

# MELANESIA NEWS



## GOD'S FAMILY

PRAYER, PEOPLE, GIVING



**ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Festival Day & AGM Reports

Bishops on Tour

# ONE BIG FAMILY

At our online AGM on All Saint's Day, we were reminded in Melanesian song that we are 'One Big Family' in Jesus Christ. The Gospel reading for this Festival -the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) – reminds us that we are called to live distinctively as Christians in the world and thereby witness to God's presence and character by who we are, by what we do and what we say. To many Christians, certainly to me, the Beatitudes are hugely challenging. I may look to study them but they seem to end up studying me! In a world where wealth can mean success, Jesus says, 'blessed are the poor'; in a world where ruthlessness is seen as a desirable quality, Jesus says, 'blessed are the merciful'; in a world where keeping quiet and not putting your head above the parapet is

smart, Jesus says, 'blessed are the persecuted ones'.

Stretched in learning how to live distinctively in the world, I am grateful that we are not called to do this alone but in the company of other saints. Particularly, I feel we are fortunate to have the Church of Melanesia as our companions in the Gospel. We are thankful for the fellowship and support of our brothers and sisters 13000 miles away on the other side of the planet. These members of our family teach us to walk more humbly upon the earth, to reflect more prayerfully, to live distinctively and to witness more naturally to our faith.



The articles in this issue of Melanesian News speak about our relationships, our support and learning together. We enjoyed the fellowship and wisdom of Brother Nelson, Sister Veronica and the Melanesian bishops who came this summer for the Lambeth Conference, then visited people in Chester, Exeter and other parts of the UK and were a central part of our Festival Day at St Martin's -in-the-Fields, London. You can read about how our support for ACoM through the COVID Appeal is being used in schools. You can hear about the 50 year ministry of the Sisters of the Church in Solomons. There is an article on how the learning about climate change in Melanesia was used to educate secondary children at Exeter Cathedral. John Pinder's piece on his 55 year connection and ministry with Melanesia and MMUK highlights how friendship, care and committed service

are the heartbeat of this family. This edition reminds us there is always more we can do to support one another but we are glad of our partnership. We are hoping to facilitate visits again in 2023 and 2024. Can you think of someone who would benefit from such a visit?

Reading the Beatitudes reminds us that we are Kingdom people -God's people now and yet also preparing for eternity. This is the hope that hold us together as One Big Family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, co-workers in God's Mission and longing for a world made new.

+Mark Rylands

Chair of MMUK

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# MMUK FESTIVAL DAY

## MMUK's EO reports on a rather hectic and ever changing Festival Day.

After many changed dates, programmes and arrangements, our festival day took place at St Martin in the Fields in central London on Saturday 13th August with a wonderful turnout of friends.

What I saw of the Eucharist - coming in late as I did, due to difficulties with some of the Bishops flying home that day, and that is another story - was very uplifting and made even more special, thanks to the stunning St Martin's singers. Archbishop Leonard preached, Bishop Mark Rylands celebrated and Revd Sr Veronica led the intercessions.

After lunch we had the privilege of hearing from our Melanesian friends about the joys and challenges of their ministries across Melanesia.

Archbishop Leonard was asked about his journey from Brother to Archbishop.



He spoke about being called once to be a brother, and again for priest and then to be Bishop and now Archbishop, responding each time to God's call. Asked if he had enjoyed the Lambeth Conference, Archbishop Leonard said, he had not really known what to expect, but had found the online Bishops' conversations leading up to the conference very useful. These small groups then met in person at the conference to continue their reflections together. The Archbishop said it was amazing to see God's work in different countries, encouraging us to remain as a family, strengthened by our diversity. In the challenges for his Province, Archbishop

Leonard talked about climate change as the continual threat, but taken over in importance in recent times by COVID. One of the reasons a new larger Southern Cross mission boat is needed is due to climate change – intense storms and needing to get to communities after climate induced emergencies.

Bishop James Tama, Bishop of Vanuatu and New Caledonia spoke movingly of living through multiple cyclones which destroyed his own home, office, cathedral and schools across his diocese, and then dealing with a volcanic eruption. Many people lost all their belongings and had to evacuate their homes and villages. Asked about his prayers for the future, Bishop James talked about the importance of children making up for lost learning time, due to the destruction of the cyclones and volcanic eruptions and COVID.



