

# MELANESIA NEWS



## A RELIGIOUS LIFE

GOOD HABITS FOR LIFE

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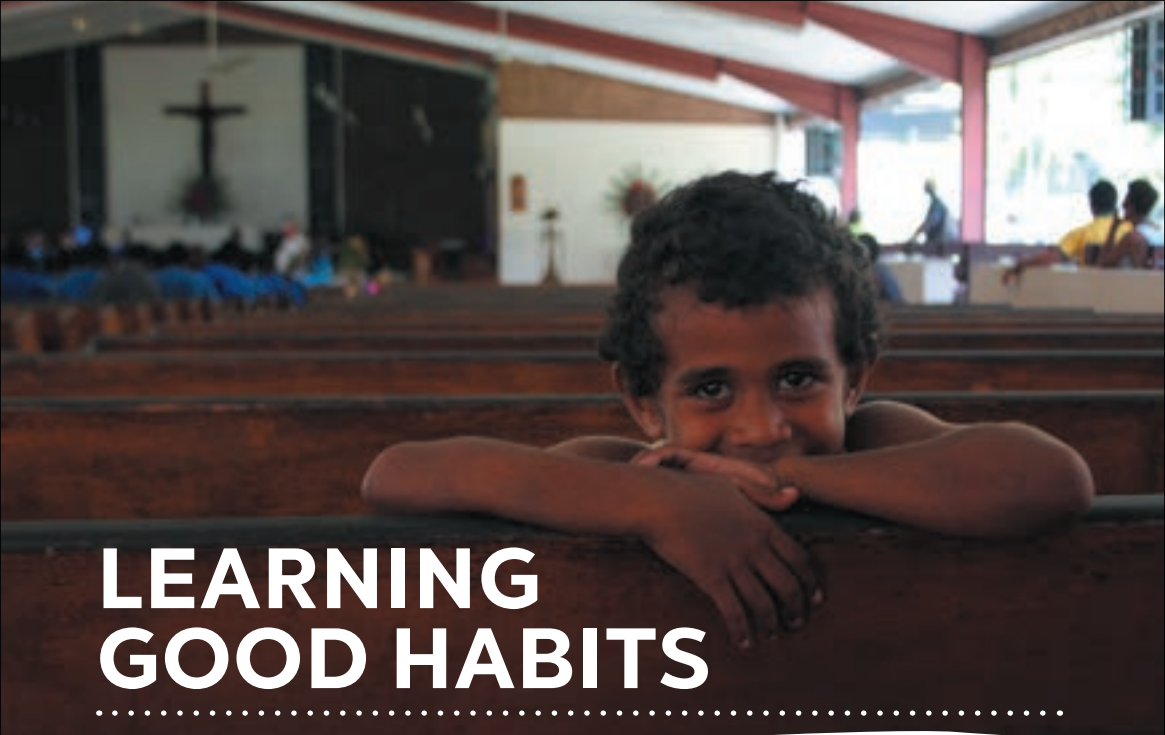
### ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from Archbishop George Takeli

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Updates from the Religious Communities

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# LEARNING GOOD HABITS

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A remark made by Archbishop Sir Ellison Pogo has stuck with me. Twelve years ago, while he was visiting Exeter, we were comparing and contrasting the mission context here in the UK, with Melanesia. During our conversation, the Archbishop made a direct and powerful point:

***'We will not make the same mistakes as you. We will pass on the Christian faith to our children!'***

In the last national census of 2011, the number of people identifying themselves as Christian in England and Wales was 59% (down from 72% in 2001). In Solomon Islands, I understand the equivalent figure today is more like 95%. Sir Ellison's remarks were certainly poignant. There are various factors at work to explain the waning of Christian belief in the UK, but one of them is that parents and grandparents have failed to pass on their faith to the next generation. In the last 50 years of the 20th

century it was assumed that, like the process of osmosis, children would just naturally acquire it, like a good habit.

Thankfully, the Church in the UK is taking this mission task very seriously now. Fresh Expressions of Church are beginning to make a difference in reaching new generations (adults and children) with the Gospel. Messy Church, in particular, is making a huge impact with over a hundred thousand participants.

When visiting the Solomon Islands for the installation of Archbishop George Takeli in April 2016, I kept thinking about this issue: will a similar waning of the faith happen in the Solomon Islands as it has in the UK? It was noticeable that young people were present in large numbers at church community celebrations; and teenagers participated enthusiastically in school worship – something that would be extraordinary here! Though

signs of 'Westernisation' were evident on the streets, the teachers with whom we spoke did not see a similar issue arising in Melanesia. Will Melanesia learn from our mistakes and faithfully pass on the Good News to the next generation? I hope and pray so.

