

ISSN 1174-0310

THE CHURCH OF MELANESIA

1849 – 1999

1999 SELWYN LECTURES

**Marking the 150th Anniversary
of the Founding of
The Melanesian Mission**

EDITED BY ALLAN K. DAVIDSON

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ISBN 0-9583619-2-4

Published by The College of St John the Evangelist
Private Bag 28907
Remuera
Auckland 1136
New Zealand

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Note on usage

The islands named by Captain Cook the 'New Hebrides' were renamed 'Vanuatu' at independence in 1980. In some places in these essays 'Vanuatu' is used in the pre-independence context.

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FOREWORD

It was very appropriate that during the week of the 22 to 26 February 1999 the Selwyn Lectures at the College of St John the Evangelist in Auckland were devoted to commemorating the sesqui-centenary of the founding of the Melanesian Mission and what has become the Church of the Province of Melanesia. George Augustus Selwyn, as Bishop of New Zealand, in 1849 both inspired and inaugurated what became the Melanesian Mission. The first five students he recruited were brought to the college he founded and during the first ten years of the Mission, St John's served as its base and training institution. Some of the first baptisms of Melanesians took place in the chapel and a number of memorial plaques and windows there remind people of the close association between St John's and the people of Melanesia. Four Melanesians are buried in the College cemetery. The midpoint of the 1999 lectures, 24 February, St Matthias Day, marked the anniversary of the consecration in 1861 of John Coleridge Patteson as the first Missionary Bishop of Melanesia.

The Selwyn Lectureship was named in memory of Bishop Selwyn and began in 1965. Originally it was conceived as a way of bringing visiting scholars of international standing to lecture at the College and in other places throughout the country. This emphasis has continued but it has been complemented in recent years by alternating overseas visitors with New Zealand lecturers who have been encouraged to take up themes particularly relevant to New Zealand church and society. The 1999 lectures brought together five lecturers from Melanesia and New Zealand under the title: 'The Church of Melanesia 1849 – 1999: marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Melanesian Mission'.

The five lectures reprinted here bring together very different insights and perspectives into aspects of the history of the Melanesian Mission and the challenges facing the Church of Melanesia in the present and future. There was no attempt in these lectures to provide an overall history of the Mission and the Church. The Mission has been well served by historians who have told the history of its early years, notably E.S. Armstrong, Charles Fox, David Hilliard and Ruth Ross and through the biographies and studies of its founder and its first bishop.¹ There are also important articles dealing with aspects of the history of the Mission and several of the lectures in this series draw on them.

Allan Davidson in his lecture places the founding of the Mission within its wider historical context. He examines the reasons why Selwyn began the Mission and relates this to the debates in Anglican circles at the time about the nature of mission and whether it was the obligation of either the church or voluntary societies to undertake this work. The sesqui-centenary of the Melanesian Mission coincided with the bicentenary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) which was founded in 1799. The clash between Selwyn, with his understanding of the role of the missionary bishop, and Henry Venn, a secretary of the CMS who feared 'episcopal autocracy', points to underlying missiological debates and tensions within the Anglican Church in the nineteenth

century. The adoption by Selwyn and Patteson of the principle of comity and their generally positive attitude towards Melanesian peoples and culture, which this lecture describes, left a deep imprint on the Mission and the way in which it went about its work.

One dimension which is largely missing in the printed histories of the Melanesian Mission was the role and contribution of women missionaries. Janet Crawford has undertaken pioneering work in this area.² Her lecture expands on this, drawing attention to the reasons why Melanesian girls and women were brought to New Zealand and Norfolk Island for training. Attention is also given to the significant role European women missionaries played at Norfolk Island in the nineteenth century and the beginnings of their move to live and work in the islands of Melanesia.

The indigenous voice has seldom been heard in the telling of the history of the Mission. The autobiography of George Sarawia is a unique exception.³ Little has been told of the more recent history of either the Melanesian Mission since the Second World War or the Church of Melanesia which came into being in 1975. There are no specialist studies by Melanesians in these areas. The work of people like Alan Tippett, Darrell Whiteman and Ben Burt provide glimpses into dimensions of both the Mission and the Church. Leslie Fugui, as a Melanesian and Anglican priest, gave a very brief overview of religion in the Solomon Islands.⁴ There is a need, however, for more extensive historical research and writing and it is to be hoped that Melanesians will make contributions in this area in the not too distant future.

In examining issues relating to ministry and mission, the Most Reverend Ellison Pogo, Archbishop of Melanesia, provides a comprehensive historical overview of both the Mission up until 1974 and the recent challenges brought to the Church since it became a separate province in 1975. The gaining of political independence in both the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and the profound social and economic changes which independence has brought have challenged the Church to provide leadership and promote appropriate development within these countries. In looking to the future the Archbishop examines the importance of training for leadership, the place of women, the role of the local church, ecumenism and mission to the wider world.

Hugh Blessing Boe as a ni-Vanuatu who has lived and worked for many years in the Solomon Islands, including a period as principal of Bishop Patteson Theological College, and now as a member of the St John's College community and a doctoral student at the University of Auckland, gives a Melanesian perspective on the nature of conversion in Melanesia. His lecture points to the dynamic relationship between, on the one hand, the missionaries and their message, and on the other, the Melanesians and their reception of Christianity within their own culture and society, often in ways that the missionaries did not expect. He raises important questions about the nature of Christianity in Melanesia and the challenges facing the churches that have come from missionary activity.

Only passing references in the printed histories and accounts have been given to Maori and their relationships with Melanesians, the Mission and the Church. Jenny Plane-Te Paa has drawn these references together and places them within their historical context

revealing the way in which Maori were participants in the Mission in its earliest period. The proximity of St John's College and St Andrew's College at Mission Bay to Ngati Whatua settlements leave a number of unanswered questions about the nature of the relationship between Maori and Melanesians at that time. How far the tensions between Selwyn and the CMS got in the way of even more closer connections between Maori and Melanesians is an area of speculation.

One of the historical legacies from the founding period is the Melanesian Trust which Selwyn set up as an endowment for the Melanesian Mission. This still makes a significant contribution to the Church of Melanesia. Similar provisions were not made by Selwyn for the Maori Church because the CMS were largely responsible for 'Maori work'. Selwyn also worked with a model of the Church which looked forward to the day when the Melanesian Mission would achieve its own autonomy while the Maori Church would be 'blended' within the Pakeha structures. The assimilation of the Maori Church never succeeded. Significant dates in reshaping the Anglican Church in New Zealand were the consecration of the first Bishop of Aotearoa in 1928, the establishment of Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa (the Bishopric of Aotearoa) in 1978, and the new constitution of Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tirenī, ki Nga Moutere o Te Moana Nui a Kiwa, The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, in 1992. The re-establishment of Te Rau Kahikatea and its partnership with the College of the Southern Cross and the College of the Diocese of Polynesia represent the new relationships between Taking⁵ Maori, Pakeha and Pasifika as constituent colleges of St John's College under the new constitution.

Jenny Te Paa, as Te Ahorangi of Te Rau Kahikatea, in her lecture not only looked at the past relationship between Maori and Melanesians but also raised questions about the present and ongoing connections in the light of the changes which have taken place in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. The presentation of a greenstone *mere*⁶ to the Archbishop of Melanesia was accompanied with the words,

In peace and *aroha*⁷ we offer to you this *taonga*⁸ by way of symbolising our hopes and our prayers for a future relationship characterised by the Gospel imperatives of mutuality and interdependence.

During the lecture series the Archbishop of Melanesia preached at the College Eucharist celebrating the one hundred and fifty years of the Melanesian Mission and the Church of Melanesia. He received a framed portrait of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson which he placed after the service on the wall of the Patteson Social Centre, marking both the historical links between St John's College and Melanesia and the continuing association which they have. The Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia and Bishop of Auckland, the Right Reverend John Paterson, chaired the lecture given by Archbishop Pogo. Three weeks before Bishop Paterson had been welcomed by the Archbishop at the Church of Melanesia's sesqui-centenary celebrations in Honiara. The past, present and ongoing connections between Melanesia and New Zealand which these lectures reflect indicate ties which are strong but changing. What the next 150 years will bring only the future will disclose.

Allan K. Davidson

¹ E.S. Armstrong, *The History of the Melanesian Mission*, London: Isbister, 1900; C.E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles: The Story of the Melanesian Mission*, London; Mowbray, 1958; David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978; R.M. Ross, *Melanesians at Mission Bay: A History of the Melanesian Mission in Auckland*, Auckland, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 1983; H.W. Tucker, *Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn*, 2 vols. London: William Wells Gardner, 1879; C.M. Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, 2 vols., 3rd ed, London: Macmillan, 1874.

² Janet Crawford, "'Christian Wives for Christian Lads': Aspects of Women's Work in the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1877", in Allan Davidson and Godfrey Nicholson, eds., *'With all Humility and Gentleness': Essays on Mission in Honour of Francis Foulkes*, Auckland: St John's College, 1991, pp.51-66.

³ George Sarawia, *They Came to My Island: The Beginnings of the Mission in the Banks Islands*, Taroaniara: Diocese of Melanesia Press, [1968].

⁴ A.R. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1967; Darrell Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries: An Ethnohistorical Study of Social and Religious Change in the Southwest Pacific*, Pasadena: William Carey, 1983; Ben Burt, *Tradition & Christianity: The Colonial Transformation of a Solomon Island Society*, Chur: Harwood, 1994; Leslie Fugui (with Simeon Butu), 'Religion', in *Ples Blong Iumi: Solomon Islands, the Past Four Thousand Years*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1989, pp.73-93.

⁵ 'Tikanga' refers here to the different 'ways' or 'cultural streams' within the church.

⁶ A 'mere' is a short hand-held weapon often made of greenstone and used traditionally for fighting but now often given as a 'taonga'.

⁷ 'aroha' has the meaning of 'love' or 'affection'.

⁸ A 'taonga' is something which is highly prized and when given as a gift conveys both respect and obligation.

AN 'INTERESTING EXPERIMENT' THE FOUNDING OF THE MELANESIAN MISSION

Allan Davidson

In 1854, Bishop George Augustus Selwyn gave a lecture 'On Missions in the Pacific' at a meeting in London of a District Association of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Selwyn outlined the history of missionary endeavour in the Pacific, described his seven recent visits to Melanesia and set out his 'plan for preaching the Gospel among these islanders'¹ by bringing Melanesians to a central college where they would be taught and returned to their own people and 'be gradually made the instruments, under God's providence, of evangelizing and civilizing the whole of these numerous islands'. In appealing to 'Christian benevolence' to meet the 'considerable expense' projected in this scheme, Selwyn referred to his proposal as an 'interesting experiment'.²

The 'Northern Mission', as it was initially called, and from about 1852 the Melanesian Mission, was an 'interesting experiment' at a number of different levels. The history of the Mission has already been well told in a number of publications. This lecture seeks to examine aspects of the experimental nature of the Mission. The first aspect is to do with the context in which the Mission was founded and the way in which this reflected the visionary genius of its founder. The second aspect brings together the inter-relationship between the Melanesian Mission and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the question as to whether mission is the duty of the church as an institution, or mission is the voluntary response of those drawn to give it support. The third area is to do with the growing nineteenth century understanding of the role of the missionary bishop within the Anglican Church and the contribution of the Melanesian Mission to this. The fourth area concerns the Mission's relationship with other missionary organisations working within the Pacific. The fifth issue relates to the Mission's attitude towards the peoples of Melanesia, their customs and culture. The significant emphasis which Selwyn and his successors placed on the use of 'Native Agency' as the means to undertake evangelisation within Melanesia will not be examined in detail here although there will be some references to this in passing.

1. The Beginnings of the Mission

Sarah Selwyn records in her *Reminiscences* how in 1849 her husband made his first missionary voyage to Melanesia on the *Undine* and returned with five young Loyalty Islanders:

When the time used to come for the Bishop's possible return from his outings either by land or sea, the house door was left wide open at night with a lamp burning there, to guide and welcome him. Do I not remember the famous night of this return, watching for what might happen, then George coming in about 1 a.m. rubbing his hands and saying "Thank God with me, I have

brought them - the work has begun.” I got up and went down to find five strange looking folk sitting over the fire toasting potatoes.³

This event took place on the 1 October 1849 and is one of the possible dates that can be considered as the starting point for the Melanesian Mission. Unlike the CMS, which in 1999 celebrates the bicentennial of its first meeting on 12 April 1799 when those who gathered declared their ‘purpose of instituting a society among the members of the Established Church for missionaries among the heathen’, the Melanesian Mission as it celebrates its sesqui-centenary does not have a specific founding date.⁴ 1849, however, was clearly the year in which the work which became the Melanesian Mission began.

Selwyn, in claiming inspiration for undertaking this work, looked back to a valedictory letter addressed to him by William Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the bishops serving on the Colonial Bishops Fund. As the first bishop appointed under this fund, Selwyn embodied the hopes of those who wanted him, in Howley’s words, to lay ‘the foundation of civilized society in New Zealand, on the basis of an Apostolical Church and a pure religion’. Howley looked beyond ‘the limits at present assigned’ to Selwyn’s ‘spiritual authority’ to wider spheres in the future:

Your mission acquires an importance exceeding all calculation when your See is regarded as the central point of a system extending its influence in all directions, as a fountain diffusing the streams of salvation over the islands and coasts of the Pacific: as a luminary to which nations enslaved and debased by barbarous and bloody superstitions will look for light.⁵

This letter was written on the 30 November 1841. One month earlier, on All Saints’ Day, in a little noticed speech to a meeting of the Windsor and Eton Church Union, Selwyn had looked to New Zealand ‘becoming the centre of missionary operations; ... supplied, by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, with the means of planting stationary clergy in every future parish of that island’ so that

the Church Missionary Society may send forth its emissaries to all the isles, which stud like stars of the firmament, the boundless waters of the Pacific. By their means the standards of the Cross may be planted on each rocky isle: and God grant that the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.⁶

Here we see Selwyn at his eirenical and visionary best, unrealistically, as it turned out, wanting to hold together the High Church support for the colonial church through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on the one hand, and the evangelical enthusiasm of the CMS for missionary expansion in the Pacific on the other. Selwyn, as Bishop of New Zealand, brought together in his own person an uneasy alliance between these different forces, with half of his salary paid by the CMS, the other half by the Colonial Office, while the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and its sister organisation, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge provided financial support. In Selwyn’s appointment as bishop we have the contending missionary and colonial pressures which were to characterise his episcopate and shape his work as he struggled with the conflicting roles of overseeing the fruits of the CMS work among Maori and laying foundations for an emerging settler church.

The Howley valedictory address and Selwyn's own early Pacific aspirations did not necessarily envisage Selwyn undertaking an episcopal apostolate himself. The idea of New Zealand providing a central base for missionary operations in the Pacific easily meshed, however, with Selwyn's ideas about the primary role of cathedral institutions in the life of a renewed church. In 1838 Selwyn published a pamphlet in two versions, entitled, *Are Cathedral Institutions Useless? A Practical Answer to this Question*, which contributed to the lively debate going on in England in the 1830s over the nature of the church. Selwyn envisaged cathedrals having theological schools which would not only prepare students for the ministry but also educate missionaries for 'the more effectual propagation of the Gospel throughout our own Colonies, and among the heathen generally'.⁷ For Selwyn the health and well-being of the church at home were intimately related to its involvement and support of missionary work overseas. He argued that 'The Church of England cannot be worthy of the English nation, if it be not a Missionary as well as domestic Church.'⁸

Practical shape was given to Selwyn's vision on the voyage to New Zealand in 1842 when he began what was the prototype for St John's College and the schools he later held on his sailing vessels around New Zealand and in Melanesia. Thomas Whytehead noted,

on Monday Jan 3d. a regular system of Instruction was commenced, and, with the exception of a few days, maintained throughout the whole voyage, such as might form no bad model for the studies to be pursued in a Church Missionary College.⁹

William Broughton, the Bishop of Australia, wrote to Selwyn towards the end of 1842 with a proposal which Selwyn noted 'completely falls in with my wish to form a Polynesian College for the different branches of the Maori family scattered over the Pacific'. But Selwyn was conscious of the vulnerability of such plans, as Thomas Whytehead, who was meant to head the central institution, had developed tuberculosis. Whytehead's death in March 1843 deprived Selwyn of his considerable yet untested gifts, and Selwyn himself became responsible for St John's College where he was only able to partially translate his comprehensive vision into what he described as "'the key and pivot"' of all his operations'.¹⁰ There was also an unrealistic tone in Selwyn's talk about 'a Polynesian College'. Polynesia was already largely evangelised by the London Missionary Society and Methodists with some Catholic presence. At this time, however, the term 'Polynesia' was often used loosely to refer to all the South Pacific so that Vanuatu, for example, was described as in western Polynesia.¹¹

There is little evidence of Selwyn's interest in undertaking missionary work in the Pacific until 1847. The conflicting demands and pressures in New Zealand on Selwyn were substantial and a lesser man would have given any idea of beginning missionary work in the Pacific away completely. In 1847, when he met with his clergy in the chapel at St John's College for his second diocesan synod, he spelt out his episcopal manifesto for the church in New Zealand. Recalling the debt the Church in England owed to Augustine undertaking his mission to Canterbury, Selwyn looked to the future establishment of 'Bishoprics in the Southern seas'. While not wanting to benefit from

the work of others or invade their territory he still talked of the possibility of forming a 'Missionary centre' in New Zealand 'for the youth of all Polynesia' where 'the strictest knowledge, and the most confirmed faith, may be carried back by our students to their distant homes'.¹² Although he now recognised that the islands eastward of New Zealand had been evangelised, he looked to the islands to the north, arguing that

however inadequate a Church may be to its own internal wants, it must on no account suspend its Missionary duties; that this is in fact the circulation of its life's blood, which would lose its vital power if it never flowed forth to the extremities, but curdled at the heart.¹³

Mission beyond the shores, for Selwyn, was of the *esse*, or essential being of the Church, and New Zealand, he argued, was richly blessed with an 'abundance of Divine gifts' including 'its climate to be a Missionary centre to the Pacific Ocean'.¹⁴

Selwyn's 1847 missionary manifesto for the Pacific was still at the level of visionary rhetoric. A catalyst for action was provided by Governor Sir George Grey, who had his own imperial ambitions to make the Pacific a sphere of British influence with as many of its islands as possible linked to New Zealand politically and commercially. In December 1847 Walter Lawry, the Wesleyan Superintendent, reported to Grey 'that Sydney traders were kidnapping islanders and that an escape of prisoners at Rotuma had led to loss of life'. H.M.S *Dido*, under the command of Captain Maxwell, was sent to investigate and Selwyn was encouraged by Grey to go as acting chaplain.¹⁵ The visits to Tonga, Samoa, Rotuma and the Isle of Pines in New Caledonia were to prove decisive in helping Selwyn move from being a missionary visionary to become a missionary activist in the Pacific. There was also, from the outset, the ambiguous relationship between British naval support and Selwyn's mission and the question as to how this was perceived in Melanesia. This was to be a continuing issue for the Mission.¹⁶

The friendly and respectful meetings Selwyn had with Methodist and London Missionary Society missionaries in Tonga and Samoa and his observations on their work, along with his encounter with Pacific Islanders missionaries working at the Isle of Pines, and advice from James Paddon, a sandalwood trader, led Selwyn to reflect on the methodology he could employ in undertaking missionary work in Melanesia. He was influenced by his thinking on the value of a central college which St John's could provide, the lack of personnel he had at his disposal to send as missionaries to the Pacific, concerns about the long-term impact of the climate and diseases of Melanesia on people from outside the region, and the dawning realisation that Melanesia confronted missionaries with a vast diversity of languages that lacked the homogeneity of the Polynesian languages which had enabled the rapid spread of Christianity in the eastern Pacific.

Sailing on his first missionary voyage in his little schooner the *Undine* in 1849, Selwyn wrote from Aneityum in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) that 'the very point and key of the whole system' was 'the constant interchange of scholars between the college and their own homes'.¹⁷ The intention was that they would progressively learn sufficient about Christianity to become teachers of their own people and eventually some of them would be ordained and lead the church in their own place or go as missionaries to other parts

of Melanesia. According to Tucker, Selwyn's first biographer, this 'was an entirely original as well as noble conception, and subsequent events have amply proved its wisdom'.¹⁸ Selwyn's methodology, however, was a mixture of pragmatism, given his inadequate financial and human resources, and romantic idealism associated with his vision, as he put it, 'to make my diocese the great missionary centre of the Southern Ocean'.¹⁹ It was certainly a highly innovative and creative missionary strategy but its success in achieving its objective was to prove to be limited and required considerable modification and eventually replacement before the Melanesian Mission began to become the Church in Melanesia.²⁰

One aspect of the foundation of the Melanesian Mission which has received great attention, but which in fact was not as important as people have claimed, was the clerical error in Selwyn's letters patent describing the geographical territory he was responsible for as bishop. A scribal mistake resulted in the word 34° north rather than 34° south appearing in the 1841 demarcation of the northern boundary of the diocese of New Zealand. Ruth Ross has clearly shown that after travelling on H.M.S. *Dido* in 1848 his 'subsequent voyagings in Melanesia were clearly uninhibited by the longitudinal limits of his patent' and 'that all the talk about the north latitude was irrelevant, except when it suited him to use it as a justification for activities which were the subject of very considerable criticism at the time, both in England and in New Zealand'.²¹ The appeal to Archbishop Howley's commission and Selwyn's understanding of his role as a missionary bishop were much more critical in the founding of the Melanesian Mission and the commencement of his 'interesting experiment'.

2. The Mission of the Church?

Selwyn was bishop at a time of creative ecclesiological and missiological thinking in the Church of England. The impact of the Tractarians and the Oxford Movement confronted people with questions about the relationship between church and state, the apostolic nature of the church and the role of the bishop. Newly emerging churches from missionary activity and colonial expansion raised serious questions about the church as an institution both in relation to its parent church and the pluralistic contexts in which they were growing. Of considerable importance in Selwyn's thinking was the model of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America and in particular the missiology of George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey, 1832-59. In support of his famous sermon in 1835 on 'The Missionary Bishop', preached at the consecration of Dr Jackson Kemper as the first missionary bishop of the American Church who was designated 'to exercise Episcopal functions in Missouri and Indiana',²² Doane gave a lengthy appendix in which he declared

that by the original constitution of Christ, THE CHURCH, as the Church, was one great Missionary Society; and *the Apostles, and the Bishops their successors*, His perpetual Trustees: and that this great trust could not, and should never be divided or deputed. The duty ... to support the Church in preaching the Gospel to every creature, was one which passed on *every Christian by terms of his baptismal vow*, and from which he could never be absolved.²³

A Board of Missions was set up by the Episcopal Church to oversee the work of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society which had originally been organised by the General Convention in 1820. Mission was now seen as the responsibility of the whole church.²⁴ While one historian has described this as ‘A momentous change’,²⁵ another historian has described it as a compromise in which the evangelical side of the church, led by Bishop Charles McIlvaine, sought to cooperate with High Church Episcopalians in order to undertake the work of every member of the church “‘in promoting the Gospel to the ends of the earth’”.²⁶

This Episcopal Church model of mission was what Selwyn had in mind when he went to Sydney in 1850 to meet with the Australian Bishops. An Australasian Board of Missions was duly constituted with the dual task of converting and civilising what were described as ‘the Australian blacks’ and ‘the heathen races in all the islands of the Western Pacific’. Selwyn’s method of withdrawing people from their own society and using English as the common language for training them and then returning them to their own people was approved.²⁷ Great enthusiasm was engendered in the dioceses of Sydney and Newcastle with £1200 being quickly raised to purchase the *Border Maid* to undertake missionary voyages to Melanesia. William Tyrrell, Bishop of Newcastle, and Selwyn were appointed as joint ‘Missionary Bishops’.²⁸ On the return voyage from Australia to New Zealand Selwyn noted that ‘A singular providence has reunited me with my old college friend, Bishop Tyrrell, who was No. 7 in the S. John’s boat when I was captain’.²⁹

An attempt was made in Auckland to establish a Diocesan Board of Missions to the support the Australasian Board by which, Selwyn declared, ‘the Church in these Colonies has become a Missionary Church’.³⁰ The CMS had already established the Auckland Missionary Association to support their own work. George Kissling, a CMS missionary in Auckland and a member of the Association, found himself in the difficult position of being invited by Selwyn to support the new Board of Missions, becoming one of its co-treasurers in the hope that ‘by taking a friendly part in the Northern Missions’ he could ‘in some degree ... feed the flame of kindly feeling, which now and then seems to burn so very obscurely between the Bishop and the C[hurch] M[issionary] Society’.³¹

Selwyn’s relationship with the CMS had deteriorated considerably from 1841 when he had looked to them to provide emissaries for missionary work in the Pacific. There had been conflict over his episcopal authority to station missionaries where he chose, the standards he required before he would ordain lay catechists and Maori, his administration of St John’s College, and the dismissal of longstanding missionaries, including Henry Williams, because of their controversial land purchases. There were also underlying tensions generated by the party-spirit which was transplanted from the ecclesiological battles of England with Selwyn being viewed suspiciously by Evangelicals, and sometimes unfairly as a disciple of the Oxford Movement. Henry Venn, the notable CMS secretary and outstanding missionary thinker, differed with Selwyn on a number of issues including their understandings of the missionary nature of the church and the missionary role of the bishop.

