

**THE ROLES OF MELANESIANS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH
IN MELANESIA 1925-1975**

Submitted by

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Dip of Theology, Bachelor of Theology, Master of Theology

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN TOTAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

21 JANUARY 2013

Online Edition

<http://anglicanhistory.org>

2016

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No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the work of many invaluable contributions from many people and organisations. Without them, it would have been impossible to undertake and complete this study. With the understanding of the impossibility of mentioning everyone by name, I would first of all like to thank everyone who contributed in one way or another, big or small in the final completion of this piece of work. However having said this, I would still like to make special mention of the following.

Thanks to my supervisors, Associate Professor Gerard Hall, who was my principal supervisor, Professor James McLaren and Dr. Stefano Girola, my co-supervisors. Their advice and supervision was not only academically professional, but pastoral and spiritually caring. It was a privilege and an honour to work with them. Our relationships grew during the years of my study and they remain heroes in my life. God provided these great teachers who allowed themselves to be part of my academic journey. I am very thankful and grateful to God.

Thanks to the Anglican Church of Melanesia which confidently provided me the scholarship. This was a scholarship given in trust, confidence and prayers. I am thankful for the opportunity. I achieved with humility the assignment that the Anglican Church and people of Melanesia confidently entrusted to me. God has always been in the forefront of the journey. Whilst on the church, I would also like to thank parishioners of St. Oswald Anglican Church in Banyo, who shared their spirituality with me.

Thanks to the Melanesian Anglican families in Brisbane, who often invited us into their many programs. I would like to make special mention of Berrald, Barbara and Neilmos who greatly supported me and my family, making our stay in Brisbane comfortable and homely. They have become part of my family.

Finally, thanks to my dear wife Jenny and Dalmina, my granddaughter, who directly shared with me all the challenges and pains while undertaking this study. It was not easy of course to live with someone who had less time in the sitting room than in the study. Your sacrifice and patience were invaluable contributions. Along with Jenny and Dalmina, I thank my daughter Lupa, who saw fit to sacrifice her overseas scholarship and accept a local scholarship, lessening the financial burden of the church. I would also like to thank my daughter Sese and son Steve, of course with his family, who supported me in small ways, especially during my research in the Solomon Islands. Lastly, but not least, for my extended family who always were a strong support - I thank you so much.

Thank you God

Thank you Melanesia

Thank you Australian Catholic University.

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Abstract

The Church of Melanesia has been independent for almost forty years and to date, no detailed examination of the roles of the Melanesians in the development of the church in Melanesia has been available. While most missionaries were aware of the importance of the roles of Melanesians, their writings did not focus on this reality. This research is therefore done to expose what seems to be a 'silent' subject.

The research is historical, anthropological, sociological, and missiological/theological. It attempts to answer questions pertaining to the subject of this thesis by examining the people of Melanesia and their society in relation to God through their participation in the church.

The initial primary goal of the Melanesian mission was the 'development of the whole humanity' embedded in the ethos of 'true religion, sound learning and useful industry.' The Melanesian undertakings through the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH), education institutions, healthcare services, Taroniara industrial development and the local village communities were guided by these principles. Three common themes continue to re-emerge in this thesis.

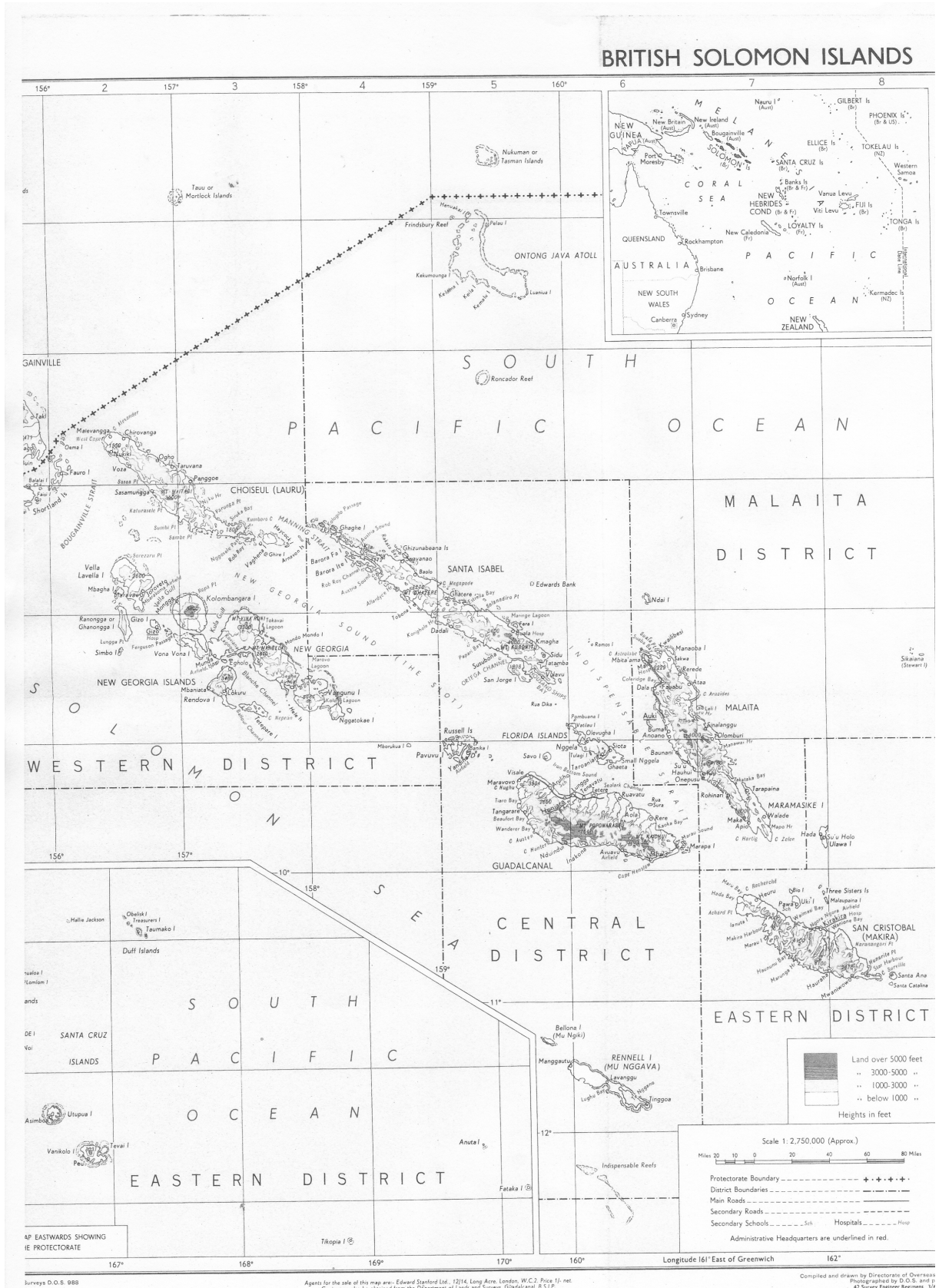
Firstly, the period covered in this thesis was the high-point in the development of the Church of Melanesia due to the roles played by Melanesians in the mission work. This was an era of consolidation in which 'proclamation, witnessing and solidarity' images were the strategies under the supervision of missionaries. This was known as the 'black net upheld by the white corks.' However, the roles of Melanesians show each approach to mission effectively especially through the solidarity approach. Melanesians 'walked with' Melanesians making them more effective than their missionary supervisors who mostly undertook proclamation and witnessing. It was a period of preparation for the 'black net to be upheld by the black corks.'

Secondly, this is the period in which Melanesians became more aware of their identity within the church. Melanesians became aware of their responsibilities within the church, and carried them out well to gain the confidence of their missionaries. Despite the many good deeds, it was also a period that brought difficulties and confusion. It was a time of the blending of two cultures that brought two kinds of solution – theologically sound and unsound. One of the major issues was syncretism. But despite the negatives, the gospel continued to flourish and the church continued to grow. This is not to say that there is a place for sin or evil in the Christian life; but it is to acknowledge that Christian life is not free from sinfulness. Syncretism therefore, with its many negative connotations, remains a reality in Melanesia. There may be strong opposition to syncretism but this is undisputably Melanesian Christianity.

Thirdly is the process of inculturation/contextualisation in which some connection can be made between the traditional culture and Christianity. The many social and economic reasons that influenced Melanesians' conversion resulted in their different roles in the church. The social and economic reasons became spiritually and culturally meaningful through inculturation and contextualisation. In other words, the contextualisation of the gospel into culture, and vice versa helped Melanesians, to understand the Christian God. In turn, this influenced Melanesians to take up the responsibilities recorded in this thesis.

The roles carried out by Melanesians – big or small - were important signs of Melanesian identity within the church. The roles are sacramental effectively symbolising what Melanesians can do for the church, which is the symbol of the invisible God. Only then is the God of the Old and New Testaments also a God of Melanesia.

Map of Solomon Islands pre-independence



Surveyors D.O.S. 988

Agents for the sale of this map are: Edward Stanford Ltd., 12/14, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Price 1/- net. Copies can also be obtained from the Department of Lands and Surveys, Gizo, Guadalcanal, S.S.I.P.

Compiled and drawn by Directorate of Overseas Surveys. Photographed by D.O.S. and P.S. 42 Survey Engineer Regiment. 1/4

Introduction

1. Research Focus

This is a research study examining the roles of Melanesians towards the development and growth of the Anglican Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands.¹

Solomon Islands is a group of islands in the Pacific, about 3300 kilometres northeast of Australia. In the course of history, the transitional development changes of the church can be divided into three stages. The first stage was the initial foundation period between 1849-1920 when the church was named the Melanesian Mission. The second stage was the period of consolidation 1920 -1975. The third is the independence period from 1975 onwards.

The area investigated by this study covers the second stage, which may also be known as the era of 'proclamation' witnessing and solidarity.² This was an important era in which Melanesians not only received the gospel, but also witnessed to it vigorously by gathering together through worship and prayer, and expressed and interpreted it through social and industrial work. The main question that this thesis attempts to address is how did the Melanesians contribute to the development of the Anglican Church in Melanesia³ between 1925 and 1975.

2. Methodology

Although this research will mainly employ an historical methodology, anthropological, sociological and theological approaches will also be used. In order to answer the questions posed by this study, data has been gathered through the analysis of primary sources such as:

¹Note that Vanuatu and New Caledonia are ecclesiastically within the Anglican Church of Melanesia though separate in political sovereignty. Vanuatu however is not within the scope of this study as it will be too broad. With the limited knowledge the author has for Vanuatu, the author feels it would be unfair to include Vanuatu in this scope of this study.

² See discussion on Missiological Approaches in Chapter 8.

³ Note that the Anglican Church of Melanesia includes Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. However, this research is restricted only to the Solomon Islands. It would be too broad to include Vanuatu. Vanuatu therefore can be best researched on its own.

Church newspapers, pastoral letters by bishops, synod and committee minutes and notes, mission reports and documents. However, the most important data for this research is from the *Southern Cross Log*, divided into two editions: a New Zealand edition; the second a United Kingdom one.⁴ Apart from the *Southern Cross Log*, there are other minor periodicals which have been used for this research.⁵ The *Southern Cross Log* is particularly important for this study because it was the Anglican Church's quarterly paper published almost consistently throughout the period under investigation.

Secondary literature mainly consists of historical books on secular topics and books on specific church matters. The former discuss the overall history of the islands or other specific secular subjects. Some historical books on the Church in Melanesia provided an overview of the mission, while others cover specific areas of missionary involvement. Most authors (anthropologists, historians, missionaries, traders and colonial officers) are Europeans, since very little literature exists that was written by Melanesians.

i) Importance and the process of analysis and interpretation of literature

The fact that this research has relied mainly on Western sources does not demean my Melanesian cultural heritage. Written sources have been an important instrument for the recording of historical events which might otherwise have been forgotten if we rely solely on the oral tradition.⁶

Nevertheless, the fact that most of the authors writing on the Church of Melanesia were Europeans, writing from their own perspective, is a strong reason for undertaking this study. This will bring about a more comprehensive record of the roles of Melanesians in the church.

⁴ *Southern Cross Log*, London and *Southern Cross Log*, Auckland. There are editions that are not identified with a place thus assumed to be of New Zealand.

⁵ For example, *The Melanesian Messenger*.

⁶ Historical events, memories and traditions were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. Oral tradition can be used in this context as a tool in verifying some of the literatures especially pertaining the cultures and customs of Melanesians. Besides this, oral tradition also could confirm ecclesiastical happenings and events witnessed by Melanesians. The same also applies to literature as a proof to stories based on oral tradition. However, oral tradition had not been used in this research as there were adequate information available through literatures.

The first objective of analysing and interpreting the sources was to acquire an understanding the roles of Melanesians in the development of the church. The next step was the gathering of information relating to the questions raised by the research which were analysed and interpreted. This involved the process of searching through files and records of the Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands government archives as well as the Bishop Patteson Theological College library.

The analysis and interpretations are made through historical approaches learned from the Western formal education system. My experience as a student in various European educational institutions,⁷ and my interaction with European scholars in different fields in the last decade or so, have influenced this study. This played a vital part as I tried to “read” the minds of the authors to understand events, actors and consequences of the past of which I had been unaware. Thus the historical approach has satisfactorily contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the literature. Even in the absence of explicit literature on the subject pursued, the multiple fragmented sources were useful, meeting a good provision demanded by this study.

The second approach is through my Melanesian Anglican identity. I am a Melanesian born and brought up in a Melanesian cultural and Anglican religious context. Both identities have shaped the way I think and act and this helped to fill the ‘gaps’ in the often so fragmented written history. It is when the gaps are filled that the roles played by Melanesians became clearer. In other words, the events, actors and consequences that have not been recorded or recorded partially have been fully or partially understood by using the knowledge and experiences of my being Melanesian and Anglican.

In the final analysis, this research is a result of my ethnographic knowledge about Melanesia, attained through a process combining Western academic influences and interactions and also my Melanesian up-bringing and identity. Both my natural inheritance and the adopted inheritance equally complemented each other in this research.

⁷ Selwyn College 1972-1976 and Bishop Patteson Theological College 1992-1995. Both these institutions are in the Solomon Islands using European educational system. University of Auckland 1999-2001 and 2004-2005.

ii) The Challenges

There are few challenges experienced in the course of finalising this research. Firstly, the content of the literature was not always compatible with my Melanesian knowledge. This is not to say that the literature is right and my Melanesian understanding is wrong, or vice versa. Despite the differences, both perspectives can provide insight into truth. However, finding a process compromising the two poles is not always easy. It is not always easy to put together fragmented pieces of literature. This is the same as trying to put together a jig-saw puzzle. It is therefore not impossible to create another picture different from the reality. It is not always possible to write 'something' agreeable for an audience of both non-Melanesians and Melanesians. Melanesians come from a variety of backgrounds, so my approaches and the results of this research may not be the same as all Melanesians expect. The same would also be true for non-Melanesians.

3. Purpose and significance of thesis

Although there has been much historical literature written about the Church of Melanesia, insufficient attention has been given to the specific roles of Melanesians. Nor has a comprehensive history of the church been provided by a Melanesian author. This dissertation firstly focuses its examination on the roles that Melanesians contributed, through the eyes of a Melanesian. The period covered by this research, 1925 to 1975, was the high-point of Melanesian participation under the influence of European missionaries. Charles E. Fox refers to the period 1919-1928 as the golden age for the Church in Melanesia.⁸ This was on account of a few reasons. First was the transfer of the headquarters to Melanesian soil, including the establishment of training facilities, schools, hospitals and economic development in 1920.⁹ Secondly, the formation of the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH) and also the 'people movements' were important developments by Melanesians.¹⁰ This was the fulfilment of the missionary vision of the 'black net floated by the white

⁸ Charles E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1958), 73.

⁹ A. R. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), 45. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 71, 73.

¹⁰ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 45. See also Chapters Three to Seven.

corks.’¹¹ This dissertation therefore attempts to focus on the roles of Melanesians; written from a Melanesian perspective.

Secondly, this research helps us to make comparisons between various mission strategies employed in different periods, noting that this research is for a time-period up to more than thirty-seven years ago. Through comparison, we should be able to find what is still appropriate and applicable for today's situation. In other words, what occurred in the past, its strengths and weaknesses, can provide important pointers for the current and future mission of the church in Melanesia.

Thirdly, the examination of the contribution of Melanesians is a study of Melanesian inculturation or contextualisation of Christianity. Most Melanesian contributions were influenced by their cultures and environments and thus it is justified to see these through a Christian perspective. The dissertation is about Melanesians and the church and so the process of inculturation or contextualisation is unavoidable. This is supported by the concept of ‘Catholicism in faith and Melanesian in form’ that calls to seek the means of interpreting the gospel to be meaningful in Melanesia. This is seen in the different roles by Melanesians that are sacramental in nature. Inculturation or contextualisation also helped Melanesians to identify themselves with the church, becoming more aware of their Christian/ecclesiastical responsibilities.

4. Literature Review

This literature is a result of analysing primary and secondary sources. The primary source consists of books, theses and articles, while the secondary source includes documents, reports, letters, synod minutes, magazines and newspapers. However much of the materials examined in this thesis, with the exception of the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH) which has been the subject of reasonably extensive research and writing, is only available in fragments across multiple and often little known sources. Much of the work, especially chapters four to seven, is therefore not the result of reviews and analysis

¹¹ Darrell Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries: An Ethnohistorical Study of Social and Religious Change in the Southwest Pacific* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983), 199. The concept simply refers to roles that Melanesians played under the supervision of European missionaries.

made on extensive scholarly literature, but relies on newspapers, minutes, reports, letters, articles and documents. This thesis is an initial compiled work on the different roles of Melanesians in the development of the Anglican Church in Melanesia by a Melanesian from the Melanesian perspective, yet it is still insufficient and subject to errors and misjudgment. Codrington's view referring to his own writings and views would still be applicable to Melanesians like me:

No one can be more sensible than myself of the incompleteness and insufficiency of what I venture to publish; I know that I must have made many mistakes and missed much that I have learnt.¹²

With these, the review is restricted on the following subjects appropriate to the content of the thesis.

i) The general observation of Melanesians

Generally, the literature provides two different views regarding Melanesians' capability, depending on the attitudes and cultural backgrounds of the writers. There were some missionaries traders, planters and colonial officers who were optimistic and others who were sceptical.

Missionaries like Bishop Cecil Wilson¹³ and Archdeacon W.A. Uthwatt were pessimistic about the Melanesians. Wilson states: "They (Melanesians) will never attain to that complete independence for which Bishop Selwyn, our founder used to hope."¹⁴ Uthwatt states: "Most of the natives are of the third generation of Christians. Their zeal and enthusiasm are reported to have died away and the villages need constant supervision and encouragement in order that the earnestness of their religion may be maintained."¹⁵ These were expected comments given the fact of the circumstances and the attitude of Melanesians at that time. Years later however, these views were found to be grossly erroneous, probably due to hasty analysis. The content of this thesis speaks loudly in this context.

¹² R.H. Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-Lore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), preface vi.

¹³ Wilson was the bishop in Melanesia between 1894-1911.

¹⁴ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 199. Cf. *Melanesian Mission Annual Report 1902*, 12.

¹⁵ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 199. Cf. *Melanesian Mission Annual Report 1910*, 56.

The second category of missionaries was other pioneer missionaries who were much more optimistic about Melanesians. Selwyn described Melanesians as having “intellectual power and moral earnestness.”¹⁶ This would be meaningless and unsubstantive if he did not have this conviction which he demonstrated by giving the Church in Melanesia part of his Auckland inheritance.¹⁷ Patteson was also optimistic or else he would not have sacrificed his life for the people of Melanesia.¹⁸ Similarly Codrington would not be remembered as the ‘apostle of the Pacific’¹⁹ and Fox would not have served as missionary in Melanesia for more than seventy years.²⁰ The implication here is that these missionaries would not have devoted their lives to the evangelisation of Melanesia if they did not believe in the Melanesian capability of caring for and developing the church. The principle of a “black net floated by white corks” though was an important strategy in this regard at this point of time.

However, there are some interesting observations reflected by these two different views. First, it informs us that different formulas and ingredients were used to arrive at their conclusions. Secondly, the conclusions were pre-conditioned by factors influenced by the missionaries’ personal backgrounds or by other people.²¹ Thirdly, they reflect the different depth of relationships that different missionaries had with Melanesians.

ii) The Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH)

Out of all the subjects in the thesis, the most comprehensive literature regarding the roles of Melanesians is on the Melanesian Brotherhood. For this reason, little review on the roles is expected. Apart from the brief literature

¹⁶ David Hilliard, *God’s Gentlemen: A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1949* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978), 10. See also Sara H. Sohmer, “Christianity without Civilization,” in *Journal of Religious History*. Vol. 18 No. 2, Dec. 1994. 177-178.

¹⁷ Copy of Conveyance No. 159316, *Melanesian Bishopric : General Mission Trust*, n.d. (However this conveyance was made on the 19th April 1862).

¹⁸ John Gutch, *Martyr of the Islands: The Life and Death of John Coleridge Patteson* (London, Auckland, Sydney and Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 206ff.

¹⁹ Allan K. Davidson, “The Legacy of Henry Robert Codrington” in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Vol. 27 No. 4 October 2003. 171[0]- 176.

²⁰ Fox arrived in Norfolk Island to join the Melanesian Mission in 1902. He left Melanesia in 1975.

²¹ It was also an era where traders, planters and colonial officers actively participated and so it could be possible that missionaries were influenced by them.

available from the *Southern Cross Logs*, the *Melanesian Messengers* and other pamphlets, very few people wrote comprehensively about the MBH. Margaret Lycett, John Manwaring Steward, Charles E. Fox and Brian Macdonald-Milne were all missionaries who in various ways, were associated with the Melanesian Brotherhood. As bishop, John Manwaring Steward was fully involved in the community's initial establishment.²² Charles E. Fox became the first European member of the community in 1933.²³ Brian Macdonald-Milne became a chaplain for the MBH for some years in the 1960s. It is quite natural then that, given their direct involvement with the community, their views on the MBH would tend to be positive.

Most of the writers agreed that in the context of Melanesia, the work of *mana* (power) had been a primary agent of conversion. This was not superficial but was already part of Melanesian spirituality. The introduction of Christianity with its *mana* displayed by missionaries was therefore an enhancement of that spirituality already in existence in Melanesia. For this reason, the MBH has always been related to *mana*.²⁴

Nigel Kelaepa, an Anglican priest and who was a tutor of the MBH provided some insights towards the theology of *mana* (power) and the theology of vulnerability in relation to the killing of the seven Melanesian Brothers. Kelaepa posed a question: "Is it now time for Melanesian Christians to be re-oriented away from a theology of *mana* (power), to a theology of vulnerability, or is it a case of holding both together?"²⁵ There seems to be a suggestion in this situation that questions and undermines God's power and presence and therefore affects the faith of the people. Other ideologies could also follow, such as the powerlessness of prayers that no longer result in miracles.

Kelaepa went on to say that both theological views should be part of the faith, together reassembling the powerful miracles of Jesus in relation to the

²² Charles E. Fox, *Kakamora* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962), 68.

²³ Fox, *Kakamora*, 70-71.

²⁴ Terry Brown, "The Roles of Religious Communities in Peacemaking: The Solomon Islands," 2. <http://anglicanhistory.org> (accessed October 20, 2011).

²⁵ Nigel Kelaepa, "A Theology of Mana or a Theology of Vulnerability," in *Melanesian Messenger*, May 2004, 12. See also Matthew E. Jones, "Mana from Heaven? A theology of Relational Power in the Context of the Murder of the Seven Melanesian Brothers in the Solomon Islands" (PhD Thesis The University of Auckland, 2008). 224ff.

cross of vulnerability.²⁶ In the Melanesian context, what seems to be misinterpreted was the fact that when *mana* is overtaken by vulnerability, faith is lost. However, it must be understood that both ‘*mana* and vulnerability’ had always been part of Melanesian traditional spirituality and that both have been at the same time subjected to practical and emotional or psychological effects. Christian faith for Melanesians therefore is centred on both the theology of *mana* and the theology of vulnerability, although *mana* maybe the deepest experience embedded in Melanesian psyches. Vulnerability, on the other hand, can be a more superficial. Lest we forget, history revealed that there were brothers who died whilst still members of the MBH.²⁷ In other words the presence of *mana* does not mean the absence of ‘vulnerability.’ Again this is reflected in the theology of the cross which contributed to the successful conversion role played by the MBH.

Many of the writers have referred to the MBH as one of the most successful conversion agencies in Melanesia. Fox, states that many places in Guadalcanal, Malaita, Santa Cruz and Lord Howe were opened up by the MBH.²⁸ In addition, Tippet mentions that one of the three most important innovations for the rapid growth in the first fifty years of the twentieth century was the establishment of the MBH.²⁹ Brian Macdonald-Milne also shared almost the same view when he states, “. . . what was important to him was that the people had recognised the Brotherhood as truly Melanesian, and loved it.”³⁰

However, what is lacking is the explicit statistical data that could eliminate any doubt concerning the information. As it is, such information may still raise questions of the MBH’s uncertainties of success and strength outside Melanesia. Melanesians however, are people who generalise even if they knew the truth and importance of issues. In these circumstances, Fox could

²⁶ Nigel Kelaepa, “A Theology of Mana or a Theology of Vulnerability”, 12.

²⁷ The prayer list for the Brothers while serving the MBH is to be found in their Office Book. These brothers are remembered by the MBH and their Companions every Saturday evening.

²⁸ Fox, *Kakamora*, 69, 71, 72, 75.

²⁹ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 45.

³⁰ Brian Macdonald-Milne, *The True way of Service: The Pacific Story of the Melanesian Brotherhood 1925-2000* (Leicester: Christian Aware, 2003), 141, 357.

have been provided with generalised information especially if information were provided to him by Melanesians. However, this does not suggest that the information is fallible as they could hold incredible truth in them.

It is also noted that very little is said about the social responsibilities that the MBH often undertook. Historically, Fox and Lycett, the first two writers about the MBH, provided very little specific data on the social responsibilities of MBH, although non-Christians, lukewarm Christians and committed Christians alike were cared for by the MBH. However, the social responsibilities as part of evangelisation became more evident after the ethnic tension through the brief writings of Richard Carter and Terry Brown and Atkin Zaku.³¹

The MBH though religious, was also a human organisation and therefore subjected to human weaknesses and failures. Brian Macdonald-Milne states that one of the weaknesses was the provisional life vow. Whilst this was compatible with cultural requirements, Brian states that it led to the unstable working nature of the community. This echoes the opinion that those who became brothers were denied their full potential in that ministry because by the time they achieved more experiences the three years vow had lapsed.

In addition, there were missionaries who believed strongly that young Melanesians joined the community “just for its glamour” and that Melanesian Brothers were “cheap labourers.”³²

However, Macdonald-Milne, who had been a chaplain for the MBH for several years, speaks out of his European background and experience. The assumption Macdonald-Milne holds is that the MBH evangelisation work could be more effective if the provision of a life vow was in place. Whilst this may hold truth, it will unfortunately never be proved so long as the life vow is absent. As it is without the life vow, the MBH had already proved successful as Tippett states:

³¹ Richard Carter, “Transforming Missionaries” in Brian Macdonald-Milne, *The True way of Service: The Pacific Story of the Melanesian Brotherhood 1925-2000* (Leicester: Christian Aware, 2003), 344-345. See also Terry Brown, “The Roles of Religious Communities in Peacemaking: The Solomon Islands,” 1-2. Atkin Zaku, “The Role of the Church of Melanesia in the Conflict in the Solomon Islands from 1998-2003,” (Master Thesis The University of Auckland 2006), 99-100.

³² Fox, *Kakamora*, 76.

the Brotherhood has been a most important force in the Eastern Solomons, not only through its primary motive of converting heathen, but especially because it was a Melanesian concept for Melanesian action.³³

Part of Tippett's statement, “. . . it was a Melanesian concept for a Melanesian action” was an indirect statement that claims the MBH success because of its indigenoussness. Part of its indigenoussness was the non-compulsory compliance with the life vow. Few ideologies can be considered here.

Firstly, the life vow may not be explicit in the context of the MBH but the three year vow indirectly could be converted to a life vow. The three year vow can be renewed until a member dies, not forgetting those who died while still under their vow. Secondly, a life vow is a foreign concept that would not fit in the context of Melanesia. Family is a form of social security, becoming more important as one grows old and requires caring.³⁴ The scarcity of money and the lack of social security facilities in the Melanesian society make this crucial. For this reason, Melanesians will eventually require release from the vows at some point in time.³⁵

Consequently, whilst there is some justification for Fox to be sympathetic of the negative perception given to the MBH as ‘glamorous’ and a source of ‘cheap labour’ as mentioned earlier, the perception can also be seen positively. Justifiably all God's work is ‘glamorous’, thus if the MBH was God's provision, men will be attracted to it. In addition the members were not paid and the community life-style which depended on little finance was a provision that helped evangelisation to reach out beyond expectations.

These are views mainly from cultural perspectives. The MBH has its weaknesses culturally and spiritually, but it's success in the evangelisation of Melanesians has been remarkable.

³³ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 51.

³⁴ Cf. view of Geoff Smith in Chapter Three, 121.

³⁵ From a Melanesian perspective, life vow in the MBH was never an option as it is strongly believed that it would not work effectively for Melanesians. This had been proven through experiences revealed by Melanesians who quitted their life vows. So far the author knows six Melanesian members of the SSF who have quitted their membership from the Society of St. Francis. This is an issue for Melanesians and that the SSF members are asked to seriously consider aspects of the vows before admitting.

iii) Social Services

Education and healthcare are two aspects of ministries under social work. These two ministries were important conversion agents. Let us first look at education. One of the achievements of the Melanesian Mission has been its schools, begun in the missionary boats in 1849.³⁶ This is an implication that education and schools have always been a priority in Christian mission.

In the context of Melanesia, there is a general agreement of the terms used for the different kind of schools. The terms used were 'central', 'district' and 'village.' Whilst their distinctions could be easily determined because of their locality and staffing components, the content of the subjects studied was not always clear.

In the area of healthcare, general literature is limited yet quite adequate from extracts that are available from books, pamphlets, Annual Reports, the *Southern Cross Log*, Church Magazines or Newspapers. Fox gave a short discussion on the healing ministry in chapter eighteen of his *Lord of the Southern Isles* centred around the roles of missionary doctors and nurses. Generally, the roles of Melanesians are barely mentioned, with the exception of the first two Melanesian women nurses.³⁷ Clifford James – the doctor in charge of the hospital between 1936 and the first half of 1940s,³⁸ also wrote, but on the subject of tropical diseases and their prevention and remedies.³⁹ His work was more of a textbook providing instructions and guidelines for medical practitioners and missionaries offering medical services to Melanesians as well as for themselves. For this reason, little was made of the contributions of Melanesians.

Subsequently, it is even more difficult to find literature pertaining to the roles of Melanesians in healthcare. Generally, healthcare is a late comer in Melanesia. Little wonder Ivens, in his *Hints to Melanesia*, stated that "everyone has to be

³⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 11ff.

³⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 252.

³⁸ *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and Other Notes*, January 1936, "Clifford James"

³⁹ Clifford S. James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia: Their Diagnosis, Prevention and Treatment* (Auckland: Institute of Printing & Publishing Society Limited 1957).

his own doctor."⁴⁰ Equivalent to this statement was the call for missionaries to be 'amateur doctors'." Hilliard states: "Medical mission had no place in Melanesia" until in 1929.⁴¹

Hilliard, in his brief contribution stated, the work done by nurses and mothercraft but there is no mention of other workers such as the dressers/orderlies and the working boys. However, there are reports by doctors and nurses such as Maybury and Webster respectively⁴² that provide us with more or less a complete account of the roles of Melanesians in the healthcare. Fox also provides names of the first Melanesian nurses and orderlies, implying a pro-Melanesian attitude as indicated earlier.

One of the general understandings revealed in most of the literature is the fact that the health discussion is written from the medical perspective rather than religion. In this case, miracle accounts of healing are not mentioned except in a few circumstances. One of those who provides such an account was Fox who repeats the words of Clifford James after a night operation, referring to a broken needle that almost went down a patient's throat. "It was only the Providence which looks after the medical missionaries that saved it from going down the windpipe."⁴³

A conclusion that can be made having assessed most literature is that the work carried out by Melanesians was founded on the basis of partnership or community. This partnership was either with missionaries or with fellow Melanesians who applied mission strategies laid down by pioneer missionaries –subjected to changes over time. In all the roles Melanesians played, apart from the MBH, the inculturation process is rarely mentioned. Either consciously or unconsciously, it is within this inculturation process that Melanesians have been able to understand and adapt to Western life. Likewise, missionaries also became more aware of Melanesians culturally and socially thus improving mission strategies. In other words, Melanesians became the instrument that

⁴⁰ W.G. Ivens, *Hints to Missionaries*, 31.

⁴¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 267.

⁴² Maybury, "Fauabu Diary."

⁴³ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 250. See also another account on 253.

bridges the two cultures even only to a very small margin. This nevertheless is evidence that suggests the contribution of Melanesians in developing the whole of humanity – spiritual, mental and physical that has had direct impact on the church.

5. Content Outline

i) Chapter One

The first chapter provides background information regarding the pre-European contact period, beginning with Alvaro de Mendana followed by whalers, traders, planters and missionaries. Secondly it covers the geographical features, exploring briefly the location, tropical vegetation, climate and wildlife. Thirdly, it explores the historical and socio-cultural aspects and the traditional religion⁴⁴ in Melanesia. These were important factors in the determination of mission strategies, initially led by the missionaries and expanded by Melanesians.

ii) Chapter Two

The second chapter examines the historical formation of the Melanesian Mission. The founder was George Augustus Selwyn who was an Englishman educated at Oxford. He was an Oxford Movement member, brought up as a High Churchman.⁴⁵ These factors influenced Selwyn's mission strategies. Besides this, Selwyn was also entrusted by the Church of England to reach out beyond New Zealand, the centre of his mission.⁴⁶

Selwyn's philosophy was the development of the whole of humanity; spiritual, mind and body. This was to be achieved through training and education of Melanesians guided by the principles of "true religion, sound learning and useful industry."⁴⁷ This was the 'native ministry'.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ This refers to Melanesian beliefs pertaining super-beings, power (*mana*) that were part of their social and cultural life.

⁴⁵ Cf. C. E. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 1. Cf. Allan K. Davidson, *Selwyn's Legacy* (Auckland: The College of Saint John the Evangelist, 1993), 7.

⁴⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 1.

⁴⁷ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 30ff.

⁴⁸ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 8. See also E.S. Amstrong, *The History of the Melanesian Mission* (London: Isbister and Company Limited, 1900), 12-13.

Selwyn also adapted other practical strategies in evangelising Melanesia. The first was through the 'Abraham and Lot principle' or the 'comity principle.'⁴⁹ This approach was to allocate a well-defined boundary for each denominational mission to avoid a competitive and divided Christianity. The second approach was the 'external administration' or 'remote control administration.' This was evangelisation from outside given the fact that the people were still very primitive, infectious diseases prevalent and the islands were dangerous.⁵⁰ Thirdly was the cultural non-interference policy seeking non-compelled conversion but at the discretion of the people. These were the bases on which mission was carried out in Melanesia by Selwyn's successors, including Melanesians who became important participants in the mission of the church.

iii) Chapter Three

The third chapter is on the role of the MBH, embedded in the concept of "true religion." It was formed in 1926 by Ini Kopuria, a Melanesian, in consultation with Bishop John Steward. Its organisational structure, leadership and rules that governed its physical life and spiritual life were deeply Melanesian-orientated⁵¹ making it an important Melanesian missiological initiative and identity. Its evangelisation work was through formal and non-formal teaching. The catechism was taught and practised through charity services; a display of true discipleship bringing trust and conversion.

Secondly, is the examination of the MBH deep spirituality believed by many Anglican and non-Anglican Melanesians to be the source of *mana*. It was with *mana* that the MBH successfully counter-attacked sorcery, witchcraft and magic.⁵² The final part of this chapter briefly examines the weaknesses of the MBH. It was from the weaknesses that new changes and new strategies were sought, gaining strength and power for effective evangelisation both in

⁴⁹ Herbert G. Curteis, "A Sketch of the Life of the Right Reverend Augustus Selwyn, Late Bishop of Lichfield, and formerly Bishop and Metropolitan of New Zealand, London and Newcastle."

<http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn/curteis1878/03.html> (accessed May 27, 2010)

See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101, 173-175. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 7.

⁵⁰ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 8.

⁵¹ Macdonald-Milne, *The True way of Service*, 10.

⁵² Cf. Ane Straume, "Medicines of the Past and Present: A Study of Medical Knowledge and Practice in a Solomon Island Village" (Master Thesis University of Bergen, 2009), 84.

Melanesia and beyond. The ministry of the MBH was based on the 'proclamation, witnessing and solidarity' approach in mission.

iv) Chapter Four

The fourth chapter examines the roles played by Melanesian teachers in schools. 'Teachers' in this chapter refers to secular teachers. The first part provides us with the education historical background providing an overview of the different education development stages initially begun on board the ships as they travelled,⁵³ followed by St. John's College (Auckland), St Andrew Mission Bay in 1859,⁵⁴ Norfolk Islands in 1867 and eventually to Melanesia in 1920.

It also provides an overview of the three levels of formal education in Melanesia; the village, district and central schools and how they developed into junior and senior primary schools and secondary schools. However, whatever differences there may be in terms of level and subjects taught, teachers carried out duties through formal teaching, informal teaching and as parental carers. British Solomon Training College (BSTC), established by the Government in 1957⁵⁵ became not only a teachers training centre but the centre of ecumenism, erasing ecclesiastical and doctrinal differences. This was a healthy environment that helped the development of the churches including the Anglicans.

v) Chapter Five

Chapter Five examines the roles of Melanesians in healthcare. The first part is on the Melanesian cultural view of sickness, healing and death and its historical development begun in Auckland and eventually in Melanesia from 1911. Sickness for Melanesians was a spiritual occurrence because of the lack of scientific knowledge. The second part of the chapter is on the specific health roles, namely orderlies/dressers, working boys and nurses. The main role of the orderlies was as caretakers of the hospital and its facilities. At the same

⁵³ See Armstrong, *The History of Melanesia*, 14.

⁵⁴ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 30.

⁵⁵ Chapter Four, section three.

time, they were also trained to provide simple health and medical tasks to the sick.

The second position was the working-boys who were the houseboys, boat crews, tour guides and the garden boys. They were labourers assigned to care for the station infrastructure and lawns, boats, gardens and other manual and physical work required by the hospital. The third position was of the nurses and nurse aids, who contributed to a successful Melanesian healthcare ministry in later years. They became the right hand workers of the doctors and sisters doing nursing and medical work both in hospitals and in villages. While, this did not come easily, by 1941 women or girls broke through the cultural and social prejudices that restricted women from working away from their homes.⁵⁶

With these cultural disadvantages to overcome and the limited education they had, many became successful in the nursing profession - the backbone of the healthcare in Melanesia.

Through these roles, Melanesians participated in the western-style healing ministry that helped to transform Melanesian mentality especially in the many areas in which health sector medicines and therapies proved more effective and powerful than the Melanesian traditional healing processes.⁵⁷ This stimulated conversion for which Melanesians contributed through their roles in the health and medical field.

vi) Chapter Six

Chapter Six examines the industrial undertakings by Melanesians in Taroniara, inspired by the ethos of 'useful industry'. Its aim was to minimise expenses and train Melanesians to become useful tradesmen to build and up-keep mission stations that disseminated educational, health and other services to villages. The industry provided the service of marine engineering, electrical

⁵⁶ Margaret, "The Education Work of the Sisters of the Cross," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, Sept. 1946, 24. Cf. D.C. Horton, *The Happy Isles: A Diary of the Solomons* (London: William Heinmann Ltd, 1965), 104. See also Hugh Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians: A History of the Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), 75.

⁵⁷ Ellen Wilson, *Dr. Welchman of Bugotu* (London: SPCK, 1935). 8.

engineering and boat building. Their role was to up-keep the mission ships and stations. The second industry is construction and carpentry, responsible for the construction and maintenance of mission buildings. The third is the Printing Press responsible for the printing of Melanesian Mission literature. The final part of this chapter examines the roles of seafarers who were described as the lifeline of the mission.⁵⁸ They were responsible for transport and at the same time were catechists, pastors, evangelists and health carers on “floating churches.”⁵⁹

Taroniara can be best summarised as a significant stimulus to church development regardless of whether it was commercially profitable or not.

vii) Chapter Seven

The seventh chapter of this thesis examines the roles of men and women in the village churches. The majority of the Anglican people were rural dwellers. These were the very people who are many times forgotten – their contribution rarely acknowledged yet it is true to say that when we talk about the Church in Melanesia we are actually talking about the churches in the villages.⁶⁰

In view of the above, this chapter examines the Melanesians' roles through their acceptance, allegiance and enthusiasm for the gospel. There were many tests of the Melanesian allegiance to the church, including the difficult time in the WW11.

Secondly, was the provision of resources in terms of labour, land, material and finance. The term resources here refers to the land, the resources of the land and human labour. These resources were fully provided by the local communities for the initial construction of churches, schools and hospitals.

Thirdly, Melanesians were agents of evangelisation and re-evangelisation through the ‘people movements’.⁶¹ The final section of this chapter looks at the gender roles of men and women. This is an important section, not only

⁵⁸ Alfred Thomas Hill, “Bishop’s Farewell,” in *Melanesian Messenger* Easter 1967, 3.

⁵⁹ H.V.C. Reynold, *Southern Cross Log* No. 78, Sept. 1962, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, 77.

⁶⁰ This is applicable to other denominations, which means that the rural people played a very big part in upholding Christianity.

⁶¹ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 42, 43, 60.

because it draws a line of cultural responsibilities between men and women, but also their impacts in the church. This is particularly notable with the women's roles.⁶²

Generally, the Melanesian community was sacramental, displaying their roles in preaching, praying and supporting each other. The sacraments especially in terms of the symbols were very important aspects of Melanesian spirituality. God was absolutely seen in the context of the symbols, rituals and prayers. This makes the sacraments understood and accepted by the church so that it would be an influencing factor for Melanesian communities to become also sacramental in nature.

viii) Chapter Eight

This final chapter attempts to provide a theological reflection on the roles of Melanesians in the development of the Anglican Church in Melanesia that falls under three missiological approaches; 'proclamation, witnessing and solidarity.' The roles consist of the MBH; social services through education and healthcare; community participation and industrial development. These roles are seen as responses under the 'Sending Out' call of the Great Commission in Matt. 28: 19-20. However specific reflection is made on each of the roles based on the appropriate missiological approaches applicable. In addition, each role also was comparatively reflected through scriptural perspectives, taking Jesus as the basis.

