

# The miracle of transformation

**Excerpts of a report by Ratu Meli Vesikula at the June international Moral Re-Armament conference at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.**

I was in the thick of things when the races were polarised after the coup of May 1987. I was recruited to reinforce the nationalist Melanesians, the Taukei Movement. We were convinced our land rights were at stake and that the leadership of our country was going out of our hands for evermore. We decided that violence was the only way to win our country back.

I became spokesperson for the Taukei Movement, and was scathing in my attacks on the other race. I fostered the violence which overflowed everywhere I spoke in the parks around Suva. I thought this was the right thing to do. I did not know I was fostering hatred and bitterness and prejudice and causing so much hurt and pain and heartache to the innocent people of Fiji. When the Taukei Movement broke up, I led the extremist group. We blamed everybody except ourselves. Many other things happened - arms were discovered in Sydney bound for Fiji, illegal arms were discovered in Fiji. Some of my friends died - my best friend and co-leader died of gunshot wounds. Speaking at his funeral, I thought to myself, "It could be you next in your grave."

It was at this time the Lord reached me. A minister of the church rang me the very next morning. "I believe that you have the lives of your people and your country at heart, but I want to tell you are going about it the wrong way. I want to help you." I said, "Come straight away." That was the start of a journey and we fasted, we prayed and meditated and we studied God's word, and it helped me to see things differently. My vision and my motives changed.

Then I met Suresh Khatri - an Indo-Fijian, who introduced me to Moral Re-Armament and took me to a conference in Sydney where I met Bernard Narakobi, Minister of Justice for Papua New Guinea. He and friends there helped in my process of change.

Back in Fiji, I believe the Lord Jesus Christ reached out for me - I was alone in my living room and I found myself on my knees praying to God, something I had never done before. I was sobbing and I was weeping bitterly I recognised for the

first time what an evil person I was. What an arrogant, obnoxious person I was, what a violent bad man I was and I saw at the same time, hanging on the cross, the Lord who was without sin, dying for me. That night I confessed all my deeds to the Lord and he is directing me. I learned to listen.

At the MRA conference in Suva last year, God directed me to apologise to the Indian community. I learned an amazing lesson - through this apology and through the forgiveness of Y P Reddy and his friends and through repentance, healing came.

I have seen my wife and children change. I had never said sorry to my wife. I had done something wrong and for the first time I knew I couldn't lie to her anymore. I struggled with it and said, "Darling, I am sorry. I was wrong." She almost broke a pile of plates! "Is that really you?" she said. My vision for Fiji is for one nation, one people - no longer racial divisions, no longer the walls, but bridges. It is likewise my dream for the world.

# Fiji needs

# all its

# peoples:

# Ratu Meli