

AUTUMN 2023 | ISSUE 88

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MELANESIA NEWS

DEAR FRIENDS

PRAYER, PEOPLE, GIVING



ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Festival Day & AGM

News from the Religious Orders



FRIENDS

Marie with ACoM Teacher Salome

The friends I had as a child were the boys I grew up with in my village in Cheshire. We were in the same class in the local primary school; we learnt together and we played together. I remember walking to school early to meet up (you could in those days), devising elaborate games for the long lunch break, playing marbles in the street after school outside my best friend's house and then his mum making us fried egg on toast for tea. In the holidays, it was den-making in the woods and football on the Recreation Ground in autumn and winter; cycling miles to local farmers' ponds to fish all day and cricket on the Rectory lawn in summer. We shared a common local physical environment and activities; we played, competed, argued, fought and made up together. We saw each other both succeed and fail - at times, upset and crying; at others, joyful and laughing. We were friends.

We meet up rarely these days. But when we do, the years fall away and the friendship remains.

This partnership we have with Melanesia... are we friends? We don't share a local physical environment and we haven't grown up together- UK and the Solomons could hardly be more different in climate and environment. However, we do share a common history through Selwyn and Patteson, a common faith in Jesus Christ and we have been learning and growing up as disciples together. There is respect, affection and care for one another.

This final hard copy issue of Melanesia News highlights something of the friendship that exists between us. Following the pandemic, our Executive Officer, Katie Drew, has been able to make her first visit in five years - a lot of catching up with individuals and groups. Time spent with staff at ACoM, visiting and staying with each of the four Anglican religious Orders and the Mothers' Union. Lots of work going on - relationships strengthened, friendships made and renewed. The new chapel for the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia is a symbol of true friendship expressed across the oceans.



Katie with His Excellency David Vunagi, the Governor General of the Solomons & his wife Lady Mary



Freda Fataka ACoM's Environment Observatories Officer

Our Care for Creation Officer, Marie Schlenker has been back to visit the places where climate change is being researched and monitored. Seeing and spending time with her colleague Freda who oversees the work in Melanesia, teaching and training new Green Apostles and visiting communities on the frontline of climate change. Marie speaks passionately about the impact of sea level rises, large scale commercial logging and the proliferation of plastic pollution upon the islands. God's creation and people are suffering and, although we are 10,000 miles away, we cannot be aloof from this as we share a common bond and this planet island.

Brian Macdonald-Milne's article charts his time and life in Solomon Islands from 1964-1980. Behind all Brian's activity, lies deep faith and the affection he has for the people with whom he is involved. An affection that continued in service for Melanesia when he returned to UK and does so to this day. Brian is admired and loved for his faithful service and friendship.

Good friends are also able to tell you when they disagree with you and think you are wrong. In this respect, I have been most impressed by the ACoM Bishops' statement following the Church of England's Synod decision on the blessing of same sex unions. The Melanesian bishops express their disagreement clearly yet they do it with both compassion and with a clear commitment to remain in communion with both Canterbury and the Anglican global family. For me, ACoM's desire and commitment, to engage respectfully with all the provinces within the Anglican Communion despite different views, embodies the friendship of Christ: 'You are my friends, if you do what I command you' (John 15:14). ACoM is demonstrating and pioneering a way for the Anglican Communion to hold together despite deep disagreement.

Thank God for good friends.

+Mark Rylands

Chair of MMUK



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & FESTIVAL DAY

MMUK is delighted to be returning to the Diocese of Chester for its 2023 Annual General Meeting and Festival Day on Saturday 16th September.

Please join us at Chester Cathedral as we celebrate 35 years of the link between the Diocese of Chester and the Province of Melanesia, hear news from the region and plans for the future of our fellowship in Christ.



RSVP MMUK

by 1st September
mission@mmuk.net
+44(0)1404 851656

Programme for the day

10:30 Registration & refreshments in Chapter House

11:00 Annual General Meeting in Chapter House

12:00 Eucharist in Quire

13:15 Lunch in Chapter House - sandwich and cake platter with tea or coffee - bookings & dietary requirements to be sent to MMUK by 1st September

14:00 Festival Day in Chapter House

- Chester Melanesia Link
- SSF Logging UN Advocacy - Br Christopher John SSF in conversation with Brs Worrick & Francis SSF
- Care for Creation - Marie Schlenker presenting her initial PhD findings on coastal erosion in Solomon Islands & the role of Environment Observatories
- MMUK News - Katie Drew presenting news from the charity & her regional visit
- Supporters' Q&A & Input - what it means to be an MMUK supporter

Closing Prayers - +Willie Pwaisiho

16:00 Close

MMUK PILGRIMAGE

The Melanesian Mission is looking for pilgrims to walk the Glastonbury Water Way from 24th – 29th September to pray for and raise funds for the Environment Observatories programme in Melanesia.

