METHODIST CHURCH IN FIJI
BEST OF ALL - GOD IS WITH US

YARAWA WESLEY CIRCUIT
1985 - 2015
30th Anniversary

# YARAWA WESLEY CHURCH

# *Pearl Anniversary*



## GOD IS ABLE


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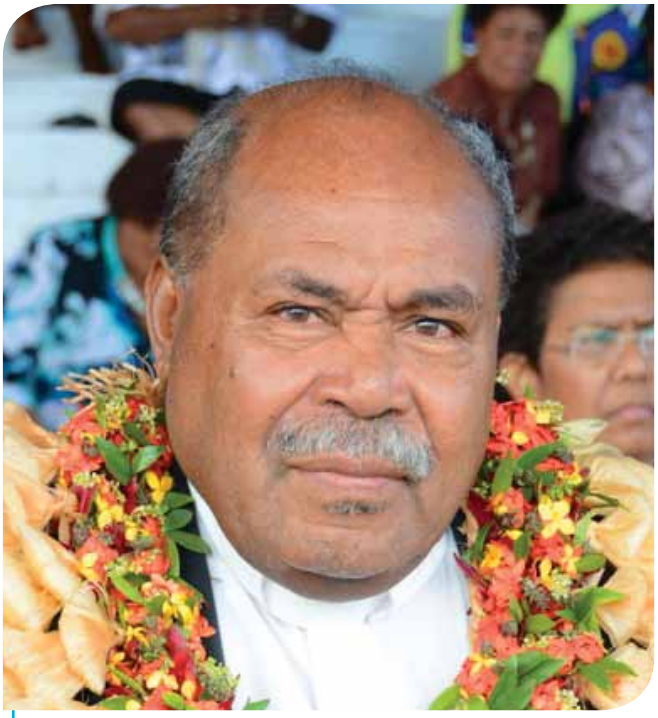
# Message from President of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma

## Rev. Dr. Tevita Nawadra Banivanua



**CONGRATULATIONS**

**YARAWA METHODIST CHURCH OF THE WESLEY DIVISIONS**

It is indeed an honour for me as President of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma to write a foreword on your *30th Anniversary Celebration Magazine of the Yarawa Methodist Church*. **Congratulations!**

You have come a long way and have also grown fast in your ministration to members of your young church. The spiritual dreamers or the visionary leaders of yester-years who were envisaging to build a church around this place, would have been surprised to see how you have grown as part of the body of Christ. Thank you for your faithfulness.



You have not only grown in numbers or membership, but in your mission as well. You have ventured outside of your own vicinity and have crossed the seas planting new churches in Vanua Levu. Like all those who have ventured out into church planting and bringing new people of faith to Christ, the journey was not plain sailing. But thank God for the Holy Spirit's guidance and the courage shown by faithful servants of this Mission project, some of whom have journeyed on to the One who called them.

You have shown good examples of faithful giving to the people called Methodists in Fiji, when you decided to keep the idea of faithful giving, not by the levy system of the church, but you have brought in a tithing system that we at the Church office hoped the other circuits would try to emulate.

Young as you are, only thirty years, you have shown good examples as previously highlighted, not excluding your attempt to also venture out into some real estate business, helping people in their need for suitable accommodation in your area. This real estate business runs alongside what the Methodist Church in Fiji is encouraging its members not to fear, since it touches the lives of the people. The hope is that all benefits from this will be for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God in Fiji and the world.

All in all, the 30th Anniversary Celebration has come at a time of great challenges in our beloved nation Fiji, and the way you have performed so far is indeed commendable. It is my hope that this celebration will be a source of strength and further visioning and manifold blessings to your community and the Church as a whole.

**HAPPY 30th ANNIVERSARY AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**

# Message from the Divisional Superintendent in Wesley City Mission Circuit

## Rev. Jeremaia Waqainabete



A blessed greeting to all in the name of the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; we praise God for the milestone we have reached at *Yarawa* as we celebrate the 30th year of its establishment.

This day is a day of reflection and indeed we cannot deny the great and tremendous contribution of our parents; yes the pioneers of *Yarawa* Wesley. The humble beginnings of yester-years has been the stepping stone to the heights we now enjoy and this reality confronts and challenges us to the direction that we will elevate the vision of God's mission as revealed to our pioneers.

We praise and thank God for the lives of all the founding pioneers of Yarawa Wesley Church both expatriates and local. The humble beginnings and the struggles of weaning is something that we all know and understand and this for the church, is double portioned for the supernatural forces of evil is fully alert to oppose the growth and development of God's Holy Church. The celebration of today is the benchmark of our ancestors' faith and the divine presence of God through the ages. This therefore should inspire us all to be faithful in our walk with Christ our Lord so to raise *Yarawa* to another level wherein all who enter in its fold will experience the uplifting spirit of peace, comfort and joy of the Lord.

> *"The celebration of today is the benchmark of our ancestors' faith and the divine presence of God through the ages"*

This my friends is my wish for *Yarawa* Wesley Church, for it to become a sanctuary of God's joy and Peace to all who gather therein, a wellspring of life and transformation to the heart of every soul.

While we celebrate the achievements of our faith journey at *Yarawa*, I wish to remind us to also allow this moment to be a time of deep reflection on all that we have and have not achieved and the factors that determined these realities.

On this understanding, I hope that whatever we conclude will rouse us to another level of commitment to the Lord and Church in order to bring forth the Kingdom of Shalom, the state of Sabbath where all living things experience and enjoy the fullness of life.

In the wake of our celebrations I also urge us to be conscious of our realities and I call on all members of Wesley and all God-fearing people that we need to open our ears and eyes to the plights and cry of the vulnerable, the weak, the less fortunate, the marginalized, those who have been victimized. Let us lend them a hand if need be or offer them a shoulder to lean on for this my beloved friends, is the heart soul of being people of God.

Yes, we celebrate the faith and spiritual journey of the church at *Yarawa* and yes, we have indeed achieved great heights individually and collectively as church in the last thirty years and I urge us to pause in this moment of celebrations to envision our goals in the next thirty or so years. Whatever that may be, may God's will be done and may you and I become the instrument of the fulfillment of divine will in the world.

"With joy let us all sing a new song to the Lord"

*Vinaka saka vakalevu.*

# Message from Lay Pastor, Yarawa

## Vakatawa Jiare Viliame



> *For many are invited but few are chosen*
>
> *Matthew 22: 14*

Today, we celebrate 30 years of existence as a church from humble beginnings at Saint Matthews Anglican Church to 29 Yarawa Road, Raiwasa. The imminent question now lingers around these lines **"Where to from here?"**

Surely God deserves to be recognized first and foremost since the church belongs to Him. His words to Peter state in *Matthew 16: 8 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock* ***I will build my church,*** *and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.* We can boldly say today that over time, Yarawa has stood strong and weathered her fair share of trials. There are so many people that have sacrificed a lot to bring her to where she is today. Now the onus is on the young generation to take it further and higher than before.

The church has expandedto cater for seven more small churches up in the North and towards the Western side. As the boundaries of the church continue to extend, the core leaders must continue to build and equip church members to take up key positions in this growth. *Matthew 22: 14 "For many are invited but few are chosen."* There is still much more work required and time is not on our side. *John 9: 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.*

In the next thirty years, I envision a bigger and better church complex to be able to house a growing and thriving church. I also see the church embark on much bigger endeavors as God reveals along the way. I believe that Yarawa Wesley and the Wesley Division as a whole play a very important part in these last days within the Methodist Church. The call is for Yarawa to remain faithful and true to its purpose.

May we continue to first give ourselves to God and serve Him faithfully than to man. ■



# REDISCOVERING OUR NAME




For the last 30 years Yarawa Church has been named after the street where it is situated. This is quite a natural way of acquiring a name and most churches are named after the street or the area where they are located. No one is sure of the origin of the street name, Yarawa. Most likely it is named after Yarawa in Serua.

In the Fijian (iTaukei) language there is no direct meaning of the word *yarawa,* therefore, it is not a commonly used word, except when referring to Yarawa in Serua. However, the word *yarawa* can be broken down to *ya* and *rawa,* and the two words can then be understood.

*Ya* can mean "there" and *rawa* can mean "is able" or "it is possible."

In trying to rediscover our name we can look at the two components of the name Yarawa and try to derive meaning from them. So let's stretch our imagination a bit, with some help from Biblical knowledge.

*Yahweh* (*YHWH* in Hebrew) is the holiest of the Hebrew names for God. This name is so holy to the Jews that they dare not utter it by mouth for fear of misusing or mispronouncing it and thus abusing or blaspheming the name of God. The more common name used is *Adonai* which is translated in the Bible as "Lord."

So, if we want to name our church after God then the most appropriate name is *Ya,* a shortened form of *Yahweh* which we cannot use in full. We then combine it with the iTaukei word *rawa* and come up with the name Ya-rawa. The hyphen is necessary in order to separate God's identity in *Ya* from the rest of the name.

YA-RAWA WESLEY CHURCH

This new name now means:

**God Is Able** – *Things which are impossible with men are possible with God* (Luke 18: 27)

This new name should give us new confidence in God's power to help us overcome all kinds of difficulties and trials, as the Apostle Paul declares, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* (Phil. 4: 13).

This name Ya-rawa means our church is a "daring church" to strive for greater things because our God Is Able. We can attempt the impossible because to God anything is possible. This new name should build in us a new "Can Do" attitude, to dream big dreams for the Church to glorify God. This new daring attitude is the reflection of our great faith in the God who is Able.

Ya-rawa, GOD IS ABLE should be our rallying cheer and motto into the next 30 years.

May God bless Ya-rawa Wesley Church! ■

Rev. Dr. Fesaitu Marseu

# My First Sunday at Yarawa

The first church service at Yarawa Road was conducted by the late Rev Paula Niukula who was then the President of the Methodist Church in Fiji. On that Sunday morning 29th September 1985 Rev Niukula preached the first sermon. He spoke about the milestone which the Congregation had reached and the atmosphere which surrounded that moment on that first worship service in a "New Church" from the once old wooden barrack type building used by the owner to rent out single flats to tenants.

The Congregation was young in terms of age, and the establishment at 29 Yarawa Road was also a new beginning. The excitement and joyfulness of this new beginning according to Rev. Niukula was infectious in terms of congregation purpose of mission and service around where it is located and its vision to move beyond that to other parts of Fiji.

"The church is like a Nursery, a Dispensary and also a good Kitchen," said the Rev. Niukula. His remarks opened up the vision of the Congregation to ponder over the helpful words from the leader of the Methodist Church of Fiji. The words presented the simple, everyday terms and symbols from three different aspects of living. The Body of Christ which is now established has been identified first as a Nursing Centre. It will provide the cradle to receive and care for every life. This will include the tender stages in their infant years to be looked after and nurtured to reach Christian maturity. They would, in turn become effective servants for the Lord. The dispensary represents the spiritual and the medical help which a person requires which is seeable in the healing, deliverance and restoration tasks which the Congregation is capable of offering. This would increase the role of the people as a life-giving, protecting community to all who live around it and who would also seek the relief which only a loving, caring heart would welcome and respond to provide such a need. The third symbol was a good kitchen; the place of nourishment. The kitchen is the place where preparation of food and drinks take place.



"It is like a Kitchen", implies that there is a visible reality in this Congregation's ability to be welcoming, hospitable and generous sharers of the Word of God to feed the hungry, starving souls around her.

The words which were said once in a life-time and addressed the essential purpose of a vision are often the very words which are needed to be heeded and used. Such words contain the wisdom, knowledge and the power of God to help those who were listening, live them. The Rev Niukula's words are timely reminders of the vision which drove the Congregation at its "infancy". But, now after thirty (30) years of following that vision which contained the three pointed purpose, the then "Nabua Church according to the late Rev. Dr. John Garrett, was a thriving teenager and at Yarawa, she had become of age".

How are we following the "baby cause"? Are the nursing, healing and feeding responsibilities being focused and implemented to enhance our continuing growth into mature believers who must move out of their comfortable nest and venture out in active service of faith which began the journey to the unknown future with risks, challenges and opportunities?

Thirty (30) years is an appropriate time to renew our faithfulness to the purpose of a vision of a Church which must become truly the actual making of a true Nursery, a Dispensary and a Kitchen. It means equipping ourselves with the essential life-giving power of God turning lives into the abundant way of living which Jesus Christ has promised and given us. Congratulations Yarawa! See you again in your Golden Anniversary! ■

*The story of Yarawa Wesley Circuit's journey will not be complete without a look back to the earlier years, where the humbling beginnings started. The following story is a short look back over the St. Matthews period prepared by the late Rev. Dr. John Garrett with help from Emily Marseu and Pauline Campell. Here is the story:*

# A Silver Anniversary Celebration

Twenty-Five years of Wesley Church at Saint Matthews, Nabua

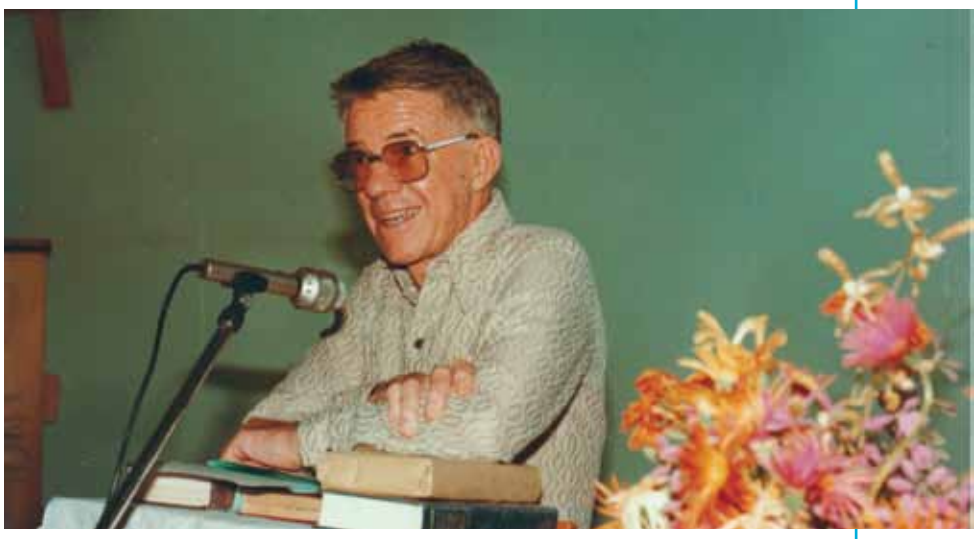
On 28 September 1985, the Nabua Wesley Church became Wesley Church, Yarawa Road, Samabula. We celebrate a quarter of a century of Fiji Methodism in the Nabua-Samabula-Raiwaqa districts by opening a new building in the heart of the area we have sought to reach for Christ.

This year also marks forty-five years since the Wesley Methodist Church began in the rapidly developing capital city of Suva. The circuit has grown, from small beginnings, among a few people who saw the need of English-speaking worship and care, into the living and expanding cause of today, with five ministers, twenty trained local preachers and six "outposts" in city and suburbs.

Then the new building opens on Yarawa Road many will look back and ask: Where did we come from?

On September 1940 the Chairman of the Fiji District, the Rev.William Green, presided at a small meeting called to form Wesley Church, Suva.

Eighteen years later the circuit that grew from the first meeting responded to a call from some of its own people who had settled in the suburbs of Nabua, around the Kings Road and Mead Road.



A special bus had already been bringing their families to services at Butt Street, Suva, during the 1950s. Why not form a church and find a building in Nabua, they asked?

The original families reached out in two directions – to the Wesley Circuit for blessings, then to find a church home. Should they build, or find a place where they would worship for the time being?

They knew the church is not a building, but a people of God; so they decided to form themselves into a church and look for help from others for a suitable shelter as their work grew. Records name at least nine families, united in this first effort of prayer and pioneering. The Rokotunidaus, Samuel Marriott, Ben Handyside and family, the Senarivis, Matthew Whippy, Steven Wedlock, Michael Aitcheson and family, the Sandays, Mary Eyre and family and William Donnelly, who was the foundation Principal of Ratu Sukuna School in the Nabua district.

St. Matthews Anglican Church on Mead Road was next to the home of Mr. Handyside and the Mathew Whippy family had Anglican members. The Anglican Dioceses of Polynesia and the people of St. Matthews willingly opened their doors to this small Methodist congregation at hours of worship agreed between them. St. Matthews has been a home for the Methodists of Nabua ever since and it will be remembered as a foster-mother to the baby cause.

# LOOKING BACK AT THE EARLIER YEARS

The child grew stronger. With the help from Miss Doris Rogerson, an Australian Missionary and a true evangelist, other families were gathered – the Works, Vaurasis, the Sotutus, the Panapasas, the Baravilalas, the Delailomalomas, the Doughtys. A missionary who played an important part in the earlier years, S.G. Andrews, with his wife Phyllis, helped to mould and guide.



When the names of the pioneers are scanned, their chilren's part in today's work is clearly seen. The Vaurasis are represented by Emily Marseu, the Rokotunidaus by Frances (Vara), the Panapasas by Sue, the Works by Emmaline Mavoa and the Baravilalas by Laisa. Today, they include a Sunday School Superintendent, teachers, Bible study leaders, an MYF President and a Church Steward.

Apart from Sunday worship, church meetings were held in homes: Young People's Christian Endeavour on Tuesdays, home meetings and Bible study on Fridays.

Three concerned people – Dr. Inoke Sanerive, Mr Bill Donnelly and Miss Annie Williams – took the lead in establishing an English-speaking Sunday School, with many helping as teachers, including Mr William Mar. Later the increasing numbers of children were welcomed into private homes not far from St Matthews. Hosts included the S. G. Andrews family, Mr Pat Managreve (a Rotuman Catholic), the Paula Sotutus, Mr Keville Bott and the Rev Inoke Nabulivou. At one stage the Sunday School met at the nearby St. Agnes' Roman Catholic School under hospitable Sister Walburga as Principal.

In these ways the young Nabua Wesley Church depended on the spirit of a wider Christian love and unity. Since 1980, by arrangement with the genial and cooperative Priest in charge, Father Samuel Shayam, the Sunday School has been able to meet at St Matthews for one hour before the regular 11 a.m worship of the Methodist congregation.

After Wesley Church, Butt Street, gained a full time minister and a fine new building in the early 1960s, the Nabua Church became a "thriving teenager". With active help from a succession of Church ministers, culminating in the vision and dynamic leadership of Rev. Dr. Daniel Mastapha and Rev Dr. Fesaitu Marseu; the Sunday School, Methodist Senior and Junior Youth Fellowships, the Women's Fellowship, Bible Study Groups and the Home Visitation Programme have flourished. Drama and singing from the Nabua are highlights of the large gathering in the Wesley Circuit. Those who sang in the Sunday School choir now act and dance as young adults, known to all as strong in faith. The Easter drama, "Crucifixion", "won many hearts, with tears" in 1985. The Christ of Christmas will follow for the festive season.

Church records include pictures of camps and retreats, worship at St Mathews, family groups growing together for district outreach in deeper commitment and faith.

Nabua has played its part in the striking increase in giving for God's work in the Wesley Circuit in recent years. Its faithful leaders Fesaitu (now the Rev) and Emily Marseu will continue to serve in the new church home at 29 Yarawa Road (telephone 3383 943). As a focal point for Suva's ever-expanding family life, at the cross roads of several suburbs, Wesley Church Samabula has come of age. The building has been paid for: but it must be equipped for years for further service. Here a new generation will come to know the saving power of Christ in human life and be trained to fight the good fight of faith. God will add others to the number. In another twenty-five years, at the jubilee, those not yet born will say, as we say now, sharing the Word of God to the younger prophet:

*"Lighten you cords, strengthen your stakes, for you will spread abroad."* (Isaiah 54.2-3) ■

Radini Talatala Emily Marseu

# FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL TO A CONGREGATION



One Saturday afternoon, Mr. Samuel Marriott visited our home at 43 Oneata Street Samabula East, Nabua doing his normal church routine as a Church Steward of the Wesley Congregation at St. Matthews Anglican Church, Mead Road. He was also looking for a suitable young person to help in the Wesley Congregation at St Matthews. After he shared his thoughts, my parents agreed and accepted his invitation. I was 15 years old; and employed at the Veterinary Division of the Agriculture Department in Suva. Joining the Wesley Congregation of St. Matthews, I was introduced to Mrs. Phyllis Andrews, the wife of Rev Stanley Andrews - they were from the Methodist Church in New Zealand. The Rev Andrews was then the Principal of Ratu Sukuna Memorial School (RSMS). He later worked as Connexional Secretary of the Methodist Conference and went on to become the President of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma.