An obvious strength of the Anglican Church of Melanesia seems to be the religious communities. In contrast to religious communities in the UK, the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Melanesian Sisters, the Sisters of the Church and the Franciscans have waiting lists of those wishing to join. A distinguishing mark of some of these orders is that Brothers and Sisters do not make lifelong vows but for a limited period. In such a way, those who then decide to leave, after serving for a three-year period or more, do so with integrity. They then return to a variety of positions in Melanesian society, having habitually learnt the disciplines of daily prayer, witness and service that enable them to live as Christian

disciples. I imagine such discipleship must act like salt in a meal and light on a hill: a distinctly Christ-like presence in all walks of life that has a transforming influence on society.

Here, the wisdom of the Solomon Islands may help us...and maybe we are learning. Archbishop Justin's promotion of the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth Palace, The Order of Mission in Sheffield (TOM) and the Community of St Chad in Lichfield Diocese are just a handful of new religious communities that point to a renewed commitment to prayer, discipleship and witness that is emerging in the UK. Church history teaches us that it was the religious communities and orders that caused the conversion of Europe. There seems to be hope. The UK (and the rest of Europe) again needs converting and it will not be achieved by the half-hearted.

***+Mark Rylands, Chair of MMUK***



***Bishop Willie gives communion in Honiara***

# PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

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Warm greetings and prayers for strengthened friendship and partnership in mission between our churches - the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom and the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

Looking back, we want to acknowledge that 2016 was an eventful year. For us in the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the year was highlighted by my enthronement as the sixth Archbishop of our church. I wish to thank Bishop Mark, Katie, Bishop Willie, and others from the UK who attended my enthronement. I acknowledged their presence as support of our friendship and partnership in mission, which has existed since the time of Bishop Selwyn and Bishop Patteson.

This deep and rooted relationship in mission work is kept alive through the exchange of resources between our two churches from the past to the present. This includes the financial contribution to support the ongoing mission work in our church, the exchange of missionary and teaching staff, training members of our religious communities, the appointment of Revd Richard Carter as my Commissary in UK, and the excellent support offered by MMUK Trustee Andrew Cartwright to strengthen our strategic plans. I wish to thank Bishop Nigel Stock, former chair, and a prayerful welcome to Bishop Mark Rylands (new chair) and all members of the Trustee Board for their work.

As Archbishop, my vision is of an emerging church and building a new community of God's people in the Anglican Church of Melanesia. To achieve this vision for the church, I have set three urgent priority areas for our mission work: 1. Create an active missionary church. 2. Establish an effective administration for the distribution of mission work. 3. Develop an aggressive, industrious investment division of our church. The strategic goal is to develop this church to become self-supporting, self-reliant, and a self-propagating church. I want to develop the Anglican Church of Melanesia to become recognised as a truly active member within the Anglican Communion family.

I also want to build on our historical links throughout the Anglican Communion, starting with Melanesian Mission UK. I am hopeful that opportunities will be made available for me to visit the partnership dioceses and churches in UK later in the year. The aim of these visits will be to develop our friendship and partnership and encourage a strengthened and active missional approach in our two church families. A partnership in mission.

***The Most Revd George Takeli***

***Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia***

*MMUK is delighted to announce that Archbishop George, his wife June and other senior ACoM staff members will be in the UK in September visiting Chester, Ely, Exeter and London Dioceses. Their programme will be posted shortly on the charity's website.*

**For current ACoM news, visit <http://www.acom.org.sb/>**

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# FR GEORGE ELO

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It was with great sadness that we learnt that Fr George Elo our beloved Brother, Revered Father and ACoM Mission Secretary had passed away in March.

George was an inspirational Brother in the Melanesian Brotherhood. He had a deep spirit of humility and service. He was tremendously popular in the Brotherhood, and though naturally shy and unassuming, people always looked to him for advice and guidance. He always stood up for what was right.

George also had a lovely sense of humour. He would never push himself forward but could always detect what was true and trustworthy. He loved the Spirit of the religious communities and as Mission Secretary was always wanting to support them. He always loved cars and was never happier than when driving others around and showing gracious hospitality. Fr George was always wise. He rejected all forms of pride, racial discrimination or superiority and colonialism and always treated the humblest with the greatest respect. Fr George kept us all humble- he knew the true Spirit of service and the wisdom he had learnt in the Melanesian Brotherhood. Though a naturally quiet and shy man, he was greatly loved by so many.

He was far too young to die and I know many



will feel such grief especially his dear wife Elsie and his son George Junior. Fr George you leave your family and friends heartbroken but all of us give thanks for your life and your service to Christ. May the soul of our Father and Brother George Elo rest in peace and rise in glory. He has shown us the true way of service.