After his first missionary voyage to Melanesia in 1849, Selwyn wrote somewhat provocatively to Venn describing his missionary plan and contrasting the voluntary and church models for supporting missionary work:

Rigid as you are in refusing cooperation with me except in terms which shall make the work exclusively your own I am sure that you will not refuse me your prayers that the Church of New Zealand may be granted Divine Grace to plant this offshoot of itself in the regions beyond. I tell you candidly that I hope to see this mission work become an integral part of the Colonial Church, as it is of the Church of the United States and not the work of a mere Society, organized to supply the defect of life and action in the Church itself.³²

Sir William Martin, Selwyn's close friend and New Zealand's first chief justice, wrote to Venn after the formation of the Australasian Board of Missions seeing it as 'the first practical enunciation amongst us of the great principle that it is incumbent on every Christian Church, as such to be a Missionary Church'. He contrasted this with the opposition encountered by the CMS fifty years earlier when it failed to gain the support of 'the heads of the Church'. In Martin's opinion, the bishops in forming a Board of Missions 'have done nothing more than express that which is the conviction of the majority of thoughtful Churchmen in this Diocese'.³³

Kissling referred his involvement in the Diocesan Board of Missions to the CMS in London and was advised of 'the serious difficulties which will arise from the Agents of one Society becoming office bearers in the other'.³⁴ Henry Venn went to the very heart of Selwyn's missionary scheme, declaring that

To this Society it has ever appeared that uncivilized pupils trained at a distance from home in a civilized land will return to their native home very unsuitable Missionaries & that the truths of religion can be taught only in the vernacular language of the country. We see not how our Agents can properly identify themselves with so opposite a system to that of the C.M.S.³⁵

On receiving this letter Kissling immediately resigned 'as Joint-Treasurer to "the Northern Mission", being sure that "obedience is better than sacrifice"'.³⁶ The CMS was clearly wanting to defend its own identity as a voluntary missionary society within the church. It was also implacably opposed to Selwyn's missionary strategy. A detailed article in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* in 1857 contrasted the CMS preferred mode of evangelisation, the use of 'native agency under proper guidance, advancing from a centre', and Selwyn's model of 'bringing in ... natives' and evangelising and training them as teachers before sending them home.³⁷ By implication they accused Selwyn of displacing the Maori Church 'from the true position which it should occupy'.³⁸ There was an element of missiological apologetics in this criticism but it also reflected the degree of animus between Selwyn and the CMS over missionary strategy. It is also of interest to note that the compromise between Evangelicals and High Church people reached in 1835 within the Episcopal Church was not sustained. Tension over the control of the domestic and foreign mission committees led Evangelicals to opt for the principle of voluntaryism and to form their own American Church Missionary Society in 1859.³⁹ In 1877 this Society became an auxiliary of the Board of Missions.⁴⁰

In undertaking the Melanesian Mission Selwyn was under attack from two sides, missionaries and settlers. The CMS missionary, William Williams, described Selwyn's first visit to the Pacific and absence from St John's as 'truly extraordinary',⁴¹ while Robert Maunsell referred in 1857 to Selwyn's 'quixotic mission'.⁴² Settlers from the outset were alarmed at Selwyn spending so much time outside 'his diocese proper'⁴³ where he was accused of "yachting" among the Solomon and other groups'.⁴⁴ Selwyn was indignant at this criticism, writing in 1852 to his two metropolitans, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Australia, giving a detailed statement of the way in which he had spent his time during the last ten years.⁴⁵ Henry Sewell, the administrator of the Canterbury Association and politician, was less than impressed, dismissing Selwyn's defence of his work as 'a good one' as unsatisfactory:

We who are smarting under the want of a Bishop (as other settlements also are doing) do not admit the plea. There are a thousand good works to be done, but people have no business to neglect their appointed duties for mere fancy work.⁴⁶

In contrast, Charles Abraham, Selwyn's great admirer and publicist, referred to him as 'the Apostle of the Pacific'.⁴⁷ This view saw the Melanesian Mission as central to the identity of the New Zealand Church and Selwyn's labours as a natural part of his role as Bishop of New Zealand. Hugh Laracy has calculated that between 1847 and 1860 'Selwyn spent approximately thirty-one months, or twenty-two percent of his time on ten voyages to the islands'.⁴⁸ The Melanesian Mission was never owned by the whole church as Selwyn had hoped. Grant Phillipson, in his revisionist thesis on Selwyn, argues that Selwyn 'believed that the Church could take over the functions of a voluntary society without losing its popular appeal'.⁴⁹ He failed, however 'to infuse a missionary energy into the Church. New Zealand lacked Exeter Hall's largely middle-class constituency, with sufficient wealth to devote some of it to philanthropy, and was not very responsive to the Evangelical revival'.⁵⁰

Selwyn during his visit to England in 1854-55 secured funds for the endowment of a missionary diocese which was invested in land in Kohimarama in Auckland. This became the Melanesian Trust. It did not, however, make significant contributions to the Mission's funds in the nineteenth century. After the consecration of John Coleridge Patteson in 1861 as a missionary bishop the work in Melanesia became structurally part of the Anglican Church in New Zealand. New Zealand General Synods urged other dioceses to give support to the Melanesian Mission.⁵¹ David Hilliard has indicated that 'The annual sum raised in New Zealand for the Melanesian Mission, averaging £600 in the twenty years after 1861, did not surpass Australian contributions until the early 1890s'.⁵²

Bishop Tyrrell made only the one voyage to Melanesia and so this Australian link was lost. Both the Australasian and the Diocesan Boards disappeared as quickly as they had arisen. It was not until 1872 that a renamed Australian Board of Missions was formed⁵³ and the New Zealand Provincial Board of Missions was not established until 1916. When the New Zealand Church Missionary Association (renamed the New Zealand Church Missionary Society in 1916) was founded in 1892 the New Zealand bishops

were concerned that it might divert contributions away from the support of the Melanesian Mission. In 1895 the Church Missionary Association reached an agreement with the Bishop of Melanesia to financially support ‘a white missionary.... On the understanding that the clergyman so appointed shall be a sound Evangelical Churchman.’⁵⁴ This arrangement continued until 1919 when Bishop J.M. Steward, noted for his Anglo-Catholic emphases, terminated the connection.⁵⁵

In 1868 John Palmer, a Melanesian missionary, married Sarah Ashwell, the daughter of a CMS missionary. Robert Burrows, ‘in one of the after-breakfast speeches said, the Church Missionary Society and the Melanesian Mission had effected a union.’⁵⁶ The marriage was performed by Bishop Patteson but there was some consternation when it was discovered that the Bishop’s name was not registered by the Registrar-General. Sir William Martin, the former chief justice, was one of the guests. He was consulted and it was decided that Archdeacon Lloyd should repeat part of the service which was duly done.⁵⁷ While the relationships between the CMS supporters and those of the Melanesian Mission were strengthened from the 1860s, Selwyn’s ‘interesting experiment’ of a mission owned and fully supported by the whole church had not been achieved.

3. A Missionary Bishop

The idea and ideal of the missionary bishop were caught up in the mid-nineteenth century ecclesiological ferment in the Anglican Church. Gavin White in his unpublished thesis on the subject has pointed to two main influences.⁵⁸ The first originated in America with John Henry Hobart, Bishop of New York State, proposing a missionary episcopate in the West in 1811. This was popularised and given substance by Bishop Doane in his sermon on ‘The Missionary Bishop’ in 1835 when he defined this office as

a Bishop *sent forth* by the Church, *not sought for* of the Church—going *before*, to organize the Church, not waiting till the Church has partially been organized—a leader, not a follower, in the march of the Redeemer’s conquering and triumphant Gospel.⁵⁹

The second major influence came from England through the writings of the Tractarians, J.H. Newman, Hurrell Froude and E.B. Pusey.

These two streams of influences were brought together by Samuel Wilberforce in his *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America* in 1844⁶⁰ and as Bishop of Oxford through his unsuccessful attempts to have a Missionary Bishops Bill passed through Parliament in 1853. Wilberforce was also active in Convocation in 1860 when the matter was discussed. Henry Venn, in contrast, was perhaps the most clearly articulate opponent of the missionary bishop, not ‘because he was anti-episcopal’ but because both he and the CMS ‘were convinced that bishops should follow, rather than anticipate, evangelization.’⁶¹ Venn feared ‘episcopal autocracy’ and was wanting to uphold ‘his Protestant commitment to the state’.⁶²

Selwyn saw himself as both a colonial and missionary bishop in New Zealand with responsibility for the emerging settler church and oversight of the Maori church which

resulted from missionary activity. Before Selwyn's arrival in New Zealand, Broughton had come over from Sydney in 1838 and exercised episcopal functions on the grounds of his apostolic authority which he claimed was his by consecration rather than British law. Selwyn also claimed he had inherent powers which allowed him to call two Synods. There were, however, considerable sensitivities in the mid-nineteenth century over the extent of apostolic authority and the constraints placed upon colonial bishops by the royal mandate underlying their letters patent.

By 1852 Selwyn noted that 'The careful superintendence of this multitude of islands will require the services of a missionary bishop, able and willing to devote himself to this work.'⁶³ Somewhat romantically he thought of resigning New Zealand to other bishops and taking up this work exclusively himself as one way of getting around the legal and 'technical obstructions', 'retaining only such interest in New Zealand as might connect me still with the Councils of the Church, and give me a central home and a resting place among my own countrymen'. But he was caught up in the midst of organising the New Zealand church system and resolving matters relating to its trusts. Writing to his confidant and fund raiser at Eton, Edward Coleridge, he expansively declared his

theory of Missionary action, that we ought to send out a Bishop first, with one or two such friends as Thomas Whytehead and Charles Abraham, to assist him during his life, and succeed him after his death, and that they with the assistance of a few masters, should devote their efforts to the work of raising up a Ministry from their own native disciples.⁶⁴

During his visit to England in 1854-55 Selwyn recruited John Coleridge Patteson to return with him and to take charge of the Melanesian Mission. As early as 1857 Selwyn was writing to Patteson's father that John 'should be the first Island Bishop' and 'that Norfolk Island should be the see of the bishop' where he would have his school of candidates for Holy Orders'.⁶⁵ The Norfolk Island base would provide a residence for the bishop within British territorial limits, a legal requirement for English bishops.

Provision was made in the 1857 Constitution of the New Zealand church for 'any Missionary Dioceses which may be formed among the other Islands of the Pacific Ocean' to be associated with the General Synod.⁶⁶ In January 1860 Selwyn wrote to the 'Colonial Secretary, asking for permission to appoint and consecrate John Coleridge Patteson as Missionary Bishop of the Western Pacific Isles'.⁶⁷ Advice had been given to the Bishop of Cape Town and his suffragans that they could exercise their 'inherent powers' as bishops to 'legally consecrate a Bishop out of Her Majesty's dominions, to confine his ministrations to places beyond the limits of those dominions'.⁶⁸ Charles Frederick Mackenzie was duly consecrated as 'the first Missionary Bishop of the Church of England in modern times' in Capetown on the 1 January 1861⁶⁹ as 'Bishop of the Mission to the tribes dwelling in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyassa and River Shire' and the head of the Universities Mission to Central Africa.⁷⁰

After taking advice from four Crown lawyers in New Zealand about the validity of consecrating a missionary bishop within British territory,⁷¹ Selwyn, assisted by Abraham of Wellington and Hobhouse of Nelson, went ahead on the 24 February 1861

and consecrated Patteson as 'Missionary Bishop among the Western Islands of the South Pacific Ocean'.⁷² As Selwyn put it, 'three Eton Bishops met together ... to consecrate a fourth'.⁷³ Whether anything can be read into the absence of Bishop William Williams who had decided CMS sympathies is inconclusive because Harper of Christchurch was also absent and Hobhouse apparently had to be convinced of the legality of the act.

Before the shift to Norfolk Island in 1867 the Melanesian Mission provided an interesting anomaly in the Anglican Church with its headquarters and its bishop residing for some of the time within the territory of another bishop. This provided a precedent and a possible model for sharing episcopal and territorial jurisdiction over both the Maori and settler parts of the church. Because of the missionary focus of the Melanesian Mission beyond the shores of New Zealand the implications of this for the church within New Zealand were not taken any further in the nineteenth century.⁷⁴

In 1867 Selwyn addressed the Church Congress at Wolverhampton and declared to cheers:

It is not in the glorification of our own order that we talk about sending out missionary Bishops, but because we know, as the Church in America once knew to its cost, but now knows with thankfulness, that the Bishop is a tree bearing its seed within itself.⁷⁵

Until the 26 January 1975, when the Church of Melanesia became an independent province, the Melanesian Mission was a missionary diocese under the leadership of ten successive holders of the office of missionary bishop. The first two Melanesians to be consecrated were Dudley Tuti and Leonard Alufurai, as assistant bishops in 1963. The first Melanesian to head the church was Archbishop Norman Palmer who was consecrated on the 1 November 1975. Selwyn's 'interesting experiment' relating to the development of the missionary bishop in Melanesia took much longer to reproduce a Melanesian bishop and an autonomous independent Melanesian church than Selwyn or Patteson probably anticipated. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this lecture, but were in part due to the exercise of episcopal leadership over the Mission which increased Melanesian dependence on Europeans, rather than, as Selwyn and Patteson had intended, free Melanesians from it.

4. Comity - working with others

In 1867 Selwyn appealed for unity in the Church of England referring to the example of a Maori chief he had encountered who when asked

why he refused to become a Christian ... stretched out three fingers, and pointing to the centre joint said, 'I have come to a spot from which I see three roads branching. This is the Church of England, this is the Church of Rome, and this the Wesleyans. I am sitting down here doubting which to take.'⁷⁶

For Selwyn a basic principle which he learnt and tried to live by in his Pacific work was that 'We must not give a divided testimony to those to whom we desire to represent the

Unity of the Godhead.’ He referred to the way in which the Methodists took responsibility for Fiji and Tonga, the London Missionary Society Samoa and New Caledonia, the Presbyterians the southern islands of the New Hebrides and the Melanesian Mission the northern islands of the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. ‘There is no rivalry between us,’ he declared, ‘each does its own work, as far as possible, without interfering with that of the others.’⁷⁷ There was an element of Anglican imperialism in Selwyn’s approach to comity, with a desire to carve out an Anglican sphere of influence in the Pacific, but in doing this he was doing no more than other Protestant missions.⁷⁸

Selwyn accepted the principle of cooperation from his first voyage to the Pacific in 1848 when he wrote that ‘It is of little consequence whether these babes in Christ have been nourished by their own true Mother, or by other faithful nurses, provided that they are fed by the sincere milk of the word.’⁷⁹ There was a clearly pragmatic dimension to Selwyn’s approach in that there were still many areas in the Pacific untouched by missionaries although he unrealistically in his early voyages wrote of some of the ‘native churches’ of the London Missionary Society opting eventually for episcopacy. He could see no future of communion with Methodists, however, because of ‘the popery of their system, in spreading the name of Wesley, and the authority of the Conference over their whole mission field’.⁸⁰ While he avoided taking part in the public services of other missions he refers to joining with them in family worship. He also undertook many acts of generosity towards the other missions, bringing, for example, Mrs Inglis, the wife of a Presbyterian missionary, and a horse to Aneityum in 1852.⁸¹

Patteson adopted Selwyn’s comity principle. He described how during his four month’s residence at Lifu in 1858, where LMS Polynesian teachers had been active for some time, he preached his first sermon looking like a dissenting preacher ‘without any mark of the clergyman save white tie and black coat’.⁸² While he went beyond Selwyn in taking part in a LMS service, he could not help exclaiming in a letter, ‘but the prayer—oh! I did long for one of our Common Prayer-books’.⁸³ The early efforts of the Melanesian Mission were directed towards the Loyalty Islands and it was from there that the first five students came to St John’s College in 1849. William Nihill undertook pioneering work in acquiring a knowledge of the Lifu language and died there. When the LMS decided to assert their claim to the Loyalty Islands as their own missionary sphere Patteson reluctantly, despite the desire of local people for the Mission to remain, gave priority to the comity principle as ‘it would do harm to have two rival systems on the island’.⁸⁴

In 1871, shortly before he was killed at Nukapu, Patteson reflected on the need for Anglican work in Fiji.

We ought to make no attempt to proselytise among the Fiji natives, who have been evangelised by the Wesleyans. But there is work among our Western Pacific imported islanders and the white people.⁸⁵

Apart from the early friction in the Loyalty Islands with the London Missionary Society the comity principle worked well for the first fifty years of the Melanesian Mission because there were no missionary rivals in the area where they were working. The

return of Catholics (1898), and the arrival of Methodists (1902), the South Sea Evangelical Mission as it became (1904) and the Seventh Day Adventists (1912) between the years 1898 and 1912 shattered the Anglican monopoly. The comity approach in the Pacific was also challenged by Alfred Willis, formerly Bishop of Honolulu, when he moved to Tonga in 1902 with the strong support of S.T. Nevill, Bishop of Dunedin.⁸⁶ The other New Zealand bishops did not support Willis and Nevill while H.H. Montgomery, formerly Bishop of Tasmania and now secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was quite hostile writing in 1903 that while it was true that the 'Wesleyans have intruded in North [*sic* New] Georgia' in the Solomon Islands, for '50 years we have done no work whatever there' and that until 'we have done our duty to the Solomons (and especially as is the case with New Zealand which comprehends Melanesia in its Province) - it seems very wrong indeed to intrude into an island where there are no heathens'.⁸⁷

Comity was an interesting experiment which originated in the nineteenth century and developed into the ecumenism of the twentieth century.⁸⁸ The Church of Melanesia, as the inheritor of this policy, has played a significant part in giving ecumenical leadership in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands and within the wider Pacific region through the Pacific Conference of Churches.

5. Attitudes Towards Melanesian Peoples and Customs

In 1854, when Selwyn addressed a missionary meeting in London, the meeting ended with the singing of 'Heber's Missionary hymn',⁸⁹ 'From Greenland's icy mountains'. It is not recorded if Selwyn grimaced when they sang the words of the second verse:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Java's isle,
Though every prospect pleases
And only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.⁹⁰

During his second missionary voyage in 1850, Selwyn wrote from New Caledonia,

believe me it is not true that 'only man is vile.' This race of men are not vile.... I quarrel with the current phrases of the 'poor heathen,' and the 'perishing savages'.... To go among the heathen as an equal and a brother is far more profitable than to risk that subtle kind of self-righteousness, which creeps into the mission work, akin to thanking God that we are not as other men are.⁹¹

While Selwyn never articulated a fully developed missiology, as far as he was concerned the object of mission was 'to bring good tidings and to publish peace: to preach God reconciling the world to Himself, and men at peace with one another'.⁹²

This approach was developed by Patteson who emphasised the common humanity which all people share, the universality of the Christian message which is available to all and the potential of everyone to receive that message. In theory at least there was equality between Europeans and Melanesians with Patteson declaring that ‘There is no line of demarcation drawn between the white and the black; we never ask a Melanesian to do anything that we would not ourselves.’⁹³ Selwyn and Patteson did not idealise or romanticise Melanesian people or their society and customs and in fact Patteson avoided publicising the Mission. They were even more forthright in condemning the evils displayed by Europeans in Melanesia. Patteson’s ‘own feeling’ was ‘that one should teach *positive* truth, the plain message of Christianity, not attacking prejudices’.⁹⁴ He was conscious of the danger of making converts ‘*English* Christians’ assuming ‘English Christianity (as something distinct I mean from the doctrines of the Church of England), to be necessary’. He was aware of the way in which other missionaries sought ‘to denationalise these races ... whereas we ought surely to change as little as possible—only what is clearly incompatible with the simplest form of Christian teaching and practice’.⁹⁵ This approach lay behind Selwyn and Patteson’s commitment to train and ordain Melanesians. Six months before he died, Patteson wrote to a London Missionary Society missionary,

My own strong impression is that we must aim, by God’s blessing, at organising native Churches under native pastors, regarding the white Missionary simply as the pioneer and forerunner of the native clergyman.⁹⁶

At one level the Melanesian Mission’s approach represented a significant move away from the negative stereotyping and condemnation of customs and cultures seen in many mid-nineteenth century missionary organisations. At the same time it did not necessarily recognise the way in which Christianity was being inculturated into Melanesian life in a peculiarly Anglican style. The public school model adopted at the central institution in Norfolk Island carried with it its own overtones of how education should be modelled. The adoption of Mota, as the language for education and worship provided a common language for the Mission which overcame some of the problems of Melanesia’s linguistic diversity but imposed its own patterns on the way that people thought. The Christian understanding of marriage presented a new model of relationships between men and women which cut across traditional expectations and roles. The use of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the understanding of ministry modelled by the European missionaries carried with them English history and traditions which have shaped the church that emerged from the Mission. The developing paternalism after Patteson, the increasing dependence of the Mission on European staff and the growing competition from other missionary organisations in the twentieth century, delayed the Mission from achieving independence as an indigenous church. These points require more explanation than can be given here, but they indicate some of the difficulties which the Melanesia Mission faced as it sought to translate its ideals into action.

Sara Sohmer has pointed to the way in which the Melanesian Mission ‘mined both traditional Anglican theology and the Oxford Movement for the intellectual and spiritual resources needed both to sustain the missionary effort and explicate the very different world in which the mission functioned’.⁹⁷ The Mission was led by graduates from Cambridge and Oxford who reflected ‘the broad spectrum of Victorian intellectual

life'⁹⁸ who were fascinated by the study of languages, ethnology and religious beliefs. They emphasised the 'universality of the Christian message' without requiring of people a conversion in the evangelical revivalistic or individual mode.⁹⁹ Patteson was deeply influenced by his reading of Richard Hooker and Joseph Butler. From them, Sohmer argued, he gained the understanding that 'The role of Christianity was to complete and enhance; it did not always need to replace or destroy.'¹⁰⁰ The attitudes of Selwyn and Patteson towards Melanesia, its peoples and their way of life became part of the ethos of the Mission which found expression in the notable work of people like Robert Codrington, Richard Commins, Walter Ivens and Charles Fox.

Conclusion

This lecture has presented a one-sided view of aspects of the beginnings of the Melanesian Mission within the wider context of its time, looking at them through the eyes of Selwyn and to a lesser extent Patteson. The commemoration of the sesquicentenary of the founding of the Mission is a time to give due honour to those who laid foundations on which others have built. The Melanesian Mission was Selwyn's peculiar creation, his 'interesting experiment'. Its beginnings reflected his great strengths, his visionary capacity, his outstanding seamanship. It also reflected some of his flaws: his difficulty in working, Patteson apart, with others; his inability to translate his understanding of mission as the work of the whole church into a permanent structure. But the Mission would not have been possible without the single minded vision and energy which he brought to its founding. It was, given the pressures on him, a remarkable achievement. While there would have been no Melanesian Mission, as we know it, without Selwyn, there would have been no mission without the people of Melanesia.

In the chapel at St John's College the names of George Siapo, Isaka Valu, Waderulu, George Apale and John Thol from the Loyalty Islands, and William Uniou of Erromanga in Vanuatu, are listed as 'students of this College, and first-fruits of the Melanesian Mission: A.D. 1851, 1852, 1853.' Their names appear on the same plaque as William Nihill who died in the Loyalty Islands 28 April 1855, aged 29 years. Siapo, Apale and Thol are buried in the College cemetery and their names are on a monument that was unveiled in 1997. Also remembered in the chapel are the Pitcairn Islanders, Fisher Young and Edwin Nobbs, who were resettled at Norfolk Island and who accompanied Patteson on a voyage to Melanesia in 1864 and died as a result of injuries received at Santa Cruz. There are memorials to Bishop Patteson, who was killed at Nukapu on 20 September 1871, and Joseph Atkin 'of this College' and Stephen Taroaniara from San Cristobal in the Solomon Islands, 'who died of wounds received at Nukapu'. The Melanesian Mission had become much more than 'an interesting experiment'.