In the year 1962, Mrs. Phyllis Andrews organized a Sunday school teacher's examination for all who would teach Sunday school including myself. In fulfilling those requirements, the Wesley Church Quarterly Meeting accepted me to become a Sunday school teacher and also a Church Steward at the Wesley Congregation at St. Matthews, Mead Road.

The Sunday school was held at Ratu Sukuna Memorial School with the support of the Principal Mr. William Donnelly and the Rev Stanley Andrews. Miss Setita who lived with Mr. and Mrs. Milly Panapasa at Pikeu Street assisted me in rounding up the children from the St Matthews area, Mead Road, Oneata Street, Samabula East area to as far as the Nabua village. We would all walk to RSMS holding one another's hand. I vividly remember dear Mrs. Phyllis Andrews, a wonderful saint of God who would walk up the hill with me and the children towards the Saint Matthews Church on "flip flops" and then changing to her normal church shoes when we arrived at the Church to ring the church bell for Worship. It was a very enjoyable task helping the Gospel of Jesus Christ received by the children at a young age, Praise God!

Mrs. Walker of Wesley Church Butt Street encouraged me to attend the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) at Matuku Street, Samabula and this was another helpful experience for me on how to minister to young children. With this inspiring time at CEF, I began a week day Good News Club at my home at 43 Oneata Street, Nabua by gathering children after school for a time of learning the Bible, prayer, learning new songs and a small refreshment of juice and biscuits. The Good News Club children brought their friends, brothers and sisters which later on our meeting place would have to be held outdoors! The growth of the Good News Club helped the further building of the Sunday school and the number in attendance at the Worship Service at St. Matthews.

My marriage to Rev. Fesaitu Marseu (now Rev. Dr) was a timely moment in the progress and development of the work at St. Matthews. Fesaitu took over much of the responsibilities that I had been doing, and was accepted by the Quarterly Meeting to be a Preacher, Sunday school teacher, Church Steward and Congregational representative to meetings at Wesley Church Butt Street.

The growth of the Sunday school attracted and increased the number of teenagers, young adults



and parents into the Sunday Worship Service. Many new members through the Home Visitations; the children and youth ministries increased the roll of the Congregation that St. Matthews time slot and services needed to be further accommodated. At this point, I would like to draw your attention to the earlier history of the Congregation from St. Matthews prepared by Rev Dr. John Garrett where many names of families were mentioned.

In 1970, the Quarterly Meeting agreed that the Wesley Congregation at St. Matthews become a Congregation than just a Preaching Centre i.e. from Ratu Sukuna Memorial School the walking distance to and from there to the hills of St Matthews required a nearby and safer place for the Sunday school children. We ended up using St. Agnes Catholic School for a while and then to different homes around the area and we finally requested the Anglican Minister to extend our Sunday school and Worship time. The Anglican minister agreed but for a longer period was found difficult to continue as the Anglican congregation were also growing in number.

In the year 1984, the Rev. Daniel Mastapha (now Rev. Dr) who was the Circuit Minister for Wesley Circuit at that time saw the need for the Congregation to shift to another place in order to help its further growth. In 1985, the old wooden building which belonged to a Hindu "pundit" was purchased, renovated and the Hindu religious artifacts were removed and then

*"My marriage to Rev. Fesaitu Marseu (now Rev. Dr) was a timely moment in the progress and development of the work at St. Matthews"*

the building was opened for the Congregation to exercise its ministries into the years ahead.

I am grateful indeed to God who brought many people along the path and I cannot mention each one by name because it is going to be a long list. But I am however thankful for the desire and willingness to help, and the support each person gave to every little task that made the Congregation grew from strength to strength. These thirty (30) years, gives me that joy which will live with me forever! My gratitude to all our faithful and loyal believers who have come to Yarawa during these passing years and have made a growing, lasting mark and an excellent impact of witness for our wonderful God.

Go forward Yarawa! For your name truly means YAHWEH IS ABLE.

May His power enable you to go forward to attempt great things for Him and expect great things from Him and May His blessing take you to greater things ahead. ■

# Yarawa Wesley Church Development Over The Years:

*Yarawa was inaugurated on Saturday, 28th September, 1985 by Rev. Dr. Daniel Mustapha, Minister of Wesley Circuit. It became the second church of the Wesley Circuit, the first being Wesley Church, Butt Street. Wesley Circuit was at the time under the Suva Division. In January 2003, Wesley became a separate Division and Yarawa become a separate Circuit on its own and Rev. Emotama Pene become its first Minister.*

**The following were the Officers of the church over the years.**

## Circuit Ministers:

**Under Wesley Circuit:**

Rev. Dr. Daniel Mustapha
Rev. Richard Udy
Rev. Peter Davis
Rev. Aveni Faktaufon
Rev. Jione Lagi
Rev. Voi Taukave
Rev Waisale Tora

**As Yarawa Circuit:**

Rev. Emotama Pene 2003—2008
Rev. Salanieta Lili Makutu 2009—2012
Rev. Jone Marika 2013 to date

## Lay Pastors (Vakatawas):

**Under Wesley Circuit**

Mr. Fesaitu Marseu 1985—1987
Mr. Joseph Hoyt 1987—1990
Mr. Viliame Gonelevu 1990—2002

**Under Yarawa Circuit**

Mr. Sau Fonmanu – 2003-2004
Mrs Siteri Sale - 2004 to date
Mr. Waqa Ledua—2005-2013
Mr. Jiare Viliame – 2014 to date
Mr. Apao Solomone – 2014 (passed away July. 2014)
Mr. Apolosi Vosanibola – 2014 to date

Mrs Belinda Tomasi (Rarau)
Mr Meli Vunisekalo (North)

**Newly Appointed**

Mrs Akanisi Kedreyate-Tabualevu
Tomasi Rayawa

## Chief Stewards:

**Under Wesley Circuit**

Dr. Jona B Senilagakali 1985—2004

**As Yarawa Circuit**

Dr. Jona Baravilala Senilagakali. 2003– 2004
Mr. Netani Sukanaivalu. 2004-2006
Mr. Tomasi Raiyawa. 2006—2015
Mr. Jackson Evans. 2015
Mr. Jone Vakamino (North)

## Treasurers:

**Under Wesley Circuit**

Mr. Nacanieli Rika 1993—1994
Mr. David Robinson 1998 –2000

**As Yarawa Circuit**

Netani Sukanaivalu 2000—2004
Lopeti Tukana 2005 to date

## Church Property Development

Church Property

The current church site at 29 Yarawa Road was purchased from the Sukhu Family Estate in 1985 and Rev. Dr. Daniel Mustapha, who was the Wesley Circuit Minister at the time, had a big hand to play in the acquisition of this property. It had been a residential property with several rooms rented out to tenants. Rev. Filipe Tuilawalawa, who was Talatala Qase of Wesley, 2007-2012, related that his family was one of tenants in 1960's, when he was a young boy. Before its dedication in September 1985, the building was renovated into a Church with the Steward's Room, a small kitchen and a little porch was added to the front.

- Car-Park and New Fence

Under Dr. Baravilala's guidance, the first major improvement was done in 1997. A retaining wall was built at the back, along the creek and the sides, and the area was filled in and concreted to form a car-park. Proper fencing was erected around the boundary which still stands today.

- Church Extension and PMB Mills Hall

In 2002, to cater for the growing numbers of worshippers, the back end of the church was extended by 2.5m and the western-side was extended by 2.5m to increase the size of the worship area. In the front, the Steward's room was extended and turned into the minister's office and a larger kitchen replaced the old one. A large pitch-roof verandah was built in the front and has become a major feature of the church. The resulting space under the back extension was converted into useable space and was named PMB Mills Hall, in honor of the Methodist Missionary Sisters, Phoebe, Mary and Betsy Mills. (See story on Mills Sisters).

The Senior Members Fellowship purchased new pews and a large pulpit, all made of mahogany timber.

- Minister's Vestry & Church Office.

In 2005, the minister's vestry was built at the back, and the eastern-side mezzanine floor was converted to be the Church Office. The old minister's office which became vacant at the front was split into two; one for the steward's room and the other as a Prayer Room.

All these phases of extensions and improvements have turned the original residential property that was dedicated in 1985 into something totally unrecognizable today, and reflects the physical growth and development of Yarawa Wesley Church.

Recent valuation of the 29 Yarawa Road Property puts the value at $340,000.



*Before*



*After*

## 1. Minister's Residence



To prepare for the arrival of the new Circuit Minister, the property at 15 Bhikabhai Street, Laucala Beach Estate was purchased in December, 2012 to be the Minister's residence. As it was in a very good condition, there were little repairs needed and the new Minister, Rev. Emotama Pene and his family moved in in January 2003. The initial cost was $120,000 and it is now valued at $200,000.

## 2. Namena Road Property

In 2013, a new residential property at 60 Namena Road (down the road from Church) was purchased for $350,000 for investment purposes. This property is being rented out at present but it has a great potential to be developed in the future to generate a steady income for the church.





## 3. Proposed New Church Building

The Yarawa congregation is now planning to build a new church building to replace the existing one. The estimate of costs range between $850,000 to $1.5million, depending on the complexity of the new design. This is a great challenge, but it is a test of faith and calls for unity of purpose and confidence in God's providence.

The funds raised during the 30th Anniversary Celebration will be invested as seed money for the new church. ■



*Before*



*After*

# CHURCH PLANTING IN WESLEY

## Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua



**Church Planting Vision:**
*We aim to accomplish the Great Commission by establishing strong and spirit-filled English-speaking churches in all cities and towns in Fiji.*

This was the original Vision that was first introduced to Wesley by Rev. William Powell during a combined Divisional Church Service at the National Gymnasium in 2007. At that time, Rev. Powell was the Assistant Circuit Minister at Wesley City Mission; Rev. Waisele Tora, the Divisional Superintendant (Talatala Qase); Rev. Emotama Pene, the Minister of Yarawa Circuit and Rev. Sausemolia Fomanu, the Minister at Navoka.

Yarawa adopted this vision and started to pray and yearn for it to become a reality. The first church planted was Rarau in Wainadoi in 2008, followed by the churches in the North. It is certainly a good reason to be happy with the great momentum in church planting that Yarawa has accomplished in these few short years. However, it is good to look back at the church planting history in the Wesley Division, even before Yarawa came into existence, to put it into perspective.

### Church Planting In Perspective

Right from the very beginning of Christianity, church planting was part of the early evangelistic movement "starting from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria even to the ends of the earth." The mark of the spread of Christianity was the establishment of churches all over the world. The apostle Paul in his missionary journeys was well known for planting churches as it is well documented in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles. Of course he was not the only apostle to do so; other apostles were also known to establish churches wherever they went. The lasting legacies of church planting in Asia Minor and Europe are the beautiful churches and cathedrals wherever Christianity had spread, albeit some of them are now empty of congregation and are just national monuments for tourist attractions.

In Fiji, the early missionaries from England planted churches, some with great difficulties because of resistance from local chiefs and the poor state of the people who had just converted from paganism and spiritual darkness (mai na butobuto ki na rarama). Missionary work and church planting has had a very turbulent history in Fiji. In the island of Moala, in Lau, the first church was built on Vunuku village in 1837, but was razed to the ground and the Catechist (Vakavuvuli) escaped with his life to another village, Keteira, where he built a new church. Some stones used for its foundation mound can still be seen today.

Of course, as the Lotu became well established, building churches became very important, and very often, the first building in the village with corrugated roofing iron and timber or concrete walls would be the church. It would also be the largest building in the village and it would be the pride and joy of the villagers, built at great expense through communal fund raising involving "saini" (contract) in copra estates or "ta dovu" (cane cutting) in sugarcane areas.

Church planting, however, is not so much the building



of church buildings as the evangelizing and nurturing of a congregation of believers toward conversion and spiritual maturity. The physical manifestation of spiritual growth is shown in the building of places of worship and the setting up of organizational structures to support the work of evangelism and church growth. The early overseas missionaries to Fiji started by having catechism classes to train local catechists (vakavuvuli) who were then sent out to new areas where they set up their own classes (mata siga), and so the spread of Christianity began in earnest. Churches were built and Bible Schools (vuli lotu) were established. Many of these vakavuvulis became vakatawas (lay pastors) and then trained to become ordained ministers to assist the overseas missionaries in overseeing the expanding Church.

Our pioneers in church planting operated along the same lines as the early missionaries. Quite often they started by setting up a Sunday School outpost away from the mother church which later grew to be a preaching point and then eventually became a full-fledged church. I can testify that I am a product of the Sunday School outpost of Lami Wesley which is now the Lami Oceania Wesley Church.

### Lami Oceania Beginnings

When I was a young boy growing up in Lami in the early 1960's, I attended the English-speaking Sunday School Classes run by Mr. & Mrs. William Mar and Mr. Ken Giblin and others, held at the Mars' home on 4 Nasevou Street, Lami from 9am to 10am. After that, my siblings and I would go to the Fijian-speaking church service at the Delainukuwatu Methodist Church on Vetaia Street, Lami which started at 10.30am. (The Fijian-speaking church service was held in the home of an uncle, Jeremaia Robanakadavu, and it was also the home of our current Talatala Qase, Rev. Jeremaia Waqainabete.) In the afternoon we would also attend the Fijian-speaking Sunday School from 2pm to 3pm. Quite a busy Sunday schedule for a young boy like me, but it was fun and I did not mind at all. The part-European children who attended the English-speaking Sunday School in the morning were from the Halstead, Eitcheson and Costello families. (I may have forgotten some.) These part-European families and the Mars were also pioneer members of the Delainukuwatu Church.

Later on (early 1970's), the Delainukuwatu congregation built their own church on Nakula Road, Lami which became known as Nakula Methodist Church. Due to




the close association of the part-European families with Delainukuwatu and later Nakula Church, the English-speaking congregation started to have their own time slot with Sunday School from 8 to 9am and church service from 9am to 10am. So it became a Preaching Point of the Wesley Church, Butt Street in the mid-1970's. Later on, in the early 2000's, the Lami Wesley Church moved down to their own church,

# CHURCH PLANTING IN WESLEY

the old ANZ Bank branch office on Queens Rd, Lami Town, which was kindly donated to Wesley by the Samisoni family. It is now known as Lami Oceania Wesley Church and is one of the four churches in the Wesley City Mission Circuit.

Note: Currently, as they are building their new church, Lami Oceania is back at Nakula Church using their usual time slot at 8am to 10am as before. Such is the working together in harmony of the God's people and the benefit of long associations of fellow believers in the Church.

The other two churches in the Wesley City Mission Circuit are the Nasinu Wesley and Pacific Harbour. Regrettably, I do not have a thorough knowledge of how Pacific Harbor was planted, except that it was the pioneering effort of the late Rev Josateki Koroi, the Powell and the Rigamoto families that got the English-speaking Wesley Church started in the *"Toba ni Pasifika."*

### Nasinu Wesley.

Nasinu Wesley owes its establishment to the late Jokatama Toga who was the first Vakatawa of Nasinu Wesley. Toga was a former Fiji Rep rugby prop forward and a giant of a man, but his huge size was only indicative of the size of his heart. He was a gentle giant with a kind heart who had time for everyone, no matter what age, race or standing in the church and community. I remember his calming influence during our Wesley Circuit meetings when discussions became heated and tempers were frayed.

In the 1990's Nasinu Wesley used the Valelevu Methodist Church for Sunday School at 8am to 9am and church service from 9.30am to 10.30am. Preachers were rostered from Wesley Church, Butt Street and Yarawa Wesley until Yarawa became a separate circuit in 2003. I remember preaching there a few times.

Vakatawa Toga persevered with his small congregation for many years and he tried his best to plan for their own church. He was able to secure the piece of land at the bottom of Yasiyasi Rd, Nadera, where the current church is now located, and submitted several plans and budgets for a new church, but they were rejected in the circuit leaders meetings for reasons of




lack of funds. Unfortunately, he passed away before the church was built. To help in strengthening the congregation at Nasinu Wesley, some Yarawa church members transferred to Nasinu including Jone Cama and Netani Sukanaivalu who were lay preachers.

The new church was built in 2004 under the leadership of the late Vakatawa Sumasafu Vilsoni's, another gentle giant with a great heart. Vakatawa Sam was an amputee who walked almost all his life on crutches. His passion for people who are physically challenged and /or impaired led him to leave Nasinu Wesley to start the Horeb Disability Christian Fellowship, a group of believers with various disabilities who meet regularly at the Fiji Vocational and Training Center for Persons with Disabilities (Brown St, Toorak.) on Sundays. He left us to be with the Lord in November, 2013.

Through Sam's influence and as tribute to his memory, Nasinu Wesley Church has recently launched its own Vision, in May 2015:

> *"Towards an Inclusive and Safe Church that Exist to Fulfill the Great Commission"*

and its Purpose:

> *"To honour our Lord Jesus Christ by carrying out His command to make disciples of all nations. Specifically, to focus on reaching out to all people including the physically challenged and impaired in Nasinu and surrounding areas."*

This is a great vision and purpose and takes the Nasinu Wesley to a completely new and exciting area of witness which will enrich the Wesley Division as its churches diversify their purposes and experiences. ■

*There are different ways that church planting can be achieved but God's hand can be seen in all of them as He uses His people to accomplish His purpose. Here is an account of Yarawa's church planting efforts.*

### Rarau Wesley



The first church planted by Yarawa was Rarau Wesley in 2008, when Vakatawa Fuata Viliame of Chruchwood Chapel retired and moved to a piece of freehold land which his family bought in Wainadoi, and the young family of Jiare and Darlene Viliame and their children moved in with them. With the encouragement of Rev. Emotama Pene, Darlene's father and Minister at Yarawa, they started a Cell Group and called it Rarau, pronounced "Rarou" meaning "branch with green leaves" or "living branch" in the Rotuman language. They had their own family worship services and held Sunday School classes on Sundays. Families from surrounding farms started to join them and soon a practicing church community began to grow.

In 2009, Rarau became a preaching point and lay preachers from Yarawa were rostered to preach there. Rev Salanieta Lili Makutu, who replaced Rev Pene as Yarawa Circuit Minister, conducted Holy Communion once a month. In 2013, Rarau was promoted to church status and became the second church in the Yarawa Wesley Circuit. Vakatawa Viliame became its first Lay Pastor, assisted by sister Belinda Tomasi and his wife, Darlene . In 2014, Vakatawa Belinda took over from Vakatawa Jiare who had moved back to Suva with his family.

The Viliame Family donated an acre of their freehold land to the church and plans are now under way to build a new church which is to be opened in December 2015.

### The Move Up North

We must acknowledge the great work carried out by Vakatawa Meli Vunisakalo and for his passion for evangelism and the ground-work he has done to prepare the English-speaking communities for church planting. He sacrificed his family time in Nadi eight years ago and served alone in the North, first under the Indian Division and then under Wesley, to prepare the way for the church planting movement that is now in motion. When Yarawa came into the scene in 2012, Pastor Meli had already spent five years in the field preparing the "soil" for church plating. The English-speaking churches in the North are now beginning to run on their own.

Now the wheel has turned a full circle and Pastor Meli is back home operating from Nadi as a "Roving Pastor" to spear-head our incursion into the West at the same time visiting the Northern churches. A lot of church members in Yarawa have their roots in the North and became their desire that Wesley should plant churches in their family estates in Rava, Vatudamu and Kasavu. This prompted a 'recon-team' consisting of Waqa Ledua (Vakatawa) and Solomoni Raravula (Asst. Vakatawa) to be sent, in February 2012, to the North to "scout out the land." During this first visit, it became apparent that the part-European communities and minority groups in the North have not been sufficiently served by the Indian-speaking and Fijian-speaking churches and that English-speaking churches were in need of planting. The recon-team also met up with Meli Vunisakalo who had been sent out to the North by the Indian Division, in 2007, to serve their English-

speaking congregations as lay pastor and he was known by everyone as Pastor Meli. He informed the recon-team that most of the congregations were keen to come under the Wesley Division because they weren't happy with the service they were receiving from their own churches. So the "field" was tilled and ready for the English-speaking churches to be planted.

