marriage as an equal partnership between a man and a woman.

Rev. Dr. Banivanua challenged the participants to be agents of transformation in their communities, fellowships, churches and in their homes.

“While the Code of Conduct is for Ministry and Lay Leaders, such as yourselves, it is meant to set the example for the whole community to follow. As Methodists we follow the lead of John Wesley in our practical Christianity. He shared with the early members of the Methodist societies “3 simple rules” for Christian living. Do no harm, Do good, stay in love with God. As Christians, as Methodists, we must ensure that in all we do we must not harm anyone or anything – physically, emotionally, verbally, sexually or psychologically. We must seriously commit to this.”

Rev. Dr. Banivanua said that one of the reasons the Methodist Church logo was changed from a taba to a drua was because the Church was ready to face the rough seas, and was called to be big enough to have space for all who want to climb on board.

“Our wives, our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, our children and other vulnerable members of our community – brave many waves that we do not. We must brave those waves with them. And not only that, we must work together to sail our drua through these storms – until we can enter the lagoon of peace.”

The participants were challenged to change the mindset of doing things the way men do. It was important to include teaching and preaching of Social Justice.

“Nasrothu vaveta vaka vista / Sharing commitment to both genders.

“Me do vaveto taba nako bula eso e navorowai ni ko yaka sege ni rawa ni da caiva. / We need to change the mindset of doing things that we say we can’t do.”

Prayer, including chain prayer is important to the process of changing hearts and minds (Masasumu – Me vakalakalaka) so that congregations commit to living and acting according to the Word (Balatava na vosa ni Kaku).

Above and Below—Theological reflections based on bible studies lead by Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird helped to unpack the issue for participants and led to good discussions and recommendations for the Church how the Church can address gender-based violence and child protection.

PHOTO—MCF Communication

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE……

According to Rev. Dr. Banivanua, gender-based violence has far too long been legitimised by many cultures, institutions and some Christian groups in society.

“Our Church’s Connexional Plan calls not only for a “saved” family but a “safe” family. We as Methodists cannot limit our work to the spiritual salvation of our community – we must also be safe communities. Any methodologies, which keep children and the vulnerable safe from harm!”

“Our Church’s Convocation Plan calls not only for a “saved” family but a “safe” family. We as Methodists cannot limit our work to the spiritual salvation of our community – we must also look at the physical, economic, and social salvation of our community. Saved communities, must also be safe communities. Anything less means we are missing the mark in our ministry.”

Gender-based violence includes:

- domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual violence during conflict and harmful customary or traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour crimes;
- trafficking in women, forced prostitution and violations of human rights in armed conflict (in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy);
- forced sterilisation, forced abortion, coercive use of contraceptives, female infanticide and pre-natal sex selection.

The physical, psychological, economic costs of gender-based violence in Fiji are well known.

Research from the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, who made presentations during the workshop, shows that:

- at least 43 women are injured, at least one woman is permanently disabled, and at least 31 women lose consciousness every day in Fiji through domestic violence.

According to the Centre:

- 80 per cent of women have witnessed some form of violence in the home;
- 66 per cent of women have been physically abused by partners and nearly half repeatedly abused;
- 26 per cent of women have been beaten while pregnant;
- 48 per cent of married women have been forced into sex by their husbands;
- and 13 per cent of women have been raped.

The workshop was timely, with the draft Code of Conduct which was to be presented to the Annual Conference at the end of August this year. The Code has a number of important sections on: Abuse Of Women And Domestic Violence / Nedra Vakacacani Na Marama Kei Na Vakayacori Ni Ivalavala Kaukauvatu Eno Lome Ni Vuvale and Child Protection / Na Nedra Taqomaki Na Gone Laieli (see last issue or read the read code online at www.methodistfiji.org)

Rev. Dr. Banivanua challenged the participants to be agents of transformation in their communities, fellowships, churches and in their homes.

“While the Code of Conduct is for Ministry and Lay Leaders, such as yourselves, it is meant to set the example for the whole community to follow. As Methodists we follow the lead of John Wesley in our practical Christianity. He shared with the early members of the Methodist societies “3 simple rules” for Christian living. Do no harm, Do good, stay in love with God. As Christians, as Methodists, we must ensure that in all we do we must not harm anyone or anything – physically, emotionally, verbally, sexually or psychologically. We must seriously commit to this.”

Rev. Dr. Banivanua said that one of the reasons the Methodist Church logo was changed from a taba to a drua was because the Church was ready to face the rough seas, and was called to be big enough to have space for all who want to climb on board.

“Our wives, our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, our children and other vulnerable members of our community – brave many waves that we do not. We must brave those waves with them. And not only that, we must work together to sail our drua through these storms – until we can enter the lagoon of peace.”

The participants were challenged to change the mindset of doing things the way men do. It was important to include teaching and preaching of Social Justice.

“Nasrothu vaveta vaka vista / Sharing commitment to both genders.

“Me do vaveto taba nako bula eso e navorowai ni ko yaka sege ni rawa ni da caiva. / We need to change the mindset of doing things that we say we can’t do.”

Prayer, including chain prayer is important to the process of changing hearts and minds (Masasumu – Me vakalakalaka) so that congregations commit to living and acting according to the Word (Balatava na vosa ni Kaku).

Teological / Spiritual Commitments:

- The word of God needs to be preached and taught correctly, (Yanuakuto vako-donu, kuku na wo abibu taba na vosa ni Kaku), including teaching and preaching of Social Justice.
- There was a recognition and appreciation of lessons learned through the week’s biblical and theological reflections – in particular Galatians 3:28 – Gender Equality (Kalotu 3:28 Tagone Kni na Felipe Tauautotavata).
- “Nasrothu vaveta vaka vista / Sharing commitment to both genders.

- “Me do vaveto taba nako bula eso e navorowai ni ko yaka sege ni rawa ni da caiva. / We need to change the mindset of doing things that we say we can’t do.”

- Prayer, including chain prayer is important to the process of changing hearts and minds (Masasumu – Me vakalakalaka) so that congregations commit to living and acting according to the Word (Balatava na vosa ni Kaku).

Personal /Group Commitments:

- Taking responsibility to discourage and avoid participating in degrading/dirty conversations about the opposite sex during laga sessions, (Na vokacori ni cora e bati ni tanoan. Mo tarova e ika, Lako noa mai kina, Me da vusatu kini kedi). This also includes reducing the consumption of kava and using the space for useful discussions on important issues (Yakalakalakasi no guru yaguna. Koa kuniku na slatga vinika me vusatu taba).

- Take precautions when using the internet and media. (Qatana na internet kei na ma- di).
Proposals for Church and Community:

- Regular grassroots training on gender-based violence and child protection in all levels, (Katau sabu na viti ena xilevu vaqa talalato Taboakokasau – Waisawake veinibulo), by training local trainers from all divisions and circuits. (Vakaitoqinotasi na viti ena xilevu na talalato. Me vakanaibaini viti na xilevu.)
- Inclusion of this issue in informal teaching sessions, such as after sports training (Qito – ati na tereni, caka na xilevu).
- Major Evangelism Programmes, need to be focused all to the youths (Ke dua na veinivakatubukalu levu me caka sara ga ena loma ni Matanakakam). All those that are implicated in gender-based violence or violence against children in any way need to be disciplined in a way that maintains the integrity or violence against children in any way need to be disciplined in a way that maintains the integrity of the Church (Me ra vakavanu sava sa vakadua ko iro kekela ere vakakacora na tani/vakanai lava na qo). They called on church departments to communi- cation department for counseling purposes. (Me dua tale na department ni consultation vei na counseling.)
- To help with preaching on such issues, refresher courses for all lay preachers should include, “Contextualization of Sermon” (Refresh course vei na Daunau ena veitubuka me Contextualization Of Sermon).
- Participants also highlighted the need for the acceptance of the shift from conservative theology that has been reflected on during the workshop against violence against women, for equality between women and men and the protection of children for divisional superintendents and circuit ministers to preach at the pulpit. (Me dikevi tale modi ko vakakacora na cakho ebo vakatubukalu tiko ena ke 21 ni yoboka dra.)
- The Church Annual Conference must be bold in addressing social and political issues that affect families in a negative way, by speaking truth to power. The Church needs to propose to the Government on the policies regarding Nightclubs, Internet Shops, Secular State. (Me xalatona na base Xa Ybi ki ni xalatona me dikevi tale modi ebo na jokxiy, eg. Nightclubs, Internet Shop, Secular State.)