In the above context, the MBH is principally reflected against the teaching approaches, loving service and moral living standard of Jesus. In regards to social services, education is reflected comparably with Jesus' educational background and the impact on his mission. Subsequently, health and medical services provided by hospitals and clinics are reflected against the love and compassion of Jesus' healing ministry. Finally is a reflection on human resource development through the ethos of "useful industry" carried out in Taroniara in the 1930s. This area is examined in relation to the work of

⁶² See document on "Evangelism among women." Also M. Inagle, "Correspondence," in *Melanesian Messenger* Dec. 1964, 30.

Jesus as a carpenter. However, 'work' as an expression of faith is brought out so that the teaching heard and taught on Sunday is put into practice from Monday to Saturday.

Chapter One

Solomon Islands Pre-Christian Era

Introduction

This chapter describes the geographical, historical, socio-cultural and socio-religious aspects of the Solomon Islands. The geographical features provide us with background information on the location of the islands and the types of environmental conditions in which the Melanesian Anglican Church undertook evangelisation. The second part of this chapter, on the pre-Christian era history of the islands, is divided into two parts. The first part is on the European arrival and the first European contact. The second part overviews the activities of European whalers, traders, planters and blackbirders believed to be in contact with Melanesians prior to the arrival of missionaries. The third section of the chapter discusses the anthropological and sociological aspects of Melanesians. Finally, the fourth section is on the Melanesian traditional religion. The historical, anthropological, sociological and religious (tradition) discussion provides us with information concerning the European and Melanesian impacts on the process of evangelisation.

1. Geographical features

Stretching in the southeast direction from Bougainville, the Solomon Islands extend some 1667 km, covering 1.3 million sq km of sea and 27,557 sq km of land. Amongst the hundreds of islands, there are six main ones, namely Guadalcanal, Malaita, Makira, Isabel, New Georgia and Choiseul.¹ They are mountainous and thick with tropical forest and fast flowing rivers. The forest unfortunately in the last few decades has been severely over-harvested.

Because of its equatorial location, the climate is tropical. This makes it prone to cyclones during the wet season from January to June. In addition, the weather is extremely humid all year around. Such tropical conditions of the

¹Judith A. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons: A History of a Pacific Archipelago 1800-1978* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987), 1.

islands contribute to the presence of tropical infections and diseases² that had important impact in the early mission of the church.³

The smaller islands are variously scattered but on some of them there are located beautiful lagoons. Sea resources are generally in abundance in these smaller islands.

The recent population data shows a population of 523,000 in 2008. Melanesians make up 93% of the total population living mainly in the bigger islands. The Polynesians make up 4% and occupy the smaller islands. The rest are of other races for which the majority are settling in urban or semi-urban areas.⁴ Eight-four percent of the total population are rural dwellers living a subsistence life.⁵

With regard to religious affiliation, out of the total population more than 33% are Anglicans. Roman Catholics make up 19%, South Sea Evangelicals 17%, United Church 11% and Seven Day Adventists 10%. The others make the remaining portion.⁶ This includes the new Pentecostal Movements that arrived in the 1980s.⁷

2. Pre- Christian History

i) European Arrival and the first European Contacts

Before the arrival of Europeans, Solomon Islands as a nation did not exist. The modern political entity came into existence as a British Protectorate in the 1890s. The creation and the continued existence of these island communities led to tribes/clans that were independently governed. This important social background has affected many areas of development in the Solomon Islands. The Church was no exception to this persisting influence. This however did not

² Clifford S. James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia: Their Diagnosis, Prevention and Treatment* (Institute Printing & Publishing Society Ltd, 1956).

³ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 102.

⁴ Cf. the estimated figure of 597,248 July 2013 <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bp.html>

⁵ Mark Otter, ed. *Solomon Islands: Human Development Report 2002 Volume 1 Main Report, vol. Vol. 1* (Windsor: Mark Otter for the Government of Solomon Islands, 2002), 8.

See <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bp.html>

⁷ See Manfred Ernst, *Winds of Change* (Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1994). This is an account of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement in the Solomon commonly known as the 'breakaway groups' in the 1980s.

mean that the life of the different islands or communities or tribes were static. There was contact between the Melanesian peoples through which they learnt interchangeable social and cultural practices as well as noting their differences.⁸ For this reason, there were social and cultural practices that were similar between tribes, communities or even islands, yet at the same time very distinct differences can still be found.

The first known European to have contacted the islands was Alvaro de Mendana – a Spaniard who led a party of sailors, soldiers, missionaries and negro slaves. In 1567, he set sail from Peru seeking gold and new land with the hope of making new settlements as part of empire expansion.⁹ The inclusion of missionaries echoes an important fact that the expedition was also religiously motivated. Darrell Whiteman argued that the conversion of souls was paramount,¹⁰ implying that religion was as important as other motives.

In 1568, after calling at Lord Howe, Mendana arrived at an island he named Santa Isabel. From Santa Isabel, he sailed to Florida (Gela) and later arrived in Guadalcanal where he discovered gold in the rivers. The discovery of gold in the Guadalcanal river convinced him that there was an immense wealth of gold in the islands. Relating this to the wealth of King Solomon of the Old Testament, he named the islands ‘Solomon’.¹¹

The islands of Ulawa, Ugi, Santa Ana and Santa Catalina in the eastern part of the country were also visited. A visit was also made to the adjacent islands of South Malaita. The Spaniards’ arrival to these places however was met with strong opposition and confrontation, even to the extent of lives taken on both sides. Six difficult months in the Solomons therefore was enough to purge

⁸ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 31. Whiteman said that European contact accelerated change but it is not right to say they were the agents of all change. However, it is right to say that change can only be accelerated if there is an agent.

⁹ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 32-33.

¹⁰ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 32-33.

¹¹ Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 7. D.C Horton was an officer in the colonial government. See also David Holdsworth, *The Solomon Islands* (Port Moresby: Robert Brown and Associates, 1977), 1.

hopes and dreams for a settlement of prosperity and opportunity. The islands proved to be of less value. Mendana and his party left for their home.¹²

As a result, the aftermath reports made about the land and people were very negative. Part of the official view written by Licentiate Juan de Crosco to the king expresses:

In my opinion, according to the report I have received, they were of little importance, although they say that they heard of better land; for in the course of these discoveries they found no specimens of spices, nor of gold and silver, not of merchandise, nor of other sources of profit, . . . The advantage that might be derived from exploring these islands would be to make slaves of the people. . . .¹³

This view was generally accepted by other writers. However, whatever views were there, the Spanish interest on the islands did not vanish. Thirty years later Mendana made a second voyage to the Solomons, only to discover Santa Cruz, many miles farther east from the islands he first discovered. A Spanish colony was then established in a place he named Graciosa Bay. Their willingness in taking the risky return journey to the islands can only be justified by the fact that there were still values and hopes that the islands could provide. By and large, this view is in contrast to the official information sent to the king.¹⁴

Subsequently, the new colony met similar but more serious confrontations than the Santa Isabel and the eastern islands experiences. Both the Santa Cruz and the Spanish lost people in these confrontations. Mendana himself later became ill and died in Santa Cruz. A mutual relationship was far beyond reach, making further efforts for permanent settlement even more difficult. Two months had barely gone before the party packed up and left for the Philippines.¹⁵

¹² Charles E. Fox, *The Story of the Solomons* (Sydney: Pacific Publications, 1975), 7-10.

¹³ Quoted by Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 36.

¹⁴ The Spanish interest may not be in terms of human resources but land. However, if they were good for slaves, they could be good sources of cheap labour.

¹⁵ Arthur, I. Hopkins, *Melanesia To-day: A Study Circle Book* (London: SPCK, 1927), 2.

The experiences were sufficient to convince the Spanish of the inhospitality of the islands and its people. However, the importance of the two expeditions was that the Spanish were able to have first-hand experiences that would enhance better planning for future expeditions. Darrell Whiteman claims that though very little was gained from the first interactions, it was the beginning of an encounter that would deepen hundreds of years later.¹⁶ After this encounter there was no known European explorer until 1767 when there were several arrivals at different times up to 1780s.¹⁷ One of the reasons for the almost two centuries isolation of the islands was probably due to the limited world geographical knowledge during this time. This led to inaccurate records of the latitudinal position of the islands, creating further confusion.¹⁸ From this confusion, later explorers mistakenly believed that the Solomon Islands was either New Guinea or was a new discovery.¹⁹ Further negative reports about the islands and its people after Mendana's second expedition could have also contributed to such a lengthy isolation.²⁰ With new knowledge and mind set, a mixed group of Europeans consisting of explorers, adventurers, optimists and opportunists arrived between 1840 and 1900. This was an important period; amongst the opportunists were the 'black birders'. They were somehow the rivals of the Christian missionaries who happened to be the Anglicans led by George Augustus Selwyn. He was the pioneer and the founder of then, the Missionary Diocese of Melanesia. Selwyn became an important figure in the islands as will be further discussed.

Because of the economic, political and ecclesiastical aspirations of the Western world, Europeans came to the Pacific as whalers, traders, planters, labour recruits and Christian missionaries. Different approaches however were applied in the hope to achieve their goals. There were good and bad, kind and cruel ones but we cannot rule out the fact that the negatives far outweighed the positives. The general relationship was unfortunately based on the 'master/slave relationship.' This was also a relationship found with the

¹⁶ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 36.

¹⁷ Fox, *The Story of the Solomons*, 11.

¹⁸ Douglas L. Oliver, *The Pacific Islands* 3rd edition (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 39.

¹⁹ Andrew Mitchell, *A Fragile Paradise: Nature and Man in the Pacific* (n.p.: Fontona/Collin, 1989/1990), 37-38.

²⁰ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 5.

people least expected like the missionaries. It is important to briefly discuss the interaction between the Melanesians and the first groups of Europeans who came prior to or at the same time as Christian missionaries.

a) Whalers, traders and planters

The common interest of whalers, traders and planters was commerce and trade. Money in the form of currency had not previously been used in the Pacific, but was then just beginning to circulate in the Solomon Islands, although Melanesians already used their own traditional money, either locally or with other islands in Melanesia.²¹ The simple transaction of exchanging goods/property proves the existence of some basic economic knowledge. Even during the Spanish exploration in the second half of 1500s, money in the form of shells, arm bands carved from shells, necklaces from porpoise or dog's teeth and feathers were used.²²

Whalers were amongst the pioneers who came to Melanesia in search of whale oil. This probably was the peak of the whaling era. Prior to this, British whalers had already hunted the Pacific mostly in the Polynesian territories as early as 1776. Melanesia however was probably deliberately left out until as late as 1830s because of its inhospitable environment.²³ Unlike the Polynesians, Melanesians were considered savages; cannibalism was also a rare practice in some parts. However, there could have been some brief contacts especially when they came into land for repairs, fresh water and other provisions. Sexual liaison was therefore likely to be possible.

We can assume that whalers were generally passers-by. The nature of their work demanded long hours in the sea rather than on land. For this reason, their contact with natives would have been very infrequent, thus their influences upon the natives would be expected to have been minimal. At the outset, this was not so. Apart from the exchange of food and goods, whalers were quite popular, but lacked moral discipline. As a result there were cases

²¹Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 58, 94, 105. See also Oliver, *The Pacific Islands* 3rd edition, 155.

²²Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 39, 53.

²³Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*, revised edition n.p.: the American museum of natural history and Doubleday & Company, 1961, 101, 104. See also Fox, *The Story of the Solomons*. 11.

of venereal diseases,²⁴ and other diseases such as dysentery, smallpox and measles.²⁵ This led the natives to erroneously assume that every white man regardless of who they were would behave the same. Having this as a precedent, the missionaries who later arrived in the island of Ulawa were asked if they would like women.²⁶

After the whalers, traders and planters came. Like whalers, they were money-orientated with lacked discipline. Traders were mostly involved in the buying of local products such as copra, beche-de-mer and turtle shell.²⁷ They had ships travelling from one place to another for trading purposes. Local people were employed as crews of the vessels. Such operations demanded responses from local communities and for this reason it was important to establish some kind of relationship with the people. The role of the chiefs became crucial if they were going to have the cooperation of the communities. It was then to this extent that chiefs became agents. The provision of goods and other special favours to chiefs was common practice. This was done to gain the chiefs' favour, a strategy also applied by missionaries with much reluctance. This could be seen as corruption or bribery.²⁸

Planters, on the other hand, were Europeans who acquired big land areas for the establishment of coconut plantations. These plantations required a substantial labour force for maintenance; the harvesting and drying of the nuts were tasks that demanded a lot of physical strength. The natives became adept at these tasks as they were already people with some horticultural understanding.²⁹

²⁴ Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 38, 98-99. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 108.

²⁵ Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 39.

²⁶ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 110. The same situation also happened in Makira, Simbo, Mono with whalers. Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 29.

²⁷ Bennett gave a comprehensive account of the local economy and trades in her book. *Wealth of the Solomons*, 243ff.

²⁸ Geoffrey M. White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," in *Chiefs Today: Traditional Leadership and the Postcolonial State*, ed. Geoffrey White and Lamount Lindstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 229. White refers to Walter Lini in Vanuatu who said that "some people mainly politicians have used culture, customs and custom chiefs for their own aims." The same also applied in Solomon Islands. See also Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 86ff.

²⁹ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 303.

However it was equally important that the success of the plantations was also in the planters' hands. They were required to be physically fit to withstand the harsh tropical climate, environment and diseases. They were required to be mentally and psychologically fit to overcome threats and fears of the violent natives. They had to have some knowledge of ships, engineering, trades, agriculture and carpentry.³⁰ This is where the old saying 'a jack of all trades, master to none' was practically important. The planter who was also at the same time a trader had to therefore fit into this category or at least attempt to.

Generally, stations were established to host the planters and labourers. Living together in the same compound however did not in any way breed positive relationships. The 'master/slave' relationship continued to take its toll. Living conditions in terms of accommodation and wages remained very poor. Discrimination existed in which natives were inferior and even unscrupulously treated. They received meagre wages yet over-charged for goods in the traders' shops. From these observations, the High Commissioner even in the 1930s described the untrustworthiness of Europeans in managing Melanesians. This is supported by one High Commissioner's statement quoted by Hugh Laracy:

The white man who, having failed in all else drifts out to the islands, is often not eradicate from a certain class of white men the idea that a black man belongs a type that is fit to be trusted with authority over natives. . . It is difficult to eradicate from a certain class of white men the idea that the black man belongs to an inferior order of creation, against whom the argument of foul mouthed abuse by feet or fist is obviously reasonable.³¹

C.E. Fox who probably had much more experience of Melanesia because of his long and close association with Melanesians also expressed the same view when he said:

³⁰Cf. Joseph H. Dickinson, *A Trader in the Savage Solomons: A Record of Romance and Adventure* (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1927), 127.

³¹ Hugh Laracy, *Pacific Protest: The Maasina Rule Movement* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific, 1983), 4.

They feel very much being treated as inferiors. The colour feeling is real. The test of colour feelings is whether a man will eat with another or not. That is the Melanesia test. No Government official or trader will allow Melanesians to eat with him or even drink a cup of tea with him, for the sake of British prestige. But that is the Melanesian test.³²

Given that this was an era of dangers and uncertainties it must not be forgotten that traders and planters were constantly under stress of fear and threats. Intimidating, manipulating and being hard was then justified as a way to practically demonstrate their confidence and power. At the same time, it was deliberately meant to suppress and bully the natives. There were of course events and times that were more serious, where lives of natives were taken by the traders or planters.³³

It must also be noted that not every trader or planter was a scoundrel. There were others who were positive in their approach. Austin Coates refers to a trader in the person of John MacDonald who settled in Ugi Island. With his western knowledge, John MacDonald taught the natives many useful things. This trend also applied to other traders who married local women.³⁴

In such circumstances Melanesians were more submissive to their masters. This was a matter reflected probably on the principle of reciprocity. Apart from this reason, there was a strong belief among Melanesians that coveted western goods can only be acquired if there was pacification. Being conscious of this fact, Melanesians to some extent were then expected to be submissive and peaceful. Quite on the same line of thought, Martin Zelenietz said:

This chapter demonstrates that the termination of headhunting in New Georgia could have resulted from native initiative. Headhunting in New Georgia had reached a point where its social and religious benefits were outweighed by economic disadvantages.³⁵

³² Laracy, *Pacific Protest*, 5. Hugh quoted this from Charles E. Fox.

³³ See Laracy, *Pacific Protest*, 12 for accounts of cases of natives killed by Europeans in the 1920s.

³⁴ Austin Coates, *Western Pacific Islands* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1970), 140.

³⁵ Martin Zelenietz, "The End of Headhunting in New Georgia," in *The Pacification of Melanesia*, ed. Margaret Rodman and Matthew Cooper (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 92.

However, natives were not always submissive and peaceful. In circumstances where they could no longer bear the cruelties and injustices imposed on them, the lives of Europeans were also taken. For example, Sam Craig and Frank Howard, both traders, were killed in Makira and Ugi respectively.³⁶ However the arrival of the colonial administration and the establishment of the Police Constabulary improved health. The enforcement of law and order cautioned non-pacifists to be aware of their susceptibility.

In the final analysis, the class of Europeans represented in whalers, traders and planters made Melanesians aware of these facts:

- The superiority of the white man opens up new opportunities in economic, trade and employment for the promotion of social status. Western currency became understood and acceptable as a common and legal tender.³⁷
- Being employed in the plantation or trade stores had given the natives some knowledge and experiences about western kinds of life. As a consequence they were able to make small decisions about their own lives in terms of budgeting, saving and other issues affecting them. Even to the extent of being able to realise the nature of justice or injustice, what was accepted and what was not acceptable. It was from these humble beginnings that the formation of organisations such as the Maasina Rule was possible.³⁸
- The opportunity to learn plantation work i.e the art of planting, maintenance, preparation and drying of nuts. In turn, this was to be a model expecting natives to do the same and becoming industrialists in their own land later.
- The opportunity to be aware of the importance of creating unity and national identity. Their coming together as employees of a particular plantation had helped them to learn how to respect and

³⁶ William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 434.

³⁷ Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 213.

³⁸ Maasina Rule was a movement consisting thousands of Melanesians 'marshalling native enthusiasm'. See Laracy, *Pacific Protest* and Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 250.

accommodate each other, regardless of their differences. In other words, cultural, social and religious boundaries had been broken and a new identity created.

b) Blackbirders

The demand for cheap labour emerged in the sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji in the nineteenth century. This created a new traffic known as 'blackbirding' in the Pacific realm. This refers to "black birders" (mostly Europeans) who sailed the Pacific looking for easy picking, filling their ships with islanders at gunpoint and carrying them to a life of slavery on plantations far from their homelands.³⁹ The initial recruits were Polynesians and Micronesians but later the blackbirders turned to the Melanesian islands in Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The first shipment of some 65 natives from the Loyalty Islands and Vanuatu was in 1847.⁴⁰ The total recruits, both men and women, from the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and Solomon Islands was estimated to be 60,000. Taking into account the deaths on board the ships which were between 40-50% and the unreliable record (which to some extent was deliberate), the number would certainly have been higher.⁴¹

The 'blackbirding' story contains accounts of both reasonable people carrying on a fairly honest trade, and scoundrels. On the better side, there are accounts of natives who gave consent and signed contracts in return for the promise of European goods, opportunities, power and prestige. There is doubt, however, that these contracts were understood, let alone honoured. Worst still, the recruits were illiterate meaning that the contracts were not understood, leading to circumstances little removed from kidnapping.

As Douglas L. Oliver pointed out, there were circumstances when chiefs and families were captured and kept as hostages until able people were recruited. There were also cases where chiefs had given their consent for young people

³⁹ Mitchell, *A Fragile Paradise*, 200.

⁴⁰ Oliver, *The Pacific Islands* 3rd ed, 66. However the recruiting era in the Solomon Islands was between 1870 and 1910. See Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 86.

⁴¹ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 138. See also Oliver, *The Pacific Islands* 3rd ed. 68 who states about 60, 800 Islanders.

to be recruited in return for muskets, ammunition and other goods. An estimated 99% of the recruits were therefore between the age of 16 and 20, consisting of both males and females.⁴² Worse still, there were recruiters who pirated the sea, captured and beheaded men and took them to chiefs in New Georgia to be exchanged for young recruits. Austin Coates says:

One of the more atrocious acts committed in connexion with the trade occurred in the Solomons, where as early as 1867 Britons from Australia took to head-hunting as a means of obtaining labour from New Georgia –particularly valued – where the chiefs were found to be willing to let younger men go in exchange for human heads.⁴³

Austin Coates also stated that villages were rampaged, and recruiters were often very cruel in their behaviour, deliberately provoking natives to avenge recruiters who came after. This however did not only affect later recruiters but also missionaries who were once the natives' allies. Missionaries were not allowed entrance to the village or in the worst cases they were violently attacked. Generally the whole scheme was done through 'forcible abduction; buying them from chiefs and relatives and through deceiving them.'⁴⁴ Characterised by violence, exploitation, dishonesty and controversy, the scheme was nothing better than a 'slave trade.' It was for these reasons that Solomon Islanders termed the ships as 'thief ships' or 'murder ships' and for the Gilbertese a white man was a killer.⁴⁵

Having said this, there were important outcomes both positive and negative that must not go unheeded. As with the traders and planters, the labour trade also contributed to the following:

- Going to a foreign land opened up opportunities for the natives in acquiring new knowledge, experience and tools. Melanesians began to experience a new age - moving from the stone-age to the iron-age that contributed to their life.

⁴² Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade*, 17, 436. Note that four out of the twenty-five recruits on board were women.

⁴³ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 139.

⁴⁴ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 141.

⁴⁵ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 139, 141. See also Oliver, *The Pacific Islands* 3rd ed. 1989, 126-127.

- Some natives were converted to Christianity, and on their return helped the spreading of the gospel or even set up churches.⁴⁶
- There were also people who when repatriated were off-loaded in a place other than their own place, with no guarantee of safety amongst strangers.
- The cruelty and deceiving approaches of the recruiters provoked the natives to seek revenge against Europeans.⁴⁷

With these brief accounts, one can tell that the negatives outweighed the positives. This had always been the general understanding though there were people who justified the trade. This brief discussion is background information for discussion that will come later in this project.

3. The Anthropological and sociological aspects of Melanesian community

The main islands consisting of Guadalcanal, Malaita, San Crustobal, Santa Isabel, New Georgia, and Choiseul, with hundreds of other smaller islands, make up what is now known as the Solomon Islands. It is believed the islands were inhabited for thousands of years by Melanesians. The term "Melanesia" means the 'black islands'. The Melanesians are believed to be of Papuan-speaking ancestry. They are described as short in stature, with stiffly curling black hair and are unsocial outside their little tribal communities.⁴⁸ This very general description of Melanesian features, is not totally accurate, however. Different personal features can be detected in different parts of Melanesia. These differences help determine where a person is from. Darrell Whiteman has stated:

There is tremendous diversity of physical appearance among Melanesians. Skin colour varies from the rich black of the Western Solomons and Bougainville to the light skin of the Trobriand Islanders. Some islanders on Santa Isabel in the Solomon Islands have brown skin and fine blond hair that is not

⁴⁶ Jackson Talofuila was a classic example of repatriates who became the first Melanesian Christian priest in Malaita in the Melanesian Mission. See his audacious story by Arthur I. Hopkins, *From Heathen Boy to Christian Priest* (London: SPCK, 1949).

⁴⁷ The killing of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson was one example of this revenge. See Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 24-25. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 66-67.

⁴⁸ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 3.

frizzy. So there is really no consistent pattern of physical appearance among Melanesians.⁴⁹

Apart from Melanesians, other small islands such as Rennell and Bellona, and other small atoll islands, are inhabited by Polynesians. They are fairer, bigger and often have silky down-falling hair. Their features are usually finer than Melanesians.⁵⁰ Both these races are regarded as the indigenous people in the 800 islands that make up the nation now called Solomon Islands. It is interesting that past observation revealed that these two races rarely mingled together. This is not surprising given the fact of the great distances between islands and that the communication, transportation and other development that would later bring them together were not available. Today the situation is very different.

Solomon Mamaloni, a three times Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, believed that the introduction of different education systems of the different churches was for the “enlightenment of the young native so that he would live in harmony with his fellows. . . .”⁵¹ Ironically, he also predicted that it would be impossible for the Solomon Islands to become a nation: “Solomon Islands or Solomon Islands Community has never been a Nation and will never be a nation and will never become one.”⁵² This is a statement highly sinister in nature that must not be taken lightly.

Given the diverse society and cultures of the islands, Mamaloni's prophecy is grounded in reality. However, one must make comparisons with other development before reaching such a conclusion. It is an injustice to pick on the negative aspects without balancing them with the positive aspects. Retrospective to this thinking is the fact that the Solomon Islands had already

⁴⁹ Darrell Whiteman, “Melanesia: Its People and Cultures” in *Point: Introduction to Melanesian Cultures*, ed. Darrell Whiteman (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1984), 88. Cf. Ian MacNeill, *Sweet Horizon: A History of the Solomon Islands* (Suva and Potts Point: Acland Press and Mieli Press, 2000), 1.

⁵⁰ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 4.

⁵¹ Solomon Mamaloni, “Rural Development Then & Now: Legacy of Colonial Miscalculation,” in *The Road Out: Rural Development in Solomon Islands*, ed. Stephen Oxenham (Suva, Nuku’alofa, Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies and the Institute of Rural Development in association with the Solomon Islands Extension Centre of the University of the South Pacific, 1981), 1.

⁵² Solomon Mamaloni, “The Road to Independence” in *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence: The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Esau Tuza (Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies, USP Honiara Centre and Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, 1992), 10. Whilst the first is true, the second and third part is debatable.

experienced decades of peace and unity, although not great wealth. This came not by chance but through the initiatives, hard work and the co-operation of so many people and organisations, regardless of who they were.

Equally important were the recognition and respect for one another within the different cultures. The 1960s was an era of great pacification when the islands became known as the 'Happy Isles'. It was D.C Horton's perspective about the Solomon Islands that must not be taken lightly. The many positive achievements that improved the life in the islands were the result of peace and unity.⁵³ Various writings and songs of both foreigners and indigenous people were written to this effect.⁵⁴ Based on these experiences there is still hope that the Solomon Islands with its diversified cultures can still be united.

In other words if unity and peace had been achieved and experienced in the past, there is no reason why they cannot be enhanced. Perhaps the strategies used by European missionaries and colonists that brought about peace and unity in Solomon Islands are now either outdated or forgotten. Perhaps Solomon Islanders have also failed in upholding the principles of unity, respect reciprocity and sharing, the very fabric of healthy Melanesian communities, which was further enriched by the arrival of Christianity. This reflected a society of love and concern for each other. It is therefore time again to revisit these and make necessary adjustments to foster a more solid and lasting united Solomon Islands. This is not a struggle in vain but a struggle full of hope and confidence expressed by the Solomon Islands national anthem:

God save our Solomon Islands from shore to shore
 Bless all our people and all our lands
 With your protecting hands
 Joy, peace, progress and prosperity

⁵³Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 190.

⁵⁴Cf. White, *Identity Through History: Living Stories in a Solomon Islands Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 92ff. Also, Titles such as *My Heart's in the Islands* by R.H. Standley and *Married to Melanesia* by Muriel Jones are examples that speak loud about the goodness of Melanesia - people and nature. Comparatively, most Solomon Islanders would hate to experience another ethnic tension as in 1998-2003.

That men should brothers be, make nations see
 Our Solomon Islands, our Solomon Islands
 Our Nation Solomon Islands
 Stands for evermore.⁵⁵

The situation in the Solomon Islands is similar to other nations such as Australia and New Zealand and cities. Compared to other nations or cities that also have diverse cultures because of bigger population coming from different nations, Solomon Islands with its small population can be administered and controlled relatively easily. What is critical is the use of right mechanisms by the right people to promote and stabilize good governance. Only then people would be appreciative and satisfied, creating a healthy environment of unity.

i) Melanesian Culture

'Culture' can be referred to as the different kinds of rules, ideologies, behaviours and practices through which a society or a community is governed and administered. The multiplicity of cultures characterised by diverse languages, practices, beliefs and ideologies therefore make Melanesia a very interesting and unique place. Even if it is further broken down on the basis of region, in the context of the Solomon Islands, the characteristics of culture as mentioned remain fundamental. Again these are influenced by the environments and conditions in which people live. Darrell Whiteman says:

Melanesian people were one with their surroundings, employing the resources of their environment harmoniously with their social and religious concerns. This interweaving of horticulture, religion and social organisation, technology and economics into a unified system in equilibrium is one of the most characteristic features of traditional Melanesian society.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Peter Orudiana, "Facts and Figures," in *Ples Blong Lumi Solomon Islands: The Past Four Thousand Years*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva & Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific in association with the Solomon Islands Extension Centre, The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1989), 160.

⁵⁶ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 56.

However, with time and the unavoidable interactions with external influences, some changes in culture must also be expected. It is therefore the intention of this section to discuss some of the important components of culture in the pre-Christian era. This will help us later relate to the roles of Melanesians in their different capacities in the development of the church. The following aspects are important to this discussion: firstly, the Melanesian traditional community in terms of membership and relationships, structure and organisation, leadership, language and traditional arts; and secondly, the traditional Melanesian religion, including *mana*, forms of spirits and gods and traditional priests.

The diversified culture with the different beliefs, practices, ideologies and languages has disadvantaged Melanesia in many ways; one reason being the complexity of its social organisation, which can be difficult to define. In every society, 'life' was and continues to be of the greatest value, regardless of the extension of its meaning and the ways in which it is embraced. In Melanesia, one of the first and most important means of embracing this 'life' was through the life of the community. Ennio Mantovani provided an explicit explanation regarding this subject:

'Life,' meaning well-being, health, prestige, offspring, good relations etc. seems to be the highest value in traditional Melanesian society. 'Life' was to be found only in the community, so that 'community', became almost synonymous with it and shared its values. By 'community', we mean the group of people necessary for biological, emotional and spiritual survival.⁵⁷

Let us now look briefly at some of the components of the Melanesian traditional community.

a) Membership and Relationship

Melanesian communities were, and still often are, characterised by their smallness within a well-defined location. Within these communities the concept of relationship was fundamental. Members of the community were inter-related through the bond of a nuclear family and extended family. This relationship can also be extended to other communities depending on

⁵⁷ Ennio Mantovani, "The Challenge of Christ to Traditional Marriage," in *Point: An Introduction to Ministry in Melanesia*, ed. Brian Schwarz (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1985), 121.

circumstances.⁵⁸ Both the nuclear and extended family were therefore important, having their own roles to play within the family structure. The welfare of the extended family was as important as the welfare of the nuclear family in terms of social and cultural responsibilities. The extended family was merely an extension of the nuclear family. Under this aspiration, the grandfather, grandmother or father or mother relationship as discussed later was practiced. Beyond this, and because Melanesians were religiously “animists”, the relationship was also extended to include ancestors.⁵⁹

The solidarity and the maintenance of the community then depended very much on its members and the principles governing the community. Illiterate and primitive as they were according to Western standards, Melanesians were always aware of the fact that humanity is synonymous with community. Strong bonds of relationship between the members maintained the strength of communal relationships, governed and strengthened by codes of conduct and behaviour. For example, most communities consisted of extended families for which the terms ‘uncles, aunts, cousins’ were not used. Every uncle or aunt or cousin became a father, mother, brother and sister. There are young people who were not real grandfathers or grandmothers but who through relationship became ‘grandfathers’ or ‘grandmothers’.⁶⁰

This did not avoid all the problems in the community but it certainly strengthened the relationship between the extended families. This was one of the important areas, and one which cannot be avoided in the formulation of social and moral codes that governed rites such as marriages, compensation, funerals and initiations. Apart from these, aspects of homes, families, gender roles and behaviour were part of this web of membership and relationship. The ‘dos’ and ‘do nots’ also can be said to have their bases here. It was through these codes that the life of the village community was governed. These codes undoubtedly were meaningful because they provided for the

⁵⁸ Fox was an incumbent of a relationship between external communities. Fox was a European missionary who became a member of a native tribe in San Cristobal (Makira). See his own account in Charles E. Fox, *Kakamora* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962), 47ff.

⁵⁹ See discussion on the subject ‘Melanesian Traditional Religion’ on the same chapter .

⁶⁰ Fox, *Kakamora*, 47. Cf. also C.E. Fox, *The Threshold of the Pacific: An account of the Social Organisation Magic and Religion of the People of the San Cristoval in the Solomon Islands* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), 46ff.

sharing of emotions, joy, happiness, success, weaknesses and pains amongst members of the whole community.⁶¹

Part of the cultural relationships found in Melanesia was what is now normally known as the 'wantok system.'⁶² The word derives from the English words 'one' and 'talk' meaning 'one language.' Literally this gave everybody the chance to relate to others based on a shared language community rather than blood ties. In other words, relationships that were not created genealogically within the nuclear or extended family were taken care of by the 'wantok system'. Everybody therefore became related to each other as brothers and sisters.⁶³ The same context can also be found in the church.

Whilst the system has met strong opposition especially from Western perspectives, it had its advantages. One of its advantages was that it provided an avenue where the seriousness of love and concern for one another was practically displayed through the principle of 'reciprocity.'⁶⁴ It can be argued that 'reciprocity' is a common practice in many cultures. After all it is also part of human nature. This is a conventional view that often blurs the cultural meaning in the Melanesian context. In other words 'reciprocity' in Melanesian contexts has a special and meaningful place. It meant more than what is normally understood and thus must not be watered down.

Traditional Melanesian society did not enjoy as many social privileges or security as the Western world, let alone in the era prior to the coming of Europeans. Melanesians also knew very well their individual limitations for self-sustenance in the many areas in life. They were aware that they could not

⁶¹Cf. Kenneth McElhanon & Darrell Whiteman, "Kinship: Who is related to Whom," in *Point Introduction to Melanesian Culture*, ed. Darrell L. Whiteman (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Social-Economic Services, 1984), 106-118. This is in the context of Papua New Guinea, also applicable in Solomon Islands.

⁶² McElhanon & Whiteman, "Kinship: Who is related to Whom," 109.

⁶³ McElhanon & Whiteman, "Kinship: Who is related to Whom," 109ff.

⁶⁴ McElhanon & Whiteman, "Kinship: Who is related to Whom," 107-110.

exist as an 'island'. 'Within this context, 'reciprocity' provided a kind of a social security embedded in the 'wantok system.'⁶⁵

A family harvesting a crop would share part of it with other families. A fisherman would share his catch with others. The community would share grief with the one who was in grief, regardless of who he/she was. Everybody was obliged to participate in building a home for the 'other'. Having said this, the 'wantok system' was not limited to basic needs. It catered for the least to the most complex situations. This is where communal life found its strength because everybody was addressing everybody's needs. Life and work of a person was everybody's concern. These practices automatically became part of a person and were expected of every community member.

The Melanesian traditional community can be identified by its structure and organisation. Unfortunately, there have been people who are not convinced of the existence of a structure, or who think that if it existed it was ineffective. Darrell Whiteman points out that "in Melanesia there are no true tribes with a chief as leader of the entire group".⁶⁶ Of course, even if this was anthropologically proved, this is a generalisation, making this theory inappropriate throughout Melanesia.⁶⁷ Besides this there is a general conviction amongst Solomon Islands Melanesians that structural organisation did exist in their pre-Christian communities. On the other hand, others explicitly said that chiefs were found in every village, though their positions and powers were different from village to village or island to island.⁶⁸ In Isabel for instance, Christianity was quickly and extensively accepted because of the chiefly power within the structure. Similar accounts can be heard from other parts of the nation.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ The "Wantok system" and "reciprocity" are not isolated phenomena in Melanesia.

⁶⁶ Whiteman, "Melanesia: Its People and Cultures," 89, 92, 93.

⁶⁷ Mendana's experience in 1567 suggests that he had encountered some form of leadership structure in the form of chiefs. See White, *Identity Through History*, 83-84. See also Montgomery, *Light of Melanesia*, Chapter 2.

⁶⁸ See discussion on the subject 'Chiefs' in Chapter Seven. The proposed delegated power to traditional chiefs to participate fully in the government proceedings was a common consensus of all the islands, implying not only as a re-enactment of the chiefs' traditional roles but also proves its traditional existence.

⁶⁹ White, *Identity Through History*, 92-102. Geoffrey White, uses the term 'chief' on the same understanding by the people of Isabel, to whom he refers.

The structure defined the roles of different people in the community. In this context then specialisations within the community were precisely practised. For example, there were people who were magicians for different tasks, while others were healers, or warriors, or peace negotiators/makers. Accounts of these are contained in mythical stories. However they should not be belittled because they are mythical, for they explicitly express the experiences and activities in the environment from which they came. Some truths in them therefore cannot be denied.

b) Leadership: Chiefs and Elders

For reasons based on different understandings, some observers expressed the non-existence of 'chiefs' within the small unit structures. Darrell Whiteman makes an observation that in Isabel in 1568, the Spanish did not encounter 'chiefs' but rather the 'Big Man'. What seems to be the understanding was that a 'Chief' was one who was an overseer of the entire island, whilst the 'Big Man' was one who was an overseer of separate small politically autonomous units.⁷⁰ But what is unclear is the description of their roles. The assumption is that one can only be a 'chief' if his jurisdiction was the entire island. Of course under this criterion most community leaders within Solomon Islands' separate units would only be entitled to the designation 'bigman' rather than 'chief.' This is inconsistent with some parts of Melanesia. At the same time, it does injustice to the community which respects their chiefs. For them the 'big man' was the 'chief' performing equal functions, only limited by the geographical area in the context where a 'chief' did exist.

Chiefs were often respected and feared because of their *mana*, believed to be inherited from the spirits and passed to them (chiefs) by inheritance or special achievement. Inheritance was passed down through either the mother's or the father's side as both matrilineal and patrilineal systems are practised in Melanesia.⁷¹ Achievement was identified with men who were

⁷⁰ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 37-38.

⁷¹ Malaita and Guadalcanal are patrilineal societies while Isabel, Makira and parts of Western Solomons are matrilineal. These are merely examples.

successful in war and had attained property or possessions.⁷² The daily administration of the village was in the hands of the chiefs. The administration of law and order and the settling of disputes were also his responsibility.

Warfare and peace were importantly identified with the Melanesian communities because of the inter-tribal or inter-island rivalries. These wars had social, cultural and religious values because the consequences reflected not only the status of the community but also its relationship with the other communities, other individuals and spirits. In a nutshell the chief's role was both physical and spiritual; internal and external. In a small way in today's terms, the chief is an overseer in the community and within the church. He is also responsible for relationships within the community and with external bodies.⁷³

The success of chiefs was believed to be closely associated with the spirits. The spirits were expected to be within a chief and therefore his deeds were spiritually inspired. He was then also a religious person. In capacity, chiefs were also mandated to perform religious ceremonies and functions, such as sacrifice offering, worship and rituals.

It is also important to note that delegation of responsibilities was also exercised by chiefs. There were young men who carried out the chief's orders, whatever they may be. He had power and influence over his area of jurisdiction both in terms of population and geographical area. He had the power to fine and punish and even to sentence to death. With these powers behind him, the chiefs were genuinely in a position of great influence. As in Isabel,⁷⁴ so it can be generalized that:

- i) Maintaining cultural practices and customs were the Chief's responsibility.
- ii) The community and people were generally under the Chief's care.

⁷² Melanesian Mission, *Religion and Customs in Melanesia: The Solomon Islands and New Hebrides* (Auckland: Melanesian Mission, n.d.), 8.

⁷³ A classical example of this is the 'paramount chief of Isabel' who is required to have some theological knowledge. One of his main responsibilities expected of him is to teach the people about God and the Church. He is presented with the Bible as a symbol of this responsibility. See White, *Identity Through History*, 226, 229.

⁷⁴ Cf. White, *Identity Through History*, 226, 230, 234, 235.

- iii) The people's land and sea was under the care of the Chief.

Next in the line of responsibilities in the village was the 'elder.' The number of elders would correspond with the number of tribes within the community. They were normally men of good standing and were held in high respect by members of the tribe and also the wider community. Because of their being responsible over individual clans, their power, influence and responsibilities were also limited to a certain degree. The elder's important role however was to be an overseer and spokesperson of the tribe of which he was a member. Disputes and differences were normally reported to him. Properties of the tribe such as land were normally in his custody. He was the defender of his tribe. For the sake of the wider community, he had to work in consultation with the chief. Therefore, generally, there was an informal council consisting of the chief and elders overseeing the affairs of the community. 'Elders' were people expected to be well versed in the knowledge about the community, but more importantly they must be knowledgeable about every aspect of their tribe.

Being made aware of this then, we can understand why traditional chiefs and elders also had important parts in the early life of the church.

c) Languages and Traditional Arts

Melanesians speaks almost 1200 out of the 6000 languages in the world.⁷⁵ Out of these 1,200, more than 80 languages are spoken within the small geographical area of the Solomon Islands.⁷⁶ Language is one of the most powerful forms of communication. The fact that the islands were gifted with so many languages marks a society characterised also by complex cultural, social, political and religious differences. This has been referred to as social and political fragmentation.⁷⁷ The differences in the languages spoken can create suspicion and hatred. These were some of the prevailing norms of a society characterised by cultural, social, political and religious differences, including language. Difficulty in creating and promoting unity and national

⁷⁵ Whiteman, "Melanesia: Its People and Cultures," 89.

⁷⁶ Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 6.

⁷⁷ Whiteman, "Melanesia: Its People and Cultures," 89.

identity is a result of such diversity. The absence of unity and national identity gave high opportunity for tension and conflict. In the era of European contact a uniform language came into existence, though it was heavily criticised by some missionaries. Pijin English helped to ease many differences, making unity and national identity no longer remote possibilities.

Some kind of communication was also expressed through arts, in the form of crafts, drums, stories, songs and dances. The forms of art in many ways reflected life in the islands and was made possible by the environment in which people lived. Stories about religious, social, political, and economic issues were embedded in these different art forms, which were supplementary to the language spoken, expressing many facets of the wholeness of life.

4. Melanesian Traditional Religion

Melanesian religion can be referred to as “animism”, defined as the belief in tangible things or objects said to be possessive of the spirits.⁷⁸ Different tribes have their own beliefs and practices, which cannot be defined systematically. This is further made difficult, because of not only the many languages used but also the difficulty of interpreting words that are unknown in the common language.⁷⁹ However, whatever difficulties there may be, religion for Melanesians embraced both the spiritual and physical world. However if religion was to have purpose then there needed to be aspects of it that were very important. These aspects will be discussed in the next section.

i) Mana

Supernatural power is very much related to the concept of *mana*. Religion had its power which was only meaningful when it was related to the world of

⁷⁸ Melanesian religion as animistic is a controversial issue as some scholars suggest. It is sometimes misunderstood because it is viewed in African terms. See Jones, “Mana from Heaven?,” However, animism was a genuine characteristic of Melanesian religion embraced by prayers, invocations, incantations, symbols and rituals in order to attain *mana*. This helped the transitional process from animism to Christianity. See Tippett, *Solomon Island Christianity*, 269.