At a meeting convened by the President of the Methodist Church, Rev. Ame Tugawe, and attended by Asst. General Secretary, Rev Tevita Banivanua, Div. Superintendent of Indian Division, Rev William Lucas, Div. Superintendent of Wesley, Rev Filipe Tiulawalawa, Yarawa Circuit Minister, Rev Lili Makutu, Labasa Indian Circuit Minister, Rev Ram Pritt, Pastor Meli and Vakatawa Waqa Ledua. In the meeting Rev Tevita Banivanua emphasized the importance of the three Synods of the Church; Fijian-speaking, Hindi-speaking and the English-speaking to take the Gospel of Jesus into all the communities in Fiji. The President gave his blessing to the church planting work by Yarawa Wesley and asked everyone to work together for the growth of the Church.

So at 8am on Sunday 22nd July, 2012, Rev Lili Makutu conducted Holy Communion in the first service at Rava, Savusavu, in the family church of the Hazelmans. Then at 5pm she held Holy Communion at the Vunibalawa Church, Kasavu, the estate of the Whippys and the Andrews. This was the launching of the Wesley churches in the Savusavu area. Then Rev Lili and her group of Prayer of Warriors (Avisaki Tukana, Fanny Simpson, Jessie Kotoiwasawasa and Tony Lanyon) went to Labasa where she held Holy Communion at the Nasea Church at 7am on Sunday 29th July to launch the Wesley Church in Labasa. It should be noted here that Rev Savirio Vuata, Minister at Nasea Methodist Church, was also instrumental in the setting up of the Labasa Wesley Church. In the same way Rev Ulai of the Vivili Circuit, Savusavu should be acknowledged for his assistance in conducting the Holy Communion services with the three Savusavu churches every a month after the launching. Note: Rev Lili Makutu and Rev Ulai were students together in Davuilevu Theological College.



*New church at Wadravua Wesley, Savusavu*

### Some Early Challenges to Church Planting

**Kasavu Wesley Church** – The Minister at Waikava Circuit had not been informed about Wesley's church planting move into his "turf," even though prior arrangement had been made with the Divisional Superintendent of Cakaudrove (based in Somosomo) to make the contact. So when he heard that Rev Lili was coming to hold Holy Communion at Vunibalawa Church, Kasavu, there was a stand-off and resistance against the new English-speaking church at Kasavu. This was later resolved when the Divisional Superintendent of Wesley, Rev. Filipe Tuilawalawa made a personal visit to Nakobo and a traditional reconciliation and handing over was done with the Waikava circuit minister in the presence of the local chief, Tui Korocau.

**Rava Wesley Church** - It was evident that the small church at Rava would not fit the size of the growing Wesley congregation. Mr Bureita Nabong at Naiyavita Estate, donated two acres of his family freehold land to the church and Rev Lili Makutu re-named the church as Wadravua Wesley Church. The Wadravua congregation moved to the new site and wasted no time in organizing the building of a new church. A member donated some mature pine trees to be lumbered to provide the timber. Members fished and sold seafood to raise funds for the materials and labor to build the church was freely given. Yarawa Church contributed the rest of the funds needed to build the church. On 13th December 2013, the new church was dedicated by Talatala Qase, Rev Filipe Tuilawalawa, assisted by Yarawa Circuit Minister Rev Jone Marika, and Director Ambassadors for Christ Pacific Islands Rev Sione Veituna. This is the





*Paster Meli Vunisakalo with members ofthe Naselesele church, Taveuni*

pioneering spirit that is the hallmark of successful church planting. Praise be to God!

**Rev Salanieta Lili Makutu Left Us** – In November 2012 Rev. Lili Makutu left us to be with the Lord, leaving behind the work of church planting which she started. Such is the work of church planting, it never stops, we simply give it our best shot and move on, God will always find the willing hearts to continue the work.

### To Naselesele, Taveuni

According to Pastor Meli, the choice of Naselesele was due to God's intervention. In March 2015, he was on his way to Qamea Island where some ground work was being done for church planting. Just as he was about to board a boat from Waiyevo, the Holy Spirit told him to take his bag and go to Naselesele instead. As he disembarked there was someone right there at the landing, who had come to take Pastor Meli to Naselesele. He was received with open arms as if they had been expecting him.

Naselesele is home to the Fishers, Stolzs, Petersons and Taylors. There is church there that was built by their ancestors and the inscription on it's plaque says:

*This Methodist Church has been built by the people of Naselesele Estate. Let us praise the Lord. Do not doubt our God. 1924.*

This was a statement of faith and showed the hope of these early settlers for their descendants to continue to worship God in this church. Unfortunately, this hope was not lived out by their descendants. As time passed none of them attended church except for Tom Fisher who was the only confirmed member of the Church but was worshipping with the Fijian-speaking congregation. The others were either non-practicing or joined other denominations. Their church is being used by the Fijian-speaking congregation. Such was the challenge for church planting in Naselesele.

Tom Fisher attended the Wesley Divisional Meeting in Suva in early May 2015, with the delegation from the Northern churches. Unfortunately, he was called to rest 26th May during a fishing incident. Our hope of planting a church in Naselesele appeared to be doomed. Officiating the funeral service was Rev Jone Marika. He stated that Tom's funeral encouraged the families to organise and attend church services on a regular basis. God indeed works in mysterious ways!

Pastor Meli has already laid the ground work for church planting in Wainunu (another branch of the Whippy clan), Qamea and Rabi. With God's help new churches will be planted in these places.

### Over to the West - Nadi Wesley

Sunday, 5th July 2015 will be marked in the history of the Wesley Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji as the inauguration date of the Nadi Wesley

Methodist Church. It was the continuation of the church planting mission for Yarawa Wesley Church.

Acknowledgement must also go to the Cawa Methodist Church for receiving our English-speaking Wesley congregation into their church, to use a time slot between 8am to 9am. Tatala Qase and our Talatala Jone Marika, and the delegation from Yarawa who were present at the launching, witnessed the warm acceptance and Christian love shown by the Fijian-speaking congregation of Cawa Church and it augurs well for the future growth of our English-speaking congregation. In no uncertain way God is going to use the interaction between two traditions to revitalize the Methodist Church in Fiji.

We praise God that the inaugural members of the Nadi Wesley consisted of the Lanyons, Newtons, Fishers, Copelands and Whippys. These are the relatives of the families in the Northern churches. We have to reach out to all the others out there who are seeking a church where they can feel at home. Let us all join hands and support the work of church planting.

As we focus into the future, we thank God that English-speaking churches will soon be established in Lautoka, Sigatoka, Ba, Rakiraki and so on. What we are witnessing is a great revival of the Methodist Church and we should be thankful that we are part of this revival. This also comes with great responsibility for us at Yarawa. We must support the work of church planting through prayers, goodwill or financial commitment. This is a big undertaking and requires a church with a big heart to bear the burden of evangelism, disciple-making and church planting.

## YARAWA OBITUARY LIST

The following are names of members of Yarawa Wesley who have gone to be with our Lord.
Gone to Higher Calling:

- Mrs Ann Nielsen – 1990s
- Mr Alexander Robinson – 1990s
- Master Jone Cama – 25th October, 1997
- Mr. Harry Narayan – 23rd March, 2000
- Master Bola – 2000
- Ms Mary Andrews - 2000
- Mrs. Bina Wati - 2001
- Mr. David Talemaitoga Chang - 25th March, 2004
- Mr. Pierre Gavidi - 24th August 2004
- Mr. James Whippy – 6th November, 2006
- Mr. Jacob Whippy - 2007
- Mr. John Edwin Rosa – 28th June, 2007
- Radini Talatala Keresi Fonmanu – 21st July, 2009
- Godswill & Samisoni Vukialau
- Mrs Ruci Domoni
- Mr Magnus Mitchel – 13th March, 2010
- Rev. Sausemolia Fonmanu – 30th January, 2010
- Mrs. Bale Raravula – 5th June, 2010
- Mr. Inoke Tabualevu – 14th January, 2011
- Mrs. Mili Panapasa – 25th April, 2011 (in USA)
- Mrs. Kitty O'Connor 29th July, 2011
- Mrs. Katea Sovatabua – September, 2011
- Ms. Kelerayani Senibici – 21st October, 2011
- Dr. Jona Senilagakali Baravilala - October, 2011
- Mr. Peter Ryland – 19th November, 2011
- Mr. Simione Bakani – 12th February, 2012
- Mrs. Seini Johnsoni – 15th February, 2012
- Mr. William Rigamoto Atalifo – September, 2012
- Mr. Nemaia Alefaio – October, 2012
- Rev. Salanieta Lili Makutu – November, 2012
- Mr. Dale Pickering Snr. – 14th January, 2013
- Mr. Samuela Taukave – 15th January, 2013
- Mr. Kelepi Vosanibola – May, 2013
- Mr. Sekope Bula – June, 2013
- Mrs. Sainiana Chang – 18th October, 2013
- Mrs. Ateca Rayawa – 21st October, 2013
- Mr Jope Raravula Snr– 24th October, 2013
- Mr Anare Senibulu – 27th October, 2013
- Mr Joseph Hoyt – 2013
- Radini Talatala Melelua Veituna – February, 2014
- Mrs. Kathy Hope – February, 2014
- Mr. Frank Wilson- 2014
- Mr. Filimone Waqalevu- 2014
- Vakatawa Apao Solomone – 29th July, 2014
- Mrs. Kiji Luisa Tomasi (Rarau) – August, 2014
- Mrs. Francis Ramaqa – 7th July, 2015

**Editor's Notes:**
If we have missed out any name, it is not intentional, please forgive us.
Some dates are not available.

# Phoebe Mills and Her Sisters

Our 30th Anniversary is all about tributes. On this page we want to pay tribute to the Mills sisters for their contribution to the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, and particularly to Miss Phoebe Mills who was the organist at Yarawa Church prior to her return to Australia in 2003. This tribute is taken from information by Dr. J.S. Baravilala displayed in the PMB Mills Hall of Yarawa Church dated 5th November, 2003.

> *"The hall is named after the three Mills sisters, Phobe, Nona Mary and Elizabeth also commonly known as Betsy. Phoebe the eldest of the three is the only surviving member in the year 2003. Mary, who became the first ordained woman Methodist Minister in Fiji died first then followed by Betsy in 2001."*



*The three sisters were the daughters of Alfred Avery and Hannah Mary Mills. Rev. Mills had left Victoria and went to Queensland as a Home Missionary. After acting as Chaplain to the Australian Forces in France in WW1, he returned to Queensland as a Circuit Minister. He became the Home Mission Secretary responsible for "building their own church buildings and parsonages".*

*The eldest of the three sisters, Phoebe Mills, came to Fiji in 1938 as a Methodist Church Teacher when the Methodist Church in Fiji was part of the New South Wales synod. Phoebe taught in several schools, including Ballantine Memorial and Dudley Schools. She became involved in Yarawa Church when the old Butt St Church organ was given to Yarawa. She became the organist for Yarawa until the organ was beyond repair and replaced by a keyboard.*

*Miss Mary Mills came to Fiji in 1970 to work as a librarian at the University of the South Pacific. In her spare time she was actively involved with work among the children, particularly in the Hart villages. She advocated abstinence from drinking of alcohol and drug abuse amongst the youths. She assisted with the small congregation that worshipped at St Matthews Anglican Church in Mead Road before it moved to Yarawa Rd. Miss Mary Mills obtained a Bachelor of Divinity from the Pacific Theological College and later was the first woman to become an ordained Minister in the Methodist Church in Fiji.*

*The youngest of the three sisters, Betsey, joined her older sisters in 1972 and worked as a volunteer in several areas of church activities including becoming the organist at Butt Street Church. She was involved in Religious Education in several schools and supported her sisters' work. Accompanied by Rev Mary Mills, she went regularly to the Heffernan home in Valelevu for Sunday School and worship thus laying the foundation for the Valelevu congregation (later to become Nasinu Wesley Church)*

*Miss Phoebe Mills finally left Fiji to return home in Queensland on Friday 3 October, 2003 after serving in Fiji for sixty five years. She was born in 1914 and come to Fiji in 1938 as a teacher when she was only twenty-four years old.*

*The three Mills sisters remained true to their calling as servants of God throughout their entire lives.*

Footnote: In a recent visit to Yarawa Church, Mrs Fulori Low reported that she visited Miss Phoebe Mills at a Nursing Home in Brisbane in July 2015, although frail, she still reminisces with fond memories of Fiji in particular Wesley Butt St and Yarawa Churches. She is now 101 years old. We thank God for Miss Phoebe! ■

# Rev. Salanieta Lili Makutu

During this Anniversary celebrations of Yarawa Wesley Church, we remember with fond memories Rev. Lili Makutu, who passed while serving as our Circuit Minister.

Rev. Lili was resident minister of Yarawa Circuit for almost four years from January 2009 to November, 2012. In fact, her name was proposed from Yarawa Circuit in 2005 to be a candidate for ministry and she was accepted for training in Davuilevu Theological College from 2006 to 2008. It was indeed a blessing that she was assigned back to Yarawa in her first posting, because she brought with her, not only her theological training, but also the many years of administrative expertise as a senior public health official in the Ministry of Health. She was passionate for the Word, evangelism work and was also compassionate for the people in and out of the church. She was dedicated to prayer, fasting and urged church members to do the same.



Rev. Lili headed the Evangelism Committee and led outreach programmes into the squatter settlements along the Cunningham Rd corridor and Bureta St, including the well-trodden areas of Wailea and Nanuku settlements. She took the Bible-Week reading programmes out of the church to MH Nabua car-park for three successive years.

In 2009 when the *Solevu* and *Bose ko Viti* were cancelled by the Interim Government, the Methodist Church made an appeal to all Circuits to finacially contribute to the Church headquarters (HQ) to replace the *Solevu Soli* competition. As the result of Rev. Lili's faithfullness in tithing she proposed to Yarawa Leaders Meeting to tithe 10% of the estimated annual income over and above the Levy (*Vakamisinari*) for the year. The Leaders Meeting agreed to this and also called for the congregation to Soli in a Revival and Celebration Service on 26th September, 2009. In this soli alone $5,890 was raised, which was added to the tithe of $15,280 and Levy of $5,290, Yarawa was able to give to Church HQ a total of $26,460 which was the highest contribution from any Circuit within the Methodist Church. In addition to this, Yarawa made a commitment to tithe to the Church HQ instead of the giving the Levy each year. For five years Yarawa was giving much more than three times the levies that were due.

The other initiative by Rev. Lili was the church planting in the North. This rose out of the requests from relatives of church members who live in Savusavu and Kasavu for English-speaking church services to be held in their own estates. Also Rev. Savirio Vuata of Nasea Methodist Church, Labasa was persistent in urging Rev Lili to set up an English-speaking church in Labasa. A preliminary visit made in February 2012 saw the establishment of a new English-speaking churches in the North. First to be planted was Wadravua Wesley Church, near Rava Estate in Savusavu. On Sunday 22nd July, Kasavu Wesley was established on the afternoon of the same day. The following Sunday, 29th July they moved on to Labasa. Rev. Lili last church planting was in September that same year, which saw the establishment of Vatudamu Wesley. Sadly that was also her last mission to the North. Two weeks later she suffered a stroke, which she did not recover from and resulted on her demise on the 12th November, 2012.

Within four years Rev Lili Makutu had accomplished what not many ministers would have not achieved in their lifetime of ministry. This was a testament of her zeal for the work of the Lord. She lived out her faith in the most practical ways possible.

Rest in peace Rev Lili, the church planting flame that you ignited is still continuing today! ■

Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua

# YARAWA PIONEERS - *Down Memory Lane*



**Mr Joe Hoyt**



**Mr Viliame Gonelevu**



**Rev. Sausemolia Fonmanu**



**Dr Jona Baravilala Senilagakali**

On reaching milestones such as our 30th Anniversary, it is a good time to go down memory lane and remember those who were influential in the life of Yarawa Wesley Church.

First let me recount how I came to join Yarawa Church. During the sad days in our history when nationalistic influences took hold of the Methodist Church in Fiji after the 1987 Coup, I stopped attending church after the "Sunday-Ban" period. However, on December 1989 I missed going to church so I searched for a church to attend. Some friends recommended Yarawa Wesley Church, so on Christmas Day 1989 I took my young family to Yarawa and we've been worshipping there ever since. I found it a caring church and the Sunday School was well suited for my young children at the time. Now, I cannot think of any other church I want to be in.

## Mr Joe Hoyt

I was a typical "Sunday-only" Christian, not committed to any serious search for spiritual growth. One evening I was at home when the late Mr. Hoyt, who was Vakatawa at the time, accompanied by Mr. Viliame Gonelevu, visited and shared a simple message: "Just try and read the Bible regularly– spiritual growth will come automatically." And Mr. Hoyt told me a story of the servant who was asked by his master to fetch water from the river using a dirty leaking bucket to fill up a drum. After several attempts the servant complained to the master that it was a fruitless exercise. "It's not fruitless," explained the master. "You see, when you first started, the bucket was very dirty but now it is clean because the water has cleaned the bucket thoroughly." I'll never forget Mr Hoyt's story to illustrate the cleansing power of the Word of God.

Mr. Hoyt handed over to Mr Gonelevu as Vakatawa not long afterwards and migrated to Australia.

## Mr Viliame Gonelevu

The most influential person in my spiritual growth, as with many others in Yarawa. He always claimed that he never sat any Vakatawa exam and only became Vakatawa by default, but his simple Biblical teachings always sink home because he practiced his faith with dedication and commitment. During his busy working life in Government and later on in the Church HQ, Mr Gonelevu always found time to carry out his church duties to perfection. He introduced the use of lectionary readings to follow the church calendar and the colors of the season. He was also innovative and introduced "foot washing" on Maundy Thursdays during Easter. He also encouraged praise and worship using musical instruments, admitting that he cannot sing in tune.

He took time to take the Men's Fellowship out to camp each year and encouraged engaging speakers outside of Yarawa Wesley Church to teach important Biblical topics, for example; the Campus Crusade for Christ on "The Four Spiritual Laws" and Christian Mission Fellowship on "Tithing." His long association with ICEJ (International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem) also made Yarawa a pro-Israel church and our on-going commitment "to pray for the nation of Israel and the peace of Jerusalem." Continued on page 28 ▶

# EARLY YEARS 1985-1995



























# TRIBUTE - YARAWA PIONEERS

## Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua



Mr. John Rosa



Mr. Tale Chang

### Rev. Sausemolia Fonmanu

When Mr. Gonelevu retired from the Vakatawa position in 2003, he was replaced by the late Mr. Sau Fonmanu. He was a staunch man of prayer who started the Prayer Warrior and also initiated the Praise and Worship Team. Sau was good with the guitar, an expert in choruses and had a lovely baritone voice.

Vakatawa Sau was recommended for Ministry training at Davuilevu and later on became the first Minister of the Navoka Circuit in Levuka in 2005, as Rev Sausemolia Fonmanu. He spent four years in Navoka and was posted to Nausori Highland in January 2009. Rev. Sau lost his life in an untimely road accident on his way to his new circuit. His funeral service was held in Yarawa Church.

### Dr Jona Senilagakali Baravilala.

The late Dr. Jona was a pioneer member who came from the Nabua Wesley St Matthews congregation. He was responsible for all the major physical improvements of the church in his position as Chief Steward. He was also a visionary, effective organizer and had enough influence in the Wesley Circuit Leadership, to plan and execute an orderly transition for Yarawa to become a separate Circuit of its own. This was no mean feat because it involved approval by the Methodist Church Conference and the purchase of a minister's residence to be ready before the new Circuit Minister was stationed to Yarawa in January 2003.

Dr Jona was affectionately known as Doc or Pa to everyone. He was a stickler for time and always advised us lay preachers to stick to the allocated one-hour service, and if the service started to go into extra time, Doc would often show his displeasure in no uncertain terms. He remained a lay preacher well into his 70's until his eyes started to weaken. Doc always put on an air of seriousness, but behind that facade he was a very kind hearted person.

### Mr. John Rosa

The late Mr. John Rosa was another pioneer of Yarawa Church and he was absolutely committed to doing whatever needed to be done. He was a regular member of the choir. Although he had great difficulty holding a note in tune, what he lacked in ability he made up with enthusiasm. He did all the tasks equired of a church steward even though he was not honored with the title. When Mr Rosa was sick the church would remain unlocked, lights were not turned off, the garbage bin was not emptied, the church compound not cleaned and the mail box not opened. Mr. Gonelevu told the congregation, "You may not notice Mr John Rosa, but you will surely notice when he is not around."

