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God's Great Big Global Church

Visit 10 Kids and Their Churches
All Around the World





It seems fitting that just as I
was completing this, my first
book for children, my first
grandchild was born.
Thus I dedicate this book to my
precious grandson Finnegan.
T. C.



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Introduction



I just got home after doing something very special. I got to go on a long journey all across the world. I began in a country called Fiji and then went to many more countries. I took planes and trains and boats and buses all the way around the earth until I had almost returned to the place where I began. In every country I did the same thing: I visited a church. Christians have been going to church—gathering as a community to worship together—for almost 2,000 years, ever since Jesus went back to heaven to be with his Father. Christians love church!

Do you go to church on Sunday mornings? Maybe your mom or dad or a grandparent takes you to a church where you pray and sing and read the Bible and learn about God's love. But have you ever thought about this? Every Sunday morning boys and girls from lots of other countries do the same thing!

Some of them look different from you. Some of them dress in very different clothes. Some of them live in houses that are much bigger or much smaller than your house. Most of them speak a language that you can't understand! But just like you, they wake up on Sunday morning, eat their breakfast, get dressed, and go to church.

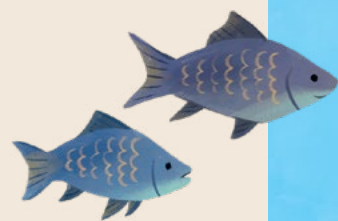
The reason I visited all of these churches is that I wanted to learn. I live in Canada and I know how people here worship God. But I wanted to learn how Christians in other countries worship God. I wanted to learn how they worship in ways that are the same but different—the same because we love the same God, but different because they live in a different part of the world or speak a different language.

I want to introduce you to some boys and girls from around the world and show you how they live and how they worship God. I've imagined their stories, but they're all based on the kinds of children I met in real-life churches I visited on my journey.

We'll begin in Fiji, where the sun rises first. Then we'll travel across the time zones all the way to western Alaska, where Sunday morning happens a whole 22 hours later!

So let's start our journey together—a journey around the world.





Welcome to

Fiji

Viti

Fiji is made up of more than 330 islands—and around one third of them have people living on them. Fiji also has about 500 islets (really tiny islands!).

The national animal is a type of parrot called the collared lory, or “kula.” Its natural habitat is the rainforest—but these days you can find them in cities too!

Fiji has lots of beautiful landscapes, including mountains, rainforests, and beaches, with beautiful sunny weather.

Viti Levu

Suva

FACT FILE

Size: 7,056 square miles
Population: 926,000
Capital City: Suva
Official Languages: English, Fijian, Fiji Hindi, Rotuman
Religions: 70% Christianity; 24% Hinduism; 6% Islam.
This means that for every 1,000 people, 700 say they are Christians.

There are people who love Jesus all over these islands! Let's head to the largest of Fiji's islands, Viti Levu, to meet Litia.

Bula, Litia!*

My name is Litia and I live in a little country in the middle of a great big ocean. I love living here! Lots of other people love it here too, so they come from all over the world to have relaxing vacations. My mom and dad work in one of the hotels here on Fiji's biggest island—Viti Levu.