***Revd Richard Carter***

***The Archbishop of Melanesia's  
Commissary in UK***

# THE ANGLICAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS OF MELANESIA

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*Noting the importance of the four Anglican religious orders in Melanesia, MMUK Archivist, Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne writes on how they were established in the province.*

Ini Kopuria was born about 1900 and grew up in the area of the first Anglican Christian village in north Guadalcanal. After schooling he did not become a catechist (lay minister) as his relatives wanted, but decided to become a policeman in the British Solomon Islands Native Constabulary. After an accident in the 'bush' on his island, he was in hospital for some time. There he had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ telling him that he was not doing the work he wanted him to do. He then offered himself for Christian ministry to the Bishop of Melanesia, John Manwaring Steward, and was sent to the theological college on Gela.

While there he heard about the missionary Religious Orders in mediaeval Europe, and suddenly he had the idea of starting a Melanesian Order which would take the Gospel to isolated places in the islands. With the support of Bishop Steward his idea became a reality when he took a Life Vow in 1925 on his own land at Tabalia, which he dedicated to the use of the Brotherhood. A large cross now stands on the spot where he made his vow at Tabalia, which has become the Motherhouse of the Order.

The Brotherhood only just survived the Second World War, when the Japanese army destroyed its headquarters, but thanks to the then Bishop, Walter Hubert Baddeley, the Brotherhood revived and has now become the largest Order for men under the traditional vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience in the Anglican Communion. The Brothers work in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua

New Guinea, the Philippines and Canada, and there are thousands of its Companions in those and other countries, including the United Kingdom. The Brothers do not normally take a Life Vow, but instead take a first vow for three years which they can renew if they wish. Many Brothers have in fact died while in the Brotherhood, and some have been killed, notably after the ethnic tension in the Solomons Islands which lasted from 1998 to 2003.

In 1970 Bishop John Wallace Chisholm decided to invite two more Religious Orders to come to Melanesia. One of these Orders was the Community of the Sisters of the Church, founded by Mother Emily Ayckbown in London in 1870. The Sisters of the Church worked among the poor and needy in England, then extended their work to Canada and Australia, where they established schools for girls from the outback, who would otherwise have missed out on a good education. The Community accepted the invitation of Bishop Chisholm, to come and work in Melanesia, where they discovered that there were still Melanesian women who wanted to join a Religious Order. The Solomon Islands Province of the Community, established in 2001, is now the largest of its four Provinces worldwide.

The other Order invited by Bishop Chisholm was the First Order of the Society of St Francis. This Order is in two parts, male and female. They usually operate separately, with their own officers. Bishop Chisholm wanted the Sisters as well as the Brothers to come, but the Sisters

said that they did not have enough members, which is why the Bishop then turned to the Sisters of the Church. John Chisholm had previously worked as an Assistant Bishop in Papua New Guinea, where the first Order Brothers had been invited in 1953 to work in the urban areas. Some white brothers arrived there in the late 1950s and Bishop Chisholm thought it would be good if they could also come and work in the capital of the Solomon Islands.

The Friars of the First Order now have a number of houses in the Solomon Islands and the European and Solomon Islands Provinces are their largest. Melanesians who wanted to join a Religious Order could now join the SSF First Order Brothers and take a Life Vow, or the Melanesian Brotherhood, in which they would perhaps spend only part of their life under the traditional vows.

For the women, there had thus been only one choice if they wanted to become a nun, profession under Life Vow in the Community of the Sisters of the Church. On Guadalcanal there was a woman who was unusual; she was a catechist, having a village ministry usually exercised by men, and she had a vision of another Sisterhood which would be parallel in many ways to the Melanesian Brotherhood. It would be organised on similar lines, have a similar Rule and Constitution, and not require the members to take a Life Vow. She sought the backing of the Melanesian Brotherhood, which she received in the mid-1970s, and then she and a small group of women planned the setting up of the new Order. This order would be called the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia. It started on Guadalcanal, the founder Nester Tiboe's home island, taking over the buildings of a former school, and later a training centre at Verana'aso, near Maravovo, the first Anglican Christian village on the island. At first the Community drew its members only from the Solomons, but then a young woman joined from the Republic of Vanuatu, Collin Wobur. She later became Head

Sister, and when she handed over that role in 2016, she was asked to start a household of the Sisters in Vanuatu, where the Melanesian Brotherhood already had a number of Households. The Sisterhood has grown rapidly, having nearly fifty Sisters and many Novices, making it one of the larger Communities of Sisters in the Anglican Communion. The community is supported by Associates (like Companions to the Brothers), and there are members in Melanesia, Australia and the UK.



