

**Annual Report of the Citizens'
Constitutional Forum
2001**



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The Year in Review

2001 again proved to be another year in which CCF faced several major challenges in its fight for human rights, constitutional democracy within the rule of law and the building of a multicultural society in Fiji.

Fiji began the year with the Interim Administration set up in July 2000 still in power. In the middle of March, following the Court of Appeal ruling on the continuing effectiveness of the 1997 Constitution [The Republic of Fiji vs. Chandrika Prasad], the Interim Administration refused to obey the court's ruling that it was an illegal regime and arranged instead for the President to appoint a member of the ousted Parliament as Prime Minister for one day in order to effect a resignation and clear the way to the Presidential appointment of Laisenia Qarase as Caretaker Prime Minister, even though Qarase had never been elected.

Thus was the Interim Administration installed as a Caretaker government. This caretaker government arranged for general elections to be held in August 2001 and used the intervening five months to increase its popularity with ethnic Fijians through pro-Fijian policies and the distribution of \$16 million of so-called Agricultural Assistance. This illegal spending of public funds, amounting to official corruption, has yet to be properly investigated and taken to Court.

The General Elections duly took place in August and were considered fair by two teams of international observers, who, nonetheless, also expressed some reservations. Qarase's *Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua* (SDL) Party won the majority of seats in the House of Representatives and Qarase was subsequently appointed Prime Minister. He selected a Cabinet that included members of the nationalist CAMV party but excluded the Fiji Labour Party. FLP, with 28 seats, was entitled to places in Cabinet under Section 99 – (3), (4), (5) of the 1997 Constitution.

In response, FLP leader, Mahendra Chaudhry, filed an originating summons in the High Court on 15th September 2001 for an order to declare that, under the Constitution, the F.L.P

ought to be represented in the Cabinet. In November 2001, this was referred to the Court of Appeal as a case stated for its Opinion.

In response to calls for a constitutional review from the Nationalists, the Interim Administration also appointed a Constitutional Review Commission, to review the constitution. Qarase insisted on this CRC review continuing its brief even after the Court of Appeal judgement in March 2001 declared the review illegal.

A few events that took place in the year stand out as significant markers in CCF's history. The first was the momentous victory won in the courts on 1st March 2001 when the Court of Appeal, composed of five international judges, gave a landmark judgement that restored the 1997 Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

The second event was the de-registration of CCF by the Registrar of Charitable Trusts for the reason that CCF was deemed to be engaging in "political activities" and therefore had rendered itself ineligible for charitable status. This, coupled with the dismissal of the Executive Director, Akuila Yabaki, from the ministry of the Methodist Church in Fiji within the same week in June, led many people to draw the conclusion that both "church and state" had found the CCF programmes and activities an insidious threat to the institutions of power. From the perspective of CCF, these were simply costs that had to be borne in the wake of the overthrow of Fiji's democratically-elected Parliament by George Speight in May 2000, and the subsequent fight by CCF and allied NGOs, which secured the restoration of the 1997 Constitution in the Chandrika Prasad Case.

While CCF's work in defending constitutionalism, democracy and the rule of law in 2001 drew a punitive response from those in power, it brought recognition and accolades from those working in human rights and the media. CCF was awarded a Pacific Human Rights Award by the Regional Rights Resource Training (RRRT) Programme for its work in 2001, and Rev. Yabaki was named 'Pacific Person of the Year' by *Islands Business* magazine.

Work Undertaken in 2001

1. Meetings with the Commonwealth Envoy, Justice Pius Langa, in Fiji

Following the overthrow of the democratically elected Parliament in May 2000 and the onset of an un-elected interim administration, Fiji was subjected under the CHOGM Harare Declaration, to limited sanctions for having breached principles of good governance and constitutional democracy as the country was being run without an elected Parliament. Justice Langa, an eminent judge from the Republic of South Africa, paid four visits to Fiji during the year and, on each occasion, held separate meetings with a range of government leaders and other stakeholders.

