



Background and History

Revival on the Fiji Islands

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The events of the past few years on the Fiji Islands can truly be called revival. Ratu Epeli Kanaimawi, a pastor on the islands and Vice President of the ACCF (Association of Christian Churches in Fiji), was invited to the Transform World conference in Jakarta, Indonesia in May 2005, along with over 1,000 Christian leaders from around the globe.

The following is an excerpt from his report.



*Cabinet Minister
Ratu Epeli Kanaimawi, leader
of the ACCF in Fiji*

"When the righteous increase, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." This proverb (Proverbs 29:2) is as true on the Fiji Islands as it is anywhere else in the world. There are two main population groups on the islands: Indians constitute 43% of the population, native Fijians 52%. The Fijians are 99% Christian, the Indians are predominantly Hindu, and Muslims and Sikhs constitute insignificant minorities. The significant cultural and religious differences between the two main groups has long caused an ethnic rift, which political declarations mostly strengthened more than they reduced.

The Indian-dominated Labor Party won the Parliamentary elections in 1986, and formed their first government. The native Fijians did not like that at all, feeling themselves robbed of their right to rule their own homeland. They immediately mobilized the military to bring down the Indian-led government. The putsch only served to increase the tension between the groups. Even though it was bloodless, the putsch set the reconciliation process back by over ten years. While the nation was still recovering from the first putsch, a second one followed the 1999 elections, which the Labor Party again won. The Fijian President inaugurated the first Indian Prime Minister, whose term of office turned out to be very short: a young Fijian, Ilikimi Naitini led the coup, holding the Prime Minister and his Cabinet hostage in the Parliament buildings for 56 days. 19 people were killed, and many injured and mistreated. The nation faced even greater suffering than in 1987.

In this lowest point in the islands' history, the mainly Christian population turned to God for help, choosing 2nd Chronicles 7:14 as their motto. Everyone prayed, from the members of Fijian high society down to the loneliest villager. Many prayer groups formed in government offices throughout the islands, and tribal leaders and chiefs encouraged their followers to pray. The whole nation prayed to God, and the leaders of the faith put aside their differences, seeking unity. By May 2001, fourteen church leaders followed the call, joining the President of the Methodist Church on the Fiji Islands to discuss ways of cooperating.



Previously, the churches and denominations had kept each other at arm's length because of theological differences. The putsch in May 2000 created just the right atmosphere for the churches to approach each other, and was God's timing for making the impossible possible.

The Association of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF) was officially founded by President Ratu Josefa Iloilovatu Uluivuda on 8th July 2001. It has four aims:

1. Uniting all churches
2. Putting God's way of love into practice
3. Establishing God-fearing leaders
4. Reconciliation in Fiji, to create peace and prosperity

God answered his people's prayers, giving the Fiji Islands a new government and leadership. A new political party won a dramatic victory in the 2001 elections; all previous leaders disappeared from the political stage almost overnight, and a new government under Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase took over the reins.

The political leaders, starting with the President and Prime Minister, humbly repented for their actions. In 2001, Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase asked God for forgiveness in a public ceremony held in Albert Park (covered in George Otis Jr.'s video "Let the Sea Resound"). Soon after his inauguration, Prime Minister Qarase set up the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity, and on 8th July 2001, President Ratu Josefa Iloilovatu Uluivuda and First Lady Adi Salaseini Kavu Uluivuda lit the Reconciliation Torch in Albert Park. That event was also the birth of the ACCF.

The Prime Minister of Fiji, Laisenia Qarase shocked a crowd of ten thousand people as he boldly and publicly confessed his faith in God. Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase said to those 10,000 people, "Our efforts in building this country will come to nothing, if they are not rooted firmly in the love and fear of God. I ask Him to forgive me for the times I have been neglectful and cold in my relationship with Him. With Your guidance, Lord, this sinner will renew himself; will find new purpose in the pursuit of Your will. Lord, I entreat You, again, to forgive me, to save me, to capture my heart and hold my hand. I honor you as the King of Kings."

Today reconciliation and unity are evident among government and church leaders, and even among Fijians and Indians. Rev. Joseph Suren is the Pastor of Agape Revival Center. He said, "There is a deep hunger in the Indians. Like, for example last month, I was holding a three-night crusade in one area. Now, the first night, there was a deaf man who was healed. Next door, the Hindus were having their prayer session. Just because the miracle took place, they came into sit in our crusade that night. The Hindu priest and a lot of their singers came over, because of the impact of what God had done by healing the man. So there is a hunger among the Hindu Fijians to come to know the reality of Jesus Christ."

The Healing of the Land Program was only initiated three years on a very modest scale, but the message of reconciliation, unity and true miracles soon spread and was in great demand. It now has a lot of support on the islands. Healing the Land team leader Savenaca Nakauyaca, the son of leading revival preacher Vuniani Nakauyaca, says "What God is doing here is



beyond all imagination. Every evening, the meeting place is full of people coming from the surrounding villages to witness God's move. Believe it or not, three paralysed people were healed during one meeting, and everyone was astonished. Particularly the younger team members experience God's favour; the team prayed for these invalids, who then walked home on their own two feet. Praise the Lord!" He adds "Instead of going to the hospital, people come from the surrounding villages to the Healing of the Land team camp to be healed."

The process is even influencing the business world. Some examples:- The number of jobs is growing, and unemployment decreasing. The building industry is booming, with ever more complex projects. - Tourism is also seeing an immense increase. The hotels are fully booked, and there is not enough accommodation to meet the demand.

A growing number of national leaders are believers, and the people are happy. Smiles have returned to the faces of the women and children on the streets. Foreign confidence in the Fiji Islands has been restored, and foreign investments are growing. Law and order have been restored.