

the
Pierce Report 
 A Newsletter from Jason and Devan Pierce

Greetings

In this issue...

Greetings 1
Gratitude 2
New Students 3
Nabouwalu Workshop 3
Short Courses 4
BIR Fellowship Meal 4
Study Abroad Program 5
Prayer Requests 5

The last six months have been some of the busiest months of my life! From mid-November through mid-February, our family was in the U.S. reporting on the work. During that time, we traveled over 10,000 miles and visited or contacted nearly 30 different congregations who support our work here in Fiji. We were also able to visit with several friends and many of our relatives. It was such an encouraging time for us. We absolutely love our work here in Fiji, but after nearly two full years here, we were glad for a visit back to the U.S. I can truly say that you filled our cup to overflowing with your generous hospitality, your warm welcomes, your encouraging words, and your enthusiastic support of our work. The spiritual upliftment that we received from you during that time has served as a constant source of strength to see us through some of the personal challenges that our family has faced over the last three months. We are so grateful to each and every one of you for your prayers, encouragement, and support of our family as we continue to labor with the Bible Institute at Raiwaqa here in Fiji.



2 TIMOTHY 2:2

“...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men.”



Our Sincere Gratitude for Your Sympathy

The last three and half months have been some of the most difficult times that our family has faced. In February, just days before Devan and I were scheduled to return to Fiji from our reporting trip, Devan's father, John McCain, fell off a ladder while at work. He broke eight ribs on one side and three on the other side. While doing scans for other possible injuries, the doctors discovered some dark masses on the scans of his brain. It was just three days until our scheduled departure, but we dropped everything to make the seven-hour drive to the hospital in Indianapolis. Even though we were only able to stay a couple of hours before driving back to Tennessee, we are all grateful that we made the trip. Sadly, it was the last opportunity that any of us were able to see him in person. He loved the fact that his daughter was working here, and he wanted the work to continue. Later tests would confirm what we all feared – that the spots were brain cancer. While the doctors were able to remove portions of it from his brain and to do both chemo and radiation treatments, he was never able to fully get his mobility or strength back. On Thursday, May 16, John McCain succumbed to his illness and passed from this life. Unfortunately, Devan was still in transit to Indiana when we received word that he had passed. However, we are grateful that she was able to be there for the funeral and to spend some time helping her mother through the days after his passing. Lord willing, Devan will return to Fiji on Friday, June 7. Please continue to keep Devan and our family in your prayers.

Through his entire sickness, John insisted that we continue with our work here in Fiji. John had visited Fiji with my father in 2006 on mission campaign and fell in love with the Fijian people. When we first spoke to him of our plans to move to Fiji, he was so excited. He had already retired from preaching, so he decided to donate the majority of his personal Bible study library to the school here in Fiji. The tools he used in ministry are now being used to train church leaders in Fiji and throughout the South Pacific. While his sudden passing prevented him from ever being able to come see the school in person, he is still an important part of the Bible Institute at Raiwaqa family.

I cannot begin to find adequate words to tell you how grateful we are to all of you for your support and understanding during this difficult time. Devan and I have both received numerous calls, e-mails, Facebook posts, and text messages from so many of you. We are so thankful for your prayers, your cards, your gifts, and your sympathy during this time of grief. You have given us the strength to carry on through our sorrow. God has truly given Christians a great blessing through His gift of the church. In times like this we see the love of God most clearly through the working of His people. Thank you.



**Pictures from
John McCain's
Mission Trip to
Fiji in 2006.**

SCHOOL NEWS

Our New Student Class

From the moment we landed back in Fiji, we had to hit the ground running! We landed in Suva on Thursday, February 14, and we had our student orientation on Monday, February 18. Classes began the next morning! I was a little bit nervous about how the year would go. We had such a great class last year, that I didn't know if it was possible to equal it. But, I must say that we have another outstanding group of students! In addition to our returning students, we have added five new students to the program, and we have one student who had previously left the program due to family commitments who has returned.



Interestingly, this term we actually have four female students. All of them are the wives of either graduates or current students. Each one has enrolled in the program because she wants to be a better support for her husband in his ministry efforts. So far, all of them have proven to be dedicated students! We are very excited about this current group of students. All of them have shown a thirst for studying to understand God's word and a passion for serving in his kingdom. All of them have also proven themselves to be very active in doing the work of the Lord in the personal lives *before* enrolling in BIR. They just want to equip themselves with the tools necessary to do the work better.