Many communities in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are struggling to make sense of climate change and plan for the future. MMUK's Environment Observatories programme teaches communities the reasons behind and also the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. Simple equipment enables communities to record changes in rainfall, temperature and on the coast, beach erosion, so they can plan for the future and evidence changes to access additional funds for adaptation projects.

On this 6-day pilgrimage from Bath to Glastonbury we will pray for communities facing climate change and raise funds for the expansion of the Environment Observatories programme across Melanesia. MMUK Trustee Revd Jacky Wise will be leading the pilgrimage, and MMUK staff Katie and Marie will be offering talks on climate change at schools and churches along the route.

More information about the route can be found here

<https://britishpilgrimage.org/portfolio/glastonbury-water-way/>

If you would like to join this pilgrimage for a day or longer, or would like to sponsor Jacky, Katie or Marie, please contact MMUK to register your interest.



**mission@mmuk.net
+44 (0)1404 851656**

MBH BROTHERS REMEMBERED

A new memorial has been unveiled to the seven Melanesian Brotherhood Brothers who were martyred during the civil unrest in Solomon Islands in 2003. The monument, located at Ghorabau village in South Guadalcanal, where the brothers were killed, serves as a reminder of the sacrifice made by these brave men and their unwavering commitment to their faith.

During the height of the civil unrest in 2003, the seven men - Robin Lindsay, Francis Tofi, Tony Sirihi, Ini Patabatu, Alfred Hill, Patteson Gatu, and Nathaniel Sado were brutally murdered by militants while trying to bring peace back to the nation. Their deaths were a tragic loss for the Melanesian Brotherhood and a sobering reminder of the cost of discipleship endured by those who dedicate their lives to serving God and his Church.

In his address at the ceremony, the Archbishop of Melanesia, the Most Reverend Leonard Dawea, spoke of the significance of the monument as a legacy and honour to the seven martyrs. He said: "This monument stands as both a symbol of sacrifice and new life, a new journey, and a new story made by the seven brave Brothers who gave their lives in service to their faith and their community. May it also serve as a reminder to all of us of the faith, hope and love we are called to profess even in the face of great danger.

"The Brothers have long wanted to build this monument, and though it took a while to build, today is the right time to dedicate the monument according to God's own



design. Having erected these symbols, the Brotherhood retains no grievances and grudges against anybody. What we do today supersedes the powers of the past events" he concluded.

The unveiling of the monument was attended by members of the Melanesian Brotherhood, families of the martyred Brothers, Companions, the Diocesan Bishop of Guadalcanal, the Rt Revd Benedict Loe, representatives from the ACoM Provincial Headquarters office in Honiara and members from churches and communities around Ghorabau village.

The Melanesian Brotherhood has a long history of service and sacrifice in Solomon Islands and abroad, and the unveiling of the monument was a fitting tribute to the seven martyrs who gave their lives in service to their faith and their community. Their memory will live on through this monument, reminding us all of the importance of courage, devotion and sacrifice in the face of adversity.

ACoM News

MBH PREPARES FOR GREAT CONFERENCE

The Melanesian Brotherhood is preparing for its Great Conference in October, where it will elect its next leaders. The conference takes place every three years around St Simon and St Jude Day on 28th October, and is attended by the Brotherhood and thousands of Companions. Please do pray for the preparations, those nominated for leadership roles and for the discussions at the conference, as the Community discerns its calling and mission leading up to its 100th anniversary in 2025.



Nominations for leadership:

Solomon Islands Region

- Br Belsaza Maupa
- Br Junior Ini
- Br Pettison Sikua
- Br Barnabas Maru

Papua New Guinea

- Br Suckling
- Br Chris Aigilo
- Br Zebedee Tausabe
- Br James Kodawara

Southern Region

- Br Charles Lolovag
- Br Renold Wobur
- Br Soter Harur
- Br David Enis

Almighty God, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
by obeying you and offering Himself,
has shown us the true way of service.
May the men of the Melanesian Brotherhood serve you
in the way he did,
showing faithful love and being true to you alone,
so that by your power, the work they are called to do
may bear fruit,
and make your loving plan for all come true,
to the glory of your name, through your Son our Lord
Jesus Christ,
who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Kate with her father Bishop Willie and MMUK supporters following her ordination

