

MELANESIA NEWS



ALL CHANGE

PRAYER, PEOPLE, GIVING



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New Archbishop Elected

From Coconut to Computer

ALL CHANGE!

**‘Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday, today and forever’
(Hebrews 13: 8)**

The Letter to the Hebrews seems to have been written to a community facing testing and change. The author introduces us to a God who in Jesus opens his heart to us. With this God we can find our true home, our deepest fulfilment. With this God we can be ourselves. With this God we can face anything. By the grace and help of this God we can persevere against all the odds. In the presence of this God we can touch a profound joy.

This edition of Melanesia News looks at the changes being met here in the Melanesian Mission UK (MMUK) and in the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

With the retirement of Archbishop George Takeli, we give thanks for ++George’s ministry and pray for him and his wife, June, as they discern God’s further calling for their life together. At the same time, we pray for the Archbishop Elect, Bishop Leonard Dawea and his family as they prepare for their new ministry.

Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with the people of Ambae who have suffered upheaval and dislocation since autumn 2017 due to the volcanic eruptions. Having

moved lives and livelihoods to nearby islands in temporary accommodation, some have returned to their homes, while the volcano still rumbles on. Others in Melanesia have faced flooding, and some have experienced pollution from oil tanker spills.

Inside these pages you will find an excerpt of Bishop Willie’s fascinating story about his calling, life and service in the Church of God. Here in the UK, Bishop Willie has now officially retired as Priest of Gawsorth but continues to serve as an Assistant Bishop in Chester Diocese. As many of you will know, Bishop Willie is not really the retiring type so his continued contributions will be welcome whenever he is able to give it. Following the death of Kate and his own health issues, +Willie and his family are especially in our prayers at this time.



**Former Archbishop George
and wife June**

Like some parts of our national Church, we recognise that MMUK has become, without noticing, an elderly support group.



MMUK Trustees, His Excellency the Solomon Islands High Commissioner to the UK and researchers from the University of Southampton.

The upside of this is that we have people who know the story of Melanesia and possess hard won experience and wisdom to contribute. The weakness is that we lack some energy, the eyes to see things in new ways and we are missing the younger generation to take up the baton. One of our main objectives for MMUK in the coming years is to inspire a new generation in the UK to connect with the people of Solomons and Vanuatu who then become passionate about our ACoM family and companions in God's Mission over 10,000 miles away.

As Trustees of MMUK, we have recently welcomed three new members: Steve Scoffield has taken on the role of Treasurer and swiftly gripped matters effectively; Cath Duce and Kate Pwaisiho, whilst significantly reducing the average age of the board of Trustees, are helping us to think how we may best broaden our supporter base through encouraging UK students to take gap years and study


periods in Solomons and Vanuatu. Please pray that we may find the 'Chris Lileys' and 'Alex Legers' of this generation who will fall in love with Melanesia.

Climate Change, a world-wide concern, is keenly felt in the Pacific. MMUK has been in a unique position to help academics find the data to document and authenticate the changes that have occurred on the islands of Solomons and Vanuatu. Trustee, John Pinder, writes about the result of our strengthening partnership with Selwyn College, Southampton University and the visit of Marie Schlenker to carry out further research this September.

Amidst all the change and uncertainty, we pray that we and ACoM may know the presence, perseverance and pioneering spirit of Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

+Mark Rylands, Chair of MMUK

NEW ARCHBISHOP ELECTED

 The Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) has a new Archbishop. He is the Right Reverend Leonard Dawea, who is currently the Bishop of the Diocese of Temotu (DOT) in Solomon Islands.

Bishop Leonard was elected to the highest Episcopal position within the Anglican Church by ACoM's Provincial Electoral Board on 25th of June at Tabalia, the headquarters of the Melanesian Brotherhood.

When he is enthroned in September 2019, he will be the sixth Archbishop in succession, since the Anglican Church of Melanesia was inaugurated in January 1975. The previous Archbishops were, the Most Reverend Norman Palmer 1975 – 1987, the Most Reverend Amos Waiaru 1988 – 1993, the Most Reverend Sir Ellison Pogo 1994 – 2008, the Most Reverend David Vunagi 2009 – 2015 and the Most Reverend George Takeli 2016 – 2019.