# A RELIGIOUS LIFE

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Bringing us up to date with the religious orders, ACoM's Communication Officer Aldrin Peloko reports...

## THE COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF MELANESIA

(CSM) offers young women today in Melanesia an opportunity of training and mission, so that they may serve Christ in the church and society where they live. They provide pastoral care for women and teenage children and uphold the Christian principles of family life.

There are 49 Sisters, 28 Novices and 17 Aspirants working in 6 Households including the Community's Headquarters at Verana'aso. Besides their mission and ministry, the community is planning to work on improving their income generating activities, rebuilding their Chapel, renovating Sisters' houses, building a library and new classrooms at their HQ, and extending the Ellison Pogo Household in Honiara for rent.

Sister Annie Alaha from Malaita is the Head Sister and the Most Reverend George Takeli, Archbishop of Melanesia is the Bishop Visitor of the Community.

**PRAYER POINTS** – *Sr Annie says the use of mobile phones has contributed to the many challenges in the community. In addition, the community is struggling with the provision of electric lighting to enable activities or study at night.*

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## THE MELANESIAN BROTHERHOOD

works in all nine dioceses within the Anglican Church of Melanesia with 188 Brothers and 154 Novices. Furthermore, it reaches out to five dioceses within the Anglican Province of Papua New Guinea, one diocese in the IFI Church of the Philippines and one diocese of New Westminster – Vancouver (Canada).

Mainly the plan for this year and the future is focused on the establishment of mission extension and development to the Dioceses both locally and abroad. However, the major challenge being faced is the improvement of the capacity of the Brotherhood in terms of education, finance and leadership.

**PRAYER POINTS** – *Brother Nelson Bako as the new Head Brother from March 2017. The manpower resources of the Brotherhood are at present declining and it is of course a focal issue of the Community. Nevertheless, many young men are still interested to test their vocations in the Brotherhood. Please pray for those thinking of becoming Brothers.*

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**THE SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS'** mission is to – “Go and Rebuild my Church”; to bring back Christian people from darkness to light; visit the old and sick, share and help those who are in prison, and help those who have problems in families, communities or within society.

SSF in the Solomon Islands is currently made up of 33 Brothers and 20 Novices in 9 Friaries;

Saint Francis Friary Auki and Collin Bauro Friary Malaita Diocese, Collin Bauro Friary Busa in DOM, San Damiano Friary Kirakira in the Diocese of Hanuato'o, Holy Martyrs Friary Luesalo in the Diocese of Temotu, Santa Chiara Friary Haevo in the Diocese of Ysabel, La-Verna Friary Hautambu in the Diocese of Guadalcanal, Little Portion Friary Hautambu, M/Devis Friary Vuru and Patteson House Friary in Honiara Diocese of Central Melanesia.

Major plans for the community this year 2017 and in the future, is to build a new Friary in the Diocese of Vanuatu and New Caledonia and improve the La-Verna Friary at their Headquarters in Hautambu, West of Guadalcanal by building new houses for Postulants and Aspirants.

**PRAYER POINTS** – *“Though we always work to achieve our mission statement, finance was and is a major obstacle to the mission and ministry to go around the scattered islands in Solomon Islands,” Minister Provincial Brother Samson Siho highlighted.*

*Not only that, but the absence of a Chaplain to look after the spiritual welfare of the Community, is a concern.*

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## **THE COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH**

(CSC) are faithful to the gospel values of Poverty Life in their mission and ministry. The Eucharist and Divine Office (usually fourfold) are the heart of the Community life.

The community has 8 Households: St. Scholastica's in the Diocese of Ysabel, St. Gabriel's, in the Diocese of Hanuato'o, St. Raphael in the Diocese of Malaita, St. Mary's in the Diocese of Temotu, Patteson House in the Diocese of Central Melanesia and Tetete ni Kolivuti (TNK), the Christian Care Centre and a newly built Household in the Henderson area in the Diocese of Guadalcanal.

Currently there are 40 Sisters, 6 Novices, 6 Postulants and 1 Aspirant in the community.

**PRAYER POINTS** – *Remembering Revd Sr Veronica as she takes up the role of Provincial Sister (from March 2017), completing the retreat centre at TNK – “Though plans are implemented, finance was and is always a major challenge to the community,” Sr. Emily Assistant Provincial, said.*

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN MELANESIA AND HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THEM, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHARITY.**

# PRAYER DIARY

## 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 and Bishop Leonard Dawea. For all the staff working at the Headquarters at Lata.