Ordination of Revd Kate Pwaisiho

Kate was ordained Deacon in the Diocese of Chester on 1st July and will be serving her curacy at St Wilfrid's Grappenhall. Kate arrived in the UK from Solomon Islands in August 1997 with her father Rt Revd Willie Pwaisiho, mother Kate and her two brothers. Kate had the joy and honour of serving in youth ministry for the parishes of St Pancras, Plymouth, Zac's youth project, Bolton, All Saints church, Coventry and most recently, served her ordinal placement at the parish of St Philip & St James, Alderley Edge. It was during her final years of youth ministry that the desire to serve the wider context of ministry began to take root. Please pray for Kate as she begins her ordained ministry.



Kate with her father Bishop Willie & the Bishop of Birkenhead, the Rt Revd Julie Conalty

CSC Extends its Retreat Ministry

The Community of the Sisters of the Church is extending its retreat house at TNK in readiness for ACoM's General Synod in November. If you would like to support this project donations are required to finish and furnish the 20 rooms with lights, twin beds, wardrobes, mosquito nets, shutters and flooring. Contact the charity to make a donation.



TNK Retreat House extension

ACoM Online



ACoM is streaming many of its key services, faith teaching programmes and events online on its Facebook page

www.facebook.com/ACOM2020 and also here www.podcast.acom.org.sb/

St Barnabas Cathedral also streams its Sunday services on Facebook

www.facebook.com/StBarnabasCathedral

SSF & CSC Continue to Stand Up to Logging

The negative impacts of logging on human rights in Solomon Islands remain largely unaddressed, despite promises made by the government at the United Nations. In a new publication, based on focus-groups discussions with over 300 people, Franciscans International provides an overview of the most pressing issues and offers concrete steps forward.

The publication was developed in close collaboration with Dominicans for Justice and Peace, the Society of Saint Francis, the Dominican Network in Solomon Islands, and the Community of the Sisters of the Church (Solomon Islands – Pacific Province). The report and an accompanying video can be found here

www.franciscansinternational.org/blog/solomon-islands-publication-2023



Head Brother Augustine, MMUK Trustee Revd Jacky Wise & Elder Brother Harry

MBH on UK Mission

During Lent and Easter, Head Brother Augustine and Elder Brother Harry from the Melanesian Brotherhood were on mission in the UK visiting the Dioceses of Bath and Wells, Chester and London. The Brothers visited schools and took part in services and Lent Courses. Before returning to Solomon Islands, they reflected on their time at a supporters online event, which you can watch on MMUK's YouTube Channel. MMUK is looking at facilitating more regular missions to the UK with members of the four Anglican Religious Orders. If you would like to host Brothers and Sisters, or help fund these visits, please contact the charity.

The Reverend Br John Carter Blyth, MBH

November 19, 1935 – February 27, 2023

Fr Richard Carter writes – Br John was a very devoted Melanesian Brother until he died. The Lord called to him those he wanted and Br John came to him. He was a true brother, a man of deep humility– he lived with such simplicity to the very end. Br John was buried at Tabalia, the headquarters of the Melanesian Brotherhood.

Here I Stand: Martyrdom

Revd Richard Carter will be giving a lecture on what is the meaning of martyrdom and why martyrs are remembered, drawing on his personal experience of the Melanesian Brotherhood and the seven martyred Brothers. More information can be found here

www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/calendar/here-i-stand-martyrdom-livestream/

SOLOMONS RETURN

In May I made my fifth visit to Melanesia, my fourth as Executive Officer for MMUK. This was one of my shortest visits to the region, just two weeks long, and I remained on the island of Guadalcanal. My last visit was in 2018, and I had many people to reconnect with and projects to visit. My time in Solomon Islands crossed over with the visit of Revd Lydia Cook from the Diocese of Exeter, her first visit to the region, and MMUK's Care for Creation Officer Marie Schlenker.

The charity had also been invited for the first time to attend ORAC (Oceania Regional Anglican Alliance Committee) at their meeting in Honiara, and Marie and I were able to share with the other agencies MMUK's work on climate advocacy and the Environment Observatories. Marie also presented the initial findings of her PhD on Coastal Erosion in the Solomons. It was very useful to see what the other agencies are doing so well in the region, including disaster resilience and response, gender justice & safeguarding, and Reweaving the Ecological Map.