Revd Br Nelson and Revd Sr Veronica gave updates on their communities and plans for the future, including 50 years of CSC in Solomons, reported in this magazine. Br Nelson has also written about his time at the Lambeth Conference in this edition of the magazine.

Recordings of these interviews can be found on the charity's YouTube channel.

As we came to a close, MMUK Chair, Bishop

Mark Rylands, paid tribute to our retiring MMUK officers – Revd Canon John Pinder standing down as Trustee and Revd Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne standing down as



Archivist. Archbishop Leonard announced that in recognition for their long years of service to MMUK and ACoM, two annual awards have been named in their honour. The John Pinder Award will be presented at Selwyn College, and the Brian Macdonald-Milne Award given at Bishop Patteson Theological College.



After prayers from Bishop Willie Pwaisiho, we gathered in a boat prop for a fitting group picture.

Next year we are combining the Festival Day and AGM on Saturday 16th September, at Chester Cathedral. Hope to see you there, if not before.

Katie Drew

MMUK Executive Officer

# AGM

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**The charity's postponed AGM took place online on Tuesday 1st November, with supporters from across the UK joining.**

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The meeting adopted the 2021 / 2022 Accounts and the appointment of Thomas Westcott as the Independent Examiner for the 2022 / 2023 Accounts. The minutes for the last AGM which was held at Exeter Cathedral on 18th September, were also approved. These documents can be found on the charity's website.

The members accepted the Trustees proposal for the re-election of

**Rt Revd Mark Rylands as Trustee and Chair for 2 years**

**Mr Steve Scoffield as Trustee & Hon Treasurer for 3 years**

**A third trustee vacancy remained unfilled.**

Bishop Mark Rylands again paid tribute to Revd Canon John Pinder as he stepped down as Trustee and Revd Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne as Archivist.

MMUK EO Katie Drew reported on the Festival Day and projects for the year ahead including more visits both ways, expanding the Environment Observatories, care for creation school resources and a new website.

Trustees were asked how supporters could best support the charity. Vice Chair Mike Gilbertson asked supporters to pray for the unfilled Trustee role and consider if they might know someone suitable to take on the role which will have specific

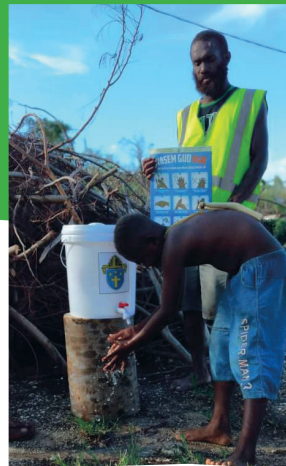
responsibility for Fundraising. The charity continues to struggle with capacity and the need for additional funding to resource the projects and work requested by the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

It was announced that for 2023 the charity will be combining the Festival Day and AGM on Saturday 16th September, at Chester Cathedral.

After a short break Nick Stanley gave a presentation on Objects as Insights: R H Codrington's Collections from Melanesia. A recording of Nick's talk can be found on the charity's YouTube Channel. Many thanks to Nick for his insightful presentation.



# COVID APPEAL



At the beginning of this year, as we in the UK were coming out of COVID restrictions and fear, the virus had its first community transmissions in Solomons and then soon after in Vanuatu. The first waves of the virus did prompt some Melanesians to take up the vaccines, but numbers were low and the virus spread across the province. The region's economy was already struggling due to closed borders and reduced imports, and food and goods prices increased. Schools closed for six months and many lost their jobs.

## The Anglican Church of Melanesia has responded by:



Supplying handwashing facilities for schools, churches and isolated communities



Training and equipping community groups to make face masks



A social media campaign to encourage uptake of the COVID vaccine and to tackle false news



Isolation units in boarding schools for staff and pupils with COVID



Hardship funds for families struggling with food price increases



Ensuring human rights and climate justice programmes continue

MMUK has been able to support this work with donations of over £17,500. Many thanks to all who supported this appeal through prayer and giving.

ACoM's General Secretary Dr Abraham Hauriasi wrote in November to thank supporters –

*"We are very grateful for your continuous support towards the Covid appeal. My preference will be to use whatever funds we now have from MMUK, to provide some support to our schools so they can operate until 23 December, the delayed end of the academic year.*

*"Almost every school, including ACoM run ones, are struggling to stay afloat due to many parents being unable to pay school fees and a government directive for schools to reduce schools fees by up to 30%. In addition, the national government is slow in paying its grants to schools on time."*

Solomons is currently battling the latest wave of infections, and though many people's symptoms are mild, MMUK will continue to see how best to support our friends in Melanesia.

