

REFORMER

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Officers of the Fiji Corrections Service at the first quarter parade in Naboro.
Inset: Commissioner of Corrections Commander Francis Kean.

Bridging the divide

"WE'RE in the business of saving lives."

His words rang loud and clear as the Commissioner of the Fiji Corrections Service, Commander Francis Kean, addressed officers and civilian staff of the FCS at the first quarter parade in Naboro.

Acknowledging their efforts and hard work, Commander Kean also reminded the men and women to maintain focus on rehabilitating offenders under their charge.

"There's a lot of challenges on our shoulders to ensure that at the end of the day when we finish the work of rehabilitating those that are under our care, they go back

into society to become better citizens of our communities, our families and most importantly, Fiji," he said.

Quoting Philippians 2:2 from the Bible, the Commissioner urged the men and women of the FCS to work together, be likeminded, have the same love and be in one accord.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem each other better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest but the interest of others. It talks about being likeminded, one mind, one accord, veilomani, no self-

ish ambition, heaps of humility and above all, trusting each other and being united. Trust because this journey must be based on trust. Trust is the glue that keeps the organisation together."

Commander Kean further implored the officers and civilian staff to pay attention to the small things, possess a can-do attitude and have passion for the job.

"I demand that we stay united in this journey. Why? Because being united, this is where God commands His blessing: united we stand, divided we fall."

More than 200 FCS staff members were present at the parade.

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Padre's Message



**Reverend
Josefa
Tikonatabua,
FCS Chaplain**

BIBLICAL reflection on prison is uniformly negative.

According to the Bible, prisons are usually part of a larger apparatus of injustice and oppression, an extension of the spirit of death.

Christian scholar Mark Olson observed: "Scripture records some of the worst crimes and most heinous violence the world has ever known. But nowhere in scripture do we find a divine endorsement of prisons. Never, ever, in any part of the Bible are prisons part of God's way. Always they are used to oppress. Always they are an affront to the divine. There are no good prisons. None."

The flip side of this negative evaluation of prison is a repeated emphasis on God as a God who wants to set the captive free and break the chains of bondage.

In the Old Testament, freedom typically means freedom from external constraint (from pover-

ty, debt, slavery, oppression, and military oppression).

In the New Testament, freedom more often refers to an interior moral and spiritual freedom which the Christian gospel brings, a freedom from demons and despair, from sin and selfishness, from guilt and greed.

The full experience of God's freedom must embrace both external and internal dimensions.

What this means in practice is that those behind bars can still experience genuine moral and spiritual liberation even while they remain externally unfree.

This is the powerful truth that lies at the heart of the ministry of Prison Fellowship.

Christ makes a connection between caring for prisoners now and the outcome of final judgement: "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me

food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

What Jesus was telling his disciples is, if you want to meet God face to face, the nearest you are going to come to it is to look into the faces of your brothers and sisters – especially those who have been declared unrighteous, unclean and unacceptable.

It is not that we find God there; it is that God finds us there. There where we expect to meet monsters, we meet God instead. The opportunity to serve God lies among the prisoners who have been reckoned to be least deserving of any service at all.

People often defend prisons as a means by which offenders can "pay their debt to society". But the metaphor fails. Not only does society foot the bill for imprisonment but ex-prisoners are never really discharged of their debt. They bear a seemingly ineradicable stigma of having been inside.

What former prisoners need most is a community of people who truly understand both the grace and the discipline of forgiveness, a community that loves its "enemies" and welcomes strangers; a community that breaks down the dividing walls of hostility and preaches "peace to those who were far off".

This is what Christ did, and this is what those who bear His name should also do.

Editor's Note



**Samantha
Rina**

BEHIND the walls, gates and bars is the 'inside'.

Beyond the perception of a steely, grey and cold world, the inside has often been credited as a turning point for most of its occupants, here at home and across the world.

The inside, as we know it, is certainly not a 'top destination' on a travel wish-list. Rightly so and that's how it should stay, Lord forbid we should find ourselves on the wrong side of the law.

But what happens if we do or a loved one does?

A spur of the moment decision or a pre-meditated one, the old adage comes to mind: do the crime, do the time or don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

Too many times though, attention has leaned heavily on the life of routine that is the norm on the inside.

It is imperative, therefore, to highlight that beyond the negative perception commonly associated with life behind bars, a lot of hard work goes into reforming inmates – more than some of us care to know, learn about or appreciate.

There is more to the FCS than simply "keeping watch" over the inmate and ensuring they serve their time before being released.

The reality of the job is to restore what has been lost, helping the lost find their way and reaching out to the soul in a bid

to understand why they did what they did and most importantly, heal.

