



### **Outcome Statement by Church Leaders**

**for International Day of Peace at the conclusion of the WACC Pacific Symposium on Communication Rights for Peace.**

**12-13 September, 2013 – Tanoa Plaza, Suva**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)*

We, servants of God called to lead in Christian Churches in Fiji<sup>i</sup>, having reflected on the imbalance of power structures and a coup-culture in Fiji; and the role of the Church in communicating a just, compassionate and peaceful society; recognise that:

- It is no longer possible for us to pray, preach and do theology with our backs to the suffering of the people;
- This is an opportune time (Kairos moment<sup>ii</sup>) among the Christian Churches in Fiji to move towards working together in our common mission of the proclamation of the gospel and to speak with a common voice on issues that affect the society in which we live and serve;
- Peace as Shalom is living in active anticipation of the fullness of life; understood by us as the gift of God through Christ.
- Peace begins with each person practising equality, simplicity and humility. Peacebuilding continues especially in the midst of intolerance and injustice existing as patron-client politics.

With one voice, we affirm that:

- Our God is a liberating God who hears the cries of the people.<sup>iii</sup>
- The Kingdom of God
  - exists when there is peace, love, justice freedom and respect for human dignity;
  - extends wherever God’s will is done on earth;
  - we are called to participate with God in bringing about God’s Kingdom.

With one voice we proclaim to society:

- The path to democracy must be inclusive and participatory and walked in humility and love.
- True democracy in Fiji includes the transformation of power structures from patron-client to one in which people participate freely and responsibly in the political affairs of our country.
- True democracy in Fiji exists when the culture of silence has been transformed into a culture of dialogue in which all people are empowered to speak up, voice their concerns and express themselves.
- Faith, both in its personal and public expression, can help us move towards democracy.
- In the tradition of the Prophet Micah we call:
  - For the transformation to a society of peace where, “swords are to be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks” (Micah 4:3)
  - For the transformation to a society of respect, compassion and justice where, “Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid” (Micah 4:4).
  - For the transformation to a society of tolerance and inclusiveness and recognition of our diversity where, “all the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.” (Micah 4:5)

With one voice, we say to our communities of faith, the Body of Christ in Fiji:

- We are called to model God’s love in our day to day life.
- We are called to speak truth in love – that separates evil from righteousness.
- We are called to act with trust and faith in God’s liberation.
- We are called to listen to the hurt of God’s people and inspire them to hope.
- We are called to live in holiness, simplicity and humility.
- We are called to strengthen our relationships with each other and build relationships, through dialogue with our neighbours.
- We must commit to working and speaking together in our common mission of contributing to the actualisation of God’s Kingdom and God’s shalom.

We express our appreciation to WACC Pacific, the Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECEA), the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), Fiji Media Watch and FemLINKPacific for their support and collaboration with us in this symposium and we affirm our commitment to work with civil society organisations as we walk towards a truly democratic, peaceful and prosperous Fiji.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2013

Suva, Fiji

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<sup>i</sup> Apostles Gospel Outreach Fiji International, Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Church of God, Church of Latter Day Saints, Fiji Community Churches of Christ, Methodist Church in Fiji, Nazarene Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church

<sup>ii</sup> Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the "right or opportune moment." It is used to define a specific time that exists in between regular time ("Chronos"); a moment of undetermined period of time in which something unique and special happens. The Christian understanding of Kairos is that "this is God's appointed time".

<sup>iii</sup> Isaiah 61:1 / Luke 4: 18,19