Justice Langa's brief was to encourage the immediate return of Fiji to constitutional democracy and to promote multiethnic reconciliation. CCF met with Justice Langa and his team on the four occasions when the team was in the country and, in between visits, kept the Commonwealth Secretariat abreast of political developments in Fiji. Justice Langa also received comprehensive briefs on the situation in Fiji from CCF.

2. Litigation Work

a) Chandrika Prasad Appeal Case

CCF Programme Director, Jone Dakuvula, helped in facilitating the gathering of information for the Court of Appeal in which Chandrika Prasad was the plaintiff and on 1st March the Court ruled that the Constitution had not been effectively abrogated. According to the ruling, the fact that the Interim Administration under Laisenia Qarase was continuing to operate the normal administrative functions of government, was not proof of popular acceptance of the regime. The passive compliance of the population was not proof of their acquiescence to the government but rather evidence of continuing restrictions on public protest. Five volumes of affidavits filed by NGOs, Churches, Women's Groups, employers organizations and Trade Unions, showed a significant portion of Fiji's population believed the Constitution embodies and protects their ideals and

aspirations. This showed there was widespread belief that the abrogation of the Constitution was not justified. The Court of Appeal therefore ruled that the Constitution had not been effectively abrogated. Parliament had to be recalled by the 7th March 2001.

Parliament was not recalled and on the 14th March the President appointed Qarase as a Caretaker Prime Minister. CCF was aware that a group of Fijian lawyers had advised Qarase not to abide by the Court of Appeal decision but to persevere with a nationalist agenda regardless of what might be the consequences, whether in the form of an outcry from human rights defenders in Fiji or the imposition of sanctions from the Commonwealth and/or the European community. The CCF Secretariat published articles in the Sun in October 2001 exposing and criticizing the Fijian Lawyers concerned.

b) CCF's Court Case Against the President's Action

On 23rd March, 2001 CCF sought a declaration from the High Court that:

- the President acted in a manner inconsistent with the Constitution in not summoning Parliament.
- the dismissal of Prime Minister Chaudhry was also inconsistent with the Constitution and therefore null and void.
- the dissolution of Parliament by the President was also inconsistent with the Constitution and therefore null and void.
- Qarase's Interim Cabinet appointed on 15th March was unconstitutional and therefore null and void.

CCF lawyer, Sir Vijay Singh, argued that a Petition by 46 MPs to the President to recall Parliament and the advice of PM Chaudhry to the President to recall Parliament were in accord with Sections 68(2) and Section 96 – and the President should have acted on these Petitions. The President had no power to refuse.

Justice Michael Scott in his ruling 12th July made the following declarations:

- ♦ the President, when advised by the Prime Minister to summon Parliament, acted

inconsistently with the Constitution when he did not summon Parliament.

- ◆ his interpretation of Section 109(i) of the Constitution was that the President could in exceptional circumstances, dismiss a Prime Minister who still had the confidence of the House of Representatives, if in his own deliberate judgement, there was evidence outside Parliament of lack of support for that Prime Minister.
- ◆ departure from the strict interpretation of the Constitution can be justified in an extreme situation under the doctrine of necessity for the following reasons:
 - since state of emergency laws were still in place.
 - because the Coalition government was then split into 2 factions and was not united as it had been before the last Court of Appeal Judgement in the Chandrika Prasad Case.
 - there was evidence of strong support from both the public and the military for the President's departure from the Constitution.
 - the Court had to take account of a threat of break down of law and order and especially with evidence of splits in the army and police, application of the doctrine of necessity to avert break down of law and order was justified in this case.
- ◆ preparations for a General Election were well under way – and had widespread support in Fiji and internationally.
- ◆ it was not feasible legally and administratively to turn back the clock to pre May 2000.

c) Appeal by CCF

On 5th November CCF filed an Appeal on the grounds that::

- ◆ Judge Scott was wrong in his interpretation of Section 109(i) of the Constitution that the President could dismiss the Prime Minister in his own deliberate judgement. He could only dismiss a Prime Minister if the Prime

Minister had lost a confidence vote in the House of Representatives and therefore he could not look outside Parliament for the evidence of lack of support.