The first step, as psychologist Elenani Vuru puts it, is to help the inmate realise and accept their mistake - without force or coercion.

What then follows is the actual rehabilitation - going through a series of programs and training designed to help the inmate develop skills and trade and ultimately, equip them for the life that awaits.

Oftentimes, the real test for the inmate is the life outside, for with an impending release comes an attack of uncertainty and anxiety about society's reaction to the homecoming.

Which brings us to the question: what can you and I do to ease that transition?

Are we willing to forgive, move on and help them up? Are we ready to let go of the stigma and give them that much-needed second chance?

First quarter parade

IN a motivating first quarter parade, officers of the Fiji Corrections Service were reminded to value the contribution of every staff member, regardless of rank or designation.

At his inaugural parade, the newly-appointed commissioner, Commander Francis Kean, drove home three key messages: the strategic private concept, leadership and an honest day's work.

He called on the FCS to unite, work together, focus on getting the basics right and above all, consider themselves as rehabilitation officers for the people in their care.

The commissioner was accorded a traditional welcome ceremony after the parade.



TOP: Officers during the first quarter parade for 2016 at the Naboro drill square.



LEFT: FCS Commissioner Commander Francis Kean addresses the officers during the parade.



LEFT: Commander Kean shakes hands with the officers after the parade.

RIGHT: Commander Kean is garlanded by COC Reijeli Lagilagi during the welcome ceremony.

BOTTOM LEFT: A traditional kava ceremony is observed during the welcome ceremony.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Commander Kean shares a light moment with senior officers.





Inmates and officers clearing out debris at the Nabouwalu Government Station.



Inmates clear branches of a fallen tree at Nasautoka.



Cleaning up at Ratu Kadavulevu School.



Removing planks, corrugated tin sheets and fallen trees in the QVS compound.

Rebuilding Fiji



Commissioner Corrections Commander Francis Kean thanks inmates for their help.



An officer and inmates clearing debris at QVS.

Unsung heroes extend

HELPLESSNESS and despair settled heavily over the atmosphere.

Overnight, more than 40 lives were lost, homes were blown to pieces, crops and vegetation destroyed, debris strewn everywhere and trauma crippled survivors who struggled to come to grips with the loss of loved ones.

But amid the devastation and pain inflicted by TC Winston, hope came alive through unforgettable acts of kindness.

Among those extending kind deeds were inmates responding to a call of

duty to serve the nation.

Aligning itself with the Prime Minister's intent, the Fiji Corrections Service wasted no time in assigning teams of officers and inmates to various parts of the country to assist in rebuilding Fiji.

Semi Rainima was among inmates deployed to clean up around Vanua Levu.

"We are very grateful for the opportunity to help in cleaning up. For many of us called to help in this exercise, we're very happy and it has brought so much change to our lives.

"For some of us, it means a new lease

after the storm



Clean up progresses at QVS which was the most affected school on the Tailevu Coast.



Inmates from the Western corrections facilities cleaning up in Ba Town.

a helping hand

of life, we know that it is also a step towards rehabilitation and helping us develop a better attitude and preparing us for life outside prison walls," he said.

St Vincent College principal Tokasa Wilson was among the thousands of Fijians who expressed a deep gratitude for the help of inmates.

"After the cyclone, I surveyed the school compound. There was significant damage to the infrastructure but more so, there was a lot of debris. Big trees and branches were all over the place. My first thought was: who is go-

ing to help us," recalled Mrs Wilson.

"Then when I saw a truck pull into our compound and I saw officers and inmates getting out, a wave of relief came over me. I knew they were the answer to my prayer."

Mrs Wilson could not hold back tears as she spoke of the effort the inmates had put into cleaning the school.

Although Winston left in its wake havoc and pain, the efforts and involvement of inmates in cleaning schools, villages and communities has brought much relief to the people of Fiji.



COC Kitione Turaganivalu.

Tapping into life

WHEN tanks and taps no longer served their purpose, students and teachers of Ra primary and high schools resorted to a borehole to access a basic need.

For more than a year, the tanks and taps remained waterless but that 'drought' finally ended when a team of officers from the Fiji Corrections Service was deployed to clean the school in the aftermath of TC Winston.

The FCS team was quick to discover the task at hand was a job for the fit and immediately set out to restore water supply to the school.

Corrections Officer Class C Kitione Turaganivalu recalls the great lengths they went to in their effort to restore water supply.

"Getting to the reservoir is like taking a walk from Suva to Valelevu (Nasinu) and its no easy walk - it was uphill and downhill most of the way. When we got to the reservoir, we had to clear the debris first and that too was no easy task because huge trees had fallen on the reservoir," he said.