⁷⁹ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 116, 117.

spirits. Religious power is believed to be the mechanism enabling humankind to achieve things beyond normal human powers. The fact that the spirits were tangible objects demonstrates the importance of a belief in the power of the seen and the unseen and strengthens the concept that religion embraced both the physical and spiritual world.⁸⁰

According to Codrington, the *mana* expressed was possessed by certain objects; revealed to human by chance and proved by some kind of results. Codrington gives an example of a stone of unique nature, probably in terms of shape found by chance. The stone was then put in a garden to determine its power through the fruits the garden produced.⁸¹ Fox states:

“The Melanesian world is full of magic ...; but they call it ‘mana’. . . . all ‘mana’ comes from spiritual beings. It is not a material thing . . . It can give prosperity, can harm or heal”⁸²

Mana was proved through the process of ‘trial and error.’ If it was not through this process, it would be through someone who had practised such in the past.

There were also myths describing the manner in which *mana* was passed down through direct spiritual interventions rather than accident. The fact that these were myths did not diminish the importance of this channel as they were part of the spiritual realm in which Melanesians lived. In other words, for Melanesians the spiritual world was reflected by their dependence upon the spirits. Earnest allegiance and fears were therefore vitally important. In essence, Melanesians were more spiritual than materialistic. In analysing these in depth, a theory proposed by some learned Melanesians may therefore hold some truth.

. . . Christ was already in Melanesia even before missionaries, like Selwyn and Patteson, arrived there. Missionaries did not

⁸⁰ Darrell Whiteman, “Melanesian Religions: An Overview,” in *Point: An Introduction to Melanesian Religion: A Handbook for Church Workers*, ed. Ennio Mantovani (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1984), 88-89.

⁸¹ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 119.

⁸² Fox, *Kakamora*, 20.

actually bring Christ with them to Melanesia; they went to Melanesia to tell [our ancestors] where Christ is to be found.⁸³

Mana is an abstract concept that we cannot identify physically. However its importance can only be identified by its results believed to eventuate through the mechanisms provided by the culture of the society. The channels could be in the form of sacrificial offerings, worship and prayer.

Reflecting this in the Christian context, Melanesians generally find no difficulty with the theology of *mana* conceived by God and conveyed by the Holy Spirit through the church/people. This can be equivalent to the *mana* conceived by the spirits and conveyed to humanity through tangible objects. In summary, the relationship between man, spirits and certain objects or animals was directly a religious environment in the eyes of Melanesians.

ii) Forms of Spirits/Gods

Supernatural beings were believed to take different forms. Spirits of those of a deceased person were within the spiritual cosmos but in different forms. It is not surprising therefore that people believed ancestors return in the form of other living things such as sharks, birds or snakes.⁸⁴ These became tribal totems which were commonly respected, honoured and worshipped. Their being worshipped and honoured implies the *mana* they possessed, elevating them to a status higher than humankind.⁸⁵ It was only right then that often explanations of the impossibilities, the uncertainties, and the secrets beyond human knowledge and power were sought from the objects which were believed to be spirits.

The different forms of spirits further suggest the existence of a pluralistic spiritual society. Codrington described two kinds of spirits and the importance of differentiating them in their order of status. The first kind was a spirit believed to incarnate from deceased ancestors or relatives who possessed *mana* in their lifetime. The second kind of spirit was believed to originate

⁸³ Hugh B. Boe, "The Melanesians and their Gospel – The Melanesians and their Response" in *The Church of Melanesia 1849-1999 Selwyn Lectures Marking the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Melanesian Mission*, ed. A.K. Davidson (Auckland: The College of St. John the Evangelist, 2000), 113.

⁸⁴ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 126.

⁸⁵ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 120, 123.

elsewhere and not from human sources. This may give the impression that Melanesians were divided into two categories; one believing in the first whilst the other in the second.⁸⁶ However, oral traditions support the simultaneous occurrence of both spirits in one community or tribe. This can be ascertained by the different roles that different spirits played in the life of the society. For example, whilst disembodied spirits of deceased warriors were a source of power for war, spirits that had never been humans could be sources of good harvest or healing, sorcery, witchcraft and so on. The implication here is that in every Melanesian community, both kinds of spirit were equally believed in, so that the idea of one group believing in one kind of spirit while the other believed in the other as suggested by Codrington is a contradiction. Both kinds of spirits existed and were objects of worship, even in one community.

Summing up, Melanesians were polytheists. Their belief was in the pluralistic spiritual cosmos—believing in different spirits through objects for different purposes. This understanding of religion as a means of achieving what was beyond human knowledge has similarities with the Christian principles of an all-powerful God.

iii) Traditional Priests and their role

Oral tradition in Melanesia fully supports the existence of traditional priests in the Melanesian religion. This is supported by scholars such as Tippet.⁸⁷ It is only rational then to say that if there were traditional religions as mentioned earlier then there must be priests or equivalent who were directly responsible for religious affairs. Under their responsibility would be the offering of sacrifices, rites and prayers to the gods who were believed to be ancestral spirits in the form of objects. Sacrifices could be offered in several ways. Normally there were places set aside for this purpose.⁸⁸ The fact that there were specific places did not in any way restrict sacrifices from being offered in other places.⁸⁹ Accordingly, the sacrifices offered were usually in the form of food.

⁸⁶ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 120, 121.

⁸⁷ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 321, 324ff.

⁸⁸ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 41. The Spanish discovered temples in the interior of Isabel for the worship of snakes, toads, lizards and insects.

⁸⁹ Melanesian Mission, *Religion and Customs in Melanesia*, 5.

Pigs were highly valued culturally and religiously thus played an important part in the sacrifice.⁹⁰ Apart from pigs, fish, vegetables, nuts, and mats were also components of the sacrifice.⁹¹ The sacrifice of human heads was not common, but did exist in some islands in Melanesia. Related to sacrifice was the rite of prayer for which the spirits were invoked to provide necessities: success in gardening or fishing and war.⁹²

Songs, gestures, words, charms along with symbols were important components in the process of sacrifice offering or prayer. Prayers could also be informal, and could be said anywhere. In an informal nature, prayers were directed to ancestral spirits for assistance especially in times of danger.⁹³ The assurance of being in communion with the spiritual world was proven by the results of the prayers offered. The seeking of propitiation, reconciliation as well as the offering of appreciation and gratification within the rite of prayer was uncommon.

The consciousness of sacredness and purity through fasting and abstinence was also important. It was a common understanding in some Melanesian traditions that success and failure depended very much on the above. This was one of the reasons why religious functions were masculine, excluding women and children. Sadly in some parts women for some reason were regarded as inferior and thus denied many privileges in Melanesian society. This undoubtedly had some impact on the life of the church then and continues to do so, as we will see later.

In summary, this chapter discusses briefly the pre-Christian era. It begins with a brief geographical background information. It is followed by some historical information on the first European contact beginning with Alvaro de Mendana and his Spanish comrades. Mendana and his party who sounded protocol in many ways were unfortunate because of the very primitive environment they

⁹⁰ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 249ff.

⁹¹ Melanesian Mission, *Religion and Customs in Melanesia*, 5, 10.

⁹² This is related to the discussion of *mana* earlier in this same chapter.

⁹³ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 146ff.

confronted. Mendana's death in the islands was a disincentive to the settlers so they abandoned what was to be a new settlement.

Long after Mendana came the whalers who although they paid only short visits on an irregular basis to Melanesian villages, were reputed to be morally undisciplined. The whalers were quite popular in the islands of Mono and Simbo in the west and Santa Catalina, Sikaiana and Santa Ana in the east. There were trading and social interactions between the whalers and the local people.⁹⁴

Also in the 19th century the slave trade culture to labour the Queensland and Fiji plantations was established in the Pacific. The Melanesian islands became the target in the second half of the 19th century, causing impacts that were difficult to solve. The next group of Europeans were the planters and traders who arrived with new opportunities for employment and trade, though often in very unhealthy conditions.

In the second part of this chapter, I have discussed the people and the islands. Components of this section cover culture in the light of community life – one of the most important aspects of Melanesian traditional life. It was within this component that membership and relationship was based; structure and organisation was encompassed, leadership roles and language were structured. The final part then is about the traditional religion aspect of Melanesia.

This chapter is brief purposely as an important background to provide a fair knowledge of what, why and how events took place in Melanesia in the period covered in this thesis. It is based on these conditions that the next chapter which is the founding of the Melanesian Mission and Bishop George Augustus Selwyn can be understood.

⁹⁴ Bennett, *Wealth of the Pacific*, 25-27, 38.

Chapter Two

The Founding of the Melanesian Mission and George Augustus Selwyn

Introduction

This chapter examines the initial stage of the mission now called the Church of Melanesia. It has five sections. The first section examines some background information of the Church of England and its mission. Section two will discuss some biographical data of Selwyn, in order to understand his relationship with the then New Zealand Church, and his call by the Church of England to evangelise Melanesia. The third section is on the Letters Patent 1841, an important document, informing Selwyn his possible mission field beyond New Zealand. He formulated his mission policies, strongly influenced by these factors together with his obedience and faithfulness to the call. The fourth section highlights Selwyn's major mission strategies of 'external administration,' the 'Abraham and Lot principle,' 'native ministry'¹ and 'inculturation.'² It was through these strategies that he "conquered" Melanesia though at a gradual pace criticised by contemporary missions as well as the colonial administration.² Selwyn believed in various strategies – embraced and executed through what Sarah H. Sohmer refers to as the 'Christianize and civilize' formula.³ This is the same as 'civilizing and evangelizing.'⁴

1. The Church of England and its mission

The era between the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century was important for the Church of England. More than at any previous time, the

¹ See discussion on the 'Native Ministry' below in the same chapter. Also cf. Allan K. Davidson, "Legacy of Robert Henry Codrington," *International Bulletin* Vol.27, No.4 (October 2003): 171-176. After two weeks with George Sarawia - the first Melanesian deacon, Codrington states, "the great fact is that there is now a native missionary among his own countrymen, who can well be trusted to teach them sensibly and according to native ideas."

² Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 134. See also Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 174-197.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9809.doc> (accessed Dec 10 2010)

² Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 235.

³ Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 174.

⁴ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 235.

achievement in terms of mission outside the shores of England was immense. Kenneth Hylson-Smith says:

The contribution of English Christians to the task of worldwide mission bears comparison with what any other nation of comparable size has ever accomplished. It is a remarkable story of initiatives taken, of courage, dedication, persistence, faith, hope and charity.⁵

Mission was further strengthened in the Church of England when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was established in the late 1790s and supported by men of great insight, nerve, boldness and enthusiasm. This was necessary as the 'colonial church'⁶ was no longer financially supported by the State but by the Anglican public. Their mission was now stretched further beyond their own land. The African mission was opened in the 1840s followed by missions in India and China. Being initial, tentative and experimental in nature, these missions were subjected to grave failures and wastage of human life and were thus limited in success. However small the successes were, both Anglo-Catholics or High Churchmen and Evangelicals within the Church became successful models of Christ shining light to parts of the world.⁷ However, it is important to know that they had different modes of beliefs and approaches, even if they were both uniform in their mission object. Their object was to make new conversions for the Anglican Church.

Taking the view of Raoul Allier, Kenneth Hylson-Smith stated that the Evangelicals' mission responsibilities and tasks were in the hands of laity. Conversion was made by preaching which was done on an interpersonal basis. This represents deep conviction regarding the Scriptures that often led to the total neglect of Melanesian traditions. The converts were then brought together in a church for baptism.⁸ Sohmer also stated that the Evangelical mission model was based on home and family visits and meetings.⁹

⁵ Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, Vol. 111 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1998), 277.

⁶This term refers to the Church of England.

⁷Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, 277-281.

⁸Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, 281.

⁹Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 195.

From the outset, the Anglo-Catholics adapted the Catholic tradition in which the mission was in the hands of ordained persons. In most circumstances a piece of land was initially acquired in which a chapel and a home were built. This often became what is normally called the mission station which was subjected to expansion to cater for other activities. The people were then invited to the station to receive Christian instructions until they were ready for baptism. A missionary bishop was often the head of the mission, administrating all the affairs of the Church - spiritual, economic or social. The bishop was also important as the historical connection to the Apostolic Ministry in which all other ministries of the church had their base. These ministries, when come together, represented a community-based mission.¹⁰

It must also be noted that the global mission concept of the Church of England had been learned from the Evangelicals. However, this attracted only a handful whose commitment, dedication, fidelity and love for the Gospel were immeasurable. It was from the energy of these very few that the extension of mission work was made to India, parts of Africa, Asia and New Zealand.¹¹ It was from New Zealand that the Anglican tradition was established in Melanesia, as we will later see.

i) The Anglo-Catholic and the Oxford Movement:

The Melanesian Mission is based on the Anglo-Catholic tradition in the Church of England; a by-product of the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century. The term Anglo-Catholic refers to the 'middle ground position' where the Oxford Movement attempted to position the post-reformation Church based on Richard Hooker's triadic principle of the scriptures, traditions and reason.¹² In other words, the movement was trying to bridge a gap between the Roman Catholic tradition and the Protestant position. This was done through

¹⁰ Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 195.

¹¹ Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, 281-282.

¹² Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Vol. 2 The Reformation to the Present Day* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), 271-272.

the recognition and restoration of some of the values and practices of the pre-reformation Church.¹³

Missionaries who came to Melanesia such as Selwyn, Patteson and Codrington were High Churchmen which closely associated them with the Oxford Movement. Consequently, their mission strategies were highly influenced by such association. In saying this, it must also be borne in mind that there were issues that were not agreed upon by both traditions, as will be shown.

Let us first look briefly at the concepts of the High Anglican Church. The High Anglican Mission in England was importantly characterised by a strong mutual relationship between the State and the Church developed after the Reformation. The term 'high' was used from 1688 by Anglicans who wished to remain Catholics but not affiliated to Rome.¹⁴ However, Kenneth Hylson-Smith has pointed out the few strands of the High Church tradition that advocated their own 'church principles and reformed Catholicism', each claiming to be true heirs of the Catholic tradition. These movements were only united through their common support or membership of organisations such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Society for Propagation of the Gospel and the National Society.¹⁵ The Oxford Movement however was not part of this as its goal was for the transformation of aspects of the old High Church. The differences between concepts of the 'high church' however did not matter in the context of Melanesia. The sacramental nature emphasized by the different 'high churches concept was compatible with the sacramental nature of the Melanesian traditional religion.¹⁶

For some centuries, one of the important services of the Church was the provision of education. This was a service monopolised by the Church,

¹³ See also David Vunagi, "Liturgical Spirituality under the Southern Cross: A study of the Impact of the Anglo-Catholic tradition on the Anglican Church of Melanesia" (Master's Thesis, Vancouver School of Theology, 1998), 97.

¹⁴ Vunagi, "Liturgical Spirituality under the Southern Cross," 90.

¹⁵ Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, 75. Some of the strands in the High Church were the 'High and Dry'; the Zs and the Club of Nobody's Friends. The Club of Nobody's Friends derived its leadership from the old High Church.

¹⁶ See further discussion on the sacramental relationship between the church and traditional religion on 247-249.

catering for all education requirements from schools to universities. This was not only socially important but also religiously important. It gave the Church the privilege of enforcing its religious curriculum as part of the whole educational curriculum. Oxford and Cambridge Universities also continued to impose religious tests, demanding all graduates to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. It is no wonder that the Church was resourced by high intellectuals who were also at the same time its apologists. Monopolised education for schools and universities ceased respectively in 1850 and 1871.¹⁷

Because of the wish of the Anglican Church to remain within the Catholic tradition, it maintained its belief in the Apostolic Succession and the threefold ministry of the Church. With these, the use of rationalism and secular knowledge were also important in that they enhanced the interpretation of traditions and events in the history of the Church. Liturgical and worship ritual and symbolic traditions were formulated to be compatible with the Scriptures. This included the use of vestments, incense and sign of the cross. The doctrines relating to the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist and Baptism, were vitally important in this regard.¹⁸

The High Church Anglican mission of the nineteenth century was complex, embracing two ideologies that did not always complement each other. These two ideologies were the expansion of both Christianity and Civilisation, both geared toward the 'redemption of the whole human.' The Church saw this as important but did not always attract religious enthusiasts except for a very small number of university graduates. It contrasted to the evangelical mission strategy of 'revivalism and conversion experience,' whilst the High Church Anglican mission strategy was based on 'determined Christianity.'¹⁹

All along, the Church had enjoyed political support. The Church became an established legal entity empowered by acts of State. Under this circumstance

¹⁷ J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* 2nd ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black 1967), 371. 374. See also Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 11 1833-1998*, 59-60 stating the importance of the two universities Oxford and Cambridge in relation to ordinands.

¹⁸ John Macquarie, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (London: SCM Press Ltd 1997), 56ff, 101ff.

¹⁹ Cf. discussion by Sara H. Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals: The Intellectual Background of the Melanesian Mission of the Church of England 1850-1914" (PhD Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1988). 35, 48, 115, 116, 117. <http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/sohmer1988/doc> (accessed April 24, 2010).

the Church was duty-bound to provide social cohesion through perpetuating moral living and works of benevolence or charity.²⁰ This was reinforced as membership of the Parliament mainly consisted of churchmen who devoted a good deal of their time to ecclesiastical matters. An example of this was the Church Discipline Act of 1840 that aimed at maintaining orthodoxy and obliged clergy to 'assent and consent' to the Book of Common Prayer and subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church.²¹ This legal backing gave reason for the Church to be optimistic.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century England society and the Church also enjoyed prosperity. Many clergy were members of industrialist families, giving them extra income and privileges. However, there were Utilitarians and Darwinians who were in opposition to the seemingly assured position of the Church.²² This was now the era of rationalism and new knowledge that often challenged aspects of religion.

Whilst the Utilitarians believed that progress had been hindered by religion, questions related to the creation story and other scriptural narratives pertaining to the historical Jesus came under criticism by people influenced by Darwin's theories. The involvement of theologians and university professors supporting these views bred further confusion and chaos among people as they continued to search for truth.²³ By then not only the process of transformation within the High Anglican Church become inevitable, but there also arose the need for archaeological study.

At the same time, in the 1830s the Oxford Movement whose members were called Tractarians emerged with its particular focus on seeking the transformation of the Church. This was a crucial era for the Church as it came under severe scrutiny by intellectuals within the Church. The State/Church

²⁰ E.R. Norman, *A Historical Study: Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 15.

²¹ See Cross, F.L. ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 289. The Act empowered the bishops to ensure that the right rituals and doctrines of the Church were adhered to.

²² Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* 2nd ed. 383- 384.

²³ Norman, *A Historical Study: Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 378-79.

relationship was one of the important issues in the belief that the Church had been corrupted by that relationship.

In more specific terms, the Oxford Movement emerged as a result of the following:

- Its proponents believed the state was an agent of secularism and liberalism influencing secular and corrupt practices within the Church.²⁴
- In the 1820s and 1830s political expediency demanded a call for constitutional reform. Examples of these constitutional reforms were the repeal of the Test and Corporative Acts and the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829.²⁵
- The movement believed in the concept of justification by faith allied with good works. This sacramental approach gave prominence to morality and the common good as well as justification by faith.²⁶
- To advocate the distinction between the order and authority of the Church with that of the State.
- There was disagreement with the concept of total authority of the Scriptures as this led to deviation from historical traditions.
- The aim to fight against irreverence and sacrilegious activities introduced by reformers in the sixteenth century.²⁷

Subsequently, the aim of the movement was to recognise some of the values and practices of the pre-reformation church as compatible with and expressive of the triadic principles of Scriptures, tradition and reason. To some extent, the movement attempted to locate itself in the 'middle ground position.' This became known as the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

ii) The Impacts on George A. Selwyn

Having discussed briefly the background of the High Anglican Church and the Oxford movement in which Selwyn was reared, we then can explain to a

²⁴ Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 141ff.

²⁵ Norman, *A Historical Study: Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 71.

²⁶ Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 142ff.

²⁷ Vunagi, "Liturgical Spirituality under the Southern Cross," 94.

certain extent how and why Selwyn used such strategies in his mission.²⁸ Let us now look at this briefly, while later discussions on the actual events and practices of Selwyn's policies will further enlighten these.

- a) Being a High Churchman implied being also Anglo-Catholic in tradition. Selwyn's mission strategies were therefore heavily Catholic in nature. Unlike the Evangelicals whose mission depended very much on lay persons, his mission comprised mostly ordained men with the bishop as the leader, he himself in this context. This reflects the Church's deep conviction of the traditional doctrine of the Apostolic Ministry. This process speaks loudly of Selwyn's Christian conviction and faith in the Church's traditions. Apart from tradition, the scriptures and reason also played major roles in his mission approach.
- b) Based on the Catholic tradition, Selwyn actually established a central place hosting a chapel and school where pre-converts were invited to attend. The central place was the place of training and assessment.²⁹ Baptism and confirmation then later followed in the central place. Baptism and confirmation were not easily attained.³⁰ This was in contrast to the Evangelicals who went out preaching, teaching on a one to one basis and only called together in a church after satisfactorily acquiring the requirements which often took shorter periods of time.
- c) Based on Catholic tradition, Selwyn believed in the 'redemption of the whole humanity'³¹ which relates to the theological concept of 'justification by faith through good work.' Under this concept, Selwyn developed three principles as guidelines: True Religion, Sound Learning and Useful Industry.³² Along with this, and being traditionalist to some extent, his wish was for converts to remain Melanesians. Non-interference with the traditions and cultures of

²⁸ Allan K. Davidson, *Selwyn's Legacy*, 7ff.

²⁹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 9.

³⁰ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 38.

³¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 2.

³² See later discussion in the same chapter. However more detail discussion are in Chapters 3 to 7.

Melanesians was therefore part of his mission policy, of course allowing changes to take place at the discretion and pace of Melanesians themselves.³³

- d) Selwyn as a High Churchman, educated at Oxford and being from the upper class could not have avoided being very English or pro-English. This seemed a silent voice in Selwyn's mind regarding the excellence of England and of course of the transformed Church. Selwyn took with him the same mind-frame into Melanesia. Supporting this was the use of the Common Prayer Book and his intention of English language as the official language in the Church. Additionally the mission monopoly under the 'comity agreement'³⁴ in Melanesia was a reflection of these views.
- e) Selwyn was very conscious of the deaths and difficulties experienced by both the Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical missions in mission areas in other parts of the world. He found almost equal or worse circumstances in Melanesia that convinced him that European missionaries would meet the same fate. This influenced his policy regarding the "remote control"³⁵ system applied in Melanesia in which he established the Melanesian Mission headquarters in New Zealand. Selwyn did not wish to tread the same path other missionaries had taken. The Melanesian Mission was now to operate under a new method under the banner of 'experiment.'³⁶ The experiment however was one that involved strenuous and very careful planning.

³³ See Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6. The concepts of 'Melanesians to be teachers of Melanesians' and 'Native Ministry' support this idea.

³⁴ See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101, 173-175. See discussion on the 'Abraham and Lot Principle' below in the same chapter two.

³⁵ Refer to discussion on 'External Administration' later in the same chapter two. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 33-34, 39ff.

³⁶ See article of Allan K. Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment' The Founding of the Melanesian Mission," in *The Church of Melanesia 1849-1999: 1999 Selwyn Lectures Marking the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Melanesian Mission*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Auckland: The College of St. John the Evangelist, 2000).

2. The biography of George Augustus Selwyn

Selwyn was born on April 5, 1809 in Hampstead in England. He was the second son amongst four boys and two girls. He was a first-rate scholar educated at Eton and St. John's College Cambridge. Apart from being a scholar, he was a talented sports person taking part in the first boat race against Oxford in 1829.³⁷

Selwyn was made deacon and ordained priest in 1833 and 1834 respectively. His appointment as the first Bishop of New Zealand came in 1841 while he served as curate in Windsor. Arriving in New Zealand in 1842, he set to work. His first sermon on the shores of New Zealand was in Maori, proving his linguistic skill.³⁸ His first seven years were concentrated on establishing the Church in New Zealand, making constant visits both to the North and the South Islands, yet at the back of his mind was a vision for a Melanesian Church.

Selwyn was a visionary and one who put visions into practice. Bishop Baddeley once said that he was a lion-hearted person³⁹ yet he was tender and loving to those under his custody. He was very conscious of the welfare of the Melanesians he took with him to Auckland. He was truly a father and one whose knowledge and insights were always sought in the difficult times. He led not only by words but also by action. He was a gifted courageous sailor, manning the tiny 20 ton *Undine* in the vast and often dangerous Pacific Ocean – with islands a thousand miles apart without charts.⁴⁰

He was an optimist always expecting the good out of negativities, especially towards Melanesians. Selwyn was confident of the “intellectual power and moral earnestness” of Melanesians in contrast to the views of some of his successors.⁴¹ He was a man who listened and took on advice that was

³⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles* 1.

³⁸ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 2, 3.

³⁹ Walter H. Baddeley, “A Broadcast: Adelaide, S. Australia by the Bishop of Melanesia (1945),” Sydney: Melanesian Mission, http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/baddeley_broadcast1945.html (accessed Nov 25, 2008).

⁴⁰ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 4.

⁴¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 10.

appropriate to his mission activities. With these gifts behind him and after seven years of preparation by the establishment of a mission headquarters in New Zealand, Selwyn was now prepared to take on a new challenge. He set out to conquer and evangelise the most “savage and primitive” area of Melanesia, an environment that was not only new and very different from his but also one that was highly hazardous and potentially fatal. Subsequently, New Zealand became the very centre from which the gospel reached out to Melanesia through Selwyn's methods that will be further discussed.⁴²

Selwyn was a man faithful to God, faithful to the Church, faithful to the State and to the people whom he was called to evangelize. He was a man who took seriously his sense of duty towards the love of God and the love of neighbour. Being a very energetic and a practical person, he was always prepared to take risks for the sake of the gospel. He was not a man who wasted opportunities even if those opportunities were surrounded by hazards.⁴³ His love of and faith in his God and the gospel had driven him to go beyond his comfort zones. His desperation to see freedom for Melanesians from the oppression of whalers and traders gave him the courage to enter the islands.⁴⁴ He was genuinely a vibrant missionary with great confidence in his vocation as the custodian and witness of the gospel to the islands where it was still largely unknown.⁴⁵ He was a man with energy, always striving to achieve results even under very difficult circumstances. These attributes made Selwyn a man of his time, probably ahead of most of his contemporaries.

Selwyn on the other hand was very aware of the foreseeable risks. Apart from the perils of the land and the sea, he was also aware of the possibility of reprisal by Melanesians who were not always treated well by some European traders. Because of this and even with his intense personality, he was always very careful in his approaches with Melanesians. In other words, Selwyn though conscious of his responsibility as the custodian of the gospel, was at the same time equally conscious of the need for safety. Martyrdom of course

⁴² Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 3.

⁴³ Cf. Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 127.

⁴⁴ Cf. Armstrong, *The History of Melanesian Mission*, 6.

⁴⁵ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 3.

has its theological relevance and justification only to a point where all safety avenues are probably exhausted and death is inevitable. In other words, martyrdom is not a result of a death through carelessness. Selwyn himself said, "The Crown of Martyrdom was never granted by the Primitive Church to those who needlessly exposed themselves to death."⁴⁶ Fox explicitly stated:

His sense of duty may have been his chief characteristic, but he was loving, and lovable, patient and tender, abounding in rich humour, but unwilling to wound. He could rebuke an angry chief, nurse a baby, sail a ship, over-awe savage Melanesians and win the love of children. Though very brave and ever ready to take risks, he was also wise and cautious.⁴⁷

Captain Erskine of the *Havannah* as it passed Selwyn's tiny *Undine* somewhere in the Pacific Ocean wrote:

At 5 p.m. we weighed, admiring, as we passed and waved our adieu to the *Undine*, the commanding figure of the truly gallant Bishop of New Zealand, as he stood steering his own little vessel, surrounded by the black heads of his disciples.⁴⁸

This statement reflects two views:

First it reflects an attitude of a great and brave missionary travelling in a vast ocean inhabited by strange, primitive and savage people whose customs and culture involved some of the most barbaric practices such as headhunting, tribal wars and cannibalism. This part of the Pacific was almost a 'no go zone' so that it would seemingly be unimaginable to see Selwyn in such situation. This would bring about very emotional feelings of sympathy. Even some years later some Europeans were killed and those who continued to stay on were still very unsafe.⁴⁹ Selwyn being one of the first European pioneers therefore was vulnerable. The situation was made worse by the fact that there were already European predecessors who had treated Melanesians with cruelty and dishonesty, creating resentment and bitterness

⁴⁶ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6.

⁴⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 1-2.

⁴⁸ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6. See also Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 128. Cf. Armstrong, *The History of the Melanesian Mission*, 13 & 14.

⁴⁹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles* 6. See also Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 49.

on the part of Melanesians. After all, revenge as a reason justifying killing and cannibalism were important aspects of the Melanesian culture and religion.

Secondly, being surrounded by the 'black savages' indicated Selwyn's deep benevolence, which attracted Melanesians. Coates says: "Selwyn had a truly remarkable capacity for treating the most dark-minded cannibal on terms of complete equality."⁵⁰ Those who witnessed him and his mission felt for him because his strategies were embedded in none other than love and peace.

Selwyn was a man loved and admired by Melanesians and so was often a welcomed friend in the islands. His position and title as the Bishop became known to people and was sometimes unfortunately abused by foreigners as a "passport and security" into the islands.⁵¹ This of course created difficulties and dangers for the mission as those involved were people whose reputations were not always favourable.

Apart from these gifts and talents, Selwyn was a British subject, educated and brought up in the life and culture of that nation. The culture in which he was brought up, the education he underwent and the spirituality he embraced of course had played a major part in influencing and shaping his beliefs and faith. Selwyn was a high churchman but at the same time was influential in gaining even the favour of the evangelicals. His influence even went further than the boundary of the church. After all, the relationship between the church and the state was closely intertwined.⁵² These were later to be the bases in which the strengths and the weaknesses of his mission strategies were to be rooted. But more than this, his aim was to lay the foundation of the mission in the islands for successive bishops and others who would come after him.⁵³ Compelled by this conviction, Selwyn was equally concerned for the physical well-being of the mission that would very much depend on a sound

⁵⁰ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 128.

⁵¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 12.

⁵² His relationship with James Paddon, a sandalwood trader in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), George Gray, Governor of New Zealand and William Martin, the Chief Justice of New Zealand, reflect such relationships. See Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 5, 13.

⁵³ Cf. I.C. Campbell, *A History of the Pacific Islands* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1989), 119.

financial foundation. Spirituality and physical well-being had to progress alongside each other.

Selwyn wrote:

If God should enable me before my death to lay out the ground plan of a great design, though in an incomplete state, I should die in faith that succeeding bishops would not refuse to add each his course of stone to the rising edifice, in which all individual pride of foundership would be lost.⁵⁴

3. Letters Patent 1841

For seven years Selwyn's ministry was mainly in New Zealand among the Maori and the European settlers, involving much travelling both on land and sea. Given that it was a new mission field, the work was difficult and exhausting, with many challenges from both the new European settlers' community and the indigenous Maori community.⁵⁵ Besides this, Selwyn was still passionate about venturing further into Melanesia - a new and hostile territory.

Based on the 14th Oct. 1841 Letters Patent, Selwyn's episcopacy in the newly created see of New Zealand was mistakenly defined. The northern boundary of this see was at 34 degrees 30 minutes north instead of south.⁵⁶ Inclusively what was known as Melanesia comprising of the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands were within this see. Later, the Mandated Territory of New Guinea became part of Melanesian Mission from 1930.⁵⁷ It remained part of the Melanesian Mission until it was taken over by the Province of Queensland, Australia in 1949.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 4.

⁵⁵ Two examples of the challenges would be: i) the involvement of Selwyn in the war between the European settlers and the indigenous Maori, ii) Land issues that even involved missionaries. See Allan K. Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment,' 18. Cf. Allan K. Davidson and Peter J. Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity: Documents illustrating Aspects of New Zealand Church History* (Palmerston North: Department of History, Massey University, 1995), 115ff.

⁵⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 1.

⁵⁷ David Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission: The Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea 1891-1942* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1977), 56. Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, xiii. Melanesia of course extends beyond the mission boundary known in this context for which Fiji is part of.

⁵⁸ Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission*, 76. Michael Blain in collaboration with Terry Brown, "Historical Notes on the Diocese of Melanesia and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea (1885-1949)." From Project Canterbury, <http://anglicanhistory.org> (accessed Jan 2009).

The latitudinal error mentioned earlier was taken theologically as being divinely orientated. Archbishop Temple wrote:

Behind it all is God in His eternal sovereignty and that the events of our life must be regarded as 'passing episodes' against the background of His eternal purpose.⁵⁹

Parallel to this is also the scriptural narrative such as the story of Joseph being sold by his brothers for which Joseph affirms his being sold as God's plan. Even more significant was the Passion of Jesus in order that humankind can be saved. These simply point us to the many things that God allows to happen in order to bring about blessings.

Associated with the Letters Patent was the commission by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, to Selwyn to extend mission work beyond New Zealand. Howley said:

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.⁶⁰

This was a great commission entrusted to Selwyn not only by the Archbishop but equally by the whole Church of England. Subsequently this was therefore not an ordinary call as he was shouldering the aspirations and hopes of the whole Church. But at the heart of this was the commission of Jesus Christ through the gospels: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."⁶¹ This of course was not an easy call but Selwyn with his unique gifts and qualities was rightly chosen among many. Much therefore was expected of Selwyn both from the church and the people of England.

By this time, and for his love for the gospel, Selwyn was ready to reach out beyond the New Zealand shores. The foreseen and unforeseen circumstances

⁵⁹ W.H. Baddeley, "Behind it all is God," Australian Board of Missions, *The Melanesian Mission in War-Time: The Bishop's Report for 1942*.

<http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/baddeley/report1942.html> (accessed Nov. 25, 2008). See also *Southern Cross Log*, Vol.49 No 3 July 1943, "The Bishop's Report 1942", 29.

⁶⁰ Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 15.

⁶¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 7.

and uncertainties did not deter him. With his commanding personality and with a strong desire for spiritual adventures and endeavours, he embarked to fulfil his commission. Supported by his qualities of seamanship and courage, he set sail for Melanesia.

The second important command given to Selwyn was “to lay the foundation of civilised society in New Zealand, on the basis of an Apostolic Church, and pure religion.”⁶² This is again merely an extension of Howley’s commission as seen earlier seeking two things.

Firstly, this was a call demanding the development of the whole being – spiritual, physical and mental. The understanding was that conversion to Christianity would be meaningless if tribes and communities remain fragmented and bred violence. The mission would be a failure if it was unable to improve and raise the living standard of the people. The gospel would not be wholly preached if it was unable to establish educational institutions. It would be pointless to preach the gospel to people whilst they were enslaved by ill-health because of the unavailability of hospitals, medical staff and drugs. There could be no mission if it could not be prophetic about the evils and injustice of the ‘blackbirding’ scheme.⁶³ These were but only a few of the ideas justifying the call for human wholeness. Coates puts it rightly when he said: “On that day, in that little schooner, and in the person of that man, came civilisation.”⁶⁴ Thus, whatever the post-Selwyn Church and its people enjoyed in terms of Christianity and civilisation was to prove the fruits of his labour.

Secondly, this was an extension of earlier nineteenth century events and ideologies seeking the transformation of the English Church.⁶⁵ Apart from this, though the call may specifically have been meant for the Church’s mission in

⁶² Davidson, “An ‘Interesting Experiment’,” 15.

⁶³ This refers to the labour trade in the Pacific, particularly men taken from Melanesia for the sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji during the last quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Dickinson, *A Trader in the Savage Solomons*, 48. Dickinson stated “. . . black-birders engaged in the labour trade, whose crews had been little better than pirates.”

⁶⁴ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 126.

⁶⁵ See earlier discussion implicating Selwyn’s being pro-England and its Church.

New Zealand, Selwyn equally applied his convictions in Melanesia. Melanesia was always in his mind because it was a very important mission territory for him. He was passionate about it to the extent that there was no doubt in his mind that Melanesia was to be evangelised under the same principles but with different approaches. In doing so, however, Selwyn made some adjustments through his radical approaches that he refers to as “an interesting experiment,” a term mentioned earlier. By examining more deeply these approaches we would be in a better position to understand Selwyn's missionary strategies, which are presented in the next section.

4. Selwyn's Mission Strategies and their background

Selwyn adapted several strategies as beacons for his missionary work in Melanesia.

i) External Administration

One of Selwyn's missionary strategies was the external administration of the mission. Tippett refers to this as the 'colonial base' in which the administration of the new mission was exercised by a kind of a 'remote control' system.⁶⁶ Selwyn took much pride in this strategy when he referred to his diocese in his own words: “to make my diocese (referring to New Zealand) a great missionary centre of the Southern Ocean.”⁶⁷ The implication here was that the Church in New Zealand was to be fully responsible for the evangelisation of Melanesia through the provision of human resources, land,⁶⁸ infrastructure, material, equipment, finance and other supplements. This of course imposed extra demand on the New Zealand Church which was still in its infancy and so limited in its own resources. However, this was an experimental strategy and was subject to exploration and scrutiny.

Nonetheless, Selwyn must be highly commended for his vision, sacrifice and influence that generated resources enabling the sustenance and growth of the mission. Subsequently the Melanesian Mission was expectedly slow in progress, but was never stagnant. The commitment and support of the New

⁶⁶ Tippett, *Solomon Island Christianity*, 33-34, 39ff.

⁶⁷ Davidson, “An ‘Interesting Experiment’,” 21.

⁶⁸ Selwyn bought land for the Church in Melanesia. See *Melanesian Bishopric: General Mission Trust*, Copy of Conveyance No. 159316. It is known today as the Melanesian Trust Board.

Zealand, Australian and the English Church through the stature and influence of Selwyn was the factor behind this.⁶⁹

There were several important reasons for enacting this policy of external administration:

Firstly, there are so many islands scattered many miles apart that it was impossible to have European missionaries on every island. There were just not enough missionaries in the entire Church. Selwyn believed: "England cannot furnish Ministers sufficient for the whole world: it follows therefore a native ministry must be the appointed way in which the world is to be evangelised."⁷⁰

Secondly, the existence of many different languages and customs made it unfeasible for Europeans to permanently reside there at that point of time. It was not possible to effectively learn so many languages in order to teach the people in their own languages.⁷¹

Thirdly, the hostility of the climate, diseases and the people made it less attractive for Europeans to reside in Melanesia.⁷² Other missionary fields in China and India were more attractive.⁷³

Interestingly, the Melanesian Mission headquarters was never permanent. For more than seventy years it was transferred from one location to another in the attempt to find a place most suitable for both the European staff and the Melanesian scholars. Locating the headquarters in Melanesia at this stage was an idea still in the future. Even those who came after as custodians of the mission were in agreement with Selwyn. Codrington later said:

⁶⁹ See Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 7, an example of Australian assistance in the supply of a ship, the *Border Maid*. Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific were British colonies and therefore had strong traditional links with England in terms of social and economic, politic and religious policies. The religious cooperation between them was therefore part of the whole strategy aimed at political, social, economic and religious achievements.

⁷⁰ John H. Evans, *Churchman Militant: Bishop George Augustus Selwyn* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1964), 125.

⁷¹ Robert H. Codrington, "Lecture on the Melanesian Mission together with the Report and Accounts of the Mission," 3 (delivered at Nelson, September 25, 1863). See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 102.

⁷² See statement by Fox for further elaboration on the difficulties faced by missionary sisters on p199 FN 100 of this thesis. Also p 77 in the same thesis discusses some of the difficulties. The same difficulties were also faced by all missionaries.

⁷³ Codrington, "Lecture on the Melanesian Mission together with the Report and Accounts of the Mission," 2. See also Montgomery, *The Light of Melanesia*, 8.

The system of the Melanesian Mission, as at presently conducted, is not therefore one of which we have to say that it is a good or wise one - it is the only one possible under the circumstances. It may be that what is necessary in this case would also under other circumstances be the wisest and best.⁷⁴

The “Interesting Experiment” therefore was applicable to the situation but at the same time was to some extent a policy that was essentially based on the already known circumstances.⁷⁵ Associated with this, was the view of Ellison L. Pogo who mentioned something regarding training centres: “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.”⁷⁶

Selwyn’s ‘external administration’ policy was in place for seventy-three years from 1847 to 1920. It began in St. John’s College and moved to St. Andrews Mission Bay, Kohimarama and then eventually to Norfolk Island. These centres were everything to the mission including being the centre of religion, education, industry and administrations. Let us examine these centres and what they offered to the Melanesian Mission.

a) St. John’s College

The Central School at St. John’s in Auckland in New Zealand was the first formal location that administered the affairs of the mission from 1849 to 1859. This was important for the initial development stage of the mission. The college was more than just being a religious and educational institution. Christian stewardship by sacrificing a portion of time for useful industry for the college was a general rule observed. Works of Charity were exercised and new young arrivals were made to feel at home. In addition, it was a centre where healing and caring ministry for the sick, the aged and the poor was practised.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Codrington, “Lecture on the Melanesian Mission together with the Report and Accounts of the Mission,” 2. See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 102.

⁷⁵ See previous discussion in the same chapter.

⁷⁶ Ellison L. Pogo, “Ministry and Mission in Melanesia: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” in *The Church of Melanesia 1849-1999: 1999 Selwyn Lectures Marking the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Melanesian Mission*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Auckland: The College of St John the Evangelist, 2000), 90.

⁷⁷ Evans, *Churchman Militant*, 101.

It was here that the Melanesians received the second stage of formal teaching on Christian principles embedded in Anglican tradition and those mentioned above. As in most cases, the initial stages in Melanesia itself often were subject to many misconceptions and confusions. Under this circumstance, there were Melanesians who became matured Christian believers whilst there were also others whose Christian beliefs were not deeply rooted. The Christian spirituality was a new religion that taught new concepts of God, different in many ways from their Melanesian religion. It was therefore not always easy to convert Melanesians overnight. Despite this, there were positive outcomes in which baptisms and conversions of the first Melanesians took place.

It was from this Central School that Melanesians had their second formal taste of Western civilisation, an experience so strange yet very attractive. As mentioned earlier, the Melanesians saw Europeans as spirits and therefore divinely superior, enhanced further by the material wealth they possessed.⁷⁸ Melanesians therefore were obliged to be in allegiance with the Europeans in order to be provided with similar wealth. Likewise in the islands, Europeans, both traders and missionaries, had been lavishly bestowing goods in order to attract or gain the favour of Melanesians. This may be ethically inappropriate and may not have been a practice at St. John's College but the fact that they were better clothed, better sheltered and better fed was to a certain extent not only a taste of Western civilisation but also indirectly a means of conversion. Better still the motive behind this was considered appropriate as it was for a good cause.

Evangelisation therefore was meant to convert Melanesians to the Christian faith with a broad programme of religious, social, economic and political knowledge and experiences. These were to be inculcated through formal training and education made available at St. John's College.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ George Sarawia, *They came to my Island: The Beginnings of the Mission in the Banks Islands* (Siota: St. Peter's College, BSIP, n.d.) 1.