Our discussions from the four days of ORAC meetings led to us giving a presentation to FONO (Primates and General Secretaries from the four Anglican Churches in Oceania - Anglican Church of Australia, the Anglican Church of PNG, the Anglican Church of Melanesia, and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia) who were also meeting in Honiara. Marie and I were given the area of Climate and Environment and made the following recommendations - to create a database of

all agency involved projects in the region, to share best practice and avoid duplication, create a care for creation theological course for pacific theological colleges and the Agents of Change training programme, and adopt a safe church policy, where new churches and church building are only built in protected places and can act as refuge centres. We are waiting to hear what FONO want to take forward, and MMUK looks forward to being part of this networking group going forward.

As always it was a joy to visit and stay with the four Anglican religious orders. Unfortunately I was two weeks early to see the opening of the Melanesian Sisters' (CSM) new chapel. After so many years it is wonderful to know the Sisters have a safe new chapel to worship in and underpin their ministry. Thank you to the UK Associates and supporters who have sent donations for this major project, and to the small group of UK Associates who send £225 each month to the community so that the Novices can eat at lunchtimes.

I was inspired to hear from the Society of St Francis (SSF) and the Sisters of the Church (CSC) about their continued campaign to raise awareness for the human rights implications of unregulated and illegal logging, and the awareness programmes they are running in isolated areas. There is a link to their latest report on P8-9 in this magazine, and we are delighted that SSF will be at our Festival Day in September.

The Mothers' Union's ministry to women, children and families is essential in

Melanesia, where the culture may prevent a woman seeking pastoral support from the parish priest. The MU is rolling out the Positive Parenting Programme to five of its nine dioceses and was training facilitators in Honiara during my visit. Their main challenge is finance for transport costs, to enable facilitators to travel to remote communities to deliver the courses. Even traveling around Honiara is a challenge for them, as they don't have their own transport and have to rely on taxis or make requests to ACoM. I have never met a more passionate group of women, who actively look at funding their own activities through their transit house, literature and sewing apparel sales, but still struggle with transport costs which limit their reach across Melanesia.

I have so much more to share from my trip and look forward to speaking at our Festival Day in September and writing more articles about my return to Solomons Islands.

Katie Drew MMUK *Executive Officer*



Katie, Marie and Lydia with ORAC & FONO members



Bishop Arthur and his staff from the Diocese of Huanuato'o with plans for the new girls' dorm at St Stephens, Pamua, a project supported by MMUK



CSC Novices preparing lunch at TNK

MMUK's Placements Recommence

MMUK is delighted to be organising placements in Melanesia once again for church workers, teachers and volunteers.

If you are considering a visit to Melanesia, please contact the charity for advice and possible financial assistance.



PRAYER DIARY

WEEK 1

Sunday

Pray for the Anglican Church of Melanesia and all the staff at the Provincial Head Office in Honiara. For Dr Abraham Hauriasi, the General Secretary. For the preparations, discussions and decisions to come out of ACoM's General Synod in November.

For the New Zealand Trust Board and its directors, as they support the Anglican Church in Melanesia.

Monday

For the Diocese of Temotu and for Bishop Willie Tungale and all the staff working at the Headquarters at Lata.

For the chaplain to seafarers, the Revd Bobby Chuchuni and his mission to visit, pray and share the Good News.

Tuesday

The Community of the Sisters of Melanesia and their work with women throughout the islands. For Head Sister Annie, Assistant Head Sister Alice and Administrator Flory.

We give thanks for the new chapel at Verana'aso, and for the support the community receives from Associates in Melanesia and the UK.

Wednesday

For the Diocese of Ysabel, Bishop Ellison Quity and the staff at the diocesan headquarters at Jejevo, Buala.

We give thanks for all those who give their companionship, time and financial help to support the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the religious orders and the Mothers' Union.

Thursday

For the Diocese of Vanuatu & New Caledonia, Bishop James Tama and the staff at the diocesan headquarters in Luganville on the island of Santo.

We pray for those suffering from non-communicative diseases in Melanesia and for the awareness programmes to encourage healthy life choices.

Friday

For the Society of St Francis throughout the world, including Melanesia and for their work with the United Nations drawing attention to the human rights implications of unregulated, illegal and unsustainable logging.

For communities affected by climate change and for the work ACoM is undertaking in monitoring weather patterns, coastal erosion, and other environmental changes.

Saturday

The diocese of Malaita, and the Bishop Michael Sau Bebeu and the Assistant of Malaita Bishop Rickson Maomaoru.

For church schools, rural training centres, the theological colleges and John Coleridge Patteson University, staff and pupils.