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

## Tuesday

For the Society of St Francis throughout the world, including Melanesia. We give thanks for the 33 Brothers and 20 Novices in 9 Friaries, and for their work with unemployed young men.

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.

## 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, Bishop James Ligo and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Luganville on the island of Santo.

For the generosity of supporters providing school scholarships, enabling students to complete their education.

## Friday

The Community of the Sisters of Melanesia and their work with women throughout the islands. For Head Sister Annie and Assistant Head Sister Jessy and the 49 Sisters, 28 Novices and 17 Aspirants working in 6 households, including the new Household in Vanuatu.

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

## Saturday

The Diocese of Malaita, Diocesan Bishop Sam Sahu and Assistant Bishop Alfred Hou. For the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters at Auki.

For Church schools, rural training centres, the Bishop Patteson Theological College and John Coleridge Patteson University, staff and pupils.

# ...please pray

## **Sunday**

For the Most Revd George Takeli in his role as Archbishop of Melanesia and as Diocesan Bishop of Central Melanesia. For all the staff in the Diocesan Headquarters in Honiara.

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.

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

## **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 Davidson Nwaeramo, and all who minister and worship there.

## **Tuesday**

For the Community of the Sisters of the Church and for Sr Veronica in her new position as Provincial Sister for the Solomon Islands Pacific Region. We pray for the 40 Sisters, 6 Novices, 6 Postulants and 1 Aspirant in this community.

For the Christian Care Centre and their work on gender based violence with police and community leaders. For Sr Phyllis Sau as the coordinator.

## **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 Patteson Alfred Worek and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Sola.

For the Mothers' Union in the Province, their Headquarters in Honiara and their guest houses. For their work on literacy programmes, couples counselling, the Girls Friendly Society, savings clubs and the Positive Parenting Programme. For Mary Vunagi MU President, diocesan workers and volunteers.

## **Friday**

For the Melanesian Brotherhood in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG, Philippines and Canada. For the new Head Brother Nelson Bako. 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 from each other.

## **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.

# FROM BROTHER TO BISHOP

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*MMUK Trustee Revd Jacky Wise, spoke with Bishop Leonard Dawea while he was in Chester Diocese about his religious journey.*

## **WHAT AN AMAZING JOURNEY? WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT IT ALL NOW?**

*When you first start off as a Melanesian Brother you don't know what the future has in store for you. I was a very quiet and shy person, but each time I encountered difficulties, I saw opportunities opening up for me. When I first entered the Brotherhood, I prayed to God and would say, "I believe you called me. Here I am".*

## **WOULD YOU CALL THAT A SENSE OF CALLING, OR WAS IT SOMETHING THAT YOU WANTED FOR YOURSELF?**

*I can say it was a true calling. I was in the Brotherhood for fifteen years, three years as a Novice and twelve years as a Brother.*

## **DO YOU FEEL THAT COMING TO CHESTER WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR CALLING?**

*I had a dream and it was an important vision for me. When I came to Chester to study for a*

*degree, that was part of the dream. Then ten years later when I became a priest, that saw the fulfillment of that dream. It was a long journey.*