COC Turaganivalu said they identified six cracks in pipes that carried water from the reservoir to the tanks.

"We fixed all the cracks in the pipes and water finally flowed into the tanks again and the school finally had water flowing through the taps again," he said, relieved and satisfied they were able to go the extra mile.



Officers and inmates saw the branches of a fallen tree at Niusawa Methodist School.



Cleaning up at a village in Ra.



An officer and inmates clearing a compound at Nabouwalu.



A parade in motion at Nabouwalu, Vanua Levu.



Parades and head counts are a norm during the day's activities at Nasautoka.

Inmates on parade at St Vincent College along the Tailevu Coast.



Heeding the call of duty

MORE than 200 inmates and 100 officers of the Fiji Corrections Services were deployed to carry out a massive clean up in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Winston. Priority was given to cleaning schools badly affected by the storm.

Schools supported through the clean up were the Navunisea District School, Dawasamu district schools, Burewai District School, Natovi primary and secondary schools, Tokaimalo District School, Delana Methodist School, Ratu Seru Memorial School, St John's College, Bureta District School, Taviya District School, Tokou District School, Wairiki primary and secondary schools, South Taveuni primary and secondary schools, Vuna District School, Navakawau District School, Salialevu District School, Lavena District School, Ra High School, Nakauvadra High School, Jasper Williams High School, Nukuloa High School, Namosau Mission School, Drauniivi Primary School, Malake Primary School, Vatulaulau Sanatan School, Moto Sanatan School, Navitilevu Primary School, Ratu Kadavulevu School and Queen Victoria School.

Villages that were assisted included Nailega, Nabualau, Delaiyadua, Matainananu, Matawailevu, Qelekuro, Luvunavuaka, Delakado and Driti.

The clean up also extended to public areas such as hospitals, towns and cities.

Quarter events and activities



Combined religious service at the Vodafone Arena in January.



Assistant Commissioner Apimeleki Taukei presents a cheque to retired officer Mitieli Veikoso.



Route march through Suva City in the wee hours.



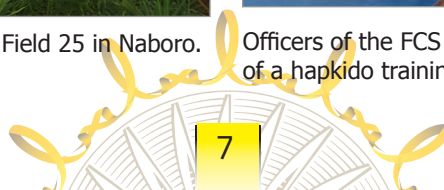
Commissioner Corrections Commander Francis Kean, left, visits the Western Division.



Farm day ... Officers get their hands dirty at Field 25 in Naboro.



Officers of the FCS join RFMF and Police officers at the opening of a hapkido training program.





OHS training for officers at the Enterprise Outlet in Suva.



Senior officers on a tour of Fiji TV as part of the FCS inaugural media workshop.



Officers of the Dog Unit testing anti-riot equipment.



Civic pride ... Officers cleaning up the St Giles Hospital.



Senior officers roundtable on welfare matters.



CLO Malakai Cakau delivers a presentation to executives of the Ministry of Finance. FCS remitted \$100k to government.



Farewelling Commandant Josua Dausiga, far right, and Ananaia-sa Vucago, far left, who travelled to Australia for training.



Works commence on the new remand centre in Natabua.

Stepping up the fight against **CONTRABANDS**

PHONES, chargers, cigarettes, suki and marijuana - these are the contrabands that make it into the remand centre every day.

In the absence of improved technology and equipment and harsher penalties, it is little wonder that parents, grandparents, relatives and mostly friends are emboldened enough to carry these items and more into corrections facilities.

In other cases, parcels of contrabands are thrown over the walls of corrections facilities.

Perhaps what can be considered baffling when it comes to the smuggling of contrabands into these facilities is the risk taken by remand inmates to conceal contrabands in body cavities, specifically the rectum.

FCS Acting Deputy Commissioner Corrections Jo Kulinidilo says this is a major challenge and frequent inspections, scheduled and random, are conducted daily.

Medics have also addressed inmates and warned them about the dangers of concealing contrabands in body cavities.

Mr Kulinidilo said cell sensors were used to detect contrabands smuggled through body cavities.

"If an inmate is searched and no contraband is found on them, a cell sensor is used to detect foreign objects that may be concealed in the body," he explained.

FCS psychologist Elenani Vuru voiced concern about the actions of friends and family who smuggled contrabands into corrections facilities for inmates.

"While the FCS is doing its best to rehabilitate inmates, friends and family members do the opposite by trying to take in drugs and cigarettes for them. What good are you doing them? What kind of love is that?" she questioned.