WEEK 2

Sunday

For the Archbishop, the Most Reverend Leonard Dawea and all his staff in the diocese of Central Melanesia, including the Assistant Bishop Rt Revd Othnielson Gamutu.

For ACoM's Mission Secretary Fr Atkin Zaku and his team at PHQ, and their outreach work in hospitals, Rove Prison, disaster preparedness, women's and youth work.

Monday

For the Diocese of Guadalcanal, and their Bishop the Rt Revd Benedict Loe. We pray for the Provincial Cathedral of St Barnabas, Honiara, and for Dean Very Revd Wilfred Kekea, and all who minister and worship there.

Tuesday

Tuesday For the Community of the Sisters of the Church, and for Revd Sr Veronica, Provincial Sister for Solomon Islands Pacific Region. We give thanks for the Community's mission work with families and children around TNK and their retreat ministry.

For the Christian Care Centre outside Honiara and in Auki on Malaita. For the work on gender-based violence with police and community leaders.

Wednesday

For the Diocese of Central Solomons, Bishop Steven Koete and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Tulagi.

For the shipyard at Taroaniara and all those who travel by sea around Melanesia, including those

who work and go on missions. We pray that a suitable vessel be found to become the next Southern Cross. For the printing press in Honiara.

Thursday

For the Diocese of Banks and Torres and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Sola, as they elect a new Bishop

For the Mothers' Union in the Province, their President Rose and for their work with satellite churches, literacy programmes, couples counselling, the Girls' Friendly Society, savings clubs and the Positive Parenting Programme.

Friday

For the Melanesian Brotherhood in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG, Philippines and Australia as they prepare for their Great Conference in October.

For ACoM schools, their chaplains, teachers and pupils and for school partnerships linking children and teachers in the UK and Melanesia.

Saturday

For the Diocese of Hanuato'o, Bishop Arthur Stanley Abui, and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters.

For closer diocesan links bringing Christians around the world together in Christian unity. For all those called to be missionaries in the past, now and in the future. For those who have given their life in service to God.



ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands is a country undergoing rapid environmental change.

Solomon Islands is a country undergoing rapid environmental change. Four years ago, I first visited the country for my PhD research on climate change and coastal hazards. I spent six weeks in remote villages off the coast of South Malaita and conducted interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory workshops with local people to learn more about the impact of environmental change in their communities. Villagers highlighted the challenges resulting from coastal erosion, flooding, and changing weather patterns for their subsistence lifestyles in the face of climate change.

Particularly, the impact of saltwater intrusion on freshwater availability and gardening was a major concern among

local people. In addition, infrastructure and houses were perceived at risk from gradual coastal erosion and the fear of extreme events, like cyclones and swell events, was ubiquitous. In response to earlier storm events, the villages had already partly or entirely relocated to new locations on the mainland of South Malaita. However, even in the new locations, people were at risk from sea-level rise and coastal hazards.

In May this year, I returned to Solomon Islands and the villages in South Malaita. I was shocked to find that Fanalei Island, one of my case study sites in 2019, was now being flooded every single day.

In 2019, I had witnessed two flooding events over a period of six weeks. Similarly, coastal erosion along the shoreline was advancing, with many trees damaged over the past four years. A trip to the tip of the island

left me completely surrounded by the incoming high tide. Similar signs of coastal erosion and flooding were also apparent on the nearby island of Malau and in New Walande, the relocation site of Walande people. Walande community had even been the recipient of funding for a seawall project in 2022 and the newly constructed seawall had already been breached.



Photo: Breach in the seawall at Walande village, which was constructed in 2022. In the background, you see the remains of the artificial island of Walande, which was the home of Walande people before moving to the nearby mainland of South Malaita in response to several storm events in the early 2000s.

In addition to the increasing risk from coastal hazards, Solomon Islands faces another huge environmental threat: Plastic pollution. It is impossible not to notice the plastic bottles, plastic bags, and pieces of plastic packaging which are framing the sides of roads and settlements, and floating around in streams, rivers, and the ocean. Due to growing populations and greater integration into the cash economy, use of plastic is on the rise in all parts of the country. While plastics are finding more and more applications, lack of waste management and littering pose major challenges for both rural

and urban areas. Plastic waste can block waterways and clog sewers, creating health hazards through the spread of water- and vector-borne diseases. In rural areas, plastic waste is often used to start fires in kitchens, exposing people to toxic emissions and increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which are drivers of climate change. Floating plastic debris supports the distribution of invasive species across the region and micro-plastics have been found to enter the food chain, leading to the accumulation of toxins in animals and humans.