Note: A slightly different version of this lecture was delivered at a seminar in the University of Cambridge on 7 October 1999, under the auspices of the Currents in World Christianity Project, coordinated by the University of Cambridge and financed by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

¹ [G.A. Selwyn]. 'Lecture on Missions in the Pacific', *Colonial Church Chronicle*, July 1854, p.10.

² *ibid.*, p.13.

³ S.H.Selwyn, *Reminiscences by Mrs. S.H. Selwyn, 1809-1867*, with an introduction and notes by Enid A. Evans, [Auckland], Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, 1961, Typescript, p.35.

⁴ Charles Hole, *The Early History of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East to the end of A.D. 1814*, London: Church Missionary Society, 1896, p.36.

⁵ H.W. Tucker, *Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn* 2 vols. London: William Wells Gardner, 1879, I, 85.

⁶ [G.A. Selwyn], *Notes of a Speech by the Right Rev. George Augustus, Lord Bishop of New Zealand, at a meeting of the Windsor and Eton Church Union, All Saints Day, 1841*, London: Richard Clay [1841], p.9. (Source, Selwyn Papers, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 115.k.)

⁷ G.A. Selwyn, *Are Cathedral Institutions Useless? A Practical Answer to this Question*, London: J.W. Paker, 1838, p.47.

⁸ *ibid.*, p.56.

⁹ [T. Whytehead], 'Journal Kept by One of the Passengers on Board the *Tomatin* with Extracts from Bishop Selwyn's Letters, Dec. 26 1841 to Nov 11 1842', Auckland Museum Library, SP, Ms 273, vol. 5, typescript, pp.4-6.

¹⁰ [G.A. Selwyn], *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of New Zealand at the Diocesan Synod in the Chapel of St. John's College, on Thursday, September 23, 1847*, London: Rivington, 1849, p.107.

¹¹ I am grateful to David Hilliard for pointing this out.

¹² [Selwyn], *A Charge*, pp.19-20.

¹³ *ibid.*, p.20.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁵ J. Rutherford, *Sir George Grey K.C.B., 1812-1898. A Study in Colonial Government*, London: Cassell, 1961, p.268.

¹⁶ Selwyn sailed in the company of *HMS Havannah* in 1849 and *HMS Fly* in 1850. He was accompanied by Sir George Grey on the *Victoria* to New Caledonia in 1853. Bishop Patteson in 1861 went on *HMS Cordelia* to Malaita and in 1865 sailed in the company of *HMS Curaçao* in 1865 to the Solomon Islands after it had shelled Tanna because one of the LMS missionaries had been forced to leave by the local people. Patteson did not approve of this approach. Following Patteson's death at Nukapu in 1871 local people were shot at by crew (who claimed they acted in self-defence) from *HMS Rosario*, which was investigating the circumstances surrounding his murder.

¹⁷ Tucker, *Memoir*, I, 290.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.285.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.287.

²⁰ David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen. A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942*, St Lucia; University of Queensland Press, 1978.

²¹ Ruth Ross, 'Evolution of the Melanesian Bishopric', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 12.2, October 1982, pp.122-23.

²² G.W. Doane, *Sermons on Various Occasions; with Three Charges to the Clergy of His Diocese*, London: Rivington, 1842, p.278.

²³ *ibid.*, p.318.

²⁴ W.W. Manross, *A History of the American Episcopal Church*, New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1959, pp.252-57.

²⁵ J.T. Addison, *The Episcopal Church in the United States 1789-1931*, New York: Scribner, 1951, p.132.

²⁶ D.H. Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth Century America*, New York: OUP, 1995, p.77; see pp. 75-77, 142-45.

²⁷ Minutes of the Australasian Synod, *Colonial Church Chronicle*, IV, 1850-51, p.465.

²⁸ R.G. Boodle, *The Life and Labours of the Right Rev. William Tyrrell*, London: Wells Gardner, Darton, 1881, p.101.

- ²⁹ Tucker, *Memoir*, I, 372.
- ³⁰ 'The communication from the Lord Bishop of New Zealand to the members of the Auckland Missionary Association', George Kissling, Letters 1850-60, typescript, St John's College Archives, Kin Misc 9/13.
- ³¹ G.A. Kissling to Henry Venn, Auckland 9 July 1852, *ibid.*
- ³² G.A. Selwyn to H. Venn, St John's College, 19 December 1849, CMS Letters Received 1847-1850, AJCP Microfilm 209, Reel 36.
- ³³ W. Martin to H. Venn, Auckland 16 December 1850, CMS Letters Received, 1850-1857, AJCP Microfilm 298, Reel 37.
- ³⁴ Correspondence Committee, Society's House, 3 February 1852, CMS Committee Minutes 1851-1854, AJCP Microfilm 187, Reel 15.
- ³⁵ Henry Venn to G.A. Kissling, 19 February 1852, quoted in Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, p.14.
- ³⁶ Kissling to H. Venn, Auckland, 9 July 1852, George Kissling, Letters 1850-60, typescript, St John's College Archives, Kin Misc 9/13.
- ³⁷ 'Missionary Centres', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, VIII, 1857, p.26.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*, p.29.
- ³⁹ Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind*, p.145.
- ⁴⁰ Addison, *The Episcopal Church*, p.162.
- ⁴¹ Francis Porter, ed., *The Turanga Journals 1840-1850, Letters and Journals of William and Jane Williams Missionaries to Poverty Bay*, Wellington: Price Milburn, 1974, p.481.
- ⁴² Robert Maunsell, Annual letter, Kohanga, Waikato River, 19 January 1857, CMS Correspondence, AJCP Microfilm 228, Reel 56.
- ⁴³ Tucker, *Memoir*, I, 281.
- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 375.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*, II, 12-13.
- ⁴⁶ W.D. McIntyre, ed., *The Journal of Henry Sewell 1853-7*, 2 vols., Christchurch: Whitcoulls, 1980, vol. 1, p.447.
- ⁴⁷ *Colonial Church Chronicle*, November 1855, p.171.
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**‘VALUABLE HELPERS’:
WOMEN IN THE MELANESIAN MISSION
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Janet Crawford

The beginning of the Melanesian Mission is closely linked with St John’s College, one of its starting dates being that day in 1849 when Bishop Selwyn arrived at the college with five young Melanesian men. Three years later, on 21 October 1852, the *Border Maid* anchored at Kohimarama, with Selwyn and a party of Melanesians on board. Among them were two young women or girls from the Loyalty Islands. Sarah Selwyn described how she watched the Bishop coming up to the College from Kohimarama:

We could watch them coming - the crowd of Maori and English, then the train of Melanesians, new and old, then the Bishop: much speculation this time as to the two quaint figures on either side of him, coming along gravely as if dressed in the height of fashion but these two girls, for such they were, had very skimpy petticoats made ... by the Bishop himself out of a coloured counterpane.... These girls were the first of their kind that came as scholars.¹

These two girls were named Wabisane and Wasatru. Wabisane was ‘engaged’ to George Siapo of Nengone, a very promising Melanesian scholar. Siapo, who was 18 or 19 years old, was baptised in 1852 on his own island after spending time at St John’s College. He begged Selwyn that he might return to St John’s and that Wabisane might be taken to New Zealand ‘to be trained in Christian ways’.² Wasatru seems to have been younger and to have come as companion to Wabisane. Wabisane’s father was described as a terrible old chief named Bula, who had 55 wives and almost absolute power. If any wife offended him he sent for the high priest who cursed her until she died. A young girl who refused to marry him was killed and eaten. After his death the chief wife was strangled by her own brother as a matter of course.³

The two girls were looked after by Sarah Selwyn and Caroline Abraham, the intention being that they might get some training and ‘be examples to their countrywomen’.⁴ They spent a month with Judge and Lady Martin at Taurarua (Judge’s Bay), and were described by Lady Martin as ‘most tractable, amusing companions’. She thought them quieter than Maori girls, ‘but then they had not half their fun and spirit’.⁵ They were puzzled by an unmarried neighbour and ‘said to us, ‘Man – money –no house – no wife’, as if the problem was too hard for them’.⁶ They learned English fast, learned to read, write and sew, and when out of school joined in playing games with a group of English children living at St John’s College. Sarah Selwyn commented that ‘Wabisane was a true lady in ways and in mind. I should think Wasatru (my girl) was the quickest, but she was made of commoner clay’.⁷

Both girls ‘made such progress in Scripture knowledge, and gave such evident proofs of an earnest and religious knowledge, that they were baptised and received the names Caroline and Sarah’.⁸ Because the girls were about to return to Nengone with William Nihill and because there was ‘a certain leaven of Christianity on the place’ they were

not required to go through the usual probation period on their home island⁹ and the baptisms, performed by Bishop Selwyn, took place in the chapel at St John's in June 1853. Later that year the girls returned to Nengone in a large party including the Selwyns and William Nihill and his wife but George Siapo, one of 'the first fruits' of the Melanesian Mission, had unfortunately died in January of that year. The voyage was via Sydney where the Mission party was warmly welcomed and the Melanesian girls received gifts of clothes and two fair-haired dolls. Mrs Selwyn wrote of their arrival at Nengone (where she herself was the first white woman the natives had seen):

We had dressed the girls warmly as they were hothouse plants, which suited them well at Sydney, but they were a sight to see on landing at Nengone, on the hottest of days when they came on deck waiting in the melting heat to go on shore, dress cross-over and shawl all woollen, two or three comforters around their necks and as many muffetees as they could get on their arms. They were quite composed feeling evidently the dignity of their appearance.¹⁰

In 1856 both young women returned to St John's College on the *Southern Cross* with Bishop Selwyn, John Coleridge Patteson, and the widowed Anna Nihill. Caroline Wabisane was now married to a young man called Simeona, another promising Melanesian scholar, while Sarah was married to a young man from her own island of Nawiki and had a baby girl called Lizzy. Caroline and Sarah were both confirmed and became regular communicants. Patteson wrote of them that Mr Nihill had taught them well 'and I am sure they could pass an examination in Scriptural history, simple doctrinal statements etc. as well as most young English people of the middle class of life.'¹¹ In 1857 Caroline's husband and baby son were both baptised in the college chapel, her husband taking the Christian names of George Selwyn while the baby was John Patteson. In March 1860 Patteson wrote a letter describing George Selwyn Simeona's death at St Andrew's, Kohimarama, from consumption and added, 'His wife, a sweet good girl, one of Mrs Selwyn's pupils from Nengone in old times, died last year. They leave one boy of three years.'¹² What happened to Sarah/Wasatru is not recorded.

The brief stories of Wabisane, Wasatru and the European women who cared for and taught them is proof that women were involved in the Melanesian Mission from the early days. Histories of the Mission have tended to marginalise women or to ignore them completely. This is not surprising, because mission's historians in general have paid little attention to women missionaries, and even less to the women with whom they worked, the objects of their mission.

Charles Forman has written that in the Pacific, 'The churches initially projected a strongly masculinist image. The first missionaries were men, some of whom were accompanied by their wives.'¹³ In fact the usual pattern for Protestant missions in the Pacific Islands was for the missionaries to be married men. This was both so that they might be protected from the sexual temptation posed by indigenous women and also so that they might provide 'the object lesson of a civilised, Christian home'.¹⁴ Missionary wives were regarded as 'helpmates', who had a role to play in the domestication and civilisation of indigenous women. The expectation was that the missionary's home would provide a model for other homes.

The key concept of the Melanesian Mission as developed by Selwyn and Patteson was different. It was based on the concept of training promising youths to be teachers and evangelists of their own people, leading eventually to the establishment of a Melanesian Church, independent of foreign oversight, led by its own deacons, priests and bishops (as in fact it now is). A small number of English missionaries would teach these young men at a central school in the winter and spend the summer season at work in the islands, imparting Christian faith while interfering as little as possible with native culture and customs. The role of these missionaries was compared to that of 'white corks' upholding a 'black net'. This was a concept in which there was little place for women. In comparison with other missionary organisations, such as the London Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society, the Melanesian Mission was a particularly masculine and male-dominated institution and yet, as can be seen above, women were involved in the Melanesian Mission from its early days. For many years the motivation for the women's work of the Melanesian Mission, in Auckland at St John's and at St Andrew's, Kohimarama, and later at St Barnabas on Norfolk Island, was the training of 'Christian wives for our Christian Lads'.¹⁵

George Siapo wanted his betrothed to go to St John's College 'to be trained in Christian ways'. Like Siapo, a number of the Melanesian scholars who came to New Zealand were engaged or married and already at St John's College in 1858 in addition to 39 single Melanesian men there were three married couples, with two babies. Patteson believed that the training of 'Christian wives for our Christian lads' was necessary and was willing to ensure the provision of young Christian women as eligible brides for his scholars. Thus he wrote in 1865 from Mota: 'I think I shall take away 5 or 6 young girls to be taught at Kohimarama to become wives for scholars. Else the Christian lad will have to live with a heathen girl.'¹⁶

In reality it was not always easy to take girls away as not surprisingly their families often objected. Later in 1865 however there came to St Andrew's George and Sarah Sarawia, two other married couples and 'four little maidens ... girls from twelve to eight years old'.¹⁷

The girls and married women were looked after at St John's by Sarah Selwyn, Caroline Abraham and Anna Nihill, young widow of the Rev. William Nihill. Anna Nihill was in fact the first woman connected with the Melanesian Mission to have lived in the islands, at Nengone in the Loyalty Islands, where William had gone for his health. He died there early in 1855, just three weeks after the birth and death of their second child, and she returned to Auckland. Lady Mary Ann Martin also took a keen interest in the Melanesian Mission and while staying at St Andrew's in 1866 wrote:

A quaint little procession of demure-looking little maidens brought our dinner over. They were grave and full of responsibility till some word from 'Bishop' would light up their faces with shy smiles.¹⁸

For a few years any girls or young women at St Andrew's were sent to St Stephen's School for Native Girls which Mr and Mrs Kissling had established in Parnell. After Lonsdale Pritt, the headmaster of St Andrew's, married in 1863 they were trained by

his wife, Mary. Unlike Mrs Selwyn and her friends, Mrs Pritt was fully involved in the work of the Mission with specific responsibility for training women and girls. She was in fact a member of the staff, though not listed or named as such. Under her care Melanesian women were trained in the domestic arts of sewing, cooking, washing and ironing, and given some basic education and religious instruction. From 1865 Mrs Pritt was assisted by Sarah Irotavira, wife of George Sarawia, described by Patteson as 'a nice, gentle creature She is not at all equal to George in intelligence, and is more native in habits, etc. But I think that she will do her best'.¹⁹ He later wrote of her as 'a weakly body, but good', and with 'plenty of good sense'.²⁰

Strict propriety and segregation of the sexes was observed at St Andrew's. Unmarried girls sat at a separate table in the dining hall and rooms were locked at night. Patteson wrote to his sister Fanny that 'a large proportion of the girls' were 'careless' but 'as far as we know no immorality has taken place with fifteen girls in the school. We take of course all precautions.... Still really evil-minded young persons could doubtless get into mischief, if they were determined to do so'.²¹ So far nothing of a serious nature had happened although 'irregularities' did occur at times.

Sarah Selwyn, writing from Kohimarama in 1866, described the 'female department' and its rationale:

A word too must be here said about the female department on which so much depends. What will do more for any set of people than carefully trained mothers, for be the fathers what they may, instructed, wise and good and as polished as you please, ignorant wild unnurtured mothers will neutralise any advantage to the children. Mrs Pritt's department therefore of training the women stands in a high, almost in the first place, and to her chiefly is due the care which converts the raw material into a very useful fabric with the orderly habits and neat ways that tell so much in domestic and social life. For the most part the women are the wives of some of the scholars, and they learn in school like the rest, and in an industrial way become quick little seamstresses and tolerable washers and ironers.²²

The emphasis in this training was on the acquisition of European domestic and social skills. The relevance of these to Melanesian culture and life-style was not questioned.

In August 1867 the Melanesian Mission moved to the new station called St Barnabas on Norfolk Island. The Pritts did not go to Norfolk Island, and the European staff consisted of Patteson, the Rev. Dr Robert Codrington, John Palmer, a deacon soon to be ordained priest, and three laymen: Joseph Atkin, Charles Brooke, and Charles Bice. In a party of 37 scholars there were seven girls, all betrothed to one of the 'lads'. As there was no English woman to superintend the girls, Sarah Sarawia, trained by Mrs Pritt in the duties of matron, looked after them.

Patteson himself was celibate, not so much on religious principle as because he believed his life of a missionary bishop was incompatible with marriage. His sisters tried to persuade him to marry and teased him about the 'monkish' nature of the St Andrew's community to which Patteson replied that he had no objection to his staff marrying, but

wives cost money. Writing in 1863 he doubted his power to provide maintenance 'by and by' for a wife and child should 'Joe' Atkin join the Mission, being able to offer him only 'a small and that uncertain salary'. He hoped to pay £100 per annum to an ordained man, increasing by £10 a year to a maximum of £150, but that depended on the income of the Mission and was hardly adequate for a married man with a family.²³

Patteson was close to his sisters, kept in very close contact with his former governess, and had a number of other women correspondents. He grew to esteem Sarah Selwyn but he seems to have had on the whole a not very high opinion of women. He wrote from New Zealand that 'as womankind become more conversant and co-operative with and in all men's work in the colony, so they become less satisfactory as companions to me.... Their kind of talk wearies me and I prefer the society of my boys.'²⁴ A letter from Fanny Patteson to Julia Farr, a single woman missionary, written in 1900 long after her brother's death, is revealing of his attitude:

You were quite right in your supposition that in the early days of the Mission women helpers were not recognised and Coley, I am sure, was quite afraid of trusting anything to them. I don't suppose he would have dreamed of letting a woman near his boys, or girls either very much; but - poor benighted man - he knew nothing of the training of female nurses, nor what a science it had become, and much as he loved and valued Mrs Selwyn and Lady Martin, I doubt whether they were the women to change his ideas. For all that at home he thought sisters and old servants remarkably pleasant folks, but they did not come into his idea of his work.²⁵

The new mission establishment at St Barnabas was likened by Robert Codrington, after his arrival in 1867, to the ancient monasteries of England and Germany in its view of work and education, its regular daily routine with chapel services and school classes interspersed with work on the mission farms and communal meals in the dining hall. It was also modelled very much along the lines of an English public school such as Eton. Like Bishop Selwyn, Patteson was himself an Eton product, and his ideal missionary was a young English gentleman, from a public school (preferably Eton) and university-educated.

The aim of the Norfolk Island school was the selection and training of native teachers and clergy, boys and young men from the many Melanesian islands. Each English missionary at St Barnabas had responsibility for 20-30 'boys' from 'his' island group, teaching them in the summer and learning their language, and in the cooler season taking a small party back to the islands as the nucleus for a new village school. At Saint Barnabas each missionary lived in a 'house' with his boys, as in the 'house' system at a public school. Each 'house' was a two room dwelling, one room for the missionary and a 'long apartment suitably furnished' for the scholars. These houses, the chapel, dining hall and printery were built around a quadrangle and the whole was known as the 'vanua'.

In 1868 a house was erected outside the vanua for the newly married John Palmer and his wife. Sarah Ashwell, then 27 years old, was the daughter of a CMS missionary in the Waikato and therefore 'brought up to Mission work and likely to be valuable among the

young girls'.²⁶ Encouraged no doubt by the arrival of Mrs Palmer, Patteson wrote of bringing more girls to Norfolk Island.

Many girls I hope to take to Norfolk Island. They can hardly be brought together with safety to this place [Mota] yet. The parents see and admit this, and consent to my taking them. I tell them that their sons will not marry ignorant heathen girls (their sons I mean who have been and still are with us); that all the young fellows must have educated wives provided for them, and that therefore I must take away many young girls with me.²⁷

Three years later Mrs Palmer was joined by Mrs Bice when Susannah Maunsell, daughter of another CMS missionary in the Waikato, married Charles Bice. The young Melanesian girls lived with the Palmers and the Bices, each house having a room where the girls lived, sleeping on mats on the floor while the married couples lived in small cottages in a separate area, known as 'Under the Pines'. Mrs Palmer and Mrs Bice were the principal teachers of the girls and also supervised the married women. In accordance with Melanesian custom – and Victorian morals – strict segregation was the rule. Girls were always chaperoned, by a European woman or one of the married Melanesian women. Most meals were taken in the dining hall, although the missionary wives and later single women could choose to eat at home. Melanesian women and girls sat at a separate table. Clement Marau who went to Norfolk Island as a 12 year old in 1869 remembered that 'I saw that the girls kept properly by themselves, and that Palmer and his wife looked well after them'.²⁸

In time the number of houses outside the vanua grew as more missionaries married and as single women joined the Mission, but the vanua remained the heart of the establishment. Julia Farr, who lived at St Barnabas from the late 1880s till 1900, makes many references in her diaries to the physical separation and marginalisation of the women. She wrote in 1894:

One thing I feel sure of is that our missionaries deteriorate in some way – in their dealings with women. They get so used to buying and selling them, to ordering them here and there and treating them as the great men's chattels, they unconsciously get to regard us in the same way and it is incomprehensible to them that a woman should venture to differ from a man or to hold an opinion of her own.²⁹

Pioneering missionary work was the role of men alone and in the days of Patteson and his successor John Selwyn the island work was without doubt a masculine preserve. Women's work was of secondary importance and it was only in 1895, soon after Bishop Cecil Wilson became head of the Mission, that women were for the first time included on the list of Mission staff.

The need for Christian wives for the young men who were trained to be teachers in the islands continued however to be emphasised by the male missionaries, based on their experience in the islands. While marriage to a Christian wife was seen mainly as a means of protecting the husband from 'immorality' or slander, there was also some hope that such a wife might prove to be a help to her husband in his work and that together they

might provide an example of Christian marriage. Richard Comins, who joined the Mission staff in 1877, wrote in 1879:

We are always anxious that our lads should be married before they leave our school to settle for good at their own islands, and we make it an important part of our work to train up Christian girls to be wives for our Christian boys, for otherwise they might go home and marry heathens who would probably drag them down and help to heathenise them again. As it is, when any of our boys tells us that his friends have purchased a wife for him we always try and get hold of the girl, who is sure to be quite a child, and give her three or four years training to fit her for her future position, and in most cases they turn out valuable helpers in the work of spreading the Gospel.³⁰

J.H. Plant, reporting in 1888 on the loss of a teacher in Florida on account of his adultery, in which ‘his wife was in league with his temptress’, wrote:

It caused me to feel more than ever the great importance that our boys should have wives who have been trained under the influence of ladies at Norfolk Island and taught to see and respect the sacredness of matrimony.³¹

Two years later he wrote that although the Florida women were ‘naturally bright, affectionate, and sympathetic’ they were also ‘active elements for evil’ who would continue to give ‘frequent and lamentable occasions of regret’ until they learn ‘something of domestic duties, and the relations and limits between men and women which Christian prudence demands’.³²

Sometimes the missionaries themselves engaged in matchmaking, including negotiating a bride price. According to Patteson, writing from Mota in 1869:

The fashion here is to buy at an early age young girls for their sons, though occasionally a girl may be found not already betrothed, but almost grown up. I now say, ‘I want to train up wives for my sons’, and the fashion of the place allows of my buying or appropriating them. You would be amused to see me engaged in this match-making. It is all the same a very important matter, for clearly it is the best way to secure, as I trust, the introduction of Christian family life among these people.³³

A decade later Richard Comins described how the missionaries on Norfolk Island decided to marry four young couples just before Lent, so that when the *Southern Cross* came in April they would be ready to go to their own islands ‘to begin work for Christ among their countrymen’. He added that:

It is probable that these marriages were actuated more by *duty* than *affection*, for the brides had been purchased by or for their intended husbands in their childhood, and as they grew up they took to each other as a matter of course, whether they liked each other or not. According to our ideas it seems a strange system, but really it does not work badly; on the whole they appear to be as happy as if they had exercised their own choice in the matter.³⁴

The institution of marriage was one of the most significant areas in which Melanesian custom (which was diverse) and nineteenth century Western Christianity differed. While the general principle of the Melanesian Mission was that there was no need for Melanesians to change their way of life in matters that were not essentially connected with Christianity, it was clear to Patteson and his fellow missionaries that the native understanding of marriage was fundamentally at variance with Christian faith and practice. He wrote in 1868 of his Melanesian scholars being unable to understand what the missionaries understood of marriage:

They always saw men and women exchanging husbands and wives when they pleased, and grew up in the midst of such ideas and practices, so that there was never a regular contract, nor a regularly well-conceived and clearly-understood notion of living together till 'death us do part' in their minds.... Long after the heathen know that to break the sixth, eighth, even the ninth and tenth Commandments is wrong ... the seventh is a puzzle to them. At best they only believe it because we say it is a Commandment of God.³⁵

The validity of native marriage was accepted by the missionaries but baptised couples were expected to marry according to the rites of the Anglican Church and the qualifications for Melanesian clergy included being respectably married, or about to be married, 'to a decent Christian girl',³⁶ although sometimes there were difficulties. For example, after his baptism Stephen Taroniara's first wife, a heathen, was abducted and:

as the heathen connection had been so slight, and a proper marriage so entirely beyond the ideas of the native state, it was thought advisable to leave this as a thing of heathen darkness, and let him select a girl to be educated into becoming fit for his true wife.³⁷

Time and again baptised teachers, including some who were ordained, failed to live up to the ideal of 'holy matrimony', causing great sorrow and disappointment to the missionaries. Even at St Barnabas it was possible to fall to the temptation to 'impurity'.