Bishop Leonard holds a Bachelor with Honours in Theology and Ethics from Chester University. From 1995 to 2007 Bishop Leonard was member of the Melanesian Brotherhood and spent a year in the UK, in Tavistock a parish in Exeter Diocese, along with the late George Elo. In 2007 he was ordained priest and served the Melanesian Brotherhood as tutor and chaplain. In 2013 he was appointed the Mission Secretary of DOT and later as Diocesan Secretary in 2015. In 2016 he was elected as Diocesan Bishop of Temotu.

Bishop Leonard, 47, is from the Reef Islands in Temotu and married to Dorah Dawea from Guadalcanal. The couple have two children.

Chair of MMUK, Bishop Mark Rylands is attending the instalment at St Barnabas Cathedral on 15th September 2019. Other UK friends are also expected to make the journey to support and congratulate Bishop Leonard and Dorah.

The Senior Bishop of ACoM, the Rt Revd Nathan Tome is calling on all members of the church to pray for Bishop Leonard and family as he prepares to take on this highest position within the Church of Melanesia.

LET US PRAY

*Almighty God you have called many to leave their homes behind to serve you
We thank God that you have called Leonard Dawea to be your servant
Bless and uphold him in his ministry as Archbishop of the Church of Melanesia
Guide and direct him through all difficult times*

Continue all the good work you have begun in him that he may lead your Church with wisdom and compassion

Fill him Lord, with bold humility that he and his beloved family may continue to grow in your true way of service

And may his ministry and leadership bring many more people to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ

*This we pray in His Holy Name
Amen*



Archbishop Elect Leonard Dawea on his last visit to the UK with the now retired Bishop of Chester, Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster



His Excellency the Governor General of the Solomon Islands Bishop David Vunagi and wife Mary

FORMER ARCHBISHOP BECOMES NEXT GOVERNOR GENERAL

Bishop David Vunagi, former Archbishop of Melanesia, was installed as the new Governor General of the Solomon Islands on the country's Independence Day in July. Bishop David was Archbishop of Melanesia from 2009 until his retirement in 2016. He returned to his village on Isabel to live a quiet life, only to be recalled again to become the Principal of Selwyn College last year.

On his new role, Bishop David said: "My wife Mary and I feel very humble about this appointment, and we pray for wisdom as we take on this dignified position. Convey to all UK friends our thanks and our request for prayer support."

MMUK hopes to meet up with Bishop David and Mary when they are presented to the Queen in London later this year.





VISITS

Earlier this year, the Rt Revd James Tama, Bishop of Vanuatu and New Caledonia, and the Rt Revd Rickson Maomaoru, Assistant Bishop of Malaita visited the UK. First they attended the 'New Bishops' course in Canterbury, with visits to Lambeth Palace and the Anglican Communion Office.

The Bishops went on to visit Wycombe Abbey, one of MMUK's oldest supporters, which is also linked with St Patrick's College in Vanuatu. The Bishops were interviewed by pupils and were able to give an update on St Patrick's College, which was evacuated from the island of Ambae last year.

In Exeter Diocese, the Bishops met Rt Revd Bishop Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter and the Dean of Exeter Cathedral, the Very Reverend Jonathan Greener, and had a fish and chip supper with supporters in Tavistock.

The Bishops then went to the Diocese of Chester, which is officially linked to the Province of Melanesia. They met representatives of local schools which have partnerships with schools in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. They visited the retreat house at Foxhill, where they saw the new cross which has been made and presented by the Melanesian Brothers, and then visited the Sisters of Jesus Way, who are linked with the Sisters of Melanesia. They spent a day looking at mission projects across the diocese, ending with a dinner hosted by Bishop Peter at Bishop's House, attended by many friends and supporters.

Both Bishops enjoyed a 'quiet day' on the Saturday, with Bishop James meeting up with family and Bishop Rickson spending the day with Reverend Jacky Wise, who had

worked alongside him at Selwyn College, as part of the Chaplaincy Team. The two visited Liverpool Cathedral and Jacky was delighted to be able to return, in some small way, something of the generous hospitality that she had received in the Solomon Islands. The Bishops also took part in the Sunday morning Eucharist at Chester Cathedral, where Bishop James preached, and Bishop Rickson gave the blessing.