# MU PROJECTS

## MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

••• The Mothers' Union holistic mission in Melanesia improves the lives of women and their families in the region. Here the MU reports on two fairly simple projects which are making a real difference :

**The Savings Club Programme** is a priority for the Mothers' Union and ACoM (Anglican Church of Melanesia) has facilitated the scheme with donor partners. This year in Ysabel it has reached 56 communities, with 81 separate groups and in total over one thousand members. The programme runs income generating projects, such as clothes dyeing and growing crops for sale, teaches numeracy and the pricing of goods for sale, and then facilitates depositing the money into a safe, secure savings scheme.



Participants now understand about making money and saving their money in order to meet their families' future needs, such as school fees and healthcare. It has given increased confidence and control to women, as income generators and providers for their families.

UK Mothers' Union members and MMUK supporters have helped set up new **Sewing Workshops** in the Dioceses of Temotu and Guadalcanal, following requests from the Bishops following the Lambeth Conference.



Income generation for women is limited in Solomon Islands, as many girls do not complete their education and cannot get paid jobs. Sewing workshops teach women to make clothes and give them valuable skills to generate their own money, improving their self-esteem and livelihoods. Six donated sewing machines, along with accessories and materials were sent out in October, and the charity has another four sewing machines to go out in the next shipping in 2023.

Many thanks to all those who donated items and money to fund this sewing project.





# NEWS IN BRIEF

## New Bishop of Malaita

Revd Michael Sau Bebeu has been elected to become the sixth Bishop for the Diocese of Malaita. Revd Michael will succeed the Rt Revd Sam Sahu who will officially retire on 13 January 2023 after serving the diocese for the last 14 years. The consecration and installation of Revd Michael is scheduled for 16 April 2023 at the diocesan Cathedral at Fiu, Malaita. The Archbishop of Melanesia calls on all members to uphold in prayer Revd Michael and his family as they prepare to take on this important responsibility in the church.

## News from MBH

Melanesian Brother Andrew Letade celebrated his 70th birthday in October at Tabalia. He came to the Brotherhood when he was 17 years old and has served ever since. The Melanesian Brotherhood is preparing for its Great Conference in October 2023 and its 100th anniversary in 2025. Both events will be a massive undertaking for the community. Please remember the Brothers in your prayers.

## Visits

With COVID restrictions lifting, MMUK is expecting more Melanesian visitors to the UK and overseeing visits to the region for UK volunteers, teachers, church workers, ordinands and for sabbaticals. Partial grants for visits are available from the charity for placements with ACoM schools, the Mothers' Union and the four Anglican Religious Orders. Contact the charity if you are considering a visit in 2023 / 2024.

## Website

The charity will be launching a new website in 2023 [www.mmuk.charity](http://www.mmuk.charity) In the meantime there will be limited access to the old website. Apologies for this inconvenience.

# LAMBETH CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

**The Revd Brother Nelson MBH and the Revd Sister Veronica CSC were invited to be part of the Lambeth Conference Chaplaincy Team. Here Brother Nelson writes about the experience –**

The 2022 Lambeth Conference has been a great experience for me as a member of the Melanesian Brotherhood. This was my second time to be part of the Lambeth Chaplaincy team, but the experience was different. What did I get out of this global conference? Well, I would say there were three things:

1. Understanding the diversity of the communion
2. Being able to relate to people from different backgrounds
3. Gaining confidence to approach things that are considered difficult to achieve

Listening and speaking to those of different cultures, gives one the knowledge of how diverse the Anglican Communion is. In understanding the diverse nature of the communion, it helps one to relate to people of different backgrounds in a more positive manner. Understanding the diverse nature of the church gives one the view that God's grace belongs to all people who exist on the earth. We might be critical but to live as a Christian, is all about recognising the difference of others. It is with these others we can practice loving our neighbours.

In recognising the value of others, it has helped me to relate positively with people of different cultures and traditions. Understanding the difference helps one to relate well to people who come from a different context and who have different views of things. It helps one to think more inclusively and be able to appreciate the differences that exist in society.