Photo: Plastic pollution in Honiara.

Another environmental issue, often concealed to the eye of visitors, but extremely damaging to the country's ecosystems, is the large-scale commercial logging, which takes place on most larger islands in Solomon Islands. Logging is sparsely regulated and monitored by the government and past logging operations have left environmental devastation behind. Logging does not only deprive the local population of timber as a

valuable resource, but also contributes to soil erosion and increased risk of landslides, as well as pollution of rivers, and negative downstream effects on coral reefs and marine ecosystems. While the signs of logging are difficult to spot on the ground, as logging operations are usually tucked away from major roads and settlements, they become painfully obvious on a plane journey. My plane journey from Guadalcanal to Malaita exposed the wide areas of logged forest, brown rivers carrying increased sediment loads, and large sediment plumes in coastal areas.



Another environmental problem that is rapidly growing in importance is air pollution in the capital, Honiara. The number of cars on the Prince Philip Highway, the main road connecting East and West Honiara, is constantly increasing, resulting in traffic congestion, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and decreasing air quality in the city.

The pace of environmental change in Solomon Islands is unprecedented in the history of the country. The country simultaneously faces global climate change and local environmental degradation due to ongoing development in the country. Both driving

forces are likely to accelerate in the future. Sustainable, long-term solutions to the new challenges need to be found fast. With regards to climate change, wasting more precious time is not an option for Solomon Islands. Fanalei islanders will need to leave their island. Many other places in the country will follow if we do not reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The examples of logging, air and plastic pollution show that it is not just us who need to take action, but also Solomon Islanders themselves. Most islanders currently lack awareness about how their land use decisions and everyday actions cause environmental issues. People are simply not aware of the environmental impact of allowing logging on their ancestral lands, contributing to plastic pollution, or relying on cars for urban transport. MMUK and ACoM plan to address this knowledge gap by providing awareness programmes which educate Solomon Islanders about Creation Care using the existing network of the ACoM Environment Observatory project. The project currently monitors and documents environmental change with the help of local volunteers in Solomon Islands. It is envisaged to increase the focus of the project on promoting Creation Care locally and to work more closely with the religious orders, Mothers' Union, and theological colleges of ACoM to disseminate knowledge about environmental degradation and environmentally-friendly lifestyles across the country.

Marie Schlenker, MMUK Care for Creation Officer

DISAGREEING WELL

ACoM has released a statement following the Church of England's Synod decision on the blessing of same sex unions and the letter that followed by The Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA). Here is a summary of that statement.

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The decision by the General Synod of the Church of England to incorporate prayers for the blessing of same sex unions in her liturgy has attracted global reactions expressed through Public Statements. Amongst the Anglican Provinces and organisations that have issued Public Statements was the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), which commended to the Orthodox provinces and dioceses that are part of her fellowship a number of resolutions for them to consider and deliberate on.

ACoM's Council of Bishops has also deliberated on both the decision by the Synod of the Church of England and the Statement by the GSFA where the Archbishop was quoted as being a signatory. Upon deep considerations, the Council of Bishops state –

1. That based on the biblical and traditional teachings on marriage, we disagree well with the Synod decision of the Church of England in faith and love. Our Foundations of Faith as articulated by Article One of the ACoM constitution declares that the Church accepts the Holy Scriptures as the final rule and standard of faith.

2. That in addition to the biblical and traditional teachings on marriage, we also acknowledge that the recognition of same sex unions is contrary to the spirit of the national laws on marriage of the countries that make up ACoM.

3. That while ACoM will always extend and welcome with the love of God people with all forms of sexual orientation, it does not recognise nor will it bless same sex unions.

4. That although ACoM disagrees well with the decision by the Church of England, we affirm our commitment to remain an integral part of the Body of Christ within the Anglican Communion global family. We believe greater understanding can be reached regarding our diverse positions through meaningful dialogue by being together than apart. We therefore affirm our commitment and support to the four instruments of unity of the Anglican Communion.

ACoM is committed to engaging respectfully with all provinces within the Anglican Communion to promote deeper understanding on issues in which it has a different view to those taken by other provinces or dioceses. We continue to prayerfully reflect on our positions in various issues affecting our communion and allow God's Holy Spirit to shed his light and Truth.

The Anglican Church of Melanesia issues this statement with deep Spirit of love, faith and prayers for the unity of the Anglican Communion.

Rt Revd Leonard Dawea & Council of Bishops



Contact the charity it you would like to read the full statement.



