



Church of Melanesia

Monthly Newsletter

CHURCH OFFICE, P.O. BOX 19, HONIARA, S. I.

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My Dear People,

The first founders of the Church of God in Melanesia, Bishops George Augustus Selwyn and John Coleridge Patteson made it clear that the faith of the Church of Melanesia had to be Melanesian as God made Melanesia. Melanesians would have to decide for themselves what to keep and what to leave out when they became Christians. The Church of God in Melanesia had to be as God made Melanesia.

For this we are very grateful to Almighty God for those Great men who founded the Church of God for what we are today. They led to God, Melanesia as Melanesians. They led us to think, believe and act as Melanesians. They led us to see and know God for ourselves. They taught us to love and serve God. They directed us to seek and find God for ourselves. And last of all, those who followed them put us to the stage where God wanted them to take us to. For the stage we are in now I would like to mention three things:

1. Gratefulness for God's Church in Melanesia. Our gratefulness to God for the founding of the Church of Melanesia and for those who laboured we are also grateful and because we are conscious of our heritage, we must now build, strengthen and broaden the faith that was laid for us today and for those of the next generation as did our founders. Being conscious of our heritage it is important to know where we stand and to understand what we are doing in order to broaden that which was laid for us today. The reading of the word of God and the teaching of the faith is the practice in our daily life. Ways have to be found where the reading of the word of God and the teaching of the faith can be more practical for both schooled and unschooled people. If the training centres can be seen as a way to help revive the Church at village level, then they should be encouraged to have the support mostly from the Church in the village. Some of the training centres have done so in training the ones who have had no schooling to read and write the languages the students know.

2. God's Church in Melanesia. The Melanesian Church has to be a Living Christian Church. The Living and risen Lord who commanded his Church to make Him known in all the world expects of us in Melanesia to do the same. We thank God that His Church in Melanesia is alive, and to mention one active part of His Church, there is the Melanesian Brotherhood and their companions. The Melanesian Brotherhood is the society founded by a Melanesian, which we know in Melanesia, as a living part of Christ's Church in the world. Is it not demanding of our best to support it? Should we have more of our gifted men in the Brotherhood, Ordained or Lay, for a long or short term? Should we not support it with prayer, labour and money? Should we not, who have received so much from the labour of others, labour more so that other men in their turn may receive from us the good work God has done for us. A Church that is alive must have men to go out and bring in those who are not yet the folk of God. The Church of God in Melanesia must be an outward looking Church. We shall have to increase our share in the spreading of God's Good News. Christ gave his all for us. Those who followed him, as did the disciples gave their all. Bishop John Coleridge Patteson gave his all for us.

3. We have seen the Living Christ in those who brought the Church to Melanesia. Christ worked in them and with them. They served God and his people us. They lived Christ's life. They left behind them their relatives and their native land.

They followed their Master's footsteps, and some of them gave their lives. They were people of prayer, they were courageous and fearless. They worked untiringly, and they loved the Word of God above all else, and they too have set us an example. For them we are most grateful to God.

Yours in His Service

+ Canon

Bishop Sidney Gething Caulton (died - August 22nd 1976)

Sidney Gething Caulton was consecrated Bishop in St Mary's Cathedral, Auckland, New Zealand on the 2nd February 1948 by Bishop Cherrington, Senior Bishop, in the absence of the Archbishop of New Zealand. He, Gething Melanesia, was the 8th Bishop of Melanesia, resigning in early 1954. His was a most difficult task after the Pacific War, and the nationalistic movement in the Solomons, known as Marching Rule. Many of our stations were destroyed in the Solomons and members of the expatriate were a minimum. He was truly a spiritual leader and again unified the Diocese after its many tribulations.

Bishop Caulton had previously been a missionary priest in Melanesia serving on the staff of All Hallows Pawa under Dr. C. E. Fox and later priest in charge of Gela living at Havelavo. He resigned from the staff in 1937, going to the Diocese of Auckland, New Zealand where he was Vicar of two or three parishes and then became Dean of St Mary's Cathedral Auckland from which he was appointed as Bishop of Melanesia by the Archbishop and Bishops of New Zealand.