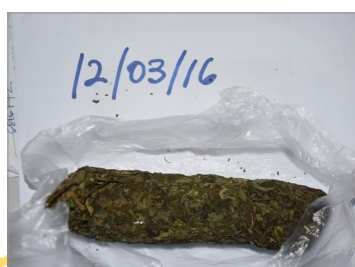
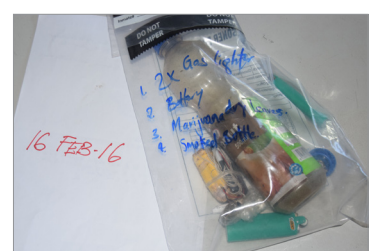
"I would urge all parents, relatives and friends of inmates to support them positively, build them up and help to restore values they've lost along the way instead of encouraging habits that destroy them."

Civilians are reminded that smuggling contrabands to inmates is an offence.

Section 53 of the Prisons and Corrections Act 2006 states: Any person who brings, sells or attempts by any means whatsoever to introduce into a prison, or to give to a prisoner, any prohibited article... commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$2000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months, or to both.



Contrabands are discovered on a daily basis and remain a huge challenge for the Fiji Corrections Service.



Sports



The Wardens team in a match against the Colo-i-Suva team at the Marist 7s tournament at the ANZ Stadium in Suva.



Corrections officer Kitone Taliga escapes a tackle while representing Fiji against South Africa at the Hong Kong 7s.





Historical win

THE Wardens teams' featured heavily at the Marist 7s tournament this year.

While the men's team made it to the semi-final, the women of the Wardens Pearl made a historical breakthrough when they played their hearts out and into the final match of the tournament. Unfortunately, the team lost out to Striders.

Wardens Pearl team manager Maraia Tuilevuka said the team was formed at least two weeks before the tournament.

"Despite the last minute preparation, it's amazing that the girls made it that far and that is a historical feat," she said.

Manager for the mens 7s team, Sakiusa Veiwili, said the team performed well.

"Their games were good, they played well but we need to improve on our selection of players especially at tournaments of that calibre," he said.

For now, the teams are focusing on the Coral Coast 7s set to take place in October.



The journey home



ELENA Lewarerega was ready to go home. Being on good behaviour while serving her term at the Suva Women's Corrections Centre had served its benefit: she was going home sooner than expected.

Lewarerega was released under an early discharge initiative on February 12, 2016 and was required to complete the remainder of her term doing community work at the Vatukoula Police Station in Tavua.

This initiative by the FCS is intended to allow for the gradual reintegration of ex-offenders into their villages or communities.

Officer in Charge of the Women's Correction Centre Ela Ranacika said Lewarerega's father and brothers' received her at their family home in Vatukoula.

"Her mum has passed away and before she was incarcerated, Elena was responsible for looking after her dad. She apologised to her father and her family and sought their forgiveness. It was an emotional time for Elena and her family and we're thankful that they've welcomed her home and that reconciliation has taken place," she said.

It was an emotional comeback for all involved.

Lewarerega served her last day of early discharge last week and has now been fully discharged from the care of the Fiji Corrections Service.

She is one of hundreds of inmates who have gone through this reconciliation effort by the FCS as it tries to bridge the gap between ex-offenders and their families.

Unfortunately, not all families are as accepting or forgiving as was the case with Lewarerega. And it isn't always smooth sailing for the FCS in this regard, however, officers tasked to reconcile inmates and families push on in the hope that a loved one somewhere will be forgiving enough to accept a prodigal son or daughter and nurture them back into a meaningful life.

❑ Left: Elena Lewarerega is reunited with her daughter at Vatukoula.

The light at the end

SITIVENI Dravo enjoyed life on the wild side. The thrill of following friends and the adrenalin rush of getting up to "no good" would appropriately be deemed the core reason for his choices.

Still in his teen years, Dravo found himself behind bars after being involved in a robbery.

As he recalls his yesterdays and the life he leads today, Dravo revealed he is ready to let go of his notorious past.

"This is the second time I've been in for robbery. The first time in 2004 I spent two years inside but I didn't learn anything.

"I was a 'naughty' boy when I was inside. I was known to the officers and my friends for smuggling contrabands into prison. They had this negative image of me and no one believed I could change," he said.

So what finally did the trick for the young man from Tailevu? A spiritual search and an unlikely mentor in then OC Minimum Pita Rokoratu.

"My turning point was when I began searching for God. I wanted to know which god I was worshipping. I was a bad boy but when I felt the change set in, no one knew what was happening to me. No one noticed the change, no one believed in me or trusted me anymore. Except the OC (officer-in-charge)," he said.

After years of soul searching, Dravo said he finally found peace and answers.

"I've had many experiences in this life and the most difficult ones were in prison. My life has changed a lot since I came to the Navuso Technical and Agricultural Institute. I have acquired new skills and I look forward to life after this because I know I'm better equipped to face it."

