



God's Work in Fiji

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Dear Friends,

These past weeks of ministry have been thrilling for us. We have experienced God's blessings in areas of outreach, discipleship, and growth. We are thankful to the Lord for allowing us to see some visible fruit.

While the outside world looks at our small nation as a beautiful paradise with white sandy beaches and palm trees, the unique demographics of this small island nation present a special kind of challenge to those of us working in the mission fields.

Some of the social issues facing the people of Fiji are as follows:

- **Poverty** – Over 45 percent of the people live below the national poverty line. Only one in ten families in our church own a car.
- **Overseas Emigration** – Many people have left Fiji in pursuit of greener pastures. In our own Bible Church Fellowships, at least 50 families have left Fiji in the last 30 years. Those leaving us are usually well to do people, so a hole is left in the ministry especially, in the area of service and giving.
- **Illiteracy** – Fiji has a literacy rate of 33 percent according to recent statistics. Hence, in our teaching and preaching we are bound to use simple English, a lot of repetition and illustrations, and often translating in the native languages (Hindi/Fijian).
- **Suicide** – Over 1,350 Fijians have committed/attempted to commit suicide in the past six years. There is a wide door of opportunity to help those who are hurting, through prayer and counseling.
- **Disability from diseases:** Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease top the list. Fijians are said to be losing two lower limbs every day due to amputations because of diabetes. Fiji's poor medical system is in an alarming state.
- **Strong religious backgrounds** – Buildings for Hindu temples and Islamic mosques can be spotted in every village settlement. People in remaining loyal to their traditional faith and practice often feel threatened when the Gospel is shared.

I can add many more things to the above list. But this description is enough to give a hint on our country's actual state.

Mistakenly, the majority of the indigenous population regard Fiji as a Christian state. But the statistics are disturbing as to how much Christian work is Gospel centered. Today, in the name of Christ, we have cult groups, prosperity gospel followers, and new age movements, all on the rise.

Down through the centuries, an influx of neo-orthodoxy and liberalism has hindered Gospel ministry. One of the most dangerous doctrines held by the liberals and neo-orthodox is that Christ arose only in a spiritual sense—continued existence after His death, but not a bodily resurrection. What heresy!

In fact, the resurrection of Christ is by far one of the greatest theological treasures for the church. Upon the resurrection hangs the value and effectiveness of all Jesus' work in the past, present, and future. Dr. John Stott states, "Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed."

Luke 24:46-47 announces the best news this world will ever hear, "*Thus it is written, that the Messiah would suffer and **rise again from the dead** the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be **proclaimed** in His name to **all the nations.***"

It has been aptly stated, "The resurrection means that Christ won hope, joy and peace for his people and for the honor of his Father. It means that all of the mess of this world will be reconciled and made whole. When Christ rose from the dead, he made hope more than just a wish."

It was a privilege for our Bible Churches earlier this month to gather together for four days to contemplate the sacrifice God made by giving His only Son to die for us. Thankfully in Fiji, we have four days of public holidays that allow us to meet in such a manner.

Ninety percent of the men and women that were gathered had roots in Hinduism at one time. Their conversion could only be attributed to the power of our risen Lord. If death, man's greatest enemy, could not bind Him, then nothing could deter Him from reaching out to lost sinners. What beautiful testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ!

Thankfully, the resurrection of Christ allows for His present ministry as our intercessor at the right hand of the Father. Please pray for us that we would be loyal to guard and carry forth the gospel tradition which was once entrusted to the disciples from Christ (Luke 24:48). We deeply value your prayers and faithful support to our ministry. Trust what the Lord is doing in Fiji is an encouragement to you.

Ministry News & Pictures

CALENDAR

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Two days before Good Friday, I was requested to bring a short Easter Message in a Hindu Primary School in the interiors of our city, Lautoka. I later found out that this school has been observing all major Hindu & Muslim religious festivals for many decades but not a single Christian one. But with the change of their school principal, for the very first time, a door was opened for the Christian message. The school had around 60 kids and I am grateful to the Lord for an open door to share the blessed message of Good Friday & Resurrection Sunday! Both the teachers and the students listened to the message with interest. The visit has initiated a contact point for future visits with Operation Christmas Child and overseas mission teams.



- ❖ **May 1 - 5 (7-9pm)**
Teaching Certificate Level Course to Students in the Capital City, Suva from 7-9pm
- ❖ **May 7 (5.45-7am)**
Men's Sunday Morning Prayer Breakfast at Lautoka Bible Chapel
- ❖ **June 5-9 (8am-1pm)**
Pastors Conference for 250 people in the Capital City, Suva. The Theme is "Bible Exposition."
- ❖ **June 29 - July 2**
Evangelistic Youth Camp for 100 youths. Speaker is Mr. Ed Caballero from Anaheim, CA, USA.

Four Day Easter Convention at Lautoka Bible Church: April 14-17

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Dr. Keith Stevenson, Aust.



Sessions each day went for about four hours



Mr. Scott Bashoor, USA



Group Bible Studies



The highlight for our children was the sessions they had with Mrs. Heidi Bashoor. Kids learnt a lot of new things, like the books of the Bible song.



Ordination of brother Roshan Ali



Privilege to baptize Charlene



15 people were baptized on Resurrection Sunday

Charlene turned 18