NEW CHAPEL FOR CSM

Pentecost is the feast day of the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia (CSM), and this Pentecost on Sunday 28th May 2023 was an extra special occasion for the entire community, their Associates, supporters, families and friends both in Solomon Islands and abroad.

After years of struggle, commitment and dedication, CSM at their headquarters at Verana'aso, finally witnessed the consecration and dedication of their newly built chapel, led by the Most Reverend Leonard Dawea, Archbishop of ACoM, the Right Reverend Benedict Loe, Bishop of the Diocese of Guadalcanal and retired Bishop Nathan Tome.

The building of the new church was a massive undertaking that took several years to complete.

Flory Kafa, Secretary to the Community, said: "The plan to build a new church for the community began in 2017, as the old chapel which was built in the 1960's became unsafe.

"In 2019 the old chapel was deconsecrated by the then Principal of Selwyn college, the Right Rev. David Vunagi and was later pulled down in early 2021. From 2018 we began our fundraising activities and appeal for donations. With kind support from our Associates, families, friends in and around Solomon Islands, businesses, some of our

Anglican members in Parliament and our mission partners in UK and Australia and the ACoM, we started the work on the building in 2021," Flory added.

The construction of the new church building was done in such a way that it reflects the traditional architecture of the Melanesian culture, and the new building retains the size of the old church building at 22 by 40 meters.



Blessing the altar

There are still a few minor tasks that are yet to be done to fully complete the building, including tiling, painting, incorporating traditional mat weaving at the sanctuary area and the retaining walls outside of the building.

Sister Annie Alaha, Head Sister of the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia in her acknowledgement speech said, the community was happy to have their new



church building blessed and consecrated.

Sr Annie said: "We have been using our dining hall and our dormitories for the past five years. As of today, we are so happy that we will go back to the church for our daily devotions and prayers."

Amongst the 4,000 plus people from Honiara, dioceses and nearby communities who came to witness the event, was the Acting Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Honourable Manasseh Maelanga and wife, founder of the CSM Nester Tiboe, General Secretary of the ACoM Dr. Abraham Hauriasi and other strong supporters of the community.



Founder of CSM Nester Tiboe, sitting, with CSM Sisters

Twelve Novices were also admitted by the Archbishop during the Pentecost service and the Right Rev. Benedict Loe preached a powerful sermon based on the theme 'God never stops working;'

ACoM News

CALLING TO MELANESIA

Known to all, Fr Brian reflects on his calling and ministry in Melanesia

I was drawn to the South Pacific as a young teenager by a set of stamps which I saw in a stamp shop window in south London. The stamps were of the Pitcairn Islands and I was fascinated to find out where these islands were and what was their history, as they depicted the Mutiny on the Bounty. I discovered that the islanders were descendants of the mutineers and Tahitian women, and that at one time they had all been moved to Norfolk Island, before some returned to Pitcairn. I also learned that in the 1860s Norfolk Island had become the HQ of the Diocese of Melanesia, and I wanted to learn more about that. I asked my school chaplain, and rather surprised, he asked me if I intended to go out in due course to the Pacific. That was a new idea, but I thought it might be a good one! He then asked if I would go as layman or as priest. That question changed my life, as we then had no clergy in our family. However, I came to realize that God was apparently calling me to be a priest in the Pacific, and I soon got in touch with the Melanesian Mission office, then in London. From then on, my reading and training for ministry was geared to preparing to go out to Melanesia.



I arrived in Solomon Islands in 1964, having sailed from Southampton to Sydney, and then on a cargo boat from Sydney to Honiara, calling at Norfolk Island on the way, where I visited the beautiful Bishop Patteson Memorial Chapel. I was due to go to St Peter's Theological College on the island of Gela, but was asked to go first for a term to teach at Alangaula School on the island of Ugi in the Eastern Solomon Islands. I then spent five years as Sub-warden of the College, spending my last year there in charge.