- ◆ the President should not have appointed Prime Minister Qarase as Caretaker Prime Minister because he was not then a member of the House of Representatives.
- ◆ departure from following the strict provisions of the Constitution in this case could not be justified by the doctrine of necessity.

The Appeal cannot reverse history but the main purpose of this Appeal is to correct the Judgement of the High Court because CCF considers it a dangerous precedent for the future if the decision is left as it is.

3. Meeting with Commodore Frank Bainimarama

In anticipation that the Court of Appeal Case might well rule in favour of Chandrika Prasad and the Constitution, CCF Executive Director Rev. Akuila Yabaki and Programme Director Jone Dakuvula together with Ratu Meli Vesikula (CCF volunteer), had visited the Head of the Fiji Military Forces on 28th January, 2001. CCF wanted to ask the Army to uphold the rule of law and, if necessary, to support the convening of Parliament. Frank Bainimarama, who had abrogated the 1997 Constitution in May 2000 at the height of the political crisis, was made aware of the issues and hard pressed to deliver in returning the country to constitutional rule.

The Commander assured CCF that the Army would uphold the rule of law and support a Government of National Unity if the Court of Appeal ruled for the 1997 Constitution. Regrettably, after 1st March 2001, the Army chose to support the President's move not to abide by the Court of Appeal's decision. CCF had however made its intention abundantly clear that it wished Fiji to return sooner rather than later to the framework of the 1997 Constitution. CCF was satisfied that its dialogue with the F.M.F Commander and other Senior Officers contributed in no small measure to the Fiji Military Forces' decision to accept the ruling of the Court that its

purported abrogation of the Constitution was ineffective.

Professor George Williams, in an article in the Oxford University Law Journal, commented that the Chandrika Prasad case was a “landmark in the history of the common law”. It was the first time ever that the leaders of a Coup had voluntarily submitted to the jurisdiction of a Court only months after takeover. “It is the first time a Court decision has restored a Constitution and the democratic system of Government created by it”.

4. Meetings with Ousted Members of Parliament on a Government of National Unity (GNU)

CCF held meetings with ousted MPs from all parties especially from the Fiji Labor Party, the Fijian Association Party, the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT), and Independent MPs exploring the possibility of having a Government of National Unity (G.N.U) in the event of Parliament being effectively restored following the 1st March declaration of the Court of Appeal on the validity of the 1997 Constitution.

At these meetings plans were made to hold conciliation meetings with other political parties whose members were more forthright in their support of the takeover of Parliament in May 2000. The CCF position in favour of G.N.U was taken in June 2000 when the Coalition Government was still held hostage in Parliament. It remains the CCF position today.

5. Grassroots Human Rights Education (GHRE)

CCF continued to hold Workshops for trade union delegates in support of the Fiji Trades Union Congress initiative in the main centers of Fiji in the first three months of 2001. CCF organized workshops on human rights education in several of the 14 Provinces throughout Fiji during which the booklets on the 1997 Constitution, “Your Constitution Your Rights” were distributed in the hundreds to villages along the West Coast of Viti Levu in Nadroga, Ba and Tavua.

A team also traveled by sea and, with the use of a hired vehicle, traveled from Savusavu through to Macuata, Bua and Cakaudrove in Vanua Levu. Tailevu North, Naitasiri and Ra Provinces on Viti Levu and Koro Island were also covered with the distribution of booklets. Volunteers, including several women, helped in running workshops on the island of Taveuni and in settlements on the outskirts of Suva. Themes covered included Indigenous Rights in the context of Fiji as a Multicultural Society, Social Justice and Affirmative Action, the Bill of Rights and other related human rights themes.