After his resignation as Bishop of Melanesia in 1954, he returned to Auckland as a Vicar of a Parish and as Assistant Bishop of Auckland. Some years ago, he returned to England with his wife and their only son, John, now married. He died on the eve of his 82nd birthday and leaves his wife and married son, John. Mrs. Beryl Caulton before her marriage was one of the first nursing sisters at the Hospital of the Epiphany, as Sister Beryl Guylee.

We have had a letter from Fr. Melchior Vaka who is working in Brisbane, Australia for three months, he says, "Well life is not too bad. The Church people are very friendly. The only thing that makes me sick is the weather; It is very cold indeed. I cover myself with 6 blankets at night, but I still feel the cold. Sometimes I say to myself My God, if I am in my sunny islands I won't feel this cold. I wish I had wings to fly back to the Solomons and bring back some Solomons food which I miss a lot! He goes on to say, When a person is sick or she needs some kind of tablets to swallow in order to help relieve the pain. 50 for me, when I receive letters from the Solomons to help me relieve the pain of Home sickness.

"No rest is to be found under the sun. I must say that the kind of work that I am doing is the work of a full time Parish Priest. But I am only a Liu. I am celebrating the Holy Eucharist every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. On Sundays I have to celebrate the Holy Eucharist at 7.00 a.m., 8.0 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. and also preach three times.

I am also helping to take Religious Instruction every Tuesday, mainly about the Faith as it is known in Melanesia. I also visit the Mission to Seamen twice a week, and I have also joined the Youth Club of this Parish, they meet once a week. Nearly every weekend I have been invited to have a meal (Kai) in people's homes. Being invited to the homes of people, I would say is part of my Pastoral work. Because at the table we talk about Melanesia, about the Church and other things, just like Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper, asking and answering questions.

I am sorry to say that I don't do much visiting in peoples homes because I don't know their places and it is very difficult to get to their homes. I do sometimes visit the homes of those who live near the Rectory. All these things that I have mentioned take a lot of preparation.

On Sundays the Rector and I have to go to different Churches. This is because he is looking after two Parishes, Stafford and Everton Park. They seem to like my jokes on Sundays when I preach. I used to call my sermons, "Word of Wisdom". I tell jokes every Sunday to keep the people awake. Well I think that is all for now, I'll write and let you know if they have some more things for me to do."

One of Fr. Melchior's jokes:-

A man was walking in the desert when he met a lion. There was nowhere to hide, and being very frightened, he got down on his knees and prayed. After a bit he looked up and much to his surprise he found the lion kneeling beside him. Being curious, he asked the lion what he was praying about, "Praying?" said the lion, "I'm saying my Grace".

MARRIAGES OF ALL SORTS

Last month there was a mixed marriage on Savo. Mr. Stanley Gregory, a relief teacher from the West and a senior member of the Roman Catholic Church, married Hilda Bungu of Savo. Hilda is a faithful member of the Church of Melanesia and is also a member of the Mothers' Union. This means that two good Christians of two Churches have agreed to live together in marriage.

Usually mixed marriages on Savo are celebrated by a combined Service with Priests from both Churches present, but this time Fr. Gabriel Maneara celebrated alone at the wish of the two parties, but with the consent of Fr. Noel with whom Fr. Gabriel had already consulted. After the service everyone shook hands with the couple. Later a feast was held at Paibeta school where there was a great deal to eat. At the feast the Mothers' Union gave the couple a present of show that they were very happy about the marriage.

There was also one at Arite on the Marau Sound. This marriage was between John Horisa'a, an Anglican and Cathrine Isimai a Roman Catholic and was celebrated by both Priests, Fr. Joseph of the Romans and Fr. Celement Juvia of the Church of Melanesia. The Service was read alternatively by the two Priests from beginning to end. When they came to the tying of the Stoles, both Stoles were tied round their two hands. Fr. Joseph preached the Sermon about marriages, and Fr. Clement celebrated the Holy Communion. At the time of the consecration, they were joined by Fr. Christian at the Altar. Both the Churches received Communion together, Fr. Joseph took the Chalice and the Celebrant took the Bread and dipped it into the wine and distributed it to all the Communicants. The people of the two Churches were very interested to see this way of working together and felt it should be done more often.