We have already completed the first eight-week term, and our students did an excellent job. During the first term, I taught *English Composition I* (with a focus on how to outline), *Preparation and Delivery of a Sermon*, and *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. Dad (Rocco Pierce) taught the courses *Christian Home* and *Pentateuch*. And, I am pleased to announce that we have added a new member to the BIR teaching staff. Brother Emosi Sailo is a member of our first graduating class. He proved himself to be an outstanding student (the only graduate with a 4.0 GPA), a very capable teacher and leader, and (most importantly) a man of outstanding Christian character. Brother Emosi taught the course *Life of Christ* (focusing on Mark's gospel). In addition to teaching, Brother Emosi is continuing his studies by extension with the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver.

Nabouwalu Workshop

Each term, we have a week set aside that we try to use to conduct some kind of student campaign to give our students practical ministry experience. This term, the majority of our students attended the annual all-Fiji workshop in the village of Nabouwalu (pronounced nom-boo-wah-loo). Nabouwalu is village located on the northern island, Vanua Levu. The majority of the congregations in Fiji were represented at the workshop, and they had one of the largest attendances on record. Several of our students were asked to speak during the workshop. One of the attendees told me, "You can tell the speakers who have trained at the Bible Institute. They are the ones who have outlines with clear main points." We are so thankful for the hard work that our students put into teaching and sharing the gospel. We are excited to see them having a noticeable impact upon the work of the church in the South Pacific. In addition to several of our students speaking, both Dad and Brother Emosi were asked to deliver lessons during the workshop.

Short Courses

I was unable to attend the Nabouwalu workshop, because I was busy getting things prepared for the arrival of our short course instructors. This term, we were blessed to have Brother Andy Dulaney and Brother Gary Hampton from the Siwell Road congregation in Jackson, Mississippi. Brother Andy serves as an elder of the congregation, and Brother Gary serves as the pulpit minister. Andy taught a course on *The New Testament Church*, and Gary taught a course on *First and Second Thessalonians*. Both men did an outstanding job teaching, and the students loved learning from them. By the end of the course, the students were in agreement that Brother Gary gave the hardest exam they had ever taken! But they loved the challenge, and they all spoke about how much they learned in the courses. Not only did Gary teach in our program, but he also taught a course on *Acts of the Apostles* for the Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC) at the Raiwaqa church of Christ each evening. I was able to attend most of the sessions, and he did one of the best jobs I have seen of teaching straight through the text. It was truly a joy to have both of these men with us!



Fellowship Meal

At the end of the first term, we decided to host a potluck fellowship meal for all of the students and staff at the school. We invited all of them to come and bring their families. The school was packed, and we fed over thirty people! It was an absolutely wonderful time of Christian fellowship. One of the goals of our program is to not only train individuals, but to also help build unity among the congregations. It was so good to see students from different countries and congregations all coming together to talk, eat, and laugh together. It was a very special time for all of us to rest from our labors and enjoy the blessing of being a part of God's kingdom.

Study Abroad: Kaleb Cutter

This year also brought another first for BIR. We had our first American student! Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver has recently begun a “study abroad” program for their students at the Denver campus. Kaleb was the first Denver student to take advantage of this program, and he chose the school in Fiji! Kaleb is 19 years old and graduated from the Denver program this month. He spent two months with us. While here, he took *Preparation and Delivery of a Sermon*, *Life of Christ*, and *Christian Home* for credit. He also took one of our short courses, *The New Testament Church* for credit. In addition to these courses, he needed to take a couple of independent studies to be able to graduate on time in Denver. Dad taught him a course on *Revelation*, and I taught him a course on *Hebrews*.

Not only did he participate in classes, but he also took part in the church work. Kaleb joined the students on the trip to Nabouwalu (more will be said about this later) where he was given first-hand experience with truly village life in the South Pacific. He got to experience true local food, scrape the coconut, and sleep on the floor. Kaleb also spent time with the local youth group and the Raiwaqa church of Christ.

Kaleb truly was a blessing to have with us here in Fiji. He was always smiling and full of life. He jumped right into the program and the work here without any hesitation. Not only did he do well with his classes, but he also quickly earned the respect of his fellow students – in spite of the fact that he was so much younger than them. On a personal note, I really appreciate him for the friendship that he showed my sons. They loved having someone their own age to play video games, skateboard, watch movies, and hang out. He is truly missed in our home!



Prayer Requests

Brother Lency Mena is a member of our first graduating class at BIR. He was the first non-Fijian student to join the program. Although he participated in the graduation last November, he still had to complete one more term of classes to receive his certificate. One week before he was scheduled to fly back home to the Solomon Islands, he received word that his father had passed away. Please pray for Brother Lency during his time of grief.

Skylar is the daughter of one of our graduates (Peter Lee) and one of our current students (Moiraa Lee). She is just eight years old, but doctors recently detected that she had a congenital heart defect. Due to an international health program that sent pediatric heart specialists to Fiji, Skylar was able to recently undergo open-heart surgery to repair the hole in her heart. She is currently doing well, but we ask that you pray for her continued recovery.