⁷⁹ This is based on the conviction that Melanesians would have had their first taste of Christian and civilisation experiences on board the vessels while travelling. This was a common practice making the vessels the prototype of St. Johns Central School. See Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 17.

Other than this, the very high moral and ethical standards of practical Christian living by Selwyn and his staff became models, thus greatly contributing to the spiritual, social and physical growth and well-being of Melanesians.

In this context, the Central School therefore was the very centre of Christianity and Western civilisation complementing each other in the course of evangelisation. This informs us that Christianity and Civilisation were therefore considered closely inter-related, more particularly in the sense that civilisation is an ingredient of evangelism – a process seen as necessary for the expansion of Christianity.⁸⁰

It is not surprising then, with the immense range of invaluable gifts and experiences offered by St. John's College that the birth of the Melanesian Mission was to take place on this very site. The date was October 1st 1849 when the first five Melanesians made their maiden voyage to this 'holy ground'⁸¹ - an important date because it marks a memorable legacy in Melanesia.

b) Mission Bay, Kohimarama

After eight years at St. John's College the mission administration was moved to Mission Bay in Kohimarama in 1857. The new location was only a couple of miles down the south shores of Auckland Bay. The reason given for the move was that St. John's, being located on a hill, was prone to excessive winds and cold that Melanesians found miserable.⁸² Whether there were other genuine reasons for moving the Melanesians to Mission Bay is not exactly known. However, it should be noted that the new location in Mission Bay was still very cold for Melanesians.⁸³ In other words, Mission Bay's weather and environment was still more or less equal to St. John's College.

The advantage of the relocation however could have been for several reasons. Firstly, the separation of Melanesians from the Pakehas and the Maori would provide a learning environment in which Melanesians would be able to

⁸⁰Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 159.

⁸¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6-7. Further discussion on this will be made later.

⁸² Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 121. Melanesians were newcomers, joining Maori and Europeans.

⁸³ This was the same reason for its reallocation to Norfolk Islands which was appropriate.

learn at their own pace. Melanesians would no longer be required to be dragged into the pace of the Pakeha and Maori scholars who were more experienced and educated. Secondly, the new environment would give more opportunity to discuss issues affecting Melanesians and broach possible solutions most suitable for Melanesia. In this way, Melanesians had their own space to live and learn tolerance of their differences in terms of cultures, beliefs, languages and practices. Finally, it gave more time for the Melanesian Mission staff to concentrate on instructing and teaching Melanesians. At the same time, it increasingly strengthened relationship between missionaries and Melanesians.

In view of these considerations, the change in location was appropriate. A new Melanesian community was established on foreign soil yet their identity as Melanesians was still susceptible. However it was the beginning of a formal contextualisation of foreign ideologies and a foretaste of the future reality of the church in Melanesia. It can be argued therefore, that the birth of the Melanesian Church officially began at Mission Bay rather than at St. John's College.

However, at the outset there were also disadvantages in the change of location. Firstly, Melanesians would miss the experiences that could otherwise have been gained from European and Maori colleagues. After all, being with fellow school colleagues is not always the same as being with teachers. Secondly, eight years was long enough to be grounded in the programs and activities of St. John's College. The transfer was therefore a new start, repeating the process of the past eight years. In Mission Bay, Melanesians again had to adapt to the new environment. Worse still, two serious consecutive dysentery outbreaks in 1863 and 1864 claimed some Melanesian lives. Melanesians were highly susceptible to common influenzas because of their poor immunity in such a climate. By then the idea of relocating the centre was further considered.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 121. See also Montgomery, *Light of Melanesia*, 5. He recorded six deaths in Auckland. See also John C. Patteson, *Report of the Melanesian Mission 1 July 1862- 31 Dec 1863*.

c) Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island was chosen and became the new mission headquarters in 1867.⁸⁵ By then, Bishop Patteson was in charge but the mission was still under Selwyn's strategy of 'external administration.' The importance of Norfolk Island over the previous locations in New Zealand was due to the following:

- The weather was sub-tropical and warm. It was both more suitable for European missionaries and staff avoiding rapid exhaustion and burn out and Melanesians, who could also easily adapt to the climate and environment.⁸⁶
- It would lessen the pressure of culture-shock that Melanesians had experienced in New Zealand. Less time for adaptation thus provided more time for concentrated studies and learning.
- It was closer to Melanesia, thus less expensive in terms of travelling. At the same time, it was still accessible to New Zealand where most of the provisions came from, therefore enabling maintenance of a paternalistic-like responsibility. In this manner, the presence of the Melanesian Mission was an important form of identity for the church in New Zealand. This was a bonus for New Zealand – it was globally missiologically recognised.
- Staff could concentrate more on the work for the Melanesian Mission rather than taking on 'extra-curricular' duties as experienced whilst in New Zealand.⁸⁷ At the same time, Europeans gained a foretaste of what would be expected in Melanesia and thus help them in decision making for the future of Melanesia.

However, Selwyn's 'external administration' policy was unfortunately still a form of detachment from reality. Melanesia-in-Norfolk Island was still a foreign and artificial concept, vulnerable to spiritual, physical and mental

⁸⁵ "Norfolk Island: Correspondence between His Excellency Sir W. Denison, K.C.B. Governor of Australia and the Bishop of New Zealand" Auckland, St. John's College.

<http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn/denison1857.html> (accessed June 7 2010).

⁸⁶ Frances Awdry, "In the Isles of the Sea: The Story of Fifty Years in Melanesia," London, Bemrose & Sons, Limited, 4, Snow Hill, E.C.; and Derby, 1902.

<http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/awdry/1902/> (accessed Nov.19 2008).

⁸⁷ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 122.

repercussions. Secondly, it was an expensive policy as it involved travelling between the islands and the mission headquarters. Thirdly, funds seemed wasted in the building infrastructure⁸⁸ in parts other than Melanesia. Under these circumstances, the process of spiritual conversion seemed to be given very little attention. In the final analysis, Selwyn seemed almost ignorant of the impact and repercussions that his policy created. This was further enhanced by the meagre achievement during the first seventy years. Many people saw it as a failure.

However, there is a good reason not to be sceptical of Selwyn's unique intellectual and wise judgment in adopting this policy. Selwyn intentionally wanted a slow conversion by successive generations. Clearly stated in his sermon in 1861 at the consecration of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson Selwyn said:

The great commission "Go ye unto the world and preach the gospel to every creature" God neither gave immortality to the apostles, nor a sudden spirit of conversion to the world. It is seen then to be the will of God, that the fulfilment of prophecy, and of our Lord's Commandment shall be a gradual work, to be carried on by successive generations of Christian Ministry.⁸⁹

The merits and justification of this policy under question can be recognised by analysing the reasons and thoughts that warranted its initial formation, together with external ecclesiastical events, both achievements and weaknesses at the time. Presumably, the absence of this process compelled some only to see the failures rather than the successes. In other words, the designer of the policy had a different perspective, based on the conditions and events of his time, from those who assessed it some decades later. It is possible that Selwyn could have overestimated the conditions when the policy was made, only, to be seen as a failure by commentators some years

⁸⁸ Infrastructures tied very much with social and economic services such as health, training and education; also regarding agriculture, livestock and plantations.

⁸⁹ George Augustus Selwyn, "Sermon Preached at the Consecration of the Rev. John Coleridge Patteson, M.A., Auckland Feb.24, 1861," http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn,patteson_consecration1861.html (accessed 7/06/2010).

later. Later observers have underestimated the conditions and pressures experienced by the designer of the policy.

Putting it succinctly, the policy was designed to recognise and respect human life in the course of the mission, taking every possible measure available at that time to avoid untimely death and disease.

ii) The Abraham and Lot Principle

The second mission strategy of Selwyn was based on what he termed as “the Abraham and Lot principle.” It was a policy restricting intrusion into areas already occupied by other missionaries of other denominations.⁹⁰ He believed that land boundaries had already been demarcated by God and that each church had already been appointed responsibility for each area.⁹¹ It was hoped that this strategy would avoid competition and dividing Christianity with doctrinal differences.⁹² Mikaele Paunga described the division between the Methodists and the Catholics in Tonga: “Yes, division and chaos had landed under the banner of the Cross.”⁹³ Such differences could create not only confusion but also could further enhance differences already existing between islands groups or communities. This became not only an issue of theory or hypothesis but one that Selwyn believed would never bring about co-operation between the different missions because of the different ecclesiastical ideologies and convictions.

Davidson has taken the following statement from Turker's *Memoir*, as an example in which he said ‘the popery of their system, in spreading the name of Wesley and the authority of the Conference over their whole mission field’ would make communion with the Methodists impossible.⁹⁴ This is merely one

⁹⁰ Herbert G. Curteis, “A Sketch of the Life of the Right Reverend George Augustus Selwyn, Late Bishop of Lichfield, and Formerly Bishop and Metropolitan of New Zealand,” London and Newcastle.

<http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn/curteis1878/03.html> (accessed May 27, 2010).

⁹¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 7.

⁹² Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6. Cf. Lacey, *Marists and Melanesians*, 75, 161. Lacey's discussion was mainly for the northern Solomons but also applicable to Solomon Islands to some extent..

⁹³ Cf. also Mikaele Paunga, “The Clash of Culture: French, English, Catholic and Oceanic Cultures Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” in *Catholic Beginnings in Oceania: Marist Missionary Perspectives*, ed. Alois Greiler (Hindmarsh: Australasian Theological Forum Ltd (ATF), 2009), 173-174. Cf. also Gerard Hall, “Marist Approaches to Mission: Then and Now” in *Catholic Beginnings in Oceania: Marist Missionary Perspectives*, ed. Alois Greiler (Hindmarsh: Australasian Theological Forum Ltd (ATF), 2009), 201.

⁹⁴ Davidson, “An ‘Interesting Experiment’,” 35.

example of a particular Mission's ideologies and conviction that were non-universal. Other Missions like those of the Anglicans and Roman Catholics also had imposed their theology and practices that would be even more hazardous to Christian unity. This is nothing less than showing self-righteousness and pride as it allows the spirit of superiority over other sister denominations.

Whilst this situation was often veiled by silence and pretence amongst missionaries, the attitudes, relationships and the sense of spiritual competition amongst the people or their congregations were always obvious. This generally implicates the church as an instrument of disunity in contrast to its message and model of love, peace and unity. There have been circumstances of course where communities and families had heated arguments regarding church or denominational affiliations. This was not only an issue of the first three-quarters of the 19th century but one that became more critical and uncontrolled in the last quarter of the century with the arrival of the Pentecostal Churches. This was essentially the issue that Selwyn envisaged when he formulated the 'Abraham and Lot Principle' that became also known as the 'comity agreement.'⁹⁵

Being committed to this policy, Selwyn avoided the Polynesian group of islands which were already evangelised by the London Missionary Society, the Methodists and the Roman Catholics.⁹⁶ Fiji likewise was also skipped because of the presence of Methodists. Further north in the New Hebrides, Selwyn also skipped the southern islands as they were already occupied by the London Missionary Society and the Presbyterians. Selwyn therefore moved further to the northern part of the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands which were still unoccupied.⁹⁷

Apart from the above, this policy aimed to provide opportunities for the different denominations to concentrate mission work in a particular area. This

⁹⁵ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 34. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6. The Southern part of New Hebrides (Vanuatu) were evangelised by the Presbyterians. The Northern part including the whole Solomon Islands was still at large unconverted.

⁹⁶ Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 18.

⁹⁷ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 7-8. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101. See also Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 34ff.

not only made intensive mission work possible but also effective. Pastoral caring, teaching, instruction and other forms of development could be achieved with lesser cost in terms of finance and energy. Follow-up work which was a critical requirement for new converts could be made easier and lighter. After all, mission work at this stage depended heavily on shipping which was an expensive investment. Subsequently the quest here pointed to the equal importance of achieving both quantity and quality to avoid fragile and ineffective mission outcomes.

However, given the fact that Selwyn was a high Churchman, conservative and traditional in nature, there could be room for speculation about the genuineness of this policy. The question of being merely possessive, protective or jealous for the sake of proselytism and Anglican imperialism could be raised against him. After all Selwyn himself entered Melanesia after Bishop Epalle – a Marist missionary who arrived in San Cristobal in 1845.⁹⁸ However, this is a hypothesis that can only be understood on the basis of the following.

- This strategy could have been decided upon or could have been in Selwyn's mind prior to his first visit in 1847.⁹⁹ The policy could probably have been decided upon prior to Bishop Epalle's visit in Dec. 1845. At this stage, it could then be merely a proposition that Selwyn thought could have avoided ecclesiastical differences leading to disunity. The presence of different denominations would bring about the concept and model of a separate God, a separate Christ and a separate Spirit in contrast to the universal understanding of the One true God in Trinity.
- Even if Selwyn's possessiveness, protectiveness or jealousy were disguised under the 'comity principle,' his commitment to his policy remained real, evidenced by his avoidance of the Polynesian Islands, Fiji and the southern parts of the then New Hebrides. Evident too, was

⁹⁸ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 131. In December 1845, a French Mission led by Bishop Jean-Baptist Epalle arrived in San Cristobal but then he was killed in Isabel. The Marists returned to San Cristobal where three others were also killed and one died. The rest were afflicted by malaria and so the mission was abandoned in 1852. At this stage it was only the very beginning so that very little spiritual and infrastructure development could have been achieved.

See also Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 17ff.

⁹⁹ This was his first visit to what was to be the Melanesian Mission but in a capacity as a naval instructor on the *H.M.S Dido*. His first trip as a missionary was then made in 1849 on his little schooner the *Undine*.

the fact that his 'comity policy' was not an obstacle to his cordial interaction as well as creating personal relationships with other missionaries with whom he came in contact.¹⁰⁰ Selwyn on his return trip even brought a wooden house on board to be presented to the Presbyterian Minister in the New Hebrides.¹⁰¹ These actions speak loudly of Selwyn's genuineness in his strong commitment to the real reasons for such a policy rather than the hypothesis of possessiveness, or protectiveness or jealousy. With the arrival of the Methodists in the beginning of the 1900s, an understanding based on the policy was made so that the Melanesian Mission withdrew itself from the Western Solomons giving way for the Methodists.¹⁰²

- Though Bishop Epalle's establishment made sound progress in the beginning, it was shattered some months later. With eight priests and four brothers the mission proved inadequate. Further hindrances came from their strongest opponents the hostile natives who took the lives of eight missionaries while relationships between the missionaries and the natives continued deteriorating. Diseases such as dysentery and malaria also became prominent killers, taking the lives of others. All these mishaps were grave threats to the remaining missionaries. They had no option but to leave by 1852 and did not return until 1898, some forty-six years later.¹⁰³ By the time Selwyn travelled to the Solomon Islands in his second trip in Oct. 1851, the remaining members of the late Bishop Epalle's team were already on the verge of leaving. Selwyn by this era was then the lone missionary which gives justification for his monopolised mission activities in Melanesia.

However, even if the above hypotheses are unconvincing, the policy was not legislated, making it toothless. For this reason, Selwyn was not ignorant about

¹⁰⁰ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 127. Coates states, ". . . Selwyn was one of the first and most influential proponents of modern ecumenism." See also Davidson "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 35.

¹⁰¹ Curteis, "A Sketch of the Life of the Right Reverend George Augustus Selwyn, Late Bishop of Lichfield, and Formerly Bishop and Metropolitan of New Zealand," London and Newcastle, <http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn/curteis1878/03.html> (accessed May 27, 2010).

¹⁰² Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 37, 54-55. Note that the Roman Catholic Church however did not consider themselves as being part of the comity agreement.

¹⁰³ Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 19, 20, 21, 32. See also John Wear Burton, *The Call of the Pacific* (London: Charles H. Kelly, n.d.), 193.

its future vulnerability. It is probable that this policy was merely a general guideline, tentative in nature but vitally important in the initial stage. After all, the long term successful growth of Christianity depended very much on the initial input. In reality, Selwyn was merely proposing this policy for the sake of Christianity's future in Melanesia. As he wrote:

It is of little consequence whether these babes in Christ have been nourished by their true mother, or by other faithful nurses, provided that they are fed by the sincere milk of the Word.¹⁰⁴

This is a statement affirming the flexibility of Selwyn's policy and his willingness to cooperate with other sister missions. However, to what extent this can be substantiated is a matter under question especially when the Melanesian Mission referred to the Methodists and Seven Day Adventist as theologically 'impure strains.'¹⁰⁵ It is assumed that even if this was in the mind of Selwyn, it only became obvious in the post-Selwyn era.

Having said this and despite the logic behind this policy, there were also weaknesses that must be noted. These could have been also the result of putting too much confidence in the 'comity principle':

- i) Whilst religious competition was avoided, it failed to motivate the mission to vigorously address the spiritual need of the people. Much complacency was generated by the monopolised nature of the situation resulting from the policy of the mission. The mission conversion rate was therefore very slow but this was not regarded as an issue. After some sixty years in 1910, it has only 8,500 baptised converts.¹⁰⁶ But "God is never in a hurry" was the slogan of the day implying the belief that mission work should produce quality and lasting results.¹⁰⁷ Patteson states: "To follow Christian teaching out in detail, to carry it out from the school into the hut . . . to get the men

¹⁰⁴ Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 35. Davison quoted from Turker, *Memoir*.

¹⁰⁵ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Burton, *The Call of the Pacific*, 197. Cf. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 185 that states 14,125 as baptised Christians up to the same year.

¹⁰⁷ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 79-116. See also David Hilliard's paper on the "Death of Bishop Patteson: Its background and Effects" n.p. n.d., 1. See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 149.

really to abandon old ways from a sense of responsibility and duty and love to God, this of course comes very slowly . . ."¹⁰⁸

- ii) The absence of competition also did not motivate the mission to establish itself within the shores of Melanesia. This meant that much concentration both on spiritual and physical well-being was merely centred on a prototype or copied Melanesia in Norfolk Island. The church in its tangible nature was not seen in Melanesia. Other services that should have been incorporated in the evangelization strategies were either lacking or slow in coming, thus further undermining the 'redemption of the whole humanity' principle.

Consequently, this policy later became to be seen as outdated and so it lost its purpose. The Colonial Administration came in 1893 and saw the small progress of the Melanesian Mission. In dismay, it gave an open invitation encouraging other mission agencies into the islands.¹⁰⁹ It is interesting that the fault was exclusively laid against the Melanesian Mission forgetting also other possible issues to be considered. Coates states,

. . . in the Solomons the Mission's progress was slower, due principally to the people's experience of European traders and crooks of one kind or another. As the Mission's report noted of San Cristobal in 1879: "No one can be more friendly than the natives are all along the San Cristobal coast, but that is all. They have seen much of the white man and do not want his religion."¹¹⁰

Anglican monopoly of proselytism and imperialism in Melanesia was therefore no longer relevant as the Catholics returned in 1898. Four years later the Methodists arrived in 1902, followed by the South Sea Evangelical Mission in 1904 and the Seven Day Adventists in 1912.¹¹¹ The arrival of the different denominations of course led to the relaxation of the 'comity agreement'. There had been no serious estrangement amongst the different missionary groups even though there had been some restrictions made intentionally by

¹⁰⁸ Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 102. A statement from Yonge.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 133 -134.

¹¹⁰ Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, 222-223.

¹¹¹ Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 36. See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 174. See also Burton, *The Call of the Pacific*, 196 mentions the arrival of Methodists also in 1902.

each denomination to keep converts faithful.¹¹² Later in 1967, an ecumenism was formed – an important development achieved in the 20th century.¹¹³

iii) Native Ministry

The third strategy of Selwyn was 'native ministry' as briefly discussed earlier. Others also termed this 'native agent.'¹¹⁴ This policy simply points to what in today's language can be termed as 'contextual indigenisation' whereby the Church was to remain local in form but Catholic in faith. Selwyn believed that it was impossible to have sufficient missionaries for evangelisation rather the world can only be evangelised through the 'native ministry.'¹¹⁵

The Church was to adopt a 'native ministry' in terms of its organisational, evangelisation and liturgical functions embedded in the scriptures and tradition, but at the same time compatible with Melanesian ways of life and culture. The heart of this ministry was a call seeking full participation of the Melanesians in every aspect of life for the building up of God's church in Melanesia. For this policy to achieve its purpose, firstly, Melanesians had to be trained and educated. Secondly, was the allowance for the inculturation/indigenisation process within the church. These were the two important guidelines that would navigate the 'native ministry' policy if it was to achieve its goal. They were to be complementary to each other. Apart from these as the main guiding principles, other subordinate functions of course were required for the success of the policy.

a) Education and Training

Selwyn was influenced and encouraged by Paddon, a sandalwood trader in the New Hebrides. Paddon was one of the few traders who was good in character and had a cordial relationship with the natives, gaining their

¹¹²Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 75. Here is an example where converts in the Catholic Church were strongly discouraged to marry a Protestant than a pagan.

¹¹³ "Solomon Island Christian Association (SICA)."

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regios/pacific/solon> (Accessed Oct. 12 20011)

Cf. also, Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 276. Brian Macdonald-Milne states that SICA was established in 1966. Brian Macdonald-Milne was its first secretary.

¹¹⁴ Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment'," 14.

¹¹⁵ Evans, *Churchman Militant*, 125.

support.¹¹⁶ Paddon's success was based on what he termed: "By kindness and fair dealing I have traded with these people for many years. I never cheated them, I never treated them badly, we thoroughly understand each other."¹¹⁷

Having been convinced by this, Selwyn was now confident that he too could establish cordial relation and gain Melanesian support not exactly in the same way as Paddon but through formal and informal education and training. Whiteman termed this 'Intercultural Understanding.' It implied formal and informal training, accompanied by practical and positive demonstration of the missionaries' behaviour towards Melanesians. This was an important strategy that could convince Melanesians of the better life that Christianity could offer than their traditional religions.¹¹⁸

Training and education, however, were to be undertaken also under the external administration policy, given the fact that it was still impossible to set up schools in Melanesia. The aim was to train Melanesians who would then return to be teachers of their own people.¹¹⁹ This was to be the method in which the Melanesian Mission was expected to extend and grow. Sohmer stated the view of Patteson to this regard as:

He (Patteson) was never certain a European missionary could bridge the gap in communication. An indigenous clergy was another matter. George Sarawia, the first ordained Melanesian clergy, had, in Patteson's view, a decided advantage, based not just on language ability, but on his mastery of such cultural subtleties as the language of gesture and expression.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101. See also Campbell, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 107.

¹¹⁷ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101. However there is also a negative picture of Paddon. Cf. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 152. Whiteman refers to the private journals of John Geddie who was the Presbyterian missionary in Aneiteum.

¹¹⁸ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101.

¹¹⁹ Margaret Lycett, *Brothers: The Story of the Native Brotherhood of Melanesia*, (London: SPCK, 1935), 1. See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 101.

¹²⁰ Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 189.

Alfred Penny a missionary from 1875 to 1886 and Comins who was also a missionary from 1877 to 1912 supported this policy. Comins referred to this as 'an army of native teachers'.¹²¹

In 1844, a central school, established in Auckland, was known as St. John's College. This as we have seen, was to be a very important cornerstone for Melanesians and the Melanesian Church. Initially Europeans and Maori were educated and trained here only to be joined later by the Melanesians. The first five Melanesians arrived in 1849.¹²² This was the first form of human resource development for Melanesia that would later have an important impact, not only in the ecclesiastical sense but also in the social, economic and political arenas.

Selwyn as a former Eton student was driven by Etonian principles so that education and training were to be based on the slogan 'true religion, sound learning and useful industry'. This slogan aimed at 'the redemption of the whole human'¹²³ spiritually, mentally and physically. This was the 19th century social gospel that not only became relevant in the parts of the world already Christianised but more so in the pagan world like Melanesia.

Putting this into context, Melanesians were basically religious pragmatists and will follow a religion that responds or works. Their daily livelihood and worldview were enveloped and sustained by spiritual beings. This was particularly so given the fact that knowledge of modern science was very limited amongst Melanesians. Anything beyond their limited knowledge could only be explained though inadequately, by their pagan spiritual worldview.

The policy of the 'redemption of the whole human' was therefore very appropriate for Melanesians in the attempt to overcome pantheistic beliefs and at the same time teach them the limits of secularism. This was a matter of finding the right balance between spiritual, physical and intellectual needs for a complete human development. Being completely developed, as Selwyn said, enhanced Melanesians being clothed in a right mind, free from the devil

¹²¹ Sohmer, "Christianity without Civilization," 188.

¹²² Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 1, 6-7.

¹²³ See discussion on the subject within this chapter and those that follows.

and sitting at the feet of Jesus.¹²⁴ They would become believers and followers of Christ with the right kind of knowledge, wisdom and attitudes that would help to develop the resources to create a better life style in terms of safe and healthy homes, communities, environments and personal wellbeing.¹²⁵ This was a concept that was meaningful in depth, very much entrenched in the statement of the Church of England's, Missionary Council of the Church Assembly that David Hilliard quotes:

. . . 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.¹²⁶

These aspirations were to be the bases of the mission training to appropriately meet the short term and long term development plans of the mission. It must be borne in mind that "true religion, sound learning and useful industry" were strategic concepts within Selwyn's education and training curriculum. They were concepts that complemented each other purposely to prepare and equip Melanesians to be teachers of their own people. An extended vision to this concept was for converted communities to become also converting agents for other communities. Tippett termed this as the "Melanesian Antioch".¹²⁷

However, this strategy did not always achieve its purpose to the full. There were Melanesians who took the opportunity to attain European goods. They had seen the wealth of Europeans through the goods they possessed and so convincingly thought that they would inherit such wealth if they showed allegiance to Europeans and do as they were told.¹²⁸ Spiritual development

¹²⁴ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 2. See Armstrong, *The History of the Melanesian Mission*, 12-13.

¹²⁵ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 2.

¹²⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 259.

¹²⁷ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 38. Cf. Allan K. Davidson, "An 'Interesting Experiment,'" 26.

¹²⁸ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 21.

was either a second priority or no priority at all, so that when they were returned to their communities they did not fulfil the purpose of their training. Patteson later sadly said: "One by one, the first generation of Melanesians taken to school in Auckland disappeared from view – swept away once more by the torrent of heathenism in their own homes."¹²⁹ This is just one example of the difficulties encountered in the beginning but which did not deter the vision of Selwyn.

Those who came after him continued to labour courageously in an environment severe and hostile in nature. By the beginning of 1894, out of the population of 150,000 the mission had claimed 8,929 baptised converts with 381 teachers and 122 schools.¹³⁰ There were two priests and seven deacons. Considering the difficulties and challenges mentioned earlier, the results were still within the achievement range attained by Anglican missions in other parts of the world. China's Anglicans numbered 10,200 while Japan's were barely 2,910.¹³¹ Perhaps this further confirms that the mission was not a failure to the extent sometimes claimed.

b) The inculturation/indigenisation of the Church

The process of inculturation or indigenisation of the Church involved both a concept of humanity and aspects of the Church's theology. It was a mission that attempted to contextualise the Church to become meaningful in a particular environment. This is quite in line with the statement of Stephen B. Bevan and Roger P. Schroeder: ". . . we might say that mission is carried out as a search for God's grace that is hidden within a people's culture, religious and historical context."¹³² However, for the policy to achieve its goal, Selwyn embarked on developing two things: The development of human resources through education and training, as discussed earlier. Secondly was the contextualisation of cultures into accepted theological concepts and practices of the Church.

¹²⁹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 20.

¹³⁰ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 115.

¹³¹ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 115. Even so there were criticism of the mission's poor performance.

¹³² Bevan and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 61.

Melanesians were taught how to read and write, enabling them to understand the Scriptures and Prayer Book. They became catechists and readers responsible for taking morning and evening services in the community. Christian concepts of love, peace and unity were taught and practised through community living. For Melanesians the concepts of love, peace and unity were applicable only within a restricted environment based on communities, tribes and families embraced by a common language or a common location. Everyone outside this boundary was a stranger, and every stranger was perceived as an enemy. Violence, cannibalism and revenge were therefore common practices in Melanesia and were incompatible with the Christian principles such as love, peace and unity.¹³³

Melanesians were also taught about farming and other trades which were to be the source of income, better nutrition, better homes and better health for a better life. Teachings therefore were geared towards addressing these issues so that in achieving this more support could be given to the Church so that it would become a truly Melanesian Church.

In helping us see the initial contextualisation of the Church in Melanesia, let us briefly follow the life journey of George Sarawia.

By December 1868, the mission policy achieved its first Melanesian deacon in the person of George Sarawia. Three others followed in November 1872 just before Sarawia was ordained priest in June 1873. The ordination of these Melanesians to the priesthood and diaconate suggests the seriousness of developing a 'native ministry' that would become the basis of an indigenous church. Further evidence of this was the fact that these Melanesians were ordained without meeting the required educational standards of the Western missionaries or the church. Patteson who took over the responsibility from Selwyn was more concerned about spiritual and local leadership capability than achieving a high level of book learning.¹³⁴ Quoting from Charlotte Yonge, Hilliard states:

¹³³ Codrington, "Lecture on the Melanesian Mission together with the Report and Accounts of the Mission," 11.

¹³⁴ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 61.

They have not to teach theology to educated Christians, but to make known the elements of the Gospel truth to ignorant heathen people. If they can state clearly and forcibly the very primary leading fundamental truths of the Gospel, and live as simple-minded humble Christians, that is enough indeed.¹³⁵

However, long before this Selwyn was always optimistic about the spiritual and intellectual capability of Melanesians. Selwyn even in this era had already visualised what the future of Melanesians and the church could be. He had every confidence in Melanesians even during this very early and darkest time. He had every respect for them and for their culture even if they were seen as savages and primitive in almost every way. Selwyn had a gracious heart for Melanesians, loving them and accepting them as they were.¹³⁶ The Melanesian story probably would not have been the same otherwise, should Selwyn have taken a different approach.

The second part of Selwyn's strategy was not to interfere with the customs and cultures of the people with whom he came in contact. This was the general trend the Melanesian Mission took from the beginning up to the present time. As mentioned earlier, this was a call to contextualise the church in a Melanesian form that would enable Melanesians to see the church not as a foreign religious entity but to see its relevance, meaning and benefits through the process of interpretation, and incorporation of their cultural context into the gospel. This was not however a call to fully accept all cultural norms and practices but a call in which the gospel must continue to be the yardstick for the justification of any cultural inputs into the church in whatever area. In other words the cultural inputs into the ecclesiastical theology and practices had to be compatible with the gospel. However, care had to be taken that syncretism was not born out of a reprehensible compromise between the scripture and cultural norms. As Stephen B. Bevan and Roger P. Schroeder state, "There is a danger of a syncretism born of compromise and infidelity to the gospel."¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 61.

¹³⁶ Sarawia, *They came to my Island*, 10.

¹³⁷ Bevan and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 61.

Ironically, Selwyn did not directly condemn cultural practices¹³⁸ though many of them would have been far from being compatible with the gospel. He believed in pointing out what may be anti-Christian but not in a condemning manner. After all, Selwyn had allowed them to decide for themselves. He believed any genuine conversion and transformation must come from Melanesians themselves of their own will and at their own pace. This can be related to Patteson's aim not to impose "English Christianity" on Melanesians.¹³⁹ This was a trend that later missionaries also applied. An example of this was the declaration given to Dr. Welchman by a group of former heathens that they had voluntarily agreed to become Christians.¹⁴⁰ This was their own wish and conviction – a conversion deep from the heart of the converts.

Simultaneously, it must be understood that for the church to remain Melanesian in form did not mean compelling Melanesians and their cultures to remain unchanged. The concept of contextualisation here also asked for transformation on the part of Melanesians and their culture where it was deemed necessary. This was a transformation that can be brought about by the process of 'take and give', more particularly in contextualizing cultural ingredients that would still provide sound theology, doctrine and practice. This however has taken many years to achieve.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the beginning of the Melanesian Mission founded by Bishop George Augustus Selwyn, the first bishop of New Zealand. Selwyn's initial mission strategies of 'external administration,' the 'Abraham and Lot Principle' and the Native Ministry were influenced by his being a High Churchman and an Oxford Movement affiliate. He was an Anglo-Catholic emphasizing scripture, tradition and reason. As well as being influenced by his spiritual and social background, he had also taken into account experiences

¹³⁸ Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6. Cf. also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 191. He refers to Codrington's view that other religions including heathenism be approached with sympathy and respect.

¹³⁹ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 117-120.

¹⁴⁰ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 108.

of other mission areas undertaken by the Church of England. This led him to establish the headquarters outside Melanesia on an experimental and tentative basis.

One of his most important goals was for the Melanesian Church to be Melanesian in form but catholic in faith. This was to be made possible through the training of Melanesians and the non-interference with their traditions and culture. He believed that the Melanesian Church would be resourced by Melanesians themselves, who must be trained to interiorise a redemption wholly, spiritually, physically and mentally under the linked aims of true religion, sound learning and useful industry. Selwyn powerfully stated in August 1858.

It is a simple arithmetical calculation that England cannot furnish Ministers sufficient for the whole world: it follows therefore that a native Ministry must be the appointed way in which the world is to be evangelised.¹⁴¹

In his address to the American Board of Mission 1871, he again echoed the same sentiment when he said in the context of the American Indians.

Never tell me there is a race upon the earth, out of which there cannot be raised faithful ministers, able to serve God in the holy offices of His Church.¹⁴²

But some, even, missionaries who came some years after, did not share the sentiment with Selwyn. Wilson the bishop for the Melanesian Mission in the beginning of the twentieth century stated “. . . that Melanesian teachers would ‘never attain to that complete independence for which Bishop Selwyn, our founder, used to hope.’”¹⁴³ W.A. Uthwatt who was the Archdeacon: “A self-governing “Church of Melanesia” is “impossible now and will be impracticable for many years”¹⁴⁴ Henry Venn, the secretary of the CMS was also critical of the mission’s method as being ‘visionary and

¹⁴¹ Evans, *Churchman Militant*, 244.

¹⁴² Evans, *Churchman Militant*, 244.

¹⁴³ Hilliard, *God’s Gentlemen*, 153.

¹⁴⁴ Hilliard, *God’s Gentlemen*, 153.

impractical.’¹⁴⁵ Other missions like the Methodist also shared the same experience in which Melanesians were thought to be incapable.¹⁴⁶

Hence, Selwyn’s vision became evident in the 1920s when the Melanesian Mission Headquarters was transferred from Norfolk Island to Melanesia. This was the beginning of a more dynamic participation of Melanesians towards the development of the church in various fields. The later chapters will attempt to examine these various development – beginning with the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH).

In many ways, the Church has become Melanesian in form and catholic in faith by incorporating culture and traditions into the gospel, developing a new, enriched and Melanesian-flavoured Christianity.

Selwyn’s vision and achievements were amazing in that they are all reflected in the status of the Church in Melanesia today. At the same time, this does not negate the contributions of his successors.

The next chapter is on the role of the MBH. The role of the MBH and others that follow are visionary ideologies of pioneer missionaries explored in chapter two, and transformed into reality by Melanesians.

¹⁴⁵ Sohmer, “A Selection of Fundamentals,” 101.

¹⁴⁶ George G. Carter, *Yours in His Service: A Reflection on the Life of Reverend Belshazzar Gina of Solomon Islands* (Honiara: University of the South Pacific Centre, Honiara, 1990), 55.

Chapter Three

“True Religion”: Its meaning and importance through the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH)

Introduction

This chapter examines the meaning of ‘True Religion’ in the context of the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH). It covers the background; the interpretation of ‘True Religion’; the background of the Melanesian Brotherhood; the special features of the MBH; the strategies in evangelisation; the social and cultural obligations and finally the weaknesses.

1. Background

Selwyn’s important goal in his education and training program was for the ‘redemption of the whole humanity.’ This refers to the importance of equally developing the spiritual, physical and mental aspects of humanity under the slogan ‘true religion, sound learning and useful industry.’¹ This is equivalent to the understanding of the Christian concept of ‘Fullness of Life’ which is to some extent compatible with the Melanesian perspective. Mantovani gave an account of the Melanesian concept of ‘fullness of life.’ He stated that ‘fullness of life’ is highly valued in Melanesian society because it embraces good health, successful family, abundant food supply, security from enemies, invaluable art, hunting and fishing skills.²

Whilst there has been some discussion on the ‘fullness of life’ in chapter two, a further comprehensive discussion will be made in this chapter. It is hoped that the activities and responsibilities discussed here are practical reflections of this concept. This chapter is centred on the first part of the slogan ‘true religion’ indispensable to the evangelistic work of the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH).

¹ Note that this chapter is mainly centred on the concept of ‘true religion’. The meaning of the concepts of ‘sound learning’ and ‘useful industry’ will be discussed in the same manner but in chapters three and four. In this way, it is hoped to give light both to intention/meaning, the processes in which the concept was channelled into Melanesian minds and the means in which it was executed by Melanesians within the Church.

² Matthew E. Jones quotes this from Mantovani. See Jones, “Mana from Heaven?,” 173-4.

Explicitly, the major contribution of the MBH was to convert pagans to Christianity. The MBH was not only indigenous but also the first religious community to work in Melanesia despite an attempt made earlier.³ However there were several reasons for the difficulty of evangelising Melanesians⁴ including the Melanesians' set of beliefs which could be a strong factor against Christianity. Pursuant to this is the multiplicity of different beliefs making traditional religious beliefs not only complex but also a source of difference.⁵ Regardless of the complexities, traditional religion continued to fulfil their daily religious needs.⁶ Christianity had to prove its capability to better fulfil the roles of traditional religion for people to accept the gospel. One of the ways of easing this difficulty was therefore to train Melanesians to be teachers of their own people. This was the vision of Bishops Selwyn and Patteson only to be revisited and fulfilled by the establishment in 1925 of the MBH who were Melanesians themselves. This is what it means to seek 'true religion.'

As hinted earlier, the people of Melanesia were polytheists, worshipping many different gods. In the same way as Christians believe that God is their source of life, Melanesians also believed that their god(s) was/were sources of life.⁷ The behaviour and attitude of people were greatly influenced by traditional religion. Although in many ways traditional religion was so different from Christianity, there were some practices that were almost the same between the two. This to some extent helped Melanesians ease their transition from traditional religion to Christianity.⁸

As mentioned earlier good harvests in gardening, fishing and hunting could be interpreted as religious achievements according to the Melanesian worldview. Victories achieved during inter-tribal or inter-island wars and which normally were related to head hunting, cannibalism, revenge/payback and

³ Fox, *Kakamora*, 68.

⁴ See earlier discussion in chapter two.

⁵ Garry W Trompf, "Traditional Melanesian Religion," in *Melanesian Religion and Christianity*, ed. G.W. Trompf (Goroka: Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Services, 2008), 8. This is a general understanding of every anthropologist, historian and theologian in Melanesia in general. See also Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 116ff.

⁶ Cf. the same view as in note 7.

⁷ Cf. brief discussion 'fullness of life almost at the beginning of this chapter.

⁸ Boe, "The Missionaries and their Gospel – The Melanesians and their Response," 138.

compensation were religion-oriented. Inclusively, any disaster either by nature or sorcery, followed by the work of restoration and healing through the use of herbs and chants, were part of their religious beliefs and activities.⁹

The consequences, whether negative or positive, were therefore considered to be influenced by the power or *mana* of their gods. In other words the power or *mana* of gods was measured against achievements, usually on the basis of the positives reflecting the gods' favour with the negatives reflecting their wrath. It is not surprising then that in Melanesia the same mentality continued to influence the Melanesian minds in their acceptance of the Christian God. The Christian God was a God of 'successes' and 'wrath' depending how one related to God. This was equally the same attitude Melanesians had towards their pagan gods. Such attitude brought about greater honour and respect to the gods and a close relationship between the people and their god(s).¹⁰

For Melanesians, love of one's neighbour was conditional and often restricted within a specific boundary shared by several common bonds. The common bonds could be either based on family, tribe or village community within a specified geographical area and among people who spoke the same language or shared the same culture or religion. Those outside these boundaries were strangers and therefore regarded as enemies.¹¹ Opposite to the concept of love yet in many circumstances closely linked to it, were the concepts of revenge or 'payback' and compensation. These were accepted as cultural and religious norms widely practised in many Melanesian societies.

The implication of this was that Melanesia was made up of fragmented and separate communities influenced by different cultures and customs.¹² The existence of divisions, hatred and enmity were therefore frequent, often provoking inter-tribal or inter-island wars. With the presence and practice of

⁹ Cf. Montovani's view per discussed by Matthew E. Jones in the same chapter note 2.

¹⁰ Ben Burt, *Tradition and Christianity: The colonial transformation of a Solomon Islands Society*, (Poststrasse 22: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), 47.

¹¹ James Boutilier, "Killing the Government: Imperial Policy and the Pacification of Malaita," in *The Pacification of Melanesia*, ed. Margaret Rodman and Matthew Copper (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 45-46.

¹² Refer to chapter one.

the 'payback' system such wars could go on for many years. Headhunting was an activity supporting such a practice.

Another important characteristic of Melanesia was the extensive practice of witchcraft, sorcery or magic. Many good results came with the conversion of Melanesians including the total elimination of the many disreputable traditional practices such as headhunting, inter-tribal or inter-island wars and the direct worship of traditional gods. However, the practice of witchcraft or sorcery or magic was never totally eliminated.¹³ In many circumstances people who regarded themselves as converted Christians unfortunately still practice witchcraft or sorcery. Not only are witchcraft or sorcery were forms of evil in themselves, but they often gave rise to other social problems between people, families and communities. Witchcraft or sorcery was not only cultural but also a religious practice that contributed to the shaping of the lives of Melanesian communities – in many ways to disharmony, disunity, suffering and even death.

Bishop George Augustus Selwyn believed that Melanesians must be led to know and believe in the Christian God and turn away from their traditional gods. It was under this aspiration that Selwyn introduced the concept of developing the whole humanity of which the slogan 'true religion' became part. The aim was for Melanesians to be converted to Christianity. He summarised this aim with these words: 'for Melanesians to come and sit at the feet of Jesus.'¹⁴ This was an important statement, rich in theological meaning that demanded practical action. It demanded the conversion of Melanesians to Christianity that was embraced by better education, better economy and better health in order to live in peace and unity. In other words, Christianity was wholly embraced by the "gospel of peace" that "offered a convenient rationale for the termination of conflict."¹⁵ The perception was

¹³ Note that according to David Hilliard, the influence of the Colonial government by means of threat ended the head-hunting. See Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 167. This seems to rule out any influence of the Church which is in contrast to Gela and Isabel. These two islands were already strongly influenced by the church that eliminated headhunting before the twentieth century. The arrival of the Colonial government in 1897 with its force therefore merely further strengthened the peace already in existence.

¹⁴ See Chapter Two, 82.

¹⁵ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 170.

that Melanesians were taught to know and love God through Jesus Christ and to love one another.