Furthermore, the other thing that one takes away from this Lambeth is the confidence to strive through the challenges of being so inferior in thinking. By interacting, listening and talking with people with status, I have had the opportunity to learn and boost my



own confidence to relate more to people. It also gives me the confidence to reach out more positively in mission, in proclaiming the gospel within all contexts.

The unity and oneness of Christ's body was truly visible all throughout the Conference. Even though there had been differences that exist, the unity of the Church overcomes all these differences. One could feel that through the prayers of all people, we were able to share, listen and learn from each other with great love and care.

Many thanks to the pastoral team for being a great team, to the Lambeth staff for all the arrangements and financing my airfares and other travel expenses. To ACoM for caring for my travel expenses and the MMUK and UK companions for the great care given while in the UK. All these are the visible symbols of oneness in Christ's body.

### **The Revd Brother Nelson MBH**

**Following the Lambeth Conference, Brother Nelson also went on his own UK tour visiting companions and supporters in Chester, Exeter and London Dioceses. While in London, Brother Nelson admitted the Revd Sam Rylands, who stayed with the Brothers early in 2020, as a Companion of the Melanesian Brotherhood.**

**MMUK is inviting the Melanesian Brotherhood Head Brother Augustine to the UK in February 2023, to discuss how UK Companions and supporters can best support the Community as they plan for their Great Conference in 2023 and their 100th anniversary in 2025. There will also be discussions about establishing Melanesian Households in the UK.**

# 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 discussions and decisions to come out of ACoM's General Synod in late 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 pray for the fundraising efforts to enable the Community to finish their chapel at Verana'aso, and give thanks for the generosity of donors.

### 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 the COVID recovery programmes and a good uptake of the vaccines across Melanesia.

### 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 concerns 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 Elect Revd Michael Sau Bebeu who will be consecrated and installed on 16 April 2023 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 Philip Rongotha, and all who minister and worship there.

### Tuesday

For the Community of the Sisters of the Church, and for Sr Veronica, Provincial Sister for the 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 Centres in Solomons. 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, Bishop Patteson Alfred Worek and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Sola.

For the Mothers' Union in the Province, their President Rosemary Sahu 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, Australia and Canada and for the companions worldwide supporting this community.

For ACoM schools, school 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.



# 50 YEARS OF CSC IN SOLOMONS

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The Revd Sr Veronica CSC, Provincial Sister, reflects on the community's, past, present and future -

The Community of the Sisters of the Church, has been in Solomon Islands for 50 years and has grown and borne much fruit, through the leading and the guiding of the Holy Trinity. As Jesus said, 'no branch can bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains on the vine'. (John 15:4) For without the connection to the vine, it cannot bear fruit.

## Ministry

The ministry of the Community took root in the soil of Solomon Islands with great difficulty but continues to grow. Sisters are involved in pastoral ministries of listening, and are engaged fully in parish work, visiting hospitals, and visiting the sick in their homes. We visited the prisons and led Bible studies with inmates before Covid hit this country. One of the sisters is a member of the Parole Board in Solomon Islands. One of the sisters is also an ordained priest, the first female Solomon Islander (although ordained overseas as this is still not possible here).

## Schools

Education is very much part of our mission and

there are some schools that have been started by the Community. The most famous one is St Nicholas School, which now has become a college. There is another one at Kohimarama named after Sr Helen Jane. There is also one at Tetete Ni Kolivuti named after the Founder of our Community, the Mother Emily Kindergarten School.

## Christian Care Centres

Solomon Islands is very much challenged by social issues and so the Community of the Sisters of the Church addresses some of these issues with the Christian Care Centres for women and children who have been affected by domestic violence. The first one is the Christian Care Centre at Tenaru, the second one is the Malaita Care Centre in Auki, the third one is at St Mary's, Luesalo in Temotu and another one will be at St Scholastica, in the Diocese of Ysabel, providing rooms designated for such ministry.

The Solomon Islands government has a Safe Net programme to address social issues, but we provide accommodation for the survivors as well as counselling and support.

## Hospitality

One of our greatest ministries is to offer hospitality to the Anglican Church of Melanesia. Most of the bishops, who have been elected, were elected at Tetete Ni Kolivuti. TNK is regarded as a very peaceful and prayerful place to elect bishops for the ministry of the Church of Melanesia. At this time of writing, ACoM has booked TNK for the election of the next Bishop of Malaita in November.