Reflecting on his visit, Bishop Rickson said: “We learnt much about our historical links and connections. It was indeed a worthwhile visit in terms of the creative response towards climate change and holistic mission in our Anglican Network and how to address these issues globally with sustainable means for the future.

“God continue to sustain MMUK with His wisdom as it becomes a medium for transformation in our Anglican world today. God bless you all,” said Bishop Rickson.

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Sr Kristy from the Community of the Sisters of the Church is on a six-month UK sabbatical staying with her community at St Michael's Convent, Gerrards Cross. Sr Kristy has visited Exeter Diocese to meet supporters and visit sites connected to John Coleridge Patteson, first Bishop of Melanesia. During her five-day trip, Sr Kristy saw Patteson's family home and church, and the church where he served his curacy. At Exeter Cathedral, where Patteson was priested, Sr Kristy saw the martyrs' pulpit, where on one panel Patteson is remembered. Sr Kristy also met up with Devon supporters who visited TNK last year.

Sr Kristy also managed to visit St John's CofE Primary School in Wellington, just over the border in Bath and Wells Diocese. The school, which is linked to St Stephen's School, Kira Kira, was holding a Melanesian Discovery Day,



Sr Kristy enjoying a Melanesian Messy Church in Exeter Diocese

and Sr Kristy was able to answer the pupils' questions about her religious community, country and home island of Tikopia.

Executive Officer of the Melanesian Mission, Katie Drew, said: “It is always very special to have guests from Melanesia here with us in the UK. It helps build strong relationships and there is so much we learn from each other. These visits turn into mini missions, and all who meet our guests, from the school children to our older supporters value the opportunity to spend time together.”

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In July 2020 we look forward to welcoming the new Archbishop and all Melanesian Bishops and their wives to the UK to attend the Lambeth 2020 Conference. Further details to follow about opportunities to meet our guests, before they attend the conference in Canterbury.

NEWS IN BRIEF



The vital role of religious communities in the Anglican Communion was highlighted at an Anglican Communion conference at St Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, in May. Addressing delegates, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "Religious communities are an integral part of the church today and in places they are a vibrant part of the church." Revd Sr Veronica, Sr Provincial of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, Head Brother Nelson from the Melanesian Brothers and SSF Minister General Br Christopher John were all keynote speakers at the conference.

When you shop online at Amazon, you can support the Melanesian Mission at the same time. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support a charity of your choice every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.co.uk, you'll find the exact same prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as amazon.co.uk, with the bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Melanesian Mission.



So, in future buying your books and goods here in the UK could also help us buy books for the religious orders and church schools across Melanesia.



The charity has a new range of posters for displays. Three posters cover the charity's main areas of work – Prayer, People and Giving, and a fourth poster shows a map of Melanesia and some of the charity's projects. If you would like a set of posters, please contact the charity.



Following the severe flooding on Guadalcanal and damage caused Cyclone Oma across the outer eastern Solomon Islands earlier this year, MMUK contributed over £1,000 to ACoM's Disaster Fund. Many thanks to supporters for the donations and prayer support for those affected.

MMUK and ACoM would like to thank the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster for all the support and encouragement he has personally given to the Chester Diocese – Melanesia Link. Sending our prayers for a happy retirement to Bishop Peter and his wife.

Many thanks to the Li Tim-Oi Foundation for sending a books grant to the two Sisters of the Church and the Melanesian Sister studying Theology at Taisa, on Ysabel.



With so many great stories to share with friends and supporters, the charity is blogging more articles on its website. Please do check the website regularly for up to date news and prayer requests. The charity also issues a monthly email newsletter, which you can subscribe and unsubscribe to at any time

The charity has resourced a number of Melanesian Messy Church events in churches and Melanesian Discovery Days in primary schools. For craft ideas, reflections, films and other resources for your Melanesian event, please contact the charity.

www.mmuk.net/subscribe

LISTENING AND TRUSTING

With the spring sun shining through the windows of the Foxhill chapel, MMUK trustees prayed for each other at the end of a residential meeting and departed for home after a cup of tea.

We had travelled and gathered together in March. Unfortunately, Trustees Andrew and Ian were not able to join us on this occasion and Jacky was only able to join us for an afternoon. We were greatly blessed to have Bishop Willie with us who was our chaplain. We took the opportunity to present +Willie with a number of gifts on his retirement.