In the Church of Melanesia there are now four religious communities: i) the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH); ii) the Society of St. Francis (SSF)¹⁶ iii) the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC)¹⁷ and the Community of Sisters of Melanesia (CSM) They were important agents in their own right, providing opportunities for Melanesian participation and contribution to the development and transformation of the Church. The MBH is given a special place in this thesis because it was the first religious order set up by an indigenous man¹⁸, and throughout the period of this thesis was the largest and most successful of the religious orders, running on lines particularly tailored for Melanesian life. The MBH is one of the best examples of a Melanesian agent embedded in the Catholic faith but clothed in Melanesian form. This was a philosophy of Selwyn - a part of his mission work.¹⁹ Supporting this was A.I. Hopkins, who believed that "the only way in which the church will survive was to become a native church."²⁰ The MBH was the representation of this, contributing to the vibrant evangelistic work in the islands since its establishment in 1925. Its contribution was immense as they were the forerunners of the gospel in many parts of the islands.

2. The interpretation of 'True Religion'

Having said this, let us now briefly examine the slogan 'true religion' which can be interpreted in many ways. The slogan itself covers the whole spectrum of Christian theology that Christians should understand and believe. The missionaries however were conscious of the complexity of Christian theology and that the Melanesians would find difficulty in understanding it. This was

¹⁶ The SSF arrived in Melanesia in August 1970. Patteson Ngalihesi, "The Society of St. Francis and the Franciscans in the Solomon Islands," Church History Research Paper 705.359, Auckland Consortium for Theological Education, 8 June 1999. 15-16. Cf. Geoffrey, *The Beginning of the Society of St. Francis in the Pacific*, n.p. n.d. 24-25. Apart from the current four religious communities, there was also the Community of the Cross (COC) that arrived in Melanesia in 1929. Ann, a native girl joined in 1934 but then later pulled out from Melanesia. See "The Community of the Cross." Rochester and Chatham: Parrett and Neves, 1946.

¹⁷ The Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC) arrived on Christmas Eve 1972. See Frances, "The Sisters of the Church settled in at Honiara," in *Southern Cross Log* (London: Mission), Vol. 80, No. 1, Spring 1972, 12.

¹⁸ Note that CSM is also an indigenous religious community but was only formulated in the 1980s.

¹⁹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 6.

²⁰ Hopkins, *Melanesia To-day*, 114.

where practical examples became more crucial than theory. In other words the missionaries must act out in their lives the things that they taught. An example of this would be the Christian concept of peace and unity practised by the missionaries in a wider and unrestricted context. This could almost be foreign to Melanesians who merely exercised and lived in a world that was smaller and restricted in nature, based only on tribe, language etc.²¹

There have been many examples in which Melanesians were converted through seeing, feeling and experience and not necessarily through books or writing. Many Melanesians could only take in little literature knowledge, but most were good in observing and doing through living examples and activities. This was an effective method that brought about the conversion of Melanesians. In other words, formal theological teachings even for the very basics could not alone have helped conversion, but rather the things that they experienced through seeing and doing. Christianity being a complex religion though with a theology that is formal, rational and systematic in nature was quite difficult for Melanesians to relate to.²² Melanesian religion on the other hand, though *ad hoc*, was not complicated and sophisticated in nature.

The most important aspect of 'true religion' was the understanding of the doctrine of God. The concept of God as mentioned earlier was not foreign to the Melanesian world view. However there were still major differences between the Christian and the non-Christian understanding of God. These differences in many ways were irreconcilable. It was under these circumstances that the basic aspects of the doctrine of God, in relation to who Jesus is, the work of the Holy Spirit, the world and human relationships were taught. The aim was to convince Melanesians to convert from paganism to Christianity.

²¹ In relation to this, compare brief discussion on page 8 as one indirect reason for movement restrictions thus had been an obstacle for the spread of the gospel to people in the bush.

²² Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 61-62, in which he states Patten's stand of a just qualification to meet local needs. Elements of fundamental Gospel truth were enough.

3. The Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH)

The Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH) is an indigenous religious community founded and established in Melanesia in 1925. However, due to the temporary nature of the promise of celibacy, the MBH was not internationally recognised as a religious community in the Anglican Religious Communities Book until 2000-2001. For social and cultural reasons, life-long celibacy is uncommon in Melanesian,²³ making it difficult for any Melanesian to take the traditional three-fold vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience.

The founder of the MBH was Ini Kopuria, a native of Maravovo village in Guadalcanal. Ini was one of the most able young Melanesians of his time, being educated at Pamua and Norfolk Island. Ini, on his return, then joined the native police constabulary. He was a loyal and committed character so that by the time he resigned he was a Sergeant.²⁴ This was a unique achievement of the times. As Gerard A. Arbuckle wrote of the MBH: "One of the most outstanding indigenous movements in the Christian Church throughout the Pacific."²⁵

Even from an early age Ini had always wanted to become a brother following the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. Nothing substantial however was made in this regard until he had an accident in the course of his police duties. It was then while in the hospital that he had a vision of Christ warning him that he was not doing the work which God wanted him to do. In his letter to bishop John Manwaring Steward, Ini wrote:

God has called me from following that manner of life, and in my pain and sickness God has shown me that I should see clearly that it is not (my duty to live) as a policeman, but to declare the kingdom of God to the heathen.²⁶

²³ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 197. See also 179 -180 for the criteria that gave its recognition as a 'religious community.' See also Brian Macdonald-Milne, *The Melanesian Brotherhood and the Tradition of Indigenous Evangelism in the Anglican Church in the Pacific Islands*, University of Cambridge and North Atlantic Missiology Project: n.d. 10.

²⁴ Melanesian Mission, *The Southern Cross Log: A journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, London & Sydney: Melanesian Mission June, 1946, 12.

²⁵ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 194.

²⁶ J M Steward, *The Brothers* (Auckland: Melanesian Mission, 1928), 2 (appendix i) There were also sociological reasons based on new aspirations that were not met such as employments. This was also said to have

This call reminds us of Ignatius of Loyola the founder of the Jesuits.²⁷ Ini's ambition became clearer after receiving further helpful instructions and teachings about monastic life from A.J. Hopkins. Motivated by this, Ini further approached John Manwaring Steward – a man who greatly believed in religious orders as an effective channel in which the Gospel of love and peace was to be transmitted.²⁸

With the approval of the bishop, Ini then advanced to Pawa, the Mission boys' school. He was seeking like-minded young Melanesian men who could join and share in the new ministry. He succeeded with the support of six young men who joined him. They were Duddley Bale, Moffat Ohigita, Cecil Lujagathaga, Maurice Maneae, Hugo Holun and Benjamin Bokoe.²⁹ In taking their vows of dedication to live in poverty, chastity/celibacy and obedience for a year they were commissioned by the bishop. Melanesia had given birth to a new child who was to be the 'spearhead' of evangelistic work among its own people and beyond. As a reviewer of *John Steward's Memories* wrote: "The dream of the first Selwyn became fact through the inspiration of John Manwaring Steward and the instrumentality of Ini Kopuria."³⁰ The concept of self-extension as Bishop Cecil John Wood believed was also further strengthened.³¹ This was the first step towards the development of a Melanesian religious community of evangelists and teachers to Melanesians themselves.

encouraged the formation of the MBH as an alternative. See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 194. This is debatable of course. John Manwaring Steward was then the bishop of the Melanesians missionary diocese.

²⁷ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 115-117.

²⁸ Melanesian Mission, *The Southern Cross Log: A journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, London, Sydney: Melanesian Mission June, 1946, 21, 22. In fact Ini was approached by Bishop Steward (probably 1907) to join him in founding an order. See also C. E. Fox, *My Solomon Islands* (Honiara: Church of Melanesia, 1985), 60.

²⁹ *The Southern Cross Log*, Summer 1969, vol. 77 no. 1, 29. See also Brian Macdonald-Milne, *The true Way of Service*, 42.

Cf. Margaret Lycett, *Brothers: The Story of the Native Brotherhood of Melanesia* (London: SPCK, 1935), 20 who had Lujagathaga as Logathaga and Maneae as Manere. The first three were from Isabel whilst the fourth and fifth were from the Russells and Guadalcanal respectively.

³⁰ *Southern Cross Log*, April 1, 1935. See also *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, No.65 1, 1939.

³¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 56. Self-extension was part of Bishop Cecil John Wood's statement 'self-government, self-supporting and self-extension.'

i) Why the Melanesian Brothers?

Generally training of Melanesians to become teachers of their own people was always the principle beacon of the Melanesian Mission. By the 1920s, the importance of this policy became more evident and increasingly inevitable. The establishment of the MBH therefore was timely for the following reason.

First, the need for inland or bush evangelisation became very evident as mission contact was rare. At the same time there were isolated islands mostly occupied by Polynesians that were also difficult to reach. This was further affected by the lack of trained people from the bush villages. Those who were trained therefore were mostly from the coastal villages that for some reason were reluctant to extend their services to people in the bush.³² Traditional rivalries often gave rise to fear and suspicion thus constraining freedom of movement from the coast to the inner land or vice versa. Related to this also was the fact that there were insufficient trained people and even if there were enough their commitment to their families remained a priority especially for those who had wives and children. The MBH was then the most appropriate group to take this responsibility, which was crucial at this stage.

Second, arguably far more relevant, missionaries even if they were committed, were generally unfit for the bush areas.³³ They were restricted to the coastal areas where mission stations were established in the hope that their health remained stable and physical exhaustion, wear and tear would be slowed down. The hostility of the people with their culture and the unkind environment were still the characteristics of the bush areas. missionaries had therefore as much as possible to keep away from extreme adversities that might have impacted on their personal safety and health.

Even in the mission stations in the coastal areas that were European orientated, missionaries experienced deadly sicknesses such as malaria and

³² Brian Macdonald-Milne, *Spearhead: The Story of the Melanesian Brotherhood* (Watford: The Melanesian Mission, 1981), 6.

³³ Macdonald-Milne, *Spearhead*, 6. Cf. See also Frederick M. Molyneux, "Bishop's Report for 1928," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission New Series No. 26*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, July 1929, 26.

nuisances from insects, cockroaches, rats, snakes etc.³⁴ It was therefore a difficult decision to send missionaries who were already under a lot of pressure into the interior. Such an event could lead to early leave or retirement of missionaries, putting a lot more pressure on the already under-staffed mission field. This could then affect the mission's pioneering development. For this reason, the MBH was again providing human resources in extending mission work to places that could not be reached otherwise.

Third, the MBH was to further strengthen the relationship between different ethnic groups regardless of islands, languages, ages or status differences. The first term used was 'Retatasiu' meaning 'a company of Brothers'.³⁵ This was a new kind of environment breeding a new kind of relationship different from normal schools. Their programs were specially tailored for mission, placing spiritual development as the priority. Maturity in faith was the ultimate goal, so that religious teaching could be expected to be more extensive and in depth than in normal schools. This specifically tailored programme paid off with great achievements, giving the MBH a special place in the Church and the people in Melanesia. This will be further explored in a later discussion.

Fourth, one of the identities of the Church in Melanesia is the MBH. Though many of its rules of life were imported from external religious communities such as the community of St. Francis of Assisi, much of it was also locally adapted. This included the organisational structure and its rules, membership, leadership, responsibilities, worship, relationship and uniforms. These of course were determined by the kind of needs required by the nature of their ministry in relation to Melanesian culture.³⁶ An example of a Melanesian culture was the vow of celibacy/chastity which at first was a one year renewal and later converted to a three year renewal. In other words, the MBH spirituality was specially designed for Melanesians. This provided the impetus for the respect of MBH with whom the Melanesian regarded as their own, and with whom

³⁴ R.H. Stanley, "At the Meeting" in *Southern Cross*, Vol.73, No. 3, August 1965, London: Melanesian Mission, 70-71. This was an experience in Pawa station – an example of the kind of life also encountered in other Mission stations. .

³⁵ Fox, *My Solomon Islands*, 60.

³⁶ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 10.

they can identify with. Suffice to say that the MBH also was, is and will always be a unique identity of the Church in Melanesia.

ii) Special features of the MBH

There are a few things that need to be brought to light regarding the special features of this religious community. Like most religious communities and especially influenced by the life of St. Francis of Assisi, three vows/rules were important in the MBH religious life:³⁷ poverty, celibacy and obedience. The first was to live in poverty, second was to live in celibacy and third was to live a life of obedience. Embedded on these vows the MBH tried to remain Melanesian in its mission and approach.

To live in poverty however was not meant to live in situations that would deprive them of health. It meant to live a decent life with food grown and harvested by themselves and homes built by themselves. It encouraged self-sufficiency and self-sacrifice. However there were situations in which poverty was inevitable particularly in villages that did not accept them easily. On these particular missions, they depended very much on the villages or the environment they approached.³⁸ However poverty at its best created an environment in which sharing was not only a moral obligation but also a means of survival. In the MBH, sharing therefore was a rule practised in reality so that a member's possessions belonged to all members of the community.³⁹ A sort of 'Communalism' was an important spirituality in the life of MBH.

Secondly marriage was not an option while serving in the MBH. This helped brothers to offer their whole being to mission, with less or no family commitment attached. Apart from this, it guided the brothers from immorality to living a life of self-discipline, a life of prayer and a life of holiness and purity. On the other hand the call of celibacy is also temporary hence the vow on life membership is not encouraged because of the socio-cultural obligations

³⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, appendix I 268. See also Macdonald-Milne, *Spearhead*, 10. One year renewable was a rule in the beginning but this had changed to three years.

³⁸ Macdonald-Milne, *Spearhead*, 10.

³⁹ This is usually in terms of food, possession or money which of course often very little and given by relatives or friends. However the meaning of sharing can go beyond material possessions. Emotions of joy, celebrations, sorrow, difficulties are normal circumstances shared by the MBH.

demanded by Melanesian structures. However not being restricted by a life-time celibacy has given many former brothers, the opportunity to serve in the ordained ministry or as catechists that would not have been possible given the circumstances of the time.⁴⁰ This means that being in the MBH gave them the foretaste of the ordained ministry and other ministries within the church.

To live in obedience is a call for allegiance to those in authority. However, this also demands far deeper commitment than what is normally understood. Brothers are required to obey each other regardless of their status within the organisation. The rules are for all, so that even the head brother or the elder brothers are liable for disciplinary action should they break one of the rules. The kinds of disciplinary actions taken are the same for all. At special times appointed for confessional meetings, each person was given the opportunity to share grievances, to apologise and to forgive.⁴¹ This is obedience reflected in the life of Christ surrendered in its totality to the will of God. Supplementary to this was also the demand to be obedient to the rules of the Brotherhood, the Great Conference, the Regional Conference and other authorities of the MBH.⁴² This strengthened and maintained the spirit of unity and brotherhood relationship as it erased suspicion within the community.

Following the footsteps of the founder of the Melanesian Mission, the MBH also based its evangelisation activity on the 'comity' principle.⁴³ The mission of the MBH was to evangelise places that were still unevangelised. In this context, the MBH aimed to evangelise the Guadalcanal bush villages. Later it extended its service to Santa Cruz in 1927. By 1929 the brothers did a wonderful ministry in pagan villages in Santa Cruz.⁴⁴ It ventured into the bush

⁴⁰ Fox, *Kakamora*, 1962, 70. An example of this: Ini the founder became a deacon and remained a deacon until his death. Others like Moffat Ohigita and Dudley Bale became priests.

⁴¹ Macdonald-Milne, *Spearhead*, 11, 12.

⁴² The Great Conference and the Regional Conference played the most important roles equivalent to the Church Synods. They are the authorities that make important decisions pertaining the life and work of the MBH. The supreme authority is the Great Conference which is held every four years.

⁴³ The 'comity principle' is a theory by Selwyn to avoid mission competition by the different denominational missions that came to the islands. See discussion in chapter two 45-49. See also Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 173-175

⁴⁴ Frederick Merivale Molyneux, "Bishop's Report for 1928," in *Southern Cross Log Melanesian Mission: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission, New Series, no.26, July 1929*. Auckland: Melanesian Mission, 26.

villages of Malaita and the Polynesian outer islands of Sikaiana in 1929, followed by Lord Howe in 1933.⁴⁵

Ini believed that religious competition must be avoided to avoid confusion amongst the new converts. This unfortunately, was not always easy in practice and in some circumstances created difficulties amongst the new converts. There were incidents in which unity that existed along cultural norms was disturbed by the intrusion of different denominations. Fortunately denominational relationships greatly improved along with time and as people opened up to new knowledge and understanding, this deepened their faith in the only one God.

The life of the MBH in its totality, with its vows, disciplines, rules, functions was drawn and shaped for the awareness of their dependence to God. It is shaped in a way that encourages the 'giving and sharing' of the gospel of love, joy, peace, pain, and difficulty in good and bad times.⁴⁶

iii) Evangelisation through Teaching

Amongst other methods, formal and informal teachings were undertaken by the MBH in carrying out their evangelisation task. The formal teaching involved two components.

The first was the Catechism that taught about the doctrine of God. This is a teaching geared towards understanding the concept of the Trinity based on God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a very complex concept that many Christians have difficulty understanding, especially Melanesians who often had added problems with literacy. However, what was important for Melanesians was to be taught in order to be convinced and believe the general attributes of God. Inclusively, that God is the sole creator and sustainer of the world. God is the provider of life and every blessing and gift, so that the Christian God is the only true God. This was a teaching centred more on faith which was in many circumstances the basis of the Melanesian

⁴⁵ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 195-196. After some years later, the work of the MBH went as far as New Guinea, New Britain and Fiji.

⁴⁶ Cf. Carter, "Transforming Missionaries," 337.

religion. The Melanesian world is a spiritual world so that all the mysteries are explained by religion.

A. Jones states that apart from the teaching of writing and reading, Genesis creation stories, other First Testament stories and the gospel of Jesus were also taught.⁴⁷ In many areas in Melanesia, some of the biblical stories, more particularly in the First Testament, are quite similar to Melanesian stories and thus were accepted with some ease. An example of this would be the creation stories of Genesis.⁴⁸ These are usually embraced as important myths passed down from one generation to another.

In view of the fact that not all traditional practices and ideologies were considered evil, and the fact that the mission approach was not to directly condemn them, there were some opportunities for integration. It is believed that the integration of some aspects of Melanesian religious-cultural practices and ideologies with Christianity resulted in a new Melanesian religion.⁴⁹ In hindsight such integration helped draw out explicitly who God is and so Christianity then became more meaningful for Melanesians.

Better still in the eyes of Melanesians, the material possessions of Europeans were also an influencing factor. In other words, the material possessions of Europeans could only be explained by the assertion that Europeans had a God more powerful than theirs. For Melanesians, the concept of Christian monotheism was tangible through the material possessions the Europeans had and their ways of living. This was a process in which Melanesians were indirectly allowed to make some comparisons between the Christian God and their own god(s).

It must be borne in mind however, that the brothers were not actually teaching about a God who directly provides possessions or Western goods but they were teaching about love and peace that could bring about

⁴⁷ A. Jones, "Brotherhood Conference," in *Southern Cross Log*, London: Melanesian Mission, June 1956, 42.

⁴⁸ Vunagi, "Liturgical Spirituality under the Southern Cross," 66.

⁴⁹ See Jones, "Mana from Heaven?," 163 who equates Received Christianity + Melanesian worldview with Melanesian Christianity/Local form of Christianity. See also White, *Identity Through History*, 112- 115. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 324.

civilisation. These were the essentials that enabled the kind of goods people wanted to come into the islands. This helped Melanesians in their decisions to become Christians.

The doctrine of Jesus was another starting point. This covers the story of the Gospels that tells of Jesus as the Son of God incarnate in order to save humankind. The aspects of Jesus life such as his birth, death and resurrection as provided in the Bible were not only important for Melanesians but also real. Subsequently, the concept of incarnation is a norm in most Melanesian cultures so that the incarnate Christ was easily accepted by Melanesians. There are Melanesian myths and folklores that tell of a similar kind of incarnation process, though in different forms and by different means.⁵⁰ Incarnation was not a concept that required rational or scientific proof as it was already part of the Melanesian worldview.⁵¹ Therefore saying Jesus was the manifestation of God was quite plausible and compatible with Melanesian thinking. In a Melanesian context, it would be compatible with the ideology as the shark was a manifestation of an ancestor. Similarly, Jesus being described as the life and the light, because in him God's love, grace, peace, and power is manifested would be believable.

The second part taught in relation to Jesus was his teachings and commands. It was not surprising that Melanesians were interested in the story of Jesus and all his mighty and wonderful work. Jesus' stories were compatible with their stories. However Jesus' commands associated with the call of his moral standards were not easy to comply with. The demand on the brothers to obey the commands and remain faithful to Jesus' teaching was therefore great.

The brothers' aim was to be like Jesus who did not only teach by words but also lived out what he taught by being loving, compassionate and forgiving. It was through these that Jesus healed, fed and restored the many to whom

⁵⁰ The Gospel incarnation story is about God becoming man through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ whilst in Melanesia folklores and myths in which ancestors had returned in other forms such as spirit or items rather than as humans. These forms became tangible and were worshipped and called upon for *mana*.

⁵¹ Fox, *The Threshold of the Pacific*, 78ff, 107ff. On the contrary see Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 344-345 for comparison.

that he ministered. Hence Jesus' ministry had always attracted great numbers of people because they saw the fruit of his ministry. Likewise following their Lord and master the brothers also performed deeds that could be interpreted as miracles.⁵² These were powerful virtues in the evangelisation ministry of the MBH especially among people who were stubborn and unbelieving.

Another important doctrine normally taught was that of the Holy Spirit who was the sanctifier and a helper that points to God's truth. This could be different from the Melanesian understanding of their spirit(s) but the general concept of the spirit(s) as a living and powerful being was compatible with a Melanesian religious worldview. Spirits for Melanesians were believed to have originally come from deceased ancestors. However for Melanesians such spirits were or could be at the same time god(s). In Guadalcanal the deceased fathers and grandfathers were worshipped.⁵³ Nevertheless, this is unlike the nature of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in Christian theology in which the two can be the same yet their natures and roles can still be distinguished. These are theological terms that obviously were complicated for Melanesians. Other than this, the only important thing was to convince Melanesians that the Holy Spirit is the third person within the Godhead. Like the Son, the Holy Spirit is also God, existing in God and functioning with God.

The suggestion here is that the prime essence of the Church's beginning in Melanesia was the need to know and believe in the one true God through Christ. However like Paul in the early church and in other contexts in which the early Christianity faced challenges, Melanesia also had its share of difficulties. This nevertheless did not deter the Church from its mission obligations. The Church's slow progress did not matter. The Church of course continued to grow and expand with improved participation of Melanesians. An unknown author affirmed this when he expressed that one of the responses to the call

⁵² The brothers did healing, casting out devils and ancestral spirits, 342.

⁵³ Ellen Wilson, *The Isles that Wait*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912), 95.

of the Holy Spirit was the dedication of Melanesian young men to spread the Gospel.⁵⁴

The second part of the teaching program covered the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Tradition had always demanded that people who are to be converted or baptised or confirmed were required to know these by heart. This was not easy in Melanesia because they were not in the local language and were not easily interpreted. However, it did not matter if the words were not exact. The important thing was to understand the general meaning of their content. Further anticipation was for the pagans to believe in the God, in Jesus and in the Holy Spirit as contained in the Creed and the Lord's Prayer and to obey the Commandments. This was generally done by what Hilliard termed as by 'assertion rather than by argument.'⁵⁵

In summary, the Creed generally covers the nature of God in Trinity. It describes the God of creation, the God of salvation in Jesus Christ the only begotten Son and God of sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this was for the pagans to know and believe in the one true God in Trinity. The Lord's Prayer taught the pagans more than just talking to God. It reflected their gratefulness to God who is love, merciful, and forgiving. At the same time the prayer also affirms human dependence in God. And the Ten Commandments laid down the expected principles of Christian living towards God and towards others. The tradition of knowing the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments as in the Catechism has been an important part of the curriculum of the Mission. Its currency remains almost the same in Melanesia today. They remain crucial requirements for adult baptism or confirmation.

The second is the teaching of the Prayer Book, Scriptures, rituals and symbols. To talk or teach about these was to teach about prayer which was a very important part of the evangelization process. Prayer was a practical expression of many things that reflected the mutual relationship that

⁵⁴ Melanesian Mission, *Leaflet "B": The Response of Melanesians to the Holy Spirit* (London: Melanesian Mission, n.d), 1&4.

⁵⁵ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 164, 165.

Melanesians had with God.⁵⁶ In short, the Prayer Book, Scriptures, rituals and symbols were taught practically through worship and prayers. It was through these practical means that the triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were explicitly acknowledged. The triune God was a theological concept only to be understood and accepted through faith. Subsequently that faith could only be interpreted through the Prayer Book, Scriptures, words, songs, gestures, rituals and symbols embraced and embedded in the acts of worship and prayer. The people were therefore taught that all these different forms were human expressions of love, praise, honour, penitence and so on towards God.⁵⁷ This went down well with Melanesians as their traditional religion had always been enriched by forms of words, chants, rituals and symbols. Integration as stated earlier became possible.⁵⁸ However such must remain simple and dignified.

In hindsight, unlike in the traditional religion whose followers merely prayed out of necessity, Melanesians were now taught to pray every day regardless of the circumstances. The new God was not only a God in the time of need. God was a God of both good and bad times. The new God required the participation of all people; men, women and children alike. This was not the case in most traditional religions that were restricted only to men, and even to some extent only those appointed as traditional priests. God was a God of equality.

Now people were taught what to say and because the brothers were Anglicans, prayer was taught with books. It is difficult to gauge the depth of the Melanesians understanding of the Book of Common Prayer, but experience revealed that people came to know by heart most of the prayers. It is amazing that there were Melanesians who had no formal education whatsoever yet were able to read the Book of Common Prayer and sing from a Hymn book. It is not a mistake therefore to say that for most Anglicans in

⁵⁶ John Manwaring Steward, "Melanesian Mission: A Melanesian Use Together with Notes on Ceremonial, etc," Occasional Papers No.3, Guadalcanar: Melanesian Mission, 1926.

http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/steward_use1926.html.doc (accessed Nov. 25, 2008).

⁵⁷ Steward, "Melanesian Mission."

http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/steward_use1926.html.doc (accessed Nov. 25, 2008).

⁵⁸ Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 190-191. See Chapter Two note 137.

Melanesia the whole basis of prayer was the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymn book.⁵⁹ Both books were the only books that could be found in almost every Anglican home. They were important as a source of their faith.⁶⁰ Incidentally, the different kinds of prayers that were in practice in the Anglican Church were in the Common Prayer Book with special emphasis on the meaning of the Eucharist. Melanesians regard the Eucharist as most holy.

Supplementing the Common Prayer Book were the gestures, rituals and the symbols provided in the new religion. Similarly and because gestures, rituals and symbols were always part of Melanesian traditional spirituality they were recognised and adapted easily. However Melanesians were taught rightly of the meanings so as not to confuse them with their own traditional religious rituals. Rituals and symbols were not only supplementary to the prayers in the Common Prayer Book but also as a way of enhancing faith in God. In many ways God's attributions were abstract but became more meaningful in the minds of Melanesians through the gestures, symbols, arts and rituals. They provided enrichment that supplemented spiritual sensation if done correctly and reverently. They therefore had to be treated as holy.⁶¹

Apart from this, people were taught about prayer and the way they should act and behave in the Church. Few were chosen among the people to be trained in leading the daily services and prayers. Some people were taught to become catechists, even women who were not allowed leadership or participatory roles in their traditional religion.⁶² Catechists played a vital role in the early church, also because brothers were only allowed to be in one place for a period of three months. This was their rule.⁶³ Catechists and other teachers were to remain in place after the brothers left.

⁵⁹ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 334.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ellen Wilson, *The Isles that Wait*, 39. This is an account of Amina, a pioneer Christian girl in Ulawa who whilst sick held on to the New Testament and the Prayer Book until her death. This proved how important were these books in the Melanesian mind.

⁶¹ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 182.

⁶² Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 194. Today, this is still applicable in some parts of Melanesia in which women are still restricted from performing certain duties in the church. In this case culture takes precedence over Christianity. There are many ill-treatment accounts of women, an example, see Ellen Wilson, *The Isles that Wait*, 88. This is an issue still debatable in Melanesia.

⁶³ The role of Catechists will be discussed in chapter seven.

There were some aspects of prayer that were taught but even more important was the fact that prayer must be effective. Traditional understanding of prayer was to seek power or *mana* that was beyond human reach but believed to be attainable from an invisible source. The same was then expected from the new religion and so the brothers were in many ways expected to prove that. The healing, exorcism and other miracles performed were circumstances that proved this and had therefore a strong impact on the conversion process.

iv) Ethical and Moral teaching

In addition to the above the brothers also did a lot of teaching on other issues that were always in direct confrontation with traditions and cultures. For example in Lord Howe when children were old enough they were tattooed from the face down to the legs. This was applied to both female and male children who sometimes died in the process. However what concerned the brothers was the children's experience of agony in the process. The brothers had to convince the people about the disadvantages of such a cultural requirement. This was not easy but in the end the people were convinced and abandoned the practice.⁶⁴ In Santa Cruz, the brothers were criticized for opposing tattooing and nose piercing which were also cultural practices.⁶⁵

Another area was the problem of drunkenness. It was a normal practice in most Polynesians communities, to produce alcohol out of the toddy from the coconut flowers. The toddy was then kept for some time, normally a week for the process of fermentation to take place. It was then ready to drink. The drink became part of the social activity in the village but most often was abused. In many circumstances it was excessively drunk by men, who then committed acts of indecency towards women, including sexual abuse. Drinking also was closely associated with dancing that went on for the whole night causing social tension between individuals and families. Apart from this,

⁶⁴ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 181, 191.

⁶⁵ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 192. Tattooing was also a practice in parts of the Solomon Islands amongst Melanesians, e.g. in San Cristoval (Makira). See Florence Coombe, *Islands of Enchantment: Many-Sided Melanesia* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1911), 132,233.

it also affected their spiritual life. For example, prayer attendance became lower than expected.⁶⁶

The same situation also affected the Santa Cruz people. With the introduction of methylated spirits in 1960s many Santa Cruz men found ways of converting it into a drinkable beverage. At this time, alcohol drinking, due to Colonial Government policy, was a European or part-European privilege. Those who were entitled were given permits or a licence but Melanesians in general were banned. Even when it was open to Melanesians, alcohol was expensive so that Melanesians had to find other ways of drinking. Methylated spirits therefore became an alcohol source in the Santa Cruz Islands and became a problem there.⁶⁷ In this regard, the brothers were also prophetic on the issue of drinking and dancing. Their call was for the people to drink in moderation and at the right times, avoiding methylated spirits.⁶⁸

Other examples could be regarded as 'bad customs' such as the practice of sleeping on the grave after a person died. There were cultural and traditional religious reasons for this so that people could spend a year for adults and six months for children in the grave yards. However the danger in this process was the temptation to see the pagan concept of death as more important and could take precedence over the Christian understanding of death. This could affect the Christian faith that the brothers taught. The Christian teaching of death from the brothers at least helped most people stop the practice.⁶⁹

Magic, witchcraft and sorcery were also widely practised in Melanesia. These three terms may anthropologically be interpreted differently but the general

⁶⁶ See example in Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 115.

⁶⁷ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 192. See also similar case in Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 115.

⁶⁸ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 181-182.

⁶⁹ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 182. There were of course some who secretly and continued the practice. This is just one example from one place or island. Different places and islands also had their own ways of burials. For example the deceased in Savo and Ulawa except for the chiefs were said to be fed to the sharks. See Coombe, *Islands of Enchantment*, 340, 251.

understanding embraces the ideology of seeking a supernatural power either for good or evil purposes.⁷⁰ Codrington gave a simple description:

By means of this (magic or witchcraft or sorcery) men are able to control or direct the forces of nature, to make rain, or sunshine, wind or calm, to cause sickness or remove it, to know what is far off in time or space, to bring good luck and prosperity, or to blast curse.⁷¹

Given the fact that Melanesia was yet in semi-pagan era, the Melanesian context provided a highly apt environment for such practices. For this reason the lives of the people continued to be disturbed and under threat. Fear and anxiety were common norms in the community because of the presence of suspicion and distrust between the members. Relationships were therefore not always mutual. These were some of the impediments indirectly affecting the growth of Christian faith. The brothers in many circumstances were thus called upon to carry out 'clearance.' This was 'exorcism' in which demons or evils spirits were driven out from either places or human beings. 'Clearance' was an ongoing ministry, sometimes repeatedly done among the same people in the same villages. This implied that, either part of the magic had not been cleared, or that the magic had been again re-imposed.

As well as these primary tasks of evangelism, the brothers also participated in what can be known as 'secondary evangelism.' This was evangelism towards Christian people who have fallen back to the old life and whose faith had grown cold. In some sense, this was spiritual poverty that needed serious addressing.

By 1960 the Melanesian Mission looked to the MBH as the most appropriate organisation to carry out the task. The MBH's terms of reference were further extended to address lukewarm Christians. Fr. Brian Macdonald-Milne was appointed to assist the MBH in working out new approaches in training and administration.⁷² This was important for the community if it was to meet the

⁷⁰ See G.W. Trompf, *Melanesian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 78ff for detailed discussion on these concepts.

⁷¹ Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 200.

⁷² Macdonald-Milne, "The Brothers," in *The Southern Cross Log*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, April 1969, No. 100, 18. See also John W. Chisholm, "The Bishop's Annual Report 1971," in *The Southern Cross Log*, Auckland:

growing needs of the ministry at that time and into the future, and for which 'secondary evangelisation' was to be an important new strategy.

The few methods of 'secondary evangelism'⁷³ were through formal teaching and bible study, home visits and person-to-person approaches. Similar issues as those addressed in primary evangelisation were often addressed. This included the deteriorating prayer attendance, magic, witchcraft and sorcery practices, drinking and gambling, problems in relationships and bad customs. Unlike the pre-Christian era, the people did not only become more aware of western life-styles but were also influenced by it. This demanded an approach that was also a little different from that used in the past. However the brothers whilst teaching were to be respectful in their approach. People had to be approached kindly. Advice was to be sincere and practical. Prayers for the sick were to be offered and evil was to be exorcised. Magic, witchcraft and sorcery practices were to be discarded.

Drinking and gambling had always created major family problems that resulted in abuse, assault and injury to wives and neglect of children. The brothers with little experience in family life did great work in this area. Many times their attendance to these situations had not been in vain, peace was restored so that marriages that were on the verge of collapse were mended again.

Another important task of the brothers was their prophetic voice on the cultural attitude toward women. Generally the attitude towards women was in many ways unchristian. Women worked much harder than most men and yet were treated as less important. They were often the last to have a meal and had the left-overs. They were not always given equal rights with men in terms of possessions and privileges.⁷⁴

Melanesian Mission, April 1972, No. 107, 18. Ball and Brian were the first European priests that were appointed chaplains and helped out in finding new approaches that would enhance the MBH ministry.

⁷³ Almost the same idea was discussed as early as 1928 Maravovo Synod. See C.E.B Wood, "An Island Synod," in *The Southern Cross Log*, Honiara: Melanesian Mission Vol. 70 No. 4, Dec. 1962, 104.

⁷⁴ Edmund Kiva, "Far out in the Blue," in *The Southern Cross Log*, London: Melanesian Mission Vol. 76, No. 1, May 1968, 19. Examples will be further discussed under the section of women.

The brothers did a few of these things to revive those who had fallen away. Edmund Kiva the Rural Dean of the Eastern Region once said: "Brothers are working hard to help people from fear into the freedom of the gospel."⁷⁵ In the late 1960 and early 1970, with the creation of training centres in parts of the Diocese, new hope, new life and new inspiration was expected. Eventually a team comprising of a priest, a deacon, catechists and readers was to be formed to disseminate new knowledge of faith in God. This was referred to as team ministry.⁷⁶ Later in the 1970s, there were brothers who became part of this ministry, preaching through word and drama.

v) Social and cultural participation in the community life

Even in the very beginning when Ini began to plan the MBH, he was very aware of the need to have others join him. His first task was to introduce the idea as widely as possible in the attempt to attract young men. The second important thing was to find land to build a place for the community. He chose to give his own land in Tabalia that became the MBH headquarters. As headquarters, it provided a home for the brothers. There the brothers could exercise care and hospitality for both Christians and non-Christians who sought healing and restoration or even just a home. Besides these, Tabalia became the central place of worship and prayers and a place of training and testing of vocation. For Melanesians, Tabalia has always been a sacred ground where the love, peace and power of God has always been experienced through the daily activities embraced by the life of community. As much as possible then the brothers had to apply the same spirit to places they evangelised.

Margaret Lycett offers a brief description of the things brothers did as they entered a new place. On entering a new place, proper judgment of the people's reactions was important. This would help them determine whether to stay or move on. In the case that they were accepted, necessities were often the first things to address. First a house was to be built, as well as gardens

⁷⁵ Kiva, "Far out in the Blue," 19.

⁷⁶ John Chisholm, "Afternoon Meeting" in *The Southern Cross Log*, Honiara: Melanesian Mission, Vol. 76 No.3, April 1969, 71.

planted.⁷⁷ Owing to the fact that 'land is life' in a Melanesian context⁷⁸ and that the brothers were strangers, the allowance of land for a home and garden must not be taken for granted. This voluntary provision of land was an important informal sign of acceptance into their community and environment. More than this, the house symbolises a home - a home in which sharing could take place. It was to be in this home that the sick would be cared for and the hungry were to be fed. These were activities in which works of charity were done in practice, an expression of Christian love, kindness and hospitality.

Another development was the building of a school house. It was simple, built from local building materials, yet it was an important development. It was the beginning of formal learning. The brothers' educational limitation did not matter. This was the opportunity for sharing the little knowledge they had. In this regard simple writing and reading were introduced and taught. This normally brought excitement to villages for many reasons, including overcoming ignorance and other disabilities associated with illiteracy. Literacy was seen as magic.⁷⁹ This was of course most important. For many Melanesians school was not only learning literacy, but it brought people of all ages, men, women and children together. It was a new method of giving new hope for a new kind of life similar to that of the Europeans. Generally this was a strategy more or less adapted from history and one that had also overwhelmingly influenced pagans to become Christians.⁸⁰ For Melanesians, school was indirectly the new god from whom prosperity and success would come.

Following these activities were services rendered in the community. These were services based on the principle of community participation. The

⁷⁷ Lycett, *Brothers*, 42.

⁷⁸ Cf. CSN, A Review of Solomon Islands Civil Society Network in an untitled document, 6 who's statement affirms that 'land as soul and heart for Solomon Islanders'. See also Atkin Zaku, "The Role of the Church of Melanesia in the Conflict in the Solomon Islands from 1998-2003," 2006. 40. See also Draft Paper on "Isabel land and sea: introduction," for Chiefs Convention 2011, n.p. 1.

⁷⁹ Cf. M.J. Meggitt, "The uses of Literacy in New Guinea and Melanesia," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. J. Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 298. This is an example of a Pacific perception of literacy from Polynesia to Melanesia. This was magic and a attraction for them.

⁸⁰ This is a similar view as seen in the beginning of the Melanesian Mission, when Melanesians were first taken to schools in Auckland and Norfolk Island. See also Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 93 states "sound learning essential for sound religion"

emphasis here was to indirectly show practical evidence of a Christian community at work. This was to be channelled through social and cultural services in the community. The brothers were to help families in the family gardens. The brothers were also expected to help women and girls in the kitchen duties. These tasks were often humiliating as such work was usually classified as feminine in nature.⁸¹ Likewise, the brothers were expected to participate with what Melanesians would regard as masculine function. This included the building of houses, homes, canoes as well as hunting and fishing.

There were two important aspects in the activity of community participation. It was the application of faith through works and services. Along with the same line of thought, it helped the people in understanding and acknowledging God's abundant love, grace in abundance. Secondly, the brothers in this context evidently revealed the equality between men and women. This is one example of their attempt in addressing gender issues especially with regards to the unsympathetic cultural attitudes towards women. Special attention was also given to those with special needs; the sick, the disabled and the old.

On a socio-cultural basis the brothers participated in feasting, dancing, singing, mourning and reconciliation. These were important activities as an expression of inclusiveness and participation on the part of the brothers in both good and bad times. It was these services that attracted the people; not money and stocks of goods.⁸² In this context, the presence and the services rendered by the MBH was a force that rectified the erroneous impression of the 'cargo cult' phenomena. In other words, conversion facilitated by the provision of goods was no longer the only method. Proper teaching and living a good life and example could also be the influencing virtues for conversion. The brothers successfully did so in this area and as a result opened up many villages to the Gospel.

⁸¹ It was humiliating for Melanesian men to be identified with social roles that were feminine. It reflected on them as being weak corresponding to the ideology of women as the weaker gender.

⁸² Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen* 165-166 states that material possessions in terms of European goods were expected by Melanesians on becoming a Christian.

Another important display of community life was the brothers' relationship with the community members with whom they lived with. This was a relationship that was to make them become members of the families in the community. It was not to be a relationship on pretence especially with regards to their relationship with the opposite sex. Mothers were to be their mothers and girls were to be their sisters. This was a relationship required of the brothers to be not indifferent to those to whom they ministered.⁸³ The ethos of being friendly and kind to all but familiar and affectionate to none was to be the principle. This was a relationship expected by the rule of the MBH based on agape whilst equally demanded within most Melanesian communities based on the rule of reciprocity.

Indirectly, this was a call to avoid as much as possible immoral temptations in order to uphold the vow of celibacy and chastity. Apart from spiritual reasons, living up to the moral standard promoted several social outcomes. It gave the brothers a place in the community and particularly within individual families. In other words they became family members that indirectly obtained their acceptance into the community. In this way the brothers gained their respect and trust; an advantage in their work of evangelisation in terms of approachability.

The brothers were also expected to establish right relationships with the men. Special attention was given to the authorities in the persons of the chiefs or elders or fathers. This was important, as men were the head of the family and the community. Chiefs were generally the most important people as they administered law and order and the daily activities of the community. For example, in Isabel, the slogan, "I speak, and they do" was a genuine observance.⁸⁴ Establishing a cordial relationship with the chiefs or elders was therefore crucial. However the brothers were often aware that they must not impose forced conversion. The brothers were to respect the pace in which the chiefs, elders and the people accepted the gospel, considering also the impacts of their culture and customs. The respect given to the chiefs or elders

⁸³ This can be regarded as a concept, silence in nature but is a very concept that bred harmony, peace and unity.

⁸⁴ Coombe, *Islands of Enchantment*, 347.

corresponded to the respect of their culture and customs. This strategy was again not to be on pretext as some may think but was meant to be 'accommodative'.⁸⁵

However to be respectful to customs and cultures did not mean that every aspect of them was acceptable. Teaching and corrections were always possible through love, kindness and gentleness. Condemnation was avoided. At the same time, brothers lived a life of humility, simplicity and openness to be approachable for people who were in need.