The government also uses TNK when they have very important meetings. For instance, the Solomon Islands National University came here to reflect, restructure the university, and to visualise its future.

## Retreats

We offer and lead retreats to different groups, and schools at TNK. It is very much part of our ministry to lead retreats for those who seek to be alone with God and to seek some direction for their lives and groups.

## Visiting Islands

We do Christmas Missions and visiting people in their villages and their homes. It is very important to reach out to many who need encouragement and refreshment in their life with God. This is not only for the people, as sisters also need to grow and develop their gifts and talents by being part of a Mission.

## Associates

The numbers of the Associates have increased greatly. At the 50th anniversary, they came in large numbers from many dioceses for the celebration. Associates support the Community by helping to spread the word of God in our villages and islands. They live out their rule of life which is aligned to that of the Community Rule and have experienced the blessing and the goodness of God in their own lives. The Associates have spread far and wide in this country.

## Number of Sisters

The number of sisters in Solomon Islands seems to go up and down. It depends very much on individuals and whether each one wants to offer herself whole heartedly to the Church and to God. However, those have left the Community are still doing great



work for the Lord. Some become teachers, housewives, catechists, and most are committed Christians.

## Life Profession

The aim of this Community is to make Life Profession but only a few sisters have made it and remain faithful. Some also made the commitment, but later realised that they need to be in the wider community. Lifelong commitment is one of the challenges of the Religious Life in the 21st century. Following Jesus is a joyful commitment, but also difficult. We can only try and take one step at a time to live the Religious Life. Furthermore, the ministries mentioned above need sisters who are committed to self-sacrifice and forgetting oneself. 'If you want to become my disciple, you must forget yourself, take up your cross and follow me' (Matthew 16:24)

## The Revd Sr Veronica CSC



# BISHOPS ON TOUR

Bishop Ellison Quity in Bath & Wells Diocese



**Following the Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop of Melanesia and some of his Bishops and their wives visited dioceses around the UK before returning to Melanesia. MMUK Trustee, the Revd Jacky Wise, hosted the Bishop of Ysabel and his wife in the Diocese of Bath & Wells -**

The City of Bath has been firmly placed on the MMUK map. Following the Lambeth conference Bishop Ellison Quity and his wife Jessie spent three days in Bath, hosted largely by the Archdeacon, the Reverend Adrian Youngs. Bishop Ellison, from the Diocese of Ysabel, had the opportunity to give talks, be formally welcomed at a Eucharist at Bath Abbey, and establish relationships with several clergy.

On his first day in Bath, Bishop Ellison visited one of the poorest areas in the

country, where the Reverend Richard White is Vicar. Richard, and his Outreach Officer Nathan, showed Bishop Ellison around some of the projects that have benefited the area of Twerton, including an all-year playing area used by dozens of children. They met people working at the Foodbank, and shared their experiences of ministry in economically deprived areas.

Whilst the Archdeacon took Bishop Ellison to Evensong at Wells Cathedral, Jessie was warmly welcomed at a special Mothers' Union service, commemorating Mary Sumner. The thirty-or-so representatives in Somerset were deeply encouraged by hearing of the training and workshops undertaken by the MU in Melanesia.

At Bath Abbey, Bishop Ellison and Jessie met various members of staff, including the Abbey Missioner, the Reverend Stephen

Girling, who welcomed Bishop Ellison at the Abbey's Midday Eucharist. During the service I interviewed Bishop Ellison, inviting him to reflect on his experience of the Lambeth Conference, the most enduring one being the sharing of prayer and bible studies with bishops from across the world. Whilst at the Abbey, Bishop Ellison gave a talk on various issues affecting Melanesia, including Climate Change, the influence of China and cultural changes such as social media.

There was enough space in the diary to spend time in conversation with several clergy in the city, several of whom have already been invited to go over to teach and train newly ordained clergy in Ysabel. The warmth of the invitation, along with the clear outlining of the various Diocesan needs, has left its mark on the clergy, and there is a hope that some of these invitations will lead to visits to Ysabel. Bishop Ellison was deeply touched by the warm and generous welcome to the City of Bath and hopes that this seed of friendship will flourish, not only through visits, but also in continued times of prayer together.