The aims were to provide opportunity for interaction with village communities and to listen to and answer questions in relation to the 1997 Constitution. It was also a way of building a network among participants to further human rights advocacy in their respective areas. Educational videos were also shown in places accessible to power generation. These workshops were generally successful and there was a demand for more. The CCF plans to continue this programme and has applied to donors for more funding.

6. NGO Coalition on Human Rights—Fiji

For the third year running the NGO Coalition secretariat was based at CCF with the CCF Executive Director, Rev. Akuila Yabaki, continuing as elected Chair. The membership is made up of 15 member organizations, three of which withdrew their membership during the year for reasons not unrelated to the changing political events and the particularly vigorous position taken by CCF to restore constitutional democracy in Fiji. One NGO based its decision on the fact that their organization would lose a lot in the “existing political environment”; another expressed regret that decisions made on behalf of the Coalition were made despite “the lack of consultation and consensus from members other than CCF”. But together with CCF, several members of the NGO Coalition gave robust support to the Chandrika Prasad case and celebrated its victory when the Court of Appeal ruled on 1st March that the 1997 Constitution remained the supreme law of the land.

In November and December, with funding assistance from DFID, UK, the NGO Coalition on Human Rights screened a series of selected nationally-produced and international films and videos in local cinemas in Suva and Lautoka. The following locally produced films were selected for screening :

- *Na Ma'e Na Ma'e* by Atu Emberson-Bain - a documentary film on labour struggles at the Vatukoula Gold Mine; and
- *Race for Rights* by Larry Thomas – a documentary film on the 2000 coup in Fiji, produced with AusAID funds and CCF backing.

The two objectives of the festival were:

- to increase public awareness and generate discussion on human rights issues.
- to set a precedent in the use of locally produced films and documentaries by Fiji TV, particularly around issues of human rights.

Unfortunately this second objective was not realized. Whereas the two weeks of film screenings achieved some success, the proprietor of a Suva cinema was prevented from actually screening the film *Na Ma'e Na Ma'e*, on labour and human rights issues at Emperor Gold Mines in Vatukoula, by a threat of legal action against the cinema company issued by the mining company.

7. Blues Committee/ Fiji First Movement

From its beginning CCF was involved in the Fiji Blues Campaign for the immediate restoration of democracy. The Fiji Blue Committee is a network of NGOs; Trade Unions and Employer organizations in Fiji. CCF was also a vital participant in its successor, the Fiji First Movement, which carried out a peaceful campaign of non-cooperation and promoted the return to democracy through advertisements in newspapers, on radio and on television. Fiji First also submitted a supporting statement to the Chandrika Prasad case.

8. Correspondence with Government

Throughout 2001, the CCF wrote numerous letters to the President, the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of

Information, and the Caretaker Government on a whole range of issues relating to illegal and/or corrupt conduct, and abuse of power.

9. National Reconciliation

CCF had responded to the Interim Government's attempt to undertake some form of reconciliation across communities in Fiji. The Pre- Election Interim Administration under Laisenia Qarase had revived a Race Relations Committee, which had existed under the People's Coalition Government of Mahendra Chaudhry and renamed it National Reconciliation Taskforce. After barely two meetings the committee was indefinitely disbanded on 5th March. The Court of Appeal of 1st March ruled the continuation of the 1997 Constitution, which also provided the framework for reconciliation. Meanwhile a Ministry of Reconciliation set up by the Interim Administration began a programme of activities designed to bring different groups together, but failed to address the problems of reconciliation in depth.