The programme for the residential provided for careful consideration of the way in which trustees work together and support Katie, our Executive Officer in her work as well as opportunities for conversations to discern what our priorities should be for the next three to five years. Throughout the residential trustees made time in the programme to think through how our work together and priorities connect with the stated aims of MMUK as a charity.

Our conversations were within the context of worship, prayer and fellowship. As we would be together on 19th March when the Church celebrates the life of Joseph of Nazareth, trustees were invited to read Matthew chapters 1 and 2 in preparation for the residential. These chapters and

the episodes in the life of the Holy Family provided the backdrop for our conversations and discussions throughout the period of the residential.

And finally throughout our time together in worship, in groups, in plenary sessions, over coffee, around the meal table we were seeking to go deeper with God and with each other that we might build on the work of MMUK in the years to come. We enjoyed fabulous care from those who are called to the ministry of hospitality at Foxhill. We were mindful of the life of Joseph of Nazareth and how he listened to God and responded in trust. May the Holy Spirit working in and through us enable us all to continue to listen to God and trust Him more and more in our daily lives.

Revd Martin Cox *MMUK Trustee*



Trustees at their Foxhill retreat



Retreat Prayer Spaces created by Kate Pwaisiho

At this year's AGM, there will be an opportunity for supporters to ask the Trustees any questions about the aims and objectives of the charity and future projects and priorities. Trustees will also be asking

St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol



supporters to consider 'how best to further and broaden our supporter network' to meet the changing needs of ACoM and modern-day mission.

Saturday 21st September is the date of the AGM and Festival Day, and this year it will be in Bristol at St Mary Redcliffe, a short walk from Bristol Temple Meads Railway Station. The day will begin with the AGM at 11am, Eucharist at 12noon, followed by buffet lunch. In the afternoon between 2pm and 4pm there will be guest speakers and news from the charity, including some exciting announcements about the Lambeth 2020 Preprogramme with all the Melanesian Bishops and their wives!

A full report from the AGM and the charity's accounts will be posted on the charity's website.

Katie Drew *MMUK Executive Officer*

PRAYER DIARY

WEEK 1

Sunday

Pray for the Anglican Church of Melanesia across the nine dioceses and all the staff at the Provincial Head Office in Honiara. For Dr Abraham Hauriasi, the General Secretary.

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

For the work of the Melanesian Mission UK in Prayer, People and Giving.

Monday

For the Diocese of Temotu as they go into vacancy for their Diocesan Bishop. For all the staff working at the Headquarters at Lata.

For Revd Hillary Anisi and the Mission to Seafarers, through their centres in Honiara, Noro Port in the Western Province, Lata in Temotu and Port Vila in Vanuatu.

Tuesday

The Community of the Sisters of Melanesia and their work with women throughout the islands. For Head Sister Annie and Assistant Head Sister Jessie and for the six households, including the new Household in Banks and Torres.

For a greater understanding of Human Rights to promote stability and respect within communities, to love thy neighbour.

Wednesday

For the Diocese of Ysabel, Bishop Ellison Quity and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters at Jejevo, Buala. For the new church secondary school being built on the island.

For volunteers from UK, Australia and New

Zealand who share their skills in Melanesia. For projects, which are driven by the needs of Melanesians.

Thursday

For the Diocese of Vanuatu & New Caledonia and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Luganville on the island of Santo and for Bishop James Tama.

For the displaced people of Ambae. May they be given safe and adequate spaces to recover and rebuild their lives, homes and communities.

Friday

For the Society of St Francis throughout the world, including Melanesia. We pray for their work along with Third Order members with the homeless and jobless in Honiara.

We pray for the greater care of creation and give thanks for the life and inspiration of St Francis.

For communities affected by climate change and pray for protection from unscrupulous mining and logging.

Saturday

The Diocese of Malaita, Diocesan Bishop Sam Sahu and Assistant Bishop Rickson George Maomaoru.

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

WEEK 2

Sunday

For the Archbishop Elect the Right Reverend Leonard Dawea. For all the staff in the Diocese of Central Melanesia.