These were examples of social and cultural responsibilities that impressed pagans in several ways. It brought home the idea of a new community with additions and subtractions. New relationships with individuals and also with leaders were established. Elements of customs and cultures were given room for integration depending on their congruency with Christian principles. Matthew Jones says:

The development of the Brotherhood was a response to the need for an indigenous Religious Order but also provided an outlet for synthesis. In this case, the Brotherhood is not purely "Melanesian", neither it is purely "European", but fusion of both. The Brotherhood demonstrates Melanesian qualities but they operate only in relationship to the type of Christianity from which the Order developed.⁸⁶

In this case, the implication is that Christianity had been tailored for Melanesians to understand. Love, peace, unity, equality and freedom of course were important components of the newly introduced religion. Although these did not totally obliterate mistrust, fears and anxieties, non-Christians were attracted to Christianity because they were able to see new openings for a better life in Christianity. These are examples of evangelism through which the Christian faith was embraced by the brothers being accommodative and through the 'mission of presence.'

vi) Religious obligations: A Ministry of Prayer and Pastoral Care

⁸⁵ See similar concepts in Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 390-191. See also Hilliard, *God's gentlemen*, 57.

⁸⁶ Jones, "Mana from Heaven?," 301.

Commitment to a life of prayer was of paramount importance. Prayer was everything to the MBH community, including serving Christ and the Church in various ways. Apart from going to Church and uttering prayers, psalms, reading of the scriptures, singing hymns with gesture and symbols there was much emphasis on prayer. Prayer and worship therefore was the greatest pillar of the MBH. The vows with its embracing special features, the services rendered and the spiritual life lived by the brothers were sustained by the power of prayer.

Prayer was a life of expressing thanksgiving, confession and intercession directly, reflecting the brothers' love for God and at the same time it connected them to God. It was a way of being united with God. And since prayer was cooperatively done, the brothers were also able to be united with the wider community in prayer. This was where the needs of others were undertaken.

For this reason, prayer covered a good deal of the time normally beginning with the first office which was the Matins at 5.30am. Following this was the Holy Communion and the Morning Office at 6.15am and 8am respectively. The Midday Office was at 12 noon followed by the afternoon Office at 1.30, evensong at 5.30pm and finally the Night Office at 9pm.⁸⁷ These were the formal prayer times of the community said every where they went even in the midst of non-Christian communities. Apart from this, there were times set apart for silence in which private meditation, personal reflections and retreats were made. As a result of faithful prayer, the brothers were spiritually powerful, doing things that can be seen as miraculous in nature. The sick were healed and restored and evil spirits were exorcised. Areas restricted only for traditional activities were trodden on without being hurt, even by the predators that they encountered.

⁸⁷ See for comparison R. Carter, "Where God still Walks in the Garden: Religious Orders and the development of the Anglican Church in the South Pacific" in *Anglicanism: A Global Communion*, ed. Andrew Wingate, Kevin Ward, Carrie Pemberton and Wilson Sitshebo, (London: Mowbray, 1998), 45. There is no guarantee the times are the same through the decades of the community's life. But a slight change may be inevitable should there be any. The important thing is that this was and is still the general pattern of prayer in the headquarters and elsewhere the brothers are, even in the bush pagan villages.

Whilst there were blessings of healing and restoration through these miracles there have also been misinterpretations. People who unfortunately experienced tragedies were believed to be cursed by the brothers.⁸⁸ Such experiences, whether positive or negative, and whether they were theologically unsound or not remained religious mysteries for Melanesians. These religious mysteries aroused interest and curiosity amongst the Melanesians that led them to search for the Christian faith and truth, in the hope of finding answers to their needs.⁸⁹ This of course was a mission that cost the brothers dearly.

Significantly prayer was not a superficial formal but was also exercised and lived within greater depths. Prayer was lived out in almost everything they did because it was the most powerful evidence of one who was in possession of the MBH spirituality and, of course, Christianity. A life of humility, simplicity and poverty made it even more appropriate of a life totally dependent on God. Prayer was therefore the basis of everything, including the source of *mana*. The *mana* was believed to be used for the ministry of exorcism or healing and turning predators away. There were many oral and written accounts of the *mana* displayed by the Brothers.⁹⁰ These comprise deeds that can be classified as miracles and were believed to be a result of committed and constant prayer. Apart from this, related to the work of prayer, was also the ministry of pastoral caring. There were several ways in which pastoral care was undertaken.

Tabalia, the MBH headquarters with the other Brotherhood stations plays important roles in hospitality. People of all walks of life have been guests of the MBH. Politicians, government officers, businessmen, bishops and missionaries, villagers, the sick, the rich and poor, men, women and children,

⁸⁸ Charles Montgomery, *Last Heathen: Encounters with Ghosts and Ancestors in Melanesia*, Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004, 154,155. See also "Transforming Missionaries," 353. Cf. also White, *Identity Through History*, note 3, 252; Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 352.

⁸⁹ A heathen man once witnessed a miracle by Brother Ini and said "wat kaen devol ia? Mi laekem devol olsem" interpreted as "What kind of power is this. I would also like the same power." See Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 144.

⁹⁰ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 144 accounts for some of the miracles performed by Brother Ini the founder. See also Fox, *Kakamora*, 72.

Christians and non-Christians have all been guests of the MBH.⁹¹ They came for many reasons from genuine ones to fake ones.⁹² Simultaneously, reasons were not important nor status, ethnicity or gender. However with the very limited resources such works of charity had problems. The main problems were the lack of proper accommodation, bedding and other facilities and in the circumstances of food scarcity. On many occasions, the Brothers had to go without a bed and a meal for the sake of their guests.⁹³ This is hospitality only to be reciprocated by love and not by material possessions or money.

This is an illustration of Christian love and what it means to live for others, inescapable from the vow of poverty. It is in hearing parts of these eventful presentations, that people are drawn to the MBH households. Whilst some are seeking new experiences, others are re-seeking past experiences. This is primary and secondary evangelism in disguise that silently reflects conversion and reconversion.

These are mission tasks indispensable, both in their own households as well as in other places; village, town, boat, hospital, prison or trek.⁹⁴ Hospitality is a supportive measure to the many other aspects of MBH.

vii) Weaknesses

The MBH is a religiously-orientated organisation and has obviously played a very important role in the development of the Church in Melanesia as discussed earlier. However, it remains fallible because of its human nature. For this reason, it also has its weaknesses that give rise to the need for changes in mission strategies. In other words the weaknesses are important because they too have indirectly contributed to mission growth.

The MBH's foremost task was to open up new non-Christian villages. In the New Testament, John the Baptist could be the model; one who was in the forefront. The MBH did almost the same; treading on spaces untrodden before, thus taking upon themselves all the risks. After three months when the

⁹¹ Carter, "Transforming Missionaries," 344.

⁹² Some came for healing, hospitality, spiritual retreats, prayer and meditation.

⁹³ Carter, "Where God still Walks in the Garden," 52.

⁹⁴ C.E. Fox, *The Melanesian Brotherhood* (London, Auckland: The Melanesian Mission, n.d.), 10.

MBH would leave, the continuation of evangelism was left to teachers, catechists or clergy. This however was not always possible due to the shortage of manpower. As a result, people would either return to traditional practices or became members of another denomination that made the follow-up.⁹⁵ In this context, converts even if they returned to traditional beliefs and practices had foretasted Christianity. Any second approach could then have been easier; not with hurdles as difficult as the first.

Two good reasons have often supported the non-practice of a life commitment. Geoff Smith expresses that young men at the end of their brotherhood ministry will have the opportunity to fulfill cultural commitments by marrying and continuing “the line.” Likewise ecclesiastically “it provided a status and an opportunity for the Brothers to show their faith in Jesus Christ that would have given them the foretaste of a full time ministry in ordination.”⁹⁶ Needless to say the brotherhood has been a source of candidates for the ordained ministry.

However, the absence of a life commitment has also affected the ministry. First, Brothers are often released at a time when their faith would have matured. This also applies to the experiences and knowledge gained. In other words their faith, experience and knowledge would have been utilised better if their membership was subjected/conditioned by life commitment.⁹⁷ The need to train new members was therefore inevitable, constraining the limited resources available. The Brothers are merely humans, vulnerable to spiritual and physical weaknesses and this could lead to their earlier release or dismissal, affecting mission programs.

There have been crucial moments in the life of MBH in which its momentum and its mission have been affected. An example of this was the Second World War, when the Japanese destroyed and looted the MBH headquarters in 1942. Other households were closed. The brothers were therefore scattered.

⁹⁵ Fox, *Kakamora*, 75. See also A. Jones, “Brotherhood Conference” in *The Southern Cross Log*, 1956, 40. See also Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 114, 138.

⁹⁶ Geoff Smith, “The True Way of Service: The Pacific Story of the Melanesian Brotherhood 1925-2000,” *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies* Nov 2005, No.34. 55.

⁹⁷ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 331.

Some fled, some resigned without being properly released while some sought employment elsewhere. The Church and other buildings were destroyed, some were shot, books were burnt and the gold chalice and paten carried off. It was perhaps the darkest moment for the MBH. Ini the founder was deeply discouraged by the situation and probably lost heart. He also breached his vows, got married and was later recruited by the Americans.⁹⁸ The position of his release had never been written, though oral information has been passed down that he was properly released.⁹⁹ Speculation however maintains that the death of his two children was to propitiate Ini's improper release. This was a belief held by people including some brothers, clergy and Ini himself.¹⁰⁰ He died not long after from tuberculosis.¹⁰¹

Needless to say, Ini being the founder and the leader, this episode also adversely affected the momentum of the MBH. Nonetheless with the strength of the few remaining brothers, the MBH continued to exist, though it took more than twenty years to regain what it lost as a result of the war.¹⁰² Proper advice and pastoral care probably could have saved the fate of Ini and at the same time saved some lost virtues that had slowed the mission's momentum.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the general meaning of 'true religion' as one of the beacons in which the Melanesian Mission conducted its evangelistic approach. One of the most vibrant groups of Melanesians that implemented this policy was the MBH. Even if their emphasis was more religiously orientated, social and economic improvements and benefits were also to some extent achieved simultaneously. They were interwoven.

The original aim of the brothers was to be the bearers of the gospel to the non-Christian population. The immediate task was therefore taking the gospel

⁹⁸ Charles E. Fox, "Retatasiu Melanesian Brotherhood" in *The Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 70 No.2, June 1962 (London: The Melanesian Mission) 1962, 47.

⁹⁹ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 137.

¹⁰⁰ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 143, 144, 147.

¹⁰¹ Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 143.

¹⁰² Fox, "Retatasiu Melanesian Brotherhood," 47.

to those who have not heard of it. The gospel was to be mobile in nature and the brothers were to be the channel of that mobility.

In entering a heathen place, depending on the behavioural circumstances of the villagers the brothers would then embark on their programs. A MBH household in disguise would be established by the construction of a home, a school and garden.

The brothers' home was an important place of diffusion for the gospel through the provision of hospitality and mutual relationship and where food, conversation, joy and pain were shared. It was a place which was accessible for social gatherings. It provided home and security to those who were culturally and socially vulnerable making it a place of safety, healing and restoration. It was a place where socio-cultural gender and status barriers and other traditional practices often incompatible with Christianity were broken down. More important still, in the circumstances where a church house was yet to be built, the home was a place of prayer and worship. It was indirectly the Church – the '*mana* house' thus a place where the brothers continued to be spiritually nurtured and empowered.

Apart from being a home and a Church, it was also to be a school. School was important as it provided a venue for teaching and instructions about the new religion, as well as literacy. It was a place where scripture was to be studied. It was a place in which God the Trinity is mostly talked about in the attempt to convince the non-Christians to come to believe and have faith in the God of Christianity.

For many Melanesians literacy was indirectly seen as the new way of prosperity and success. It was supernatural in nature so that people themselves often requested it. They wanted to read and write in order to be like Europeans with material possessions. However it must not merely be taken as one reason for conversion, but it was a part within the organisational strategy of developing the whole of humanity.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Cf. Boe, "The Missionaries and their Gospel – The Melanesians and their Response," 125.

These were processes undertaken by the MBH in introducing God to people who have indirectly known God in many other forms. MBH was God's way of intervention amongst the non-Christians in Melanesia. This was to be a new community an analogy of the past but one that was far greater and more powerful. It provided the answers to the many problems that the mission faced.

As Ellison Pogo states:

Bishop John Mainwaring Steward encouraged the idea of moving away from Norfolk Island and developing a church organisation which was more Melanesian with strong native ministry. The Melanesian Brotherhood, founded in 1925, was a result of this move. . . . 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.¹⁰⁴

The next chapter is on the ministry of education.

¹⁰⁴ Pogo, "Ministry in Melanesia: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," 92.

Chapter Four

Sound Learning through the Ministry of Education

Introduction

This chapter investigates the roles of Melanesians in the development of Education and Training. These were services categorised and embedded under the ministry of social service. Through education, Melanesians acquired knowledge and wisdom that was further disseminated to Melanesian communities through the process of teaching.

Many of the European missionaries who availed themselves for ministry in the Melanesian Mission were very well educated. Most of them were also men and women of great dedication and commitment not only to their profession but also to their Christian faith. This was not easy but it was a sure sign of great sacrifice and commitment. Leaving their homes of opportunity and privilege for the sake of Melanesia was a difficult decision, only made possible because of their faith, love and obedience to God.

But this is a noble calling, requiring tact, energy, perseverance, patience, and to be filled with real love and zeal for work, or else no one could stand the strain. . . . While we are sitting comfortable in our homes, with all our dear ones around us, these men are battling against wind and weather in their little boats; going from island to island; suffering all kinds of hardships, fever, skin diseases, which they nearly always get from living amongst the natives. . . . Souls converted to Christ is a victory but its costs something. A man given solitary confinement in prison is less solitary in a way than one of these men in the islands; yet he does it cheerfully, each looking upon Christ's last message as a sacred trust to himself.¹

Their knowledge and skills in the different fields were indispensable in the life of the new mission. However, because of the very challenges and problems making Melanesia unattractive, the supply of European missionaries for

¹ William Sinker, *By Reef and Shoal: Being an account of a voyage amongst the islands in the South-Western Pacific* (London: SPCK, 1925), 33, 34, 63, 64. William Sinker was the Commander of the Melanesian Mission's steamer *Southern Cross*.

Melanesia was never adequate.² It was therefore inevitable that Melanesians were trained to become teachers responsible for the transmission of knowledge and skills to their own people.

Subsequently it is in this chapter that the participation of Melanesians as teachers in the Melanesian Mission will be discussed. 'Teachers' in this chapter basically refers to secular teachers. This must be distinguished from the ordained who were also teachers in the various mission schools. This chapter will focus on: (1) general historical background of the education system; (2) historical development of Teacher Trainings; (3) contributions of the British Solomon Teachers College (BSTC) towards the training of the mission's teachers, and; (4) teachers' contributions in schools.

1. Historical Background of the Education System

The Melanesian Mission focused largely on education from its inception. On board the *Border Maid*, the sleeping area was turned into a classroom for the Melanesians to have lessons.³ From the beginning of the history of the mission, schools have been a central part of the story. It was a common understanding that Melanesians who had some kind of formal education and training also became teachers. This was a strategy of 'take and give' done in words and in practice. In other words people learned new things theoretically and practically in the expectation that they further transmitted that knowledge through the mode of teaching. This was believed to be a contributing factor to the improvement of the people's spiritual, social and economic lives, related to Selwyn's ideology of the 'native ministry.'

The slow progress of ecclesiastical growth in terms of numerical converts, as mentioned earlier,⁴ was an alarming sign for more Melanesian teachers. This became urgent because of the subsequent arrival and the residential permanency of other sister denominations in the first two and half decades of the twentieth century. As a result, the Melanesian Mission could no longer be complacent with the strategy of the 'remote control' administration. The

² See Chapter Two, 51, 67. Cf. "Partnership" in *Southern Cross Log*, April-July, 1944, 13.

³ Armstrong, *The History of Melanesian Mission*, 14.

⁴ See Chapter Two.

'remote control' administration was outdated so that the transferring of the Melanesian Mission headquarters from Norfolk Island to Melanesia was now inevitable.⁵ The headquarters was first established in Siota, followed by Taroniara in 1939.⁶ Taroniara was on the same island and was only several kilometres away from Tulagi - the small colonial capital of the islands. Since then, Taroniara remained an important mission centre and Headquarters. The headquarters moved to Honiara after the Second World War in 1945.⁷

Other important changes were the integration of Pawa boys' secondary school and Pamua⁸ girls' secondary school into a co-educational secondary school. It was named Selwyn College in honour of the founder of the Church in Melanesia and situated some thirty or so kilometres east of Honiara. About March 1970, the theological college was also transferred from Siota to Kohimarama some thirty kilometres west of Honiara.⁹ These were very important changes in that the church's major institutions and development in general became accessible to Honiara. This was a great forward step for the church in its preparation for its independent status that required more participation and commitment of Melanesians.

More than before, effective mission was enhanced by different methods, one being through the MBH as discussed in Chapter Three. The Brothers of the MBH were in a sense teachers of a converting church, specifically designed to convert the people to Christianity.¹⁰ Simultaneously and subsequently, teachers of different kinds became equally important as they nurtured the growth and well-being of the infant church. These teachers were responsible

⁵ John M. Steward who was already working in the Mission was chosen to be the next bishop in Melanesia. Drastic change took place in his time. Norfolk Island school and headquarters was dismantled and wooden buildings reassembled in the shore of Melanesia. This was the third transfer of the Mission from Norfolk Island to Melanesia. A similar trend was again made in the early 70s by Bishop John Chisholm when he moved many developments of the Church from various islands to Honiara. This was not only risky and expensive because of the uncertainties, but it needed courage, vision and confidence. Refer to note on footnote 6.

⁶ H.W. Bullen, "Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara" 21.11.1972: Report for the Diocesan Conference 1973.

⁷ See the introduction in chapter six. Honiara was a US base in World War II and after the war became the new capital. Infrastructure such as the airport left by the war was an advantage. There was also more room for expansion.

⁸ Note that Pamua became a girls school in 1949 and became a girls leading school in the 1960s. See *Melanesian Mission* No. 12, J.D. Froud ed., August 1967.

⁹ Muriel Jones, *Married to Melanesia* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1974), 44ff. See also "Bishop's Address to the Outer Eastern Islands Archdeaconry Conference" Tikopia, 1969, 2.

¹⁰ This is the emphasis on chapter three on the subject of the MBH.

for the intellect, industry and health of the church. As time passed, and as many Melanesians were converted, the mission's responsibility to establish more schools became crucial. This at the same time called for the mission to train more teachers which this chapter attempts to investigate.

In the first seventy-five years, the curriculum covered subject areas in religion, education and industry in a single institution.¹¹ However, every subject area was unevenly allocated with different time lengths. Religious education with its other related roles took much of the time followed by 'useful industry' programs. 'Useful industry' programs covered a small proportion of theory but were mainly implemented in the daily three-hour manual work program.¹² Such a time for manual work of course could be seen as being excessive in an educational institution, but it was a means of supporting the schools given the limited resources provided by the mission for their upkeep.¹³ In addition it was meant to be method-based on-the-job training for new experiences and skill development.

In contrast to the above, the strategy also provided a means of cheap labour by which mission stations were built. Infrastructure such as roads, drainage, play grounds, water supplies, the construction of houses, sewerage facilities and the development of proper gardens and farms were all included in the manual work package. Needless to say the physical appearance of mission stations was also important. Obviously influencing the attention of people also depended on the attractiveness of the stations. Mission stations therefore were not only the pride of the mission, but also provided a stimulus to growth.

Literacy classes though seen as paramount were given lesser time. What was taught was limited, based on the rate of interest and intellectual capability of the students.¹⁴ This was appropriate so as not to put more pressure on the Melanesians that would only create confusion rather than understanding.

¹¹ Areas here referred to are subjects covered by the ethos of 'true religion, sound learning and useful industry' as practised in Auckland and Norfolk Island. This included religious instructions, the three Rs and farming, carpentry, health etc.

¹² Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 33.

¹³ "Solomons Government to give Aid to Mission Schools," in *Melanesian Mission Broadsheet* No.3, July 1963, 2.

¹⁴ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 53.

These programs gave priority to the teachings of the gospel. By placing emphasis on teaching Christian principles, doctrines and practices, the aim of the mission was to make Melanesians become good Christians. Other programs such as English, Arithmetic and Gardening were also provided as a way of enhancing and sustaining human knowledge and spiritual growth. Even so, care was taken to ensure that Melanesians did not become 'clever devils.' This was a term used by missionaries of the time for people who pretended to be too clever and thus seeing God as fiction and unnecessary.¹⁵ Neither people nor church was allowed to become too secular.

In his 1919 charge, J. M. Steward commended the three orders of teachers found in Melanesia. They were the preachers, the school teachers and the readers. However, it was found that there were individuals who held the three positions simultaneously which often resulted in the poor discharge of responsibilities and services. For this reason, Steward responded by wanting to do two things.

Firstly, he felt that it was time that some kinds of specialist training were made so that people were given responsibilities according to the gifts they had. Hence preachers were trained in preaching, teachers in teaching and readers in taking the services.¹⁶ In this way Melanesians began to recognise their potential in the different ministries in the church. Apart from recognising their potential, Melanesians were also able to disseminate knowledge to their own people effectively. The church in a way could grow in terms not only of literacy but also of skills and confidence in teaching and in the leading of worship and services.

Secondly, the call was for a change from the single educational structural entity to a diversified structured entity. In this way, instead of having the various fields of study or work in a one single institution, each field of study

¹⁵ *Southern Cross Log*, April 1951, 8. See also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 263.

¹⁶ John M. Steward, "The Primary Charge delivered by The Right Reverend John Manwaring Steward, Bishop of the Diocese of Melanesia, in his Cathedral at St. Barnabas, Norfolk Island, on Monday, 6th October, 1919." http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/steward_charge1919.html.doc. (accessed 25 Nov. 2008)

would have its own institution.¹⁷ Not only specialisation became more obvious, but the intake of students was increased. At the same time, development in terms of mission stations with facilities was increased and diversified. These stations became the model and example for a civilised and spiritual living for many Melanesians.

Steward also felt the need to add another category of teachers as the overseers over other teachers responsible for two or three villages.¹⁸ There were a few reasons for this change, including the scattering of the schools which led to isolation and other difficulties of teachers.¹⁹ There could have been a concern over the quality of services that teachers rendered. It was probably an administrative undertaking to strengthen and improve aspects of the education system that were malfunctioning. It was an evidence of encouragement and assurance to the teachers that they were not alone in their labour and difficulties.

In the final analysis, the mission thus provided an immediate supervisor with whom the teachers could share their concerns with an anticipation of making improvements on the services rendered. There was some literacy improvement in regards to the numbers of children attending schools and the standard achieved, although this was very slow. It was probably from the above concept that the supervising position was further developed in the 1960s and early 1970s. The position was known as the Education Inspector, held first by expatriates and eventually by educated Melanesians such as Francis Bugotu. Their work was to visit in order to inspect all the mission schools²⁰ on a regular basis to assess the teaching standard of teachers, academic standards of students, the quality of religious life, the physical outlook of students, and the maintenance of the mission stations. The overall aim of the visitations was to develop Melanesians Christian life in its totality.

¹⁷ The process however took a slow pace to implement.

¹⁸ John M. Steward, "Melanesian Mission Occasional Papers No. 4,": Hints on District Work, Guadalcanal[r]: Melanesian Mission, 1926.

http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/steward_hints1926.html.doc. (accessed 25 Nov. 2008)

¹⁹ Francis Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," in *The Southern Cross Log* Vol. 69 No. 1, London: Melanesian Mission, Feb. 1961, 20.

²⁰ Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 20. The author has experienced the visits of Education Inspectors. The visits were also highlights of the schools so that they were regarded as very important.

Despite these changes, however, the achievements of the Melanesian Mission were at best modest, as we have seen. Nonetheless, these modest achievements must not be left unacknowledged since education in the islands was totally in the hands of the Mission Churches²¹ till after the war in 1945. It was not until some ten or so years later that the government through the White Paper acknowledged the role of the Churches in the field of education and started taking an active role in education.

2. Teacher Training and its historical development

From the beginning at St. Johns College to St. Andrews School in Norfolk Island, and finally to the schools of Melanesia, the existence of a priest/headmaster or a priest/teacher was a common mission strategy.²² However this chapter does not focus on ordained teachers but rather on the Melanesian ordinary secular teachers whose labour and commitment for a long time have not been adequately acknowledged.

Some kind of training opportunities for teachers was first provided by the Melanesian Mission in Auckland and then in Norfolk Island in the time of Patteson in 1867. Obviously this training could not even be adequately graded as semi-formal teachers' training. Nevertheless, it was an important, integrated part of the educational system quite appropriate in that time of mission development. Such training at this stage was relevant and simple enough for the Melanesians' capability. In other words, the teacher training structure was basically tailored to suit the Melanesian context. Practical evidence of this was that senior Melanesian scholars were given the opportunity of trying out their teaching skills by teaching the junior Melanesian scholars.²³ This was a practical method in which Melanesians had their first taste as teachers in an 'artificial' Melanesian world. This was probably the trend in which the Melanesian Mission did its training even from the very beginning in Kohimarama, Auckland.

²¹ 'Churches' refers to denominations that were established in the islands. The Roman Catholic, the Methodist, the South Sea Evangelical Mission, the Seventh Day Adventist and the Melanesian Mission (Anglican).

²² See staff lists on the various *Southern Cross Logs*.

²³ J.J. Halcombe, ed. "In the Solomon Islands," in *Mission Life: An Illustrated Magazine of Home and Foreign Church Work* (London: W. Wells Gardner, 1871), 165.

Its application in the real Melanesian world however was mixed. While many noted 'positive' aspects of Melanesian teacher training, there were also contrasting views negating Melanesian capacities by some outsiders, including missionaries. George Augustus Selwyn for example was always optimistic about Melanesians' "intellectual power and moral earnestness."²⁴ On the other hand, Cecil Wilson, a bishop of the then Melanesian Mission from 1894-1911, said that "Melanesian teachers would never attain to that complete independence for which Bishop Selwyn, our founder used to hope."²⁵ Supporting almost the same sentiment was W. A. Uthwatts, also a clergyman in the mission, who stated that "Melanesians were too often proved to be morally unworthy of positions of responsibility in the Church."²⁶

Such a negative ideology however had been proved wrong in many ways. Hugo A. Bernatzik, who spent time in 1932-33 on the island of Santa Ana recording the manners and customs of the Melanesians, referred to "the Melanesian children as much more precocious than the European," adding that "boys and girls are almost equally gifted."²⁷ Apart from the children, he also had a houseboy from Malaita to whom he referred: "I have never known a better lad in all my life. He literally read every wish in my eyes."²⁸ Whilst this may be of some exaggeration, it points out to the different opinions which resulted from different yardsticks used by the different people. The fact remains however that elements of truths and misjudgments were part of the process and that only Melanesians themselves were in a position to prove the pros and cons. But as in most circumstances, failures in the initial stages must be given some provision of acceptance even to a level that is almost unbearable. This does not always mean a total failure; some time must be allowed for things to fall in their right places. It is only right to say then that Cecil Wilson and W. A. Uthwatts were too paternalistic and underestimated the abilities and talents of Melanesians.

²⁴ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 10. See also Sohmer, 'Christianity without Civilization,' 177-178.

²⁵ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 153.

²⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 159.

²⁷ Hugo A. Bernatzik, *Sudsee: Travels in the South Sea*. (London: Constable & Co. Limited, 1935), 20.

²⁸ Bernatzik, *Sudsee*, 19.

In 1922 Pawa was opened as a school for preparing teachers, but it was not until 1954 that the first formal mission teachers' training school was established at Alangaula. The program was not ambitious in nature. The program was only for two to three months and the intake was for men who were already teaching.²⁹ This again indicates the informal and limited content of the program which was relevant for the Melanesian teachers for that particular time. It provided knowledge and skills to men who became teachers in village schools and to some extent in district schools.³⁰ Needless to say these men fulfilled an important obligation in spite of the little training and knowledge they received. Indeed this was a commitment and sacrifice to the call of the mission.

By 1961 teacher training was moved to Maravovo in Guadalcanal but, again, basically on the same footing as when it was at Alangaula. The need for teachers however became more crucial as the mission then had sixty registered primary schools and many other little schools. With this number of schools, European teachers were difficult to find so that Melanesian teachers began to play a vital role. This was particularly evident in some junior primary schools where the entire staff was Melanesian.³¹

During the same period, girls also were given teaching training at Pamua and Bungana, almost on the same basis as the boys at Alangaula or Maravovo.³² Although the results may not be the same as for the boys,³³ the girls also participated by teaching in the little village schools. This was important as women began to see their importance in the development of the church and the community. This was quite a different world from what they were used to

²⁹ Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 20.

³⁰ At a later stage when education became better formalised, the standardising system applied to the education system in the Melanesian Mission then was that standard 1 to 4 was identified as junior primary schools; standard 5 to 7 as senior primary schools and form 1 to 2 as secondary school. Note that form 2 which was equivalent to year 9 was the highest educational level. These major changes shaped what was to be the national education system in the early 60s when the government took some active role in education.

³¹ Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 21.

³² Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 17 & 20.

³³ Statistical record shows that most pioneer teachers in the missions were males. This was also appropriate since the first schools were mainly for boys.

experiencing. This was affirmed in the 1960s, when some girls in Pamua were provided overseas scholarships by the government.³⁴

The last third part of the 1950s was an important era in the general development of education in the Solomon Islands. Whilst acknowledging the roles of the mission's teacher training institutions, the government at the same time was aware of their insufficiency. Recognising the situation, the government established the British Solomon Teachers College (BSTC) in 1957.³⁵ This was crucial as more teachers were required to cope with the growing number of schools and children. At the same time recognition was also given to the mission's teacher training institutions. A new syllabus compatible with the then BSTC³⁶ was drawn up to meet the grade Three teaching certificate program requirement. The two years program then started in 1962.³⁷ However, there are no information in the records sighted at the Bishop Patteson Theological College library and the Government archives that support the success of the program in terms of producing grade Three graduates.

With the creation of the BSTC, the mission in fact had discouraged its teaching programmes. With much complacency the mission was rather happy to put the resources that could have been used for the training of teachers into other forms of development. Given the fact that the Melanesian Mission was dominant in terms of numerical and geographical strength, more places had often been allocated to it than other sister denominations.³⁸ This was practically realistic since the Melanesian Mission had more schools than the government and the other sister denominational missions. After all, at this stage the government played very little part in education, operating only six junior primary schools.³⁹ Contented with the BSTC program, the Melanesian Mission became inactive in the training of teachers.

³⁴ See list of girls J.D. Froud ed., in *Melanesian Mission*, No.8 Aug. 1965, 1.

³⁵ Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, n.p. n.d., 20 ff.

³⁶ See footnote 16 for detail.

³⁷ Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 20. See also Roger Mountfort, "Church and Education," in *Melanesian Mission: Southern Cross Vol. 69 No. 1*, London: Melanesian Mission, Feb 1961, 14-15; Roger Mountfort, "Teacher Training," in *Southern Cross Log Vol. 69 No. 1*, London: Melanesian Mission, Feb. 1961, 21.

³⁸ Greaser E. Bussell, *To the Islands of Patteson: Diary of a Visit*, n.p. 1974, 59.

³⁹ Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, 22.

Teachers' training in the mission did not resume until the opening of Hautabu College (HC) in 1971. The training program was six months in duration conducted by Titus Lopakana and Veronica Kafa. Titus was the principal but was later replaced by Loyld Loe. All were grade three Melanesian teachers.⁴⁰ The purpose was again historical, opening up new opportunities for the untrained teachers and standard seven dropouts. Many, of course, were unable to have direct entry into secondary schools and BSTC.

The graduates were recipients of the grade four teacher's certificate. These teachers filled up the teaching vacancies in the mission's junior primary schools. Many of these teachers later had the opportunity of upgrading their teaching qualification to grade three teacher's certificate at the BSTC. This could not have been otherwise. This program was unfortunately short lived so that by 1972 it was closed. The discontinuation of the program was probably due to the fact that most of its junior and senior primary schools were taken over by the government.⁴¹ The teachers' welfare therefore was the responsibility of the government who had the resources more adequate than the church.

In the above instances, the training of teachers was done on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the circumstances and of course the resources available. This contributed to the insufficiency of teachers both in terms of number and intellectual development. Despite of this, teachers contributed to the human resource development of the church for its many areas of ministry. Unfortunately sometimes the teachers' contribution were not recognized and appreciated because of the failure to see the long term benefits that they

⁴⁰ "Report of the Education Department", Honiara, Diocesan Conference Jan 1973, 2-3. For the same kind of program BSTC took five and half months. Cf. Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, 53. The report however does not mention the names of the instructors, but the author who was a student of Maravovo primary school is very much aware of the situation. Maravovo was only about half kilometre away and the trainees from time to time had their field work with the school.

⁴¹ Moffat Wasuka (with Toswell Kaua and Simeon Butu), "Education" in *Ples Blong lumi: Solomon Islands, the Past Four Thousand Years*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva, Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of South Pacific, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1989, 107.

imposed on the church and society. The sentiment often given to teachers as 'dropouts' may have contributed to this.⁴²

3. Trainees of the British Solomon Teachers College (BSTC) and their contribution

As mentioned earlier, the government became more involved in teacher training by opening the BSTC in 1957. It was established in preparation for the proposed government educational development policy provided for in the 1962 'White Paper.'⁴³ The BSTC was a new project which brought about fresh energy and initiative in the development of education. This was particularly true for the Melanesian Mission that stood to derive far more benefit from this development.⁴⁴

From another perspective, the BSTC was also another facility which gave primary schools 'dropouts' new opportunities for further education. It is important to note that until 1969, BSTC intakes were largely from the standard seven dropouts of the senior primary schools. Whilst the senior primary schools students with the best final marks took up the limited spaces in the secondary schools, the second best went into direct employment with the government or private sector. The third group which was least wanted either became teachers⁴⁵ or church workers or villagers. BSTC was therefore established as though merely for the standard seven dropouts, who were only eligible for grade three teachers training. Training grades one and two teachers was thus unachievable as the intakes did not meet the initial prerequisites. The few who became grade one or two teachers were former secondary school students trained overseas. BSTC however catered well for the junior primary schools, though not so much for the senior primary schools.⁴⁶ Ultimately the unfortunate implication was that the teaching profession was left for the lower achievers or those non-selected ones to various fields. Regardless of this, the

⁴² See same page below.

⁴³ Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, 20.

⁴⁴ See above discussion which states that they were given more places because of their numerical strength.

⁴⁵ Fox, *The Story of the Solomons*, 68 with Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, 24, 28, 36. Church workers or villagers are the author's own observation.

⁴⁶ Entrance requirements for grade 1 and 2 teachers were students with secondary education. The latter were trained overseas whilst the former can be trained in BSTC. Grade 1 teachers were eligible to teach in both secondary and Senior Primary Schools whilst grade2s were for Senior Primary.

government realised that it had to play a more active role for the general development of education in the whole Protectorate to progress.

The advantages of the BSTC training over training offered by the different denominational missions including the Melanesian Mission were various. These advantages when analysed further indirectly contributed to the development and growth of the Church as will now be demonstrated.

First, BSTC provided better facilities, equipment and qualified human resources. The standard achieved was thus higher than the informal training provided by the denominational missions.⁴⁷ Melanesian teachers were therefore better equipped in terms of knowledge and skill to produce better students who, in turn, were more effective and productive in many walks of life. This gave the Melanesian Mission the advantage of both short and long term benefits either directly or indirectly. In regards to short term benefits, the church was able to divert funds for other ministries such as pastoral caring whilst on the long term, men and women were prepared to take up responsibilities such as nurses, tradesmen, teachers and clergy.

Second, for the past fifty or so years, different denominations have had their own training institutions.⁴⁸ Amalgamation was not only almost impossible but was a very rare expectation. BSTC therefore provided an environment where members of the sister denominations in the different settings came together. Besides being an academically oriented institution, the integration of the different social and cultural norms also came to be experienced. Later this was further developed into religious experience where churches began to come together. In 1966, students of the BSTC from the three main denominations – the Roman Catholic, Methodist and the Anglican – came together as the principle actors in the Lenten play “A Pilgrimage of the Passion play.” At the end of the play an Anglican priest stated:

⁴⁷ This is a comparison between the government and the Missions in the then British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP).

⁴⁸ An example was the Catholic Training College named Villa Maria that produced grade 3 female teachers. See Searle, *Education in the BSIP: History and Structure*, 31.

When the Roman Father, the Methodist minister and I first started working together on this project, there was a holding back, a shyness of the unknown between us, of what each one of us was thinking; but at the close of this lent, we were not just calling each other by our Christian names, we had been to Golgotha together, and things will never be quite the same as before in consequence.⁴⁹

It was a very healthy environment enabling living, sharing and learning together, in ways otherwise impossible. It was a time to learn patience, acceptance and tolerance. Illiteracy was not a lone phenomenon, nor was it an individual religious issue, but was a common problem for the whole of Melanesia. The coming together in a single training institution therefore strongly enhanced the feeling of a common struggle to overcome a problem that caused many difficulties in the life of the people.

Closely related to the above was that teachers became aware of their identity and the importance of this identity. In other words, their previous identity based and defined by their religious affiliations – so that they were merely ‘Anglican teachers’ or ‘Methodist teachers’ or ‘Roman Catholic teachers’ – had been transformed to being Solomon Islands teachers. Teachers therefore were even more encouraged to help other brothers and sisters build a more healthy united Solomon Islands. A healthy Solomon Islands is reflected by a healthy church and the vice versa. This can be an indirect contribution of teachers even when under training.

Third, BSTC provided an environment in which essential ecclesiastical similarities and the differences were learnt, shared, accepted and tolerated. In the absence of this, the already fragile relationship between the churches could have deepened further. Peace and unity would have continued to be under great threat. Ultimately the coming together of members of the denominations helped alleviate the previously deep, hostile and suspicious relationship between the denominations.⁵⁰ BSTC therefore in the course of

⁴⁹ D.T. Ferguson, “Witness and Worship,” in *Southern Cross Log*, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), no. 93, June 1966.

⁵⁰ Fox, *The Story of the Solomons*, 67. Fox stated that one of the problems facing Melanesia was the division created by denominationalism. Fox also stated that this was also affirmed by a Solomon Islander. See also J.W. Chisholm, “The Bishop Talk to Teachers: Conference 30 April 1971,” 4.

training also nurtured the spirit of 'co-operation' in the hearts of the teachers to be.⁵¹ These were Melanesians who were later to have much influence over the younger generation in the schools to which they were assigned. The future of Solomon Islands and the churches was to be reflected by the contributions of the teachers.

Based on the spirit of co-operation, BSTC also prepared teachers to teach in the schools that were outside of their own denominations or geographical areas. Such a need was real as O. Sahu, a student of BSTC, pointed out by declaring the need for an exchange scheme of teachers between the denominations.⁵² In some circumstances, there had been schools under the responsibility of committee members consisting of different denominations and institutions. An example of this was the Yandina Primary School that was administered by a joint-Committee of 3 institutions: Levers Plantation, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.⁵³ This was further strengthened by the creation of a uniform curriculum for the entire Protectorate. Academically and ethnically, no teacher was a stranger to another school. Likewise, the same applied to students. Transferring from one school to another therefore was no longer an issue. In this way the church, through its people and led by teachers, began to see common difficulties that were resolvable by united efforts. This was an example of a relationship created and nurtured by teachers who were members of different denominations. Despite the differences, such a relationship, merely sought for interests designed to achieve a common purpose, strengthened the sense of respect and tolerance.

Fourth, the former senior primary students whom we earlier discussed as having difficulties at school became not only teachers but also important contributors in other walks of life. A good number of the teachers later

⁵¹ Cf. "Solomons Government to give Aid to Mission Schools," in *Melanesian Mission Broadsheet*, No.3, July 1963. 2.

⁵² P.L. Tugunau, "Co-operation Needed," in *Melanesian Messenger*, Easter 1963[1965], 23.

⁵³ D.C. Ruxton, "Education" Report for the Diocesan Synod 1965 held in Pawa. See also Dudley Tuti, "Tour of Guadalcanal and Russell," in *The Southern Cross Log* Vol. 76 No.1, London: Diocese of Melanesia 1968, 27. In here he mentioned that the Yandina School was administered by a joint-Committee of 3 institutions: Levers Plantation, the Roman Catholic and the Anglican.

became priests and a couple became bishops in the Church of Melanesia.⁵⁴ Others became government officers holding high positions in the government. Some became influential politicians in the country's highest decision making body. All the same, their contribution towards the church could be indirect though remaining equally as important as to those whose contributions were of a direct nature. Within a faith perspective, it could be said that God had used the low level students as teachers who then became important backbones of the church mission. Knowledge and experience gained as being a teacher of course had helped such people in their preparation for greater religious responsibilities entrusted to them later. As Hopkins argued in 1927, "many of the native clergy have been assistant-masters in the secondary schools, an experience of the greatest value."⁵⁵ Retrospectively, with the knowledge and experience gained, teachers also were prepared for political, social and economic responsibilities that unavoidably had an impact on the development of the church.

4. Teachers and the different categories of schools

Having briefly discussed the contribution of trainees at the BSTC, it is necessary to discuss the contributions of its graduates who became teachers in the mission schools.

The teachers' primary responsibility of course was the imparting of literacy knowledge to the students. Simply this referred to the transmission of knowledge in the subjects of English, Arithmetic, Writing Skills and Religious Instructions. This was generally the educational syllabus of the mission adapted from the Auckland and Norfolk Island Melanesian schools. However the transferring of the mission headquarters to Melanesia in 1920 further highlighted the need of expansion. It was under this urge then that village schools, district schools and central schools were set up in several different

⁵⁴ An example that could be taken as a benchmark is the fact that out of the 23 Melanesian bishops that the Church of Melanesia have had since 1975, 11 of them were either trained or untrained teachers. The untrained however were active teachers in the mission theological school thus were generally regarded as teachers. This is the author's own information worked out from his historical knowledge and experience. Apart from the bishops, the author also is aware of many former teachers who became influential clergy at the provincial, diocesan, or district levels in the church.

⁵⁵ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 59.

locations. It should be noted that different terms had been used by different people for the different level/kind of schools.⁵⁶ For this reason small differences in terms of information for the different kinds of schools could be expected. However, such small differences did not have much impact on the general overview of the education system until the 1960s when some major changes took place.⁵⁷

By the 1930s there were generally three levels of education that involved some kind of formal teaching. They were the village, district and central schools. For a number of reasons, the rate of involvement by Melanesian teachers in the different levels was not always the same.⁵⁸

i) Teachers and Village schools

First, the village schools were for the very beginners more or less on the same level expected from kindergartens and preparatory classes. In essence there were village schools in every Christian village often established at the request of villagers. It consisted of a single house built by the community with local materials. The daily supervision was the responsibility of a native teacher who was under the supervision of a missionary. Basically the didactic materials consisted merely of ABC sheets, chalk, blackboards and reading books. The aim was to teach the three 'Rs' preparing both boys and girls of the village(s) to have the necessary educational background in preparation for the district schools.⁵⁹

However, from records the aim was far from being attainable and to some extent the village schools were heavily criticised. W.C. Groves, who previously was an education officer in Papua New Guinea, was appointed by the British Solomon Islands Protectorate government to investigate the general education system in the Solomon Islands. His official appointment began in

⁵⁶ By the 1920s village schools were referred to as primary schools while central schools were referred to as secondary schools sub-divided into junior and senior schools.