The Bishop of Melanesia, John Chisholm, then asked me to be the Chaplain and Tutor of the Melanesian Brotherhood

on Guadalcanal, and, five years later, to establish and run the Department of Evangelism and Community Education, based in Honiara, as I had also been working as the Diocesan Secretary for Religious Education. That Department later became the Melanesian Board of Mission. I also served as the first Secretary of Solomon Islands Christian Association, the national council of churches, and on the Executive of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

Life was full! I arranged the religious services which were part of the celebrations of Independence of Solomon Islands in 1978, as Secretary of SICA again, and as a member of the Independence Committee. I received the Independence medal as a result. Because of this involvement, I was invited by the leader of the National



Brian with the Assistant Bishop of Central Melanesia, Bishop Casper Uka from Tikopia

Party (later the Vanua'aku Pati) in the New Hebrides, Father Walter Lini, a former student of mine, to go and serve there. I moved to Port Vila, the capital of that country and set up the Pacific Churches Research Centre with the backing of the Pacific Conference of Churches, of which I became a staff member. It was a difficult

time in that country as it tried to achieve Independence from both Britain and France, which jointly ruled it. I was again involved in the planning of the Independence celebrations, and on the Committee which planned them. Just after Independence of that country as the Republic of Vanuatu in 1980, the President conferred on me its Independence medal. Rather exhausted, I handed over the work at the Centre to a RC priest and returned to the UK at the end of 1980.

I was invited onto the English Committee of The Melanesian Mission UK, and served as a Trustee for many years. In 2005 I was invited to be the Advisor of the Melanesian Brotherhood after the 'ethnic tension' in Solomon Islands during which seven of the Brothers were martyred. I paid visits to all the countries where the Brothers worked throughout the Pacific. During one of the visits back to the Solomons I was installed as an Honorary Canon of the Provincial Cathedral of St Barnabas, Honiara. From 2013 to 2022 I was the Honorary Archivist of the Mission and also acted as its historian.





To date Brian has written two books on Melanesia, copies of which are available from the charity.

I am deeply grateful to God for his call to serve in the Pacific Islands and in the United Kingdom, and for the many blessings I have received. I continue to serve Him as a retired priest in the parishes where I live in Cambridgeshire and I keep in touch with Solomon Islands, especially with the family there into which I was adopted. I was very moved when I was told in 2022 by the Archbishop of Melanesia that the annual prize awarded to the student with the best academic results at the Bishop Patteson Theological College has been named after me. May God continue to bless the Churches, countries, and peoples of Melanesia.

Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne



Brian accompanying Bishops Benedict and Arthur on a visit to Cambridge after the Lambeth Conference in 2022

MOVING ONLINE



With costs increasing all the time and with our environmental hat on, MMUK is moving most of its supporter communications online. With a new website www.mmuk.charity about to go live, the charity will be sharing more prayer requests, news, blogs, films and downloadable resources for supporters, churches and schools. Information will be up to date and will link to news coming direct from Melanesia. There will also be a new online donations page, with information on appeals and projects.

The charity already produces an email newsletter six times a year, and online events are still being held every other month. Contact the charity to sign up to the newsletter and to receive news of when the online events are planned. In person events are still very important to the charity, and we will always

endeavour to provide a speaker from the charity for Sunday services, parish and school talks. Following feedback from supporters, AGM's and Festival days will revert back to being physical events. As a Christian Community and family we value meeting up with supporters whenever we can.

The biggest change going forward will be that the printed twice yearly Melanesia News will cease and be replaced by an Annual Report issued each summer before for the AGM. It will be available via the website, and printed copies will be available. If you would like to receive a printed Annual Report, please complete the form below and return it to MMUK, or email the charity mission@mmuk.net.

I would like to receive printed copies of MMUK's Annual Report, from summer 2024

Please send to the Melanesian Mission, 21 The Burlands, Feniton, Honiton, EX14 3UN

The Melanesian Mission (MMUK) is a mission agency working with the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) in Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and the UK, through Prayer, People and Giving. We are a community of people who live and grow in Christian fellowship, supporting and learning from each other.

Please visit our website for the latest news and prayer requests from MMUK and ACoM. Our extensive film archive includes an introduction to the charity narrated by the Charity's President, the Most Revd & Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, films on the religious orders and climate change.

To receive the charity's regular email newsletter contact the charity. You can also follow the charity on Twitter www.twitter.com/melanesianm and Facebook www.facebook.com/melanesianmission

If you would like more copies of this magazine, leaflets on the work of the charity or would like to book a speaker, please contact the charity.

Many thanks to all who have contributed articles and photographs for this edition of the magazine.

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O Jesus,

Be the canoe that holds me up in the sea of life;

Be the rudder that keeps me in the straight road;

Be the outrigger that supports me in times of temptation.

Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day.

Keep my body strong so I can paddle steadfastly

on in the voyage of life. Amen

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The Melanesian Mission

21 The Burlands
Feniton, Honiton, EX14 3UN

Tel: +44 (0)1404 851656

Email: mission@mmuk.net

Website: www.mmuk.charity

UK Registered Charity Number 1104551
President of MMUK - The Most Reverend and Right
Honourable the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

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