Being an ex-Solomon veteran, Mr Rosa was always proud of his service status and calls Col. Kacisolomone "tin solider." His favorite saying was "Born 1820, still going strong." Someone who was not familiar with this saying, couldn't believe that Mr. Rosa was born in 1820!

Mr Rosa always showed authority whenever necessary. So whenever we went to Butt St for Vulavou Service, he was in charge of the transport. Afterwards at the Fellowship-cup-of-Tea, we were given just one warning about the bus leaving exactly at 7 o'clock! Sure enough if you were not in the bus by 7o'clock you had to find your own way back to Yarawa!

### Mr. Tale Chang

The late Mr Tale Chang was another pioneer of Yarawa Church. He was a keen gardener and his "sevu" of yams and dalo were always the biggest each Harvest Sunday. He and Aunty Sai were long-time choir members and inaugural members of the Senior Members Fellowship. Whenever Yarawa put on a feast, Uncle Tale was always in the kitchen doing the cooking. He was an expert in both Chinese and Fijian cuisine.

We thank God for such pioneers of the Church for they shaped our history, and may their legacy live on.

# SENIOR MEMBERS FELLOWSHIP

## Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua

*The Methodist Church in Fiji has three recognized Fellowships: Youth Fellowship (YF), Men's Fellowship and Women's Fellowship. These fellowship groups cater for the spiritual needs of the different ages from adolescence to adulthood. Their activities and witnesses are suited to the interests, spirituality and financial capabilities of the age groups concerned. The YF caters for the youthful exuberance and the carefree and somewhat experimental lifestyle of adolescence and youth, and the Men's & Women's Fellowships cater for the more mature or spiritually advanced and the financial dispositions of adult members of the church.*



An age group that is not sufficiently catered for by the existing fellowship groups is the retirees, pensioners and senior members who, having served the church during the prime of their lives, have begun to regress into old age and inactivity. These members have been more or less regarded as redundant and have passed "use-by-dates" and, therefore, deserving no attention.

Nevertheless, as proven by sixteen years of experience in Yarawa Wesley Church (YWC), these senior members have their own special spiritual and physical needs that must be met by the church and they can still play a very important role in the church. They deserve to be recognized to have a fellowship of their own.

### Background Information

The Yarawa Senior Members Fellowship (YSMF) was inaugurated on 17th November ,1999, through the initiatives of the senior church members under the leadership of the late Rev. Sausemolia Fonmanu, who was an elder of YWC at that time, before he went into the Ministry.

The YSMF was set up with the aims to:

i. bring together the senior members for daily fellowships to share experiences and personal testimonies as an expression of their faith;
ii. help and support one another spiritually;
iii. help those who are in need financially and medically;
iv. help in the welfare of the members and
v. help in the welfare of the church.

The Founding Members were:

President - Sau Fonmanu (later Rev. Sau Fonmanu),

Secretary - Ruth Newton

Members - Late Talemaitoga Chang, late Sainiana Chang, Atilaite Baravilala, late Seini Johnson, late Joseph Hoyt, Lydia Hoyt, late John Rosa, Lavenia

# SENIOR MEMBERS FELLOWSHIP

## Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua



Ratucicivi, David Robinson, late Kitty O'Connor, Ledua Bakani and Fanny Simpson.

Membership of the SMF is short term in nature as members are in their twilight years. It can be noted from the above list that many of the founding members have passed on. Therefore, it can be said that SMF is the final preparation toward death and eternal life.

### Contribution to the Church

Apart from achieving the purposes for which it was set up, the YSMF has, through the years, helped the Yarawa Church in its major projects, namely:

1. New Pulpit for the church in 2003;
2. New pews for the church in 2003;
3. Renovation and Outfitting of the kitchen in 2002.

Numerous other contributions by the YSMF to the church have not been mentioned due to limited space.

### Special Days for Senior Members

a. Senior Members Sunday

As approved by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, YWC now observes a special Sunday annually to honor the senior members of the church, which is the Sunday closest to 17th November, the inaugural date of the YSMF.

b. Birthday Celebrations

The YSMF celebrates the birthdays of members who have reached 70 years and over with birthday cakes and special lunch.

In 2015, members of the Senior Members Fellowship are: -

President: Waqa Ledua

Vice-President: Rt. Isoa Gavidi

Secretary: Fanny Simpson

Treasurer: Ledua Bakani

Members: David Robinson, Nau Atilaite Baravilala, Vera Work, Kesaia Toganivalu, Rita Lanyon, Lena Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Fesaitu & Emily Marseu, Emily Underwood, Lavenia Ratucicivi, Emi Gavidi, Selina Katafono, Loata Ledua, Jessie Kotoiwasawasa, Anne Deo, Lydia Mohammed, Elisabeth Pickering, Eroni & Emmaline Mavoa, Iliesa Kacisolomone, Akuila Sovatabua, Sukulu Mara, Manasa Rasolo, John Williams.

At the 2015 Wesley Divisional Annual Meeting, it was approved that the Wesley Division shall establish Senior Members Fellowship in all its churches, and it was also approved that it be taken up to the Methodist Conference for the SMF to become the fourth fellowship within the Methodist Church in Fiji. It is our prayer that God will allow this to be so. Amen. ■

# MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

## Vakatawa Apolosi Vosanibola









The Yarawa Wesley Church Men's Fellowship (YMF) operates under the mission that promotes brotherly love and leading a Christ-centred life with the focus to be a role model in our families.

It is a group of Christian men who enjoy one another's company and work together to achieve common goals. It comprises of fathers, brothers, husbands, and friends from all walks of life who bring an incredible wealth of knowledge, skills, and expertise to achieve amazing things for God in the church and for Fiji.

The fellowship is designed to equip, prepare and challenge men to meet their calling and lead as Christ has modelled, through humble service. One of the greatest expectations of men of faith is Men of Change.

Since its inception, the YMF has been working closely with other ministries to assist, improve and steer the direction of the church.

The group meets regularly every week on Mondays to discuss ways in which to improve its services and contribution to the church and the community at large.

The fellowship provides an avenue for uniting the members. This involves Bible study, sharing of Biblical knowledge and encouraging faith. On special occasions, guest speakers are invited who present topics relevant to the group.

Community work is an integral part of the YMF and this is an area that continues to be supported also within the church by hosting our children's lunch on the Saturday before Palm Sunday.

The Veisau Kava Project is still in progress and this will involve the repairing of roof and other areas that need to be fixed for the home of a fellow colleague.

Visitation to YMF members has been on-going and this is a way of enhancing the value of caring.

There are greater plans for the YMF ahead. The past 30 years has been a journey filled with joy, tears, challenges of faith and the next 30 years will be no different. ■

# WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

## Litia Kaitu'u









**Philippians 2:1-2** *"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."*

1. Leadership

President: Mrs Litia Kaitu'u, Vice President: Mrs Josifini Bola, Secretary: Mrs Sereima Koli, Treasurer: Ms Vilomena Dautei

2. Membership 2015 – 38

3. Fellowship Meetings – Women's Fellowship meet fortnightly on Friday evenings. Meetings are preceded by a short devotion, bible studies and testimonies. The women's groups organise scheduled programmes such as guest speakers, movie nights and dinners.

4. Existence - The Women's Fellowship has been in existence over 15 years as it has been a forum in which women of the church are able to meet, share, encourage and help each other in their spiritual life. The Women's Fellowship is an important part of the Yarawa Wesley Church.

5. Mothers Sunday – The Women's Fellowship has an organised annual camp for spiritual enhancement i.e. fasting, praying, Bible studies and choir practice in preparation for the Mother's Day program.

6. World Day of Prayer – This is also an annual event where women around the globe come together in prayer. The Women's Fellowship participates in the event to remember women and children around the world in prayer.

7. Welfare of members – The Women's Fellowship continues to look after its own members' welfare through visitation to those who are sick and hospitalised and provide assistance.

8. Conclusion

On behalf of the Women's Fellowship Committee, I take this opportunity to thank the women of the church in their continued support in the various activities in which the Women's Fellowship has been taking the lead role, such as the Methodist Conference morning tea, hosting of the Divisional Meeting and other events.

I also would like to thank the Men's and Youth Fellowships for their assistance and availability when needed.

We would like to thank the church elders and also the past leaders for the Women's Fellowship in keeping the faith alive in the lives of the women of the church and nurturing them to continue the legacy.

God Bless you all.

# YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

## Richard Ryland



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an honor and privilege to write on behalf of the Youth Fellowship (MYF) of Yarawa.

This Fellowship runs its programmes on diversity and spontaneity as this results in the drawing and captivation of young people's attention. In a world where there are many distractions for the young people of today, the MYF continues to rely on divine creativity and direction to impact the youths. All of this though, would be impossible without God and the commitment of the youths themselves. Through the will of God, we have not only been able to impact youths in the local church, but on a divisional and national level as well. The programmes and goals are a testament to that.

The MYF consists of a committee of leaders and the members of the fellowship. We also have a Mentor in Aunty Elenoa Waqanibaravi, who continues to support and ecourage us. The 2015 committee is made up of President (Richard Ryland), Vice-President (Paul Lal), Secretary (Taina Kotobalavu), Treasurer (Ana Bataba), Praise and Worship Leaders (Eugene Evans & Sarah Viliame), and Dance and Drama Leader (Milika Ryland). The current membership for the MYF is forty-two. We continue to praise God for the growth within the fellowship and look forward to impacting more lives for His Kingdom.

We have one main goal that we are looking to accomplish over a span of two years. This goal is to send as many members as possible on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Israel). As preparation, we have a special programme on Sundays where we come together in unity to fast, pray and read the Word. This has strengthened the inter-relational bond between the youths and also their personal growth in Christ. Other special programmes include a fundraising concert, spontaneous lunches and retreats/fun days. There is also a camp planned at the end of the year where we will outreach to our brothers and sisters in the North. This year has also been a special one in that we have been given three youth Sundays instead of the usual one. This enables the youth to actively participate in the running of Sunday programmes and the advantage is that new talents and gifts are identified and exposed.

One thing that was highlighted at the beginning of the year though, was the lack of youth preachers. To the surprise of everyone, four young men of the MYF volunteered (Kauned & Elijah Tamton, Paul Lal

# YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

## Richard Ryland







& Richard Ryland) and, through spiritual guidance and mentorship under Vakatawa Jiare Viliame, were accepted and are now part of the normal rotations. Another important development was the introduction of the youth band. From when they were first accepted by the local church, the youth band has grown in leaps and bounds. Humble beginnings as they first started with just a guitar, a bass guitar and an acoustic drum set playing at a few Scripture Union rallies; to now having a full set of musical instruments *and* sound equipment. They have been identified as a building block to introducing music to the church on a national scale. One of our youths, Elijah Tamton has also been accepted with a *full* scholarship for three years to attend the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Discipleship Training School based in Canberra, Australia. As the blessings continue to rain down and doors open, we can only stand in awe of the hand of God in everything.

As our theme states for the year; "The Perfect Effort", we can boldly testify that when we give our best for the Lord, He will do the same for us. That is not to say that we do not have our setbacks. But as His Word states, we are more than conquerors and if He is for us, who can be against us?! Overcoming obstacles and moving on is what spiritual growth is all about. Jesus is *always* the reason for *all* seasons.

Colossians 3:23 ***"Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as unto the Lord and not unto men"***

**To God be all glory, honor and praises!** ■

## Fanny Simpson



***"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."***

***Nehemiah 4:6b***

***Praise the Lord!!! What a joy to know that our God reigns!!!***

The Sunday School Ministry is very important and delicate because we are dealing with young vulnerable lives, and even more so today because of the nature of media, communication and information systems that are readily available to them. We nurture children in God's house into the Body of Christ by teaching them the Word of God and Christian values by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in love. We want them to learn to relate to God in a personal way and in Godly love with others.

Yarawa Sunday School caters for children of all ages, from kindergarten to tertiary, and each class has one or two teachers. A team of teachers prepare the materials before the school year begins and the teachers go on a camp to commit everything to the Lord in unity.

Sunday School takes place from 9.00am -10.00am, beginning with a combined session before the children go to their respective classes. This year we purchased a projector and laptop to use for our combined sessions, so we are able to use slides and videos. During these sessions, the teachers on duty





# SUNDAY SCHOOL





introduce the theme based on the lectionary readings, welcome new children, acknowledge birthdays and teach a song to be rendered in the 10.30 am service. The lessons are taught accompanied by activities tailored for the various levels. A summary of the lesson and the children's activities are pasted on the notice board. Every first Sunday of the month, White Sunday occurs for the children to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Their are four annual events that children and parents look forward to; Children's/Palm Sunday - the Sunday before Easter, Fun Day in July, Sunday School Camp in October and Christmas Cantata in December. These events provide opportunities for the children to develop and display their talents, build bonds of friendship, love, respect as well as life skills, while learning about Jesus and how to have a relationship with Him. Parents are just as excited as the children and we are grateful for their support.

The hype for Palm Sunday begins soon after the first school term starts. Each year there is a new theme and the teachers work with the children coaching, practising and supervising after school. The final rehearsal on the Saturday before is a family affair, with the fathers cooking lunch. This year everyone dressed as Jews rather than the usual white for the morning worship, which the primary school children led based on Jesus' triumphant entry to Jerusalem. In the evening service the older children led a time of creative worship.

Fun Day this year was held at the Suva Grammar School courts. As usual the children enjoyed the competition and fun. Families came with their mats and lunch to enjoy the day with other church members.

The most highly anticipated of events is the camp held at the Coral Coast Christian Camp every year. It is a time for children to learn to be independent as they go without their parents and rely on their teachers and older brothers and sisters from Sunday School or Youth. A buddy system is established and chores are divided. Mothers of young children accompany them, while others volunteer to cook together with some youths and fathers. We have a lot of fun eating, playing, swimming, learning and living together as a big family.

The Sunday School Christmas Cantata has mostly been a time of singing carols. However, last Christmas we took the Cantata out to the public to My Suva Park. The children performed the birth of Jesus as well as other creative pieces. It was a time to reach out to others about the message of God's love for the world through His Son Jesus.

From time to time we have had fellowship with the Gospel School for the Deaf children and donated Christmas gifts as well as a regular supply of groceries. The Dilkusha and St Christopher's Home children too have been our guests or recipients.

I thank God for the lives of the children and the families they come from. Also, I praise God that there are always willing hearts to teach and guide the children, and helpers. I am grateful too to the other leaders and those who help to organise our various events and activities. For the future, we give thanks that God will provide a place for Sunday School where we can have more space and use more activities for the lessons. The Ministry has grown and the space we use inside and outside the church building is limiting.

It has been a blessed and exciting 28 years of serving God as a Sunday School teacher. I thank God for His calling and the talents He has given me with children. Today I can only praise the Lord seeing the children I have taught in the yester years bringing their children to Sunday School and the parents who usually drop their children, joining the Yarawa congregation.

***GLORY, HONOR & PRAISE TO THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.***

## Nanise Lesianawai



**Greetings to all in the Name of Jesus!**

***Psalm 138: 1: I will praise You with my whole heart, before the gods I will sing praises to You.***

When I approach members of our church to join the Choir – some of the comments I get – "I don't know how to sing." or "I don't know how to read music" or "I will stress those who hear me sing" Challenging? This is my story.

I know how to sing **but I do not know how to read: d: r: m (tonic sol-fa)!** That is the greatest challenge any choir member will tell you. I sing what I hear (learn through my ears!). But with God – nothing is impossible. When we come with an attitude of thanksgiving and depending on God to lead us, we can do it.

To be the Yarawa Choir Leader is another level and only with God's guidance through His Holy Spirit can anyone achieve this. Honestly, I honor God for the appointment.

I was a choir member for 2 years when I was elected to replace Joe Amoe who had retired from the leadership role. I took the challenge despite the little knowledge I had, and trusted God to guide me through to this very day.

Although I have been in the choir for the last 14 years, it is still a great challenge. If you love to sing for God, total commitment is the key to becoming a good choir member. The best thing about the Yarawa Choir is that you don't have to go through a test, or, you don't have to go through voice training, you just come as you are. That is the beauty of this choir. Everyone learns from others.

I salute all the members and choir leaders who have come and gone and have contributed tremendously to improving the standard of singing in the Yarawa Choir, in particular; Phoebe Mills, Joe Amoe, Manasa Moce (2010 – 2011), Sekope Bula (Jan '12 – Apr '12),Sam Taukave (April'12 – January'13) and Talatala Pene for the continuous support to train members on how to read music using tonic sol-fa and staff notation.

A tribute must be paid to those members who have gone to be with the Lord – Sekope Bula, Apao Solomone, Sam Taukave, Ruci Gukisuva, Mr. Whippy, Naita Ateca Raiyawa (aka. QEI), Dr. Jona Baravilala who was always there when we needed bass in the choir.

I continue to thank God for the lives of our members who continually sit every Sunday to bring the congregation into worship. A special acknowledgement goes to the senior choir members – Waqa and Loata Ledua, Claire Heffernan, Tuwaci Rasolo and Ledua Bakani who are the pillars of the choir.

I thank all the youths who are in the choir and praise God that new members continue to come in to join – the choir of the tomorrows.

A few highlights of what the Yarawa Choir have achieved in the past 14 years : -

Melbourne Tour – 2012 , Choir Singing in the Annual Conference & Christmas Cantata – every year.

If I had a thousand tongues, they would be used to Praise our Lord God Almighty in song!!!! ■

*How good it is to give thanks to You, O Lord,*
*To sing in Your honor, O most high God,*
*To proclaim Your constant love every morning and Your faithfulness every night.*
*With music of stringed instruments and the melody of the harp,*
*Your mighty deeds, O Lord, make me glad,*
*because of what You have done, I sing for joy.*

I have always sung in the church choir, and I sing alto. From the early sixties, I joined the Rava Youth Fellowship in Savusavu. We combined with the Yaroi Methodist Church Youth Choir. The choir conductor then was renowned, the late Mr. Josua Rabukawaqa. He took us through the "Hallelujah Chorus" and we were very fortunate to have his expertise.

I moved to Vatukoula, joined and sang in the opening of the new Methodist Church with the Work sisters – Stella, Vera, Dada, and Emalyn and their brother Chris. By the mid-sixties I had moved to Suva and joined the Butt Street Church choir that is where I met with the Mills sisters – Reverend Mary, Betsy and Phoebe. Phoebe later came to Yarawa Wesley Church to help with the choir as the organist.

In 1965, some families from the Wesley Butt Street moved to Saint Mattew's Church in Mead Road. I joined the choir there which was made up of family members from the Pareti, Mavoa, Waqanibaravi, Hatch, O'Connor, Panapasa, Wedlock, Senilagakali and Marseu families. Reverend Marseu and the late Dr. Senilagakali were the choir's deep bass voices. We miss you, Dr. Senilagakali.

The Yarawa property was purchased In 1985 and in October, the church was officially opened and dedicated by the late President of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma, Reverend Nabulivou and Reverend Daniel Mastapha. By 1987, Yarawa had formed a choir with only a few members. Nothing being impossible with God, our brother Joe Amoe stepped up and took on the responsibility of being the Choir Leader. This role was later shared by Miss Phoebe Mills, who came in to help the choir with the music. Reverend Marseu was the Yarawa Wesley Church minister then.

With Vakatawa Vilame Gonelevu the choir entered the choir competition in the mid-nineties and came first for soli. Later the choir was blessed to have more members under the leadership of Reverend Pene who had been posted to Yarawa. Five or so years into the new millennium, the choir was very fortunate to have the expertise of two very talented men, Manasa Moce and the late Sam Taukave as conductors. We miss you Sam.

More recently, Mrs Nanise Lesinawai and her helper Mrs. Ledua Bakani have taken on the enormous task of leading the Yarawa Wesley Choir. I personally, want to thank the two ladies who are always ready to help and to take part in anything that is needed. Thank you for your service to God's family.

As I have been in the choir of Yarawa Wesley Church for so long now I still believe retirement is not for me as there is no retiring from God's services. We exist to fellowship with God and His people, to be members of His family. To the young people and children of Yarawa Wesley Church, learn as much as you can from the older members of the church, who have made this church what it is today since it began more than 30 years ago.

***Choir Member since 1987***
***Your Sister in Christ,***
***Clare Heffernan***

**"Do it in the now"** was explicitly articulated by Vakatawas Jiare and Apolosi during Sanctification Week this year, meaning that one must come out of one's comfort zone , for, " to be in Christ, you are a new creature, the past is gone and everything becomes new."