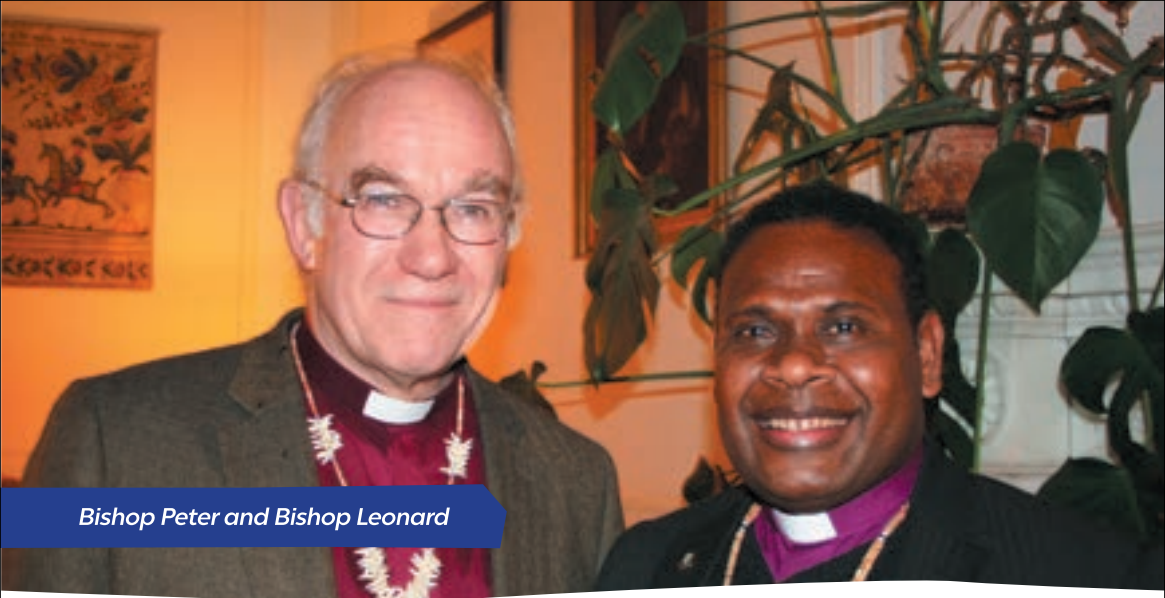
## **WAS THE DEGREE HARD?**

*As a leaver from Form 3 I didn't think that it would be possible academically to go to university but with faith and trust in God I think to myself that I can do it. It was hard, especially settling into the new culture, and learning English well enough to manage in lectures.*

## **WHEN YOU WERE INVITED TO BECOME BISHOP WAS THAT NOT PART OF YOUR CALLING TOO?**

*Yes, right from when I was made a priest many people would say to me that I would not stay only as a priest. Many people, including some children, spoke to me and I prayed and prayed to God not to let that happen to me! But I also prayed that if it was in his will, that I would become his mouthpiece and do this work for him.*





**Bishop Peter and Bishop Leonard**

**SEVERAL PEOPLE FROM THE UK CAME TO MELANESIA FOR YOUR ENTHRONEMENT AS BISHOP.**

*I was so thankful to Bishop Peter, from Chester Diocese, because as soon as he heard the news, he asked how to get to Santa Cruz as he was going to clear his diary and he would be there. I am very thankful that he preached at the service and also that Barbara Molyneux from Heswall came along.*

**THERE IS THE PRAYERFUL LIFE AND ROOTEDNESS IN CHRIST THAT IS SUCH A PART OF LIFE IN THE MELANESIAN BROTHERHOOD, BUT HAVE THERE BEEN OTHER INFLUENCES TOO ON YOUR MINISTRY?**

*The Brothers were of course the main influence but it was partly down to myself too. We all have a responsibility to look after our own calling. There are people who have a vocation, who don't look after it. I prayed a lot for my vocation, to keep it alive. We know that God is there for us but we have to reach out. He is always faithful*

*and if we spend our time in quiet prayer then we won't miss out on it.*

**IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WILL BE A GREAT ENCOURAGER. WILL THAT BE PART OF YOUR ROLE IN THE FUTURE?**

*In my Diocese, I want our young people to join the priesthood and I have taken this message into schools. I say to them that if you want to follow what I do, and have courage and determination and confidence, then you can follow my example.*

*I want to see a prayerful diocese and a diocese that engages in mission. My background in mission and spirituality will help me to encourage my priests and my people to be a praying people. I only have a small background and God has chosen me and it is a heartfelt calling. I want this to rub off on all people and I am looking forward to doing that.*

# NEWS IN BRIEF

On Sunday 19th March at Tabalia, Bishop Michael Tavoia blessed Brother Nelson Bako **as the new Head Brother**. Brother Nelson studied at the University of Chester where he obtained his BA honours degree in Theology and Religious Studies in 2011. He is a thoughtful, caring and intelligent man who has a deep humility. Please pray for Br Nelson as he takes up this very important and responsible ministry.

**St Stephen School, Pamua** in the Diocese of Huanato'o, has a new female Deputy Principal for the first time in history. Mrs Anna Isou Usumae graduated with a Diploma in teaching Secondary Science from SICHE and Bachelor of Education degree in service from SINU in 2016.

**The Anglican Church in Vanuatu** has recently introduced the Girls Friendly Society (GFS). During the launch, the regional leader of the Mothers' Union, Anika Shiba, said this was the first time for girl's society in the country. The Mothers Union also manages the Girls Friendly Society in the Solomon Islands.

**Pupils from the Norman Palmer School** near Honiara and the Kings School in East Devon have been exchanging letters on weather patterns and life in their respective countries.

**UK Associates to the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia** have been working hard to increase their monthly donation to provide lunches for Novices from £100 per month to £125 a month. Many thanks to all the donors.

**TNK now have new solar panels** thanks to UK fundraising organised by Sr Veronica. The panels have replaced ones stolen from the community last year.