In 1869 Patteson was deeply upset when a young man, a communicant for three years, 'sinned against purity' with his fiancée. Although duly penitent, he was punished by being banned from eating at high table and from teaching and was excluded from the chapel for three weeks. This punishment was decided by the other male communicants but clearly endorsed by Patteson, who believed that:

It was very desirable that great notice should be taken of the commission of an act which it is hard for a heathen to understand to be an act of sin, and the effect upon the whole school of the sad and serious way in which this offence was regarded has been very good.³⁸

Such discipline was in keeping with the practice of the early church, although Patteson admitted, that

In our English nineteenth century life such practices could hardly be reintroduced with benefit. Yet something which might mark open offences with the censure of the Christian Body is clearly desirable when you can have it; and of course with us there is no difficulty whatever.³⁹

The girl's transgression was regarded less seriously, for according to Patteson:

For a poor child who, two short years before, had assumed as a matter of course that a woman simply existed to be a man's slave in every kind of way, her fault could not, I think, be regarded as very great.⁴⁰

After a time the couple was married but their wedding 'was perfectly understood to be in all respects different from a bright, happy wedding'. There was no festivity or feast, no supper and fun and holiday but this was 'quite as much for the sake of all, for the sake of enforcing the new teaching about the sanctity of marriage' as it was to further punish the unfortunate pair.⁴¹

In spite of this strict moral regime the number of scholars, male and female, continued to grow. Later that year Patteson wrote from on board the *Southern Cross*, en route to Norfolk Island with fifty young Melanesians, that 'We have fourteen girls, two married, on board, and there are ten already at Norfolk Island.' He believed the reason for this unusual number to be that people understood that young men and lads 'who are baptized and accustomed to decent orderly ways, are not going to marry wild heathen girls', so the girls were sent 'to be taught and qualified to become fit wives for our rapidly increasing party of young men.'⁴² The training of girls to be 'fit wives' and to have a proper understanding of Christian marriage was the responsibility of the female missionaries on St Barnabas, several of whom were themselves unmarried.

Marriages became a regular feature of life at St Barnabas, often performed shortly before the *Southern Cross* left to take the newly-married couples back to their home islands. Patteson described one such ceremony at which three couples were married in 1868:

The Chapel was so prettily dressed up by Mr Codrington and Mr Bice, under whose instructions some of the lads made evergreen ornaments, large white arums, and red flowers also. At 7 a.m. Morning Prayers, as usual. At 9.30 the wedding. All the Melanesians in their places in Chapel; and as we came into the Chapel from my room the 100th Psalm was chanted capitally.... The bridegrooms wore their Sunday dresses, nice tidy trousers of dark tweed, Crimean shirt, collar and tie and blue serge coat. The brides, white jackets trimmed with a bit of red, white collar and blue skirts.⁴³

For Patteson the fact of its being 'a really solemn religious service' was of central importance:

The deeper feeling of it all is bearing fruit. Already lads and young men from the Solomon Islands say, 'We begin to see what is meant by a man and woman living together'. The solemnity of the service struck them much.⁴⁴

Weddings over the years followed a similar pattern: a whole holiday and a picnic for the whole school, new clothes for the bride and groom, a cricket match for the boys, games for the girls. In 1896 a couple called Charlotte and Harry (from the Banks Islands) married a few days before the *Southern Cross* was due to sail. A detailed account of the wedding day, typical of many, was published in the *Southern Cross Log*:

The wedding itself took place at half-past nine, so at about nine the ceremony of dressing the bride began. She is always given a new outfit, and her dress is a pale blue print skirt, with a white cotton bodice, trimmed with the same blue print. She had a blue belt, and one of the ladies had given her a beautiful necklace of blue beads tied with ribbon. After this was done, her hair had to be dressed. The finishing touch was the putting of a row of particular white flowers all round the hair, and when she was finished she looked exceedingly nice. Mrs Colenso, in whose house she lived, took Charlotte to church, and gave her away. After the ceremony was over Charlotte went off with the other girls to play rounders or cricket. Harry went in another direction with the boys, and for the rest of the day they saw no more of each other. Then we all went to the Mission store to buy wedding presents. One gave a bucket, one a lantern, one a frying pan and so on. The large new work-room was cleared, and cakes and tea were spread on tables. The girls had their tea, waited upon by the white ladies. Tea was followed by chapel as usual, then came games in the work-room - blindman's buff, hunt the slipper, twirl the trencher – they play all these old games, and enjoy them just as much as ever English children did. When the bell rang for bed-time, Charlotte was taken over to her cottage by two of her white friends. A fire had been lit there, and all was cosy and comfortable. Very soon the bridegroom came and they were left alone – the first time they had met since they were married. At about half-past five next morning Charlotte was back in her old home, and there she stayed all day doing her work and going to school as usual, while Harry did just the same among the boys. And then the ship came, and they are gone back to their islands, and it may be years before we see either of them again. All we can do is to pray that they may be happy and useful, and stand firm against the temptations they will meet with.⁴⁵

This was a European-style Christian wedding, the uniting of two people in 'holy matrimony', but it was also a marriage which had been arranged, the fulfilment of a contract made between two families, yet taking place far from their support. Frequently the young couples hardly knew each other, had experienced no 'courtship' and were, not surprisingly, described as shy and embarrassed. According to Julia Farr at least one young bride refused to spend the night with her new husband in their cottage and tried to return to her girlfriends in her former home.

Julia Farr also recorded a significant conversation which gives a hint as to how Melanesian girls themselves thought about marriage. Told that the girls should behave themselves, stay near their chaperones, not make a noise and play in the road 'because it's not nice for women' one girl burst out in a torrent of words:

If we go away from you, play in the road and cry out the men won't marry us – they will be angry and not marry us – and that's what we want. School is good but we don't like the men to buy us. We don't want to get married – why should we? And we don't want to please them.⁴⁶

The response of Miss Farr, herself unmarried, seems rather lame:

This was rather stunning – I could only say there were lots of things in the world we didn't like, like pain and sickness and work and there was no good rebelling against them. God meant them for us and they were good and so with being married, besides their husbands were good men and they ought to be proud of them and that she must not talk any more like that. The truth is with some intelligence the women are getting to rebel against men folk and just now the result is rather bad.⁴⁷

In spite of this small hint of rebellion, the training of girls to be Christian wives continued to be the major focus of women's work in the Melanesian Mission until into the twentieth century when the first women missionaries went to the islands. By the time St Barnabas closed in 1920 there were very few girls still there. The focus had shifted to the work in the islands.

The number of female missionaries on Norfolk Island was always small. Sarah Palmer, who had no children, died after a long illness in 1874, soon after the arrival of Clara Selwyn, wife of John Richardson Selwyn. Her loss was keenly felt, for 'her work among the girls, so important a matter to the Mission, had long been invaluable' and she had known 'so wisely how to combine watchfulness and strictness with unvarying kindness'.⁴⁸ In 1877 Clara Selwyn died shortly after the birth of her fourth child, a daughter who survived her mother only a few months. Both Palmer and Selwyn remarried, and a few more missionary wives came to Norfolk Island but most had to spend a good deal of time caring for their own children and as the number of Melanesian girls and married women increased the 'women's work' of the Mission was increasingly the responsibility of two 'solo' women: Elizabeth Colenso, separated from her husband, and Julia Farr who had not married.

At the end of 1875 John Selwyn invited Elizabeth Colenso to go to Norfolk Island 'to assist Mrs Bice for a time in the education of the children at the school'.⁴⁹ She arrived for a visit in February 1876 and left for good just before Christmas 1898, having served the Mission longer than most male missionaries. It is hard to imagine how at times the St Barnabas community would have managed without Mrs Colenso yet in histories of the Mission her work has received little mention. Even in contemporary accounts she is often rather overlooked. Perhaps this is because she was not a 'proper' missionary wife, but a woman separated from her husband and thus somewhat of an anomaly.

Elizabeth Colenso, the daughter of CMS missionaries William Fairburn and Sarah Fairburn, was born at the Kerikeri mission station in 1821. In 1844 she married William Colenso, catechist and printer to the CMS. The marriage, which was one of convenience and encouraged by Bishop Selwyn, was not a happy one and in August 1853 Elizabeth left her husband, who had been dismissed by the CMS for having a liaison (and a child)

with a Maori woman. She took with her their two children and in 1854 joined the CMS mission station at Taupiri which was run by B. Y. Ashwell. There she would have known Sarah Ashwell (the first Mrs Palmer), and Susannah Maunsell (Mrs Bice). By the time she joined the Melanesian Mission she had considerable experience in teaching Maori children, in translating, and in parish work. Her two children were no longer dependent on her and at the age of fifty-seven Elizabeth Colenso began a new phase of her life on Norfolk Island. As she kept diaries during her time there we have in them a valuable source of information which is lacking in the case of other women, with the exception of Julia Farr.

The work was hard, especially for a woman who was no longer young. The first step was to learn Mota, the common language used by the Mission. Already an outstanding Maori linguist, Elizabeth soon became very proficient in speaking and writing Mota, and did some translation work with Dr Codrington. She usually had some Melanesian girls living with her and under her care and she taught both girls and boys whenever needed.

From time to time she entertained large parties of Melanesian scholars in her house; she oversaw the great annual Christmas spring-cleaning; helped with the packing for the island trips; wrote hundreds of letters to former pupils; helped to entertain visitors to St Barnabas. She did enjoy some social activities and the diaries mention picnics, horse-riding, Norfolk Island and Melanesian weddings, cricket matches and annual Bounty Day celebrations. She was assisted at times by unmarried women who came as unpaid 'helpers': Amy Purchas, Annette Lush, and Kate Lodge (who stayed several years) from Auckland; Helen Rossiter of Norfolk Island and, towards the end of her time, Julia Farr from Adelaide.

Teaching, nursing, translating, providing hospitality were all really secondary to Elizabeth Colenso's main work which was to oversee the clothing department. Indeed 'women's work' was, as Hilliard points out, 'essentially a euphemism for the school's clothing factory, where, for three hours or more daily, prospective Christian wives cut out, sewed and patched up to 1,600 garments annually'.⁵⁰ This provision of clothing was a major task, for each year when the *Southern Cross* arrived back from the islands all the new scholars had to be clothed. The girls' clothing was mostly provided by friends of the Mission in New Zealand and Australia who sewed according to patterns which were provided. The boys' clothes were mostly made at St Barnabas', and of course all the mending was done there, one day each week being set aside for it. Elizabeth Colenso, the gifted translator and teacher, presided over this 'clothing department' for many years.

Elizabeth did most of the cutting out of the trousers and shirts for the boys, and with the help of the girls made them up, she doing the machining. This cutting out of the thick blue material, mostly denim in later years caused her to suffer great pain in the large thumb joint. Innumerable letters had to be written to various people and societies to thank them for their gifts of clothing and sundry parcels for the Mission. Also patterns of the different garments had to be sent to many helpers and guilds.

As the 1890s went on Elizabeth was increasingly crippled with rheumatism. In 1896 and 1897 she was looked after by her two granddaughters, Frances Edith and Christine Simcox, each of whom came on an extended visit. She was still busy teaching and doing translation work but early in 1898, aged 76 and more or less permanently in a bath chair,

she decided to retire at the end of the year. She died at her daughter's home in 1904, aged 83.

Julia Farr was the daughter of Archdeacon Coleridge Farr of Adelaide, a first cousin of John Coleridge Patteson who was Julia's godfather. The Farr family supported the work of the Melanesian Mission for many years. Julia joined the staff in 1893 at the invitation of John Palmer, at that time Acting-Head. She had trained as a nurse but also taught and assisted with the sewing and other 'women's work'. She returned to Adelaide to nurse her elderly father in 1900, and was remembered by a co-worker as one of the Mission's best and most devoted workers, 'never sparing herself, teaching [the girls] as few could, nursing them in sickness and influencing them for good.'⁵¹

The general pattern of the training given to Melanesian women and girls remained much the same until St Barnabas closed in 1920. Unmarried girls were strictly chaperoned. They learned to do housework:

It is surprising how quickly a Melanesian girl learns to do the work of a house; she can scrub, wash dishes, make beds, wash and iron clothes in a very short time indeed, and they are things which she has never done or seen done before. It is not even as if she had lived all her life in a house where such things had been done; all is new, and yet, in two or three months, many of the girls know how to do it well.⁵²

They were taught to sew and spent a great deal – far too much – time making new clothes and mending old ones, even though it was recognised that this was not the most appropriate form of training:

It is wonderful how quickly they learn, and how neat and strong the garments are they make. It is astonishing, too, how little complaining there is about the work, when one remembers how unnatural it must be to a Melanesian women to sit still and work steadily for three hours at a time. Without this sewing we could not keep the boys clothed; but at the same time one rather regrets that the girls have to do it so constantly, as it unfits them for the field or garden work, which is their natural sphere in the Melanesian Islands, and makes some of them inclined to be idle, and bring down the wrath of their lords and masters in after days.⁵³

Girls were given an elementary education: reading, writing, a knowledge of the *Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Catechism, a little arithmetic and a little English. The primary aim of this training was character formation. The missionary women tried to win the confidence and trust of the Melanesians and to make the most of 'countless opportunities of influencing them and teaching them, and raising their ideas of a woman's life and work'. This was their real work with the girls:

to form their characters, to draw them up and on, to put a high ideal before them, and to show them how to strive to reach it: to make Christian women take the place of heathen slaves.⁵⁴

The training given to girls and women has been criticised.⁵⁵ Certainly it gave little recognition to the realities of village life for Melanesian women and the missionary women themselves, barred from going to the islands, were largely ignorant of that life. Their judgements, and the judgements of most male missionaries on the lives of Melanesian women were Eurocentric, superficial, and based on ignorance and misunderstanding of Melanesian societies and customs.

Inadequate as the training given to girls on Norfolk Island undoubtedly was, it did produce some remarkable women who worked with their husbands in the islands as missionaries and teachers. Much research remains to be done on the lives of these women and at this point I can offer only a few examples.

Mention has been made already of Sarah Sarawia, wife of the first Melanesian priest. George Sarawia, Sarah, and two other Melanesian couples settled on Mota in 1867 in order to found a model Christian village. Emily (or Emma), wife of Robert Pantutun, a priest who served in the Banks Islands, was described by John Palmer as 'a good Christian and a courageous little woman too'.⁵⁶ Her courage was displayed when she and another woman ran into a village where men with loaded guns were ready for a fight and told them to put away their guns and did not leave till all was peaceful.⁵⁷ Emily was killed in a great hurricane on Mota in 1882.

Mano Wadrokai was one of the stalwarts of the Mission, being the first missionary on Santa Isabel, then on the Reef Islands and finally on Santa Cruz. He served from 1873 to 1891, helped in all his work by 'his brave wife Carrie'.⁵⁸

When Nesta, 'faithful wife of William Wulenew', and the only woman teacher on the Torres Islands, died in 1895 there was a mourning period of three weeks at the two schools and the chiefs proclaimed the same mourning for everyone. She was much missed 'as her influence was very good, and she was always cheerful, and willing, and gentle'.⁵⁹ Marian Virsal taught with her husband Benjamin at Vureas on Vanua Lava for at least eighteen years. She was described as 'a real mother in Israel to the women of the Vureas district....a good and noble woman' to whom the people 'all went in times of sickness and sorrow.' They resorted to her 'for spiritual help and guidance, to her they listened with respect when reproof was necessary'.⁶⁰ She died in 1902.

By the 1890s there was a growing opinion that it was time for women missionaries to go to the islands and on some islands people were asking for women teachers. Soon after the arrival of Bishop Cecil Wood on Norfolk Island in 1894, as the third bishop of Melanesia, Julia Farr wrote to her parents in Adelaide:

There is a strong and ever growing feeling here that before long we must send down women; that the women are the weak part and can only be got at by English women going in and out among them and showing them how a woman should live in their own homes. This will not come to anything for some years but I believe it will end in our going down.⁶¹

This step had been suggested already by Bishop Montgomery of Tasmania, who visited the Melanesian Mission in 1892 and noted women's work as one of its areas of weakness.

In 1896 the first married woman from the Melanesian Mission went to live with her husband in the islands at Siota in the Florida group. Helen Rossiter, daughter of the Government agent for the Norfolk Island community, had assisted with women's work at the mission for several years. In July 1896 she and the Rev. Dr Henry Welchman, a priest and medical doctor, were married at St Barnabas chapel. In October the Welchmans left for Siota, amid high hopes for the new venture but Helen survived only three months in her new home. She was already pregnant when she left Norfolk Island and suffered badly from seasickness during the rough voyage of 1,500 miles in the little *Southern Cross*. For a few weeks after her arrival she did a little teaching, but the sickness continued and the heat was exhausting. On Christmas Day she fainted and then grew gradually weaker, unable to eat anything, until she died on 12 January 1897. Her death was a great loss to the Mission and a real setback to the attempt to increase the sphere of women's work.

Under Bishop Wilson's leadership the position of women in the Mission was officially recognised for the first time when in 1895 their names appeared on the list of staff: Mrs Colenso, Mrs Comins, Mrs Browning, Miss Farr and Miss Rossiter. In a New Year's letter from the Bishop of Melanesia in 1900, Wilson wrote of his plans for women:

I have begun to appeal also for women to go as missionaries to the islands. During the past year a new monthly service of steamers from Sydney to the islands has made it possible for us to send ladies, although we have no ship of our own, with suitable accommodation, that can carry them. These ladies will work only in Christian islands, and will return to Norfolk Island every second year for rest. When we have our women in the islands as the Roman Catholics in the Solomons have their nuns, and the Wesleyans their 'sisters' in New Britain and New Ireland, I believe we shall find no difficulty in bringing girls to Norfolk Island in greatly increased numbers. We shall then have 150 of them in training instead of 40 (as now). Our boys will all have trained as well as Christian wives; and every school village will have trained native women to teach the women. Six ladies have volunteered their services, and are now being prepared for missionary work. Sister Kate, a deaconess from Sister Edith's Home (a branch of the London Deaconesses), has already joined us, our first deaconess, and I trust not our last. The work amongst the women of Melanesia needs development, and I hope that this year and next will see the beginning of it.⁶²

Sister Kate Ivens was in charge of the newly opened hospital at St Barnabas, the first hospital built by the Melanesian Mission, which had in the past put little emphasis on medical work. Now Wilson identified medical work and women's work as the two weakest areas in the Mission's work. He pointed out in 1902 that in New Guinea eleven single ladies were working in the field, while the CMS had 331 single women in addition to a number of missionary wives. At that time the Melanesian Mission had just three

single women, all on Norfolk Island. He saw no reason why single women should not work in the islands just as they worked in New Guinea and elsewhere.

There was opposition to Wilson's plans from some of the male missionaries and his plan of a training station for women missionaries on Norfolk Island was unsuccessful, although a building was erected and a woman came from England to run it. She however stayed only a little over a year. In spite of these difficulties, in 1905 two women, Miss Kitchen and Miss Hardacre, went to work on Gela, in the Solomon Islands. In 1906 Miss Hawkes and Miss Hardacre opened another station on Raga in Vanuatu, and in 1909, Miss Hawkes and Miss Wench settled in the Banks Group, North Vanuatu. In the same period, a number of missionary couples were placed at the Central Schools which were developed in different island groups and replaced St Barnabas. Women's work continued to develop with the foundation of more schools and took on new importance, with emphasis on teaching girls, looking after babies, and spreading knowledge of hygiene, health and Christianity among the women in order to raise the standard of their health and to train them to be good mothers. The stories of the women, teachers and nurses, who worked for the Melanesian Mission in that era belongs in a different chapter.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries women did make a significant contribution to the work of the Melanesian Mission in New Zealand and on Norfolk Island, although the training and education given by women missionaries to Melanesian women was limited and often inappropriate and did not lead quickly to great changes for Melanesian women.

In 1999 as the Church of Melanesia celebrates the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Melanesian Mission, Anglican women are on the threshold of new opportunities for under the leadership of the Council of Bishops the Church is moving towards the ordination of women to the priesthood. This is a response to mission in the Melanesian context today, and a new stage in the development of women's work in the Church of Melanesia. As the Church of Melanesia moves into the third millennium there can be no doubt that although their roles may change women in the church will continue to be 'valuable helpers' in mission and ministry.

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- ² Charlotte Mary Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson, Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Mission*, 2 vols., London: Macmillan and Co., 1874, vol. 1, p.196.
- ³ *ibid.*, p.304.
- ⁴ Lady Martin, 'Melanesian Mission at Kohimarama', in Lady Martin, *Our Maoris*, London: SPCK, 1884, p.189.
- ⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p.190.
- ⁷ Selwyn, *Reminiscences*, p.45.
- ⁸ *Melanesian Mission Report 1853*.
- ⁹ Yonge, *Life of Patteson*, vol. 1, p.196.
- ¹⁰ Selwyn, *Reminiscences*, p.47.
- ¹¹ Yonge, *Life of John Coleridge Patteson*, vol. 1, p.300.
- ¹² *ibid.*, p.453.
- ¹³ Charles W. Forman, "'Sing to the Lord a New Song: Women in the Churches of Oceania', in *Rethinking Women's Roles: Perspectives from the Pacific*, ed. Denise O'Brien & Sharon W. Tiffany, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, p.155.
- ¹⁴ Diane Langmore, 'The Object Lesson of a Civilised, Christian Home', in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha MacIntyre, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p.85. Langmore writes of Papua, where 'on any Protestant mission station the focal point was the mission house' but the same is true of missions throughout the Pacific.
- ¹⁵ Patteson to his sister Frances, 6 February 1864, Patteson papers, quoted in David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: A History of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942*, Santa Lucia, Queensland: Queensland University Press, 1978, p.34.
- ¹⁶ Yonge, *Life of Patteson*, vol. 2, p.145.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.153.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.223.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp.291-292.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p.324.
- ²¹ *ibid.*, p.150.
- ²² Mrs S.H. Selwyn, letter, Kohimarama, April 16th 1866, in *Report of the Melanesian Mission from 1st January 1865 to 9th May 1866*.
- ²³ Yonge, *Life of Patteson*, vol. 2, p.36.
- ²⁴ Quoted in John Gutch, *Martyr of the Islands: The Life and Death of John Coleridge Patteson*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971, pp.120-121. Original source not given.
- ²⁵ Fanny Patteson to Julia Farr, 6 November 1900, unpublished letter, privately owned.
- ²⁶ Yonge, *Life of Patteson*, vol. 2, p.323.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, p.371.
- ²⁸ Clement Marau, *Story of a Melanesian Deacon written by himself*, London: SPCK, 1894, p.24.
- ²⁹ Julia Farr, Diary, unpublished, privately owned.
- ³⁰ *The Island Voyage 1879*, p.16.
- ³¹ *Report of the Melanesian Mission 1888*.
- ³² *Report of the Melanesian Mission 1890*.
- ³³ Yonge, *Life of Patteson*, vol. 2, p.371.
- ³⁴ *The Island Voyage 1879*, pp.15-16.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, pp.311-312.
- ³⁶ *ibid.*, p.493.
- ³⁷ *ibid.*, p.365.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*, p.352.
- ³⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.404.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*
- ⁴² *ibid.*, p.379.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, pp.328-329.

