



Beacon Media Fiji report June 28th – July 12th 2014

We conducted two seminars for teachers in Suva, on two consecutive Saturdays: one for the teachers who attended last year, (a “Part 2”) and one for new teachers. We could not have done this without the great support of Patrick Bower and his staff from Suva Christian Community School. Patrick and his team have been amazing, particularly in “rounding up” the Christian teachers to attend the seminars. They also organized the venues, morning tea and lunch.

The seminar for new teachers, (the “Part 1”) was a repeat of last years’ seminar on the foundations of Christian education, Biblically integrated curriculum and the character of God as the foundation for character development. There was also teaching on Biblical Creation and Inquiry-based learning. In the afternoon the teachers were practically involved in workshops: God-centred curriculum planning; Science experiments; puppets; exploring the Beacon Media resources.

The topics for the “Part 2” seminar, (for teachers who had attended last year), were: Biblical Christian Worldview; Research skills and Nutrition for the Pacific islands. The afternoon workshops were: Creative classroom displays through visual art; Creative thinking skills; Literacy; making student research assignment cards. Both seminars were well attended with about 75 attendees at each seminar.

Last year I invited Fijian teachers to become “torchbearers” for the Beacon Media vision. As a result, six local teachers helped out with the “Part 1” seminar by conducting the workshops. This year three more torchbearers were added, including one from Western Samoa and one from the Solomon Islands. These two teachers are currently studying in Fiji and will return to their countries at the end of the year.

Apart from conducting seminars, our team spent four days assisting with literacy in the Nasinu Gospel Primary school. Naomi was also able to help in the kindergarten. We also spent a day visiting Genesis kindergarten, the staff of which greatly blessed us not only by their support but also putting on a dinner for us. We intend to work with teachers Miri and Mela in the future.

By visiting the government run schools such as Nasinu Gospel Primary, we have been able to observe the great needs. Class sizes are 40 to 50, and the law does not permit parent or volunteer assistance. Only those with teachers’ qualifications and permission from the ministry of education are allowed into schools. This means that there can not be one-on-one reading help for students. Many students fall behind without individual assistance. Teachers have limited resources, are overworked and overwhelmed, and due to further legal restrictions on fund-raising, their situation is perpetuated.

Patrick arranged an appointment with a representative from the ministry of education in Suva, where I presented some suggestions, such as the introduction of a teachers’ aide course which would qualify classroom assistants. But we did not get

far with one appointment, and this will have to be taken further before there is any glimmer of hope for improving conditions.

On the positive side, we have now reached about 150 teachers, many of whom have a new outlook on what it means to be a Christian teacher. We continue to pray that more teachers will respond to the invitation in the future so that we can slowly but surely influence Fijian educators to be lights to the nation.