For Left: One of the workshop organizers, Rev. Naivalu makes a point of clarification. Left: Rev. Ravoka listens as Dr. Moses Ligan speaks above; Time for discussion and sharing in groups. PHOTO—MCIF Communication

Rev. Semiia Turganovou challenged participants to look beyond the legal approach and cultural attitudes to the issue of gender-based violence, suggesting a situational ethics approach of focusing on the situation and looking for a long-term solution. He urged participants not to be satisfied with only dealing with the immediate situation or symptoms of the problem but to peel back the layers and look at the core, root of the issue.

This workshop is only the first step. Other workshops are planned around the country this year. It is one small step for the three departments which facilitated the workshop. Yet is also a giant leap for the Church in addressing these issues and making sure the discussion and action is taken seriously by the Church. In upcoming issues Nai Tabe will also play its part by sharing biblical reflections and lessons learned on Gender Violence and the Protection of our Children.
Obituary

Rev. Sarwesh Singh
Superintendent,
Veilomani Boys Home
13/12/1943—10/6/2015

The Methodist Church in Fiji is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of the Superintendent of the Veilomani Boys Home in Ba, Rev. Sarwesh Singh.

Rev. Singh passed away in Ba yesterday (12/6/15) at the age of 71.

Methodist Church General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewavosa said he and Church President, Rev. Dr. Tevita Banivanua were dismayed when they received the news of Rev. Singh’s death.

“He was passed the retirement age for a minister, which is 70, but had asked for an extension so he could complete some projects at the Veilomani Home. He was committed to his work in serving the Home and give his life for it. Our deepest condolences go to his dear wife, sons and family.”

Rev. Singh served as a lay person in the Young People’s Department from 1986 to 1992. He candidated for the ministry in 1991, at the age of 48, and was ordained in 1997. He served in the Indian Division as circuit minister in Nadi, Sigatoka and Lautoka.

He was appointed to the position of Superintendent of the Veilomani Boy’s Home in 2008 and began there in 2009.

Rev. Iliesa Naivalu, who, as Secretary for Christian Citizenship and Social Services, had oversight of the Home and Rev. Singh’s work, said that Rev. Singh was responsible for the development of the Home’s vocational programme into the Methodist Veilomani Rehabilitation and Vocational College, of which he was the first principal.

“Rev. Singh focus was firmly on the home and the welfare of the boys. He wanted to ensure that they were given the care they needed to complete their education either in school or the vocational college. There are a number of success stories of young men who have found work in Vatukola or FSC as a result of the training from the vocational college. While his dreams for the home may not have been fully materialised, he was able to achieve a fair amount in his time. He will be missed not only by his family but by the community in Veilomani and his colleagues and community in the Church.”

Rev. Singh was also a recipient of the Independence Medal in 1970 and served as a Justice of the Peace for 15 years.

He is survived by his wife Chand, sons Eric and Ivan who are both lay Pastors of the Methodist Church, and his grandchildren.

May he rest in peace, “good and faithful servant”.

Photos of Farewell: The Church’s General Secretary-Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewavosa, Trust Secretary-Mr. Livai Tuisaravere and Secretary for Christian Citizenship and Social Services-Rev. Iliesa Naivalu travelled to Ba to comfort Rev. Singh’s family and present their traditional condolences. At the Namosau Methodist Church, residents and students at Veilomani held a guard of honour for the funeral cortège. The beloved servant of God was also a loved man of the people, many who flocked to the church to pay their respects. Ministers from the Church’s Indian Division took part in the service, while ministers attended in solidarity. Rev. Naivalu, Rev. Singh’s colleague in Church social services spoke and Deaconess Leba Laveti of Dilkusha Girls Home comforted Mrs. Singh as she prepared to say farewell to her dear husband.

Photos- M. Naivalu—MCIF Communication
Students urged to “Protect Your Temple”

By Rev. James Bhagwan

School children from the greater Suva/Nausori area were challenged to treat their bodies as the temple of God and stay free from substance abuse. Preaching a sermon at a Church service organized by the Ministry of Education and the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council to launch International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Methodist Church General Secretary, Rev. Epineri Vakadewavosa said that all major faults call their adherents to be clean, physically, mentally and spiritually.

“Don’t destroy and abuse the place that God lives in – Your body. The ‘Temple of the Holy Spirit’. What kind of temple do you want your body to be? One in which God is pleased to dwell in? Or one which is empty and unwanted... except by evil? Keep your temple clean, protect your body – say no to drugs, say yes to God’s plan for you.”

Addressing students, teachers and supporters who packed the Centenary Church, Rev. Vakadewavosa said that drugs and alcohol also destroy God’s Temple.

“Many widely used drugs damage the brain, heart and lungs of the user as well as the bodies of unborn children. The use of drugs contributes to the leading causes of death in the world—heart disease, stroke, and various types of cancer. Drug abuse also generates an incredible financial burden for society.”

Rev. Vakadewavosa added that drugs also play a role in violent behaviour, car accidents and fires. If that’s not bad enough, they also lead one to fall under the influence of worldly things rather than being yielded to God.

“Drug and alcohol use will lead you to be involved in things that God despises. You’ll be throwing God’s money away and destroying God’s Temple at the same time. I asked you earlier to imagine your dream house. Now imagine a ruined, rundown, damaged old house. This is the exact opposite of your dream house. How can you be at peace when you are in this house? Is this the kind of home that you want to live in?”

Dr. Vakadewavosa highlighted the role of peer pressure in leading someone to use drugs.

“The more involved he becomes, the greater the temptations become and the weaker his will to resist.”

He pointed out that alcohol and cigarettes are the first step toward marijuana use.

“To use them is to take drugs for pleasure, so why not move on to greater ‘pleasure’? Users are told marijuana is harmless, friends encourage them, and so they try it. They enjoy the ‘high’ and want it more often. Then they start having problems at school, on the job, and at home, so they use it more and more to escape reality. Then they want a bigger high. They are already using an illegal drug that weakens their judgment and inhibition, so they have removed the barriers against stronger drugs. Soon they become another drug addict statistic.”

According to NSAAC fact sheet with School Drugs Statistics in 2011: there were 54 cases of marijuana being smoked in schools, 369 cases of kava, 522 cases of cigarette smoking, 268 cases of alcohol consumption, 212 cases of inhalants being used, 215 sexual cases and 72 student pregnancies.

Fiji Police Force Crimes Statistics show that 136 drug-related crimes took place in 2011, 284 in 2012 and 217 in 2013. Offenses against public morality has continued to increase, as have rates of new HIV infections, and teenage pregnancies.

The NCAS also highlighted the increase in methamphetamine and cocaine cases.

“Your body is unique,” said Rev. Dr. Vakadewavosa. “You were created by God, and you are not an accident. Your heavenly Father chose the day and the time your life would begin. God thought a lot about you. Every detail of your body, every cell and organ are God’s handwork. There is a purpose for your body. It is to glorify God. You can glorify God, not just in your academic, sporting or work achievements. You can glorify God by living a good, righteous life – being kind, helping others, working hard, loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and loving and respecting others.”

He added that drug users are tempted to all kinds of sins, including: Lying to cover up drug use; Disobedience to parents; Failure to do one’s job or schoolwork; Stealing; Neglect of Bible study, prayer, worship, church work, etc.

“My point is that drug abuse is wrong even before people actually begin to practice these sins, because from the beginning it tempts people toward these sins. Drug abuse is a failure to avoid temptation.”
Vulilevu Update: News from the Young People’s Department and the Methodist Lay Training Centre

**Nasini Wesley Church Launches Disability Ministry**

The Nasini Wesley Church (NWC), under the Wesley Mission Circuit Mission and the Wesley Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji has launched its vision “Towards an Inclusive and Safe Church” that exists to fulfil the Great Commission” - focussed on people with disability. Lay Pastor for the Nasini Wesley Church, Apenia Lewatoro said that the church is moving towards becoming an inclusive and Safe Church by the end of 2017.