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- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.328.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*, December 1896, pp.6-7.
- ⁴⁶ Julia Farr, Diary, unpublished, privately owned.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ E. S. Armstrong, *The History of the Melanesian Mission*, London: Isbister & Co., 1900, p.151.
- ⁴⁹ *The Island Voyage*, 1876, p.32.
- ⁵⁰ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, p.150.
- ⁵¹ *The Southern Cross Log*, 15 December 1901, p.137.
- ⁵² *ibid.*, 15 July 1898, p.7.
- ⁵³ *ibid.*, July 1895, p.8.
- ⁵⁴ *ibid.*, September 1895, pp.9-10.
- ⁵⁵ See for example Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, pp.149-59.
- ⁵⁶ Quoted in C.E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, London: Mowbray, 1958, p.129.
- ⁵⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.99.
- ⁵⁹ *The Southern Cross Log*, February 1897, p.31.
- ⁶⁰ *The Island Voyage and Report*, March 1902, pp.16-17.
- ⁶¹ Julia Farr, unpublished letter, privately owned.
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MINISTRY AND MISSION IN MELANESIA: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Most Reverend Ellison L. Pogo

This is not an academic paper, but rather it is a ‘reflection’ on the ministry and mission of the Church of Melanesia, from a Melanesian perspective, as it attains its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The focus is first on the founder’s visions and their application to the ministry and mission of the Church. Secondly, it looks at the results of mission work as it interacts with the challenges of culture and secularism. Thirdly, out of these historical perspectives and the contemporary challenges, the future prospects of the ministry and mission of the Church can be drawn.

The terms ‘ministry’ and ‘mission’ in relation to the Church of Melanesia need to be understood here in the context of the founder’s visions and their application to the Melanesian Mission. According to Dr Charles Fox’s history of the Melanesian Mission, Bishop Selwyn ‘believed in the redemption of the whole man’. More than once he refers to

the man out of whom the devils were cast as sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and this expressed what he aimed at for the people of Melanesia sitting at the feet of Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; clothed, i.e. civilized, with all that is good in civilization, better health, better homes, better farms; and in their right mind, i.e. with good education.¹

‘Ministry’ is a package of everything that pertains to religious life. Fox goes on to say that Selwyn ‘seems to expect a number of Churches on the islands, each with its native Bishop, and associated together in a Province’.²

This understanding (of mission) is closer to that of the people of Israel, with their understanding of wholeness and well being of all the people of God living prosperously because they are in a right relationship with God and each other. This lies behind Selwyn’s prayer for the College he founded at St John’s,

that “true religion, sound learning, and useful industry may here forever flourish and abound”. He hoped that this would be the ideal for his college and that it would become a missionary college for the whole Pacific. At this college, he hoped to unite the races without regard to colour.³

Following this understanding, ‘ministry’ is a package of all the gifts that bring redemption to the whole human being, and ‘mission’ is a holistic approach to the exercise of this ministry which in terms of the Melanesian Mission was aimed at bringing Melanesians to the Christian faith.

YESTERDAY (1849-1974)

1. Background

First, let us have a quick look at the geographical area which now forms the Church of Melanesia. It was composed of the nations now known as ‘Solomon Islands’ (a constitutional democracy and member of the Commonwealth of Nations with Elizabeth II as Head of State), the independent Republic of Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides), and the French Territory of New Caledonia. Prior to the foundation of the Melanesian Mission, no foreign power laid claim to any of the islands. They were individual islands, the inhabitants often fighting their neighbours, and especially the aliens who set foot on their soil.

Indentured labour (or ‘blackbirding’) was rife from the late 1860s. It was the practice of sugar cane plantation owners in Queensland and Fiji to take young men from Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides to provide the manual labour on the plantations. Often these men were taken by trickery and deception, perhaps invited aboard a ship for a feast, shoved down into the forward hatch, and then the hatch cover was set in place and the ship sailed away. As you can imagine, it was not a popular practice with the Melanesians!

The London Missionary Society and the Presbyterian Church were already active in many of the islands, which were often dangerous places for foreigners to visit. The Roman Catholic Church began work in Solomon Islands in 1844, but withdrew in 1847, not long after the people of my own island, Santa Ysabel, had killed their bishop, Jean-Baptiste Epalle. The Roman Catholics did not return until 1898. Several other foreign missionaries had also died before the Melanesian Mission began.

2. The Beginnings

The Melanesian Mission, now ‘The Church of the Province of Melanesia (commonly called The Church of Melanesia)’ began in Auckland at St John’s College.

After the consecration and the commissioning of George Augustus Selwyn on 17 May 1841 as the first Bishop of New Zealand, the official documents describing his territorial authority mistakenly described the northern boundary of his diocese as 34 degrees 30 minutes *north* instead of south of the equator. Thus, by accident, Melanesia became part of the Anglican Church of New Zealand, and it is in the context of the New Zealand Church that the new native Church was established as a part of the Anglican Communion.

Bishop Selwyn left Auckland on 1 August 1849 on his first missionary voyage to Melanesia on the thirty-nine foot schooner the *Undine*. After a two-month visit to the Loyalty Islands in what we now know as New Caledonia, and one of the southern islands of the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), he returned to Auckland on 1 October 1849, with five young Melanesian men. He is reported to have said to his wife, Sarah, ‘Thank God with me, I have brought them - the work has begun,’⁴ and indeed, it is from this date that we begin our history of the Melanesian Mission.

This first missionary visit to Melanesia led Bishop Selwyn to decide on a missionary strategy different from the Wesleyan Mission and the London Missionary Society, perhaps at least partly because of the diverse cultures, harsh climatic conditions and geographical isolation of the Melanesian islands.

3. Selwyn's Missionary Strategy

Bishop Selwyn first decided that he would not interfere with areas where other missionaries were already working. He did not want to show a divided Christianity to new converts, but rather a co-operative missionary endeavour. There was an unwritten agreement with the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides. As a result of this agreement, he withdrew from the Loyalty Islands and some parts of Southern Vanuatu.

The emphasis was on bringing people within the Christian faith, but as far as possible, contextualised in a Melanesian way. The Melanesian Mission was really a mission to the Northern Islands of Vanuatu and Solomon Islands where no gospel had reached and while there was so much work to be done among the 'heathen', he saw no reason to move into areas where the gospel had already been preached by the LMS or the Presbyterians. There was an acceptance of missionaries of other Churches and here is already an element of ecumenism in the Melanesian Mission. Christianity is not proselytising, but bringing people to know and love God. Dr Davidson covered this point very well in his lecture and I do not want to dwell on it here other than to point out the great significance of this policy.

Bishop Selwyn decided to work through an indigenous Melanesian ministry, which would comprise Melanesian catechists who would 'christianise' their own people from within. He looked forward to the ordination of indigenous deacons and priests, and eventually bishops.

On his first missionary voyage, Selwyn took five young men from their homes and brought them here to the College of St John the Evangelist, Auckland, to be taught 'true religion, sound learning and useful industry'. They, and others, were educated at St John's College from 1849 to 1858, by which time Patteson had built the 'missionary college' (the remnants of which still stand on the foreshore of Mission Bay), and this college and its successors became known as 'The Central College'. At St John's College these first young people were trained alongside European and Maori scholars in Christian faith and principles. In 1867 the Central College was moved to Norfolk Island, and in 1920 to Siota in Solomon Islands.

It is extraordinary that from a very early stage in the development of the Melanesian Mission, perhaps as early as 1861, there was the aim of the Mission becoming a diocese with its own Melanesian bishops, and ultimately becoming a Province in its own right.

4. Comment on the Mission Strategy

One can only guess at how Selwyn was able to take five young men from their homes. We know enough of Selwyn's character to be sure that he did not take them by trickery

or deception, but it must have been a major event in the history of those village people to see their young men leaving with a group of foreigners on a strange ship.

In 1857, George Sarawia (who became the first Melanesian to be ordained to the priesthood - in 1873) saw Selwyn and Patteson arrive at his island in the *Southern Cross*. George's account of this event includes the following words:

I saw Bishop Selwyn standing at the side, and I was afraid of him, because he was wearing black clothes but his face was very white. So I drifted far away from the ship, because I was afraid, but he beckoned me to climb up on to the ship. But I was still afraid because it was the first time I had seen a white man, so I paddled off, but he still beckoned me ... I thought to myself, "Those two (Patteson had joined Selwyn by this time) want me to go to them, but I don't know them yet," for I was still a heathen, but I thought they were like the people of my island, ready to deceive someone in order to kill him.⁵

The would-be Melanesian catechists were removed from their own cultural environment into an institution in a foreign land to become Christian disciples and to be trained for missionary work.

From the gospels we note that Jesus called his own disciples and he lived with them to train them. Selwyn's plan of bringing them to Auckland was, I suppose, similar. And it was Melanesian in one sense, as in our own cultures, young men were always taken to sacred buildings to be trained in a group.

By removing young people from their Melanesian homes and cultures, however, and taking them to St John's College for training, Bishop Selwyn was arranging their conversion in a foreign land with foreign languages, alien forms of worship, foreign culture and customs. Although there was no intention of interfering with their own culture and customs, the whole exercise meant that their new faith was quite out of context. Later, they had to return to their own homes when a new exercise in 'inculturation' had to begin. There was much personal and emotional strain on them not only at the Central College, but also when they returned, with the task of re-integrating what they learned into their own cultures.

On the other side of the ledger, the advantages of the task of ministry and mission being given to young Melanesians very early meant that the Church soon became *our* Church - a *Melanesian* Church. The opportunities of interacting with vastly different cultures and races, in a vastly different climate, also produced a transforming situation. There was incredible trust and hope that those early young disciples would do great miracles - and some did, although others failed.

While Auckland was the place where young Melanesians were trained in this way from 1849-67, seventeen of them died, mostly as a result of an influenza epidemic. Their bodies would not have been able to cope with the cold and the foreign diseases which they encountered here. Their deaths must have weighed heavily on their families back home.

Selwyn's activities were, of course, limited by the lack of human resources for the tasks of teaching, and of finance. Although in one sense, his policy was very enlightened and far in advance of the normal kind of missionary strategy of his time, this education out of context caused problems. There was no direct conversion within their own culture, social and religious environment: Christianity was something imposed from outside. Henry Venn may well have been right in his opposition to this 'transportation for training', but if Selwyn had waited until he could establish training centres in our own islands, nothing may have happened - at least for a very long time.

5. Plan and Design Implemented

Bishop Selwyn's vision set the whole plan and design for the Melanesian Mission which he then handed over to John Coleridge Patteson. On St Matthias' Day, 24 February 1861, Patteson was consecrated in St Paul's Church in Auckland city, as the first Bishop of Melanesia. Patteson's gift of languages was most useful in the diverse Melanesian languages and cultures. He taught in Mota, a language from an island in the Banks Islands of Northern Vanuatu and he began to open up island after island, from Vanuatu to Santa Ysabel in Solomon Islands. Teaching and communication with Melanesians was the hallmark of Bishop Patteson's life among the islanders.

The real battle of laying down the groundwork of the Melanesian Mission was bravely carried out by Bishop Patteson. In the social climate of that time, with the practice of 'blackbirding' fast developing, the taking of young men to be trained at the Central College was not favourable. Melanesians were being captured by these 'blackbirders', and white men were seen as the enemy.

Although in 1867 the Central College was shifted from Mission Bay in Auckland to Norfolk Island, where the climate was more favourable to the Melanesians, no white man's life was safe in Melanesia. Melanesians were also experiencing harsh treatment from the planters. Thus the Melanesian Mission and the bishop's life were at risk and the bishop was murdered at Nukapu near the Reef Islands of Solomon Islands on 20 September 1871, to avenge the lives of five people taken as labour recruits by the *Emma Belle* a few days before the *Southern Cross* arrived.

The death of Bishop Patteson had a profound effect on the British Parliament and forced labour was soon prohibited by law. On the memorial cross that stands at Nukapu are these words, 'His life was taken by men for whom he would gladly have given it.'

6. Growth and Expansion

From the time he became bishop in 1861 until he was killed at Nukapu ten years later, Bishop Patteson used central locations to station English clergymen and to train teachers and run village schools for three or four months at a time. This gradual move from Auckland in New Zealand, to Norfolk Island, and then spreading to various centres in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands was a very wise policy. Patteson did not establish a big mission station which would tend to extract people out of their local cultures and induce them to adopt a more European lifestyle. The Mission headquarters, where the Central College was located, was only a support unit, and village mission was the first priority.

With locally established schools in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, many lay teachers worked as village teachers and catechists. Bishop Cecil Wilson⁶ contributed much to the future ministry of the Church through the establishment of schools. But despite the increased number of Melanesians in the Melanesian Mission, much of the control remained in the hands of the English missionaries.

Bishop John Mainwaring Steward⁷ encouraged the idea of moving away from Norfolk Island and developed a church organisation which was more Melanesian with a strong native ministry. The Melanesian Brotherhood, founded in 1925, was a result of this move. The founder of this 'native ministry' was Ini Kopuria, a product of Norfolk Island. The evangelism work of this religious order has greatly enhanced the Melanesian Mission in many areas of Melanesia where the gospel of Jesus Christ had not reached.

Despite the diverse cultures, languages, customs, and geographical locations, the Melanesian Mission's strategic plan, and the vision of the founder to achieve the See of Melanesia, with native bishops, was achieved within one and a quarter centuries. There was a succession of eight English bishops within 100 years of the growth of the Melanesian Mission, from a Mission to the Diocese of Melanesia within the Province of New Zealand.

Much of the missionary conversion and discipling work of the Melanesian Mission reached its peak during the Second World War. Bishop Walter Baddeley⁸ stayed in Solomon Islands throughout the war to help and encourage the people (as 'Shepherd of the sheep'). He revived schools and hospitals, and built up the Church after the war. Bishop Sidney Gething Caulton⁹ continued to rebuild the Church, founded teacher training, and raised the standard of education for girls and boys to New Zealand secondary education level. Nurses were trained in hospitals, and useful skills, (particularly ship-building, carpentry, engineering and marine electrics), were taught out at Taroaniara on Ŋgella in Solomon Islands. Regular visits to mission centres by the bishop, and an increased number of village schools, helped to stabilise the war-torn diocese.

Education in church schools, villages and mission centres produced students who went on to the Church secondary schools on other islands. The result was a dedicated band of young women and men to serve the Melanesian Mission, the Melanesian Brotherhood, the government, nursing and teaching professions, plantations and commerce. Inter-island movement increased and this helped to create a national identity and a sense of unity within the Church.

The leadership in the Church continued in the hands of the expatriates. Bishop Alfred Thomas Hill¹⁰ was elected for the first time by New Zealand at the request of the Melanesian clergy. In 1963, two Melanesians, Leonard Alufurai and Dudley Tuti, were consecrated to be assistant bishops, but neither of them took the place of Bishop Hill when he retired in 1967.

John Wallace Chisholm, an Australian who had been an assistant bishop in Papua New Guinea since 1964, was chosen by the New Zealand Bishops in 1968 to be the tenth

diocesan bishop. This was after the Synod of Melanesia, composed of a majority of Melanesian clergy and laity, had been unable to agree on a suitable person. It was Chisholm who led the Church to independence from New Zealand in 1975 when it became the Province of Melanesia. The two assistant bishops became diocesan bishops of Malaita and Ysabel. The Dioceses of Central Melanesia and Vanuatu were both under expatriate leadership.

Under the leadership of Bishop Chisholm many changes took place: the Prayer Book was translated into modern English, co-education was introduced to Church secondary schools, and primary schools were taken over by the Government. Technical training (including teacher and nursing training), was taken over by the government-administered Honiara Technical Institute, and the theological college and printing press were shifted to Kohimarama and Honiara respectively. The Society of St Francis and the Community of the Sisters of the Church commenced work in Melanesia. These changes had a lasting influence on the present ministry and mission of the Church.

The vision of Selwyn and Patteson to eventually have the See of Melanesia with native bishops had been lost with the more authoritarian Anglo-Catholic bishops in the early years of the twentieth century. The establishment of four regions in the two countries did not lead to the development of Melanesian assistant bishops. As has already been mentioned, when it came time to choose the tenth Bishop of Melanesia in 1968, although there were already two indigenous assistant bishops, it was, again, an expatriate who was chosen.

It took longer for Melanesian bishops to emerge as leaders in the Church compared with Anglican Churches of other Third World countries. First, the missionary strategy established a teacher-student relationship in which Melanesians were seen as learners and expatriates as teachers. This vertical relationship continued right up to the time of independence and it was also continued by some Melanesians who felt unready to accept the responsibilities of leadership. After independence this mentality was sometimes perpetuated by expatriates because of the way they perceived natives. Expatriate leaders were willing to train Melanesians for work amongst Melanesians, but they were reluctant to hand over the leadership of the whole Church for fear that the Melanesian leadership would not cope, an assumption which had no basis in fact.

Even after the Church became independent, there were some expatriates who expected the Melanesian leadership to 'rubber stamp' the expatriates' decisions, and there were some Melanesian leaders who deferred to the expatriates, even though they (the Melanesians) now held power. This 'vertical relationship' caused a delay in the 'localisation' of the Mission.

TODAY (1975-1999)

In January 1975 the Diocese of Melanesia separated from the Church of the Province of New Zealand to become a Province in its own right, with four dioceses initially, three in Solomon Islands, and one covering Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Since then the Church has grown and expanded.

Solomon Islands gained its political independence from Britain in 1978, and Vanuatu gained its independence from France and Britain two years later. Political changes and financial constraints forced the expatriates who were in leadership at the time of independence to shift their emphases from a 'mission' in which education and health were vital components, to a Church conducting only the more traditional church activities.

Education and health, for example, were seen as the responsibility of the governments, not the Church. The Church could no longer run all the training institutions it used to run. Not only was this financially impossible but it was the desire of the governments to take over such things as schools, and teacher and nurse training. The loss of control by the Church meant that its ability to produce dedicated men and women to serve in the Church and government was diminished.

At the same time, some funds were able to be redirected to support other forms of mission in the expansion of dioceses and the spread of leadership. Specific training, especially for the ordained ministry, and equipping the clergy for mission and leadership within the Church, have increased, and today we have one of the finest theological colleges in the South Pacific islands. One of the results of these changes away from a more all-inclusive ministry, however, is that the life of the Church is increasingly being influenced by secularism.

1. Social Situation

Both ecclesiastical and political independence brought many changes influencing the lives of the people and the mission of the Church. Melanesians took over leadership from expatriates, and Melanesians had to exercise authority over the affairs of both the government and the Church.

In fact, experience has shown a virtual collapse of government in the area of education. For instance, moral life is less important than the acquisition of knowledge and wealth, and teaching is now seen as an occupation instead of a vocation. Both the teachers and the students are the responsibility of the government, even in Church schools. There is a decline in the social services, and many clinics and schools are meeting financial difficulties.

Because of economic constraints, the professional people are experiencing corruption, nepotism and moral collapse, even down to the village level. A strong urge to get money for personal purposes has led to corrupt practices. The countries continue to experience the falling value of the dollar and vatu, due to decreasing production and exports. Financial constraints have put pressure on the Church resources available to be put into institutions, thereby weakening the village ministry. This, in turn, is affecting the spiritual and moral life of the villages and the breakdown of relationships. There are ethnic tensions and tribal divisions in the struggle for limited resources and this raises the whole question as to how a deep, holistic and integrated Christianity can be fostered at all levels.

2. The Challenge of Leadership

Leadership in the Church has been an enormous challenge since independence. In spite of Selwyn and Patteson's dream of a See of Melanesia with native bishops, it was one hundred and fourteen years before the first Melanesians were consecrated to be assistant bishops, and one hundred and twenty-six years before the first Melanesian became a diocesan bishop and archbishop of the fledgling province.

Expatriates took a leading role until the eve of independence in January 1975, but upon independence they quickly disappeared. This process was sudden as the expatriates left as missionaries. It was understandable that the Churches overseas, including New Zealand, did not want to influence our new control over ourselves, but their departure was almost total and it was very dramatic.

Within a very few days of the celebrations marking the independence of the Church, John Wallace Chisholm, who had just become the first Archbishop of Melanesia, developed cancer and went to Melbourne for treatment, and died there about three months later. This resulted in the election of Norman Palmer as the first Melanesian to become the Bishop of Central Melanesia and the Archbishop of the new Province. He had been educated at Te Aute College and Ardmore Teachers' Training College, had completed his Licentiate in Theology at St John's College in Auckland, and had never exercised any ministry other than that of a school teacher or principal before becoming the Dean of the Provincial Cathedral about three years before being elected archbishop.

Almost immediately following the separation from the New Zealand Church Melanesians had to take over leadership roles in most areas. The process of development was slow and painful to both the individual leaders and to the whole Church. This was important as the public sees the Church leaders as the 'image' of the Church.

Development did continue, however, possibly because the Church was seen by Melanesians more and more to be 'their' Church, the Melanesian Church. The growth and expansion of dioceses, (there are now eight - double the number at the time of the Church's independence from New Zealand), has enhanced the development of leadership in the Church both in the ordained and lay ministry. Some criticism has been levelled at us over the creation of so many more dioceses. We have been challenged to show a sufficient number of people, or parishes, or income. But those are western ways of looking at the need.

It is important to remember that the Melanesian islands did not become political 'units' until British and French governments towards the very end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries started drawing boundaries on maps and giving a name to a group of many islands - hundreds, in fact. From our point of view we were never a single country. Each island, or part of an island, was a unit in itself. It had its own language and customs, its own chiefs and elders. It waged war with its neighbours, and sometimes ate them. There was no feeling of corporate identity as 'Solomon Islanders' or 'ni-Vanuatu'.

By creating more dioceses in the more homogeneous groupings of islands, we are returning to the style of government that was truly Melanesian, and this enhances the concept of the Anglican Church as the *Melanesian* Church. Diocesan bishops form a team of leaders to take the responsibilities co-operatively for the Province of Melanesia and bodies such as the General Synod and the Executive Council are quickly developing a maturity and wisdom to govern the whole ecclesiastical Province in a co-operative way.

While Church growth and expansion reaches closer to the people at the outer areas of Melanesia, the formation of new dioceses tends to create an element of possessiveness and self-centredness. Any sense of oneness that may have existed under the original Diocese of Melanesia has gone, but I believe this may be a temporary phenomenon as the new dioceses work to establish themselves.

Similar experiences are seen and spoken of within the expanding parishes; between the parishes themselves and the ordained clergy and the laity. As the dioceses and parishes become aware and conscious of their real task and their roles as leaders within a team of leaders, these problems should disappear. Leadership can be a team ministry including the clergy and the laity, thus moving away from the priest-centred Church which is being experienced today. The Church will continue to struggle to come to grips with team leadership as opposed to individual leadership.

3. Effects of Development

Growth and development have resulted in the dispersal of the community where the basic unit of Melanesian society has always been the village. There a number of family 'lines' may live together in harmony under a chief and elders. The village life was always strong and the rule of the chiefs usually good. But now, with the appearance of a cash economy and general growth and development of the nations, the ministry of the Church is experiencing imbalanced financial growth. Village life is being broken down in two different directions.

First, there are those who have had the benefit of a good education, who then move to the capital or the major towns for work. Almost all industries are centred in the capitals, Honiara and Port Vila, and less in rural centres. Unemployment is high in the urban centres where many young people gravitate. This situation is affecting Church giving and providing less for its mission.

Secondly, there are those individual families who leave the village to go to their ancestral lands where, living as a single family 'settlement', they rape the land in order to raise quick cash. There may be a financial and economic gain to the individual families, but there is a loss to the village community and the Church as a whole. Village worship life and village chiefly leadership are being affected. The dispersed community continues with Sunday worship but the weak ones fall away or join the New Religious Movements. The authority of the village chief becomes weaker.

In both rural and urban centres the normal work of the parish or district is financed by that parish or district, although clergy stipends are subsidised by about 33% from the Provincial Headquarters. In the urban areas, however, where stipends need to be paid at

a higher rate than in rural areas, specialist ministries are mostly funded by the Provincial Headquarters from funds from overseas. Thus theological education by extension, chaplaincies to prisons, hospitals, and seafarers, the outreach work of the Religious Orders, and so on, are still funded from Provincial Headquarters. Financial constraints and population growth are of greatest influence on the mission and the type of ministry to counter the changing situation which the Church is entering. Despite these changes, the Church must continue to uphold the faith and the traditions that point to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some negative effects of development can be seen in the Religious Orders. As I mentioned earlier, the Melanesian Brotherhood was founded seventy-four years ago by Ini Kopuria. It is now by far the largest Religious Order in the Anglican Communion. Its lifestyle is exceedingly simple and attractive. Poverty is one of the most attractive aspects of the Brotherhood and it is true poverty, such as I am sure St Francis would approve of.