I am proud to say, that this year my decision to join the Yarawa Choir was not by chance, but by the work of the Holy Spirit in me and the transformation that has uplifted my spiritual walk with the Lord.

This came as a surprise to my family and some of my close friends who never believed that singing is one of my hidden passions, given my quiet nature. Be as it may, there is a time for everything and it is never too late to change for the better, especially for a late comer. Being with the choir and singing praises to God every Sunday is a joy and a blessing.

My appreciation goes to our Choir Leader, Mrs. Nanise Lesianawai for her patience, perseverance and leadership and to "Fiji Elvis (Rev Pene) for the tonic solfa and staff notation classes, and lastly to the choir members for without them the church is incomplete in worshipping God.

Last but not the least, I wish the Celebration Committee all the best and may the Good Lord continue to shower the Yarawa Church family with his blessings for a very bright future in Christ.

***Aptinko Vaurasi***

Dr. Akanisi Kedrayate

# SERVING IN THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD




*Yarawa Wesley Church Holy Land Tour 2014, Western Wall, Jerusalem*

The journey of the Prayer Group has been long and interesting in terms of its beginning. Some of its highlights are shared in this article.

At the outset we remember fondly those Prayer Warriors who have gone ahead of us to heaven.

It all started in the year 1994, when the Wesley Circuit was organising a crusade for a week at the National Stadium. Reverend Allan Walker was the main speaker. A week-long prayer meeting was organised by the late Reverend Sausemolia Fonmanu, the late Radini 'Talatala Keresi Fonmanu, Mrs Margaret Hatch, Mr Viliame Gonelevu and maybe a few others.

During the same year, the Yarawa Women's Fellowship went on a tour to Australia. They were guests of Reverend Dr and Mrs Fesaitu Marseu. As part of the preparation, the ladies were requested to join the Crusade Prayer Group to pray and prepare for the trip. The ladies who joined were:

the late Deaconess Akanisi Taito, Avisake Tukana, Lavenia Ratucicivi, Susau Atalifo, Jessie Kotoiwasawasa, Emaline Mavoa, Olivia Mavoa, Fanny Simpson, Laisa Baravilala-Baoa, Harieta Fonmoa, the late Mrs Frances Ramaqa and Kini (Vakatawase) Tuiono.

After the crusade and the departure of the ladies to Australia in early December 1994, the Prayer Group continued to meet. Dr Akanisi Tabualevu joined the group. When the ladies returned, some rejoined the Prayer Group and have continued until today. Their name was then changed to Prayer Warriors.

The Prayer Warriors continued their spiritual journey and met every Saturday, then added Tuesday to pray and fast.

This decision was made after the Mother's Day camp preparation in 1996, when the ladies fasted the two Tuesdays before Mother's Sunday. Some of the ladies were also Prayer Warriors, so this fasting day was adopted and is still practised with the addition of Sunday.

The Prayer Warriors has played an important role in facilitating special prayer meetings and fasting for Yarawa Church during special events some of which are listed as follows:

- 1996 - The Ladies Fellowship participation in the Methodist Conference Choir Competition.

# Prayer Warriors

- 1997 – Yarawa Church one week Crusade at Sukhu Park.
- The Women's Fellowship participation in the Methodist Conference Choir competition.
- 1999 – Organised a tour to Israel which saw eight members of Yarawa Church make pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Dr Akanisi Tabualevu, Mrs Atila Baravilala, Mrs Margaret Hatch, Mrs Lena Mitchell, Dr Nacanieli Rika, Mrs Susau Atalifo, Mrs Elizabeth Pickering and the late Mr Dale Pickering.



During 1998 to 2002, the Prayer Warriors were involved in evangelism and outreach programmes and went into squatter settlements around Suva and parts of Nasinu. This evangelism was done after work and in the evenings.

We walked through mud and sometimes fell into dirty, stinking drains, walked through grass that was up to our waists with no light to guide our path. These were experiences that we will never forget and will remain happy moments of our lives, as we reflect on our journey with the Lord. A special mention must be made of the Wailea experience where we waded through the mangroves and mud to reach some homes. The smell of the mud stayed with us for a week. Some families were very poor and had little in their homes. Our plan to build a home for two families became a church project where the Youth and Men's Fellowships helped us.

On reflection, the Lord was refining and teaching us to be humble, obedient and persevere and to be His followers and servants. We should not just remain in church and pray. It was very rewarding when we prayed and led people to the Lord Jesus Christ to be their personal Saviour, particularly for non-believers. We witnessed a lot of miracles during these visits, such as when families were reconciled, people were healed of cancer, several people who were demon possessed were delivered, food on the table, etc. The Lord was showing us that through UNITY of Purpose, fasting and prayer, He used us to perform miracles. It was during such visits in Nasinu near the Hart Community, that a group of Indian families who had witnessed the healing power of prayer asked us to set up a church there. However, we told them to go to the nearest church or come to Yarawa.

During this period the Corporate All Night Prayer held on the last Friday of every month began. We also started the Open Hand Ministry because we saw a lot of poor families during our evangelism and outreach to the nearby squatter settlements.

In 2003 Mrs Margaret Hatch was relocated to her daughter in Lautoka and 2005 saw the transfer of Rev Fonmanu and Radini Talatala Keresi to Navoka Circuit. In 2010 Mrs Ruci Gukisuva departed for Heaven.

But during this period, we gained five other members, Mrs Losalini Tavaga, Mrs Tuwaci Rasolo, Mrs Jieni Timote, Mrs Siteri Sale and Ms Unaisi Vosarogo.

The "specific period fasting" was introduced and this was also a great period of growth for the Prayer Warriors as a group and also as individuals. The monthly visitation to the Ladies Prison was also birthed at this time. We looked forward to these visits because of the transformation we witnessed in the lives of the prisoners. One of the outcomes of these visits was the establishment of the "Half-Way" home for those who have been discharged but have no homes to go to. This project was supported by some members of the church, but was not sustainable because it required a full time person and resources to run it.

In 2014, another pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Israel was organised, which saw a total of 21 people, including our very own Talatala Jone Marika. It was a life changing experience for everyone who went.

All in all there were times of great joy and mischief and also times of great fun and happiness. In 1999,

## Dr. Akanisi Kedrayate

*"**Psalm 84:5-7** – Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength till each appears before God in Zion"*

there was a Prayer Warriors camp at Sabeto Christian Camp site in Nadi. After dinner on Saturday evening, there was so much left-over food, corned-beef, fish, etc . So without the knowledge of Talatala Fonmanu, Sister Aggie and Aunty Margaret, the rest of us, Keresi, Elizabeth, Jessie, Avisake, Asena, Fanny and Sue decided we would wake up at 4.00am on Sunday morning and eat before fast began at 6.00am. It was like back in boarding school, eating with all the giggles, but trying not to wake up the three senior Prayer Warriors who we knew would not eat with us.

Then there was the time in 1995, when we were still very young as Prayer Warriors and there was a request to deliver someone who was demon possessed. With our limited knowledge, we depended on God and Him alone to do this deliverance through us. We witnessed the POWER of GOD through His Written Word and the spoken Word in the Name and the Blood of Jesus to deliver this possessed man and also to set him free from generational curses.

Today, the members are:

- President: Dr Akanisi Kedrayate Tabualevu
- Assistant President: Jieni Timote
- Members are:
    - Jessie Kotoiwasawasa, Losalini Tavaga, Tuwaci Rasolo, Lucy Senibulu, Unaisi Vosarogo, Avisake Tukana, Tomasi Rawaya, Susau Atalifo, Tresa Lal, Kauned Tamton and Ruth Newton.

We, acknowledge and thank past Members, both in Yarawa and outside of Yarawa who have at one time or another joined the Prayer Warriors.

This story will not conclude well without the acknowledgement of the Yarawa Church Leaders and Elders, past and present, namely, Mr Viliame Gonelevu, the late Dr Baravilala Senilagakali, the late Rev Sausemolia Fonmanu, the late Mrs Keresi Fonmanu, Mrs Margaret Hatch and Sister Olivia Pareti who helped nurture us in our formative years.

Today, we continue to run this race as Royal Priests with this High Calling from God until Jesus returns or until He calls us home.



# PRAISE & WORSHIP

## Kauned Tamton








*"Praise the LORD!*
*Praise God in His sanctuary;*
*Praise Him in His mighty firmament!*
*Praise Him for His mighty acts;*
*Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!*
*Psalm 150: 1-2*

The essence of Praise and worship is to be like King David who worshipped the Lord wholeheartedly, pouring his heart out to God, regardless of his status and people's expectations. In Psalms we read about the expression of a myriad of emotions, all surrendered to God. The Holy Spirit leads. Praise is well expressed in Psalm 150, showing uninhibited joy acknowledging God for who He is. Worship is a time of total surrender to God. Worshippers are free to worship God in any way they feel comfortable, coming before God as they are, whether it be in quiet tears, wailing, shouting, dancing, clapping, lifting hands, kneeling in submission, praying, speaking in tongues, singing or playing musical instruments spontaneously. These are what may seem foolish in the eyes of man.

Praise and Worship is about creating an atmosphere that brings all who are present into the presence of God Almighty with the conviction of the Holy Spirit. In the 4-5pm hour of Praise and Worship, the team unites in prayer, song, playing of musical instruments and action with the leading of the Holy Spirit. For preparation we continue to uplift one another in prayer and fasting so that there is unity in what we do. Even practice time is spent in prayer and worship so that it is not just a time of preparation for the next day. We come with expectant hearts that God will meet us as we praise and worship Him. In our role we also support other ministries especially Sunday School and Youth, and preachers during the 5pm service, Vulavou, prayer breakfasts for various groups, and on request.

There have been teaching sessions on this Ministry from Pastor Manasa Moce, vocal training from Christians from other denominations and instrument playing lessons from the American Embassy and Joseph Tavaga.

A big encouragement is having more young people as musicians and the Youth leaders playing a major role. Previous leaders have been the late Rev Fonmanu, Anuanu Tamtan, Nalawa family, Losalini Tavaga, Siteri and Jioji Junior and Avisaki Tukana. We would like to encourage more young people to be worship leaders, as musicians, vocalists and dancers.

Towards the end of November this year we plan to have a concert and we look forward to the support of the Yarawa family.



## Kauned Tamton

**God's Call to Praise and Worship**

I remember very clearly a moment in my childhood (between 10 &11yrs) when holding a guitar for the first time, running my fingers up and down the fret board & plucking away. Mind you, all my efforts at playing the guitar made more noise than music "at the time".

I recall myself saying "Hey look, I know how to play the guitar now", only to be sharply cut off with words that pierced without warning.

"Don't be mad, nobody can learn to play the guitar overnight".

Cold words, but I thank God. Those were the right words, allowed to be spoken at the right time, all a part of a refining process intended for my life.

Over 10years have passed since and as I look back on how far God has brought me in music and life, I am now beginning to understand that all the hurt, the disappointments, all the pain and struggles I had to endure were just processes;refining me, shaping me and preparing me for God's call and plan in my life.

Back then I was just a child who believed the impossible. Today I am a young person beginning to understand the call of God and witness the impossible; in life, at home, within Praise & Worship, at church, even at work. Who knows, maybe God is preparing me to live out and be an example of the impossible…. to the Glory of God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

-Kauned Tamton-



It seems like it was just yesterday that I joined the choir, but actually I joined the choir in 2013 when I was still in Form 6. In fact, from the day I enlisted, I never regretted it. Being part of the choir has taught me many things from learning the tonics of an anthem to learning the value of commitment, something the Choir Mistress stresses to us almost every Thursday during our practice.

Previously, I had no knowledge of singing, and to make it worse my voice fluctuates when I sing. What I mean is, I will start with a bass kind of voice, then later it would change to tenor and eventually to a female voice. It is quite funny, isn't it? But after a few years in the choir my voice is kind of stable. Sometimes, it still fluctuates.

Every Thursday when I come to choir practice, I learn something new either from the Choir Director or from the choir members themselves. I must say that it is quite embarrassing also when you make a mistake and it gets even more hilarious when the person sitting next to you gets it wrong also and the laughter will even get louder when one voice (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) makes a mistake and imagine if the whole choir makes a mistake then everyone would laugh their hearts out.

I would say that joining the choir is one of the best events in my life. It has shown me that you don't have to be a good singer to join, all it takes is your heart and willingness to serve the Lord. If you are reading this and have always wanted to join the choir but are always having second thoughts, I urge you to join because it is not about the ability and having a great voice, but it is what you can offer the Lord that counts.

***Henry Cassidy (Choir member)***

# OPEN HAND MINISTRY

## Isimeli Bola





Open Hand Ministry (OHM) operates under the Mission Ministry of Yarawa Wesley and is coordinated by volunteers within the Yarawa congregation.

Based on the Methodist principle of mission work and assisting the less fortunate or marginalized in the community, the Ministry relied on the church and donations in cash or kind from the Yarawa congregation to undertake and fulfill its operations.

Since its inception in the early 90s, the Ministry has been working closely with the Prayer Warriors to facilitate donations towards the needy within and outside the church.

In 2011, volunteers who had committed to the Ministry and recognizing the need to revive and ensure the sustainability of the Ministry in the future put together a plan to take the Ministry to another level by improving its operations; partnering with relevant networks and ensuring its continuity in the future.

The need to start with the Yarawa family was a priority and identifying 20 families and providing them with basic food items was a start. Selection was based on four categories including sole breadwinner, widow, elderly and unemployed.

From the outset, a budget was put in place and the formulation of its vision and mission and other visionary methods to enhance and grow its work as the mission arm of Yarawa.

In trying to partner with relevant parties, the Ministry recognized the need to work with the Evangelism Ministry of the church and identified the Prison Ministry outside of the church to fulfill its core objective of targeting and working with the marginalized in the community.

Some of its achievements included the fortnightly provision of basic grocery items for the 20 families; visitation and the sharing of the Bible with the recipients; providing presents under the Angel Ministry of the Prisons Department for 20 children of different age groups and trying to find ways to assist other ministries within the church such as the Youth and sourcing funding to sustain its operations in the future.

In respect of the above, some of the good stories which were the outcomes achieved during the year shared by one of the recipients was the sharing of the food items by the family with 3 other families living in their neighbourhood; the enthusiasm and commitment by the volunteers and the opening up of opportunities and various areas of serving the targeted communities which God blessed the Ministry with.

This year is a challenging year for the Ministry with its commitment to producing the 30th anniversary magazine for Yarawa as well as other merchandise including t-shirts, sulus and caps.

Fundraising activities planned so far like selling of lovo packs plus steak and egg have been a success and there are more similar fundraisers planned for 2015 and beyond.

The Ministry is a small community within the Yarawa Wesley Circuit family and is driven by the kindest of Christian values of CHARITY, HELPING OTHERS and LOVE. ■

Vakatawa Jiare Viliame

# How important is the 'matasiga' in the local

My answer will be extremely important. Every church needs to have a strong base of small/cell groups within its own framework. The concept is not foreign as some perceive it to be nor is it Pentecostal in nature. First, it is Biblical as found in

*Acts 2: 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

Secondly, it is also found in John Wesley's methods of fellowship.

Even Jesus chose only twelve men to follow Him and for three years He taught them, they travelled with Him and experienced the miracles He performed.

*But why didn't Jesus chose more than 12 disciples?*

The answer is very simple. It's easier to manage a small number and in classroom terms, it gives the teacher the ability to spend quality time with each student.

You will find in Acts that the early church usually meets in these two places, temple courts and homes. Why not the temple, but in the temple courts?

Only priests were allowed within the temples so it is logical to say that the common men met around the temple courts where it is easier to converse.

The fact is the experiences that transpire within small groups can never be experienced at church. Cell groups promote true fellowship amongst members. It is easier to manage and easier to communicate.

The goals for cell ministry are twofold: to connect with God and connect with each other.

In the human anatomy, the blood cells represent a living organism that keeps evolving in order to sustain itself. So is the cell group within the church. It must be evolving, recreating itself, experiencing life change individually and as a group.

The atmosphere of fellowship must be fresh, exciting, renewing and the members look forward to every cell meeting.

Remember, the cell meets for one reason and that is connection. If connection fails, then the cell will not survive.

***The fact is the experiences that transpire within small groups can never be experienced at church. Cell groups promote true fellowship amongst members. It is easier to manage and easier to communicate. The goals for cell ministry are twofold: to connect with God and connect with each other.***

The growth of the cell is dependent upon its members. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, members must be able to live transparent lives within and amongst each other. And the concept is quite clear in:

*Acts 2:47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Growth will come by God's means. The existing members must continue to honour God in every way and He will give growth. When a cell is too big to maintain, multiplication takes place and a new cell is formed.

How the cell fellowship is run is solely dependent on the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The worship structure must be completely different from a formal Sunday church service.

The cell leader must have a discerning heart to know exactly when and where to connect, who to lead and what to do.

The cell is seen as the body (the church) and Jesus being the head reveals Himself to the body then the body expresses His character to the world.

*Colossians 1: 18 And He is the head of the body, the church;*

If the cell functions in this way, then the church becomes easier to build up. The fruits that will be evident are a loving and caring church. Worship services on Sundays becomes a time of great celebration. How wonderful is that! ■

# CELL GROUPS

## Grantham Road Zone



*Some members of the Grantham Road Zone*

This cell group was originally called LAUCALA BAY ROAD CELL GROUP and fellowship started in Mr & Mrs Aren & Laisa Baoa's residence in Laucala Bay Road. The group was first led by Nacanieli Rika, then Peter Ryland until God called him to His side in 2011.

Pauline Ryland then took over the reins from her beloved husband, until 2013. The leadership role was passed on to Brother Lemeki Ravai. The cell was very sorry to lose the Baravilalas as they played a major role in the spiritual lives of the cell members.

In 2014,the cell was renamed GRANTHAM ROAD CELL GROUP as most of the members lived along the Grantham Road corridor.

This year the cell became a zone which has been divided into 3 cells due to the increasing numbers in the cell. This zone was the first to make this very challenging and bold move.

**The Cell has grown in numbers and now consists of 11 families:**
Ryland, Baoa, Silisoma, Jennifer Lanyon-Bentitai, Ruth Newton, Vive Cerewale, Kaituu, Ravai, Jieni Timote, Emeli Underwood, Faktaufon

- Grantham 1 – led by Aren Baoa based in Church.
- Grantham 2 – led by Jio Kaitu'u based in Cunningham Road.
- Grantham 3 – led by Panapasa Silisoma based in Raiwaqa
- Zone leader – Lemeki Ravai

***"God has blessed our Cell Group with so many talents. We are also blessed with the largest number of youths in our cell and we praise God for using them to serve Him in so many ways."***

The first Wednesday of every month is usually a combined fellowship held in Church, followed by a meeting to discuss any issues we may have and then a fellowship cuppa afterwards. On the other 3 Wednesdays, meetings are held in our respective venues.

God has blessed our Cell Group with so many talents. We are also blessed with the largest number of youths in our cell and we praise God for using them to serve Him in so many ways.

It is our prayer that we will continue to bring more families into this fellowship and break into more small groups in the near future and increase our work and the spreading of the Word of God to the hungry in Spirit.

*TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOREVER.*

## Nabua





*Some members of the Nabua Cell Group during the Soli last year.*

Bula Vinaka and greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nabua Cell Group wishes to congratulate Yarawa Church on its 30th anniversary. It is an exciting time to be part of the church as we celebrate 30 years of its establishment especially recalling how it started and the vision that the church has planned for the future.

Eleven families are members of this group; the Rasolo, Waqanibaravi, Vaurasi, Fonmoa, Raravula, Bola, Domonakibau, Koroi, Ravuso, Marseu and Lilo families. The total membership is 42 with a varying range of ages. Family homes mainly concentrate around upper Nabua along Sukanaivalu Road and Mead Road and extend south to Wainivula and down to Bayview Heights and upper Samabula.

Our objectives and aspirations are aligned to themain purpose of a Christian cell. Cells provide an environment in which Christians can actively participate in each other's lives. Their main purpose is to create a Christian fellowship amongst the members and with God and help in their spiritual development, to grow in their knowledge and love for Christ. It is said that cells are like fires which shine brightest when their kindling are laid next to each other. Nabua cell members believe that the growing fruits of the Spirit in our lives will attract others around us to come to Christ.

The families take turns to host our weekly cell meetings at their home. This allows the older members and very young members in the cell who may find difficulties in travelling around to attend the meeting when it comes to their homes.