For the Church's outreach work in hospitals, Rove Prison, women's issues, climate change relocation programmes and youth ministry.

Monday

For the Diocese of Guadalcanal, Bishop Nathan Tome and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Honiara. Pray for the Provincial Cathedral of St Barnabas, Honiara, and the Dean Philip Rongotha, and all who minister and worship there.

For all the different communities in Honiara, that there be a safe and clean environment for all these groups to flourish and come to respect each other.

Tuesday

For the Community of the Sisters of the Church, and for Revd Sr Veronica, Provincial Sister for the Solomon Islands Pacific Region. We give thanks for the Community's work with children around TNK and their retreat ministry. For the Christian Care Centre outside of Honiara and the new centre in Malaita. For the work on gender-based violence with police and community leaders. For Sr Phyllis Sau and Sr Doreen.

Wednesday

For the Diocese of Central Solomons, Bishop Ben Seka 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 aboard the Southern Cross. For the printing press in Honiara.

Thursday

For the Diocese of Banks and Torres, Bishop Pattenon Alfred Worek and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Sola.

For the Mothers' Union in the Province, their Provincial President Pamela Abana 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 the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG, Philippines and Canada. For the Great Conference to be held in October. For the Companions worldwide working to support this community.

For School Partnerships and the opportunities for children and teachers in the UK and Melanesia to learn together. We continue to pray for the success of the gap year programme with the Project Trust volunteers placed with church schools.

Saturday

For the Diocese of Hanuato'o, Bishop Alfred Karibongi and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Kirakira.

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.

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS PACIFIC ISLANDS



Researcher Marie Schlenker planning her field trip with Bishop Willie Pwaisiho and MMUK supporter and film maker Alex Leger



The small fragile islands of the Pacific are in the front line when it comes to climate change issues. MMUK Trustee Canon John Pinder reports on how over the past year, MMUK has been actively working to promote research from this country, which it hopes will be of real benefit to the people of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Last June, Adam Bobette, a research student from Selwyn College, Cambridge, was in the Solomon Islands, working alongside villagers, to collect data on the impacts of climate change, including sea levels and coastal erosion. MMUK contributed to his funding, and his work was warmly welcomed by the Church of Melanesia. The methodology is very simple, and it is hoped that with accurate record keeping over many years, an accurate picture will emerge, which will provide conclusive evidence of what is happening to the islands as a result of climate change. Adam will revisit Solomons later this year to check on the progress of this project.

MMUK's Katie Drew has also been working with Professors Robert Nicholls, David Sear and Dr Ivan Haigh from Southampton University's engineering, geography and oceanography departments, who are involved in climate change research in the Pacific. One of their research students, Marie Schlenker, will be travelling to Solomons later this year, to pursue research into the changing pattern of coastal margins. She will also be visiting schools to talk about climate change research. David Sear has been collecting core samples from the bottom of lakes, which provide the history of weather patterns and volcanic activity over the last 2000 years. Robert Nicholls and Ivan Haigh have been examining rates of sea level rise over the 20th and early part of the 21st century, and changes in the frequency and magnitude of coastal flooding.

The research so far shows oscillations in climate over many years and a much more complex pattern of change than was

previously thought. The El Niño effect causes rising and falling of water temperature in the Pacific Ocean. When the temperature rises, cyclone activity increases in frequency and intensity. While sea levels are undoubtedly rising, most of the damage is caused by storm surge events.

All agree that sea levels and cyclones will become critical over the next few years. Our researchers are also keen to study what can be done to mitigate the effects of climate change. Mangrove swamps and coral reefs are a vital part of the islands' defences and must be preserved. Unrestricted logging activity unfortunately damages these defences.

The artificial islands of Malaita and the atolls of the Reef Islands and Ontong Java are most threatened. Walande Village, which once had a population of over 1,000, has been abandoned. There is an excellent video about this loss which can be accessed through the MMUK website. The maximum height of most atolls is six feet above sea level and when there is a storm surge the whole island can be swamped. The underground aquifers which are the only source of drinking water, are compromised and become brackish. This has happened to Ontong Java which has a unique Polynesian culture going back over 1,000 years. The inhabitants are being evacuated and face a very uncertain future.