10. General Elections 2001 Audit

CCF successfully conducted an audit of the 2001 General Elections in Suva on 13th October, that is within two months of the General Elections. Representatives of various political parties, the Elections Office, Government departments, NGOs, youth groups, academics and other members of the public took part as panelists, speakers and as participants in the one day event. The purpose of the Audit was to identify the problems that had emerged in connection with the 2001 Election and to suggest solutions for the future. Unhappiness was expressed by some defeated candidates at what they claimed was undue pressure being put on voters from one particular Fijian dominant party and at the Methodist Church's attempt to direct its members to vote for Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua. A full report has been published.

Suffice to highlight some of the problems in terms of voter understanding and participation:

- lack of voter understanding of the voting process

- voter education is largely confined to the election period only
- some voter educators failed to explain to voters the electoral process in their own languages. The “top-down process” also failed to meet the needs of the people.

Young people between the ages of 18 and 20 are still unable to vote in Fiji. The figures for women voting were lower than in 1999, and a smaller proportion of women candidates were successful in this post-coup general elections, compared with the 1999 general elections.

11. Support for Workshop on "Culture of Peace"

In the national turmoil which followed the 19th of May 2000, other organisations beside CCF such as the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA) took up the enormous challenge of helping to bring sustainable peace to the country. ECREA has embarked on a project, *Towards a Culture of Peace* to create a safe space for people of different faiths to come together and examine through dialogue, practical strategies of resolving conflict in their respective areas. In October 2001 a week-long seminar was organized bringing together 60 people from a wide cross section of society in Fiji together with representatives from the Solomon Islands and PNG. CCF contributed by selection of participants as well as in the funding of the workshop with \$10,000 from its European Union sourced budget.

12. Participation in Meetings/ Overseas Visits

a) Visits by CCF Executive Director to Northern Ireland

The Executive Director, Rev Akuila Yabaki, made two visits to Northern Ireland during the year. In May he was asked to participate in a panel on the Northern Ireland Peace Process held in Belfast and heard about how an NGO Forum with similar interests in conflict resolution was attempting to address the uneasy peace in Northern Ireland following the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. On the panel his own contribution centred on the vision of CCF and the strategy taken by CCF in the resolution of conflict by pressing for the implementation of the

provisions for human rights, independence of the judiciary and constitutional democracy within the framework of the Constitution.

In November Rev. Akuila was back in Northern Ireland this time to help present a Fiji study at the World Council of Churches Study Group on Ethnic Identity and Unity of the Church held at Corrymeela from 26th November to 2nd December. The two member delegation included Sister Theresa Naidu who was nominated by the Fiji Council of Churches. The study was a collective effort by representatives of member churches of the Fiji Council of Churches. Dr Sitiveni Ratuva of the University of the South Pacific and member of CCF Steering Committee had the lead role in the research.

b) World Conference Against Racism

2001 was the International Year of Mobilization Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, aimed at drawing the world's attention to the objective of eliminating all forms of racism. Apart from being at the WCAR Conference in Durban, South Africa in August, the Executive Director attended regional conferences organized for Asia and the Pacific in Tehran in February, 2001, the World Council of Churches' own preparatory conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok in June and also, the same month, the international Preparatory Committee Meeting held at the United Nations in Geneva. CCF also worked in cooperation with the Fiji Human Rights Commission in organizing Fiji's own preparatory meeting for Durban in August.

c) Commonwealth Human Rights Workshop

In October, CCF Programme Director, Jone Dakuvula, presented a substantive paper on the protection of Indigenous Rights in the Fiji Constitution at a Commonwealth Human Rights Workshop. A compilation of the workshop papers has been published by the Commonwealth Human Rights Group.

d) Pacific Theological College

The Executive Director, Rev. Akuila Yabaki, taught as a guest lecturer in Special Ethics at the Pacific Theological College in the third

semester of 2001. The Pacific Theological College is a regional, ecumenical tertiary institution drawing students from mainline churches in Fiji as well as in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tahiti, Micronesia, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia. He introduced courses to help students gain an appreciation of how international conventions on Human Rights are consonant with Biblical teachings on Justice. Students were invited to examine the racism and other forms of intolerance which are inherent in the Constitutions of their respective countries in the Pacific Region.