*Archbishop George, Revd Sr Veronica, Sr Emily & Bishop Nathan*

## LEADING SISTER

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Sister Veronica Vasethe has been installed as the Provincial Sister of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) in the Solomon Islands, by the Bishop of Guadalcanal the Right Reverend Nathan Tome at Tetete ni Kolivuti. Sr Veronica was elected to the post of Sister Provincial last year, replacing Sr Kathleen Kapei.

In her first address Sister Veronica spoke of her vision for the Community, saying: "Firstly as a leader, it is my duty to encourage each Sister to fulfil her vocation. Secondly, I would like to promote the Spirituality of the Community, by encouraging the Sisters to live up to their Christian Values and by the CSC Spirituality being lived in the Community Houses.

"Thirdly, I would like to promote the Mission of the Community to be partners with the Church of Melanesia, the Religious Communities, the Government and the NGOs. My Community needs to work with these bodies to address the issues and challenges that this country is facing at this time. It is by

the Spirit of collaboration and respect that we bring change, hope and transformation to our people. Finally, I would like to complete the Retreat Centre Project in June 2017. I might have raised my hopes too high, but it needs to be completed and I believe God will be my helper."

Sister Veronica joined the CSC in 1989 and later made her profession in 2001. In 2007, she left the Solomon Islands for studies at Trinity College in Bristol. In September of the same year she was ordained to the priesthood and served as a Curate at St Andrew's Church, Ham, in the Diocese of Southwark, until earlier this year. While in the UK, Sr Veronica was also a Trustee of the Melanesian Mission.

With the blessing and support of the Archbishop of Melanesia, the Most Reverend George Takeli, Sr Veronica will carry out her role as a priest at TNK and the Christian Care Centre, under a hospitality decision offered by the Church's Council of Bishops. This has been given while the ordination of women is being discussed by the Church's General Synod.

# BISHOPS ON TOUR



In January and February Bishops Ellison and Leonard were in the UK, first attending a course in Canterbury and then visiting friends and supporters in London, Exeter and Chester Dioceses.

Reflecting on his first visit to the UK, Bishop Ellison said: ***"It has been a great privilege and honour for me to come over for the conference at Canterbury to convene with many bishops from all over the Anglican Communion. Meeting supporters, visiting UK schools and attending the Rededication of Patteson's Cross will stay with me for life."***

Bishop Ellison, who is the Bishop of Ysabel, also attended Sr Veronica's final service at her UK parish before returning to the Solomon Islands.

Bishop Leonard was invited to preach at Tavistock, where he had spent a year with the late Fr George Elo. The Bishop was clearly pleased to be back in Tavistock, and he was able to renew a number of old acquaintances. At a shared lunch in the Bishop's honour, Bishop Leonard spoke of his journey in faith since his time in Devon, his family, and what it was like to be a new bishop. Old friends said afterwards, 'it was quite like a family reunion and we felt truly blessed to have such a deeply faithful bishop with us, and we look forward very much to future visits.'

**MMUK Trustee and UK Secretary to the Companions of the Melanesian Brotherhood, Barbara Molyneux, reports on Bishop Leonard's visit to Chester Diocese.**

Bishop Leonard is one of four Melanesian Brothers who were funded by the Diocese of Chester, the University of Chester and the Chester Companions of the Melanesian Brotherhood, to study an honours degree in Theology. The University of Chester was very pleased to welcome their first Graduate to become a Bishop.

Of particular interest to Bishop Leonard was a visit to the Chester Diocesan Retreat and Conference Centre of Foxhill. The Director Revd Jonathan Green provided a tour and gave Bishop Leonard ideas for his planned Retreat Centre in Temotu.

The Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster and his wife Elizabeth hosted a supper party at Bishop's House for Diocesan staff, Companions of the Melanesian Brotherhood and church school teachers. Bishop Willie Pwaisiho and his wife Kate also hosted a splendid lunch at Gawsforth with family and friends.

On the Sunday before he departed, Bishop Leonard attended the main Service at Chester Cathedral in the morning, fitting in lunch with Bishop Keith of Birkenhead and his wife Rosie and son. He then attended Evensong at St Mary's, Weaverham where he was interviewed by John Freeman, Chairman of Chester's Melanesian Link Committee.

It was time of joy for Bishop Leonard and our Diocese.



# MEMBERSHIP

Keep up to date with news, events and prayer points from the Anglican Church of Melanesia and from the Melanesian Mission, by completing and returning this form to the address at the bottom of page 18.

Membership of The Melanesian Mission is open to any individual, church or organisation interested in promoting the work of the Charity. Only registered Members can vote at the AGM and elect the Charity's Trustees.

There is no subscription for membership, though it is hoped that members will support the work of the charity, with prayer and giving. The Mission is required to keep an up-to-date register of all its members.