Our cell meetings consist of prayers and sharing testimonies about our personal lives and experiences especially on what we have encountered each week. We also conduct lively Bible studies on selected passages from the week's lectionary readings and share our views and insights on the passages.

Christian cells are an important component of the church as they help to build up the spiritual lives of the members and ultimately the church and we want to encourage this in our cell programes.

Lastly, if you happen to live in or near the areas mentioned, you are most welcome to join us in our cell meetings which are conducted every Wednesday evening at 7pm. Just contact one of our members who will direct you.

I end with a verse from 1 Cor 1:3, *"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"*

Autiko Domonakibau
Nabua Cell

***Our objectives and aspirations are aligned to the main purpose of a Christian cell. Cells provide an environment in which Christians can actively participate in each other's lives.***

# CELL GROUPS

## Rewa Street



*Some members of the Rewa Street Cell Group with the late Rev Waqairatu*

This group started in 2003 and covers the Raiwaqa, Raiwasa & Rewa St areas. The formation of this group started with Dave Robinson, and the Newton and Lesianawai families.

My family at this time had just gone through a dramatic change in life as my husband and children were converted to Methodists, had confirmation classes and became confirmed members of the Yarawa Wesley Methodist Church during Vakatawa Gonelevu's leadership. It was really a big step to take. We were young Christians, hungry for the Word of God, and at the same time learning the Methodist way of worship etc. So the idea of a Bible study group was really the way to go to meet our hunger for the Word of God and fellowshipping with one another.

We formed our group and began meeting at the Newton home on Monday evenings. After sometime, Dave was not able to attend due to medical reasons and then the Newtons migrated to Australia.

The group then moved to the Lesianawais at 11 Kini Street. Youths joined us - Teresia Rokodovu (missionary), Saula Varo and Nunia. We invited guest speakers to come and lead us in our study and to encourage us because as I said – we were very young Christians.

- 2004 – William, Sue Atalifo and children & Baleikorocau families joined the group because there was no other Cell going on during this period. It was a big boost to our Bible study group.
- 2005 - Sitiveni and Marjorie Bola's family joined and in 2008 – Uncle John Williams joined until 2012 when he found difficulty travelling in the night.
- For about 3 years we did renouncing – severing ties or curses said or any sacrifice done through words or other means through our generation or family lines.
- In 2009, with boldness & confidence the Bola family formed the Raiwasa Cell Group.

Continued on page 49 ▶

**What the Cell have achieved in the past 11 years :**

- All our children are confirmed members of the church
- Bringing 4 young adults to accept Christ to be their God and personal Savior & one member (converted) went through confirmation classes & was confirmed in Yarawa church in 2013.
- We have witnessed 7 marriages in our Cell within the 11years and also education achievements for our children. The Lord never fails us and we can give so many testimonies to His goodness. Praise God!

# CELL GROUPS

## Rewa Street

■ Ledua Bakani and Aunty Fanny's families joined us in 2012.

Raiwaqa also formed their group – so the church changed our name to Rewa St Cell.

We Praise God that the Cell is multiplying and growing bigger each year.

Cell meetings were held on Monday nights and after a few years the church decided that the Cell meeting day should be Wednesdays since there will be no more Wednesday night service. Children are still part of our group meeting each Wednesday.



*Rewa Street Cell Group arranging flowers for Sunday service.*

We have witnessed so many good things that God continues to bring each year and He continues to strengthen our families in bonding and fellowshipping and also the boldness to share the Word of God. We have two Lay Preachers, Prayer Warriors, Choir members and Sunday School Teachers.

For encouragement to those that are wanting to form Bible study groups, if God is touching your heart, be bold to stand up and form your study group. It is sweet, when we come together and share the Word of God – it is the sweet honey in the rock.

We would also like to pay tribute to one of our staunch members whom God has called to be with Him – Uncle Willie Atalifo, a faithful servant of God in a very quiet and unique way. We miss you Willie!

The Cell members are also preparing this year 2015 for their Israel trip next year 2016. Shalom!!! Next year in Jerusalem! ■

# CELL GROUPS

## Vatuwaqa

Greetings to all in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**In all, there are about nine families who belong to the Vatuwaqa Cell Group**
The Bulas, Kotoiwasawasas, Toganivalus, Rosas, Johnsons, Senibulus, Tuitecis, Gonelevus, Taobas, Amoes and the Evans.

The group consists mostly of adults. Although most families do not attend cell meetings, we come together in other church activities such as church cleaning and fundraisings.

Currently, the weekly meeting combines with the Rewa Street Cell Group in preparation for the September 30th Year Celebration and church extension fund raising. Our strength is unity when it has to do with the church activity participation. However, we need to improve on our collective spiritual empowerment in coming together for Bible study every Wednesday evening. I am positive that this will be realised in the month of October after the September function. Furthermore, we hope to visit all families who are yet to join the weekly cell meetings.

Finally, we the members of the Vatuwaqa Cell extend our deep appreciation to the Open Hand Ministry which forms the magazine committee for the Yarawa Wesley Circuit for the breakthrough in publishing our Church Magazine.

Vinaka vakalevu. ■

# CELL GROUPS

## Raiwasa



*Some members of the Raiwasa Cell Group outside Yarawa Wesley Church.*

The Raiwasa Cell is a group formed to accommodate families that live within the vicinity of Yarawa Rd, Shalimar Street, Namena Road and Sukhu Park Road, and we have families who live further away who prefer to come to our cell meeting.

**Today, there are fifteen families represented in the cell:**
They are the Niukula, Vosanibola, Soderberg, Chang, Bola, Bataba, Rayawa, Koli, Rokoba, Meya, Dautei, Vatanitawake and Varo. It is usually the adults who meet, but we also have the days designated for our children in our programme.

The adult programme basically involves Bible Study, usually studies on the lectionaries for the week and at times on specific topics (Holy Spirit etc). Our programme encourages us to be involved, thus each week someone is tasked to research and lead the study or the programme for the evening. Part of our cell programme is "visitation"; we visit the sick within the cell or a family who needs assistance. We also visit other members of the church to assist or just for fellowship.

We are blessed in the Raiwasa Cell group as most of the members are actively involved in the Church through various ministries (Sunday School, Open Hand Ministry, Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship and Prayer Warriors)

There are five members of the cell who are in the Lay Preaching Ministry.

We are in awe when we witness God's hand in shaping the lives of our Cell members. Their spiritual growth is evident in their stepping up to take up the leading roles in Fellowship groups and also in the Church as a whole.

One of the hallmarks of Raiwasa cell is its involvement in the church. In unity we come together to partake in whatever activity the church requires of us, whether it is in outreaching, cleaning the church, feeding or giving. In the last Church Bazaar, members gave willingly from their heart and managed to surpass our $10,000 target. This year we are so looking forward to the 30 years celebration in September and all its activities and have pledged a seed towards the new church that has been planned.



*The young members of Rewa Street Cell Group at the Rayawa family home.*

Finally we the Raiwasa Cell would like to thank the Church, Open Hand Ministry and Magazine Committee for the opportunity to have a small write up about our cell in the Church Celebration magazine.

May the name of the Lord be praised. ■

## Laucala Beach



*Rev Jone Marika and Radini Aloesi members of the Laucala Beach Cell Group during Lynne and Allan Harm's wedding last year Novotel Hotel in Suva. .*

***"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with Thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6***

The Laucala Beach Cell group started with a membership of five families namely: The Baoa, Sukanaivalu, the Pickering, Rika and the Lomaloma families. Rev E. Pene joined after his appointment to Yarawa Circuit, followed by Rev Lili Makutu.

**Current Membership:**

1. Rev Jone Marika's family
2. Elizabeth Pickering's family
3. Dr. Sala Saketa's family
4. Toka Lomaloma's family
5. Amelia Natauilagilagi's family
6. Akanisi Panapasa's family

**Weekly meetings**

These are held at 7pm on Wednesday evenings at Rev Marika's residence. Bible study is taken from the lectionary reading for the week. To encourage our children to become confident speakers, we make them prepare and present the reading of the different

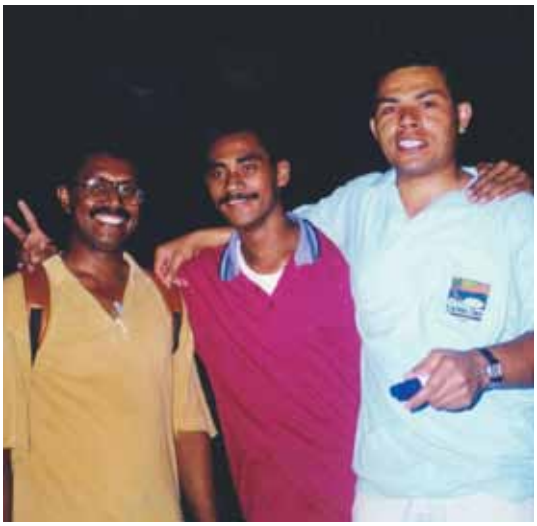


lectionary books studied.

**Activities**

- Feeding the homeless in Suva city on the last Wednesday of the month.
- Visitations - once a month to the non members living around the area/ sick/ those in need and mainly for spiritual guidance.
- Teamed up with Rarau Church for fundraising this year, and our last one will be on the 19th September.

# EARLY YEARS 1996-2005
























## Sela Panapasa

# *Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!*



Iakopo S. Panapasa



Milly A. Panapasa



Fuafanua T. Panapasa

"…as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). This verse embodies the character and commitment of the persons to whom we pay tribute; two generations of the Panapasa family, who with their children and grandchildren served the Lord unconditionally.

Worship at the Wesley City Mission Church on Butt Street was foundational for all of us, growing up with parents who instilled church, not as a weekly obligation, but as a daily opportunity to build a genuine relationship with God.

As our faith community grew, the family embraced the expansion of the Church to Nabua. Initially, the congregation met and worshiped temporarily at St. Matthews Anglican Church. Through prayer, daily worship, hard work, planning, strength of purpose and mutual support, we joined the community in its vision for a new church—YARAWA! The Yarawa Wesley Methodist Church is very special to our family. While our Father passed away in January of 1986 and never saw Yarawa grow into its full potential, he always remained a part of the church through the prayers of our Mother.



Our mother Milly (aka Aunty Milly) found great comfort in communion with the Yarawa Church and the community embraced her. Mother loved the Church and she grew joyfully in service to its mission. She worked closely with the Ladies Guild, displayed her love for flowers at the church altar, engaged in spirited discussions during Bible Study and empowered women to apply their talents in God's work. All of us have memories of Mother and her friends singing joyfully and loudly in the "Yarawa Choir", if not always in tune, unto the Lord. She devoted her life to helping achieve church goals such as the steeple she never got to see completed. Her friends were there, her faith was there and she felt fulfilled in the role God had planned for her in the church. When she moved to the United States in 1998, one of the hardest things for her to leave behind was the Yarawa faith community, but her memories of the church stayed with her until her passing in 2011.

Fanua and his family also had a strong commitment to the growth and expansion of the church. He was a quiet man who spoke primarily with his skilled hands and experience in making things work when no one else could resolve a technical problem. Fanua was involved with the Men's Fellowship and like our parents he embodied the spirit of St Paul who told us, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,… You are serving the Lord Christ".

Congratulations Yarawa on your 30th Anniversary and God Bless! ■

## Dr Salanieta Saketa

# YARAWA WESLEY IS UNIQUE

"My vision for Yarawa Church for the next 30 years is to grow from glory to glory and be the source of many incubator churches that portray God's love and mercy to the hurting world that we live in. I acknowledge the sweat and tears of the pioneers of Yarawa Church and the work of the Holy Spirit that has sustained their efforts till today," are the sentiments of Dr Salanieta Saketa.

"I have had the privilege of experiencing both the Fijian speaking and English speaking Methodist churches and I see that the unique thing about Yarawa Wesley is that it is not afraid to be different and to explore new ways of worship as the Holy Spirit leads. With the introduction of praise and worship and the use of musical instruments in the Methodist church for worship, it is relevant for all ages and particularly for young people in this technological era," she said.

Dr Saketa joined Yarawa Wesley Church when her family moved into their new home in Laucala Beach Estate.

"Yarawa Church is unique to me as I liken it to an incubator. In medicine a child who is newly born is placed in an incubator so that he/she can be warm, protected from harm, set apart to enable him or her to grow if born prematurely and placed in an environment similar to that of being in a mother's womb. I was at a stage in my spiritual walk when I needed to be protected, fed and guided, Yarawa provided just that for me, with exactly what I needed to grow spiritually. I was nurtured spiritually and taught to go out and do likewise," said Dr Saketa.

Dr Saketa indicated that the most significant period of her career was during her three year stint as the Permanent Secretary for Health. "This was the pinnacle of my professional life and this was also the time I could and did apply a holistic approach to health, particularly the spiritual aspect," she said. "It was a time the Lord used my life to showcase His power and favour. It brought home to me the fact that the Christian faith is to be lived out in our lives every day, 24/7 and not just on Sundays or during our fellowship group meetings," she further stated.

Dr Saketa or Sala as she is known in Yarawa Wesley Church was born on the island of Matuku in Lau where she was raised by her parents in the faith with her five siblings. She started her primary education at the Delaiverata District School on the island and moved to Suva with her parents at the age of 7. Her primary education continued at Arya Samaj Primary School and secondary at DAV Girls College. After that she moved on to the University of the South Pacific to enroll in the Foundation Science Programme with the intention of



becoming a teacher.

"Becoming a Doctor was not my personal choice of a career. I actually wanted to be a Science teacher. I enrolled in the University and was given a scholarship to pursue my dream, but somehow, Public Service Commission approached me to consider doing medicine as they needed to fulfill the quota for ITaukei students at the time to study medicine. In retrospect, I believe that this was God's career choice for me because I actually enjoyed studying to be a doctor even though it was a tough programme of study," said Dr Saketa.

After graduating with her MBBS, she went on to pursue a Postgraduate Masters Degree in Health at the Braun School of Public Health in Hadassah Hebrew University, Israel, then completed her Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at the Graduate School of Business in the University of the South Pacific.

"My medical specialty is public health and epidemiology which is the area of medicine related with studying diseases and how they are caused and how to prevent and control them. I spent most of my career in the Ministry of Health and I left the Ministry to undertake consultancy work in the Pacific Island Countries and have recently joined the Secretariat for Pacific Communities, Public Health Division," she says.

"There is no alternative to working hard and showing commitment and integrity in what we do. All of these will bring success to any young or older person's life," are the sentiments shared by Dr Salanieta Taka Saketa.

## Aren & Laisa Baoa

# *Pilgrims' Tour of Faith*





When Laisa proposed a new filming assignment, my reaction was, "No worries, my dear!" But when she stated that the assignment would be to Israel, I felt my heart miss a beat!

As a filmmaker, there is always a sense of anticipation when you are told that funds are available for the new film project. The excitement of visiting a new place with the full support of life insurance, airfares and per diem was always a bonus in the tour of remote places in the Pacific region like the Pitcairn Islands or other international destinations like Nepal, India, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Syria and New York. When you are a photographer or filmmaker working without funds, it would be a nightmare.

The idea of visiting a place that links directly to the origin of my faith was exhilarating, but the notion of having to raise over $30,000 (Fijian Dollars) was scary. The budget would be $14,000 to cover our tour expenses and then there is another $18,000 required to acquire a digital video camera, tripod, sound gear and Apple Mac laptop for editing. The first question that I meant to ask but could not say out aloud was, "How, when and where can we get that kind of money?"

Deep down in my heart the idea was "insane". It would be best that Laisa went alone, but she wanted me to film the tour so it seemed that staying was not an option. I was no longer working and had ventured into farming, which required a bit of capital investment to make it successful. I thought my filming consultancy proceeds from my Tonga assignment early last year (2014) would be enough to put my farming project on track. However, the Lord had other plans and the lady felt strongly convicted…….I had no choice but go along with it. "Israel! Here we come!"

I don't think I was the only one going through this dilemma. There were 18 other members who made it to Israel in October 2014, who had probably battled with the same predicament. However, I was reassured by our tour leader, Dr Akanisi Kedrayate-Tabualevu, "*just have faith my brother*".

The pilgrimage tour to Israel is now history, but looking back at how it happened, for my wife and I, is beyond human comprehension. Raising $30,000 in a short period of time was possible after all – we had put our faith into practice through months of prayer and fasting with our tour leader, our spiritual leader and the rest of the lady pilgrims, prior to the tour.

A video highlight of the tour is almost completed, but awaiting further editorial inputs to ensure it is of high quality and one that will remain a souvenir of a trip that can only be achieved, for most, once in a lifetime.

A word of advice to anyone who wishes to visit the Holy Land, "claim it, pray and fast about it and leave it to the Lord to do the rest". May His name be glorified always.

Happy Pearl Anniversary Yarawa Wesley Church. ■

## Baravilalas



***Ya-Rawa Pilgrims at the Temple Mount.***

*Back Row (L-R)* Dr. Tabualevu, Susau, Jieni, Nau Seini, Patricia, Tara, Aunty Lo

*Middle Row (L-R)* Dr. Tima, Amelia, Dr. Biu, Siteri, Akosita, Rev Marika

*Front Row (L-R)* Laisa, Ana, Toka, Filo, Elenoa

# *Nau Tila's tour to the Holy Land, 1999*

"I look at my grandson and thank the Lord for blessing my family with him," says Atila Senilagakali, fondly known in Yarawa Wesley as "Nau."

Nau was a member of the first group of women that left Yarawa Wesley on pilgrimage in 1999. She left Fiji's shores for the Holy Land with one mission in mind, to climb Mount Sinai and pray that the Lord bless her eldest son with a child.

That faith saw her climb 7,500 ft up the mountain to seek countenance with the Lord to grant her the yearnings of her heart.

Recalling that journey Nau shed tears as she retold her story. "It took me two and a half hours to climb that mountain. It was the mountain where God gave Moses the ten commandments. I felt I was so close to God, it was a different feeling, I can't explain it," she said. By this time she was overcome with emotions and trembling and took a while to compose herself.

"I felt I was so close to God and you could just feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I just broke down and prayed there on the mountain, and that was when I asked the Lord to bless my eldest son with a son," said Nau.

In faith Nau bought anointing oil when she returned to Jerusalem in preparation for her grandson's baptism. September 5th 2000 her prayer had been answered by the birth of her grandson Nathan.

"If you commit everything to God in prayer and believe with all your heart that it will happen. God will honour you by answering your prayers," Nau said with tears in her eyes.

"For me, I did not dream that I would make it to the Holy Land, but God allowed it to happen for me," she said.

Her parting advice was to those intending to go to Israel, "If you can make it to Mount Sinai, I would advise you to take that walk up the mountain and experience it for yourself." ■







## Jerry Bosenvanua







Woohoo Happy 30th years Yarawa Wesley!

As I write this article I have just finished praying with a couple in their half constructed house in a small coastal city called Gopalpur in the Indian state of Odisha (formerly known as Orissa). For this past week I have been teaching on "Worship" in their Discipleship Training School. My first time to this state was when a huge persecution of Christians broke out in 2007. Many Christians were killed, many lost their homes, farming lands were burned and destroyed and many children orphaned. Many had no choice but be relocated to other states of India where they could take refuge and be sheltered. By December this year, I will have completed 10 years of working as a missionary in India. I would not have been able to survive in the mission field had it not been for the prayers over me, my wife, daughter and other YWAM missionaries of Yarawa Church.

In 2007 I began working in a very poor slum community in Kolkata. I lived in this community, I ate their food, drank their underground mud tasting water and walked through their muddy, smelly and flooded paths. It was only by the grace and blessing of God that we were able to preach the Gospel here, lead many to Christ, and I had the great privilege to baptise our first convert there. But not long after setting up our "base", I began to have severe chest pains and my health began to deteriorate very quickly. I began to lose weight and cough severely.

After weeks of feeling like this, one night it was so severe that I began to cough out blood. So I got up to go to the hospital. I literally had to drag my legs through this mud covered slum village to get to the road and then walk to the nearest hospital. It was almost midnight when I walked through the ER. They rushed me in and immediately admitted me. As the doctors did their tests and gave all sorts of medicine, what was going through my mind was my medical bills. I was in such a bad shape that I was in hospital for 2 weeks. As I was being discharged my heart was beating from thinking about how I was going to pay my bills. But just like that I was allowed to go. Yarawa church came through and took care of my medical bills. The church has stood with me all these years, and I literally wouldn't have survived the trying and harsh environments of the mission fields of India otherwise.