13 CCF Web-site

With funding support from the British Government, CCF was able to develop its own web-site, www.ccf.org.fj. Launching the web-site in May, British High Commissioner Michael Price highlighted the pivotal role of NGOs, amongst other institutions, in the functioning of good governance and democracy. He said the British government's foreign relations are certainly influenced by the manner in which individual states treat their NGOs and civil society. He said there would be doubts about the ability of states to fulfil their international obligations if they do not facilitate the participation of civil society through NGOs.

The CCF web-site followed the various constitutional cases closely, and all documents, including submissions and judgements, were posted up on the site.

14. De-Registration of CCF

In April, the Registrar of Charitable Trusts gave notice of his intention to de-register CCF and to have it removed from the list of organizations registered under the Charitable Trusts Act Cap 67.

Unfortunately there is no other Act under which a non-governmental organization can be legally registered except the Charitable Trusts Act. The Act is an outdated piece of colonial legislation and its unrefined provisions were known, even at the time of registering CCF, to be unsuitably narrow and inappropriate for most NGOs. The ground cited for CCF's de-registration was that CCF

had transgressed its obligations under the Charitable Trusts Act (Cap 67) by its involvement in what were deemed to be "political activities".

CCF's threatened de-registration was rightly read both as a punitive measure against CCF for its court action (CCF Vs The State) and as a clear warning to other NGOs engaged in similar advocacy in defence of the Constitution and democratic governance and human rights. NGOs did not take it lying down. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement published a strongly worded article in support of CCF in the *Daily Post* on June 5 under the heading 'Deregistering Non-Government Organisations' in which it stated: "... the NGOs will not stand quietly aside and let the State de-register the CCF. The NGOs are already harnessing their considerable intellectual and other resources to fight the good fight. They will do this in solidarity for an NGO which [they regard] as being a principled organisation committed to the restoration of democracy, equality and human rights; because the CCF is the current Secretariat for the NGO Coalition on Human Rights; and because they might be next".

Representations were made in defence of CCF by CCF lawyers as well as by the Fiji Human Rights Commission but these were to no avail. On 21st June 2001, the Registrar of Titles, Mr. S.M.Lochan, wrote to CCF that he was "satisfied" that the activities of CCF in filing affidavits in support of the plaintiff Chandrika Prasad in the Court of Appeal, in being the principal litigant in another Civil Action Case between CCF and the President, and in lobbying for support from the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom and other international organisations and amongst non governmental organizations and civil societies within Fiji, amounted to "political activities" not contemplated under Cap 67 so as to render the objectives of CCF non-charitable in law.

Fiji-based Anglican Bishop of Polynesia, Jabez Bryce, President of the World Council of Churches for Oceania, publicly expressed disappointment at the de-registration of the CCF. In a statement Bishop Bryce said, "The World Council of Churches has always

supported the struggle for peace and justice and, therefore, supports the work of CCF.”

The question of CCF's registration under another legal formality is currently being addressed.

The inadequacy of existing legislation governing NGOs in Fiji and other Pacific countries, as highlighted by the CCF case, became the subject of a substantive review by the University of the South Pacific's Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies (IJALS). At the Charity Law in the Pacific Conference (4-6 October, 2001) at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Mr Chaitanya Lakshman, of IJALS, presented two papers, “The Cotonou Agreement, Civil Societies and Charities in Pacific Member States of ACP” and “Charity Law in Fiji”. The papers reported on the findings of a research project on the legislative and regulatory framework governing the establishment and legal status of the civil society sector in Pacific member states, which had been commissioned by the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC).