“We believe that God has given us this vision at such a time as this. Information gathered from the Disability Training Center at Brown Street say that a great number of people with disabilities live in the Nasini area. It is a process for the next 2 years. We will need to build all necessary ramps, a separate toilet facility for the disabled, safe entry from the roadside, extended shelter at the church entrance, etc.” Mr Lewatoro said that the Church is prayerfully considering running effective programs for such people from differing races, religion, language, social background, etc. in the church once the disabled washroom and other necessary infrastructure are put in place.

“Our former Lay Pastor, the late Mr Sam Vilsoni, was an amputee who walked almost all his life on crates. He was a great Methodist son and advocate for the disabled community in our nation. Before his passing in November 2013, he had also pioneered and served as pastor of the Horeb Fellowship, a group of believers with disability who meet regularly at the Fiji Vocational and Training Center for Persons with Disability (Brown St, Suva) on Sundays.”

“And now, the new leaders in NWC have picked up this ministry focus, and since February 2014, the NWC has been having a combined Vula Vulo (New Month) Service with the Horeb Fellowship this is an opportunity for us to do so and inspire the rest of the Methodists Church to follow up as well. SOURCE and PHOTOS—MCIF Communication.

NEW BURSAR FOR MLTC/YPD

With the retirement of Mr. Tomasi Gonelevu from the YPD Board, Ms. Add Saleva Francisc Tubu has been appointed chair of the board. The Church welcomes her and prays that God will bless her appointment to manage the finances entrusted to the Young People’s Department and Methodist Lay Train.
NA LAKO YANI VOU: NA LAKO YANI VOU: NA LAKO YANI VOU:
THROUGH CONNEXIONAL PLANNING TODAY

By Kalisiana Koroj

Let’s start by asking ourselves the following questions:

1) Do you know where your church is going?
2) What will your church be like in three years?
3) How can you be a few steps closer to realizing your vision?
4) If you do not change anything, will the future be any different than the past?

One sure-fire way to impact your church’s future is to develop your Connexional Plan.

This chapter will highlight the importance of developing a Connexional Plan for your church today.

Why DO A CONNEXIONAL PLAN?

Connexional planning is a process that will help you focus on aligning the unique gifts and resources that God has given your church to take advantage of your opportunities. Strategy says, “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwisely but as wise, making the most of every opportunity?” (Ephesians 5:15-16). As you do the planning, let God do the directing.

For the Christian, this is not simply projection-based planning but the realization that through prayer and obedience you can be a catalyst to help bring about a future that is in alignment with God’s purposes. Through prayer and collaboration, a plan for a church can be established. We do the planning, but God does the directing.

WHAT IS CONNEXIONAL PLANNING?

Simply put, a Connexional plan is the formalized road map that describes how your church executes the chosen strategy. A plan spells out where the church is going, over the next 3 years and more, and how it is going to get there. A Connexional plan is a management tool that serves the purpose of helping a church do a better job, and it improves churches because a plan focuses the energy, resources, and time of everyone in the church in the same direction.

Connexional planning does not have to be mysterious, complicated, or time-consuming. In fact, it should be quick, simple, and easily executed. In addition, Connexional planning is not just something you put off your list of “to-do’s”—you must create a culture of strategic thinking, so that connexional planning does not become an annual retreat but, instead, a part of daily decision making.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A CONNEXIONAL PLAN?

There are several different components or pieces in a Connexional plan. This is probably the most widely debated part of strategic planning. Every person you ask will provide a different answer. What matters is having a combination of long-term and short-term targets to keep your church moving in the right direction.

Think of the elements of a typical Connexional plan in the hierarchy as outlined hereunder:

- Vision
- Mission
- Values
- Strategy

The elements of the question, “Where are we going to be if we have been on target for five years from now?” is where your church will look like in five years from now.

In conclusion, I wish to state that a Connexional Plan is the plan that is achieved by the church after it has carefully considered the vision, mission, values, and strategy for its church.

The elements of the question, “Where are we going to be if we have been on target for ten years from now?” is where your church will look like in the future. What will your church look like? Answer this question.

Where are we going?

The elements of the question, “Where are we going?” help you answer other critical questions, such as, What will my church look like in the future? What are we headed to? What is the future I want to create for my church? The following elements help you define the future for your church:

- Vision:
  A church’s vision provides a clear mental picture, by faith, of what your church will look like in five years from now.
  By forming a strategic vision, your church will be better able to direct its energies, and the church will be able to have a full purpose.

- Mission:
  Mission is the statement you need to understand how God has uniquely gifted your church with core strengths, abilities, and gifts. You should decide where you want to be and how you want to get there.

- Values:
  Values are enduring, passionate, and distinctive core beliefs. They are guiding principles that never change. Values are why we do what we do and where we go. Are they the beliefs that guide your church’s conduct, activities, and goals of the organization?

- Strategy:
  Strategy is the swot, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are strategically important to your church.

Strategic Planning establishes a way to match your church’s strengths with opportunities, and weak areas with threats. The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to assess your current strategic position.

Where are we going?

To write a mission ask the following questions:

- Why do we exist?

The mission of your church should state the purpose of helping a church do a better job, and it should be quick, simple, and easily executed. In fact, it should be a filtering tool to assess where you are now.

To write a mission ask the following questions:

- Why do we exist?

To create a mission statement you need to understand how God has uniquely gifted your church with core strengths, abilities, and gifts. You should decide where you want to be and how you want to get there.

To define the future for your church:

- Vision:
  A Godly vision is based on God’s will for the church. It is a picture of seeking the needs of other people and meeting those needs. It is vitally connected to the heart of God and His perspective. A vision which is inspired by God is Godly and is what you want to accomplish, which God has given you. A Godly vision makes your heart surge, carries you to heights you never dreamed possible, and causes exponential growth. You are empowered and motivated by it. It seizes hold of you and orders your thoughts and actions.

- Mission:
  A mission statement is a road map that describes how your church executes the chosen strategy.

- Values:
  Values are enduring, passionate, and distinctive core beliefs. They are guiding principles that never change. Values are why we do what we do and where we go. Are they the beliefs that guide your church’s conduct, activities, and goals of the organization?

- Strategy:
  Strategy establishes a way to match your church’s strengths with opportunities, and weak areas with threats. The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to assess your current strategic position.

- SWOT:
  The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a tool to help match internal organizational strengths with external opportunities so that your church can be better positioned to realize its mission.

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Cicia the Organic Island of Fiji.

Early morning on the Tuesday, 28th of April, join Na Qase Levu Rev. Dr. Tevita Banivanua and Executive Administration Officer Patiliai Leqa, who serves as the President’s traditional spokesperson (Matanivanua) on a Fiji Link flight to coordinates 17°45′S 179°18′W, Cicia Island in the Lau group. After an hour flight we land at Cicia Airport and are greeted by Rev. Tagitivakatini, who is the Divisional Superintendent of Cicia, and make our way to Tarakua Village. We are treated to hearty organic Cicia-style breakfast: Sukota (coconut soaked in seawater), ika tavu (fish roasted on an open fire), boiled fish and many more – I recommend you go there and try it yourself. The President is then accorded a traditional welcome by the chief and leaders of the village in the church hall. The President was in Cicia to officially open the Cicia Division’s Annual Meeting and the occasion was one of spiritual renewal for the people of Cicia. In his opening address, Rev. Dr. Banivanua said, “God made this island of Cicia a beautiful garden. You have been planted in this garden by God. If you commit to being God’s disciples, this garden and your lives will be in order because our God is the God of Order.”

On the Saturday following the three-day meeting, Na Qase Levu visited the other three villages on the island: Nakoro Levu, Tokalau and Lomaji. On Sunday morning, he conducted the 1030am service at Mabula and that same evening in Tarakua he conducted the Induction service of Rev. Tagivakatini as Talatala Qase. Rev. Tagivakatini has already served 3 of 5 years as Divisional Superintendent. Reflecting on his work and the President’s message at the Annual Meeting he said that when he first arrived to serve in Cicia, “it was like walking into a village after a bomb exploded. His vision, inspired further by the President’s visit and his induction is to bring order in the Cicia Division, “because our God is a God of Order”.