The Revd Jacky Wise  
MMUK Trustee

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**Now travel is becoming easier, we look forward to welcoming some of the newer bishops back to the UK in 2023 when they attend the New Bishops Course at Canterbury. If you would like to host a bishop, do contact the charity.**  
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**Bishops toured Chester, Ely, Exeter, Lincoln and London Dioceses with MMUK Trustees and supporters following the Lambeth Conference.**



# CARE FOR CREATION SCHOOLS DAYS

With the appointment of Marie Schlenker as the charity's Care for Creation Officer, MMUK is developing its schools' resources and offering training to pupils to become environment champions. In October the charity was invited to run a joint event with Exeter Cathedral and the Met Office, working with a group of students from St Luke's CofE Secondary School. Canon Cate Edmonds from the cathedral writes about the day.

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The aim of the day was to introduce the students to the impact of climate change in general and the real-life problems of Small Island Developing States, with examples from the Solomon Islands. Following this, training was given to use weather charting equipment, which was given to the school for them to engage in this work going forward.

Fifteen students from years 7 and 10 arrived full of expectation and were introduced to Marie Schlenker from MMUK and Nicola Golding and Dr Laura Burgin from the Met Office. The day began with the pupils watching Walande the Final Story film produced by MMUK on the disappearing Solomons island. The students were visibly moved with the firsthand accounts of



living with climate change. The students' emotions ranged from horrified, ill-prepared and disgusted, to excited about the prospect of making a difference.

Laura went on to explain some of the science behind climate change with the use of some fascinating graphics and discussion. Marie followed this with activities about living on small islands and how this has changed with rising sea levels. Marie also explained about the work she had undertaken with students in Solomon Islands to chart what was happening to sea levels on their islands.

Students at Selwyn College in Solomon Islands have helped to set up their own environment observatory and are actively monitoring their local environment to record the impact of climate change in their country. At the moment, they are undertaking regular measurements of temperature, rainfall, water levels and shoreline change on their school grounds.

Following a lunchbreak, Marie engaged the students in a Mitigation and Adaptation game, which encouraged the students to look at ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing further global warming, as well as adapting to environmental damage already caused by climate change. The students were then instructed on the use of equipment they could take back to school to use for their own monitoring of the weather.

The day ended with a discussion as to how they could, as a school help to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and then each student made their own personal promise as to how they were going to look after the environment.

The students were very engaged



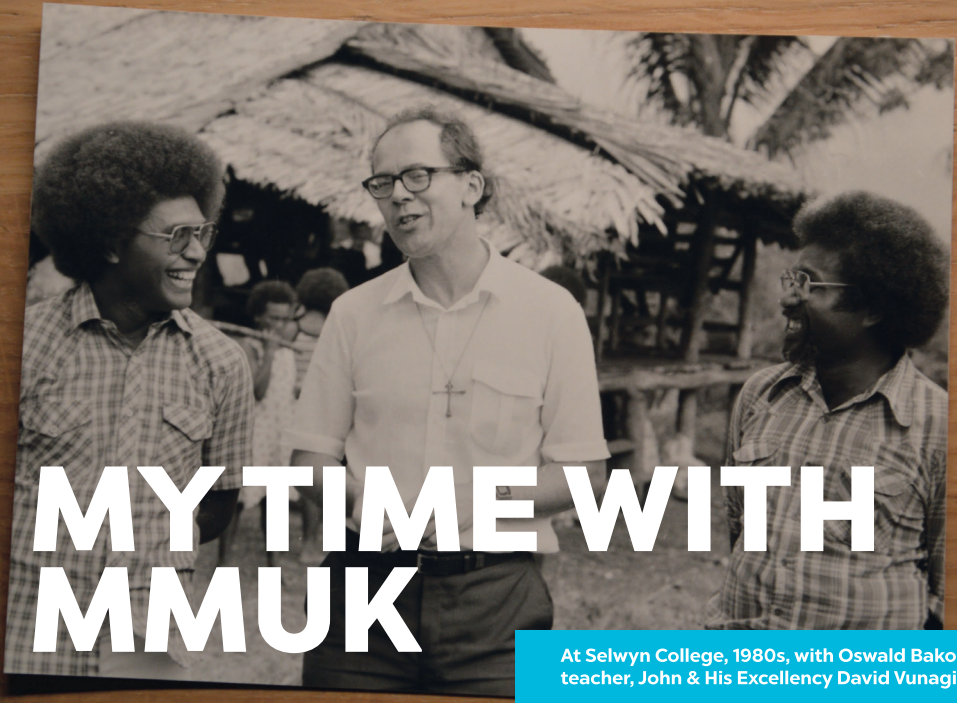
**Marie teaching students about climate change in the Diocese of Exeter**

throughout the day and keen to make a difference. At the end of the day, they came up with lots of great ideas for practical climate action and it will be great to see how these ideas will evolve.