I remember the first time walking into a youth meeting years before. The Youth Pastor then, fondly known to many of us as Uncle Sau Fonmanu. Every Wednesday was the junior MYF, and the thing that really caught my attention was he would sing worship songs. He would sing only two; one before a small sermon/encouragement, the other at the end. There wasn't much to it, but this was what I looked forward to till the next week. This was what kept me going. The

church only had an old 12 string guitar, but it was that simple honest service and passion to God that I saw. And as Uncle Sau would worship the Lord, I wanted that joy, that peace. The elders invested so much in the youths. They tolerated our breaking the fences at the back when we would play volleyball or left the doors unlocked or did other crazy things. We knew we were going to get a big telling off from the elders, but we knew come Sunday evening service there would be pie, cakes and fellowship cups of tea and then "Youths, the dishes!!!!" Nau Atila shouting. If we were not at the Fonmanu's, we would be at the Lesiamawai's or crashing at Uncle Willi and Aunty Su's place. Of course the Nice Bola family never closed their doors to us. They had no choice, they were just next door.

It was this simple, sharing and family atmosphere that nurtured me. It's amazing how now I am half-way around the world, overlooking the Indian Ocean preaching and teaching to a persecuted group of believers on "Worship".

I love you all. And I wish the very best for the 30th year Anniversary Celebration of God's missions' call to Yarawa Wesley.

Praying for you all,

in Christ

Jeremaia, Ana Paula and Agape Estela Bosevanua ■

# TESTIMONY

## Teresia Rokodovu



I came to Yarawa after years of praying and asking God as to which church to be a member of ever since becoming a Christian and had done a Discipleship Training School(DTS) with Youth With A Mission(YWAM).The word of the Lord to me at that time was to be part of a church that my family/relatives were also a part of. I was challenged to join Pentecostal churches, but I was not at peace about it.

In 1996 I was one of the leaders at a Scripture Union In Schools (SUIS) camp held at Saint John's College Cawaci. During that camp I got to know the youths of Yarawa then as they were also part of the same camp. The youths invited me to church and as I entered Yarawa Wesley Church that Sunday morning in December of 1996, I was at peace. I knew in my heart that this was going to be my home church. I became a member of Yarawa early 1997 and Yarawa has been family to me ever since.

I have served with YWAM locally and abroad ever since then and Yarawa Wesley church has continued to support me financially and in prayers. I am now with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Canberra and serve as a DTS staff on this location. I am grateful to God for bringing me to Yarawa Wesley. I have come to know individuals, my Rewa Street Cell group family and families over years.

I would like to also honor those who have passed on and those who are here today for being visionary to see Yarawa to where it is today. I thank God for the families that started at Saint Matthews and later moved to Yarawa Road. I now enjoy the fellowship and friendships at Yarawa Wesley Church because they looked beyond what could not be seen.

Yarawa Wesley Church continues to be on my prayer list and I am hopeful that God will continue to lead and direct Yarawa. May God be exalted and praised for His faithfulness in the last 30years as we hold onto His promises for the next 30 years. ■

## Seria Vinakadina





# Mission Journey

**Isa 43:16-19**

**This is what the Lord says — He who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: "Forget the former things ;do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. NIV**

The scripture above has stuck with me for more than 20 years as a full time missionary with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). It has become the foundation that I build my faith on, knowing in my heart that God is with me, I am not alone when I walk through my own wilderness and stormy waters..

Life as a missionary is not luxury. It is living on the edge in the life of faith holding on to dear life when everything seems so impossible in the human eyes, only to smile with tears when you understand the amazing presence of the Uncreated, All knowing, Ever-Present God is the only invisible yet person with you in your incredible journey. He has been an incredible friend.

That has been my life in the last 20 years.

My passion is in the area of Discipleship and I have worked with Discipleship Training School in all my years with YWAM. My joy is watching God transforming lives in the DTS and seeing young people pursuing their God dreams in mission or in the spheres of influence in their nations.

In 2008, God spoke specifically to me to join a couple to pioneer YWAM work in the northern part of Fiji (Vanua Levu) in the town of Labasa. This year 2015, we celebrated 7 years of existence in Labasa and I am grateful to God for His unending love and faithfulness. YWAM ministry in Labasa has flourished because of the incredible staff that I have worked with over the years and the committed support from Yarawa Wesley Church, through praying and financial support. To that, I am so grateful.

As we celebrate 30 years of Yarawa Wesley Church, I am reminded of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, (Philippians 3: 12- 14)

- We press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of.
- Forget what is behind and press forward to the goal to win the prize.

As we celebrate the 30 years, we celebrate God's faithfulness to us, believing us as a church to take hold of HIS Dream and faithfully together with the Holy Spirit cause it to grow and expand. We have become stronger and taken roots. We have borne abundant fruits…fruits that should last for eternity. We look forward to the new things ahead of us. We hold on to our faith, we hold on to LOVE because that is who GOD is. We serve in obedience to His voice and we boast about God in any platform given.

Bless you all.

I thank God every time I remember you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now…

Blessings ■

# Yarawa, A Family Affair



*"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."* **1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18**

When Mum and Dad moved us from Butt Street to Yarawa, it was a family affair. Everyone who was part of the household, whether permanent or in passing had to go to the respective fellowships and ministries, and be part of the picnics, camps, cooking, festivities and so on. It was not just a matter of attendance or participation, but of worshipping God Almighty and building up relationships in the family of God and above all commitment to an intimate relationship with Him, growing as we served Him. Our connections started from St Matthews when Uncle Waisani Mar and his family worshipped there, which meant that we sometimes attended Sunday School, church, and a family function like the twins' baptism.

Mum and Dad were pioneers of Yarawa with many other families and we will always cherish the joy and humility with which they served at Yarawa. They were exemplary in their walk of deep faith at home, church or elsewhere. It was always about "walking the talk". Dad mowed the lawn, cleaned the compound and made sure the hedges and trees were trimmed regularly. Mum having been a school teacher, was always keen to tell stories whenever Raiwasa Cell Group or the Senior Fellowship led. I can still hear Dad's bass and Mum's soprano voices in the choir.

Their protégés Ledua Bakani, Fanny Simpson and others talk about the cooking skills they learnt from Uncle Tale and Aunty Sai, salusalu making and weaving from Bubu. There were also the gentle words of wisdom and encouragement that are still cherished. Whatever they did, they put in their best because it was about God and not about them. And they both developed deep life-long friendships. This was evident in the exchange of jokes, farming, flowers and baking tips. Above all they taught the heart of giving the best, even from the little we have. Though they have both passed on, their teaching still lingers.

Mum's family continues to support Yarawa in various ways and in prayer. Reverend Uncle Josefa Mar, visits with Aunty Losana and has conducted family weddings and funerals as well as preached at Yarawa. Uncle Waisani, Aunty Inise, Aunty Jean, and their families too worship at Yarawa when they are visiting. Luisa, one of Yarawa's babies has returned with her own babies to Sunday School, and so have Johnson and his family.

Our home has been a venue for many Yarawa gatherings: lessons in cooking, craft and gardening, dance practice for the Senior Fellowship, catch up sessions for missionaries and youth, painting and sewing props for Sunday School, meetings and celebrations for fellowships and cell groups. It has also been a safe haven and refuge for the lost, the lonely and the hurt. We give thanks to God that we can share His love with many others.

Thanks be to God who enables us, Tale and Sai's children and grandchildren, to continue serving Him through our talents and gifts, to God be the glory! Indeed it has to be God's family affair. ■

## Rylands

# "Jesus Christ Our Only Hope"





Peter and I began the celebration of our marriage in Yarawa in December 1987. "Jesus Christ Our Only Hope" were printed in bold red letters on a banner on the wall facing the congregation. In those days, Yarawa was a small quaint building with a little path to a little porch, where I walked the aisle with Dad and walked out with Peter. These words ring true for everything in life. When I reflect on all that has happened in our lives, and in the passing of Peter, Jesus Christ has to be at the centre of it all, or all is lost.

Our wedding was orchestrated by Mum and Dad, which meant that Yarawa was very much involved. Reverend Fesaitu Marseu performed our nuptial service with the support of the youth choir led by the late Rusiate Nayacakalou. It was a heartwarming ceremony where our families came together with the Yarawa family in celebration. We both fell in love with this church, I having come from Butt Street and Nasea, and Peter from Vatukaroa.

Then we went away to Vatukaroa, but returned for Richard's birth and baptism and after that, the school holidays and more births and baptisms. We moved to Labasa and Richard and Milika came to live with Mum and Dad for education, so they were part of the Sunday School. Nei Atila still reminds me of how little Richard sat next to Pa Jona Baravilala most Sundays and sang his heart out. That would have been the beginning of Richard's musical career and Praise and Worship.

When we moved to Suva, our first home was in Raiwasa. Having served in the Nasea Indian Division for so many years as leaders and lay preachers, we thought about attending Dudley Church. But the pull from Yarawa was stronger, and we settled in slowly. We still needed healing from losing our youngest child and the children needed time to adapt.

It was the formation of the Laucala Bay Cell Group that really got us going full throttle again. We had prayed about this as a family, asking God to take us to a fellowship group that we could feel comfortable in as a family. There was no turning back after that as we thrived with the cell group that drew together people who came from various areas, rather than that locality we were named by and with united hearts. Quiet time was a vital teaching for building our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and gifts and talents were nurtured in this safe haven.

Peter, Richard, Milika and I became leaders and we have faced many challenges. Peter always advised me whenever I expressed unhappiness about someone or something, to pray about it. This gentle giant taught me a lot about humility in leadership, and so I was wiser not to always voice my feelings, but to practise self-control and pray. Yes, whatever we go through, Jesus is our only hope!

Sunday School and Youth are two ministries where our children's talents shone forth. From the time 4 year old Richard acted as Jesus riding a donkey, the family and youth rallying around for Milika's banner and Tshirt creations, Milika and Josie dancing solos, Ruby, Peter and Richard performing action songs vigorously and Miriama being MC, to all of them leading worship and boosting their confidence, I can boast that Ya-rawa, God is Able. It is about honouring God, letting the Holy Spirit lead and handing everything over to Him.

*"Now all glory to God who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think."* Ephesians 3: 20. ■

## Jone Cama

# Cama Listens To God's Calling





*In the face of temptation and the hardest of times, Jone Cama's story can confirm to us that God's guidance is omnipresent even when man is at his weakest point. The story of Cama is truly inspiring and one that should never be unread.*

For Cama, his life changed completely along the oh-so-familiar street of ours, Yarawa Road.

"It was a Sunday, the 30th of September, 1985. I was drinking alcohol with a group of friends in the bushes along Yarawa Road," Cama recalls.

"I was 42 years old then and still single."

Cama said they had begun drinking alcohol in the early hours of dawn and by midday had run out of drinks and were all intoxicated.

It was while walking along Yarawa Road, he heard music coming from a small wooden church .

"Looking across the road, I saw a small church. It was a new church because I was quite familiar with the area."

"I was drunk when I saw the church, but what happened to me next was beyond my control," he said.

"One moment I was on the other side of road, and in the next instant I was inside the church at the back, kneeling down and whispering a prayer in *iTaukei*: '*Vosoti au, Turaga*." (Forgive me, Lord)."

While Cama was kneeling down, he noticed the preacher was smiling at him.

"From that moment, I vowed that I would change my life."

The following Sunday Cama came to church again, and by this time he had established the church was called Yarawa Wesley Church.

And the first person who greeted him was the same preacher who smiled at him when he was on his knees.

"When he introduced himself I discovered he was the leader of Yarawa Church - Fesaitu Marseu."

"And from that day forward I continued coming to Yarawa."

Cama said being a member of an English-speaking congregation was a challenging one for him.

"But the men at the church that time, a few who have passed on, were very encouraging," he said.

"They told me not to worry about the language, but just continue speaking it to improve my English."

"Even though I did not speak English well, I believed that joining Yarawa Wesley was God's calling."

In 1987, Cama who had now become an active member of church was approached by Mr. Marseu to become the first president of the men's fellowship.

He accepted the offer.

"I recalled some of our fellowship members were Tom Gonelevu, Robinson, John Williams, the late Dr. Jona Baravilala Senilagakali, O'connor, Dale Pickering, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Joe Hoyt."

He said joining Yarawa brought a lot of changes into his life, one of which was marrying his beautiful wife, Maraia Johnshon.

"As the result, my wife's family began attending Yarawa as well."

The couple rented a home close to Yarawa Wesley Church, so it was convenient for them to attend the services at that time.

By this time the congregation had begun to grow and it was at this stage too that its structure was in need of attention.

And God continued using Cama by helping maintain the church.

A carpenter by profession, and a foreman for the then Public Works Department, he used this experience to advance the church's structure.

Some of the works that Cama did back then can still be seen today, like the main double-door at the main entrance, the new timber flooring and the picket fence at the front yard.

Cama and his wife, Maraia, were members of Yarawa Wesley Church from 1985 to 2005.

In 2006 the Cama family had to change their place of worship after they bought a property in Tacirua East.

Like many families who have come and gone, Yarawa Church holds many beautiful memories for Cama and his family.

However, because of the move, the family has opted to attend services closer to home.

Today, the Cama family attend the Methodist Church branch-Nasinu Wesley Church, which is a part of the Wesley Circuit. ■

## Elenoa Waqanibaravi

It is very uplifting to see the Youth Ministry in Yarawa Wesley grow from strength to strength over the years, watching babies grow into toddlers to children into adolescents then leaving the nest and returning later with children in tow who will in turn continue the cycle.

Growing up in this church, I recall that we first started attending combined Youth Fellowship on Friday evenings at Nailuva Road Gospel Church in 1978 and 1979. Nailuva Road Gospel Church used to have the then famous Lanyon sisters who sang Gospel, while we showed off with the "Lillies" the Nayacakalou siblings. Friday afternoons we would congregate after school at the Nayacakalous' residence then walk to Nailuva Road and walk back after fellowship. We were led by Aunty Frances Lagi (nee Rokotunidau) and Aunty Laisa Baoa (nee Senilagakali) who were both working then.

In 1980 to 1982 we joined Wesley City Mission Youth Group, I guess because at the time our mentors were starting their own respective families. By 1983 we started the St Matthews Youth Fellowship with the blessings of Pa (Dr Senilagakali) as he noticed that the St Mathews Sunday School children were now grown and at secondary school and tertiary levels ,and engaged in grog sessions on Friday evenings as there was nothing to do and nowhere to go. Youth Fellowship began on the verandah of the Waqanivavalagi's residence in Oneata Street with the leadership of Geoffrey Waqanivavalagi and assistance of his brother Steve.

From the Waqanivavalagi verandah we moved to the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities Recreation Room which was arranged by Mr Tiu Livino, the administrator at the SPC at the time. When we started worship at the present location the Youth Fellowship was also moved to church with our Mentors back on track, Aunty Frances, Aunty Laisa, Aunty Emily and Uncle Itu.

In 1987 the Methodist Church of Fiji called for delegates to represent the church at the International Christian Youth Conference in Mount Tamborine, Brisbane -Australia, Yarawa Wesley Church sent 3 delegates, consisting of Aunty Laisa, Sue Panapasa and myself. Two years later a contingent of 23 young people from Yarawa Wesley attended the



*Yarawa 80s Youth*

Australian National Youth Conference in 1989 with the leadership of Sue Panapasa.

I took a break from the Youth Ministry in the early 1990s to start my own family only to return in the late 90s to assist Rusiate Nayacakalou. Mid 2000 I was convicted to take on the Youth Ministry again and put back into the Ministry all that I had learnt over the years while working with young people. I also felt that I needed to involve myself in the Youth Ministry as I had teenage daughters then and I had to be a part of their spiritual upbringing as well. Looking back, I praise God for His empowerment, wisdom and patience bestowed upon me to deal with and understand our young people as they come from different backgrounds and ethnicity.

The young people have represented the Methodist Church to Regional Youth Conferences in Samoa, Tonga and here in Fiji. They have extended their boundaries by sharing the word of God in a Kings Kids Outreach in Canterbury Church, Sydney, Australia, shared to notorious juvenile inmates in Baxter Juvenile Centre in Gosford, part of the Yarawa Wesley choir that toured Melbourne. They have shared with local communities through a library project termed SOCK (Support Our Children with Knowledge) by painting a library and donating books for the library at Tukavesi, Buca Bay, volunteered at Homes of Hope and had been active participants during the outreach and church planting in Savusavu and Labasa. At the Divisional level they have worked in projects like Antioch in 2012,

in assisting victims of flood ravaged areas by cleaning up, rebuilding homes and providing essentials.

The Youth Ministry have over the years been an important inclusion in the Sunday School Camps as it is an opportunity to hone in on their leadership skills and share with the younger children their knowledge and assist in the nurturing of their younger siblings in their spiritual growth. They have participated in Divisional Camps and held camps of their own.


Yarawa 90s Youth

The Youth Ministry has been an avenue through which young people are able to be trained and nurtured to take over responsibilities in the church in years to come. It is also a programme where they are able to develop their social skills, discover their talents, develop their entrepreneurial skills and learn stewardship, are nurtured in their spiritual walk and explore their talents which they can use for God's Ministry.

I take this opportunity to thank the church elders for the support given to the Youth Ministry over the years and allowing our young people to flourish in the church. The Youth Fellowship has groomed many a young man and woman to take on leadership roles and who are actively involved in the church where they are currently residing locally and abroad. We have seen them move on in their chosen careers as musicians, accountants, media personalities, doctors,

*The Youth Ministry has been an avenue through which young people are able to be trained and nurtured to take over responsibilities in the church in years to come.*

academics, soldiers, pharmacist, artists, bankers, teachers, administrators, missionaries, chefs, sports people, architect, preachers and church stewards.

A long term plan for the Youth Ministry is to take a group to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2016 and open the way for our young people to also introduce other young people of the faith to the joys of experiencing Israel which should be experienced by everyone, to walk the ground on which Jesus walked and understand and know and love this great God we serve with all their hearts, their souls and their minds. ■






# SMF Pledges Suppport to Collage



*Senior members fellowship visitation to Davuilevu Theological Collage*

The newly refurbished Baker Hall stands tall as the backdrop for the Yarawa Wesley Church Senior Members Fellowship and staff of Davuilevu Theological College and their families. For the Senior Members the name Rev. Thomas Baker is highly regarded in the introduction of Christianity to a country that once was rife with tribal warfare and cannibalism. Rev. Baker lost his life in bringing the Gospel to Fiji, but paved the way for Christianity and Methodism that has since dominated this land for over 150 hundred years. The Yarawa Wesley Senior Members were there to show their support to the college and trainees for continuing the work that has been established under very difficult circumstances by pioneers like Rev. Baker.

The President of the fellowship, Waqa Ledua said their visit to Davuilevu was to assess the real needs of the students who are dependent on the generosity of their families and members of the community. "This is not going to be the last, but the beginning of the Yarawa Wesley Senior Members' visit to contribute what they can to the basic needs of future ministers, lay preachers and church workers."

After morning tea, the team were then given the tour of the college facilities by the Principal, Rev. Reuben. The Principal also showed them new initiatives in income generation undertaken by management, such as the 8,000 taro plants that will be harvested later in the year and sold directly to an exporter.

An ex-scholar of college, Rev. Pene, said it was an honour to revisit an institution that prepared him to his calling over 30 years ago. The oldest member of the group, Atilaite Baravilala, commended on the college's development and endorsed the group's visit to the centre on a regular basis. ■

Reama Mitchell





# How God Made Me Join the Choir

In church, I used to be one of the ones sitting at the back. It was because of my own insecurity and shyness that I could not walk up to the middle seats or to the front. I kept thinking of others looking at me or maybe there was something wrong with my dress. I was very self-conscious, so I preferred the back seats. But I love music, and singing is my favorite pastime. When I am singing, I am very happy and all my worries flee. I feel very confident only if am singing in a choir. Singing solo makes me nervous even till today.

One of those times, I was sitting at the back of the church listening to the preaching and I was admiring how the preacher spoke very clearly and confidently and was not even stuttering. I thought, "Man, I could never do that, Lord. I would be so uncomfortable up there with everyone looking at me, they would end up feeling bad too. How these preachers go up every week and preach Your word is so good, I wish I was like them and could preach like them." I have so many things I can preach about and how God is so good in my life and always there for me and showing me His message, but going up there is another story. How can I stand in front of everyone and preach God's goodness and love and at the same time not feel shy or embarrassed or struggle to get the message across? I always ask God, "What is my calling? There is something I am supposed to do, but what is it? God, you need to let me know sooner rather than later."

