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To help bring home the message, kindly allow me to first share the following, for the purpose of bringing about social equality, it has been said that democracy is the best form of government. I say this because, to me, democracy simply is – where there is a free and equal representation of people to participate in a system of government, often by electing representatives of the people by the majority of the people. Words with similar meaning to the word “good” are: high quality, first class, excellent, decent, respectable, moral, upright, virtuous, noble, worthy, blameless, satisfactory, pleasant, lovely, proficient, accomplished, talented, expert, skilled and trustworthy.

A look at the daily news items both in the local and international arena, clearly tell us that almost every face of our lives reek of corruption: individuals, marriage, family, governments, business practices, sports, education, media, politics, arts and shockingly, even religion. A very simple definition of “corruption” is the gap between this supreme being called Almighty God – His standard in contrast to man’s standard. The difference between God’s standard and man’s standard is corruption. I purposefully include the God whom I worship because He is my standard for “good.”

Let me explain: there is this story in the Holy Bible when Jesus Christ was walking on the road on eday, when a rich young man came running to Him, and kneeling before Jesus, asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life.” Jesus replied and told him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but one, that is, God.” The Greek word for good in this context is the word agathos, meaning good, benefit, well, etc. I was drawn to this story whilst writing this essay. You see, this young man was rich. In verse 22 of the same book and chapter referenced above, the Bible says that “ he had great possessions.” He wanted eternal life, but because he was not willing to do what Jesus told him to do, he cancelled himself out from what he wanted. He wanted an eternity with God, but he was willing to forsake the things that would disqualify him from the very thing he wanted.

History teaches us that many so called “good leaders” were brought to shame and destruction because of their “personal agendas.” These so called “good leaders” were those who were good outwardly but had corrupt hearts. There are many today as well. What many people in the world do not know is that leaders stop leading when they lead to serve in their own interests. It happened many times in the past, and sad to say, with all the latest advancements the world has in hi-technology, internet, supersonics jets, ATM’s, mobile phones, iPhones, etc ..., the practice is still happening today. So good leaders are those who are not good outwardly – having big houses, fancy cars, own a business or properties, having a fat balance in their bank accounts, and the like. Sad to say, many leaders who are in such category think and believe that this qualifies them to leadership. These kind of people are what is best described as “blind guides” who in turn lead the blind, and they fall into the ditch.

But good leaders are those who are good in their hearts as described above – those who are not moved by the riches of this world, those who would not accept bribes against the poor or the innocent, those who do not backbite with their tongues, those who speak the truth in their hearts. Furthermore, good leaders are those who swear to their own heart and do not change. In other words, they are people of their word. Good leaders multiply themselves in others by way of their character and maturity. Because of their character and maturity traits, they influence and impact the lives of other people. Good leaders are driven by adding value to others: they have a leader’s head – they understand people, they have a leader’s heart – they love people, and they have a leader’s hand – they help people.

Good leaders are those who lead to serve. Jesus Christ described this principle very well, he said, “ I did not come to be served, but to serve.” I have gone to great lengths just to describe some qualities – if not all – of a “good leader.” I purposefully did this so that it would open our minds to recognize these

qualities in those who would lead us, and elect them accordingly. It was once said that leaders are born, but time has proven that statement is not true. Rather, leaders are made.

Fiji will be holding democratic elections in 2014 – which is just around the corner. The government of the day is taking the steps that are necessary to ensure that this comes to pass. I sincerely believe that Fiji has good leaders whose qualities are as described herein. Leaders who have the goof of Fiji in their hearts and are willing to pay the sacrifices necessary to help bring about this good, because they understand that everything valuable has a price. They don’t take shortcuts. Why? Because they know that the longest distance between two points is a shortcut. No wonder why Fiji has been struggling all along! Leaders who are bound by race, creed, or colour. But remove barriers and obstacles and reach out to lead the people of Fiji such leaders know their purpose, which in turn has given them their vision.

Leaders who have a buoyant spirit that no matter the circumstances they may face as leaders, they never drown or go “under the circumstances,” but are always above their circumstances. Leaders who are able to interpret well the good times and the seasons hidden in the unseen realm, and apply the appropriate measures in the seen realm to bring the unseen into the seen. Leaders who remain teachable even when at the helm, because they know the moment they stop becoming teachable, they stop leading and they also stop growing. Leaders who do not dwell in their past trophies, but look at achieving future goals. Leaders who admit that they do not know everything, even though they do know some things. Leaders who will never pay the price twice for the same mistake. These are leaders who understand that growth means they will make mistakes, but they take time and the effort to learn from each of them.

Let me make a profound statement here – there is a Fiji in the mind of Fijians, and there is a Fiji in the mind of God! There is a big difference in what we think Fiji should be like as compared to what God thinks of Fiji. I totally believe that good leaders I have described herein can and would be able to tap into the mind of our Maker, understand it, and apply them accordingly.

Given this brief definition of “democracy” and “good”, let us participate in electing good leaders who: are people of integrity and high moral standard, know their God given purpose will motivate them, keep their priorities straight ( not driven by personal agenda), develop their potential, give them power to live in the present and help evaluate their progress, are people of vision who know where to go and how to get there.) This is vitally important because where there is no vision, the people perish. George Washington Carver wrote, “No individual has nay right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it”

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us something very important: Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Friends, this is not only a prayer to be recited over and over again for ceremonial purposes. No! It reveals something that God had initially planned from the very beginning - even before creation, that heaven be manifested on earth. His desire hasn’t changed.

So taking our cue from George Washington Carver and the Lord Jesus Christ, let us all (the voters and the voted) participate in ringing this good to reality. Let us give the wonderful opportunity for such leaders to deliver what they are made of! Not too long ago, there used to be a famous advertisement sung over the radio for Air Pacific. Mind you, there was no television then! The ad sounded like this, “ We are Fiji! We are the way the world should be!” “All things are possible to him who believes.”

God Bless Fiji!

OPEN CATEGORY WINNER 2013