

## Beacon Media Fiji report 2015

In July this year, 2015, a team of four Australian teachers traveled to Suva to conduct Professional Development seminars for teachers.

Over the past 3 years we have been developing new content and now we have 3 different seminars covering different subject matter.

- In Part 1 we present the Foundations in Christian Education. Topics include Biblical Christian Worldview, six-day creation and character development extending from understanding the character of God.
- Part 2 has a focus on literacy and creative learning. Topics include literacy assessment, inquiry-based learning, research skills, creative thinking skills and art
- In Part 3 we explore learning difficulties, identifying gifts and talents, learning styles, mathematics, writing, play-based learning and classroom management.

All seminars give the teachers opportunity to participate in practical activities and give practical solutions to overcoming the lack of resources in schools. Beacon Media provides seminar participants with a CD of free practical resources for classroom use. Teachers can take their CDs to local printing shops and have materials printed for student use. Included in the free resources is a whole compliment of graded student reading materials. Beacon Media has provided 20 laminators to schools so that the printed resources can be laminated and have a longer life-span.

In 2014 Beacon Media, working in conjunction with Suva Christian Community School, approached the Ministry of Education for permission to allow teacher's aides to work in the overcrowded Fijian classrooms. Currently classes may be up to 50 students with one teacher and no assistance. Although the process has been long and drawn out, with a few hiccups along the way, a pilot school is now operating with teacher's aides. We have applied for a grant from Fiji Water towards payment of teacher's aides. If successful this would help to launch the project. But churches need to take on fund raising if the project is to succeed, as funding from Fiji Water would only provide a small percentage of the finances needed.

The Methodist school group has responded enthusiastically to assistance from Beacon Media and the head of the Methodist school group is now working with us. Beacon Media has been asked to rewrite their Scripture program which was written many years ago and is only available in photocopied booklet form. The new Scripture program will be digital and linked with classroom topics. This means that a God-centred topic-based curriculum will be possible in primary schools using the Beacon Media program. The pilot school will commence using the new curriculum in 2016.

Since our July visit we have been very encouraged by the way in which the Beacon Media ministry is growing in Fiji. We now have a group of about eight Fijian "Torchbearers". They recently met together to discuss ways of moving forward. We have also been encouraged by the initiative of teachers from Genesis preschool, who ran their own Beacon Media "Part 1" training for parents and a few other teachers.

We have recently started a Facebook group called “Beacon Media Fiji networking” where Fijian teachers can communicate with each other, ask questions or upload photographs of what they are doing in the classroom.

Our greatest needs are finances, volunteers, prayer. Once the pilot teacher’s aide program has been completed, (end of 2016), the program will be open to all Primary schools in Fiji and there will be a need for many more trainers.