I / We

wish to register as a member(s) of the Melanesian Mission for 2017/18

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Email:

There is a magazine archive available to view and download from the charity's website. To reduce costs, printed copies of the magazine will only be sent to those Members requesting one.

I require  printed copies of Melanesia News for my parish

## Please send me more information on:

Prayer Support

Personal Giving

Leaving a Legacy

Parish Giving

Collection Boxes

Holding a Fundraising Event

Organising a Melanesian Display / Talk

School Partnerships

Volunteering in Melanesia

## Resources Available:

Leaflets

Posters & Display Panels

Documentaries

Prayer and Reflective Materials

You can sign up for the Charity's email newsletter and follow the charity on Facebook and Twitter.

Turn over  
for Gift Aid



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Date:

## Other ways to give:

Secure online donations via our website: [www.mmuk.net](http://www.mmuk.net)

### By Standing Order

Please contact the Charity for more information

**By cheque**, payable to The Melanesian Mission, posted to the address below:

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

**Tel:** 01404 851656 **Email:** [katie.drew@mmuk.net](mailto:katie.drew@mmuk.net) **Web:** [www.mmuk.net](http://www.mmuk.net)



THE MELANESIAN MISSION  
UK Registered Charity  
Number 1104551

*f*



# DISAPPEARING ISLANDS

MMUK supporter Alex Leger shares his memories and concerns

I feel as if I know the Solomons well, as when I was 19 I was sent to teach at an Anglican mission school as a cadet VSO volunteer.

One boy in my class came from an artificial island, Walande, made from coral rocks that had been piled up over hundreds of years to make a platform above the waves in a lagoon - and quite by accident, I visited it. It was Christmas 1966 and there were 200 inhabitants.

Walande's inhabitants seldom saw a white face. Many of the people wore grass skirts and little else. The floors of the leaf houses sat directly on the coral rock and the roofs were wind blown and ragged at the edges. All water had to be brought from the mainland in containers made from giant bamboo. The only transport were canoes made from hollowed out logs. The islanders survived by fishing and by planting vegetable gardens on land rented from people on the nearby Malaita island.

Fast-forward to 2002 and filming for the BBC's Blue Peter programme, I featured Walande. The village had grown to over a thousand and fibreglass dinghies with outboard motors had replaced dug-outs. European clothes were worn and the floors of the houses were no longer resting on the coral rock. They were now perched on two-metre high stilts, and with good reason. The sea level was rising faster

than their collective ability to gather rocks to raise the height of the island.

Then last year I was invited to join a group going to the Solomons from the Melanesian Mission and was asked to film the devastation that was once Walande Island. What we saw when steaming up the quiet waters of the Port Adam lagoon was extraordinary. Instead of the sizeable island crammed with houses there was only one house left.

I filmed an interview with the last occupant of the island. He readily confessed to being scared at what was happening. Everyone I spoke to agreed that the turbulent weather and sea level rise was something they had never experienced before. They knew that it had everything to do with climate change.

Throughout Melanesia, islands are being abandoned. On remote Ontong Java some 4,000 people wait to be relocated to a site on Guadalcanal. The advance party has already arrived and set up a makeshift community. In the Reef and Duff Islands in the South of the Solomons, there is a constant flow of refugees to higher ground.

Perhaps the saddest thing about all this is that customs that have survived the centuries are being forgotten in the clamour to provide a safe refuge for children and grandchildren.

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

This year's Annual General Meeting and Festival Day will be on Saturday 23rd September, at St Mary's Church, Nantwich from 10.45 – 16.00.

We are delighted to be at one of the finest mediaeval churches in the country, in the middle of Nantwich, a historic market town in South Cheshire. The church dates back to the 14th century and we will be holding part of the festival, including our eucharist, in the main body of the church

[www.stmarysnantwich.org.uk](http://www.stmarysnantwich.org.uk)



The town is near Crewe railway station and is just off the M6 motorway. There is a rail service between Crewe and Nantwich and several places to stay if you need overnight accommodation: The Crown Hotel in Nantwich (01270 625283) is 300 yards from the church, and Crewe has both a Holiday Inn and Travelodge. ***We look forward to seeing you!***

*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*



## The Melanesian Mission

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**Email:** [katie.drew@mmuk.net](mailto:katie.drew@mmuk.net)

**Website:** [www.mmuk.net](http://www.mmuk.net)

**UK Registered Charity Number** 1104551

Many thanks to all who have contributed articles and photographs for this edition of the magazine, including MMUK Trustees and Alex and Henry Leger.

**Please contact the Charity for more information on its activities, sign up for the Charity's email newsletter and follow the charity on Facebook and Twitter.**

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