

**HDI Rank** 108<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 8.4% of GDP. **Income/person** \$4,094 (9% of USA).

## Politics

British rule 1874–1970. Post-independence calm, inter-racial balance and relative harmony are consistently disrupted by military coups. In 1987 and 2000, Fijian ethnic interests were at the heart of the coups, in undermining the elected governments with strong Indian elements. The coup in 2006 occurred on the pretext of stopping corruption and endemic racism, but was more likely retribution for the clemency extended to previous coup plotters as well as prevention of ethnic Fijian interests from establishing themselves again. In every case, the coups have been universally condemned by the global community and resulted in expulsion/suspension from the Commonwealth as well as sanctions. Sadly, such actions seem not to prevent further coups, and the ones suffering most from such actions are the poor of all races.

# Fiji

## Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji

### Pacific

## Geography

**Area** 18,274 sq km. Two larger and 110 smaller inhabited islands, both volcanic and coralline.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 854,098	0.62%	47/sq km
2020 887,759	0.31%	49/sq km
2030 918,474	0.29%	50/sq km

**Capital** Suva 176,000. **Urbanites** 53.4%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 31%. **Life expectancy** 68.7 yrs.

## Peoples

**South Asian** 36.7%. Mainly descendants of indentured labour imported by the British between 1879 and 1916; also subsequent Gujarati and Sikh immigrants. Hindi 20.8%; Bihari 2.4%; Gujarati 2.2%; Bengali 2.1%; Tamil 7.4%.

**Fijian** 52.0%. Speaking six related main languages and 30 dialects, Melanesian and Polynesian elements. Includes mixed Euro-Fijians.

**Other** 11.3%. Vanuatan 6.4%; Caucasian 1.4%; Rotuman (on Rotuman Island) 1.2%; Solomons 0.8%; many other immigrants from other Pacific islands; Chinese 0.7%.

**Literacy** 92.9%. **Official language** English; Hindustani and Bau Fijian commonly used. **All languages** 21. **Indigenous languages** 10. **Languages with Scriptures** 4Bi 1por 3w.i.p.

## Economy

One of the Pacific's most well developed economies, based largely on tourism and sugar. Consistent budget and trade deficits mean that Fiji is one of the world's largest per capita recipients of aid. The Indian community dominates nearly all commercial activities but lacks long-term security, with almost all land rights denied them. This has in turn caused significant emigration, a brain-drain the country can ill afford.

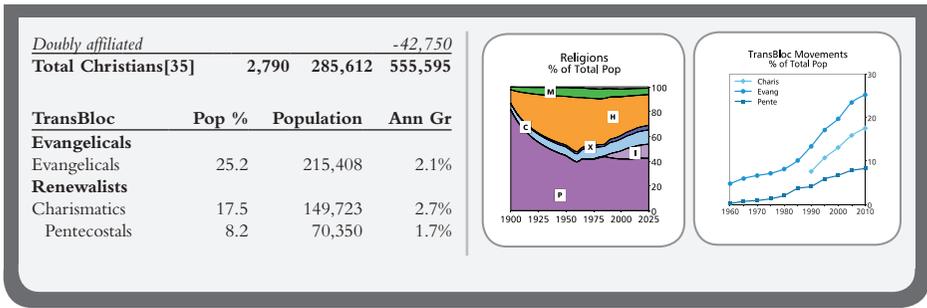
## Religion

Religious freedom exists, but there are accusations that much of the political machinery favours Christianity against minority religions and that it tightly aligns with Methodism in particular.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	65.05	555,591	1.2%
Hindu	27.81	237,525	-0.3%
Muslim	5.70	48,684	-0.4%
Non-religious	0.60	5,125	-2.4%
Sikh	0.53	4,527	0.3%
Baha'i	0.28	2,391	-0.1%
Chinese	0.02	171	0.6%
Jewish	0.01	85	0.6%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	14	45.91	392,000	0.6%
Independent	16	10.59	90,000	3.3%
Anglican	1	0.80	7,000	0.4%
Catholic	1	11.59	99,000	1.6%
Marginal	3	2.83	24,000	2.2%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		-6.67	-57,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Methodist Church	P	1,134	56,703	258,000
Catholic Church	C	47	51,563	99,000
Assemblies of God	P	650	65,000	69,500
Chr Mission Fellowship	I	161	32,222	58,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	250	27,000	41,580
Latter-day Saints(Mormon)	M	55	8,939	16,000
Apostles GOF Int	I	40	8,500	12,500
United Pentecostal Ch	P	67	10,000	10,500
Chr Outreach Centre	I	70	6,294	9,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	37	3,080	7,700
Anglican Church	A	57	4,255	6,850
Other denominations[24]		222	12,056	23,965
<i>Doubly affiliated Pentecostals</i>				-14,250



## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **British colonial greed left a long-term legacy** of rival ethnicities and segregation in Fiji:
  - a) **Indigenous Fijians** have long resented imported Indian indentured labourers, from 1870 onward. At times, Fijians were a minority in their own country. This challenge has resulted in a positive restoring of many traditional Fijian ways, but also a negative protectionist bias in politics and land issues.
  - b) **The Indian communities** work hard to build up what they have and yet feel little security in a nation where they cannot own land and where systemic racism undermines their efforts. Their treatment by the British and then by Fijians discredits the gospel in the eyes of most Indians. Pray for a spirit of repentance and reconciliation and for a society marked by freedom and equality.
- 2 **Fiji's social and political problems are many.** Alcoholism and broken homes are major social ills that need to be addressed nationwide. But greater still is a political issue – there have been four coups in the last two decades; every time the country seems about to turn the corner, another coup disrupts and destabilizes progress. Pray that righteousness and justice might be established and the rule of law and democratically elected governments observed.
- 3 **The Methodist Church has been the de facto state church** in Fiji for 150 years as well as the faith of the majority of ethnic Fijians. It has also been tightly aligned with the nation's political structures – to the detriment of the gospel. Methodism's past failure to adequately condemn the endemic racism and racially motivated coups has prompted splits within the Church. A lack of spiritual vitality has spurred a large-scale exodus to newer denominations. But there has also been change in recent years as issues of renewal and reconciliation have come to the fore. Pray for new life and right priorities for this highly influential denomination.
- 4 **New churches with spiritual dynamism and evangelistic vision** have surged in growth in the last decade; Pentecostal groups are the most notable among these. Also within the Methodist, Anglican and Catholic churches are strong evangelical/charismatic movements. There are many claims of great revival in Fiji, and there is undeniable fruit of God at work in remarkable ways, as individuals, communities and even the environment see transformation. Some specific areas that warrant prayer:
  - a) **Unity.** The Association of Christian Churches of Fiji was formed after the 2000 coup to establish unity and reconciliation. It is composed of mostly evangelical Protestant churches and has a great impact. The more ecumenical Fiji Council of Churches also works toward the same goal. The Evangelical Fellowship of Fiji exists to unite evangelicals.
  - b) **Leadership training** for the many churches. There is a wealth of options as the Methodists, AOG, Baptists, Nazarenes, Catholics and others offer training programmes and degrees. In addition, the interdenominational Pacific Theological College offers degrees up to doctoral level. World Harvest Institute (Christian Mission Fellowship), South Pacific Missionary Training Centre and Fiji College of Theology and Evangelism focus on training for mission and evangelism.
  - c) **Mission vision.** Fiji was once a hotbed of mission-sending throughout the Pacific. This legacy is being revived as **YWAM, WEC** and **CMF** have been prominent in channeling Fijians to mission fields around the world. The Deep Sea Canoe Mission seeks to foster a missions vision. Pray for

existing missions and for a greater future of Fijian missionary investment.

**5 Less-reached peoples.** The Indians of Fiji form the largest non-Christian community in the Pacific. As few as 3% of them claim to be Christian. The greatest challenges for Indian-majority churches are developing (and retaining) mature and experienced leaders and integrating with the rest of the body of Christ. For specific prayer:

- a) **Hindus** remain mostly unevangelized. The number of converts to Christianity is accelerating. **AoG** in particular but also Methodists, Baptists and Pentecostals have seen fruit from this ministry. Multi-racial congregations are springing up among them. **Pioneers** also has church planting ministries committed to reaching Indians. Pray for real disciples and not mere surface converts; pray also for more culturally appropriate outreach to this people. The minority of Indo-Fijians who are Christians are taking initiative in reaching their own people.
- b) **Sikhs and Punjabis** retain more of their culture and language, but there is little specific outreach to them. Many are emigrating to Antipodean or Western countries.
- c) **Gujaratis** in particular have remained unevangelized among all Fiji's South Asian origin peoples. They have largely retained their caste structures. There are only a few believers from among this group, and no specifically focused outreach to them has ever been made.
- d) **The Muslim community** is tightly knit, very resistant to the gospel and increasingly Islamized via Saudi and Pakistani influence. Little is being done to reach them; the few converts to Christ suffer from considerable persecution and from the churches' failure to integrate them. Several Fijian villages have become Muslim. An increasing awareness, regionally and globally, of this people – the Pacific Islands' largest unreached group – has generated a groundswell of attention and prayer; locally, this is translating into encouraging signs of spiritual interest and response from the Muslim community.

**6 Christian help ministries** in Fiji have a Pacific-wide impact. Pray for:

- a) **Christian literature.** The Bible Society of the South Pacific is based in Fiji. Pray for translation work, printing and distribution of God's Word throughout the Pacific. Translation and revision work in Fijian and Fiji Hindi are both needed, since good Christian material is lacking in these two languages. Thank God for progress of the NT in Fijian Hindi. **CLC** has recently opened three Christian bookshops.
- b) **Ministry to young people.** Fiji has serious sociological problems among its youth, yet there is a responsiveness that needs to be met. Pray for those specifically ministering to young people in Fiji and the Pacific – **CEF**, **YFC**, **SU** and **YWAM** among youth, and Pacific Students for Christ (**IFES**) and **CCCI** among students. The University of the Pacific in Fiji has students from every island territory and is strategic for impacting many islands which have much nominal Christianity.
- c) **The more remote communities** are much less reached and resourced by the Church. **YWAM's** Mobile Ministry seeks to reach these communities by ship and by truck, sharing the gospel and providing medical and dental care.
- d) **Media ministry.** Fiji has Christian TV and radio stations run from within the country. Pray that they might be fruitful in reaching and discipling many. Radio programmes and the JESUS film are available in all the major languages of Fiji.