In 1970, the Society of St Francis arrived. There were several expatriate brothers and for them their lifestyle was probably very simple indeed. But it was still a great deal better than the lifestyle of most Melanesians. Although the expatriates have now withdrawn, the lifestyle of the Franciscans continues on a much higher plane than that of the village people. The Melanesian Brothers are obviously influenced by this and such items as wrist watches, and sports shoes, are now starting to be seen among the Melanesian Brothers as they are among the Franciscans.

Likewise with the Sisters. The Community of the Sisters of the Church also arrived in Honiara in 1970, but the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia was founded much more recently. In this case, the reverse seems to be happening. As the Melanesian Sisters expand and move into the villages and towns, the Sisters of the Church seem to withdraw more and more inwards.

There are already more priests, more religious, more lay leaders, and more trainers in schools. Whether the members of these groups come from different structures and organisations, they all contribute to serving the same people. They all have a role to play in the mission and ministry of the Church, to reach out for those in need. The Church is being challenged with the question of 'dedication and commitment'.

The proliferation in both Solomon Islands and Vanuatu of the New Religious Movements emanating mainly from Australia and the USA was seen, initially, as a threat to the Church, and also to village life, as the new movements divided villages and families. I believe the longer term result of these movements has been good. They have challenged the Church's complacency and forced it to look at itself more critically, to analyse what it is that caused people to leave the Anglican Church in order to join these new movements.

The call of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 for a Decade of Evangelism and Renewal was well-timed and we have been able, at least in Solomon Islands, to check the outflow of people from the Church. Everywhere we see people returning to the Church of Melanesia and our own numbers increasing very rapidly. Evangelism and renewal

programmes have enabled much more religious education in the Church and they have helped set directions to be followed. With this programme, various groups are renewed to understand their role and potential for the mission of the Church in helping people to know and understand their faith in Christ, and to appreciate the catholicity of the Anglican Church. This has resulted in a much more vibrant and informed Church than the Church which existed before the challenge came.

TOMORROW (2000 AND BEYOND)

1. Training

The Church has always seen teaching and nurturing as a top priority. Since the independence of the nations, teaching in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions has been the responsibility of the government. Training of clergy and laity will continue to be the responsibility of the Church for its ministry and mission. Equipping and empowering of the laity needs to be emphasised, and greater opportunities must be given to help them to gain confidence in all forms of leadership.

There is an urgent and pressing need to upgrade our theological training. This is already being done in a remarkable way at the Bishop Patteson Theological College, and it is planned that by 2010 the Church of Melanesia will have enough Melanesian priests, who have graduated from overseas universities, to staff the College totally.

Moves will be taken at the General Synod of the Church later in 1999 to approve members of the United Church of the Solomon Islands training at Kohimarama and the Moderator of that Church is likely to join the Board of Governors of Kohimarama. Already there is a United Church minister on the faculty of the College.

The cost of transporting families from Vanuatu to Solomon Islands for the training of those called to the ordained ministry is fast becoming prohibitive and discussions are also underway with the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu for our ordination candidates there to be trained at Talua Theological College on Santo.

Other specialist posts in the Church should also, by the year 2010, all be held by graduate priests, but some of our graduates are also beginning to see their vocations expressed not in specialist posts, but in the rural areas as parish or district priests. In the islands and rural areas we shall see a great supply of well-trained young priests equipped to guide and strengthen the Church, and on them will rest the joy and privilege of teaching, serving and helping the men and women of the Church in the islands.

There is a need to prepare the clergy for leadership in their dedication and commitment to the ministry and mission of the Church, and especially for the work of evangelism. Leadership must be founded on humility and service, and leaders must carry the evangelistic responsibility as vision-bearers. In particular the clergy need to be helped to minister to, and engage in, the on-going cultural and economic situations they are encountering. They need to be sensitive to social concerns and environmental justice.

In considering the role of the Church in both formal and informal education, emphasis may need to be shifted to pre-school children and continuing with Sunday Schools. The role of rural training centres to train the increasing number of young people, and the training needs of the laity, may be considered. It must be remembered that over 50% of the population of both nations is under the age of twenty years, and these statistics are reflected in the Church as well.

The role of the lay people is being developed all the time and must continue. The work of the Religious Orders, the Mothers' Union, the Companions of the Melanesian Brotherhood, the catechists, and those engaged in the ministry of healing is seen as integral to the overall work of the Church and must be developed in tandem with the upgrading of the clergy.

The Church encourages convinced Christians to offer themselves to serve their countries (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) in all professions and callings, so that there is a dedicated band of Christians in government, the private sector and the villages. There is a need to provide a meaningful ministry to the leaders of government, industry and commerce in both countries and this is starting to be addressed.

2. The Place of Women

It is easy for people beyond our shores to criticise us for what seems to them to be the low place of women in our society. It is true that in some places the status of women is not what it should be, but in some respects the criticisms are not true. There are cultural nuances to the roles of the two sexes which the western mind would not appreciate and to alter that by pressure from outside could cause the breakdown of the basis of our culture.

Literacy is one aspect which needs urgent attention and the Mothers' Union is doing sterling work in this field - even among some of the men!

The ordination of women is another area where we are misunderstood. At this time, our Constitution and Canons do not allow us to ordain women. This is because of the entrenched opposition of the expatriate bishop who was largely responsible for drawing up the Constitution. But the present bishops of the Province are not so opposed. In fact, the Council of Bishops has drawn up a paper to be presented to General Synod in 1999. It shows unanimous support for the ordination of women.

Women priests ordained outside Melanesia are already acceptable under our Constitution and Canons and it is in the hands of each individual diocesan bishop to grant or withhold a licence exactly as that applies in the case of male priests.

The bishops have noted that there are, in fact, some positive cultural reasons why we *should* ordain women priests. One of these relates to the cultural impossibility of women sharing their private problems and concerns with men, whether or not they are priests. The ordination of women will certainly extend and enhance the priesthood in Melanesian society. This point will help Melanesians themselves to accept the ordination of women.

What we need to be careful about is that the move to the ordination of women becomes acceptable to the whole Church. We do not want division and secession. Change happens slowly in Melanesia for reasons that I have stated earlier. We are not one homogeneous group of people. Creating unity among us is very much more difficult than creating disunity. Therefore it is likely that a programme of education and preparation will be approved at the forthcoming General Synod.

3. Ministry and Mission of the Local Church

The ministry and mission of the local Church is concentrated on the teaching and nurturing of the congregation being united in its faith and teachings. The Anglican Communion must continue to uphold its traditions in worship to share it with other denominations around them.

The strengthening of family units and extended relationships rooted in Melanesian culture is important. Home mission to the reconciliation of broken homes, family divisions, and tribal differences, strengthens the local Church, the parishes and dioceses giving unity to the whole Church. The building of the local Church through family fellowship, studies, healing ministry, counselling and reconciliation strengthens the whole Church.

Spirituality and worship must continue to be the life and work of the local Church. With the publication of new liturgical forms to be tried, it has opened up freer worship and contextualised liturgy. Our common pattern of Anglican liturgy has helped to bind us together but local cultures and languages are to be reflected in their worship as their thanksgiving, offering, praise, and honour of God. (Culture and the fruit of labour is part of worship.) It must be remembered that there are at least 100 different languages in each of our two countries, and there is no single language which is spoken by everyone, even within one nation, so the costs of this exercise are great.

We shall need to develop more effective methods for the local support of the Melanesian Church, and be less dependent upon overseas funds for the maintenance of Church life. We shall continue to look to the overseas Church for capital grants for new works, but we must see to it that we become self-sufficient in the day-to-day running of the Church. Only in this way shall we be able to hold up our heads and really call ourselves the Church of Melanesia.

Much more responsibility must be willingly accepted by Melanesians in the ordering of the Church in the dioceses and in our relationships with other Churches. Hitherto, both these have been largely European-inspired and from the Melanesian point of view they could be lacking in meaning and purpose. We still have a need of advisers in some technical areas such as assets management and the law, but for those who come from overseas to fill these needs the vocation is to advise and serve rather than to direct and order.

We want to foster at the parish and district level a much greater degree of local Church government than hitherto, so that the local church becomes a vital part in the sharing and administering of the responsibilities and challenges of the whole.

4. Ecumenism

Ecumenism has always been an important role for the Melanesian Mission. While the Church continues to support the work of the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) and the Vanuatu Christian Council, the Province as a whole, the dioceses, parishes and local Churches, will actively explore practical ways of ecumenism. We live and work together with different denominations, but worship separately in our Churches. Individuals and different denominations have special talents and gifts that can be shared. The Church will search into areas such as the sharing of education programmes, health services, economic activities, skills, youth organisations, studies and discussions.

Flexibility and understanding will continue to build relationships and unity. This does not mean that we should allow materialism and secularism to encroach, for these will be the challenges for the Church in the third millennium. Meeting these will continue to make the Church of Melanesia a missionary Church that reaches out to others.

5. Mission to the World

The foundation for the Church's mission to the world will continue to come from the local parishes and districts and from home mission work. Every Christian is a missionary, and reveals to the world the faith and the teachings of the Good News given in the home, the local Church Sunday School or pre-school, and the village spiritual and worship life.

Any specific ministry or mission is built upon this foundation laid by the local parish or district in its teaching of the Christian faith. In order for this movement for mission to grow in the local parishes and districts, the people need to be given training to understand and be concerned for the poor, the weak, the oppressed, and be conscious of the creation. They need to learn to work to overcome structures and systems that perpetuate poverty, oppression and environmental degradation. This work and aspect of training and awareness needs to be considered seriously by the rural training centres.

There needs to be an extension of our work and concern for the Church outside Melanesia. We have received so much, and so far we have given so little. We need to follow the noble example of the Melanesian Brothers who have readily, and with self-sacrifice, gone to Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia and the Philippines to help the Church in those parts. Some of our clergy currently serve, or have recently served in Australia and Papua New Guinea. This task of caring for others can be shared by us all as we help to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and visit the sick in other lands.

We have the strength of numbers in the Church of Melanesia, but we need to build up our human resources to become 'temples of the spirit', and to develop the resources whereby we are able to extend our work overseas. This whole process can only succeed with the tolerance of the western world and its willingness not only to give, but also to receive.

CONCLUSION

As the Church of Melanesia is maturing in its ministry and mission, leadership in the Church at all levels has to consider seriously giving mission a priority place in our budgeting, planning and development programmes.

Although the numerical strength of the Church of Melanesia is very strong, we cannot be complacent about that. It is of paramount importance that we keep 'on our toes' in terms of training, renewal, spiritual refreshment and theological reflection. Not to do so would mean to fall back into a stale and uninteresting Church. And the Church of Melanesia, if it is going to relate overseas, must do so in terms of its own originality and vitality, not simply accepting the theology of the western world, but interpreting and internalising it in a way which is meaningful to the Melanesian mind. Only then can we hold our heads high as equal partners in mission.

Strategic planning in the Church must take into consideration the points raised. In continuing recognition of the great principles established by Bishop Selwyn, namely 'true religion, sound learning and useful industry', we have initiated the process of strategic planning to guide us for the first twenty years into the new millennium. The eighth General Synod in 1996 approved the development of such a plan within the Church to ensure that our leadership would focus on gospel, partnership, social and educational goals and harness our human and physical resources. This is to lead us in an optimum way to meet our responsibilities for pastoral care and to show forth the redeeming love of God.

¹ C.E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, London: Mowbray, 1958, p.2.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ S.H.Selwyn, *Reminiscences by Mrs. S.H. Selwyn, 1809-1867*, with an introduction and notes by Enid A. Evans, [Auckland], Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, 1961, Typescript, p.35.

⁵ G. Sarawia, *They Came to My Island*, Solomon Islds: St Peter's College, Reprint 1996, p.1

⁶ The third Bishop of Melanesia, 1894-1911

⁷ The fifth Bishop of Melanesia, 1919-28

⁸ The seventh Bishop of Melanesia, 1932-47

⁹ The eighth Bishop of Melanesia, 1948-54

¹⁰ The ninth Bishop of Melanesia, 1954-67

THE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR GOSPEL - THE MELANESIANS AND THEIR RESPONSE

Hugh Blessing Boe

The main focus of this lecture is not simply about Selwyn or Patteson and their mission to Melanesia, but rather this is a talk about *my* general perspective of missionaries who 'visited' Melanesia and led the islanders to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the way the Gospel was received and perceived by Melanesians during those pioneering days of the early missionary enterprise. I believe Christ was already in Melanesia even before missionaries, like Selwyn and Patteson, arrived there. Missionaries did not actually bring Christ with them to Melanesia; they went to Melanesia to tell [our ancestors] where Christ is to be found.

From a general perspective the missionaries who visited Melanesia all had one single purpose as to why they decided to go to Melanesia. J. Leslie Dunstan summarised this impact of missionaries in the Pacific:

The missionaries set out to transform the life of the people, to eradicate the evils which they saw and to establish as far as possible the kind of orderly existence which they knew. To them their ways were right, God-given, and the means by which men might receive God's favour. They worked through their powers of persuasion and the example of their own lives. They set up in the islands the manner of life to which they were accustomed and urged the inhabitants to copy their ways. They learned the native languages, reduced them to writing, printed books, started schools and taught as many of the people as would submit to instruction. They set up churches and conducted worship among themselves; they preached to the people and urged them to give up their native gods and turn to the one true God. They publicly condemned behaviour that was repugnant to them and on occasion tried to stop by personal interposition actions they abhorred. And they suffered with patience indignities, persecution and death at the hands of the islanders. Through the relationships they established with tribal chiefs they were able to effect changes in island life, for when they won a chief to the church he brought his people with him. They became involved in the political affairs of the people; taught chiefs about law, wrote legal codes and planned enforcement procedures. They were on occasion involved in inter-tribal warfare, advising a chief who had embraced Christianity. Inevitably they became implicated in trade both between themselves and the islanders and the visiting ships.

The missionaries broke into the social and political structure of island life and worked a transformation in it through their own western moral and religious ways. They could not and did not turn the people into copies of themselves but

they did succeed in bringing about a more orderly, person-regarding society than had previously existed.¹

A fair assessment of missionaries who came to Melanesia must be viewed against the backgrounds from which they came because these influences shaped their life and characterised the Gospel they brought and presented to the Melanesian people. Selwyn and Patteson went to Melanesia as the products of their own time and place. They were devoted Christians, but they were also Anglicans of a very particular brand and were Englishmen at heart with strong cultural links to their mother country. They were Christians by conviction yet they remained full-blooded Englishmen. They went with God's divine message, but the message had a strong English nineteenth century flavour. They went to preach the Gospel, but they also brought with them Western civilisation, or the European way of life. In their view, this was **the** Gospel. However much we may want to disagree, they believed this to be part of their divine mission in converting the 'heathens' to Christianity. For Selwyn and Patteson, and indeed for every missionary of the nineteenth century, Christianity and Western civilisation were synonymous. By the preaching of their Gospel Melanesians have come to adopt the new way of life which the missionaries brought.

The missionaries who went to Melanesia came from an era which is quite distinctive in the history of Christendom in the Western world. M.E. Gibbs has written that

The nineteenth century is marked by the impact of modern science and literary criticism on Christian thought; by the spread of European influence, and to a great extent of European domination, throughout the world; and by the development of the modern missionary movement, which was to make the Christian Church at last world wide.²

Generally, every missionary of the nineteenth century, no matter what mission organisation the missionary came from all had a very individualistic view of salvation. For the missionary, salvation began through conversion, a complete break with the past. This was especially true of the London Missionary Society, Methodists, and Presbyterians; and for the missionary, salvation for Melanesians meant to be saved from heathenism, from superstition and magic, from sorcery and witchcraft, from the darkness of sin and death, from the works of darkness, and from certain traditional ceremonies which were regarded by missionaries as 'works of evil' and the powers of hell. G.A. Milner concluded that

What you must do to be saved, the missionaries said, is to believe and put away the works of darkness ... refrain from permissive sexual relations before marriage ... polygamy, tattooing, and provocative dances. The islanders were to be clothed and were to live decent middle-class lives. They were to learn to be good parents, good farmers and fishermen, to be thrifty and to make the best of the world God had given them. To improve their standard of living they could sell their produce to the mission or to honest traders. With the fruits of their labour they could buy clothing and religious literature, and build churches.³

The island missionaries themselves played a major role in transposing this same message to their own people, telling them what they must do in order to receive salvation from God. The content of their Gospel was crude nevertheless. This was the way Christian salvation was understood in the nineteenth century, and this same idea was carried into the early twentieth century.

As well as accepting the divine word of God in the Bible and accepting that human salvation has been wrought in Jesus Christ by God in faith, the Melanesians were expected to accept the demands of Western civilisation as a proof that they had sincerely renounced Satan and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world of spirits and ancestors. For the Melanesian Mission acceptance of the Bible as the source of truth, accepting the Anglican tradition and the use of the Book of Common Prayer became the predominant aspects of what it meant to be a Christian.

Missionaries taught that salvation was by faith, and that the acquisition of grace and personal holiness was an important element, at least in the Protestant tradition. Evangelicals stressed the notion of free grace and salvation through the individual's decision to commit oneself to Christ, rejected the hierarchical organisation and formality of established churches. By contrast the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans emphasised the importance of religious tradition, institutional organisation, the Sacraments, and the Apostolic Succession as necessary dimensions of the church within which salvation was to be found.

There was an over-emphasis on the concept of good works to gain salvation. The relationship of faith and works was an issue of great contention in the mission field. Converts went from one extreme view to another, but salvation by works gained prominence and found firm ground among the converts because it was similar to indigenous beliefs and practices. In Melanesian traditional culture a person gained mana by what he/she does. Life in this world and life in the world to come is entirely dependent on what you do here and now. Salvation in the Melanesian concept depended on the right relationships you had with the world of the spirits, and these relationships did not depend on beliefs (faith), but on the things you did. The Christian faith, as assimilated by Melanesians, was and still is dependent on what one does. Not as much emphasis was based on salvation as God's free gift of grace in Jesus Christ.

There was an over-emphasis on salvation as an eschatological achievement, and in some areas of Melanesia, little was said of salvation as a present reality. As a result, the concept of salvation was spiritualised to such an extent that converts seemed to think of it as something far removed from present existence. The Parousia was the biblical theme which haunted the minds of Melanesians for a long time after the first contact. Emphasis was such that the Second Coming of Christ and the judgement of God, which would fall on those who had gone astray, seemed to take precedence over the loving and caring of God who was their Father. This made God's salvation dependent on a human relationship with Him and not on the free will and love of God who comes to save.

Salvation as understood by the early missionaries brought together the acceptance of biblical teaching and the Apostolic tradition with the adoption of Western civilisation and Western values. Salvation was the acceptance of both the spiritual and the material

blessings which modern science had brought into the European societies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a convert to inherit salvation, he/she was expected to be able to read and write, to speak the language of the missionary, to behave the way missionaries behaved, to dress like the missionary, to live the kind of life missionaries seemed to live. These were seen as essentials to the attainment of salvation.

METHODS USED BY MISSIONARIES TO CONVERT ISLANDERS

1. Literacy for Reading the Bible

It was the missionaries who first introduced the system of formal education in Melanesia. The missionaries were the innovators of both change and attitudes among Melanesians encouraging them to adopt the new way of life brought from the West. Soon after their arrival, the missionaries saw that the only way to implement their message was to introduce literacy so they began to build schools where Melanesians were brought and taught to read and write. The first Melanesians were brought to St John's College in Auckland from 1849 onwards where they were taught to read the Bible so that they would eventually become teachers of the faith to their own people. English, or for the Catholics French, became the medium for learning the new culture. This was an important phenomenon since one could only learn to understand any culture by learning the language of that culture. The Melanesian Mission moved a step further by adopting Mota (a language spoken in the Banks Group in the New Hebrides / Vanuatu where the Mission had early success) in 1866 as the language for education and worship in the place of English when the training school for Melanesians was moved from Auckland to Norfolk Island. This in itself was a indication of the missionaries' attempt to work with a Melanesian language. But Mota was spoken only by a minority of Melanesians. It was used only as the language of the Church for worship, teaching and communication within the Mission. The missionaries had to learn this new language in order to communicate the Gospel to the islanders. The Missionaries saw literacy as a way to introduce their Gospel because in doing so they hoped for a better understanding of the Bible by their converts. But they also saw literacy as a means of introducing Western ideas and moral value judgements which would in due course make Melanesians accept what the missionaries had gone to offer to them.

Other subjects such as arithmetic, history, health and science, geography and simple agriculture were also taught in the mission schools. Most important of all was teaching as many Melanesians as possible to read and write so that they would have a sound biblical knowledge so they would be able to read the Bible and assimilate the message it offered for their own souls. How much literacy meant to islanders, and what their understanding and response to it was, went far beyond what missionaries anticipated. This will be considered further later in this lecture.

2. Concern for the sick

The missionaries' concern and care for the sick was another way of implementing their Gospel. As well as preaching from the pulpit, missionaries saw it as their duty to care for those they came across who were physically sick. They provided medicines to the sick and suffering and cared for those who were ill. The missionaries were the first to establish hospitals and health centres in Melanesia. Doctors and nurses were recruited to work in these centres. If missionary doctors or nurses were difficult to get, the missionary himself or his wife (if he was married) had to act with whatever resources of knowledge he/she had. Missionaries felt it was their duty to care for both the physical and the spiritual nature of their converts. At the same time it was a way of introducing Western technology through the medium of medical science.

Missionaries went with their knowledge and skills of modern medicine, and in that way, they had much to offer by way of treating human disease or illness. They had the drugs which could remedy much of the sicknesses which were causing pain and suffering among the Melanesian population. They saw this as a divine duty, and such became the pioneers of medical work in Melanesia. It was not until the twentieth century that Western medicine really began to assert its more sophisticated knowledge with its understanding of malaria, inoculations against yaws, and then from the 1940s the use of antibiotics. Healing is an inseparable aspect of salvation, and by regarding physical health as a priority in their presentation of the Gospel, the missionaries were only taking part in Jesus' command in Luke 10:9, 'heal the sick in that town, and say to the people there, "The Kingdom of God has come near you."' But their motives also went beyond that. The missionaries saw medicine as a way of exerting their influence to combat what they regarded as superstitious and magical practices of healing. It did not take long for Melanesians to realise the power and the knowledge of the white man in overcoming pain and suffering caused by sickness. This then became one of the attractive reasons for accepting Christianity. It was obvious in the eyes of the converts that these missionaries had life well beyond what they could ever imagine. What this meant to Melanesians and the way they responded will be discussed later.

3. Training

Training centres of various kinds were also been built for specific purposes. These were built to cater for training people for mission work which included special training in modern agricultural methods, trades and commerce, carpentry, fishing, raising poultry and weaving. From these centres, people were trained how to run a cooperative or private stores, to farm the land, taught new skills in arts and crafts, and learned how to be productive and industrious like the white missionary. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century there was a special emphasis on the so-called 'industrial missions'. This was seen particularly in the coconut plantations that were set up both as a means of training locals and also providing an income for the mission and helping it to move towards becoming self-supporting. These centres were built to learn what the missionaries had brought with them from the West. Melanesians were told that only by working hard and by becoming industrious would they gain the kind of life lived by missionaries and only in doing so would they become rich like the

white man, and live a full and abundant life. This was seen as an effective method of implementing the Gospel and introducing Melanesians to Western civilisation.

The missionaries' intention to go out to Melanesia was solely to save souls for Christ, but saving souls included a whole range of activities. In the words of a semi-official Church of England *World Call Series* (1978), we have the full expression of the missionary mind which included a statement of the missionary task which placed social reform as equal in importance to the salvation of souls:

the Christianization of the world involves the creation of sanitary conditions, of an educational system, of social, economic, and political welfare, in which life and life abounding may come to its full personal and corporate development; that salvation involves not the saving of men's souls alone, but the bringing of the whole human race in every aspect of its existence into conformity with the will of God; that nothing less than full physical, artistic, intellectual, moral and spiritual "godliness" is necessary if we are all to attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.⁴

Missionaries may be criticised because of the way they presented their Gospel and the motivation that went with it, but nevertheless, it was an earth-centred Gospel which was based on the application of the social gospel, to build a kingdom of God on earth. True Christianity does not belong to the Church sanctuary alone, it is far more a world-bettering programme of action that should embrace the whole of life.