### **Canon Cate Edmonds – Exeter Cathedral**

**The charity is also trialling online care for creation schools' materials for Key Stages 2 to 5 with church schools in the Diocese of Chester. These resources will be available on the charity's new website in the New Year.**

**With school visits now possible again, the charity's Schools' Trustee, Daphne Jordan has been visiting schools in the UK partnered with Melanesian schools. The charity is looking at strengthening these school partnerships and looking into more shared learning experiences. For more information on this work, contact the charity.**



# MY TIME WITH MMUK

At Selwyn College, 1980s, with Oswald Bako, teacher, John & His Excellency David Vunagi

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## At the 2022 AGM, the Revd Canon John Pinder stepped down as a Trustee. John recounts here his longstanding relationship with the charity

It all started 55 years ago in 1967. I had been at theological college for 18 months but I didn't feel ready to be ordained. An Australian friend gave me four addresses to write to and Archdeacon Harry Reynolds answered my letter by return, offering me a teaching post at Pawa Secondary School on the Island of Ugi.

The journey out was quite an experience in itself, first on the liner Ellenis to Australia and then by the MV Tulagi, a cargo boat which made its way slowly to Honiara, calling at Norfolk Island, where I visited the Patteson Memorial Chapel, and Santo.

The final leg of the journey was on the MV Baddeley, the size of a fishing boat.

I fell in love with Pawa from the moment I arrived, despite the rainfall of 300 inches a year which made the bed sheets permanently damp and the mosquitoes, which gave me malaria despite the prophylactics. After two months I was asked to be acting head of Pawa, while Desmond Probets and family were on leave. It was a secondary boarding school of 120 boys, from many different islands, including Vanuatu. The boys were amazingly mature and self-sufficient. We were expected to maintain the buildings and grounds, grow as much of our own food as possible and care for 100 head of cattle, pigs and poultry. Every Monday

afternoon the whole school collected coconuts from the plantation and the resulting copra helped to pay for the running costs of the school. Our only contact with the outside world was by radio and the occasional visit by a mission ship.

Some of the students became lifelong friends, including Willie Pwaisiho and Ellison Pogo, later archbishop of Melanesia. When Desmond returned from leave, he and Jennifer became firm friends. We experienced earthquakes and a major cyclone – winds of 150kph, followed by a dead calm in the eye of the cyclone, and then hurricane force winds in the opposite direction. The hero of the hour was Willie Pwaisiho, who bravely paddled out in a canoe through the surf to help save the MV Baddeley from certain destruction as

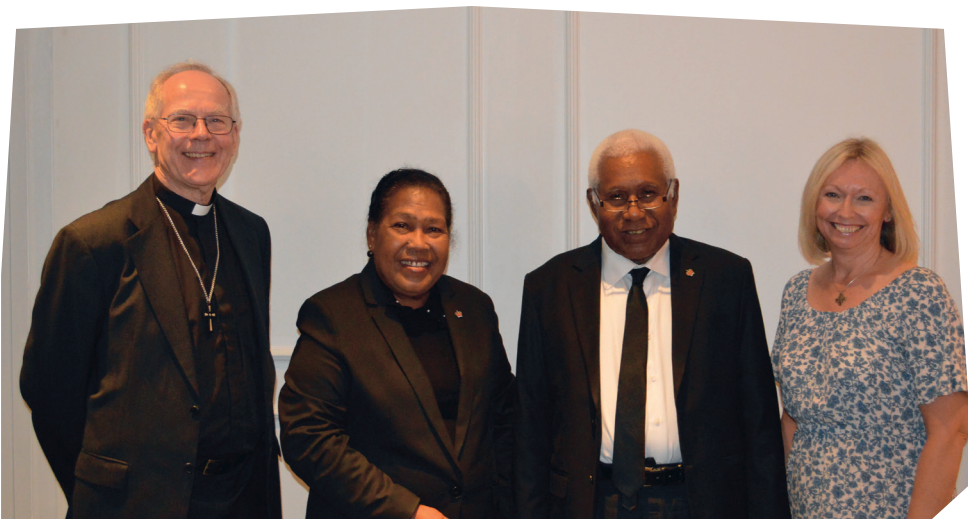
she was dragging her anchor.