We are fortunate in this country where the effects of climate change will not be seriously felt for many years. But in the Pacific the effects of global warming are already destroying cultures and communities. MMUK will continue to do all it can to help the people of Melanesia with disaster relief funding, supporting vital research and raising awareness of these issues.

To find out more about the research we are involved with, visit the charity's website www.mmuk.net

FROM COCONUT TO COMPUTER



On his retirement from parish ministry in the Diocese of Chester, Bishop Willie Pwaisiho shares his inspirational story on his calling, life and service in the Church of God.

Chapter 1

The first time I saw a white man I was in my village, Kalona, in Small Malaita, Solomon Islands in the early fifties, when the Missionary Sister based at Fauabu Hospital, came around giving injections and treating the sick. The others were the Parish Priest based at Fiu village near Auki, Fr. Philip Baker was the Rural Dean of Malaita District in those days. I was very interested and fascinated by the respect and calmness which these white people commanded in my village, sleeping and eating our local food of roasted taro, yams, pana with local vegetables cooked in bamboos. The next

white man to come to my village was Alfred Thomas Hill the Bishop of the Diocese of Melanesia in the sixties, he too left a very big impression on me as child. The other white men were the touring Doctors who came and stayed in my village, also treating patients from neighbouring villages. Then came the Agriculture Technicians who came to talk about coconut and coca planting. There was stream after stream of those people who served us so well, but for me it was the Church men that held my interest and I wanted to follow in their footsteps.

I went to school in order to learn how read and write. My other dream was to learn the English language in order to be able to converse with any white man who came to my village. My local schools were basic with Melanesian teachers who taught us maths,



divinity, English and handwriting. We were given a slate with a slate pencil, then the next day before lessons we had to clean the slate from the previous day. It was very difficult to remember all that went before with no means of looking it up or re-reading it, but because of our burning ambition to better ourselves we managed. We were thirsty for knowledge.

1963 was a landmark year for me as it was the first time I became aware of electricity, cars, trucks and tractors at the Lever Brothers Head Quarters in Yandina Russel Islands. It was there I tasted white man's food of bread, butter, tea with milk, rice with corned beef. It was supposed to be a holiday with my uncle, and I was meant to return to school. But the white man's lifestyle and food was very tantalising, so I refused to return to school. I wanted to be a copra cutter just like my kinsfolks cutting copra for Lever Brothers and being paid for what they did.

In 1964 word came from my Parish Priest Revd. Willie Au of Walande, who said that I must return to school immediately on the next boat available. It was the word of wisdom and authority from a holy man, God had spoken to me through him and I obeyed. That was my turning point. I returned to school and completed my Junior Primary Education and at the end of the year I passed my entrance exam for senior education at St Barnabas Boys School Alangaula on Ukiniasi (Ugi) in Makira / Ulawa Province.

Mission Schools were very special and my three years at Alangaula from 1965 - 67, gave me a lot of privileges, being able to learn and to discern being called by God to the holy orders. The Mission Motto was, True Religion, Sound Learning, and Useful Industry, or simply - Pray hard, Learn hard and Work hard. I think we were indoctrinated into that application and the Christian Ethos never left either the teachers or their pupils.



Chapter 2

of Bishop Willie's fascinating story will appear in the next magazine, and his full article is available to read now on the charity's website www.mmuk.net

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Even in retirement, Bishop Willie is very much in demand in the Diocese of Chester, where he remains an Assistant Bishop. Bishop Willie is also actively involved in raising awareness of issues affecting Melanesia and is part of a group which meets at Lambeth Palace to discuss environmental matters, including plastic pollution and climate change.



EDUCATION UPDATE

MMUK Trustee Andrew Cartwright brings us an update on school partnerships, visits and training.

There are now 19 UK schools in partnerships with ACoM schools across the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, covering the full range of schools. Of these, four are with Senior schools, four Junior and eleven Primary. Five schools are in Vanuatu and fourteen in the Solomon Islands.

At the end of the Easter term, we added a link between a Junior School in Tavistock with its twinned Primary and the C E Fox School at Sa'a on Malaita. Both George Elo and Bishop Leonard had spent time in Tavistock when they were in England, and Bishop Rickson – new assistant Bishop of Malaita – lives next door to the school at Sa'a.