Stand in the pulpit to preach the divine Word, teach in the classroom, translate the Bible into a vernacular, build a school or training centre, train mission workers, teach agriculture and modern methods of fishing, train Melanesians for different trades and arts, prepare a convert for baptism and Holy Communion, teach one to pray or read and write; this was the Gospel missionaries brought to Melanesia.

THE MELANESIAN RESPONSE

What follows is a very brief outline of the response the Melanesians made after being presented with the Gospel, how the concept of salvation was viewed, and what it meant to them. In Melanesia, there seems often to have been a vast gulf between what the missionary taught, and what the converts heard. When the missionary promised them 'wealth' in heaven, Melanesians took it as promise of 'cargo', and of a reconciliation of human dignity. These aspects obviously went with material possessions, here on earth, and especially in Melanesian cultures where status in this life could be measured by the acquisition of mana or cargo.

The missionaries had a profound impact on Melanesian society. Each of the old established missions was actively at work long before the government set out to produce a society free from fear and suspicion, from magic and sorcery, from tribal enmity and war, from disease and from all that was regarded as 'heathenism'. In the light of the first contact, and of the long tradition of teaching the Gospel, the missionaries had their own ideas as to what kind of society should be established. In Melanesia this was particularly

interesting because in the midst of all the new disintegrating influences, the missionary, in offering his/her own way of reintegration, could well appear to islanders, to offer the dignity and purpose which the white man seemed to have robbed them of, and for which the Melanesians yearned.

Christianity came as a 'religion of the book' with an emphasis on doctrine, which required at least a minimum of understanding, and of precision in belief on the part of an adherent. It was here that the early scholarly white missionary played his/her main role as translator, educator and administrator of the growing Christian community. The missionary regarded himself/herself as responsible for making known the true Word of God, whatever interpretation of the scriptures there was, so that the close association of conversion with literacy was maintained. Thus, even the least scholarly of mission bodies, were involved in providing a minimum formal education.

There was a whole range of attitudes adopted by missions to conversion, and on the proper relation of conversion to education. What degree of understanding is required before the would-be convert may be accepted as a Christian and baptised? Most missions tried, without making it a prerequisite for baptism, to produce literate Christians. Even those like Lutherans in New Guinea and the London Missionary Society in Polynesia, with a tradition of mass conversions, placed emphasis on the need of the new Christian to read the word of God in his/her mother tongue. Anglicans in the Solomons and Vanuatu made it their priority to translate the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, or in many places the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament so that converts would be able to read the scriptures in their own languages.

The missionary could do little until he/she had been accepted by Melanesians in his/her role of teacher. In many areas of Melanesia, there was a major obstacle to this acceptance, where there had been exploitation by white men like the 'blackbirders', and later, the labour recruiters.⁵ The Melanesian response was often to resort to violence, stimulated by their desire for the traditional 'payback'. The mere presence of a white missionary could be enough to attract a murderous attack, seen for example in the martyrdom of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson in the Solomons in 1871, and the Rev. Charles Godden in Vanuatu in 1906. The death of Patteson on the island of Nukapu in the Solomon Islands and Godden on the island of Ambae in Vanuatu were examples of the Melanesian 'payback' system to reciprocate the evil that had been done to you and your people.

In this situation, we have to account for the spectacular success of missionary enterprise in many parts of Melanesia. In an amazingly short space of time missions of various denominations managed to establish themselves and commenced a continuous process of expansion outwards to other non-Christian communities. The white missionary was soon distinguished from other white men and women and with their Pacific Islander assistants seemed to have something which Melanesians needed. This is where literacy was pre-eminent at this point.

The impact of literacy in the minds of converts went further than the missionary had anticipated. Melanesians treated writing as a mystic sign, thinking that by manipulation of the written word, they could control the spirit world and hence secure access to

material wealth. The attitude to writing was pragmatic, a ‘concomitant of European Education, with its promise of worldly success’.⁶

Reading and writing as a means of communication were adopted by Melanesians as a new way to communicate with the spirit world. When wireless telegraphy was introduced by the white administrators and used as a means of communication by the European administration, imitation transmitters were erected by Melanesians. When airstrips become an essential feature of European transportation, they were also incorporated into the socio-religious and cultic practices. The reason was clear. A large part of ‘magico-religious’ activity in Melanesia had to do with communication between humans and the spirit world and so new and what were thought to be more powerful methods of communication were appropriated by Melanesians within their own world-view.⁷

What writing really meant to the converts oscillates between ritual and pragmatism. The failure of the Book to bring the desired prosperity and wealth, namely, the ‘cargo’, was sometimes attributed to its incompleteness, to the fact that ‘the all-important pages have been torn out and hidden by their white masters who want to keep the secret knowledge to themselves’.⁸ For many, the Book carried magical power as well as prestige, and it was thought that such power cannot be produced if the Book is incomplete. Given the tendencies in Melanesian religions, one certainly understands the reasons for these reactions. Everywhere missionaries were perceived to have skills, wealth and power well beyond those of the Melanesians who assumed that these new-comers had received these advantages from the omnipotent god whose message they strove to disseminate. Simultaneously, the missionaries were assuring the Melanesian populace that through attendance at church services and through conversion, they too could enter into communion with this deity and eventually attain a state of grace or achieve salvation.

For many, these factors explained the observable power and wealth of missionaries, and, as they were told that all were to be brothers and sisters in God’s Kingdom, they saw themselves eventually occupying positions of equality in the new societies which were emerging in many parts of Melanesia. Thus people were only too willing to join the missions and to share in these obvious benefits. I remember as a little boy my dad telling me to go to a mission school to learn the new arts of reading and writing, and through this to be able to penetrate the mystic secrets which missionaries alleged were contained in the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

Thus, from the beginning of their contacts with missions, Melanesians displayed a curiously ritualised attitude towards literacy. Many took writing to be merely one of those modes of communication with the supernatural world with which they were already familiar. From this perspective, the virtue of writing lay in people’s ability to manipulate it as an entity in a defined ritual fashion so that they could get a grip on the mission god and force from him his secrets. Writing soon came to be in itself an important symbol of the very goals of wealth and authority to which people aspired, a symbol of the impending millennium and a ‘road to the cargo’, that is access to the wealth and power visible in the new socio-economic order.

Melanesians were soon disappointed in most of the hopes they had placed in the mission forms of Christianity. No matter how conscientiously they participated in mission rituals, no matter how carefully they heeded the missionaries' moral exhortations, no matter how diligently their sons and daughters studied the school primers, the people remained materially poor and politically impotent. No amount of Church-going bridged the social gap that separated them from the Europeans, and what they had acquired was just hard labour for low wages in towns and on plantations. In short, they seemed to be nowhere near their desired goal. They felt that they were being cheated and that somehow the missionaries were concealing from the people the true formulas that led to the mission god. According to some people, the missionaries were not teaching the true Bible, but were withholding the crucial parts that listed the secret names of their god.⁹

As a result people began to withdraw from mission churches and schools and followed the 'road blong cargo'. (The term 'cargo' here meant not merely commodities but the combinations of wealth and power visible in the new socio-economic order). People joined those who claimed to have more effective ways of finding the 'road to the cargo'. There were those who went down the cargo road and those who remained 'faithful' to the mission. If we had to dig deeper into the inner reasons why someone like Brother Ini Kopuria founded the Melanesian Brotherhood (an indigenous order for Melanesians committed to evangelisation) in 1925 it would be interesting to find that one of his main reasons was to develop an alternative 'road' for Melanesians that gave them a sense of being part of the work of the Church.

The Melanesian search for literacy and development was enormous. Professor Parsonson summed it up in a study of 'The Literate Revolution in Polynesia' thus:

The Polynesians had plainly believed that the art of reading and writing was the real source not merely of the technological capacity of the European but also of his military and political strength, his 'mana', and that they need only master these skills to secure a like pre-eminence. Then they discovered that these were not enough or at least while they apparently worked in European hands they dismally failed in their own.¹⁰

An ex-councillor of a village in Madang said what sums up the Melanesian disappointment:

We have read the Bible, we have sent our children to schools, we have planted cacao and coconuts, but as yet we have not found the source of white man's material wealth and we are pledged to the cultist belief in our search for this.¹¹

They had accepted the Gospel and they had tried all the government schemes of the whites without achieving anything like equality with the whites. They had done all that the missionary had told them to do to make them rich and powerful, but till now, they had only secured a little cash income. Their young men and women had wasted every hour-and-half walk to school daily for six or seven years, because they hung around the villages unemployed. They had accepted the setting up of local government councils, but all it did was collect taxes, and road conditions were worse than they were thirty

years ago. So they turned their back to the missions and re-instated their own magico-religious methods in a 'new money-doubling cult'.¹²

These disappointments arose from unfulfilled expectations, but they were also due to the misunderstanding of the purpose for which these new ways of life had been introduced. Above all their disappointment was due to unrealised expectations. The Melanesian's eager response to the teaching of reading and writing that marked the first phase of so much missionary activity often, therefore, had other motives than those which governed the teachers, and inevitably led to disillusionment.¹³

Despite the fact that missionaries were misunderstood, their impact was felt everywhere by their teaching and preaching. Conversion of islanders proceeded, though the actual conversion and acceptance as a Christian through baptism could be a long process. Missionaries had to wait for over a decade for the 'first fruits' of the 'harvest'.

While success was a sign that missionaries were inspired instruments of God, other factors also contributed to the acceptance of the missionary and his/her revelation. There were other whites either preceding missionaries or contemporaneous with them in most parts of the Pacific, whom governments found difficult and often impossible to restrain from misusing locals for their own profit. When the government came in, it appeared in spite of its protective role, to interfere deeply and pointlessly in some ways with the ordinary life of the people. Imposed law and order might make the old way of life impossible but government in many cases offered in this period little by way of compensation. In Vanuatu the government hardly did anything to save the local population from these effects but rather encouraged them.

White people whether from the government or not, constantly acted with impunity in contravention of the will of the spirits and ancestors. Thus the power which had been used by the elders to order the lives of the people in the village and to maintain the protective traditions became for the first time subject to doubt and question. As a German scholar with New Guinea experience pointed out,

The presence of the white man and all the new things and conditions which accompany him are of religious significance. He is not only in his person an exception to their rule and can indulge with impunity in many things which are shrouded in magic for the native, but he brings with him a world of things which have no analogy in the old world, determined as it was by religion. Therefore he is not bound by old customs, nor by magic laws, and thus a sphere of life springs into existence that is free from the old responsibility to tradition.¹⁴

The old way being now of questionable efficacy in this larger world, and the times being out of joint, the people were prone to assume that the solution, the 'road' into the new world, was to be the same road used by the white man who prospered in these new conditions. The missionary thus seemed to offer a way of being like the white man - not, as the missionary himself/herself might say in his/her sermon, in the next world where the humble would be exalted, but here on earth. This was a reasonable interpretation by

Melanesians whose religious activities had always been a means of conserving the material benefits they possessed, and of adding to them.

The rapid conversion (especially mass conversion) amounted in some cases to the acceptance by islanders of a 'package deal', in which the white man's way of life was accepted in expectation of getting the white man's rewards. Jean Guiart's example of New Caledonia and Vanuatu illustrates the response of the people everywhere in Melanesia to the missionary organisations. He wrote that the tribes which were in danger of losing their land to the French settlers round the turn of the century were rapidly converted to acceptance of Protestant teaching. Guiart argued that, 'an essential aspect of the symbolism of conversion in Oceanian thought was life versus death'; that the idea of Christian salvation was somewhat vague to potential converts, but that the 'Word of life' has remained 'the key word in all religious discourse in the Protestant Churches of New Caledonia and Vanuatu'. The faith proclaimed by local evangelists in the indigenous symbolic idiom, he says, offered a 'rallying point and new hope.... To desperate people, it was a haven, a frame within which social cohesion could be re-established. This "Word of life" had for them exactly the meaning we would have put upon it. It meant the refusal of social death, the hope of a better deal, and the will to be considered something other than ignorant savages. Such deeply rooted hopes gave local pastors and priests courage to oppose, with dignity, any measures that they considered to be unjust.... In this case, early Christianisation was definitely a subtle, in many ways efficient, and at times overt, form of resistance to the worst aspects of colonial rule.'¹⁵

According to Guiart, the collective conversions which missionaries took as indicating the power of the Word of God, were really attempts to throw the old ways and to embrace a whole new order of living. He therefore argued that

a native group can of itself, with relative ease, decide to shed what would once have seemed to us anthropologists the most important and functional elements of its culture: on Santo Island, even such things as exogamy and bride price. There were dozens of such instances in New Guinea. The process of Christianization often involved sudden and radical changes for which the missionary does not bear the sole responsibility.¹⁶

Anthropologist F.E. Williams reported what he called the strange conduct of people in the Vailala region of Papua. He described how drastically life had been changed by the influence of leaders who appeared possessed, and who taught new things and ridiculed the old. There have been many examples of such cults affecting congregations after conversion. The same kind of social process could have been involved at the time of the first conversion.¹⁷

It could be argued that for Melanesians conversion to Christianity could be a way of release for tensions in society. This was true in many parts of Melanesia for Christianity was seen as the only hope. But Guiart noted the missionary 'was sitting on the very tension he thought he had eradicated'. It is difficult to envisage the psychological, religious, and social impact made by the arrival of missionaries in Melanesia and the Gospel they preached. For Melanesians the Gospel they received was an alternative 'technology' for celebrating life, making life become full and more abundant.

Deliberate stimulation of emotional excitement has long been a technique of conversion. The appeal to reason has never been as effective as the appeal to the emotions. This was already a common element in Melanesian ceremonies marking the life transitions where for good social reasons it was necessary to impress the imaginations of those who were the central figures.

The London Missionary Society left its first group of Pacific Islander missionaries in Vanuatu in 1840 and in Southern Papua in 1872. Experience had shown in Polynesia how much more effective, once they had mastered the language, were the direct appeals of local evangelists when compared with the efforts of white missionaries. The Anglicans in the Solomons and Vanuatu also had seen the advantage of using native missionaries since it was these local missionaries who made the greatest impact on their own people. This indigenous response to the Christian message and religious revival was seen in Melanesia in men and movements as diverse as 'Vailala Madness', the Yali Movement in the Rai Coast of New Guinea, in the Mansren Movement, in the Jon Frum Cult of Tanna, and the Nagariamel Movement on the island of Espiritu Santo. The 'Vailala Madness' was marked by expectations of the kind of millennium produced by a synthesis of Christian and traditional ideas. The first teaching of the missions had aroused millenarian expectations, and conversion had been an attempt by Melanesians to solve the problem posed by the presence of the white man, a problem which in the years following conversion was to become progressively more critical. Christianity was accepted because of the notion of millennium in its teaching and its promise of a new way of life.

Guiart tells how the Presbyterian converts on Tanna conducted their own 'courts', and ordered flogging for Christians and pagans alike. The hierarchy of the mission replaced the older social and cultural hierarchy. A similar state of affairs resulted from the use by the Neuendettelsau Lutheran mission of the trained New Guinean 'native helpers'. By 1913 there were thirty-five of them, already widely scattered in villages through the Huon Peninsula, and around the Huon Gulf. These men seem often to have assumed secular authority, like the Presbyterians on Tanna. An Australian officer who patrolled through this area in 1917 reported that 'the native teachers ... are practically the rulers of the villages. They are so swelled up with their own power that they know no limits'.¹⁸ He also found that the 'Luluais', (head of the clans), were holding courts which enforced the mission rules rather than the government law, and put this down to government neglect. This was common practice at the turn of this century. Government neglect was certainly the case here, but it was also obvious that the people were opting for what seemed to them a better alternative to their present way of life. This was especially true for the 'native missionaries' in Vanuatu where government control in the villages was more or less non-existent. As long as this state of affairs was maintained, the mission rapidly extended its area of influence.¹⁹

Each area is a separate story, but where conversion was rapid, essentially the Melanesians were opting for a new way of life which would bring the white man's material advantages. Whereas the mission was introducing them to the spiritual Kingdom of God, it seems reasonable to assume that many thought that the 'deal' they were making would bring them the riches and advantages which belonged to that great

world of Western materialism and industrialism on which the missionary had turned his back which nevertheless he brought with him to Melanesia.

In Melanesia many people embraced the Gospel because it met their practical needs, not because its truth convinced their minds. In Maewo we have a saying: 'we know something is true because it works, if it doesn't work, it is not true!' Traditional Melanesians are concerned more with the question of the effectiveness of religion than the question of whether or not it is a true one. The questions, 'Does it work?' and 'Is it effective?' are more important than the question, 'Is it true?' In Melanesia, it is true only because it works and we have seen it with our own eyes. If you take the example of Christianity and ask the same questions: 'Does it work?' = 'Yes!', 'Is it effective?' = 'Yes!', 'Is it true?' = 'Yes! because we have proved it!'. This means that a true God is one who is effective while a lying god is one who claims to be god, but is impotent. Melanesians accepted Christianity because the missionary brought with him a world of things which have no analogy in the old Melanesian world. The Gospel completely changed our lives, the old way of life was made more or less redundant. A 'new order' of life was established changing us from enemies into friends, and leading us from the darkness of sin and death into His marvellous light. By and large, Christianity is therefore taken as just another alternative ritual for celebrating life.

The critical issue here is one of power or mana which to the Melanesian is the manifestation of the truth. This undoubtedly is the aspect which was one of the contributing factors in the Melanesian peoples' adoption of Christianity when missionary contact was first made. From the islanders' perspective, many of the traditional festivals were changed in favour of more powerful ones that would ensure life and cosmic renewal.

Missionaries did not have to wage a campaign to convince the Melanesians of the superiority of their rituals. It was plain to the observer that these European missionaries had life in a way unimagined before. They came, therefore, with a superior ritual, their way of obtaining the mana or power was undoubtedly effective.

CONCLUSION

During the last one hundred and fifty years Christianity has taken its root within the lives and activities of the people of Melanesia. Today Melanesians can rightly and confidently claim that we are predominantly Christian, and that we have inherited a 'Christian culture' which now underlies the diversities in our cultural beliefs and practices within traditional Melanesian religions. One area of the world where the nineteenth century Christian missions have been successful in their work of Christianisation has been the islands of the South Pacific. It was here that the influence of the Gospel made an impact within the whole of society. It was here that the Christian influence made its mark felt within the predominantly animistic culture of the Melanesian populace. Christianity takes a significant place in every aspect of the Melanesian cosmic life today. Christianity has indeed been one of the most important parts of the Melanesian way of life. But lurking behind this 'Christian culture' lies a very strong and powerful force of Melanesian traditional beliefs and practices which

may either enhance and enrich the Gospel values, or weaken and destroy the very fabric of Gospel truths.

The challenges to the Gospel values are far greater today than they were when the missionaries first arrived at our shores. As we move into the third millennium, we have on the one hand a sign of real growth in the number of Christians among the mainline churches in Melanesia where faith is nurtured and strengthened, but on the other hand there is clear evidence that the percentage of Christians in Melanesia is dropping slowly. There are those who follow the 'road of the cargo', and there are those who have been carried away by what Charles Forman called 'a new wave of Christianity' that is 'trying to supplant the old'.²⁰ Without over-emphasising the situation it can be said that we have to bid farewell to the 'good old times' when the vast majority of islanders belonged to the churches which were established by the early missionaries. Manfred Ernst in his book *Winds of Change* gives a sound warning that 'If the trend of change in religious affiliation over the last 30 years continues, about one third of the generation after next will worship in places other than those of today.'²¹

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- ² M.E. Gibbs, *From Jerusalem to New Delhi*, The CSL, No. 32, Mysore: Wesley Press, 1964, p.229.
- ³ G.A Milner, 'The New Missionaries?: Language, Education and the Pacific Way' in *The Effects of Development on Traditional Pacific Island Cultures*, London, Royal Commonwealth Society, 1984, pp.11-12.
- ⁴ Quoted in David Hilliard, *God's Gentleman: A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1978, p.259.
- ⁵ The term 'Blackbirder' described those who used force or suspect methods in recruiting labourers from the Melanesian islands for work in sugar plantations in Queensland or Fiji.
- ⁶ M.J. Meggitt, 'The Uses of Literacy in New Guinea and Melanesia', in J. Goody ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p.298.
- ⁷ Kenelm Burridge, *Mambu. A Melanesian Millennium*, London: Methuen, 1960, pp.193-94.
- ⁸ Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, p.157.
- ⁹ M.J. Meggitt, 'The Uses of Literacy in New Guinea and Melanesia', in J. Goody ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p.303.
- ¹⁰ G.S. Parsonson, 'The Literate Revolution in Polynesia', *Journal of Pacific History*, 2, 1967, pp.39-57.
- ¹¹ T.K. Moulik, in M. Ward, *Change and Development in Rural Melanesia*, Canberra: Australian National University, 1971, p.27.
- ¹² H.W. Turner, "The Hidden Power of the Whites", in the *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, Paris: Priester, 1978, p.45.
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Walter Freytag, *Spiritual Revolution in the East*, trans., L.M. Stalker, London, Letterworth Press, 1946, p.165.
- ¹⁵ J. Guiart, "Conversion to Christianity in the Pacific: Millennial Dreams in Action", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Supplement 11, The Hague, 1962, p.134.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 134.
- ¹⁷ F.E. Williams, "Mission Influence Among the Keveri of South East Papua", *Oceania* 15.2, 1944-45, p.135.
- ¹⁸ C.D. Rowley, 'The Impact of the Christian Missions', in *The New Guinea Villagers*, New York: Praeger, 1966, p.142.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*
- ²⁰ Quoted in Manfred Ernst, *Winds of Change: Rapidly Growing Religious Groups in the Pacific Islands*: Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1994, p.4.
- ²¹ *ibid.*

MAORI AND THE MELANESIAN MISSION: TWO 'SEES' OR OCEANS APART?

Jenny Plane Te Paa

As we join in the celebrations of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Melanesian Mission, I cannot help but ponder the rightful and respectful relationship which ought to prevail today between two indigenous peoples whose lives and histories were coincidentally intersected all those years ago, by colonial missionaries. While it is true to say that our contemporary understandings of race and the identity politics which flow from this concept would not have been a feature of the earliest historical contacts, nevertheless one would like to imagine that newcomers from other parts of the world to Aotearoa would have had a sense of being *manuhiri* – that is to say, of 'being from somewhere else'. I am convinced those early Melanesians must therefore have recognised those whose land, and therefore hospitality, they were enjoying.

I do not know if this is just my way of constructing a romantic ideal, certainly it is what I would hope might have characterised the earliest relationships between Maori and Melanesian, but, given the disruptive missionary role as 'benevolent evangelist', it is almost impossible to be sure. As Allan Davidson has said to me many times and on many occasions with gentle directness, we cannot repeat nor indeed recreate the past, all we can do is hope to learn from it. For this contribution to the Selwyn Lecture Series, all I 'know' is what my incredibly hard working and gifted researcher, Tahu Kukutai, has been able to gather from archives, books, documents and conversations. So what are the certainties we can learn from? Well, we know that Maori travelled to Melanesia in the early years of the mission. We know that we were all part of the same Province until 1975. And we know that there is a long history of Maori and Melanesian students having studied together at Maori Anglican boarding schools and here at St John's College.

Today in 1999, Maori are but one of several indigenous peoples of the South Pacific who share a common commitment to Anglicanism. The quality and strength of relationship between indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific vary greatly, and not surprisingly, those with whom our relationships are less intimate are those who have not experienced the ravages of colonial imperialism; those who have not had to struggle against all odds to retain God-given language, culture and tradition; or those who have turned away from us either in shame or embarrassment as we continue to engage in the often radical struggle for justice. However, be that as it may, as Maori turn now toward the new millennium I think it is timely for us to ask ourselves whether we have a common basis for reviewing past relationships with our indigenous South Pacific brothers and sisters and if so, what this may mean for our future relationships.

In the course of researching this paper it very quickly became obvious that, while much has been written on the history of the Melanesian Mission, there are several aspects which remain overlooked. I do not think I am being controversial when I say that most

histories of the South Pacific missions, and that includes Aotearoa, have tended to focus on the European missionaries and their work, rather than upon the peoples amongst whom they worked. Thus we know much about such luminaries as George Selwyn, John Coleridge Patteson and Henry Williams, but very little about indigenous preachers such as John Thol, George Sarawia or Henare Taratoa. We know even less about the relationships which these Melanesian and Maori preachers may have developed, for example while they were students here at St John's College.