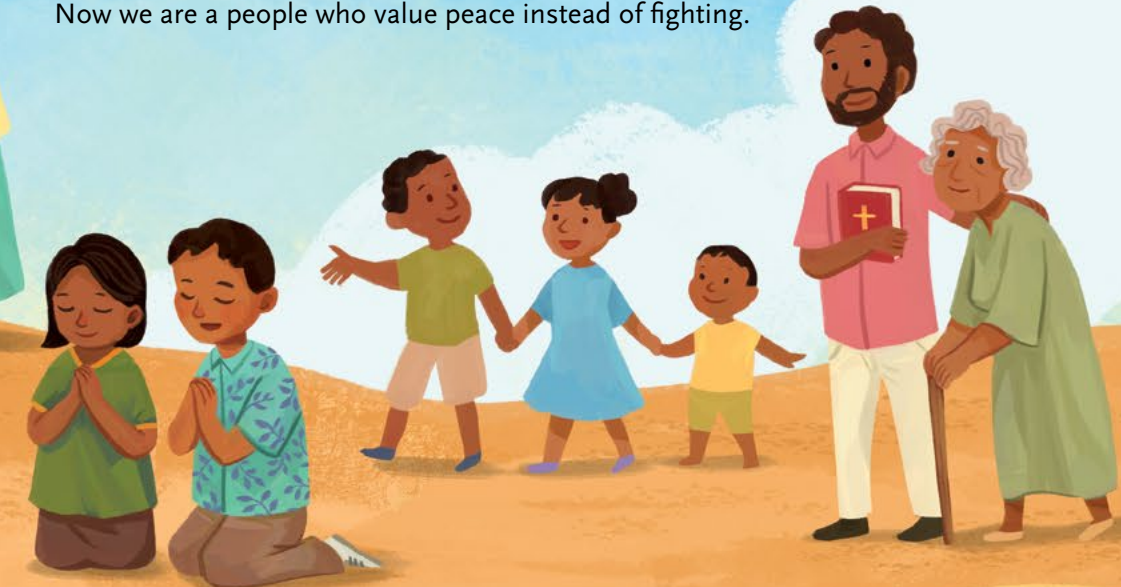
** "Bula" means "hello"—you'll find a local greeting like this in every chapter!*

Sometimes my family tells stories about the old days. In those days Fijians were some of the fiercest warriors in the world. Other people were terrified of them because they were so strong and could fight so bravely. The people of Fiji were proud of how scary they were.

About 200 years ago, some missionaries came to Fiji and began to tell people about Jesus. They loved the people of Fiji and wanted them to know that Jesus loved them too! But my people didn't like that and the fierce warriors killed some of those missionaries.

More missionaries came and told my people that Jesus had come to bring peace to the world. But to bring peace to the world he first needed to bring peace to their hearts. And do you know what? A few people listened to what the missionaries said—and then a few more, and more, until LOTS of people were trusting in Jesus. Soon so many people believed in Jesus that they began to stop making war and stop being so cruel. Now we are a people who value peace instead of fighting.

Everyone in Fiji loves to sing. When you arrive at our airport, you'll probably hear musicians singing to the passengers. When you eat at a restaurant, you'll probably hear musicians singing to the guests. And when you come to my church, you'll definitely hear us singing our praise to God. We love to sing hymns where the men sing one part and the women sing another in beautiful harmony.



My church is near a special college that trains men from Fiji and other islands to be pastors. They come here to learn how to understand the Bible and how to teach it to others. And they all love to sing as much as we do! My favorite Sundays are the Sundays when the students sing special songs for us. All the singers wear sulus, which are kind of like skirts that men here wear.



Every Sunday, I watch as the church celebrates the Lord's Supper, I listen as the pastor preaches a sermon, I speak as we read Bible verses out loud together, and then I sing as we praise God for being so kind to us. I praise God that the good news of Jesus has come all the way to a tiny little country in the middle of a great big ocean.



THE BIBLE SAYS...

Jesus said, "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..." (Luke 6:27)

People in Fiji used to believe it was good to hate their enemies and hurt them. But Jesus says we need to love our enemies and do good to them. He changed the hearts of the Christians in Fiji. He can change our hearts to help us love people too.

TALK ABOUT IT...

- What would you like most about life in Fiji?
- Who does God want you to love? And how can you love those people today?

Welcome to South Korea

Daehan Minguk

FACT FILE
Size: 38,750 square miles
Population: 52 million
Capital City: Seoul
Official Languages: Korean; Korean Sign Language
Religions: 48% no religion; 32% Christianity; 19% Buddhism; 1% others. This means that for every 1,000 people, 320 say they are Christians.

✕ Seoul



Gwangju is thought to be the birthplace of kimchi. This spicy, salty pickled vegetable dish is popular all over Korea. Instead of saying "cheese" when they take a photo, people say "kimchi"!

✕ Gwangju



✕ Jeju

Over 70% of Korea is mountains. The highest one is called Hallasan, on Jeju Island.



There are lots of cool things to see in South Korea's capital, Seoul. But Ha Joon wants to tell us about one of the more unusual places to visit...