There continues to be changes in the development of schools in Vanuatu due to the continuing disruption caused by the volcano on Ambae. Most schools relocated back to Ambae in February, but St Patricks College (SPC) elected to stay at its temporary site at Santo East while its own site is cleaned up. It should move back at some point, but the long-term intention is for the school to relocate permanently to a new site on Santo near to Luganville. This will be a massive project which will take several years to complete.

Because of the disruptions and some changes in pupils' attendance, Wycombe Abbey has generously switched its funding of bursaries at SPC to provide support for projects in the school as it settles down in temporary conditions, so girls in each of the Houses at



Melanesian Discovery Day at St John's C of E Primary School in Bath & Wells Diocese



Wycombe continue their active support for SPC. Everyone hopes that the bursaries can be reinstated eventually.

We supported some significant work in August 2018 when Daphne Jordan and Revd Cate Edmonds went first to Vanuatu and then to Solomons to launch the next phase of the Christian Distinctiveness project for ACoM's schools. This began about four years ago in Vanuatu, as part of a focus on

schools' governance; after Daphne's second visit in 2017, ACoM made the guidance into a manual for schools. This has now been launched into ACoM's schools in the Solomons as well. There will be a follow-up visit by Daphne and Cate to reinforce this work later in 2019.

In the Solomons, Project Trust sent a new team of volunteers to Selwyn College and St Nicholas last August, and more volunteers went to help at St Stephens Pamua in January. Their arrival is hugely welcomed by all the schools.

Pupils in church schools in Melanesia and the UK exchange letters



In March 2019, three volunteers led by Christine Calderwood completed a second Human Rights training workshop for 28 teachers in Honiara. This was attended by teachers from Solomons and also Papua New Guinea, and, like its predecessor in 2016, was fully funded by the British High Commission and the Foreign Office. It has already been hailed as a great success, with requests from ACoM for a repeat as they start to roll out the subject matter as a formal part of the school syllabus.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD

Back in August 2018 I embarked on a twelve-month overseas placement with Project Trust, teaching at St Nicholas Anglican College in the Solomon Islands. On my arrival, the first thing I noticed was the car number plates; every single one reads, 'Solomon Islands - The Hapi Isles'. This certainly put a smile on my face, and a year later that smile hasn't come off.

The Solomon Islands are undoubtedly an enchanting place, but it goes deeper than the white sand beaches and gently rolling Pacific waves. Even Honiara, the dirty, loud, ramshackle capital, I have come to call home has the power to leave your spirit dancing, day after day. This makes little sense: why does a place where dust and burning plastic fill the air, where plain white rice and processed



sausages are the staple diet, pull at your heartstrings like no other place on earth? The answer is the people. Nowhere else in the world do you find such a big smile, such joy, and a heartfelt and unique welcome from a stranger on the street; nowhere else are people so completely ecstatic about staying up late, drinking tea and talking. That the Pidgin word for "talk" is "story" tells you all you need to know about the emphasis Solomon

Islanders place on sitting down together and talking.

As I began teaching at St Nicholas, I initially found the 'easy easy' attitude to life frustrating - I was desperate to get things done. Now, I couldn't imagine it being any other way. Why would you stress and sweat the small stuff? Perhaps what I missed at the beginning of the year but now understand is that this attitude comes not from lethargy, but from trust in God. At school, we all stop and pray three or four times a day, every time thanking God for the blessings we have received: air to breathe, sun, rain, food, water, health, friendship, family, fellowship, the chance to learn...the list goes on. Such regular and genuine gratefulness for what we have makes it hard to be frustrated by what we don't. The school motto - 'Dei Gratia' or 'By the Grace of God' - sums this up perfectly. If it's God's will, by His grace it will be done.

When I do return to the UK, I know there will be tears. No longer will I live in a place where worship music echoes around the street at all hours of the day and night, where people share food with such enthusiasm that you can go days without buying anything for yourself. I will return with a valuable life lesson: how important it is to be truly and regularly grateful for the smallest but most important necessities I have been blessed with. Captivated as I am by the Solomons, I am sure to return here.

***Kate Sibbald Project Trust Volunteer
2018 2019***

KEEP IN TOUCH

MMUK is required to obtain specific consent from anyone about whom we may retain or process any personal data. We are asking you for your consent that we hold your details to inform you about news, events, appeals and activities of the Melanesian Mission and the Anglican Church of Melanesia and to maintain records of donations.