While this is due in part to a dearth of written historical evidence from indigenous sources I think it is incumbent upon us, as post-colonial partners in the Anglican Church, to at least make an attempt to bring new questions to bear on the evangelisation of Pacific peoples and, if possible, to explore and expose relations between them. In order to do this we need to try to look beyond the dominant stories and words of the European missionaries, to catch a glimpse of what was happening on 'the other side'. So while we acknowledge that there are methodological difficulties involved in revisiting the relationships between the early Melanesian and Maori missions, several aspects of their history still beg to be explored.

We could for example begin by asking what were the connections between the Melanesian and Maori scholars who came here to St John's from 1849? How did they relate to each other? Or perhaps more importantly, *did* they relate to each other? What were the attitudes of the church authorities and missionaries towards the evangelising of Maori and Melanesian and what common assumptions if any, did they share? In turn, what can these attitudes tell us about the Maori and Melanesians as discrete groups, and of relationships between the two groups? Was there a sense of camaraderie or rivalry, or a bit of both? Evidence suggests that while Maori and Melanesian did support each other financially, there was concern in some quarters that the progression of one mission would be at the expense of the other.¹ Finally, what can be said about the contemporary relationship between the Church of Melanesia and Maori tikanga as indigenous sisters and brothers in the Anglican Church in the South Pacific?

As I have indicated, the problem with many of the historical questions raised in this paper is the lack of comprehensive written sources to which I could refer. The connections between Maori and Melanesian appear fragmented and are often elusive. These historic references by European authors, are usually in passing, and sometimes contradictory. Perhaps the best starting point then, is to outline some of what is known.

We know that from the outset of the Melanesian Mission, Maori were accompanying Bishop Selwyn on his trips to Melanesia. In her well known book *Our Maoris*, Lady Mary Martin wrote of a 'New Zealand' youth, (a term used interchangeably with 'Maori'), who accompanied Bishop Selwyn on his 1849 trip to Melanesia.² Referring to the same trip in a letter to his father, Selwyn recalled how two of 'his' *New Zealand* boys, James and Sydney, had rowed him out to a native canoe in New Caledonia.³ It is likely that the 'Sydney' mentioned in this letter was Hirini Taiwhanga, an apprentice carpenter at St John's, who took part in several voyages with the Bishop.⁴ In 1850, a description of the Bishop's travelling party noted another *New Zealander* who, along with five New Caledonians and fifteen people from Aneityum, spent part of the trip in

the ship's hold.⁵ The rest of the party, which included the Bishop, three church scholars and the Presbyterian missionary John Geddies, remained in the cabin.

In 1851, a Maori carpenter from the school, again probably Hirini Taiwhanga, and an unnamed Maori man from the Waikato, were among those who accompanied Selwyn on a voyage to the Solomon Isles, the Loyalty Isles and the New Hebrides.⁶ This *Waikato* man, may have been Jowett Kumumomo, who is mentioned in William Swainson's 1853 publication, *Auckland: The Capital of New Zealand and the Country Adjacent*. According to Swainson, Kumumomo had visited the 'heathen people of the neighbouring islands' and had then returned to enlist the support of his countrymen for the Melanesian Mission. At a native missionary meeting at Taupiri in 1852, Kumumomo was reported to have said:

The Bishop and myself have been to the islands near to us: many of the islanders are cannibals; five Europeans had been killed a few months ago, and perhaps eaten. What are we to do? We must send the gospel of Christ.⁷

Further journeys by Maori to Melanesia are recorded. In 1856, a Maori named Hoari, accompanying Selwyn and Patteson, came across a pit of human remains while in Vanikoro, in the Santa Cruz group.⁸ Six years later, Patteson wrote to his uncle Sir John Coleridge, describing how while moored off Rennell Island on board the *Sea Breeze*, he had celebrated the Holy Eucharist with a European, two Norfolk Islanders, a Maori, and a Nengone man (from Nengone or Mare in the Loyalty Islands) present.⁹

From these anecdotal snippets, it is clear that Maori were influential in the earliest years of the Melanesian Mission. Just what the nature of that influence was, however, is difficult to gauge. Were Maori utilised as translators? Or evangelists? Or were they merely there as general shipmates? Perhaps the most revealing insight into Maori activity during early visits to Melanesia is recorded in 1852. At that time, Henare Taratoa,¹⁰ (later of Gate Pa fame), was left with William Nihill at the Island of Nengone also called Mare for three months. Their task was to prepare the way for the permanent residence of English missionaries. A letter written by Nihill at Nengone provides some detail of Henare's role in the mission. Outlining a typical working day for the pair, Nihill wrote:

The early morning we spend in school in the church; after breakfast we spend about two hours and a half in instructing the young men who act as teachers.... During this time Henry writes out lessons &c. In the afternoon he teaches about the same number of boys, and I print.... Every night we translate for about an hour and a half.¹¹

Thus it is evident, that in 1852, Henare Taratoa was an integral part of the mission, sharing the teaching and translation workload with William Nihill. It would be reasonable to assume that as Henare's senior at St John's College, William Nihill had overall charge of the mission. Whether the teacher-student relationship was faithfully maintained in the unfamiliar uncultural setting of Melanesia, or whether it became more a partnership of equals, remains open to conjecture, given Taratoa's closer South Pacific affinity with Melanesia. Certainly Taratoa was known to be a strong-minded individual

who was not in the habit of capitulating. His later refusal to enter the priests' orders and his high profile involvement in civil matters indicates this. However, in lieu of any further literary evidence, we can only speculate his likely thoughts on the Melanesian mission; and on how he perceived his Melanesian brethren, if indeed he saw them as brethren.

Furthermore, there is no explicit reasoning evident in the correspondence of either Bishop Selwyn or William Nihill, to indicate why Henare Taratoa was selected for the mission. Perhaps he was being seen as a good 'example' to the people of Nengone, as a former 'heathen' who had chosen to undertake the Lord's work. Or maybe it was simply due to his individual ability as a teacher, translator and missionary. Alternatively, maybe it was because as a Maori, he was assumed to have had a common linguistic or cultural bond with Melanesians. Perhaps, it was a combination of all these factors?

Certainly, in the early years of the mission, linguistic similarities had been noted between Maori and the peoples in the Polynesian outliers of Melanesia. An 1851 account of Bishop Selwyn's voyage on board the *Bordermaid* noted a striking resemblance between Maori and the language of the people of Futuna, in the New Hebrides.¹² In 1852, at the Island of 'Tubua' (Utupua in the Santa Cruz Islands), Bishop Selwyn observed the locals 'rubbing noses in true Polynesian fashion.'¹³ Linguistic similarities with Maori were also noted at the Rennell Islands and Bellona,¹⁴ and certainly, while in Nukapu in 1856 and 1857, Selwyn and Patteson had found it possible to make themselves understood to the locals by speaking Maori.¹⁵

If indeed there was a sense of commonality between some of the Melanesian peoples and Maori, how was this expressed in the vastly different environment of St John's College after 1849, when the first Melanesian scholars arrived? Although there are few accounts which directly mention interaction between Melanesians and Maori, there is enough material available which suggests that a bond of sorts did exist. In 1852, when a new scholar from Uvea in the Loyalty Islands was brought to the college, a Maori youth named Himiona was considered to be of great use in teaching the newcomer and, it is recorded, that he 'took great pains to acquire some knowledge of the Mallicolo [Malekula] language.'¹⁶ Upon her arrival at St John's College in 1859, Eliza Blackburn, wife of the new college master Samuel Blackburn, wrote of Maori and Melanesian scholars worshipping together at a Maori Christmas service.¹⁷ In 1861, at the consecration of Bishop Patteson, a Maori deacon, several Maori teachers from St Stephen's School and a group of about ten Melanesian scholars were among those present.¹⁸ And in 1873 when George Sarawia was ordained as the first Melanesian priest, the Reverend Wiremu Turipona and the Reverend Wiremu Pomare are recorded as being among the clergy who participated in the ceremony.¹⁹

In Colleges such as St John's where no clear delineation existed between the private and public aspects of students' lives, interaction between the Melanesians and Maori was not limited to the Church and the classroom, but extended to the wider social sphere. Sometime between 1851 and 1853 at the wedding of a Maori student Philemon Te Karari to Harriet Hobson, Lady Martin noted that thirteen Melanesian boys were present. She observed that the Nengonese scholar George Siapo 'made a very modest,

manly speech' while the Maori boys and girls present 'sang English glees and catches with great spirit' in between the speeches.²⁰

During their years at St John's, both groups of scholars shared in the loss of loved ones: Henare Taratoa's wife Emily and Govett Taraea, along with George Apale and his cousin John Thol from Lifu, all died within months of each other in 1852.

Given the personal fellowship which clearly existed between Maori and Melanesian students, it seems hard to believe that no enduring official '*ecclesial*' bonds were forged in those early years. Apart from a Waikato teacher named Edward who taught a class of Mai and Tasiko boys around 1860, there is little evidence of any concerted attempt to involve Maori in the teaching of Melanesians, either at St John's College, or later, at Mission Bay.²¹

Certainly, the rivalry between Bishop Selwyn and the Church Missionary Society (who had worked amongst the Maori for almost three decades prior to Selwyn's arrival), may have been an inhibiting factor. In his lecture in this series, '*An Interesting Experiment*,' Allan Davidson pointed to the struggles between the CMS and Selwyn for control over 'Maori work,' and in particular he noted the CMS opposition to the Bishop's evangelisation strategies in Melanesia.²² Given the opposing '*modus operandi*' and the philosophical differences between Selwyn and the missionaries, it would obviously have been difficult to establish let alone maintain a more integrated relationship between the Melanesian and Maori Missions. Furthermore, the Bishop appeared to view the evangelisation of Melanesians and Maori as being quite separate and distinctive mission activities. In an 1851 letter he warned of the futility of drawing comparisons between the Melanesian and Maori missions, noting that where it had taken sixteen years to make any significant progress amongst the Tahitians and Maori, even slower progress must be expected amongst the 'mingled peoples' of Melanesia.²³

His '*mingled peoples*' reference is indicative of his awareness of the diversity of Melanesian tribal groupings, of their numerous languages and the subsequent barriers this cultural complexity presented to those attempting to evangelise the islands. Whereas it was possible for European missionaries to teach and preach to Maori in their own language with relatively few problems, this was infinitely more difficult in an area where nearly every island had at least one language, and where even neighbouring peoples were unable to understand one another. Hence, where there was potential (even if it was not realised) to achieve conversions en-masse amongst Maori this was never seen as a serious prospect in Melanesia. From the 1850s onward, a perceived spiritual demise within the CMS Maori Mission led to a concern that, if left unchecked, the Melanesian Mission would suffer the same fate. The effects of uncontrolled alcohol consumption, coupled with acrimonious relations between Maori and settlers, had seriously impaired CMS mission work. While in Nengone, William Nihill wrote of his fears that the Melanesians would follow the decline of their Maori predecessors:

Religion has become the business of their [*the Melanesians*] lives, and without their mode of life is changed, and something given them to do, they cannot, I fear, withstand the temptations which their easy mode of life must continually expose them to, when the novelty has worn off. The contrast they

present to the New Zealanders, amongst whom the spirit of religion seems to have died out, quite frightens me, - it seems like a lull before a storm.²⁴

Perhaps as a consequence of the declining Maori Mission, the Melanesians were viewed as more vulnerable, and in need of greater protection. Patteson, one of the more enlightened churchmen of his day, certainly in terms of racial equality, described the Melanesians thus: 'They are generally gentle, and seem to cling to one, not with the very independent goodwill of New Zealanders, but with the soft yielding character of the child of the tropics.'²⁵ Clearly Patteson felt, (notwithstanding the paternal benevolence of his observation) there was something 'innocent' about the Melanesians which Maori lacked or had lost.

All of this anecdotal material is helpful for understanding the European views of Melanesians in relation to Maori, but it says nothing much about the attitudes of Maori, or of Melanesians toward themselves. The absence of direct clues within indigenous literature sources is frustrating in this respect. For example, in the short memoirs of the Nengone scholar George Sarawia, *They Came to My Island*, how significant is it that he omits any mention of Maori, despite the fact that he was virtually in the backyard of Ngati Whatua?²⁶ Was it that Maori did not figure in his experience, that he shared no common ground with them, or was it that he was primarily concerned with describing his relationship to the European teachers and missionaries?

Perhaps more telling is Sarah Selwyn's manuscript 'Reminiscences', in which she describes a kind of racial hierarchy observed amongst St John's College indigenous scholars: 'It was amusing to see the Maoris holding their heads up above the Melanesians owing to their own lighter colour, while the Melanesians looked down on the Australian, "He was no good, too black".'²⁷ Arguably this observation could be attributed more to Sarah Selwyn's European reading of race relations, but the point it raises, one of acknowledged racial difference, and even superiority, cannot be ignored.

A further impression is offered by Lady Martin following the ordination of George Sarawia:

There was a large luncheon party afterwards at our house-native and English clergy, Melanesians, Maori girls, &c. William Pomare; when there was a lull in the conversation, which was being carried on in three languages, looked up the table to his host, and calling him by the shortened title of affection, said in Maori: "E Tenga, it is the Gospel that has done this, is it not? But for the Gospel we should be hating and despising each other."²⁸

Is Lady Martin's account, written almost a decade after the event, a faithful reflection of how Melanesian and Maori related to each other; or is it merely wishful propaganda, a bid to describe how Christianity had successfully 'united and tamed' former heathen peoples?

On the financial front, Maori were known to have been contributing funds to the Melanesian Mission from at least 1852.²⁹ There were frequent collections taken amongst the Maori pastorates and communities. The Melanesian Mission accounts for

1862, showed Maori from the Diocese of Waiapu contributed more than seventeen pounds.³⁰ Conversely, so too did Melanesians contribute to the Maori Mission, although to a lesser degree. In 1873, for example, the Maori Ministers' Endowment Fund received a contribution of ten pounds from the Norfolk Island Offertory Fund, which was largely made up of 'native' offerings.³¹ While this demonstrates a spirit of mutuality amongst the missions, there was some concern that the Melanesians were diverting funds from an already struggling Maori Mission. This concern was raised by the Bishop of Auckland, Bishop Cowie, in a letter dated 1873, in which he wrote that 'we shall think it rather hard if the inhabitants of those islands [*Melanesia*] monopolize the sympathy of the Church at home for this quarter of the globe, and we are left alone in our poverty of men and other means'.³² He concluded that the Maori Church 'both needs and deserves such help at the present time. The Maories were never more disposed to help themselves than they are now in many parts of this diocese, and the European settlers of New Zealand were never less inclined.'³³ He cited the example of a Maori clergyman from the Hokianga, the Reverend Piripi Pataki, who had collected substantial collections for the Melanesian Mission, despite his own meagre stipend and the limited resources in his region:

Poor Patiki ... subsisting on 50*l.* a year, could not have been blamed if he had, on the principle that "charity begins at home," suggested to his people that their seven pounds might go to augment his own stipend instead of being added to the funds of a comparatively rich foreign mission.³⁴

After the removal of Melanesians to Norfolk Island in 1867, contact between Maori and Melanesians appeared to flounder. Apart from the few Melanesians who were sent to St John's College or the Maori boarding schools, there appears to have been little ongoing formal contact between the two peoples. In 1907, prospects were revived when the Auckland Superintendent of the Maori Mission, H. Hawkins, and a senior Maori clergyman Hone Papahia, were sent to the Polynesian outliers of Bellona, Tikopia and the Reef Group to undertake a feasibility study into the possibility of sending Maori teachers to those areas. The plan was significant in that it proposed to send Maori laymen and their wives, rather than ordained Maori clergy, to live among the Melanesians. It was hoped that by setting a good example of how a Christian family lived, the Maori teachers would be able to successfully evangelise the Melanesians. The 1907 Maori Mission Report noted that the Mission was, 'taking definite steps towards bringing the Maori and Melanesian peoples together' and that there was unlikely to be a lack of Maori volunteers, as Maori were 'born missionaries'.³⁵ In the report which followed the visit, Hawkins and Papahia made the following observations and recommendations:

- that the languages and food were similar to that of Maori;
- that the Reef Islands should be the first port of call, as the friendliness of the peoples was assured, the islands numerous and the populations large;
- that all Maori evangelists sent to the islands should be married, with the exception of a man sent to San Cristobal who, because he would be in the company of a white missionary, could be single;
- that the Maori missionaries should stop at Norfolk Island on the way to the islands in order to learn the language; and

- that a white missionary keep in close contact with the Maori teachers.³⁶

Despite the glowing terms of the report, the plan came to nothing. In his book, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, Charles Fox suggested the plan failed because the Maori Church had never been missionary: ‘How different might have been the history of the Polynesian-speaking islands if this recommendation had been acted on, and what fresh life have been infused into the Maori Church itself,’ he lamented.³⁷

This century we can still find connections between the Melanesian and Maori churches, although this has been limited, in the main, to shared educational experiences of clergy. Over the decades many Melanesian clergy and theological scholars have been educated at Maori boarding schools such as St Stephen’s and Te Aute and at St John’s College. Notable scholars include the first Melanesian assistant bishops of the Diocese, Leonard Alufurai and Dudley Tuti.

At a national level an ecclesial relationship of sorts has also existed. In 1975, when the Province of Melanesia was established as an autonomous diocese, a chair carved by Maori craftsmen was placed in the Cathedral at Honiara as a symbol of the two interwoven histories. Conversely, when Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa Endowment Fund was established in 1978 the Melanesian Diocese donated a substantial sum to its foundation.

This gesture of support for Te Pihopatanga was indeed a tangible symbol of goodwill from Melanesia. However, this was twenty years ago and it saddens me to think that, while there may have been official exchanges between Church leaders over the past two decades, there is no vibrant memory of regular recent intimate contact between ordinary ‘pew warming’ Maori Anglicans and our Melanesian brothers and sisters. Therefore because this forum provides us both a unique opportunity to hear one another and to address one another on issues of mutual concern, then it seemed timely for tikanga Maori to proffer both a challenge and an invitation to Melanesia to reconsider your relationship with the tangata whenua³⁸ of the Church of this land.

Melanesia: while we in tikanga Maori respect your right to choose those with whom you associate in the New Zealand Church for the purpose of administration, financial management and mission oversight, while here in this land, what we find less easy to reconcile is the fact that you, along with our tikanga Pakeha partners, appear to be the direct beneficiaries of our legacy of suffering and injustice and at times you appear impervious to that fact. I say this without any sense of malice nor of ill will. Rather, as your sister in Christ I believe it to be imperative for me to speak publicly and with humility. This is a place of God. This is a forum within which critical questions can and should be addressed. As one with leadership responsibilities I consider it only right and proper for me to exemplify something of the responsibility for truth-telling, offered in the spirit of hope for building future relationships of mutuality and interdependence.

It is my solemn hope that we will find a time in the not-too-distant future to begin a conversation – perhaps by way of an ongoing narrative project – one

which celebrates the knowledge, the wisdom, and the faith journeys of both Melanesian and Maori storytellers.

As tangata whenua in this land and as kaitiaki³⁹ on this site, tikanga Maori are committed and obligated to ensuring the establishment and maintenance of 'right relationship' with all those whom this College seeks to serve.

As a result of the constitutional revision endorsed by our Church in 1992 the existing monocultural arrangements for management and governance of the College were transformed into a three tikanga model.

In light of that change all previous 'taken for granted' understandings ought to have been reviewed in order to ensure that the justice envisaged by constitutional revision, might truly prevail.

As we in tikanga Maori have begun the long haul back from a profoundly disadvantaged position in our Church we have been careful to examine all of those 'structural arrangements' which the Church has created and sustained in the name of mission both to and from this land. While it could be argued that if tikanga Maori did not exist in the historical context then there really ought not be any unnecessary changes initiated. However, in the case of relationships between indigenous people of the Pacific, as people of God, it is to the moral conscience that this appeal is being directed.

Kia ora tatou katoa.

- ¹ This concern was raised by Bishop Cowie in a letter printed in the *Colonial Church Chronicle*, August 1873, p.308.
- ² Lady Martin, *Our Maoris*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884, p.183.
- ³ H.W. Tucker, *Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn*, 2 vols. London: William Wells Gardner, 1879, I, 311.
- ⁴ Bishop Selwyn's policy was to use, where possible, College students as part of his crew. 'S. Taiwhanga, Maori Carpenter', was part of the College party on board the *Undine* in 1850, on a trip to the Firth of Thames, Tucker, *Memoir*, I, 349.
- ⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁶ *St John's College Calendar (SJCC) 1851*, Bishop's Auckland: College Press, 1851, [p.5?]; J. Evans in *Churchman Militant: George Augustus Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and Lichfield*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1964, p.127 also refers to 'some Maori boys' in 'Mallicolo' [Malekula in Vanuatu] in 1851.
- ⁷ W. Swainson, *Auckland: the Capital of New Zealand and the Country Adjacent*, London: 1853, p.146
- ⁸ C. Yonge, *The Life of John Coleridge Patteson: Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, 3rd ed., 2 vols, London: Macmillan, 1874 I, p.171. This expedition is also described in E.S. Armstrong, *The Melanesian Mission*, London: Isbister, 1900, pp.28-29. Extract of a letter from W. Nihill quoted in *Colonial Church Chronicle*, May 1853, pp.423-30.
- ⁹ Yonge, *Patteson*, II, p.17.
- ¹⁰ Ngahuia Dixon, 'Henry William Taratoa', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1769-1830*, vol. 1, Wellington: Allen & Unwin & Department of Internal Affairs, 1990, p.430.
- ¹¹ Extract of a letter from W. Nihill quoted in *Colonial Church Chronicle* 1852-53, pp.423-460.
- ¹² Report of the Northern Mission in *SJCC*, 1851, [p.5?]
- ¹³ Report of the Northern Mission's Fifth Voyage in *SJCC*, 1852, [p.10?]
- ¹⁴ C. Yonge, *The Life of John Coleridge Patterson: Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands*, 4th ed., 2 vols. London: 1881, I, 164.
- ¹⁵ D. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978, p.66.
- ¹⁶ *Report of the Melanesian Mission: November 1852 to June 1853*, p.3
- ¹⁷ A. Davidson, *Selwyn's Legacy: The College of St. John the Evangelist Te Waimate and Auckland 1843-1991, A History*, Auckland: The College of St John the Evangelist, 1993, p.84.
- ²⁰ Martin, *Our Maoris*, p.70.
- ¹⁸ Yonge, *Patteson*, 3rd ed., I, 490-92.
- ¹⁹ *Church Gazette*, July 1873, p.94.
- ²⁰ Martin, *Our Maoris*, p.70.
- ²¹ Ruth Ross in *Melanesians at Mission Bay*, Auckland: New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 1983, states that Edwards, whose identity and subsequent history are not known, did not remain long with the Melanesian Mission. Edward is also mentioned in Yonge, *Patteson*, 4th ed., II, 29.
- ²² See p.
- ²³ *Colonial Church Chronicle*, December 1851, p.239.
- ²⁴ *Colonial Church Chronicle* May 1853, pp.425-26.
- ²⁵ Yonge, *Patteson*, 3rd ed., I, 174.
- ²⁶ George Sarawia, *They Came to my Island*, Taroaniara: Diocese of Melanesia Press, 1968.
- ²⁷ S.H.Selwyn, *Reminiscences by Mrs. S.H. Selwyn, 1809-1867*, with an introduction and notes by Enid A. Evans, [Auckland], Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, 1961, Typescript, p. 44.
- ²⁸ Martin, *Our Maoris*, p.207.
- ²⁹ Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, p.40.
- ³⁰ *Accounts of the Melanesia Mission 1862-1863*, p.vi.
- ³¹ *Church Gazette*, March 1873, p.34.
- ³² *Colonial Church Chronicle*, August 1873, p.308.
- ³³ *ibid.*, p.310.
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p.308.
- ³⁵ Report of the Maori Mission in the *Supplement to the Church Gazette*, Dec. 1907, p.XVI.
- ³⁶ *Church Gazette*, January 1908, pp.15-16.

³⁷ C.E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles: The Story of the Melanesian Mission*, London: Mowbray, 1958. p.209.

³⁸ 'tangata whenua' refers to Maori as the people of the land.

³⁹ 'kaitiaki' conveys the meaning of 'guardianship' and 'oversight'.

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