After the services there was a "Big joyous feast", given by the relations of the couple. Afterwards Fr Joseph with the Sisters and some school children sailed back to Wakina, their school on their launch the "Daula"

At Balo in the Moli District a marriage service was held between four Couples, Michael Kona to Roselyne Maiango, Patrick Makocho to Alice Kenipisua, John Adarai to Salome Leo and Sam Marava to Sarah Tarua. The Service was conducted by Fr. Clement Juvia and was followed by a Communion Service. More than 100 people attended the services and the lovely feast prepared by the relations of the Couples.

NEWS FROM THE NEW HEBRIDES

After his visit to Noumea, Bishop Rawcliffe toured the Banks and Torres Islands. During his tour he explained the four Canons which were approved at the last Diocesan Synod. With him went Veve Joyce Butu, who, until her retirement, was Mothers' Union Leader, Sister Imogen Stanhope, Matron of Godden Memorial Hospital, Brother Wilson Vwaliusala, Head Brother of the Melanesian Southern Region and John Henry the Youth Adviser and Information Officer. Brother Wilson and John Henry continued the tour visiting Motalava and Mota for six weeks.

Three Youth groups have been formed since the beginning of the year, the "Waimemea" at Lolowai. The other two are Christian Youth Associations, one on Motalava and the other on Mota, each group has more than 100 members and they plan their programmes under the direction of the Melanesian Christian Youth Movement. John Henry said that he thought that through these youth Groups, the young people of today will become a real active part of the Church in the near future.

Miss Nancy Maria, the head of the Department of Evangelism, has spent two months on Pentecost working with the Women there while her Assistant, John Henry was teaching at the Catechist Centre. Nancy is now teaching and preparing a course which is to be held early next year for youth workers. John Henry is spending most of his time visiting the islands and inspecting Sunday schools and doing Youth work.

A Christian Renewal Conference held recently at the Torgil Conference centre, was organised by the Trinity Renewal Outreach Ministry, who are Transdenominational charismatic Ministry to the people of different backgrounds, traditions, races and churches living in these Islands.

The main speakers were Pastor Rex Meehan from the Apostolic Church of New Zealand and Fr. Edward Subramani, an Anglican Priest from Fiji. Fr. Edward was rather late for the meeting as his plane overflew Vila and took him all the way to Honiara and then back to Nandi before taking him to Vila! People from four different churches attended the meeting, they were Anglicans, Apostolics, Churches of Christ and Seventh Day Adventists. They all appreciated the conference. The Conference was also held in Santo.

FLYING PERSON IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

For the past 18 years the Rev Douglas McCraw has combined his ministry with flying, for a time he worked with the M.A.F. and now he works with Tal-air. Doug has conducted services for Anglicans wherever he worked, but in the last few years he has settled down to more regular parish work, combined with his flying. He says his work has provided him with a wealth of illustrations for his ministry. "It's God's world, and God's laws have their counterparts in the natural world." Doug now works from Mt Hagen in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea where they have recently built a church which was dedicated by Bishop Hand and Bishop Ashton in May.

We have been asked to pray for Brother Timothy S.S.F. ill in England while on leave.

NEWS FROM PROVINCIAL OFFICE

Plans for the Provincial Synod.

There will be a retreat for all members of the Synod at All Saints from September 19th to 21st.

The Guest Speaker at the opening of the Synod in St Barnabas Cathedral will be The Chief Minister, The Hon. Peter Kenilorea. The Head of the Roman Catholic Church and the Head of the United Church will also bring greetings from their Churches. It is hoped to install loud speakers in Patteson House so that the public can hear the discussions in Synod.

As a result of the resolution passed at the Provincial Council it was decided that the Plantations will have to make a contribution to Church funds, a Consultant has been engaged to give advice on running them on a commercial basis.

Will all Clergy please be sure that they have sent in their forms for the Pension Scheme.

WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

The Mothers' Union of the Diocese of Malaita have built a new house at Fouia road head and it was opened on July 25th by Fr. Henry Mabe. It is built of bush materials and is about 30' x 20'. It is going to be used for Mothers' Union meetings and can be used by people who have nowhere to sleep at the cost of 50¢ a night or \$5.00 a week, though a Church worker does not pay anything.

At Toga village on Gela they had a great feast to celebrate Holy Trinity. About 400 people attended the Service which was conducted by Fr. Mathias Kuali and assisted by Fr. Andrew Piaso and Fr. Meaven Kitgo, who is a village Priest and a retired Priest Fr. Samuel Balea. They also had a bazaar and raised \$88.99 towards their new Chapel and church fund.