Please complete, sign and return the form below to the charity, if you have yet to give us this permission.

Name:

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Post Code:

Telephone:

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By signing this form you give consent to the Melanesian Mission to hold and process your personal data for the following purposes **(please tick the boxes where you grant consent):**

- To keep me informed about news, events, appeals and activities of the Melanesian Mission and the Anglican Church of Melanesia
- To maintain a record of any donations
- To including my details in the Membership List, available only to Trustees.

I consent to the charity contacting me by:

- post **(to continue to receive this magazine & other mailings)**
- email (to receive the regular E-news from the charity & other notices)
- telephone

Signed:

Dated:

You can grant consent to all the purposes; one of the purposes or none of the purposes. Where you do not grant consent, we will not be able to use your personal data (so for example we may not be able to let you know about news and events), except in certain limited situations, such as where required to do so by law or to protect members of the public from serious harm. You can find out more about how we use your data from our "Data Privacy Notice" which is available from our website or from the Office.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the Executive Officer at 21 The Burlands, Feniton, Honiton, UK, EX14 3UN.

Email: mision@mmuk.net

Telephone: 01404 851656

Website: www.mmuk.net

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The Melanesian Mission, 21 The Burlands, Feniton, Honiton, EX14 3UN

Tel: 01404 851656 **Email:** mission@mmuk.net **Web:** www.mmuk.net



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THEN AND NOW

MMUK Archivist Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne recalls his first visit to the region and how times have changed.

I travelled for three weeks on a ship from Southampton to Sydney in 1964 on my way to the Solomon Islands to first take up my work at St Peter's Theological College at Siota on the island of Small Gela. I then waited in Sydney for another three weeks, before proceeding onwards, travelling for another three weeks on a trading vessel which called at Norfolk Island, Port Vila, the capital of the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, then at Luganville, the only other town, situated on the island of Espiritu Santo in the north and finally Honiara.

What is the situation now? You arrive in Honiara by plane, travelling normally from London Heathrow to Brisbane International via Singapore or Hong Kong. You then join another plane to travel on to Honiara. The journey can be completed in a few days. There are international airports at Port Vila and Luganville and Honiara; the capitals have supermarkets. The country of the New Hebrides has been the independent Republic of Vanuatu since 1980. Now there are a large number of Anglicans living there, mostly from the mainly Anglican areas in the north of the country, and the parish has a number of sub-parishes.

As the Diocese of Melanesia became an autonomous self-governing Anglican Province in 1975, it now has nine dioceses, two of them in Vanuatu, instead of just one. The headquarters of the Diocese of Vanuatu and New Caledonia is now in Luganville. The population of Vanuatu is about a quarter of a million. In the Solomon Islands, the population in 1964 was about the

same as that, but now it has risen to about 600,000, with one of the highest birth-rates in the Pacific.

Many people have mobile phones and can now keep in touch with families and friends, and others in the Church and Government. There are more shipping services, some with regular timetables, and lots of small airports on different islands. The Melanesian Brotherhood had a Novitiate at Tabalia of about twenty Novices when I arrived there, now the number is usually about ninety, while the Theological College no longer grants only diplomas, but became the first institution in the country to offer degrees.

Much has changed. The two countries have been transformed. New Caledonia, where there is only one Anglican church, has recently voted to remain a French Territory, so there is less change there. We can rejoice that there has been so much development, but there have also been many problems on the way, including a civil war in the Solomons which started in 1998, leading to deaths, including those of seven Melanesian Brothers. Our concern and prayers and on-going support mean a lot to our fellow Christians there, as they face the challenges of modern life in the Pacific and the world.



The Melanesian Mission (MMUK) is an Anglican Mission agency that provides support to the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM), through prayer, people and giving.

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 first-hand accounts of climate change.

To receive the charity's regular email newsletter subscribe at www.mmuk.net/subscribe.

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, introduction 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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UK Registered Charity Number 1104551

President of MMUK - The Most Reverend and Right Honourable the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

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

Printed on sustainably sourced paper.

Designed & printed by Nettl of Exeter (01392 797400)