

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN



Mark and Kim Gardner

Christ's Burning Bushes For The Pacific

January 2024

Clash of the Titans - Christmas and Diwali



On my left, my neighbor's son celebrating Diwali. On the right, kids from our neighborhood just finishing decorating a Christmas tree. Below - a QR link to a short video to see what our neighborhood looks like during Diwali. Those are not Christmas lights folks - those are Hindu Diwali lights.



Fiji is approximately 40% Indian with the largest percentage being Hindus. We've chosen to embed in a neighborhood that has a majority of Hindu households.

The Diwali (Festival of Lights) celebrates the Indian gods: Lakshmi, Ram, and Krishna and is about as important to the Hindus as Christmas is to Christians. It's accompanied by fireworks, lights, and visiting family and friends with sharing of food.

We don't hide or withdraw at these times, but we visit our neighbor's houses and simply converse and love them. Then, after a few weeks when the Christmas season rolls around, we invite them and their children to our house where we set up a Christmas tree and explain who the light of the world is. We'll even set up a big projector and screen in our yard and show a film. This year we showed, "The Little Drummer Boy."

We explain to the kids that when you're young a lot of stuff happens to you that you have no control over, but like the little drummer boy we need to forgive people, and sometimes that's tough to do. What's necessary, like the Little Drummer Boy did, is to come to Jesus, and in His Presence things are made right. In His Presence there is healing.

Nausori Outreach

People's Church Children's Ministry Team from Salem, OR joined us to partner with Pastor Hampton Singh in reaching out to the area of Nausori, on the island of Viti Levu.

Gaining favor, we were able to go into schools and neighborhoods which were highly populated by Indians, and



School Outreach in Nausori with People's Church team share the gospel. We go into these areas and train children's

Outreach to Rabi Island - the Whole Lump

The Little Drummer Boy also made his way over to Rabi Island! Rabi island is one of the Fijian Islands where the displaced Banaban tribe of Micronesia live.

We first heard of the "Banaban Tribe" after Covid lockdown ended and some of the Fijian leaders spoke to us of this neglected people group. People that were Fijians, but were of Micronesian origins.

GT Church of Reading, PA took on a 32 hour travel challenge, taking several airlines trips and a voyage in a small, fiberglass boat to join us on this remote island. They helped us do outreaches to the children and the community, as well as breakout workshops during the day for the

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A Side view of the altar call on Rabi island where GT Church members joined me in praying for these precious people as they sought the Lord. The Front view shows that the Holy Spirit met them - even the children at the altar.



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Last leg of the trip out to Rabi island - loading our luggage on the boat

Outreach to Rabi Continued...

men and women of the villages.

Arriving at Rabi, the humid conditions were pretty rough - sleeping on the floor of the church, limited portable generator electric, no running water, and at one point having to bathe in a creek. However, in these more remote locations we often see great results and Rabi didn't disappoint.

The move of the Holy Spirit at the altar calls was wonderful. In the midst of the wondrous mess I remember two questions that were asked:

1) "What's he doing here? He never comes to church!" This referred to the local drug dealer - he had been standing outside the tent, but now was inside, being prayed over with his dreadlock head in his hands weeping.

2) "Would you go outside and pray for that man with the long hair? He's a backslidden board member." Before I could cross the ten yards to the man he was on the ground wailing. Not just crying, bless his heart, but wailing. God really got a hold of that man. I turned to the deacon who had made the request, "I don't think he needs me to pray for him anymore."

That's really how it went, and that doesn't happen just because of good preaching, or when the worship team are all playing in the same key. Prayer brings that; produces the leaven of the glory of God that leavens the whole lump. The training, outreach, the programs - lump it all together! Thanks for praying for us - for the whole lump!

Sincere Thanks!

In November I wrote an appeal to a half dozen churches, to ask for help with some costs of vehicle repairs and travel. It was above and beyond normal monthly support. I just wanted to take this small space to let you know how sincerely appreciative we are for you and for your kindness and generosity. One of the churches even threw in extra funds and told us to put it towards buying food so we could have a nice Thanksgiving Dinner.

WE REALLY DO THANK GOD FOR EACH ONE OF YOU!

- OUR VISION -

BRING KIDS into an **ENCOUNTER** with the **HOLY SPIRIT**

So they can **KNOW THE GRACE**
of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**,

and

BEING thus **EMPOWERED** can **MINISTER TO OTHERS.**

Nausori Outreach Continued...

ministry leaders to evangelize children, sharing the vision of kids being born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. However, it is so important to then follow that up and demonstrate the truths we are imparting.

We did this and reached over a thousand kids in the various schools we were visiting, as well as share the gospel in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Nausori and Rabi are two very different cultures, and so our outreaches as well as our programs looked very different. Because of our partnership with Pastor Singh in Nausori, and Pastor Kata in Rabi we were able to adjust and be what we needed to be in order to proclaim Christ in that cultural setting.

Once again though, prayer makes all the difference in the world in how effective we are. Thanks for praying for us!



Team Polynesia is growing!

December saw us getting together with the Dorrises, the Rioses, and the Webbs in Auckland for a time of vision casting, strategy planning, and mutual encouragement.

Thank you so much for your financial support that allows us to establish the church in Fiji, as well as to travel to mentor new missionaries!

Prayer Corner

- 1. School of Supernatural Children's Ministry** - it's awesome that this is growing to 30 students now and catching fire - Pray for churches to implement what they're learning so as to see kids filled with the Spirit and winning souls!
- 2. Teen Challenge Fiji** needs \$8000 USD so they can drill a borehole & can have water.
- 3. In February** we need **travel** again in our role as Field Coordinators for Polynesia. Pray for our safety, as well as continued financial provision for this leadership role.

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