About 200 people attended a bazaar organised by the Sahalu District at the Tenamba plantation to raise money for their district. They made \$137.00.

There was an Anglican party on board the Cruise Ship "Fairstar" when she visited Honiara this month. They visited Kohimarama during the morning, and went to Selwyn College for the afternoon.

The Lae Seminar

A Seminar on 'Adjustment Movements, Independent Churches, and the Emergence of Indigenous Theology' organized by the Melanesian Institute, was held at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, Papua New Guinea on July 23rd - 30th, 1976.

The guest lecturer was Dr. Harold Turner, of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. There were more than forty participants, who represented different Church and Institutions in Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and the Pacific Theological College in Fiji.

The aim of the Seminar was to look more closely at the causes, nature and motivations of various Adjustment Movements (such as the Turu Movement in P.N.G.), and Independent Churches (such as the Christian Fellowship Church of Eto in the Solomons), and then try to find some points of contact between these and Christian Theology.

Taking lectures and papers presented as resources, the Seminar went into both group and plenary discussions, comparing and criticising Melanesian beliefs and concepts of creation, salvation, dreams and other religious experiences the end of man and of everything with those of the Bible and vice versa. Taking for example:

- a) The Bible has it that Man was created by God, good and perfect but he fell away from God. Consequently, he became lost and helpless, but could regain his salvation through Law keeping (O.T.) and by Faith in Jesus Christ (N.T.). He will rise again when He dies but
 - (i) the good ones will enjoy it up there in heaven for ever.
 - (ii) the bad ones will be damned down there in hell for ever.
- b) The Melanesian traditional belief has it that men were created by the gods/spirits to live in this world as part of nature, but they can control nature by means of 'mana' or supernatural power. (E.g. to cause or stop rain, cause or heal sickness, etc.) They will join the spirits of the dead in one of localities when they die, not in some outer space up there but here in this world. Melanesians are born (through a line of ancestors), lived (with the dead ancestors), and died (to join the ancestors in this world.)

Now, the theological implication of the (b) above may be used to reinterpret (a) above if we are to creatively construct a Melanesian Theology. But while we try to do this the important formative factors in theology must not be ignored.

The Seminar wholeheartedly agreed that the indigenization of Christian Theology in Melanesia is long overdue, and that steps must be taken to see that this is done but by Melanesians themselves. Christian Theology which had been Westernised before it was introduced to Melanesia would not be relevant and meaningful to Melanesian Christians.

Persolan Reactions:

I believe that Christian Theology (meaning = Christian knowledge of God or Christian study about God) cannot be easily understood and therefore cannot be meaningful for us in Melanesia. Theology was originated from the Hebrew people, but had been influenced by and written in Greek language and culture, and then in the last centuries it has been influenced by Western culture and written in Western languages. It is our turn in Melanesia to do just that.

Christians in the Solomons and the New Hebrides have a long way to go. Since the Bible has only been translated into very few of our languages and only partly in others, I feel that we cannot 'put the cart before the horse'. For we need to employ Melanesian symbols or metaphors and concepts to represent the unfamiliar metaphors such as 'Lamb of God', 'Good Shepherd' etc. in the Bible. If we are to make our Melanesian theology, we should:

1. Try to use a common language which is understood by all.
2. Try to make one theology and not different theologies for different churches.
3. Try to make a good dialogue between Christian Theology and our Melanesian heritage.
4. Try to use tools for articulation, eg. social sciences & religious disciplines

- 5. Try to express beliefs and religious experiences in songs and hymns in our worship patterns.
- 6. Try to use the Bible as a basic tool.

(Robert Hagesi)

Pamua Training Centre Board of Governors

Clergy and Laity of Makira Region met at Pamua Training Centre from August 14th to 17th to look into ways and means the Centre can meet the needs of the Church in the Region. The meeting went on smoothly under the Chairmanship of the Assistant Bishop, Rt. Rev. Casper Uka. A committee was elected called Pamua Training Centre Board of Governors - whose function is to advise the Staff on certain matters; seek to provide the Centre with all it needs, increase local support for the Centre, appoint and dismiss members of the teaching staff, deal with other matters concerning other employees of the Centre including their pay and conditions of services.