Induction at Matuku

A Saturday morning sunrise heralded what was supposed to be a perfect day for a 2-hour ride on the outboard powered fiberglass launch, which, on this trip, belonged to the Naroi Police. Once again I am accompanying Na Qase Levu and Radini Qase Levu as they travel on the open sea from Naroi on Moala to Matuku for the induction of the new divisional superintendent. However, once we cleared the lagoon and reached the open sea, the little cruise became a different type of journey. The wind was strong and waves were rough. Yet but the hands of God’s protection with his angels was over shadowing us and 3 hours later we were viewing the beautiful nature of Matuku. Talatala Qase, Rev. Tevita Vukealau and the Tuirara Levu came out to meet us and direct us to a safe passage from the sea to shore. After a traditional ceremony of welcome in the Burotukula Hall, there was a discussion regarding the re-opening of the Divisional School in Naroi next year. An offer was made to rejoin the Yasayasa group Matuku, Moala and Totoya which had been made into 3 separate divisions in the Methodist Church. For the Matuku and Totoya Divisions, this may provide a much needed lay-training for their members interested in training and for possible opportunities for further discipleship training at the Methodist Lay Training Centre or ministerial formation at Dauluvu Theological College.

The rest of the day was spent travelling to the villages of Qalikuru, Levukaidaku and Tokalau, which is the village of Methodist Church in Fiji’s first President, the Late Rev. Setereki Tuilovoni. The changing tides limited further exploration and we returned to Burotukula for the night.

On Sunday 17th of May was the Induction of Rev. Vukealau as Divisional Superintendent of Matuku. Rev. Vukealau hopes to implement the Church’s Connexional Plan in Matuku before his term is complete. The return journey on Monday, while a little shorter, was slow and rough due to large swells. But another mission accomplished by the President.
Induction Totoya

Returning from Matuku, we have three days to rest, recover and refuel. At 10am on Friday 22nd May, we climbed onboard our little boat to journey to Totoya for the induction of Rev. Vakamoce as Divisional Superintendent, or Talatala Qase, of Totoya. The captain advised us that we would experience the same strong wind and large swells as we had during our return from Matuku. However, referring to our President, sitting on the boat, since the man of God was on a mission, God would be in control of the journey.

By midday we passed Udu village and entered the bay opposite Daveta Tabu. As soon as we reached the shore Na Qase Levu was greeted by the Tuirara, who performed the traditional request Qase Levu to step ashore. In the afternoon, during the formal traditional welcome ceremony, Rev. Dr. Banivanua sought the forgiveness of the community as previous Presidents had not come to install the Divisional Superintendent due to the difficulty of travelling to Totoya by boat. However, he had given his word, after his election last year that he would come to Totoya and he had kept his word.

As in Matuku, a talanoa session, following the welcome ceremony, addressed the re-opening of the Divisional School on Moala and the working together of the three divisions of Moala, Matuku and Totoya. The Totoya Division consented to this proposal.

On Saturday, the President, Mrs. Banivanua and I visited the three circuits of the Totoya Division, Udu, Dravuwala and Keteira. There was a very special welcome for Na Qase Levu and Radini Qase Levu in Dravuwala, in which they were wrapped in masi (tapa cloth), and led along a path made from colourful sulu material spread out on the ground to the village hall where they were again accorded a traditional welcoming ceremony.

Sunday morning dawned and with it, an occasion the whole island had been awaiting for a long time. The Induction of their Talatala Qase. In his sermon, Rev. Dr. Banivanua Qase Levu said that one of the key reasons for a decline in church membership was that the core of Methodism was not being practiced by the community of faith. “A true Methodist,” according to Na Qase Levu, “is someone who has the love of Christ or understands deep in his heart what Agape love is: to love his or her neighbor and love his or her adversary.”

Na Qase Levu ended his sermon with the statement by John Wesley “Do No Harm, Do Good Always And Stay Connected To God.”

Rev. Vakamoce said that this is his last year of his 5 years in Totoya as Divisional Superintendent.

“All that has been achieved, I see that the people has being working together in harmony to the call of the Church and I thank God and pray that this unity will not break but continue with the next Talatala Qase who will come after me”.

As we made our way back to Moala to prepare for our return to Suva, we enjoyed calm seas and a smooth short journey. I was a confirmation, perhaps, that the President’s mission to the Yasayasa, to induct the divisional superintendents and discuss the combined divisional school, was complete.
From a dream to a “VISION”

Nasikawa Vision College’s 20th Anniversary is a testimony of faith and commitment to mission for the Korean Methodist Church

By Rev. James Bhagwan

I doubt that when John Wesley famously said, “The world is my parish,” he thought that one day, there would be around 805 million Christians in 133 countries who consider themselves part of the Methodist family. Having not heard of Fiji or Korea, he would not have imagined that these far-flung countries, one in the Pacific and one in Asia, would, 277 years after his Adventist experience, be celebrating two decades of mission partnership.

On the 3rd of June this year, a service of thanksgiving and rededication was held at Nasikawa Vision College to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the school, and of the Korean Methodist mission from Seoul, South Korea that established it.

Nasikawa Vision College was opened by a Korean Methodist Church in 1995. The school started as a bible and vocational school for local youth providing bible and computing courses. Upon being requested by the communities around, the school changed to a secondary school in 1997 and was registered with the Ministry of Education (Reg. No. 9792).

The school has been developed rapidly due to consistent support from Korea. The school, as one of the Methodist mission schools in Fiji, emphasizes Christian values and teaches with a strong biblical ethos. The school provides a RE class and a chapel service once a week for the students.

The school is also used as a mission base for mission teams from Korea, New Zealand and Australia. And many local church groups and mission organizations, such as Scripturze Mission of Schools and ‘Pacific Students for Christ’, use the school facilities for their spiritual training. The school’s ultimate goal is to be the centre of spiritual movement in Fiji.

The first principal of the school, Rev. Joo-Sung Kim, who returned to Fiji for the celebration, recalled that when they began work on the first classroom block, the land was a swampy mangrove before being cleared to build the school. In 1994 the first classroom block was built, and the school opened in 1995. It was only 1 classroom block with chapel and some staff houses. The first chapel, up on the hill overlooking the school was built in 1997 by two Korean supporting churches. In 2011 a larger chapel Antioch Chapel was built down in the main school campus. It serves as both a hall and a chapel.

Vision College’s current director, Rev. Nam Gun Cho, was the school’s third principal, until 2008. The current principal is Mr. Mata Loga, a lay preacher and former Youth Fellowship Coordinator for the Indian Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji. In fact, Vision College and Naibale Church are part of the Vision Circuit of the Indian Division. Rev. Nam Gun Cho is also a valued member of the Church’s Overseas Mission committee.

In his message preached during the thanksgiving, Methodist Church in Fiji General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewavosa paid tribute to the pastors and members of the Kang-namdong Division of the South Seoul Conference of the Korean Methodist Church who have supported Vision College and its mission for the last 20 years.

“We give thanks to God for the missionaries and lay teams that have worked hard to develop this school. We give thanks for the many Methodist congregations from South Korea that have given so generously to fund the mission here. We give thanks to God for the mission teams that have used this school as a base to do outreach, to do medical mission work and share the word of God and the love of Jesus Christ.”

“Not only is Vision College and Naibale Methodist Church part of the Korean Methodist mission to Fiji – it is a part of the Methodist Church in Fiji. It is a full circuit within our Indian Division, working to reach out to our Indo-Fijian brothers and sisters who have yet experience and understand the love of Christ. The Indian Division Superintendent – Rev. Dr. Reuben is here with me today as both a Methodist Church in Fiji leader and a member of the Vision community.”

“I also want to affirm the Methodist Church in Fiji’s commitment to working with our brothers and sisters of the Korean Methodist Church in partnership for mission, both in Fiji and around the world.”

With the presence of Rev. Won Kyu Lee – representing the World Mission Board of the Korean Methodist Church, the General Secretary said that the strengthening of our mission partnership with the Korean Methodist Church is a priority for the Methodist Church in Fiji.