⁵⁷ "Education in Melanesia: The Solomon Islands and The New Hebrides," Southern Cross No.4. http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/sx_booklet4.html. Doc (accessed June 9 2011)

⁵⁸ Similarities were between the village and district schools though there were some differences. Major differences were between the former two and the central schools who had European teachers.

⁵⁹ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 31-32. Cf. "Education in Melanesia," 3ff.

February 1939.⁶⁰ His impression regarding the village schools confirmed the observation of the Church of England⁶¹ that acknowledged “the village schools were ineffective.”⁶² Groves described the village schools as being ‘poor’ and even as being “extremely depressing, completely inadequate and completely failed.”⁶³

The lack of evidence of regular schooling, the lack of trained and proficient teachers and the lack of materials even for an ‘elementary literacy program,’ was obvious. Rather than formal education, the emphasis was on devotional services.⁶⁴ The causes of this problem were several. First the nature of the work was new to many Melanesian teachers and their little knowledge and training made it even more difficult for them. Second, they had little support from the students’ parents, especially in terms of attendance. The village or family commitment was the priority over schooling. The lack of a compulsory attendance rule compounded the lack of parental support. Third, there was a lack of government support that led to many defects in the mission educational system. Should there have been government support, some of the defects could have been alleviated. Tippet’s general observation on education in the Solomon Islands implied that, with the amount of overseas support in terms of funds, personnel, labour, equipment and materials put into the system, the dividend was poor in terms of spiritual investment. This service was more or less a token rendered to Melanesians by the missions because of the government’s inability to provide it.⁶⁵

However, in spite of the weaknesses of the system, it also contributed to the rising general status of the educational system. Despite not fulfilling minimum expectations, a new form of learning in a school environment had begun.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 1.

⁶¹ This refers to the Anglican Church in England not the whole church as some understands the term.

⁶² Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 31.

⁶³ Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 31. See also “A Letter from His Lordship the Bishop” in *Southern Cross Log*, (New Zealand and Australian Journal), No. 70, January 1941, 18.

⁶⁴ See also Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 31.

⁶⁵ Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 1967, 119ff. There are also other views of Tippet which are debatable.

There was no option or alternative so it was the only form of schooling that Melanesians had access to. For this reason although their little achievements could have been undermined, the village schools must still be noted. Teachers must also be commended who worked in difficult circumstances with scarce resources, as mentioned earlier. It was the beginning of bigger things to come in the life of the church and, in some ways, this challenged the view of scholars such as Tippet's, as mentioned earlier.⁶⁶ There is no reason therefore to think otherwise than that consideration be given to the reality that "the teachers had been exemplars in terms of 'zeal and faith'."⁶⁷

ii) Teachers and district schools

The next higher level of education was the district schools. This was a new development in the mission's education system.⁶⁸ Maravovo and Alangaula, which were the boys' schools, fell into this category. The girls' schools of Bungana and Tasia, established later, also shared the same nature. These schools were often located away from villages and so they became boarding schools. The facilities such as the chapel, teachers' houses, dormitories and classrooms were mostly built by the local people with local materials. Support by the local communities even went as far as the supply of food and help in the making of gardens. The mission on the other hand was responsible for the provision of teachers, both Europeans and Melanesians.

Given that the district schools were a new development, it can be inferred that the district school perhaps was intended to be a 'gap filler' between the village and the central schools. The intakes were from village schools and the teachers were Melanesians who were supervised by native priests.⁶⁹ Groves in his report, although making some positive remarks about these schools,

⁶⁶ This refer to above discussion referred to note 64.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, "An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945," 32.

⁶⁸ The Bishop's Annual Report 1938, 5. Note that there seem no district schools prior to 1938. See Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 49-50.

⁶⁹ "Education in Melanesia," 3.

recommended that a change of program was necessary to be “indigenous environment” friendly.⁷⁰

The importance regarding this level of education was more or less similar to that of the village schools. However, the district school responsibilities were more demanding in some ways. Teachers were required to be a little more knowledgeable in order to be able to teach at a higher level. At this point in time, English started to be taught and the Mota language was gradually relinquished. It was a transitional period and Melanesian teachers were expected to assist European teachers in the transition. This was a time of preparing those who were to on go further to the central schools.

With these changes, however, even in the absence of a definite formal and uniform educational syllabus, there was still evidence that some kind of syllabus was drawn up even from the 1930s.⁷¹ District schools therefore became junior primary schools whose standard was up to class four. This became clearer in the 1960s when it became essentially important for the class four students to sit a uniform examination in order to proceed on to class five. Class five was then the beginning of the senior primary level which was then the status of Pawa. Pawa School was then the only senior primary school solely for the boys. Later Pamua became the second senior primary school for the girls. Maravovo and Alangaula remained as boys’ junior primary schools while Bungana and Tasia were upgraded to be the girls’ junior primary schools.⁷² These were boarding schools which could be referred to as the inter-island schools with intakes from all parts of the diocese. By then the mission had become the diocese.

By early 1960 further changes took place with most existing schools ungraded to the next level. By then, the education structure in terms of schools began to be well-defined so that: village schools became junior primary schools; district

⁷⁰ Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 33-34.

⁷¹ Note that attempts were made in 1933 in trying to introduce a regional common examination that resulted in cooperation between the Methodist and the Seventh Day Adventist schools. The Anglican with some disagreement in the beginning had Pawa incorporated into the scheme. See Anonymous, “An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945,” 7-8.

⁷² Bugotu, “Education Work in the Solomons,” 20.

schools were upgraded to senior primary schools, and; the central schools became the secondary schools. Apart from this, additional junior and senior primary schools were also built. Important still was the fact that there was another examination at the end of the senior primary school to determine who would go on to Pawa or Pamua secondary school.

The term central school is not clearly understood though it refers to the secondary schools. In this context, Maravovo and Pamua were categorised as boys' central schools but this designation is questionable whether they were actually secondary schools. However, Pawa became definitely the central school so that it became secondary school in the 1960s for boys. Also in the same decade, Pamua followed suit by being upgraded as the mission's girls' secondary school. Maravovo and Alangaula though were upgraded were no longer regarded as central. Rather they became senior primary schools as feeders for Pawa secondary school.

Pawa School was basically different and exceptional. Its syllabus consisted of religious studies comprising of the Catechism, Prayer Book, Bible, General History of the Church which included the early, medieval and reformation period. The secular subjects included English, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Nature Study and Agriculture, General Knowledge, Civics and Science.⁷³ Grove however was convinced that Pawa remained 'native' – with 'no influence at work to wean the boys away from the native environment and interests'.⁷⁴

The above discussion points to the importance of identifying the different levels of schools, namely the village school, the district schools and the central schools. These schools had different levels of study and were supervised by different levels of staff power capability. Generally, village schools from the beginning were in the hands of Melanesian teachers. The district and central schools also were quite the same but with European

⁷³ "Education in Melanesia." 4-5. See also *The Southern Cross Log*, April 1, 1939, 2.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, "An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: W.C. Groves, 1939-1945," 36. See "Interim Report No.5. Supplement. Report on All Hallows' (Melanesian Mission) Training College, Pawa," in *File WPHC/4/IV.2736*. (WPA-Suva), 1-6.

supervision and leadership. As changes took place and more Melanesians were trained, most of the teaching responsibilities fell into their hands especially in the 1960s. We will now examine some of the impacts made by the Melanesian teachers in the development of education.

The changes made were inevitable and some improvements were achieved in the education system in terms of a formal syllabus, supervision and incentives.⁷⁵ Despite the supervision of European teachers, we cannot rule out the participation of Melanesian teachers. Melanesians, like the Europeans, were also important agents of change in the area of education. Equally important was the fact that they were also implementers of the new syllabus necessitated by the changes. Without Melanesian teachers this would have been impossible as there were inadequate numbers of European teachers in the diocese. Teachers therefore had still much personal influence on many other little rules and developments both within and outside the syllabus.

In addition, despite the many difficulties encountered, the work of the teachers had always aimed at achieving academic excellence that could be put into practice. This was the general understanding so that the main subjects taught in all mission schools were essentially English, Arithmetic and Religious Instruction. The perception was that English and Arithmetic were components required by the teachers for literacy classes or academic purposes. Time allocations for formal classes were solely made to suit the capacities of Melanesian students. There were three allotted time slots for this program daily. The first period which lasted forty-five minutes began before breakfast; another hour and half period came after breakfast; the last period, normally called 'prep,' lasted for forty-five minutes after the evensong.⁷⁶ The formal time for schooling therefore was three hours daily except for Saturdays and Sundays. This was the general program for most schools until the 1960s.

⁷⁵ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 280. Inclusively, problems such as irregular attendances, the lack of new teaching materials for over 40 years, the absence of formal syllabus and without supervision and incentive were some contributing factors. The author had sighted two English text books: 1) *A First Reader of the Melanesian Mission*, Melanesian Mission, Hautabu: Guadalcanal, 1938; 2) *Easy English Reader Book 3 for the Melanesian Mission*, Melanesian Mission: Summer Hill, NSW, 1951.

⁷⁶ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 53.

There were changes at later times in which much longer periods were allocated for formal classes.

Whatever was done in terms of the academic level, the assumed agenda was to help students have the capacity to learn information and skills that could improve their current lives and the village environment that they would return to later. Teachers were very aware of the fact that many could not have attained academic excellence, therefore chances for further studies or government or private sector employment were very slim. On the other hand, going back to the village was not a 'choice or a chance but a must.' For this reason, the fundamental aim was to produce students whose characters were Christian-grounded. In this way, it was hoped that once they returned to their villages they would become important agents of change in a positive manner in the local community.⁷⁷ There were simply three considerations in attaining this. First was that the study content was achievable by Melanesians. Second, the content was to be applicable in the Melanesian context and, third, it was to be capable of improving the Melanesian way of life. These were important factors in the ministry of education and to which Melanesian teachers contributed.

Moreover, teachers had contributed indirectly to the growth of the ordained ministry. Records have proved that in many of the boys' schools, teaching was more or less fashioned in a way to influence the boys in taking up teaching and ordination.⁷⁸ In other words, the initial priority of the general educational system in the mission schools was the preparation of students for ecclesiastical and community responsibilities. Apart from ordination and teaching aspiration, boys were also encouraged to become members of MBH, catechists, guild of servers and companions of the MBH. After all, other optional responsibilities were very limited at the initial stage giving the students less opportunity to select. This was affirmed by the fact that much time and

⁷⁷ All that were taught in schools were believed to be applicable in the village life.

⁷⁸ "The Story of the Melanesian Mission 1926," http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/story_melanesian1926/ (accessed July 8, 2011). This theory is directly or indirectly re-echoed now and again in the reports and stories of the mission.

See also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 224.

emphasis was also spent on practical religious and community activities. A reflection made on the spiritual life embraced at Pawa boys' school seriously expressed this incentive:

The innate bias in the boys' mind against entry to King George the Sixth School is now broken down. Most boys dislike to go there because of the lack of regular and full spiritual provision. After the regular cycle of full daily services in the Chapel here, boys feel empty and lost at a Government School where Religion is not the first consideration.⁷⁹

This certainly represented the seriousness of the mission's task of creating men to be engaged in the work of the church – with ordination being one aspect. This was only possible because many more disciplinary activities were involved apart from the daily chapel services and the classroom lessons. Teachers therefore in this context, apart from teaching the subjects based on what was termed the curriculum of the day, also had other responsibilities to accomplish. This was not always easy and, needless to say, teachers also had many other hurdles to overcome at the same time. Positive achievement required extra work on the part of teachers even if there was a priest chaplain available. In many circumstances, a teacher had always been the right hand man to many of the chaplains - an indication of the non-dispensability of teachers. Except for ordination, the same aspirations also applied to the girls in the girls' schools.

Finally, apart from formal teaching, they were also responsible for the proper academic assessment of students. The fact that students' progress was not based on intellectual capability, as mentioned earlier, did not mean that academic assessment was totally ignored. Academic assessment, however, became even more important later when the educational system unavoidably became more of a pyramid in structure. This structure had a very broad base and got narrower as it progressed up the pyramid, an implication that less room was available at the top. Students were therefore required to be assessed academically in determining places for the next higher class. Such requirement also became crucial as new kinds of development in the

⁷⁹ *Southern Cross Log*, May Quarter, 1963, 59.

islands occurred that required persons of high intellect rather than physical strength.

5) Teacher's other major roles in the schools

Apart from teaching responsibilities, the daily administration was in the hands of the headmaster. Most of the responsibilities, however, were shared and carried out by the teachers. Normally by the 1960s most junior primary schools were headed and staffed by Melanesians. The few senior primary schools, however, were headed by European teachers (who were mostly clergy) and staffed by both Europeans and Melanesians.⁸⁰ Given such a situation, many of the responsibilities could not by-pass the Melanesian teachers. The situation was even more so in the 1970s when almost the entire staff in both junior and senior primary schools was Melanesian. The responsibilities that were often carried out by Melanesian teachers in schools need to be discussed.

i) Discipline

Discipline was a very important aspect of life in the schools. It was often based on the moral and ethical standards that were deeply embedded in Christian principles, and specifically in the Anglican regulations and doctrines. Discipline and religious life were therefore very closely interwoven. One could not be executed without the other. However, we can discuss the two separately and show how each contributed to the life of the students and the Church.

The area of discipline could be vast, ranging from daily regulated attitudes towards oneself, others and school equipment. In addition, virtues were acknowledged whilst forgiveness, warnings, reprimands and punishment given. In regard to this, teachers needed to make sure that students complied with daily practices in these areas. This was necessary for the well-being of the school in terms of unity, peace and co-operation. Experiences hitherto had revealed that, although unity and peace prevailed in the schools, elements of regionalism could still be evidenced outside mission boundaries. Suspicion

⁸⁰ Even in the time of Charles Fox in the 1920s, all his teachers were Melanesians. See Fox, *Kakamora*, 41. See also "Education in Melanesia." n.p. This was a staff photograph of Pawa school in the 1950s with Alfred T Hill the headmaster and the only European with seven Melanesian teachers.

and distrust were often factors caused to by such regionalism, often placing peace and unity under threat. The schools thus were one of the most reliable institutions that attempted to address the situation.

Schools were the meeting places of students of different backgrounds in which acceptance and tolerance could be learned. This is where the teachers became important instructors and executors of disciplinary principles. The roles of the teachers however did not go without reprimand, punishment and in some extreme situations corporal punishment.⁸¹ Rivalry and contention between parties or individuals was not uncommon, thus the restoration and maintenance of peace and reconciliation, which was part of teachers' responsibilities was important. This was where the teachers needed to be extra cautious so that proper and right judgment and personal approaches were essential to avoid unnecessary repercussions.⁸²

As a result, students generally learnt to become more respectful of one another. They became more reliable, helping out also in the carrying out of certain responsibilities especially in terms of upholding the school rules. This was particularly demonstrated through the work of the prefects,⁸³ as they lived and worked in the midst of the students. These responsibilities were a foretaste of what it was to be like in the places they served later, either as employees or villagers. Such contributions, regardless of their residential locations, were in fact indirect contributions to the church.

ii) Religious activities

Religious activities were both theoretical and practical. It had been erroneously assumed that all religious activities were entirely the responsibility of the priests. It must, however, be understood that even in the absence of the priests, most of the church duties – except those that could be undertaken only by the priests, such as officiating the Eucharist - were done by the teachers and students. This was a demand even more crucial for

⁸¹ R. H. Standley, *My Heart's in the Islands*, (Oxford: Becket Publications, 1981), 52.

⁸² The author is aware of a few circumstances where students sought revenge against their former teachers even years later.

⁸³ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 55.

schools that were without priests. This included the reading and conducting of the daily services. Hymns were an important part of the services and so teachers were responsible to see that hymns were taught and sung well. Students were taught about the importance of the rubrics, symbols and rituals. In addition to these, students were taught to serve at the altar for the different kinds of services that were led by priests.⁸⁴ The importance of these lay in the belief that spiritual and prayer life were substantiated through church worship and services. Subsequently this then called for the full attendance and participation of the whole student body in compulsory worship. Failure in observing this requirement was punishable.⁸⁵

Apart from the participation of the whole student body, there was also a committee comprising several students known as the sacristans. In the diocese of Melanesia, the term most used was 'Guilds of Servers.' The term also referred to what was normally known as the chapel boys, supervised and coordinated by a teacher. Their duty was centred on the welfare of the chapel, making sure that important items were prepared prior to important liturgies or services. This included the preparation of chalices, patens, wafers, wine, water and vestments. In other words, the sacristans were responsible for the preparation of the vestry, as well as the sanctuary and altar items. Besides caring for the internal part of the chapel, the sacristans were also equally responsible for the external part such as the garden and the surrounding.⁸⁶

Ultimately the sacristans' job was important as it was fully responsible for the heart of school life. These may seem simple tasks but they demanded commitment and time.⁸⁷ At Pawa, "the centre of the school was the chapel, large, light and a place of prayer."⁸⁸ Teachers in this regard were then important instruments for the early development of students for a positive and responsible attitude towards the Church. This made it even clearer that the

⁸⁴ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 91.

⁸⁵ This was the author's experience in Litogahira junior primary school and in senior primary school in the 1960s.

⁸⁶ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 91.

⁸⁷ Cf. "A 'First' for Pamua," in ed. J.D. Froud *Melanesian Mission* No.11, Feb 1967, 2. These practices were also applicable in villages where the chapel was also the heart of the village. Practically, it was not surprising then that the church was normally erected in the centre of the village.

⁸⁸ *The Southern Cross Log*, Vol.72, No.2, May 1964, 43.

non-presence of priests did not in any way demean the importance of Christian spirituality. The church remained the physical icon of a spiritual life (sacramental in a sense) which was in the hands of teachers in the absence of priests.

The presence of unbaptised students in the mission schools was not exceptional, let alone the unconfirmed.⁸⁹ These were spiritual rites required by the Church that students went through; only then could they be spiritually recognised as full members of the Church. The process, however, required teachings and self-examination that were often coordinated by teachers. The content of the course included the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. These were requirements under the Church's Catechism.⁹⁰ At the end of the course the students then went through the rites depending on the final assessments of the teachers. Normally this was an additional responsibility of the teachers in the absence of priests.

It is worth noting however that the same religious responsibilities were equally required in the girls' schools. The cultural barriers brought about by a masculine-dominated society were often insensitive, even opposed to the roles of women in the church.⁹¹ The participation of the girls in terms of religious responsibilities in the girls' schools was tolerated. Such religious undertakings included leading the daily worship and services and scriptural readings. On the same basis as boys, the duties of sacristans as mentioned earlier were also taken up by the girls. All the responsibilities that were elsewhere restricted to males therefore were done by the girls in their own space. This was a responsibility that female teachers addressed with caution and diligence in order to relax the traditional religious influence that already had impact on student girls. This was not always easy either for the students or the teachers who could also become victims of the masculine-dominated influence. The teachers themselves were in fact the first to be transformed

⁸⁹ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 93.

⁹⁰ See copy of the Catechism in the *A Melanesian Prayer Book* (Honiara: Church of Melanesia, 1985), 251.

⁹¹ See the roles played by women in Chapter Seven.

from the traditional conviction in order to convince the students entrusted to them.

In summary, religious activities in the schools, both communal and individual based, aimed to develop Christians in the Anglican spiritual tradition. Spirituality in this context reflected an improved quality of life based on God's ways and purpose. The many activities involved as mentioned above therefore were mere attempts in attaining this. The involvements, the responsibilities, the teachings, the instructions, the reprimands, either in the form of theory or practice, were the nourishment fundamentally important for the growth of such spirituality. They were within the package meant for the right or moral understanding of God and improvement of attitudes and relationship with God and that reflected their faith in God. Self-discipline, Christian commitment, and love for others therefore were important components.

iii) Welfare of students/Parental Responsibilities

Besides being teachers, teachers were duty-bound by parental responsibilities. As such, they represented fathers and mothers in many ways for which some aspect will be briefly discussed in this section. There were several responsibilities held by teachers that authentically represented the parental duties.

First, teachers were responsible for students having enough food. Planning on the kinds of cultivation methods, the types of crops and vegetables with their proper timing were carefully assessed so that continuous food supplies were guaranteed. School food crops could include kumara, bananas, cassava, yams, taro, coconut and different kinds of vegetables. In addition to this, the use of soil and methods of improving it for better yields were important to the farming scheme.

Equally important was the application of the limited knowledge on the rearing of livestock. This area concerned mainly cattle, pigs, goats, chickens and ducks that were common animals on the farms. This food production was an important supplement to the ration supply from the mission that came in

every quarter.⁹² For this reason, the need to be professional in terms of agriculture, nutrition and economics on the part of teachers was important as so as not to starve students entrusted to their care. Their responsibility was to see that the daily provisions of rice or meat or soap were rightly calculated to last until the next supply. There was no such thing as surplus or left-overs so that, if such occurred, it merely represented bad management and planning in terms of the students' welfare. In other words, surplus of food was just as bad as running out of food before the next food supply arrived. This was a responsibility that required experience and skill.

Secondly teachers were responsible for students keeping hygiene rules by daily bathing and cleaning of their bodies. Skin diseases were quite common so that a proper daily bath was vitally important. On the weekend students were encouraged to wash their clothes and bedding. As a means of incentive the mission supplemented the provision of soap that was distributed weekly. In relation to this, accommodation was important. In many circumstances, buildings which were commonly in the form of dormitories built by the mission were inadequate. Accommodation was crucial and so with the teachers' leadership and enthusiasm, extra dormitories were often built and maintained by the teachers and students. The students were taught ways of tidying and cleaning dormitories and bedding. At first this was a duty-bound responsibility and often tough, given the fact that students were not used to it. However with time and practice it became natural. Inspection of dormitories for cleanliness was commonly carried out by teachers every Saturday.⁹³

Thirdly, teachers often played the role of nurses. In many of the mission schools, nurses were not always available, giving the teachers the extra burden in caring for the sick students. Malaria, influenza, pneumonia and toothache were some of the common illnesses in schools but the more fatal ones such as dysentery, TB and diarrhoea were not unusual. In many circumstances, very

⁹² The rations supplied consisted of flour, rice, tinned meat and fish, tea leaf, milk, sugar, cooking oil, yeast, soap, fuel etc.

⁹³ Many of the things mentioned above were experiences the author had in the mission schools.

little was done because of the limited nursing knowledge of the teachers. Apart from aspirin-based tablets there were no other medicines and, even if they were available, prescribing them to those who were sick was beyond their understanding and authority. However, these factors did not hinder or belittle the teachers' spirit of care and concern for their students. Students who were too sick were often cared for in the teachers' own homes⁹⁴ – even with the very little they offered, the environment was a little more comfortable than the dormitory environment. Their work of charity through little ways equally represented the care and concern of the parents.

Owing to the establishment of only a very few schools, located in just a few of the islands and exacerbated by the lack of an efficient transportation network between islands, 'teachers as parents' had great demands put on them. Except for those whose homes were within a walking or paddling distance, most students of both the junior and senior primary schools spent their entire term of three years or so at the schools.⁹⁵ There is also an account stating that more than half of the students were orphans which implied that they could be better off in schools than in their homes.⁹⁶ The lives and welfare of the students for their entire schooling period therefore were in the hands of the teachers. 'Mother Margaret' claimed that "for those vital years 13 to 17 or 18, many schools spend the whole of their time with us except for one holiday," adding that "for those growing years the school was their home."⁹⁷

6. Organisational Responsibilities in Schools

There had been a number of organised groups in the schools, featuring different activities with different structures. However, whatever the differences were, their common purpose was to develop students who became useful in their current schools and in the places that they served later. These organisations were again under the responsibility of the teachers. Of course, whilst these organisations had their own operational rules, they were at the same time required to be compatible with the general rules of the schools.

⁹⁴ These were also experiences that the author had in mission schools.

⁹⁵ This was the normal practice in many of the mission schools.

⁹⁶ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 49.

⁹⁷ *The Southern Cross Log*, London, July 1949, 117. The same also applied to the boys in the boys' schools.

Examples of these organisations include Postulants Guild, Boys Scouts and Girl Guides Movement and Sports and Entertainment.

i) Postulants Guild

The Postulants Guild was a group who felt the call to ordination and thus needed to be helped and directed. The aim was basically to begin the nurturing of that calling from an early age, especially in young boys at the senior primary schools and secondary schools such as Pawa and King George VI. Of course there were also teachers who were members of the guild as well as others who were in employment with either the government or private sector.⁹⁸ Being a member of the Postulants Guild was seen to be a foretaste of the ordained ministry but was by no means a total commitment to the ministry. One merely felt the call and needed guidance and help to make this call became clearer. There was no promise or vow made by the members nor did the mission promise places in its theological training institute. Even if they were to enter the theological institute there was no promise of ordination – that was at the discretion of the bishop in consultation with the theological institute warden.⁹⁹

However the importance of this guild in the church was that members became conscious of the need to be morally upright. This feeling therefore influenced them to live a life of discipline that they might not otherwise have done. The members therefore were obligated to perform extra programs by getting together for prayers, bible studies, instructions and advice for a further discernment of the call. At times retreats were also undertaken through arrangements made by the teachers.¹⁰⁰ It was in this context that contributions of the teachers were important. Without considering the inexperience they had in terms of the priestly or deacon's work, they were nevertheless the closest authority that gave instructions, advice and

⁹⁸ Harry V.C. Reynolds, "Postulants Guild" in *The Diocesan Conference*, Honiara, 1969.

⁹⁹ Reynolds, "Postulants Guild."

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Thomas Hill, *A Pastoral Letter from the Bishop to his Clergy*, March 1966, 6. By the 1960s, steps had been taken in formulating a uniform Post-Ordination Training.

encouragement to the younger members on the regular basis. After all, a good number of teachers were also members of the Postulants Guild.¹⁰¹

Like in many other professions, teachers' final recommendations therefore were strong evidence for the selection of ordinands for training. This was the work of a Postulants Guild guidance officer who normally was a teacher by profession and in the absence of an ordained person. The teachers then were responsible to the priest or the director of the Postulants Guild. In other words teachers played an important role in satisfying the important concept of Jesus: "many are called but few are chosen." This was to some extent the first post-ordination training responsibility sometimes entrusted to teachers.

ii) Boys Scouts and Girl Guides Movement

The Scout movement was one of the most popular groups in almost every boy's school. Supervised by teachers, the group met once or twice weekly. Because of the adventurous nature of its programs, it attracted many boys. Its program covered jamboree, camping, bush hiking, sea adventure, singing, and games. The programs also provided tests and assessments on skills such as the First Aid, bridge and house building and bush walking so that badges were awarded for each achievement. There were of course boys who were well decorated with many badges. This attracted many boys into the movement. Along with this was an oath of obedience to the Queen and to the Scout laws.¹⁰² Part of the Scout's law was helping the sick or the poor.

One of the features of the Scout Movement was that it was a world-wide movement which was normally referred to as the Brotherhood of Scouts. For this reason, visits from higher officials to the schools were carried out.¹⁰³ Likewise there were visits from other groups, sharing days in camping, games, discussion and other social activities.¹⁰⁴ Many activities were shared and so attained experience from each other. International jamboree were also

¹⁰¹ Reynolds, "Postulants Guild."

¹⁰² *The Pawa Herald*, Dec. 1966. See also *Jejevo School Magazine*, 1969, n.p.

¹⁰³ *The Pawa Herald*, Dec. 1966.

¹⁰⁴ *Selwyn College Talk-Talk 1977*, n.p. This is an example of the general types of activities undertaken by scouts.

attended.¹⁰⁵ There were also Melanesian teachers like Shadrach Sade who trained in Newcastle and who won the medal of merit for scouting.¹⁰⁶

Likewise the Girl Guides were active in the girls' schools.¹⁰⁷ In Bungana Girls' School, one of the girl guides' important tasks was to care for the school gardens which were the source of their food. Girl Guides were also subjected to certain rules of obedience and allegiance. Attaining a pass on tests and assessments could see them progress higher in the structure of the movement. A Bungana school Girl Guides was therefore the first recipient of the Queen's Guide honour.¹⁰⁸

It is also important to note that because of the shared nature of the Scout movement and the Girl Guides, there were 'get togethers.'¹⁰⁹ Their coming together, though it had been mainly for scouting and guiding purposes, went further than these. It paved the way for co-educational purposes, bringing boys and girls together in one united institution. It was here that boys and girls began to understand in a deeper sense of what it meant to share their different gender responsibilities and their weaknesses for a common purpose. Though this may not have been realised in the first place, such small beginnings played important roles for what was to come in the future. Again these achievements were a reflection of the challenging tasks that the teachers undertook.

iii) Sports and Entertainment

Sports and entertainment played a very important part of the life of the school. The sports included soccer, basketball, netball, cricket, swimming, water polo, and athletics. Students were divided into sport groups normally named after past missionary legends or bishops. These were formal groups and were expected to participate in the formal sport program of the school. This program was held every Friday afternoon and, being part of the weekend, everybody looked forward to it. It was also a time to prove oneself

¹⁰⁵ *The Pawa Herald*, Dec. 1966. One was held in Adelaide, Australia, from December 1966 to January 1967.

¹⁰⁶ See "Melanesian Teachers Training in England" 1970, 44.

¹⁰⁷ Brian Macdonald-Milne, "Report on Rural Youth Work" in *Diocesan Conference January 1973*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Girl Guides of Bungana School, recorded in the "Nakamuda – Our Home," 1968.

¹⁰⁹ *Jejevo School Magazine*, 1969, n.p.

to be worthy of selection to the school teams for external competition.¹¹⁰ This was also something students looked forward to – it was an opportunity to visit other places that could not occur otherwise. Apart from the formal program, there was always an hour of sports after the manual work and just before the evening prayer. This was merely a fun time rather than a competition. A few advantages came about through sport.

It brought together the whole community into the spirit of competition. In this context, not only skills and talents were exposed, but it gave the opportunity for students to exercise tolerance, patience and mutual respect in the course of competition. In some circumstances, it was one of the methods by which old rivalries were tested, owing to the fact that the Melanesian world was subjected to fragmentation and disunity.¹¹¹

Sports brought about joy and happiness. It is genuine enough then to say that where joy and happiness existed there was also an environment of health. In other words sport, was a way of keeping fit and healthy so that, when that was achieved, the school community was expected to be joyous and happy. The philosophy that echoed here is that a healthy and happy environment in schools was entirely in the hands of teachers.

With these advantages, it must also be taken into account that sports did not always have happy endings. There were also difficult occasions where rivals became bitter and sour. It was the responsibility of the teachers then that such a situation be avoided at all costs. And if it occurred, ways were sought to address the situation.

The second part refers to what can be termed as 'entertainment', comprising dancing, singing, drama, quizzes, films and slide shows. Like sports, entertainment programs consisted of activities to which students also looked forward. However a thorough discussion of all the different entertainments is beyond the scope of this discussion; hence I will focus only on 'dancing'.

¹¹⁰ Alangaula School" in *The Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 81 No. 1, 1973. 44-45.

¹¹¹ See subject of fragmented and diversified cultures discussed in Chapter One.

'Dancing' in this context refers to cultural dancing often referred to *kastom* dancing. *Kastom* dancing is a re-enactment of past important events in the community. They may either be events of war or fishing or hunting such as the men's *Sepe* dance from Savo and the women's *Sale Olo* of Ysabel.¹¹² These dances were the major activity in schools and were often the highlight of the ecclesiastical special days such as Easter and Christmas provided in the lectionary. In Pawa, for example, dancing was held on a weekly basis by the different island groups in addition to English dances by European teachers.¹¹³ This went well with the mission's policy of not interfering with cultural practices that were compatible with the gospel. The importance of teachers in this context was that they were mentors for upholding cultural practices. Some the dances were later contextualised in the Melanesian liturgy.¹¹⁴

7. Challenges faced by teachers

Challenges faced by teachers were various and by no means ordinary. Some of these challenges are discussed below.

As Hopkins states, for many Melanesians teaching was not "congenially natural."¹¹⁵ This is debatable, though there could have been some truth in it for a number of reasons. In the initial stage the content was foreign, so difficulties were normal and to be expected. In other words, the classroom environment, let alone the subjects taught, reflected European concepts and, for this reason, it would have taken time for Melanesians to adapt.

There had always been the problem of resources, thus teachers in many circumstances were handicapped in carrying out their responsibilities. Mission funds were inadequate and this was evident in the poor and even non-availability of facilities, equipment and materials. This in turn brought boredom and the lack of incentive both on the part of teachers and students.

¹¹² These two dances are only examples. There are many others in the different islands.

¹¹³ Fox, *Kakamora*, 41. Fox refers to these dances as native dances.

¹¹⁴ For example it is now common to have cultural inputs integrated with the 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo', the 'presentation of Gospel' and the 'offertory ritual.'

¹¹⁵ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 32.

Given the fact that the teaching profession was one of the first kinds of occupation in the mission, it was poorly remunerated. Even years later when education became a little better structured and recognised as the fundamental basis of society and the church, it remained hampered by very poor conditions of service. The wages of teachers in the mission were between 12 to 18 pounds per annum whilst employment in the commercial sector and government earned 200 pounds or more in a year.¹¹⁶ This failed to attract intelligent students to take up teaching as a profession as previously indicated. Those who did however were serious in becoming teachers.

In addition, the absence of a 'compulsory attendance' rule affected the school programs. This was exacerbated by the 'non-support' attitude of parents or even the whole community.¹¹⁷ Parents in general did not see the immediate importance of schools, but were rather concerned more about the cultural tasks that were of immediate benefit. This weakness merely contributed to the difficulty of attaining intended goals within a specific time. The intended number of Melanesians to be trained within a specific time could not have been achieved. However there were changes in attitude later, especially in the post-World War II era. This was obvious in the 1960s when many became more supportive of education.¹¹⁸

Melanesians unfortunately only went through a training that was brief and basic in nature. Melanesian teachers therefore had scant knowledge that could only grow in a serious educational atmosphere. However with non-regular class attendance and a non-supportive environment,¹¹⁹ as teachers experienced, it was likely that the teachers could lose the little knowledge and experience they had. In other words, the situation merely brought about little or no incentive in terms of extra reading and research. These were of course the informal methods enhancing and updating one's education. In the absence of these, it only endangered the momentum of learning both on

¹¹⁶ Bugotu, "Education Work in the Solomons," 18.

¹¹⁷ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 32.

¹¹⁸ Roger Mountfort, "Church and Education" in *Southern Cross Log* Vol.16 No.1 Feb 1961. 14-15. People supported school expansion and improvement. They provided food and also helped in the school gardens.

¹¹⁹ Hopkins, *Melanesia Today*, 32.

the part of teachers and also the students. At the worst, this could have been detrimental to the whole process of education.

Finally, formal education was given limited time in spite of its importance. Other aspects of development that needed physical strength were given more time. The construction of infrastructure such as roads and drainage, the construction of buildings, the cultivation of gardens and rearing of livestock, the work on the coconut plantations and the upkeep of all these developments were equally demanding. Indeed the demand for mission stations as role models and the demand to become self-supporting units had inspired such a program. A writer stated about Maravovo School: "The school is a hive of industry from early morning till sunset."¹²⁰

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has been centred on education in terms of schools and the Melanesian teachers. The important task of Melanesian teachers was the transmission of knowledge to students. However, given the many problems mentioned and criticism laid against teachers, it must be understood that many of the problems could not have been theirs alone. The main stakeholder, the Melanesian Mission, was also a major contributor as it was the overall overseer of the development. The negative impressions that could be inferred in the discussion however must not be taken as total failure.¹²¹

The general picture of the educational system therefore can be classified as both a success and a failure. With optimism, we can say that the importance of their contribution was not in vain, for it gained momentum as time passed. It produced human resources not only for the church but also for the government and the private sector. They were models and mentors for the students' academic excellence, character development and productiveness. This was one of their greatest post-conversion contributions especially in terms of the teaching responsibilities entrusted on them.

¹²⁰ E.E. Hawkey, *Martyrs' Harvest: How a film was made*. n.p., Australian Board of Missions: 1954, 16.

¹²¹ This was expected as it was the beginning of Melanesian participation.

Unlike today, every class work and library material or anything to enable students' learning was limited and often solely dependent on the intellectual capability of the teacher. The teacher was the only information and knowledge house.

Teachers were the go-betweens between the mission and the people. Teachers were role models of what it was to be Christ-like, especially among people who were non-Christians or even for those who were not yet well grounded in their Christian faith. Simply a teacher was everything in a school – teacher, administrator, theologian, farmer, a plantation worker and a father/mother. Teachers had never been let down even in the face of criticism, strong opposition and violent threats and deeds.

The next chapter is an examination of the roles of Melanesians in the ministry of healthcare. Both education and healthcare are social services which have direct impact in the lives of people.

Chapter Five

Healthcare through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services

Introduction

This chapter examines the roles of Melanesians in the ministry of health and medical service in the Melanesian Mission. The first section covers the historical background of the mission's health and medical services. It also provides insight into the Melanesian cultural perception of sickness and healing as well as exploring the historical development of healthcare services in Melanesia. The major focus of the chapter is on the roles played by Melanesians in health care under the supervision of the European doctors and Sisters.

Four specific Melanesian roles in healthcare are specified in view of their importance. With training and experience, Melanesian health workers became competent and confident in area of health services. However, one of their achievements that is often forgotten is their role in leading Melanesians in adapting to European medical procedures whilst, at the same time advising missionaries the cultural practices that would have impact in the health procedures. Melanesians became the channel of inculturation in this context.

The first role was that of the orderlies/dressers. Their work covered minor aspects of medical work as well the cleaning of hospitals and equipment. With the absence of Melanesian nurses at this stage, these workers were important helpers of doctors and the Sisters.

The second position was that of the 'working boys'. This group of workers consisted of boys who were responsible for outdoor manual work. The upkeep of the stations, maintaining the buildings, lawn, drainage and the food

gardens were in their hands.¹ They were the carers of the environment, ensuring cleanliness and the production of enough food for healthy living.

The third position was that of the nurses which was initially taken up by the girls. They undertook medical and social responsibilities on almost the same basis as the orderlies/dressers. However, with the training received and with improved facilities, the nurses became the new improved version of the orderlies/dressers. Basically the roles of orderlies/dressers and nurses covered medical work, health teaching and the leading of prayers. These responsibilities were carried out in the hospitals as well as in villages that they toured frequently. The work of health and medical services was not static but mobile.

Finally, the fourth position is on the leprosy colony. This was a common epidemic closely associated with the hospitals, though located separately. Because of its close association with the hospital, the hospital staff was equally responsible for its operation. The nurses as well as the orderlies/dressers therefore were also assigned to the leper colony. Apart from the hospital staff, it is also interesting to note that amongst the lepers in the colony were priest lepers, brother lepers and teacher lepers. These people were also entrusted with responsibilities as leaders, teachers and pastors amongst their equals.

It may be noted that the order of their discussion does not necessarily reflect their level of their importance.

1. Cultural and historical background: A Melanesian worldview of sickness and healing

In Chapter One I discussed Melanesians as being “animists” - believing in objects said to have spiritual power – and explained part of the reason why health, well-being, sickness, healing and death were part of the Melanesian spiritual worldview.² Successful medical treatment such as the injections for yaws and the quinine for malaria were therefore merely another manifestation of spiritual power, through a new foreign agency. These

¹ “Fauabu Diary 1928-1978,” 6.

² This was a common view in Melanesia. Doris M. Mitchell, *Challenge in Melanesia*, n.p., 1957, 25.

medicines were recognised as spirits that successfully counter-attacked magic which was also a spirit.³ In other words it was believed that there were spirits in medicines that placated the sicknesses that were caused by magical spirits. The scientific process taking place within was therefore incomprehensible, only to be interpreted as a miracle in the Melanesian worldview. This explains basically why it was not difficult for Melanesians to accept the healing ministry of Jesus as a kind of benchmark for the church's healing ministry. Nor was it difficult for Melanesians to generally adapt to medical science through the establishment of hospitals, clinics or the use of modern medicines.

The health ministry was "an 'integral and essential' part of the Christian missionary enterprise, a demonstration of the 'gospel in action' and – because cures often led to conversion – a proven agency of evangelism."⁴ Soga of Isabel, usually referred to as the first converted chief, was a successful demonstration of this process. Having exhausted all avenues of traditional healing,⁵ Soga was so ill that he seemed to be beyond recovery. There was no second option apart from Bishop John Richardson Selwyn who went to him and administered quinine and brandy with prayer. As a result Soga was healed. He was then converted, influencing others and most of Isabel.⁶

In this healing ministry the bishop used medicine, brandy and prayer. It was difficult, however, to draw a conclusion as to which of the two actually healed the chief. The converted Melanesians of that time merely saw the administration of the quinine, the brandy and the prayers as a single healing recipe. All three components, regardless of their individual properties, were beyond the understanding of Melanesians. For Melanesians the administration of the quinine, brandy and prayer was a single course treatment, as they

³ See Ane Straume, "Medicines of the past in the present: A study of Medical knowledge and practice in a Solomon Island village", 84. Ann gathered her information from Robert H. Black, *The epidemiology of malaria in the South West Pacific; Changes associated with increasing European Contact*. Oceania, 1956, 141.

⁴ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 267. See also Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 1967, 121.

⁵ George Bogese, http://parasidec.org.au/fieldnotes/images_viwier.htm?SIBUG102,73,2.S (Accessed 1/10/2010). George Bogese was a graduate medical personnel from the Fiji Medical School in the 1950s and gives a wide record of local remedies for different kinds of diseases in the Bugotu area of Isabel.

⁶ Wilson, *Dr. Welchman of Bugotu* (London: SCPK, 1935), 8. See also Wilson, *The Isles that Wait*. 102-103.

were unaware that the quinine and the brandy had chemical properties, differing from the prayers. F.R.S. Rivers gave an equivalent illustration of this:

I was called to see a man who was ill and found him suffering from acute pneumonia. I spent much time and trouble in looking after him only to discover later that I had been one of thirteen doctors! During the time I was attending him he was undergoing twelve other treatments, all directed to counteract the influence of certain spirits and agencies.⁷

Under these circumstances, the question of which healing process was the most effective was not of interest to Melanesians. Likewise, even if the Church had been part of this healing process, Melanesians would still accept all three components as all being effective in healing the patient. This would be contrary to the scientific and academic world that almost certainly depended solely on the availability of evidence to determine its conclusions. In the context of Soga then, the scientific and academic world would have definitely favoured the quinine as the effective means of healing.