The Assistant Bishop and Senior Priest made a weeks tour round Makira and Ugi, they also took delegates.

Leadership Talks

A talk on leadership was given by R. L. Teona, Evangelism Worker for the Makira Region to Government Field Extension Workers and Field Assistants Eastern Inner Islands Council on their one week annual conference held at Kaonasugu Agricultural Training Centre on Friday August 13th. There will be a similar talk to 31 students from Pawa New Secondary School who are having a two weeks course on Agricultural subjects at the Centre.

Mothers' Union

Mrs. Kathrine Lui Regional President for Makira spent a week on Ulawa during August. She visited Ugi and other places on Makira during the Assistant Bishop's tour.

This was written by Elizabeth Smith while she was attending a Church Conference in her parish. I wonder if anybody attending a Church of Melanesia Conference, Council or Synod, has written anything that we could print?

I looked at the World,
 And found horror.
 I looked at Man,
 And found disgust.
 I looked for success,
 And I found mediocrity.
 I tried to be filled,
 And found more emptiness.
 I tried for the light,
 And the darkness closed me in.

I searched for God, And I found Him in Glory.
 I prayed,
 And I am healed.
 I prayed,
 And I am forgiven.
 I prayed,
 And the light surrounds me.
 I prayed - And the world became beautiful.
 I prayed - And the world sings in my ears.

PEOPLE

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The Archbishop has toured the Diocese of Ysabel this month, he is very impressed by the life in the villages.

Marika Brown a Solomon Islander has been a lay reader in the Diocese of Polynesia for the last 55 years. Last month he was 100 years old and he is still working as a Lay Reader in the island of Wakaya.

Robert Rova, a ships engineer and his wife have just had a baby boy, they now have one of each.

Amy and George Negro, an engineer at Taroaniara have had a baby boy this month.

Brother John Charles, of the Society of St Francis has been elected Minister of the Pacific Province of the Society of St Francis, in place of Brother Reginald. Before becoming a Brother, Brother John Charles was Bishop of Polynesia.

Fr Tony Bagnall, Acting Chairman of the Australian Board of Missions of the Anglican Churches, has been visiting the Solomons. He has been out to Selwyn College, and Kohimarama, he also went over to Gela to join the Archbishop for a day of his tour of Gela. He then flew up to Papua New Guinea to attend the Diocesan Synod there.

Sister Beryl of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, has returned to Honiara after her holiday in Australia and work in New Zealand. Sister Ella Mary has returned to Australia. Sister Audrey, the Provincial Superior of the Australian Pacific Province is in the Solomons for five weeks, she spent some time in Honiara and has now gone to Tetete ni Kolivuti.

Mr. Ernest Sage from Melbourne Australia visited Fiu Church on Malaita this month. He and his Father built the Church in Australia and shipped it out to Fiu in 1934, they had built it in remembrance of William Sage, a Brother of Ernest, who had been drowned off Malaita on June 7 1913. William sage had worked for the Mission in the Fiu District for four years before he met his untimely death.

Archdeacon Harry Reynolds is holding a pre-ordination course at Fauabu for Deacon Dudley Kiriau before he is to be Priested, and for Simon Peter Fafale before he is ordained a Deacon.

The Rev Lopeti Taufa paid a short visit to Bishop Patteson Theological Centre on his way back to the Pacific Theological College in Fiji from Papua New Guinea. He is a lecturer at the College and also Secretary to the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools. He was here officially to check the academic standard, administration and development of the Centre. Three students from Kohimarama did a weeks exchange with three from Onepusu the S.S.E.C. college.

Fr. Brian Macdonald-Milne has been away most of this month. He left Honiara on August 8th for Nauru, from there he went to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands where he has had a weeks holiday. Then back to Suva via Nauru where he is attending the Executive meetings of the Pacific Conference of Churches. He will arrive back in Honiara on September 4th.

Fr. Peter Thompson is now working in the Diocese of Carpentaria. His wife and family will be joining him shortly.

Mrs Janet Marau, wife of Fr Martin Marau, has had a daughter, and she was baptised Augustine Willie Marau on August 6th.

Mrs Diana Tarohoroiasi, wife of Fr. Mathias Tarohoroiasi gave birth to a son this month, Fr. Mathias is Warden of Pamua Training Centre.