Despite the malaria and the boils, Pawa almost seemed like the Garden of Eden, but it was an impossible site for a secondary school and in 1969 Bishop John Chisholm decided we should move to the main island of Guadalcanal and join with Pamua girls' school to become Selwyn College. The story of the move was covered in last winter's edition of Melanesia News.

The early years were challenging, but on a return visit a few years later it was good to see the school flourishing under the leadership of David Vunagi. After three years at Selwyn and having married Jenny, a fellow teacher from New Zealand, we decided to return to the UK and ordination. After serving a curacy in Watford, I was invited to be English secretary of the

John with his wife Jenny, receiving the Solomon Islands medal





**John with MMUK Executive Officer Katie Drew and Lady Mary and His Excellency David Vunagi, the Solomon Islands Governor General and former Archbishop of Melanesia**

Melanesian Mission.

In the 1970s there were far more supporting parishes than now and most weekends were spent visiting, sometimes with Jenny and young daughter. As I got up to preach one Sunday, our 3-year-old was heard to say loudly: 'Oh no – he's not going to tell the story of the boy falling out of a coconut tree again.' Sitting next to her in the congregation was the Archbishop of Canterbury's press officer.

There was a steady stream of former students visiting the UK for further training on British Council scholarships and many of them stayed with us. One family was with us in 1978 for the Solomon Islands Independence service in Westminster Abbey. Moffat Wasuka carried the Solomon Island flag to be placed on the altar in the abbey. Jenny was concerned that his young daughter might not see him from where she was sitting and asked a steward if she could have a better seat.

The steward solemnly addressed Ethel. 'I could move you to beside the high altar, but if you stay where you are you will be sitting next to Princess Ann. Ethel decided to stay where she was. She could see her dad any day.

Jenny was my long-suffering host, driver and assistant secretary. I had to organise the bishops visiting the UK for two Lambeth conferences, both memorable occasions, the first when we were in Watford and the second after we had moved to Henley on Thames. Stories from those visits would take up an article in itself.

There were several return visits to Melanesia. One followed a severe cyclone in Vanuatu and the chance to report on and record severe damage to St. Patrick's School, Vureas. Over the fourteen years we were wonderfully supported by the committee led by three different chairs, the first two, Sir John Gutch and Sir Michael Gass were

former high commissioners of the western Pacific and the third was Barry Rogerson who was Bishop of Bristol.

After 14 years as English Secretary we decided I should return to full time parish life and I spent 19 very happy years in the Diocese of Portsmouth, five of those years as Rural Dean of Portsmouth. During most of that time I was a trustee of MMUK and we continued to welcome visitors, including Ellison Pogo, by then Archbishop of Melanesia.

When David Vunagi became Archbishop I felt very honoured when he asked me to be his commissary and we have remained friends ever since. We organised a reception for him when he came to the UK to be knighted as Governor General of Solomon Islands and it was lovely to catch up with him and Lady Mary when they came to the UK recently for the funeral of the Queen.

In 2017 to my amazement, I was nominated to receive the Solomon Islands medal for services to the church and community. I felt there were others who deserved the award far more than I, but I felt I was receiving it on behalf of MMUK for all that we have done collectively for Melanesia over the years.

My swansong as a trustee this year, was helping to organise visits for the bishops and some of the wives post Lambeth. We arranged visits to Chester, Exeter, Bath, Lincoln and Cambridge. The visits were a great success despite the fact that most of them had covid either during or after the conference.

As we look to the future I am keen that there should be younger blood on the board of trustees. We have made some progress in that direction with the election of Kate Pwaisiho and Catherine Duce. I feel MMUK is in good hands under the leadership of Bishop Mark and Katie Drew and although I am standing down a trustee, I shall of course, continue to support Melanesia in any way I can.

### **The Revd Canon John Pinder**



**MMUK Trustees with the Melanesian Bishops & their wives following the Lambeth Conference**

**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](http://www.mmuk.net/subscribe). You can also follow the charity on Twitter [www.twitter.com/melanesianm](https://www.twitter.com/melanesianm) and Facebook [www.facebook.com/melanesianmission](https://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 for public gatherings, 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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**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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Designed & printed by Nettl of Exeter (01392 797400)