Straight after that, the choir stood up to sing their anthem and at that time, there were only a few old folks with Miss Mills at the organ. Even though they were a small choir, and voices were not like the Centenary Church or the Vuniyavu Choir, they sang so sweetly and the message of the song was powerful because they sang from the heart. My whole being was suddenly so convicted to join the choir and it was a very powerful feeling. I knew I had to sit there but I still could not figure out why.

The following Thursday, I joined my mum for choir practice. Back then, I was the youngest choir member. That first Sunday I came in as a choir member, I had to sit in the front, in front of the whole congregation, where I still sit today. When we sang the hymns, our anthem and the Amen at the end of the service, I felt so good. God showed me that there are many ways we can preach the word of God and the best way to do it is to preach in our own way. My way is to sing out God's message and I realized that I was doing exactly what I was wishing when I was sitting in those back seats. I was standing in front of the congregation just like a preacher. I was preaching God's message in songs and was so comfortable with it.

Now that I know my calling, I just have to master it and it all works in prayers. I am amazed at how God listens to every silent prayer of our heart. It brings back that passage in the Bible *Jeremiah 29:11 "I alone know the plans I have for you (says the Lord), plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." (GNT)*

Hope this testimony blesses you. ■

## Margaret Hatch





# Good memories of Yarawa

*Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.* ***Romans 5: 3-4***

Perseverance was the building block that kept this little branch of Wesley going with only a few families attending what was then known as the St Matthews Anglican Church. Despite our small number, we faithfully continued to attend services each Sunday and became very close as we served the Lord in our own small ways: the Baravilala, Mavoa, Rokotunidau, Marseu and Harieta, Panapasa, Hoyt, and Hatch families. If I have missed anyone please forgive me, as at the age of 75 years my memory is not as good as it used to be.

Pastors and lay preachers came in from the main church at Butt Street, and we were still dependent on Wesley for the daily running, finances etc. of the church and each activity had to be agreed to by them.

Because of the inconvenience experienced through sharing a church building with another church, it became obvious that we had to have a place of our own to worship in. An old building situated in Yarawa Road was identified and the owner, a member of the Indian Division, agreed to sell. We were given a donation of $10,000 by one of the Wesley members. This was an exciting time as the members pulled together and raised the necessary money to purchase and renovate what was to become The Yarawa Methodist Church.

Thirty years ago the doors of this Church were opened. I remember the night before the opening we were still carpeting the pulpit area. We had bought some second hand brown carpets from a sale at Carpenters. These were used to cover the bare floor. Another family bought the one covering the aisle and someone else bought the baptismal font. This was how the church was first furnished. The chairs we used were single iron and wood chairs which made so much noise when someone sat down or got up. From this humble beginning Yarawa has grown in leaps and bounds to what it is today.

I would just like to briefly touch on the beginning of the weekly Bible study and prayer group which was and is still the backbone of this church. This group started in the private homes of the families, each taking a turn at hosting. I will be forever grateful for the prayers that were uttered for my family members throughout those times, as we all had young children who needed our prayers. Many were the times when a member would bring his/her problem to the meeting for us to pray and fast for, and we all took part in lifting them up to the Lord.

There are so many good memories of family picnics, camps, and especially the closeness of attending a church run on the love of God and the faithfulness of its members. Yarawa is blessed indeed to have come so far in the 30 years of its existence and I know that this is because God is pleased with the humility and faithfulness of its members and I pray that there will always be unity amongst all the different ministries of the church.

I would like to acknowledge all those who have left us - some to be with the Lord and some who have moved on to other places . *WE THANK YOU ALL FOR THE LOVE AND FAITH YOU HAVE LEFT THE MEMBERS OF YARAWA TO CONTINUE TO BUILD ON.*

MAY GOD BLESS YARAWA AND ITS MEMBERS MIGHTILY.

# A MEMOIR OF YARAWA IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

**Dr. Nacanieli Rika**

This memoir is dedicated to my parents: Nacanieli Talai Rika of Makadru, Matuku, Lau; and Dorothy Joan Inglis who was born in Australia and first came to Fiji in 1958.



In 1985, my father was transferred from Lelean Memorial School to the Ministry of Education Headquarters at Marela House in Suva. As a result, our family relocated from Davuilevu in Nausori to our home at Laucala Beach Estate. Our relocation coincided with a decision by the leaders of the Wesley Circuit (at the time, Wesley was a circuit within the Suva Division) to establish a new congregation at Yarawa Road. The Butt Street congregation had expanded beyond the capacity of the church building so families living in Nabua, Raiwasa, Laucala Beach Estate and surrounding areas were encouraged to join the former St. Matthews Congregation at Yarawa Road. Growing up, I had always looked forward to worshipping at Butt Street whenever we visited Suva during the school holidays, so I was extremely disappointed when my mother explained that we would be joining Yarawa. After all, the Yarawa property was small, the church building was old and it seemed far less significant than Butt Street ... at least from the outside and through the eyes of a child. Little did I suspect what the Lord had in store for me at Yarawa!

One of my earliest memories of Yarawa is walking to church with my parents from Laucala Beach during the Sunday Ban in 1987. Taxis were prohibited from operating and our family didn't own a car so we simply walked to church. The first church minister at Yarawa was Rev. Fesaitu Marseu (Uncle Itu) and there was a yellow electric kettle that we used for preparing tea and coffee. I remember sitting on the church porch having tea with Uncle Itu and Aunty Emily, perhaps after some meeting, watching the traffic on Yarawa Road before they drove me home in their red car.

My first Sunday School teacher at Yarawa was Mr. Akuila Sovatabua and the other members of our Senior Class included Rusiate Nayacakalou (known as 'Junior') and David Heffernan. Our classes were held outside the church on a grassy patch between the front door and the pedestrian gate (the concreting of the forecourt happened much later). At Youth, our leader was Sue Panapasa. I remember one Friday evening we had a hat night during Youth. Amele Tabuya (later Tarakinikini) won the prize wearing her crown as the reigning Hibiscus Charity Queen ... well, who could compete with that? On some Sunday afternoons we would visit the Tamavua Rehabilitation Centre to sing, pray, share and meet with the patients.

My father was a lay preacher at Yarawa and my mother played the keyboard during church services. I remember one Sunday morning my father preached on true religion, based on James Chapter 1.

> *What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world (James 1:27 Good News)*

After the service I recall Cema Bolabola discussing the text with my father and whether it could be interpreted more generally to mean caring for vulnerable groups in society. At the time, I wasn't familiar with the concept of social justice, but now I can see more clearly where Cema may have been coming from. On other days, I had to hold the music sheet while my mother played the keyboard during church service because the book holder on the keyboard had gone missing.

In 1990, I was teaching Sunday School at Yarawa and Emmaline Mavoa was the Sunday School Superintendent. As I recall, the other teachers



included Kitty O'Connor, Fanny Simpson, Laisa Baravilala, Harieta Fonmoa, Katea Sovatabua and Tuwaci Rasolo. One of our favourite choruses was 'The Steps of a Good Man:'

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*

*And He delighteth in his way*

*Though he fall, though he fall he shall not be cast down*

*For the Lord upholdeth him with His hand*

*With His hand, with His hand, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand*

*Though he fall, though he fall, he shall not be cast down*

*For the lord upholdeth him with His hand*

One Saturday we had our final rehearsal for Children's Sunday. During the practice my mother telephoned and I took the call in the old office at the front of the church (that was way before the era of mobile phones). She told me that my father had suffered a fall and was very unwell. It was only when she picked me up about 20 minutes later that I found out he had already passed away at home. When we got to the CWM Hospital, Emmaline, Tuwaci and some of the other teachers were there to comfort my mother. The Yarawa Choir had been practising an anthem 'His Grace is Sufficient for Me', which they sang at my father's funeral service. The service was held at the Centenary Church because Yarawa was far too small.

As I reflect, I am grateful to my parents for bringing me to Yarawa ... a place I would never have chosen myself and one I initially resisted. Yet, by the time my parents passed away I had a loving church family and was firmly established in the congregation as a Sunday School teacher, Bible reader, steward and later a Youth leader. After Mr. Viliame Gonelevu became Vakatawa, he asked me to be the Church Treasurer while we were preparing for the first renovations of the church building. Mr. John Rosa would do the banking and Mariana Tukana handled payments. If I remember correctly, the first extension involved a new wing leftwards towards the Bola's residence and a balcony on the right (which was later enclosed to make the current office). We also put in a new kitchen ... one part of the church that carries so many happy memories!

I have many wonderful memories of Youth at Yarawa, including great friends who served alongside me as leaders. They include Aisake (Zack) Raikabula, a gifted orator and dancer. In the early 1990s, we





had a blue land cruiser known as the 'War Bus' that could easily transport 15 young people for picnics, rallies, outreach and road trips to the West. Livai Serevi was learning to drive, so we would sometimes have driving practice at the Bindhi Sub-division in Vatuwaqa. Apart from Livai and Junior Nayacakalou, we also had several other bank officers including Freddy Dumaru, Apenisa Rayawa (Qei Ateca's son) and Jonati Mavoa. One of our favourite pastimes after Sunday evening services was to visit Aren and Laisa Baoa for tea and to watch television. The Yarawa Youth was closely connected to the Fiji School of Medicine Student Fellowship through Zack and Apenisa Lewatoro, who later helped to establish the Valelevu (now Nasinu Wesley) Youth.

Around 1997, we held a Youth concert at the Suva Civic Centre. I remember buying our blue T-shirts in Los Angeles with Emma Mudreilagi, who was then flying with Air Pacific. In the lead-up to the concert, I was interceding with my co-leader Seria Vinakadina (Gee) and the Lord led us to John Chapter 1 where Jesus was calling His disciples. When Philip told Nathanael he had found the Messiah, Nathanael skeptically asked "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" In relation to the imminent concert, we felt God was saying that even though Yarawa was small and seemed insignificant, He would use us to achieve something significant for His kingdom.

Indeed, Yarawa Youth has been consigned on several missionaries. This includes Jerry Bosevanua, Alisi Gonelevu and later Kasanita Onelala and Tony Lanyon. Vive Cerewale (Caph), Seria Vinakadina (Gee) and Teresia Rokodovu (Tress) had already served as missionaries before joining Yarawa. Our Youths have gone on to serve in various spheres of influence including: tourism and hospitality (Caroline Vosanibola, Veijinia Kacisolomone, Kelera Lesianawai, Kereni Finau, Hudson Mitchell, Sorovi Tamani); journalism and the media (Ateca Toganivalu, Foto Ledua, Maciu Bolaitamana); graphics and design (Siteri Kovetabua, Josua Toganivalu, Oscar Rosa), military and security (Epeli Rabuka, Josua Biukoto, Julian Toganivalu, Sitiveni Pareti), engineering and construction (Epeli Koroi, Tevita Finau), business and finance (Liliana Pareti, Veti Wara, Olivia Kacisolomone) and medicine (Apolosi Vosanibola).

I thank God for the opportunity and privilege of belonging to this Yarawa family where I feel loved and which I can call home. I thank everyone at Yarawa who has welcomed, led, supported, encouraged, taught and loved me over the years. I thank my parents whose decision to join Yarawa made this all possible. ■

## Apenisa Lewatoro

# COME, SEE, EAT



'Come and see' is basically an invitation. It doesn't take much effort to utter these words in drawing somebody to something exciting or important. In my experience, it's a non-threatening approach. And this was exactly how I first joined Yarawa Wesley Church twenty four years ago (1991) after a young fourth former at Cathedral Secondary School invited me to a Friday Youth programme with the words, 'Come and see!'

The invitation by my Mataqali Joe from Gau, who was later baptized with the name "Master-mover" by the late Rusiate Nayacakalou and Youth President back then, Dr Nacanieli Rika, remains an unforgettable event. Master-mover's words, as I recall, were not only "Come and see", but "Come and see and eat!" because the youths served free BBQ that evening. This was the beginning of the many great experiences and opportunities of growth in my life, spiritually and socially, as a young person.

Now as Yarawa Wesley Church celebrates its 30th Anniversary this year, I praise God for the Church and Youth Fellowship, especially the leaders back then in the 90s until today for their continuous support and encouragement in my life. I still have fond memories of great programmes and good relationships fostered within the church members, some of whom have gone to be with the LORD. And quite importantly, Yarawa had helped me re-establish my Methodist roots since I was just moving from a church fellowship to another before joining the church. Even though I was deeply involved in Student Ministry (Scripture Union and Pacific Students for Christ) that particular year, I believe it was the church support and prayers (church cover) that kept me going even after moving to Labasa the following year due to work commitments.

Once again, thank you Yarawa Wesley Church and may the LORD continually bless and keep you through and through. ■



Rev. Sione Veituna

# Our Eperience with Yarawa



In July 2009, the Conference of the Methodist Church in Tonga seconded my family and I to Fiji to direct the ministry of the Ambassadors for Christ International for the Pacific Island Nations (AFCI). This partnership between the Tongan Methodist Conference and the AFCI was to establish the new headquarters for the work of AFCI among the Pacific Island Nations. There are about 16 Island Nation States under our care and Fiji was chosen to host the new AFCI Pacific Islands office. Much of my time towards the end of 2009 was spent in Atlanta, Fiji and Tonga.

In 2010, my children moved to Fiji, but my wife had to complete her contract with the ANZ Bank in Tonga as the Manager of Prime Banking, before resigning to join us in Fiji in 2011. We chose Yarawa Wesley Church as our place of worship. We immediately fell in love with the people of the Church and decided to make it our home church away from home. I am ordained to the ministry in the Tonga Methodist Conference, so my credentials were recognized by the Fiji Methodist Conference.

My initial engagement at Yarawa was an invitation to preach at the Men's Fellowship followed by another invitation to preach on a Sunday. I have since been a regular speaker on Sundays and other events at the Church. During that time, the lady Minister of the Church, Rev Lily Makutu fell ill and sadly went to be with the Lord. I had been acting as Interim Pastor for the congregation for over ten months before the Fiji Methodist Conference found a replacement in Rev Jone Marika. I preached the sermon at his induction and the District Superintendent, Rev Filipe Tuilawalawa, thought I could remain as supporting pastor for the new pastor. Rev Marika and I have been team mates since and I have invited him into my accountability cell group. That was how we became a part of the Yarawa Church Community.

During my beloved wife, Melelua's untimely passing on 8th February 2014, Yarawa Church community was our source of strength and support. They incarnated to us the care and the love of Jesus. When you are missionaries in a foreign land, death becomes so hard and real, and the loneliness that comes with it is incredibly deep. But this community of faith came to our rescue and embraced us with such love that can only be found in Jesus Christ. The Rev Jone Marika and Vakatawa Waqa Ledua, on behalf of the Church, even accompanied us to Tonga when we took Melelua's body to her final resting place beside her father in Nuku'alofa. The token of love and care shown to my little family by this Church will never be forgotten. We became better Christians, the three of us, my son Zachariah, my daughter Grace and I, because of you, people of Yarawa.

Thank you Yarawa and may we all have a blessed 30th Anniversary. *Me vakakalougatataki keda ko Jiova!*

# *Grandchildren & Grandparents*

*Four little feet running up n down,*
*In my deep sleep I hear a shout ,*
*"It's time to get up" the older one said,*
*Jumping between us the younger one laid.*

*Tehinnah, the older one is in class one.*
*Jehoshua, 5 yrs younger is our grandson.*
*When they are naughty, mummy gives them a smacking.*
*Nanna gets angry, their side she is taking.*

*We don't see them often our dear little angels,*
*Only when we are in Suva, which seems like ages.*
*Grandchildren are dearer than parents, yes they are.*
*We wish they were nearer and not too far.*

*We love spending money on these little ones.*
*We never did that with our daughters and son.*
*Grandchildren are different they can twist us a little,*
*With their little fingers and their sweet, sweet dimples.*

*Parents often think grandparents are naughty,*
*Because we spoil their children with sweets and sorties.*
*I used to think like that too some time ago,*
*Little did I know my turn would follow.*

*Grey hair probably makes us think differently,*
*Or God probably ordained grandparents be good company.*
*But our highest achievement in life, we now have gained,*
*Being Grandparents is an Honor attained.*

***Keresi R.Fonmanu*** *2009-06-09 13:26:12*









# PEARL CELEBRATION PROGRAMME
# YARAWA WESLEY CHURCH

**FRIDAY 25TH & SATURDAY 26TH 2015 -BAZAAR, LOWER CIVIC CENTER**

**TIME** : 9:00AM - 3:00PM

**VENUE** : Lower Civic Centre

**SUNDAY 27TH, 2015 – DIVISIONAL COMBINE THANKSGIVING SERVICE**

**TIME** : 10:00AM - 12:00 Noon

**VENUE** : Upper Civic Centre - followed by fellowship cup of tea

**MONDAY 28TH, 2015 – ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

**TIME** : 07.00PM - 10:00PM

**VENUE** : Novotel Entertainment Centre, Lami

**THANKSGIVING PROGRAMME – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2015**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **9:15 – 9:45am** | - | Praise & Worship |
| **9:45 – 10:00am** | - | Welcome Congregation |
| **10:00am** | - | President, Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma to be seated |
| | - | Divisional Superintendent Rev. Jeremaia Waqainabete |
| | - | Introit – Sunday school |
| | - | Prayer of Invocation |
| | - | Responsive Reading /Gloria |
| | - | 1st Hymn |
| **10.15am** | - | Prayer Talatala Qase |
| | - | Welcome Chief Guest – Vakatawa Vakacegu Waqa Ledua |
| | - | Unveiling of New Name – Rev. Dr Tevita Banivanua, President, Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma |
| | - | "Selo" Choir |
| | - | Prayer for Dedication - President |
| **10.25am** | - | Soli |
| **10:30am** | - | Presentations |
| | | Wesley City Mission, Yarawa Wesley, Lami Oceania, Nasinu Wesley, Yarawa Senior Members Fellowship, Sunday School. |
| **11.00am** | - | 2nd Hymn |
| | - | Bible Reading |
| | - | 3rd Hymn |
| **11:10am** | - | Sermon - Rev. Dr Tevita Banivanua, President, Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma |
| **11:40am** | - | 4th Hymn |
| **11:50am** | - | Prayer & Benediction |

# EARLY YEARS 2006-2015


































# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## Rev. Jone Marika



I am honoured to deliver the acknowledgment for the celebrations of Yarawa Circuit's 30th Anniversary is a moving, honorable and pleasant task.

The theme of our Pearl Anniversary festivity is "God is Able". Such a theme is befitting in every sense of the word. The church's milestone in growth is our celebration. My family and I have every reason to celebrate too. Being given the opportunity to serve at Yarawa Church and be part of its history has been a privilege for us. On this note I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the congregation for the opportunity to celebrate with you all.

As the church celebrates its anniversary, my family and I are also celebrating my accomplishment in my calling as an ordained full-fledged church minister during the Methodist Church of Fiji Conference in August this year. I must admit that this achievement would not be possible without the support of the Yarawa Wesley Circuit.

In lighting the 30 candles to mark our special day we are also reminded of Jesus' own reference as the "*light of the world*". The symbol of light is significant for this magazine as it continues to shed rays of hope and inspiration that "God is indeed Able". It is also on this note that I wish to commend the contributions of my predecessors who have contributed to what Yarawa is now, a Circuit.

With the guidance of Reverend Fesaitu Marseu from humble beginnings in a small wooden house at 29 Yarawa Road to a Circuit in 2003 under the pastoral leadership of Rev. Emotama Pene. The work continued with the late Rev. Lili Makutu who played a very instrumental role in church planting as it steadily grew and expanded. What was a single church now has become a Circuit consisting of five churches in the North, one in Wainadoi and the latest addition in Nadi.

The number of congregation in the circuit has increased to over 800 members. Whilst increasing in numbers, we are also extending geographically. In addition, four confirmed lay pastors (Vakatawa) have recently received their pastors certificates.

Last but not least, I wish to convey the gratitude of the Open Hand Ministry to everyone who had contributed pictures, stories, in kind - by way of sponsorship, in prayers and technical support towards the production of this magazine. We are grateful for the support and I am also mindful of the need to ask for forgiveness if your stories or pictures are not in the publication, this is due to space constraints. I urge all members of the congregation to accept this souvenir magazine as a true record of our church history, which will remain so for decades to come.





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