“As you may know – we have already seen some of the fruit of this partnership – not only here at Vision College – but also from the opportunities for the training of our ministers and leaders. In 2013 when our late president Rev. Dr. Tukilakilakua Waqairatu travelled to Korea for the World Council of Churches General Assembly, he was moved by the spirituality of the Methodist congregations he met during his stay. He was also impressed by the hard work of the Korean Methodist pastors.”

“He shared on his return that he hoped that more of our upcoming ministers and future leaders would have time to study in Korea – not just at the Methodist Theological University but to work with Korean Methodist Churches and experience and learn about serving God and leading a community of faith in a developed country facing many of the issues we are starting to face.”

Methodist Church leaders have already spent time with Korean Methodist churches during visits for various programmes – they have learned and also being spiritually strengthened during their visits. There are also some senior ministers who have been trained in Korea. Secretary for Non-Formal Education, Rev. Samisi Turagavou space time at the Methodists Theological University and Gaspo Methodist Church and Secretary for Communication and Overseas Mission, Rev. James Bhagwan also was attached to Gaspo Church and is the first Fijian graduate from MTU’s International Graduate Studies programme. Currently Rev. Tariela Ratuwai is studying at MTU and serving at Gaesan Methodist Church in Incheon.

"I also want to affirm the Methodist Church in Fiji’s commitment to working with our brothers and sisters of the Korean Methodist Church in partnership for mission, both in Fiji and around the world.”

Early days, first classrooms under construction in 1994 Photos-Supplied

www.methodistfiji.org  / twitter: @methodistfiji

The hilltop chapel under construction. Photos-Supplied

The first batch of students at the College in 1995. Photos-Supplied
However, the General Secretary called for a more balanced relationship – not just in the sending of our students and receiving of missionaries.

“We see our partnership as being in the true spirit of the early church – of a sharing and working together for the extension of the Kingdom. While we may not have the financial resources – we have two important resources which we can share. The first is land - through which projects or businesses can be set up to generate income for mission work in both Fiji and around the world. The second resource we have is people.”

“There are many Methodist men and women – experienced as teachers, doctors and nurses, engineers, carpenters and many who are able to go to dangerous areas, who are willing to take the Gospel to the unreached. We are willing to partner with the Korean Methodist Church – to work together to reach out and together take the Gospel from our Jerusalem, and in all our Judea and our Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Rev. Dr. Vakadewavosa said that will the occasion to celebrate Lord has done through Vision College over the last 20 years, it was also a celebration of what more God can do - not just for Vision College and Vision Circuit - not just for Fiji - but for Korea and the world - if we commit to working together and sharing together what we have.

In the process of globalization, John Wesley’s motto “The world is my parish” has become much more relevant than his time. Methodist mission should not be confined in geographical, racial and ethnic barriers. Fiji overseas mission is now picking up the pace.

Rev. Cho reflects on the next ‘vision’ for the mission:

“Nasikawa Vision College has turned 20 this year. The pioneers of Korean Methodist mission also started from the scratch 20 years ago and now we see the results of the consistent works of planting and watering. Planting and watering can be tedious work. People easily get tired of sowing and plowing. “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”!! Let’s keep on sowing and plowing, only then we will see the great harvest of God’s mission in years to come, if not, in the next generation for sure.”
We are a global village and the internet can be a powerful channel to connect with others around the world, to share ideas and information, and to build community. But with this comes the responsibility to use social media in a responsible way.

### Rule #1: Do no harm.

Job writes, “To do no harm means that I will be on guard so that all my actions and even my silence will not add injury to another of God’s children or to any part of God’s creation.” Doing no harm means respecting the cultures and life situations of those with whom we interact.

When we engage with others online, we may forget that living, breathing people with thoughts and feelings are on the other end of the digital conversation. With almost 70 percent of all communication being nonverbal, we may easily misunderstand what someone is trying to convey or how another interprets our intentions. It is easy to focus so much on proving a particular point that we cause unintended harm.

When engaging in social media activities, take the time to discern both the intention and the potential consequences of online engagement:

- What is the intent of the post? Does it show Christ’s love or does it focus on judgment and condemnation?
- Do you speak disparagingly about anyone involved?
- Do you try to use facts and opinions to manipulate others to your viewpoint?
- Could this post “do harm” to the reputation of Christ, the church or another person or organization?
- Could someone interpret the post as harmful, offensive, rude or disrespectful?
- Does this interaction recognize each person involved as a “loved child of God” – a recipient of love unearned, unlimited and underused – just like myself?

### Rule #2: Do good.

Job writes, “My desire to do good is in response to God’s invitation to follow Jesus, and it is in my concern to determine to extend hospitality and goodness to all I meet.” Doing all the good we can means to engage others proactively in a way that “nourished goodness and strengthens community.” Assess every word and act to determine if it brings God’s grace and goodness to others.

Whether Facebook, Instagram or something else, social media very quickly embeds us in other people’s lives. How we engage online can have a profound effect on the people with whom we connect. Using social media to extend hospitality and goodness to all or to demonstrate God’s love to digital neighbors.

- Whether engaging as an individual or as a representative of your church, think about every status update, comment or post as an outlet of “doing good.”
- Would you describe the post as “good”? Does it reflect God’s interest or your own self-interest or will? Does it serve the good of the community and those in it?
- Will it help God’s reign and fellow believers? How will those outside the church perceive it? How will people of different cultural or faith backgrounds receive it?

### Rule #3: Stay in love with God.

Job writes that we stay in love with God, “we find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus.”

Social media can be a powerful channel to “re-present” Christ to the community outside the church building. Stories can show how God transforms lives, communities and the world. Social media provides ways to share those stories that help all of us to “stay in love with God.”

Social media, like other ministry, can lead to emotional burnout and exhaustion. We can overextend ourselves in too many people’s lives or engage in too many conversations. We must find a balance between sharing God’s love and sustaining efforts over time.

- What stories can you tell or share online to help others stay in love with God?
- How does social media help you to stay in love with God? How does it hinder you?
- How can your social media contribution help others stay in love with God?

Handle with care:

Social media is another channel to minister to those around us, but it must be used carefully. Words or comments posted online can go viral in a matter of hours. Focusing on “doing no harm, doing good and staying in love with God” can help ensure that we make a positive impact in the world.

Is Your Child Being Cyber-Bullied?

Gone are the days when a child’s home is a refuge from playground or neighborhood bullies. The Internet is the new playground, and there are no off-hours. Tech-savvy students are turning to cyberspace to harass their peers using a new method of bullying—cyberbullying. The popularity of instant messaging, e-mail, web pages, text messaging, and blogging means that kids are potential targets—all day, every day. Victimization on the Internet through cyberbullying is increasing in frequency and scope. Electronic bullies can remain “virtually” anonymous. Temporary e-mail accounts and pseudonyms in chat rooms, instant messaging programs, and other online venues may make it very difficult for adolescents to determine the identity of aggressors. Individuals now have the ability to hide behind some measure of anonymity when using their personal computer or cellular phone to bully another individual.

What is cyberbullying?
Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm (i.e., harassment, humiliating, or threatening by text, images) inflicted through the Internet, interactive technologies, or mobile phones. Cyberbullying tactics:
- Gossip: Posting or sending cruel gossip to damage a person’s reputation or relationships with friends, family, and acquaintances. Exclusion: Deliberately excluding someone from an online group.
- Impersonation: Breaking into someone’s e-mail or other online account and sending messages that will cause embarrassment or damage to the person’s reputation and affect his or her relationship with others.
- Harassment: Repeatedly posting or sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.

Cyberbullying safety tips:
Encourage your children to talk to you if anybody says or does something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. It’s important to stay calm and keep open lines of communication with children. Make sure your children tell their school if the bullying is school related or involves another student. Be in your children’s lives. If your child is cyberbullied with contact, contact your local police. Watch for the warning signs of being cyberbullied, such as reluctance to use the computer, a change in your child’s behavior and mood, or reluctance to go to school. Tell your children to guard their contact information. Children should assume that people will use the information they post online to cause them harm. Remind your children that they communicate with family and friends online have open access to ALL of their posted content and information, and they can forward or use any of that information against them.

Remind your children that those who bully want to make their victims feel as if there is something wrong with them, but victims should know that there is nothing wrong with them; it is the bullies who have the real problem.

