



president's newsletter

Associated Churches of Christ in N.Z.

July, 1966.

Last May, for just less than three weeks, 20 young men from N.Z. went to an island of coconut palms, warm sunshine, and smiling faces - Fiji. They also visited an island having poor housing, cheap labour, and few welfare benefits. What did they go for? What did they achieve?

In Fiji today many people earn about £4 per week, and from this comes food, clothing, education, rent, and something to be used for the day that unemployment or sickness strikes. For you see, there are no benefits or schemes from which they can obtain help. Because rent is often out of all proportion to the wage; houses are 'built' of tin and boards on land that doesn't belong to that person. Eviction Orders follow and another family becomes homeless. Thus the N.C.C. sponsored a work party to help in a scheme to erect low-cost houses for a rental of one shilling a day, and for those that can't afford this, 'no-cost' houses for 4²d per day. Our job was to erect 6 of these houses, each only 20' x 10' in the time we were in Suva. Not all of these were completed but were a help in the whole scheme which visualizes the completion of 55 such homes.

Life in Fiji is very much tri-racial, the Fijians, Indians, and Europeans tending to live within separate cultures. The housing scheme is also an experiment to see how people of differing races can live together in the one environment, for people from any race or religion can apply.

And was the work camp worthwhile? Could not the money each person had to spend have been better used there instead of going into air fares? The scheme was worthwhile because it showed to many people on the island that Christian young people in N.Z. were interested and concerned about their welfare and were also prepared to do something about it. It also gave the 20 workers an insight into condition that exist and how these can be overcome. These young men on returning to N.Z. have been able to tell others of the need that is prevalent only 3 hours flying time from N.Z.

This briefly then, was what we achieved. On an island that is just awakening politically and economically, where

differing races are beginning to work together better. Avenues of Christian service are open to help these people whose standard of living is not as high as ours.

R.M.H.

The above article was written by the C.Y.M. Vice-President for 1966, Rex Heyworth of Christchurch. Rex is a very interested worker with youth and does all he can to assist youth. He is a Secondary school teacher by occupation; leader of his local youth club; and very active in Ecumenical affairs. No doubt many of you know Rex, or have met him at some camp sometime, so he is really no stranger. He was fortunate in being chosen as the Associated Churches of Christ representative to travel to Fiji for the Work Camp.

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Do you realise that YOU can help people in undeveloped countries to help themselves. It is not as hard as you think. There is a scheme functioning in N.Z. at the moment which is organised by youth to educate youth of New Zealand in doing something positive about the hunger situation of the world. This scheme is called 'Operation 21'. And what is 'Operation 21' doing? First of all let me say that the C.Y.M. CYRIL funds for 1966 are going to 'Operation 21'. The money that they raise they hope to establish 5 family-sized farms in Kerala, South India. The total cost of these farms is £13,000 and 'Operation 21' intends to raise this money through the Youth of N.Z. For each farm the cost is made up as follows: (N.Z. £)

Land of 25 acres	£190
Family house (300 sq. ft.)	185
Cow shed (600 sq. ft.)	230
Well & water connections	380
Reclamation of land, fencing etc.	230
Six cows at approx. £60 each	370
Milk cans and implements	25
Working capital for grassplants	115
General expenses	35

Total per £1,760
farm