Mr Lakshman reported that in the island states, legislation in this regard was generally pre-independence or colonial and remained stagnant while the number of civil society organisations had increased to meet a wider range of needs not covered in the colonial legislation. Organisations engaged in advocacy work were especially vulnerable to charges of being “political” and to consequent de-registration by state actors. In the Fiji case, the charities trust legislation dated back to 1945 and, despite being amended in the 1960s, maintained a limited definition of charities. This legislation does not facilitate the growth of civil society as envisaged by the Cotonou Agreement and is in urgent need of reform. CCF's constitution clearly states among its objectives to educate and promote amongst Fiji citizens, the provisions of the Constitution, human rights and multiculturalism. Its advocacy of constitutionality in recent court cases could have been interpreted as ‘educational’ but the present outdated legislation encourages a narrower outlook.

Mr Lakshman recommended that an independent (from the state) Charity

Commission be established in Fiji and in other Pacific member states of ACP, to register, regulate, monitor, support and protect the public with respect to charities. For Fiji he has recommended that the Registrar of Titles, the current regulator of charities, be relieved of his duties to allow him/her to concentrate on other onerous tasks (eg. Land and Deeds registration).

CCF welcomes these recommendations which, if implemented, would provide the legislative framework and institutional structure that would provide an enabling environment for civil society organisations.

By strange coincidence, at almost the same time as the CCF de-registration occurred, the Executive Director of CCF, Rev Akuila Yabaki, an ordained minister of the Methodist Church in Fiji for 30 years, received a letter notifying him of his dismissal from the Methodist ministry. The Methodist Church Standing Committee had made the decision on 29th June.

The Methodist Church decision was entirely political. Its leadership openly supported the 2000 coup and was strongly averse to the sustained opposition mounted by the CCF under Rev. Yabaki's leadership. Rev. Yabaki has a long history of working on issues of human rights in Fiji and the Pacific, and, for the nine years he spent in ministry as Asia Pacific Secretary for the Methodist Church in Britain, in the wider Asia/Pacific region. This has been a feature of his ministry for more than 30 years.

There is an urgent need to strengthen the prophetic role of the Church in the face of the many injustices and illegalities perpetrated since May 2000. But anyone who takes a stand against the established norms of “Lotu” and “Vanua” must be ready to pay the price.

15. CCF and Rev Yabaki Awarded Recognition

The CCF was pleased to receive public recognition for its work in 2001, by being awarded by the Regional Rights Resource Training (RRRT) Programme, a Pacific Human Rights Award 2001 (Fiji Category). The citation in the award to CCF read: 'for its outstanding commitment and contribution to

Human Rights in Fiji by demonstrating an extraordinary and exemplary initiative in upholding constitutionalism and advancing human rights for all".

In December 2001, CCF's Executive Director, Rev Akuila Yabaki, was also publicly recognised by being named 'Pacific Person of the Year' by the regional news magazine Islands Business. The front page story in the December issue of IB highlighted the work undertaken by CCF under Rev. Yabaki's courageous leadership.

Rev Yabaki was also recognised by well-known local artist and CCF Secretariat member, Jane Ricketts, who included in her exhibition on 'Two Faces of Fiji' in October, a portrait titled: Rev. Akuila Yabaki: A Prophet Honored Except in His Own Country; Luke 4:24".

16. Visitors to CCF 2001

- Rae Julian, Coordinator of Canada Fund
- Charles Silver, Deputy Director, Public Diplomacy, East Asia & Pacific, United States Government, Washington.
- Dr Andrea Mann, Asia Pacific Secretary, Anglican Church of Canada
- Kirsty Smith, Methodist Relief & Development Fund, London
- John Henessey, Political Affairs, United States Embassy, Suva
- Andy Carl, Conciliation Resources, London
- James Thompson, National Council of Churches, Australia
- Rev Maren von der Heyde, East Asia and Pacific Desk, Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW), Germany
- Christine Elliott Hall, Asia Pacific Secretary, World Church Office, Methodist Church in Britain
- Roger Ball, New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner, Suva

17. CCF Financial Statement 2001

The audited financial report for the year January to December 2001 (attached) forms the second part of this report.