Talk to your children about cyberbullying:
Tell your children they do not have to accept any online activity meant to intimidate, threaten, tease, or harm them or anyone else. Remind them that giving bullies attention is exactly what they want, so ignore them as much as possible. Tell them not to erase or delete messages from cyberbullies. Your children do not have to read messages they receive from bullies, but they (or you) need to keep messages as evidence. To report cyberbullying, it is important to save as much information as possible. The more you save, the easier it will be to track down the people that are bothering your child. (Save the e-mail, e-mail address, date and time received, copies of all relevant e-mails, screenshots, etc.)

Finally, use software to block bullies if encountered through chat or IM and use privacy settings to block networking pages.


Parents' Guide to Children and Mobile Phones: Everything You Need to Know Before You Buy or Give Your Child a Mobile Phone

These tips can help you:
- Decide whether your kid is ready for a cell phone.
- Teach basic cell-phone safety.
- Explore responsible cell phone rules.
- Set limits.

What’s the right age to get my kid a cell phone?
Age isn’t as important as responsibility and maturity. If your kid can demonstrate both—by checking in with you at appointed times, following your rules, adhering to school guidelines, and handling the phone sensibly—then he or she may be ready. Here are a few questions to help you decide:
- Do your children need to be in touch for safety reasons?
- What kind of easy access to friends benefit them for social reasons?
- Can they adhere to limits you set for minutes talked and apps downloaded?

- Will they use the text, photo, and video functions responsibly and not to embarrass or harass others?

Can I “just say no” to cell phones?
It’s not a tragedy to be the only kid at school without a phone. But there are very few public phones anymore. If there’s an emergency and you need to reach your kid, you could be kicking yourself for not having given him one. Maybe you just don’t want to pay to put a tech-obsessed, always-connected culture. You can still pass along your values by modeling the tech habits you want your kids to pick up—without missing that emergency call.

What are the basic safety rules for cell phones?
Basic safety skills are essential for kids’ safety and privacy. Here are the rules kids will need to be responsible for, plus some best practices.

Texting:
Be helpful—both to the people you’re texting with and those around you. Be careful. Assume that even “private” texts can be accessed.

Calling:
Verify the caller or texter. Don’t respond to numbers you don’t know.
Answer the phone when it’s Mum or Dad. Make sure your kid knows how to answer when it’s YOU calling.

Cameras:
Ask permission. Before you snap someone’s picture, take a video, or forward something, ask if it’s OK.
Don’t publicly embarrass people. Don’t post someone’s photos—especially scantily clad ones—from your cell phone without permission.

How should I do if someone “sexts” my kid?
The definition of “sext” is “to send suggestive text messages back and forth. Like cybersex, but with text.” This can happen—ever accidentally! Tell your kid to delete the photo and block the number. And if someone asks your kids to send them a “sext,” make sure your kids say no and tell you if they’re being pressured.

My kid’s friend texted an embarrassing photo of her to friends. What should I do?
She learned the hard way that kids can use cell phones to humiliate others by forwarding texts, photos, and other things that were thought to be private. First, explain that this is a form of cyberbullying. Next, talk to the other kid’s parents—and show them the evidence. Don’t accuse—but do make sure that you’re all on the same page about what’s appropriate behavior. Make sure your kids don’t retaliate, but do make sure they’re standing up for themselves and have supportive friends who will also stand up to bullies. Also consider their online success indicative of “pay for play” activities, which is a subtle shift into gambling. These games, even when centered on pets, candy and other non-gambling themes, recreate some of the same emotions and excitement experienced by gamblers.

The games build competition among online friends and strangers that drive children and teenagers to keep playing until they meet more levels or otherwise make progress.

The games often allow players to earn fake money or other prizes that can be traded for an opportunity at winning more, replicating a real-life gambling opportunity. Many mobile games allow children to pay real money for game boosters and tips—making children sacrifice cash for games that may never produce any real value for them in return.

These games are easily accessible, making it simple for children to get caught up playing and become distracted from their responsibilities, wherever they are—even if they are at school.

The desire to play their preferred games can make children irritable when they are forced to do other activities, such as joint the family for dinner or do homework. There are plenty of apps that simulate gambling scenarios, such as poker games, blackjack and virtual slot machines. This increase the desire of teenagers—near the age of 18 to play in real life. Young children playing free versions of games consider their online success indicative of how they would do in versions where they bet real money.

How do I keep tabs on my kid’s cell phone usage without seeming intrusive?
Some parents say, “If I’m paying for it, I’m entitled to read my kids’ texts, check their call log, and know who their buddies are.” That’s valid, but kids consider these devices to be as personal as diaries, so tread cautiously. Spot checks are a good idea. You know your kid best. If you sense something isn’t right, spot check more often. Explain that your rules are for their safety and protection and that you need to be able to make sure they’re using their devices appropriately.

My kid seems addicted to her phone. What do I do?
Experts have compared cell-phone dependency to gambling. Every text, email, and update is a “hit” you begin to crave. Hopefully, you’re just dealing with a compulsive habit that you can manage by structuring your kids’ phone usage. Put your phone on and off, schedule activities where the cell phone can’t be used, and look into programs that limit phone from being used. If you suspect the problem is true addiction, talk to your minister or a counselor at school.


Nai Tabe Issue 4 June 2015

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17
GOD MESSAGES, GOD MESSAGES
A Prayer by Will Penner

God has messages every day. Some are good messages; some are not so good. Help us to pause long enough to allow some of the good messages to get through to us, to mould us, and to develop us into better versions of ourselves. Help us to place the messages in the right place in our lives so that we can learn what you would have us learn. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.
—God of the Holy Spirit (May/June 2015). Copyright © 2015 by The Upper Room®. All rights reserved.

GOD’S ANSWERS
By S’ambrosia Wasike

“Let me ask you something. If someone prays for you, do you think God honours them? Or does he give them the opportunity to be partners in prayer? If he prayed for courage, does God give him courage, or does he give him opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be closer, do you think God zips them with warm fuzzy feelings, or does he give them opportunities to love each other?”
—God in the movie Evan Almighty

REFLECT: I don’t often quote popular movies to offer insight or encouragement, but this is one quote that has always been on the tip of my tongue when people ask me why God doesn’t answer prayers. For most of my life I was often asking questions of what God is doing in their lives.

WHATEVER you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive.” Matthew 21:22 (NRSV)

How has God answered your prayers? When has God given you opportunities to learn patience, forgiveness, and love?
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THE DEVOZINE STORY

devazine is a devotional lifestyle magazine (devazine for short) designed just for youth and published by The Upper Room in Nashville, Tennessee. devazine is written by young people and by adults with youth who work with them and love them.

DEV AZINE’S PURPOSE
devazine’s purpose is to help young people 14–19 years old develop a lifelong practice of spending time with God, to practice their faith, to connect with other teens around the world, to hear the voices of other youth, and to share their creative gifts and their prayers.

Maraivu Naivalu is the MYF President for Centenary Church and a Production Assistant in the Church’s Department of Communication and Overseas Mission

C O N T R I B U T O R S 2 0 1 5

Will Penner is a husband, father, teacher, youth worker, and author, and he is a Disciple of Jesus Christ. Will was raised in the United Methodist Church in the USA. He’s getting better and better at keeping his promises.
—From devazine (May/June 2015). Copyright © 2015 by The Upper Room®. All rights reserved.
Ephesians 6:10-18: “Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil’s evil tricks. For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God’s armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy’s attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground. So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and with your faith as a shield to announce the Good News of peace. At all times carry the word of God as the sword. And accept the Spirit leads. For the Devil will try to get us to turn away from God. You don’t have to be afraid of Satan - but you have to be ready to fight him! And so, like a great warrior, you need to put on your armor. And because your enemy is a spirit, God will give you spiritual weapons to fight. So put on the whole Armor of God! Tie the Belt of Truth around waist. God is real. God loves you, and Jesus died for your sins. God is on your side - that is the Truth! Hold on to the Truth, and like a good tight belt, the truth will hold you up and keep you strong when Satan attacks. Guard your heart. The Shield of Faith: The God of the Universe is on your side. God is your protector. Put your faith in Him and Satan cannot hurt you! Now you are ready!! And finally, take up the Sword of the Spirit. God has given us a weapon to fight back against Satan’s lies and accusations. Our weapon is the truth of God’s Word. It is the Bible. God’s Word can cut Satan’s lies to pieces, just like Jesus did when Satan tempted him in the desert. The words of the Bible are your sword. Now you are ready!! You are God’s child. He will never let you go! Hold onto that Truth! Always do what is right and good. Be ready to tell anyone you meet about God’s amazing love. Put all your trust in Jesus, and know that he has saved you. And finally, fight the devil with God’s own Word. Satan is going to try to take away all the good things God has for you - but don’t worry - God is on our side! And with God on our side, no one - not even Satan - can defeat us!“
Ai vakananumi ni yabaki 277 ni Nona Vakabulaka
Vakayalo ko Jone Wesele ena Eldersgate Street:
24 Me 1738 [8:45 pm] – 24 Me 2015 [4:30 pm]
Vakarautaka: Rev Jolami Lasawa Sedra

NA MARAVI

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R
effecting the biblical focus of the
Wesleysan, the two missionaries
used their time devising an appro-
priate orthography for the Fijian language,
this partly in preparation for
work. They were assisted by converts
from seminary and mission
leaders, who had contributed
words in the language.

The most productive result of Cross
and Cargill’s work on Vava’u was
the printing of a Fijian primer and catechism: A
Vosa Vaka Viti J Mendla, which included
a preliminary alphabet, the numerals, syllabic
groups of words, a catechism and The
Lord’s Prayer. The two missionaries each
devoted to the development of a Fijian orthography,
five vowels and, together with
the consonants, a single letter to represent
a single sound. This considerable achieve-
ment was not without its challenges and
indeed led to one of the celebrated
ments in Fiji Christian history. The main
problem that Cross and Cargill had in
keeping to the ‘one letter-one sound’ princi-
ple was in dealing with the consonant com-
bination of ‘th’, which was a common
sound in Fiji. To try and solve this, Cargill wrote
to John Hobbs, the missionary printer on the
southern Tongan island of Tongatapu,
requesting him to cast some Greek thetas
so that a single letter would act for the ‘th’
sound. Such letters, however, Hobbs did
not have on his printing press (and from
a modern perspective it was probably just
as well since no widely-used keyboard today
carries a theta). Hobbs then chose the
unletter ‘c’ to represent the sound
‘th’, a unilateral decision greatly resented
by Cargill, who unsuccessfully tried to
overturn the printer’s actions. More than
150 years later, the western world (not
the Fijian) still finds difficulty in mastering
Hobbs’s “unlettered” Fijian orthography.

Arriving in 1839 John Hunt had
re-
ceived training in the biblical languages
while studying at the Wesleyan seminary
at Hoxton in England. His first posting was
with Cross at Rewa and the new mission-
ary proved adept at picking up the differ-
ent dialects. The two men at Rewa agreed
that scripture translation would eventually
have to resolve upon one dialect and they
favoured the Bau dialect because of its
pre-eminent status of Cakobau, whose
fluence extended over most of central and
eastern Fiji as well as parts of the
coastlands of western Fiji. The decision to
opt for the Bau dialect was eventually
made in 1844. Hunt admitted the choice
was not simple: “The Bau dialect is very
imperfectly understood in very many places,
so that the people of these islands will
be a long time before they will derive
much instruction by means of books”.

In making their decision, the mis-
sionaries effectively handed over the ma-
lor responsibility for translation to John
Hunt, now Chairman of the Wesleyan Mis-
ion and stationed on the island of Vava’,
close to the pre-eminent island of Bau.
While each of the seven missionaries
throughout Fiji continued their individual
translation work, Hunt was the acknow-
edged expert in the Bau dialect. Writing
from his station on the northern island of
Taveuni, Thomas Williams - the celebrated
missionary ethnographer who struggled
constantly with translation - was happy
to concede Hunt’s pivotal role: “He [Hunt]
had so steadily grown into assured con-
fidence of his co-workers that he naturally
occupied the position of translator-in-
chief”. While missionary at Somosomo
from 1839-42, John Hunt took on as
household help a Fijian called Noa
Korovaeo, who had made his home to the
Dau anew at Somosomo originally as part of war-
party. Although I have always understood Noa
to be a Viana native I have recently been
informed that Noa came from Dawai,
well to the north of the Bau district, in
the coastal borders between the Sawakasa
and Nakorotubu districts of Northeast Vi-
Viti. Noa accompanied Hunt to Viane
when the missionary was appointed there in
1842 and attended Hunt’s training insti-
tution on Vava’. Between 1842 and 1846,
Noa was a critical language informant for
Hunt (with the exception of a six month
period in 1844-5, when Noa went as
a teacher to Kavul in Nakorotubu). The ex-
tent of Noa’s assistance in translation work
can be seen in a letter written by Hunt
in May 1846 to the British and Foreign Bible
Society authorities in England:

“In translating I have the most important
assistance that can be desired, in a very
intelligent Native, who has been with me
three years and has become a good Theo-
logian and an excellent Preacher. I have him by
me when translating and make him the judge of
the work, so far as the Fijeean[sic] is con-
cerned. We have a considerable part of the New Testament in a state of forwardness...”

Two tentative hypotheses can be
drawn from this evidence. The first
Hunt’s information about Noa’s length of
stay: that Noa was with Hunt for most of the
time that the missionary had been given chief re-
ponsibility for translating, viz. for the major
part of three years from 1844 onwards.
The work of the Fijian New Testament

The original article of which this is an edited
version was first published in the Pacific Journal
of Theology in 2007. The full version of this
revised article is for an upcoming publication.
WE ARE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Sermon preached at the Pacific Day of Prayer held on 8th May 2015, at Centenary Methodist Church

BIBLE READINGS: GENESIS 1: 26 & 31 AND JOHN 11:1-45

O ur theme for 2015 Pacific Day of Prayer that was prepared by the members of the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is “WE ARE CREATED IN GOD’S IMAGE.” In both New Testament readings, the story of Jesus and the three siblings (Martha, Mary and Lazarus) is sandwiched between the narrative of Jesus’ presence in the temple in Jerusalem during the Festival of the dedication of the Temple in Chapter 10: 22 -39, and the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:1-19). This literary location of the narrative of these siblings must be very important in John’s presentation of Jesus’ final days. Actually, if we read the passages before and after the text, we will see that Jesus was surrounded by people who questioned him and his authority, and in the end they tried to seize and stone him but he slipped out from their hands and went back to Jordan River. Following immediately the text for today, when Jesus was riding a donkey into Jerusalem the crowd of people elevated him with shouts of hosanna; Yet just a week later they were shouting and calling for his death by crucifixion.

Jerusalem where the temple was situated was a central place for all Jewish cultural, socio-economic, political and spiritual activities during those times. So the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus is sandwiched between the plotting and attempted capture of Jesus on the one hand and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, which actually ended in Jesus’ death on the other.

Compared to John the three synoptic gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke – do not mention this story thoroughly. Matthew and Mark...

Fiji Performing Rights Association Recognises Bennett as the “father” of Fiji’s 4-part Harmony

A t the 2015 FPRA Fiji Music Awards, a surprising name was heard as one of the inductees of the FPRA Hall of Fame was Methodist Reverend, William Ernest Bennett.

Rev. Bennett served twice as principal of the Methodist Theological College, both at Navua and then at Dalavunu between 1901 and 1913, during which time he also served as minister of Sevu, Dorevo.

Rev. Bennett not only composed hymns in the iTaukei language, he also wrote books on the Old and New Testaments and in Theology for use in the Theological College.

In accepting the award to Methodist Church in Fiji President, Rev. Dr. Tevita Banivanua, the Fiji Performing Rights Association’s Eremasi Tamaisaisi said that what held Rev. Bennett above the other candidates for the Hall of Fame was his teaching indigenous Fijians how to sing in 4 part harmony, which is the cornerstone of Fijian music to date.

“Previously it was only traditional chants such as the Vaiyakava vaiseke and the kovutakadua that grinned almost the full spectrum of Fijian music. This 4 part harmony and the variations that evolved, are the reason why Fijians are appreci- ated globally for their beautiful singing, particu- larly in the Middle East where our soldiersserve as peacekeepers.”

Rev. Bennett made a significant contribution to the Methodist hymn book where 32 hymns are attributed to him.

In receiving the award on behalf of the Methodist Church in Fiji, Rev. Dr. Banivanua said that the Church was grateful for the recog- nition of Rev. Bennetts by the Fijian music history. “One of the hallmarks of the Methodist tradition, proudly maintained in Fiji, is ‘joy in singing.’ The singing of hymns is more than a fruit of the Spirit for the hymn book is, in a form of proclamation of the Gos- pel and a source of doctrine for Method- ists. This award is a reminder of the role we might see Jesus’ freedom to liberate his friend Lazarus from bondage as an sign of glorifying God, and so forth.

“Firstly, it refers to intellect and reason, freewill and spiritual and moral qualities (justice, kindness, righteousness etc) in human beings. In our NT reading, we could perhaps take Martha’s declara- tion as demonstration of her intellect as well as her faith since to know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God requires both mind and heart. Or we might see Jesus’ freewill to liberate his friend Lazarus from bondage as an sign of glorifying God, and so forth.

Secondly, it refers to the relationality and com- munion that is in God, that God exist in com- munion and relationship. From this perspective then, the word ‘image’ in God’s image is to be understood relationally and in communion. Again back to our NT reading, the relationship that was shared and demonstrated between these siblings and Jesus, namely the concern, compassion, trust, love and care amongst them could be an example that displayed the image of God. This is the kind of relationships that should happen in our families, and not the kind that violates and dehumanizes the other. It is a relationship and communal living that is based on love, justice, peace and wholeness.

The third interpretation of the image of God refersto to what someone possesses but to the fullest, gives to the man and woman by God, which is to multiply and ‘have domin- ion’ (note here, not to dominate but to have dominion). To be created in God’s image is to exercise care and stewardship for God’s crea- tion.

All these three interpretations of the ‘image of God’ give a fuller understanding of God and men as created in God’s image. So whatever is wrong we face in life these two images tell us that we belong to God, that we (men and wom- en) bear God’s image in equal measure and that we live to carry out God’s vision and dream for the earth. So when we are beautifying our gardens and houses; when the carvers skillfully carve their art- work; when our nurses skillfully care for the sick; when our cooks prepare meals and dishes with reeds to create a beautiful pattern; when we have compassion for the sick and the prisoner; when we inspire and bring voices to the voiceless; when we empower people to stand for their rights; when we speak and stand for justice when and where there is injustice; when we stand against violence in our communities and promote and provoke peace and wholeness in our families, church and societies; when we protest against human greed and stop the corruption and pollution in our communities and environment; when we become servants and stew- ards of God’s creation which God saw and pro- nounced as ‘very good,’” then we are demonstrating the image of God, which is God’s imprint on all of us, on all of humanity.

I pray that we will continue demonstrating this ‘image of God’ together as co-creators, co- gardeners, co-farmers, co-peacemakers, and as liber- ators And I pray that we do this in partnership with our Creator, our God, who gives wholeness and shalom to all of us and to all creation. Amen
I first met Rev. or Pastor (in French) Sam Tofs Amouzoun when he and a fellow minister from Togo arrived in our domes-
tory for international students at the Methodist Theologi-
cal University in Seoul, South Korea. Being strangers in a
strange land and part of the ACP (African
Caribbean and Pacific) group of students (including a Cuban student) we
became good friends.

Togo is a small sub-Saharan country in
West Africa bordered by Ghana to the
west, Benin to the east and Burkina Faso to the
north. It extends south to the Golf of Guinea, where
its capital Lome is located. Togo covers an
area of approximately 57,000 square kilomet-
res with a population of approximately 6.7 mil-
lion. Togo is one of the smallest countries in all
of Africa. The official language is French, with
many other languages.

The largest religious group in Togo are
those with indigenous beliefs, and there are sig-
nificant Christian and Muslim minorities.
Pastor Tofa is a former high school teacher
and continues to work in promoting
non-violence, peace-building, conflict preven-
tion and reconciliation before entering the minis-
tery. As such he is critically aware of social issues and
practicalities of ministry in his homeland.

Pastor Tofa is concerned about the increase
of radical Islam in Togo.

“The influence of Islam nowadays is very im-
portant. The percentage of Islam religion is grow-
ing. From 20% previously, nowadays it is more than
22 percent. Not only this religion occupied the
north of Togo, it is taking great proportion in the
southern part. They are using many strategies es-
pecially money to gain many poor peoples. Also
because of the instability of our political situation,
we have fear of “Al Qaeda” and “Boko Harram”. I
can say that they are nearby because already in
Nigeria and Mali. Young people are attracted by
these groups because of promises. We need your
prayers.

Pastor Tofa also needs support. For the last
two years he has been trying to raise funds for a
motorcycle so that he can visit the 33 rural
churches and communities he is responsible for.

“Public transportation cost a lot of money
because of road state in local areas where the
majority of our churches are located. I need a good
strong motocycle that can enable me to reach
for churches.”

There is also a need to buy equipment for
outreach and evangelism.

A simple motorcycle in Togo costs around
$2,500 Fijian dollars. Given that Togo is among the
world’s poorest countries, that is a huge amount.
Pastor Tofa is also trying to develop an agri-
cultural project to assist pastors and their com-
munities in poor rural areas by farming and other
agricultural activities.

If you would like to support Pastor Tofa’s
ministry and contribute to fundraising for a
motorcycle, or evangelism work, or agricultural projects,

HOW TO SUPPORT PASTOR TOFA’S MINISTRY:

- Sponsor the children to go to school
- Make a contribution to provide Bible or literature for the church
- Donate some money or medicines for community medical care
- Support a small income generating activities to help the Church
- Pay for some seed or animals, for a farming ministry
- Provide a means of transportation to enable a pastor to
reach remote churches under his care in rural areas

Pastor Tofa’s affirmation in his ministry is
one of my favourite passages from the book of
the Prophet Isaiah: “Then I heard the voice of the
Lord saying, ‘who shall I send? And who will go for
us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. send me” (Isaiah 6.8-9).

In the early church, the believers would
collect what they could and send it to the com-
community that was in need. Perhaps this is your
chance to help a community of faith in Togo
and begin to make the World Your Parish.

Nai Tabe Issue 4 June 2015
www.methodistfiji.org / www.facebook.com/MethodistChurchFiji

细读，发现并回答以下问题：

1. What is the primary language of Togo?
2. What are the significant religious groups in Togo?
3. Why is Pastor Tofa concerned about the increase of radical Islam in Togo?
4. What are the needs of Pastor Tofa's ministry?
5. How can one support Pastor Tofa?

1. The primary language of Togo is French.
2. The significant religious groups in Togo are those with indigenous beliefs, and there are significant Christian and Muslim minorities.
3. Pastor Tofa is concerned about the increase of radical Islam in Togo because of its proportions in both the northern and southern parts of the country, using strategies such as money to gain poor people. Also, due to the political instability, there is fear of 'Al Qaeda' and 'Boko Haram'.
4. Pastor Tofa's ministry needs support for a motorcycle so that he can visit the 33 rural churches and communities. There is also a need to buy equipment for outreach and evangelism and to support an agricultural project.
5. Support can be provided through sponsorship of children's education, donations for Bible and literature, small income generating activities, payment for seeds or animals, provision of transportation to enable pastors to reach remote churches, and contributions for agricultural projects.
We are at liberty to choose how much we give, for what reasons we give, and how we give it. It is a spiritual investment. What you give will be doubled in spiritual blessings for you, your children and grandchildren. Warning: Mind your motive – don’t give more to receive more blessings, but give solely because you have already received much blessing.

Nai Tabe Issue 4 June 2015 www.methodistfiji.org

By Rev. Iliesa Naivalu

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Nai Soli-Ka vakarisoitu

Christian giving is a spiritual investment. What you give will be doubled in spiritual blessings for you, your children and grandchildren. Warning: Mind your motive – don’t give more to receive more blessings, but give solely because you have already received much blessing. Your giving is an expression of your appreciation. The blessing belong to God.

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