Apart from the 'conversion' perspective, the 'inclusion' perspective in the Soga healing saga can also be perceived. Both 'conversion and inclusion' were results of the healing through the quinine, brandy and prayer. Ironically, it is interesting to note that traditional healing could not be overlooked just because it failed to heal Soga. Rather, medical science and Christian prayer became the new approaches inclusively,⁸ giving a new blend in the Melanesian community healing process in which the church inevitably became linked. This does not support the idea of "innovation" in terms of Christianity being seen as an agent that was sought to fill the religious vacuum.⁹ This experience of healing became part of the characteristics that not only governed the healing ministry but also gave the Melanesian Church an identity unique from the western Church.

⁷ Cf. F.R.S. Rivers, "Speech at the Annual Meeting in England" <http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/rivers-speech1910.html>, 2. (accessed 3/12/2008). Rivers was an anthropologist and a medical doctor who spent sometimes in Melanesia. His treatment in this context was based on medical science but did not mention anything on prayer. Combination of treatments based on medical science, religion and tradition can still be experienced today. See also Straume, "Medicines of the past in the present," 68.

⁸ Cf. Tippet, *Solomon Island Christianity*, 121.

⁹ Cf. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 142, note 162, 165.

In other words, the result of Soga's healing offered 'conversion' and 'inclusiveness' simultaneously. In these processes there were two transactions taking place. First, there was transformation from a traditional religion into a new religion which was believed and accepted as Christianity. Again, under this transition Christianity, though, was perceived as to the answer of many problems, was still not a total functional substitute.¹⁰ This was and is still the general perception of the image of the church. Second, was the transformation of Christianity into a new kind of Christianity that was compatible with some Melanesian beliefs and practices. This is a debatable subject, although it could also be strongly recognised as contextual Christianity in the Melanesian worldview.¹¹ Whether one agrees or not, this has become both the visible and invisible identity of the church in Melanesia today.

The traditional healing approaches, however, were constantly under scrutiny so that not all of them continued to be accepted. The benchmark used for evaluation was the theology and praxis of the church. The accepted traditional healing practices were therefore not necessarily alternatives for medical science and the healing ministry of the church. Rather the synthesis of the three branches of healing accepted in the church had their own special roles to play in the different circumstances. This is still a current practice in the Church of Melanesia's healing ministry today.

Today the whole spectrum of the healing ministry of the church is provided for in the church manual. It is within this manual that the exercise of traditional healing in a Christian community is inclusively provided for.¹² The provision however is very general in scope as it is difficult to determine between the genuine traditional healing practices and fake ones. Like medical science

¹⁰ Cf. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 162, 165.

¹¹ This is debatable because there would be people both 'insiders and outsiders' who are fundamentalists who's source of theology is absolutely from the scriptures. Any contextualization regardless of their relevance but outside the scriptural relevance is rejected. Cf. Wayne T Dye, "Toward a Theology of Power for Melanesia Part 1," *Catalyst* 14, no. 1 (1984), 74. See also discussion on p86, 271-286 on this work.

¹² Anglican Church of Melanesia, "Title B Canon 4, Ministry of Healing" in *The Manual containing the Constitution, Canons and Standing Resolutions of the Anglican Church of Melanesia*, Honiara: Anglican Church of Melanesia, 2008, 35. Note that traditional healing on the same Title under (G) provides for its recognition and that traditional medicines in the forms of plants can be blessed by priests to be used in the accepted manner.

which is subjected to continuous research and development, traditional healing also has its own challenges. Its legitimacy and acceptance is always constantly being checked, though not in the same way as medical science. This is where, as mentioned earlier, the theology and praxis of the church had to become the benchmark in determining the correctness and morality of the methods and materials used in traditional healing.¹³ Apart from this, another method of assessing the genuineness of the traditional healing practices was in terms of their success. The deaths that occurred were normally accepted as being part of the healing ministry, unless otherwise proven. There were occasions of course when traditional healing practices came under strong criticism because of the belief that they had contributed to deaths that may not otherwise have occurred.

The above emphasises the importance of the traditional healing practices in the Melanesian Christian community and legitimised in the Church Canons. However, this is a debatable subject because of its lack of consistency and systematic methodology in practice. Obviously, the lack of consistency and a systematic methodology had not always lessened its success in the eyes of Melanesians. But it had some weaknesses in that not all of the practices were compatible with the theology and the praxis of the church. This placed the church in an ironic or difficult situation, although the church was at liberty to make the final judgment on the practices that were to be accepted or not. Besides this, because of the openness of the provision in the Canon there were no legal limits on the exercise of traditional healing practices. Sometimes these went far beyond control so that the church could do very little about them. This is where religion and culture sometimes came into conflict, causing misunderstanding, confusion and division in the community. In this context, it would not be wrong to claim that the current healing provision in the Canons was to a certain extent formulated to be compatible with the cultural views of Melanesians.

It is important, however, to note that this probably was not erroneous for Melanesians; it was part of their faith. The church therefore was duty-bound to

¹³ "Proceedings 3 Jan 1973," in *Diocesan Conference*, Honiara, 3 Jan – 12 Jan 1973.

provide such a compromise on behalf of the people of Melanesia. This was done through the authority of the church's synods that were entrusted with ecclesiastical responsibilities and affairs.¹⁴ Tangible evidence in this regard could be seen through the practices of the church by way of the blessing of traditional medicines by its clergy.¹⁵ Traditional medicines were usually and still are in the form of plants, herbs and vegetation that were believed to be good. The church gave the clergy the discretion to determine which traditional medicines were to be accepted and which were not to be accepted. This of course was to be done in consultation with the theology and praxis of the church.¹⁶ This illustrates the Melanesian view on the importance given to the church. Any form of healing, whether medical or traditional, therefore must often be applied with the support and conviction of Christian understanding, principles and faith.

For many reasons the healing practices seem syncretistic and may not have been viewed favourably by some. However for Melanesians, Christian healing was viewed such that, unless all three methods of healing were present, they would still see the incompleteness of the healing mission. This was a perception which justifiably emerged not out of option or choice, but out of necessity, given the scattered islands and isolation which made access to medical services difficult. In addition, the lack of facilities, drugs and human resources was also a significant main drawback. In such circumstances, the only available means of healing was therefore through the healing ministry of the church and traditional practices. This was contextual theology in the healing ministry in practice.

One of the ironies of this perception lies in the fact that medical science was not always in conformity with traditional healing, yet both were integral elements in the healing package within a Melanesian world. For Melanesians the two often did not complement each other but had their own sphere of

¹⁴ Note that provisions in the canons are made by the members of the synods entrusting the clergy with the power of discernment.

¹⁵ Church of Melanesia Commission on Liturgy, *Blessings for the Priest's Manual*, Honiara: Church of Melanesia, 2007, 31. This is modern but still in line with practices done in the period covered by this thesis.

¹⁶ The same reference as note 5 is applicable to this understanding. The clergy probably had been given the mandate to decide on the assumption that they were versed in the theology and praxis of the church.

problems to address. Melanesians had always believed that sickness was a spiritual phenomenon that could only be addressed by traditional healing means. Today, this belief to some extent has been relaxed, but has not changed totally. Melanesians still believe that there are some sicknesses that are still inflicted by spirits and these can only be healed by traditional methods. The irony becomes even more difficult to understand on the grounds that Melanesians could have compromised all three healing practices. With their major differences in terms of their approaches and knowledge, the irony of their acceptance of modern medicine was understandable to the Melanesian mind though could remain a mystery to the 'others.'

'Inclusiveness' on the other hand has been brought out here purposely. 'Inclusiveness' was not only religiously beneficial but also socially, economically and politically. An example of 'inclusiveness' in this context was the action taken by the government, when it sent health personnel into the Malaita bush villages to treat people with yaws and hookworm. The intention was to attract the bush people to move to the coast where civilisation was established. Civilisation in its common understanding simply was a reflection of peace, respect and unity as a result of upholding law and order.¹⁷ This is in view of a common concept of 'imperialism' found in that time between the state and religion.

This is another example of inclusiveness rather than conversion. On the island of Santa Ana, Heinrich Kuper, who was a German by birth but had a local as wife, had repeatedly refused hospitality to Europeans. Heinrich's attitude, however, changed when another German who was a researcher arrived at the time when Heinrich and his wife were both very sick. Both were relieved when the researcher treated them with tropical medicines that he had with him. It was only then that the researcher became accepted as a companion

¹⁷ Straume, "Medicine of the Past and in the Present," 84. Ane quotes from S M Lambert, 'Medical Conditions in the South Pacific' in *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 362-378. In this context, there is no direct evidence as to whether the conversion to Christianity was a hidden agenda in the process of inclusiveness. However, there were historical circumstances where states and church were all part of the same "imperialism."

and a guest of Heinrich.¹⁸ Being healed through the work of research changed Heinrich's attitude towards other Europeans. Europeans then became 'included' into the Santa Ana local community.

As a background then, we have generally covered the three healing perspectives accepted in the Melanesian world. Inclusively, the three at the same time further became part of the accepted healing provision of the Church. Under such circumstances, the healing perspectives played an important role as both 'conversion and inclusive agents.' However, a narrow interpretation of healing as merely a vessel for conversion into Anglicanism is misleading. Care had to be taken that conversion did not come about under the menace of duress or 'selfish reciprocity.' This must be left to the people at their own pace. While conversion to the Anglican faith was probably the main agenda, a conversion meant to transform the whole being - soul, mind and body. Conversion of the whole being, wrapped in the Anglican faith, was the mission objective.

2. Brief history of the health and medical work

Historically health and medical work amongst Melanesians had a very humble beginning, with Bishop Selwyn and his wife as pioneers, followed by Patteson. Fox stated:

The first hospital of the diocese was Bishop Patteson's own room at Auckland where he ministered to the sick himself, putting them on his own bed. The second was his room at Norfolk Island, where he did the same thing, and it wasn't until 1901 that the diocese was first able to establish a hospital, and that was at the school on Norfolk Island.¹⁹

Based on the then current 'remote control' administrative policy, establishing hospitals in the islands was still not possible. This, however, did not mean that health and medical services were of little importance to the mission. Under these conditions, the church was mobile in nature as were the services it

¹⁸ Bernatzik, *Sudsee*, 7-8.

¹⁹ *Southern Cross Log* 1970, See also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 269. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 248. I have intentionally included Bishop Selwyn and his wife in introducing Fox's statement, even if he did not mention them. It is felt that Selwyn who brought in the first Melanesians to Auckland could not have by-passed any form of health care given to the Melanesians. The many references to him reveal the whole of his nature as a true pastor in every way to Melanesians.

attempted to render. Health and medical work as part of the services therefore were mobile with the travelling missionaries who were not necessarily doctors or nurses. In this regard every missionary, regardless of their profession, was an amateur health and medical worker.²⁰ This was very important not only for the healing of Melanesians but also for the missionaries who were far more vulnerable to tropical diseases.²¹ The ethos of 'jack of all trades, master of none' was an important guideline. An example of this was seen in the healing of Soga as discussed earlier.

It was not until the mission headquarters were moved from Norfolk to the islands in Melanesia that the many services became formalised and established. Health and medical services were among them. Prior to any official health establishments, Welchman, who was a doctor by profession, had already established a kind of hospital that served the surrounding villages in Isabel. What seems to be the first official hospital then was Welchman Memorial Hospital. This was established at Hautabu in Guadalcanal in 1911 by Dr. Russell Marshall but only to be closed in 1916 because of the lack of a doctor. The hospital was then transferred to Fauabu in Malaita in 1929 under the supervision of Dr. Maybury.²² This was to be the beginning of a notably dynamic and extensive healing ministry. It was new but an additional responsibility through which Melanesians could pursue and contribute to the development of the Melanesians' whole being. Yet this was still inadequate as Bishop Baddeley stated in one of his letters.

. . . medical work is really a desperate need. I find it difficult to restrain myself from bitterness at times when I see the physical needs of so many hundreds, nay thousands, of these island people . . . folk whose bodies are covered with yaws or have

²⁰ Molyneux, M. Frederick, "Bishop's Report for 1928" in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, New Series, No. 26, July 1929, 22 - 25. Frederick M. Molyneux, "From Head Hunting to Christianity in the South Seas: A Missionary Travel Talk Broadcast" in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, New Series, No. 32, April 1931. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 248.

²¹ See Clifford S. James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia*.

²² Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 249.

limbs partially eaten away with horrible sores, or whose desire to live has been sapped by fever, leprosy or tuberculosis.²³

Baddeley was more than a man of theory who wanted the healing ministry in the mission to be further developed. In this regard another two hospitals were established – one in Kerepei on Ugi in 1937 and the other in Lolowai in Vanuatu the same year.²⁴ This was a great work of charity and generosity in the face of the most difficult and unfavourable circumstances at that time. The pioneer missionaries were bishops, priests and laity. The laity consisted of professional personnel such as doctors and nurses, administrators, accountants, engineers, builders and seafarers. Their initial efforts combined together enabled this ministry to come to fruition. Their leadership and teaching helped Melanesians to be equipped to take on their responsibilities.

However, the small beginnings undertaken by Melanesians and often regarded as unimportant tasks must also be considered. Without them the healing ministry services would have been in jeopardy in many ways. One must not forget that the little contributions made by the Melanesians were their best. They could not have offered more at this point in time, owing to their lack of education. Nonetheless, such responsibilities, regardless of their status, were important and indispensable. Hence this chapter will also examine these contributions, often considered small or insignificant.

3. Orderlies/Dressers and their roles

i) General view of orderlies/dressers

Today orderlies/dressers are generally seen as the 'small jobs' most fitting for the less educated. They attract low remuneration, privileges and opportunities because of the nature of work. Such low opinion was inappropriate in the period that this investigation spans. Those who were recruited were in fact the

²³ *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, No.13, 1 July 1943, 22. See also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 269. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 253.

²⁴ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 252 - 253. This refers to the rebuilding of the hospital by funds made available by the Lepers' Trust Board in New Zealand. The hospital then was not fully operative because of the lack of funds from the mission. The hospital then became known as P. J.Twomey Memorial Hospital dedicated to the man who established the Lepers' Trust Board. See "Kerepei – The First P.J.Twomey Memorial Hospital" *Melanesian Mission*, ed. J.D. Froud, No.8 August 1965, 1.

most privileged because they were employed even with the meagre remuneration. Many could not have been happier for a lifetime opportunity.

Unfortunately for some reason, their contributions have been less highlighted. This however is not surprising; the role itself could almost be regarded as that of a labourer therefore rightly viewed as labourer's work. Work of such nature has always been classified as inferior. In today's understanding the term could imply lowly-kinds of jobs such as general cleaning, mail runs and messengers, even tea-boys. With this kind of understanding one could almost have the same perception of the orderlies of the past. But the Melanesians who were recruited as orderlies at the time did more than what was expected. The environment and the circumstances that they were in probably gave them the privilege to do so.²⁵ It is for this reason that this section of the chapter attempts to bring out explicitly the different areas in which they made impacts in the field of health and medical services. They were essential members in the team.

The introduction of the western-style health and medical services provided Melanesians with the first positions of orderlies. This was the only possible position within health services suitable for Melanesians, as it demanded minimal educational requirements.²⁶ The position could rightly be seen as a "Master/servant" relationship which was inevitable. However, this must be seen positively on a basis where the doctors and the Sisters attempted to teach Melanesians to become partners or even to become substitutes in this specific healing ministry. The situation was ironic because of the environment and circumstances in which the orderlies were placed. They were treated as though inferior but were provided with all the necessities that would enhance a better life for them and the communities they served. The relationship that was not one of domination but was equivalent to the Jesus/disciple relationship. Consequently it was under this relationship that the orderlies were

²⁵ Working in a hospital with committed Christian doctors and sisters was a privilege. Besides that, those who were recruited would probably have been the most capable ones. Apart from their orderly work, they could be trained to play other roles in the hospital. This was essential as there were no nurses as yet.

²⁶ Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 210. Judith stated that there were illiterate Melanesians trained to become medical dressers at Tulagi government hospital in the mid-twenties.

recruited from the different islands to be trained for two years. They were then sent back to serve in villages, which indicates that they were more than orderlies. Some, like John Patteson Nana were proficient enough to perform 'intravenous injections.'²⁷ In this way, Melanesians had the opportunity to prove their capability to their European masters. Later reports highly commended the Melanesians.

In the 1928 medical work report, Dr. Maybury stated that there were already six orderlies – all males. John Patterson Nana and Frederick Fafale being the first ones, later joined by Simon Peter Nwasina, Thomas Tosia, Joe Qai and Everyn Tharetona. Thomas and Joe were on short term contracts and Everyn was also a teacher at the same time.²⁸ By 1933, the orderlies had increased to ten. It is interesting that the number of orderlies even from the beginning was already higher than the number of expatriate staff. This is an indication that the hospital was in desperate need of staff but that it was not readily available. The best that the hospital could offer then was to recruit Melanesians who at this point in time were merely capable of the responsibilities of the orderlies. The second implication is that they were not merely orderlies in the real sense of the term. They were more than that and to an extent played the roles of nurses as shown by the following section.

ii) Medical work

Maybury once stated that in the then absence of Sisters all medical work was done by Mrs Maybury, the orderlies and himself. In this period of time the cases that they attended were numerous – malaria, pulmonary tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, bacillary dysentery, amoebic dysentery, leprosy, yaws, elephantiasis, helminthiasis and ulcers.²⁹ From this description of cases one could only reason that Melanesians' limited knowledge could not directly allow them to attend to these, let alone their being merely orderlies. If this was

²⁷ Melanesian Mission, *About Melanesia: Medical Work in Melanesia* No.4, Melanesian Mission n.p., 1935, 4. The term 'intravenous injection' could mean a different kind of injection for those who served in Melanesia in before 1935 in contrast to today's view. This does not therefore rule out the possibility of some who viewed the circumstance as impossible for the fact that 'intravenous injection' when seen to relate to 'biotic' only came to be used after 1935. This is not to say that Melanesians were incapable, only that such injection was still unavailable.

²⁸ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 2. Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 249.

²⁹ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 2.

so, what then were their contributions when Maybury included them as part of the team that attended the cases mentioned above? Maybury unfortunately did not clearly state these but from examination of other related information the following could be deduced.

In the absence of nurses, the orderlies could be mandated with some of the responsibilities of nurses. This could include the distribution of medications among sick patients as advised by the doctor. Different kinds of sicknesses required different kinds of treatments in terms of medications and times for administering them. Malaria patients for example required shorter term treatment than TB patients, who would need a couple of months treatment. Giving out medications to patients on a daily basis therefore would have been merely time consuming for the doctor, who had many other important tasks to do. After all, there was nothing sinister or cynical about utilising whatever manpower was available, being the orderlies in this context. This was not a matter of choice but one dictated by necessity and accepted. The philosophy "it was better than nothing" took precedence over the legality of the procedures. After all, whether things were done legally or illegally was still not understood and therefore not an issue in Melanesia. Ethical judgment and common sense were important in this context.

Even when more nurses became available later, the orderlies still were important members of the team. To some extent the duties such as above continued, whether the nurses were present or not. The orderlies played a role both as subordinates and substitutes. They attended to surgical cases, helping out with the preparation of equipment and tools. This of course probably was illegal, yet was done out of necessity. This kind of situation did apply also to Sisters or nurses who performed duties outside their own professional boundaries and doctors who performed duties under illegal conditions. An example of this is a case in which the Sisters diagnosed correctly and with the help of the Native Medical Practitioner (NMP) performed an 'anastomosis operation' and removed a gangrenous bowel growth. This was the kind of case that was occasionally dealt with but which was well outside the scope

of the nurses and the Sisters.³⁰ Again these were situations where ethical judgment and common sense took precedence over legality. Whether patients were healed or died was not a matter subjected to challenge, except only if there was misunderstanding. In the final analysis the doctor could only say 'we had done our best, let God to do what remained to be done.' However, by the 1960s when the government became more active in the health development, regulations of a more stringent approach were applied.³¹

The daily dressings of patients were also in the hands of the orderlies. The fact that this task required less skill did not belittle its importance. Yaws was quite a common disease, easy to treat by injection but requiring daily cleaning and dressing.³² It was also common for yaws to continuously re-emerge due to the unhealthy living environment.³³ For this reason, there was always a great demand for attention to this kind of sickness. Likewise, the same applied to external sicknesses such as those that affected the external part of the body. Skin fungus was widespread; cuts and sores were common and elephantiasis, while not so many cases, needed regular dressings.³⁴ These were cases that would not by-pass the orderlies, even when there were nurses available.

There were crucial times in the life of the hospital. In 1942, the impact of World War II brought in serious trouble for the hospital. No ordinary ship carrying supplies came to the Solomon Islands.³⁵ Drugs and food supplies were running low. The gardens were not producing enough as the garden boys were not working at full capacity. This was made worse by the absence of the doctor and some of the Sisters. Dr. Thompson was given a new appointment by the government in 1943. In the same year, Sisters Field and Woods, who worked in

³⁰Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 250 and 253. Fox did not say that such were illegal. He merely mentioned the occurrence of the situation that one could interpret as illegal. See also "Hospital of the Epiphany: Report for the Quarter July to Sept. 1941" *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No. 7 1st January 1942, 6. See also "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 5, that stated the amputation of a patient's leg by the Sisters because there was no doctor available.

³¹This was when the government became more involved in health and medical services and established a standardised level of performances expected. It was compatible with the nurses training program.

³²James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia*, 24ff. See also "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 8.

³³"Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 9. See also James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia*, 24ff.

³⁴James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia*, 19ff.

³⁵"The Bishop's Report – 1942," in *Southern Cross Log*, London: Melanesian Mission, Vol. 49, No.3, 27.

Fauabu most of 1942, left for New Zealand. Fauabu hospital was then without the staff capacity that could enable it to function to its maximum capacity, though Thompson gave some of his time on several occasions.

Prior to this, and because of the invasion of the Japanese, the doctor and Sisters sought refuge in the bush villages. The major hospital functions including the nurse training program were forced to close. The hospital load was therefore in the hands of the orderlies, especially Martin Maneia who was the head of the orderlies.³⁶ There was no money available in the hospital to pay the orderlies' wages. They searched for their food in their own time, often after work and paid whatever they could from their own pockets.³⁷ They were flogged by the Japanese soldiers for refusing to provide information about the doctor's and sisters' whereabouts. Despite this, the orderlies kept the hospital efficiently run. In the absence of the mission staff, the Melanesian orderlies continued the care of the hospital until it resumed again in 1943 when the threat of war receded.³⁸

The dressers or orderlies were not only working in the hospital. There were others who returned to villages and set up dispensaries.³⁹ They toured and visited villages on a regular basis, giving injections and treatment for common diseases. At the same time they provided simple instructions about hygiene and healthy living. This was a strategy which emerged out of circumstances and which the hospital authorities encouraged. Subsequently, it was from the hospital that they got their small medical supplies.⁴⁰ In this way medical attention was provided to the sick and old who could not afford to travel the distance to Fauabu hospital.⁴¹ Besides that, for some if not for most, this could be the first experience of medical healing and teaching. The first experience of course could be crucial and must not be taken lightly. It could be a determining factor in the future development of the hospital and the

³⁶ See further information about Martin in "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 7.

³⁷ "Fauabu Hospital," in *Southern Cross Log*, Ruislip, Middlesex: Melanesian Mission, Vol.50, No.1, 4.

³⁸ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 150.

³⁹ See section below on Nurses and Village Dispensaries.

⁴⁰ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12.

⁴¹ Martin Manaia was an example of the orderlies who set up a dispensary in Ferasubua, Malaita during the WW2. He later returned to his job in Fauabu at the resumption of the hospital in 1943. See "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 7.

expansion of the mission.⁴² The orderlies or dressers were therefore the first Melanesian 'medical apostles,' spreading another healing dimension. These were seen as the very little beginnings that sometimes blinded us from seeing the impacts on the lives of the people.

iii) Communication and community agencies

Orderlies were important communication agents in many areas, not only for medical purposes but also in the daily life situations encountered. The fact that the healing process was principally done in a hospital environment did not mean that the external contributions were not recognised. This was the reason why it was desirable for the doctors and Sisters to understand aspects of the socio-cultural and socio-religious environment that influenced the lives of people. Likewise, the same was also expected from the recipients in understanding the perspective of the service providers. Understanding each other was therefore vitally important in the healing process. It provided background knowledge of the possible causes that could enhance the right examination of sick patients. In that way the right medication and treatment could be given.

Communication also bred understanding that helped to establish and nurture a mutual relationship between the doctor and Sisters with the people whom they served. Understanding each other led to mutual relationships that helped to boost confidence between the service providers and the recipients. This could be followed by the establishment and strengthening of a new community or family with a common goal. The common goal to strive for prevention, healing and restoration from illnesses could then be improved as the recipients became aware of their responsibilities. Healing and better health thus came to be understood as a community responsibility and was of course influenced by proper communication. Deficient communication and misinterpretations had to therefore be minimised if the best service was to be provided to the sick.

⁴² The story of Soga could be compatible with this concept. See section on Cultural and Historical background: A general Melanesian view of Sickness and Healing, 165ff.

However, the danger of faulty communication in Melanesian society must not be underestimated. Embedded in a highly oral and multi-linguistic culture, the susceptibility to lack of communication could result in serious misunderstandings. Faulty communication not only occurred through words, but also in actions. Consequently misunderstandings were created that often were impossible to contain within the hospital boundaries. Problems that involved people in the interruption of hospital services thus were not rare. Serious intimidation and threats were common in such situations.⁴³ These situations could have been caused by poor communication and misinterpretation. Despite this, the orderlies did wonderful work in terms of communication that built and strengthened relationships in a fragile community. An examination of literature and oral traditions indicates the high regard in which they were held.

Generally, orderlies were therefore important coordinators or 'go betweens' between the doctors and the patients. Their knowledge of the local context, the languages (if they were from the area) and the little English they had was an advantage. Language was a very important aspect of communication and one that also could hinder health care. The problem of multiple languages with varying pronunciations posed a real difficulty.⁴⁴ The Melanesian orderlies could easily understand and adapt to the cultures of the people whom they served, even if they were from another part in Melanesia. In these circumstances, they were invaluable. Awareness that misunderstanding and defective communication must, at all costs, be avoided was essential. Welchman stated as a piece of advice to women missionaries in Melanesia:

Of their (Melanesian) manner of daily life and their villages' social relations it is impossible to write intelligibly: it can only be

⁴³ M.L. Curtis, "Rondonala and Iowa," in *Southern Cross Log*. (London: Melanesian Mission, May 1963), 53. This could be a case resulting from misunderstanding that could indirectly be caused by faulty communication. Curtis claimed that she was blamed for the death of a very serious leprosy patient Iowa who was taken from his home only three days earlier. See also "Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany, Fauabu: Oct 1962 to September 1963" *Southern Cross Log* No. 83, Dec. 1963. 114.

⁴⁴ *A Handbook of the Melanesian Mission (C. 1924)*, 17-19, Auckland: Phoenix Press Ltd., <http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/handbook1924.html.doc> (accessed October 4, 2008).

got from experience; not even a casual visit could make it quite understandable.⁴⁵

He went on to say:

She will understand the natives thoroughly in six weeks, and in six years she will confess that she knows nothing whatever about them. . . They will crowd round from a natural curiosity, but they are not rude, and at a bidding will retire, when they understand they are not wanted.⁴⁶

iv) House and ward cleaning

Healthy living corresponds to cleanliness. The requirement of cleanliness is crucial in a hospital environment, let alone in the unhygienic situations and behaviour of Melanesians that prevailed at this point in time. In this context, the duties to be performed were sweeping and mopping of the floors; the cleaning of toilets, baths, showers, laundry and hospital; the washing of linen and bedding; washing of utensils and the disposal of waste and dirt. These were responsibilities that could have been rated 'lowly' in either developed or underdeveloped societies. However, for Melanesians these were responsibilities that were domestic in nature and were bound to be done by women and girls. Recruiting of men was therefore in breach of cultural and social gender roles. This was humiliating and degrading.⁴⁷

Six women orderlies came onto the scene later in 1938; two of them being previously trained in Siota by Stead.⁴⁸ The responsibilities would have been similar and so, in that sense, the women were not seen as breaching the culture. Besides this, there were other important perceptions that were interesting. This was the beginning of a new adventure in a new field for women.

⁴⁵ *A Handbook of the Melanesian Mission, (C. 1924), 27.*

⁴⁶ *A Handbook of the Melanesian Mission (C. 1924), 27.*

⁴⁷ Cf. the Melanesian Brotherhood who also shared female gender roles as discussed in chapter three, 115 under the section Social and cultural participation in the community life.

⁴⁸ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 6.

4. Working-Boys: Houseboys/crew and interpreters

The next unit of Melanesians within the structure of the hospital were the “working boys.”⁴⁹ This class of workers consisted of transport and maintenance crews, houseboys and gardeners. These were men, like the orderlies, who did what was normally regarded as menial tasks. Without realising their importance, the jobs were normally classified as manual yet covered different areas – from responsibilities of a domestic nature to heavy manual and physical work.

The first group consisted of crews. Their task was mainly to lead the hospital staff (doctor, Sisters and nurses) to the various villages. Access to the bush villages was by footpaths that crossed rivers, valleys and plains, with mountains and hills to climb. These were not easy, owing to the lack of updated maps and the inevitable changes of the physical landscape caused by flooding and landslides. J.L.O Tedder gave a brief account of his experience in Guadalcanal that could be similar with the other islands. “There are a number of walks on Guadalcanal that take longer than one day to complete and in these cases, almost without exception, a guide should be employed.”⁵⁰

With the loads of medical and staff supplies, let alone the responsibilities of assisting the sick patients to the hospital, the journeys were often not easy. This was a worthy ministry as the mission was expected to extend its services beyond its normal zones. Sometimes cultural, religious and geographical reasons restricted the people’s liberty to go to the hospital.⁵¹ In addition, the initial visits could be for raising awareness where the people were informed of the existence of the hospital and its services. It is when we consider these aspects we realise that the crews became indirectly the agency by which the hospital resources were mobilised to reach out to those who otherwise could not be reached. This was actually a special call demanding men of

⁴⁹ “Fauabu Diary 1928-1978,” 6.

⁵⁰ These were normal descriptions of the geographical features of the islands. Cf. J.L.O. Tedder, *Walks on Guadalcanal* (Honiara: British Solomon Islands Tourist Authority, n.d.), 25. See also J.L.O. Tedder, *Solomon Island Years: A District Administrator in the Islands 1952-1974* (Stuarts Point, NSW: Tuatu Studies, 2008), 199ff.

⁵¹ *A Handbook of the Melanesian Mission (C. 1924)*, 27.

reasonable geographical and cultural knowledge, not to mention the need for strength and fitness. In the same manner, crews were also required to man the small boats such as the *Gwen* and *Mavis*. Without them villages on the coasts could have been difficult for the doctor and nurses to visit.⁵² Even with boats, additional responsibilities were required when serious cases needed to be taken back to the hospital. In saying this, even if Melanesians suffered less because of their greater resilience in the tropical environment, they were not totally immune to fear, anxiety, pain, stress, wear and even death. The many hundreds of “taboos” gave very little freedom and thus subjected them to constant threats of intimidation, compensation and death.⁵³ When we consider the fierce and quarrelsome situations of the islands at this point of time, it would have been very challenging, particularly given the situation in Malaita.

Many times, only the tangible actions of the “working boys” were recognised, whilst the unseen actions were taken for granted. This occurred in many cases in Melanesia. In the context of the daily living situation of that time, one must not forget that the life in Melanesia was still without modern conveniences, thus very fragile. Heathenism and traditional practices still played an important role in the life of the communities. Enmity and differences between clans were still a prevailing reality. With these practices still prevailing, the lives of strangers were still at great risk. Being a doctor or a nurse, a government officer or even a missionary was not a guarantee of safety.⁵⁴ For this reason, having Melanesian crews was a bonus. It gave confidence and to some extent guaranteed some safety to the doctors or nurses. Safety of course could only be guaranteed by adhering to the cultural and social requirements in a community that one entered. In view of this it was important, then, that the proper adherence to these requirements be practised. This was very much in the hands of the crews who were obliged to teach the right

⁵² *Southern Cross Log*, No 27, 1949, “Medical Work: A day’s Tour”, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, 18ff.

⁵³ Hopkins, *From Heathen Boy to Christian Priest*, 10. Malaita had always been reputed as having the most dangerous men. See Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 85ff. Horton provided some of the cases in Malaita that were also common to other islands.

⁵⁴ There are records of killings and threats by Melanesians towards Europeans and even towards other Melanesians in this era. An example of this was the killing of W.R. Bell and a cadet by a group in Kwaio, Malaita, in 1927, about two years before the establishment of Fauabu. See Hugh Laracy, *Pacific Protest*, 12.

cultural practices and behaviours. The safety and the success of the travelling team were often in the hands of the crews.

Apart from the boats *Mavis* and *Gwen*, a land rover was provided by UNICEF in 1962.⁵⁵ This made travelling faster and more reliable. Nurses and medical supplies were conveniently dispatched to villages. Very sick patients were able to be transported to the hospital for urgent attention. But this was not always easy for the Melanesians who drove and captained these types of transport. Owing to the poor condition of the roads, safety was not always guaranteed.⁵⁶ Likewise, the crew of the *Mavis* and *Gwen* had to face the perils of the sea. Storms with heavy seas, rain, wind and strong currents were often met. These circumstances called for skilful and knowledgeable drivers and crews who many times were taken for granted.

The mission referred to another category of workers as the 'work boys.' This group consisted of boys (men) who were responsible for the manual heavy jobs in and around the hospital station. The establishment of a hospital was a new development that required buildings and infrastructure. Houses were required, whether they were of local or imported material did not make any difference. They both required manpower. However, in the case of Fauabu, the houses that were built were both of local and imported materials. The Melanesian boys were responsible for their construction and maintenance. Besides this, they were responsible for the station lawns, gardens, roads and drainage.

There were also garden boys who cultivated the land to supplement the rations supplied by the mission. There is no record of livestock which reflects the absence of this industry. But the growing of vegetables and root crops such as yam, taro, cassava and sweet potatoes were the major farm undertakings. The gardens provided for both the patients and the workers,

⁵⁵ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 18.

⁵⁶ "Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany, Fauabu: Oct 1962 to September 1963" *Southern Cross Log* No. 83, Dec. 1963. 117.

including the nurses and the trainees.⁵⁷ This reflects the principle of 'self-reliance' in the running of the hospital.

Their limited knowledge and experience did not deter the 'work boys' from fulfilling the duties expected of them. In fact they did more than expected from their limited knowledge.

5. The Melanesian Nurses and Nurse Aids

i) Cultural values versus incoming values for women

Health and medical care had always required the work of nurses and nurse aids. It was an unavoidable responsibility and one that became a Melanesian ministry in later years. Initially to become a nurse or a nurse aid was not easy as there were prejudices to overcome. The cultural and social barriers were the main obstacles.⁵⁸ This constituted an irony because whilst the girls were culturally restricted from becoming nurses and nurse aids, they were merely undertaking cultural and sociological responsibilities of a similar nature to traditional Melanesian female roles, but that was now wrapped in and executed by a technologically more sophisticated culture.

In supporting the above claim, the general cultural responsibility of women in Melanesia was enormous. The daily survival of the family in terms of food was in their hands. Women were responsible for the gardens – everything from planting to the preparation of the products in the households. Other domestic responsibilities such as household duties and care of children and the elderly were on their shoulders.⁵⁹ The children and the elderly who were vulnerable depended for much of their survival and welfare on women and girls in the family. The sick and the disabled were cared for and nursed by the women and girls. These were the kinds of responsibilities of the same nature with those of nurses. The only major difference was that whilst such roles were required to be applied within a family circle in the Melanesian culture, the incoming culture extended such services beyond family, and beyond geographical, ethnic and cultural boundaries.

⁵⁷ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 6-8.

⁵⁸ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 5-6. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 251.

⁵⁹ Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 104. See also "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 5.

Generally women were continuously under pressure because of the amount of work they were required to do. The village economy depended on their labour.⁶⁰ A lack of women in the family was therefore a cultural, social and economic disadvantage. A relevant statement in this regard was made by a member of the Sisters of the Cross:

In all cases the mother has parted with her best, and perhaps her only helper. Send a boy to school and there is one less to feed and clothe. Send a girl to school and you must prepare to do all the garden work, cooking, house sweeping yourself. . .⁶¹

Women were thus restricted in mobility, especially in terms of migrating out from the community, even for a short period of time. The cultural reason justifying this was that the rightful place for women was the home. Embedded deep into this concept was the view that it protected women against “infringements of sexual ‘taboos’” and preserved “marriage values.”⁶² This restriction became even more obvious with the introduction of the cash economy when men and boys went out in search of employment and educational opportunities. In other words, men were required less at home and were at liberty to migrate. The community cared less about men who migrated even to the extent that some left their homes for decades. The late Fred Maedola - a Solomon Islander artist - once claimed in one of his albums in the sixties “Allardyce nomoa girl,”⁶³ that the place where the Allardyce logging companies operated in Isabel, Solomon Islands, in 1960s and early 70s was a women-less spot. This is an example of a prevailing trend up to the sixties in many urban or semi-urban areas, reflecting the restriction on the departure of women and girls from their villages.⁶⁴ In this context, what has

⁶⁰ Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 75. Hugh Laracy however pointed out this in the context of the Roman Catholic Church that was similar throughout Melanesia. See also George R. Hemming, ‘Diary for a week in 1948’ and “Fauabu Diary 1928-1978,” 9.

⁶¹ Margaret, “The Education Work of the Sisters of the Cross” in *Southern Cross; A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, Sept. 1946, 24.

⁶² Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 75.

⁶³ Fred Maedola, “Solomon Islands Hits 1970s.”

⁶⁴ Cf. Janet Crawford, “Women and Melanesian Mission,” in *The Church of Melanesia 1849-1999: 1999 Selwyn Lectures Marking the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Melanesian Mission*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Auckland: The College of St. John the Evangelist, 2000), 53, who expressed that girls were restricted at home because of family objections. Family objections were again based on cultural responsibilities as well as avoiding “infringements of sexual ‘taboos.’” One could say that ‘sexual taboos’ were wrapped by parental or relative objectives.

been just discussed highlights that culture was the bottom line that long affected the opportunities of the women in Melanesia.

However, with the introduction of nurse training for girls in 1941, the cultural and social break from the past was repeated in another field. This time, however, it was not by the call for formal education either as students or teachers. Rather it was a call for the employment of women as nurses or nurse aids. This was a new important call and an opportunity that was not only to extend further services to the people but, at the same time, further broaden the employment base for women. This was an opportunity for women to prove their economic capability that had previously, been always hampered by cultural norms.

ii) Training and the duties of nurses

The nurses training program formed one of the success stories of the mission. It began when the first six female nurse trainees were taken in 1941 by the Hospital of the Epiphany in Fauabu, Malaita. The training took four years or more depending on how the trainees coped with the studies. Repetition of the courses was permissible if a student was unsuccessful in obtaining the required grades. English lessons were important as most medical instruction was in English and in view of the little education that the trainees had. Nursing subjects with Pharmacology were taught by the Sisters while the doctor taught medicine and surgery.⁶⁵ However, by the 1960s there were some changes, as we will see later.⁶⁶ But what can be assumed here is that as usual the initial stages of the training program were not easy for the trainees. For this reason, it was fitting to present the training in an informal and flexible manner.

At the resumption of the hospital functions after the war, nurse training became an integral part of the ongoing programs in the mission hospital. Unlike in the pre-war period, it was now necessary to upgrade the standard.

⁶⁵ H.M. Webster, "Fauabu Hospital Nurses" in *Southern Cross Log*, (Wellington: Melanesian Mission), No. 93, June 1966, 39-40.

⁶⁶ George R. Hemming, "The Mission Hospital Fauabu," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, no.25, June 1947. 26. See also H.M. Webster, "Fauabu Hospital Nurses", 39.

Since then the intakes were always twenty-five to thirty students.⁶⁷ The curriculum used at this time was the 'Nurse Training of the Island Territories of the South Pacific.' This was initially drawn up for Fiji in New Zealand and the course covered a period of three years. There was no question about the relevance of this curriculum, but it was a difficult undertaking for the trainees whose educational background was low.⁶⁸ The first Melanesian nurses to graduate were Line Esu from Vanuatu in 1946 followed by Rose and Rosina.⁶⁹ Later in 1952, eight other girls also passed their government examination.⁷⁰

The training of nurses became an important and integral part of the health and medical services of the Melanesian Mission. The training was undertaken by well qualified European Sisters and the doctor who was in-charge. The subjects generally covered were Anatomy, Physiology, Medical and Surgical nursing, Mothercraft and Maternity, English and Religious Studies.⁷¹ Many difficulties were encountered, including the capability of the girls who at this point of time still did not have an appropriate level of general education. Despite this, their contribution both as trainees and as qualified nurses had an immense impact on the lives of Melanesians and the missionary doctors and Sisters physically, mentally and socially.

In the late 1950s, the nurses training took another turn by their undertaking studies within the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) government nurses training curriculum. This training was under the Central Hospital that was administered by the government in Honiara. The course was three years in duration but required an additional year for registration before they were employed.⁷² In 1961, the Church of Melanesia nurses sat the same

⁶⁷ George R. Hemming, "The Mission Hospital Fauabu," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, no.25, June 1947. 25. See also "Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany – Fauabu" in *Southern Cross Log*, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), no.83, Dec 1963, 114.

⁶⁸ *The Southern Cross Log*, (London: Melanesian Mission), Vol. 54 No.1, Jan. Quarter 1947, 10.

⁶⁹ *The Southern Cross Log*, (Wellington: Melanesian Mission), No. 93, June 1966, 39. Note that if Rose or Rosina was a Solomon Islander as they were likely to be then there is a discrepancy with Fox's claim that the first Solomon Islander nurse was Joyce Ofana who graduated in 1950. See Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 252.

⁷⁰ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12. Cf. Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany, Fauabu: Oct 1962 to September 1963" *Southern Cross Log* No. 83, Dec. 1963. It states that this was the first unified Protectorate-wide Examination.

⁷¹ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12.

⁷² H.M. Webster, "Fauabu Hospital Nurses," 39-40. Note that training programs became more formal at this stage in comparison with the late 1940s when the training period was flexible from four or more years.

examination as those in the Central Hospital and the South Seas Evangelical Maternity Centre at Nafinua. The oral and practical examinations were conducted in Honiara.

Prior to 1961, Fauabu hospital had its own training program that was not legally obliged to be in conformity with the government curriculum.⁷³ However, the trainees were eligible to sit the government examination for recognition that could enable them to work in government hospitals and clinics. This could further mean that the government curriculum was still not the legal benchmark but it was an option that the mission hospital decided to base its training on. For a few reasons this was an advantage. The recognition given by the government was more than an achievement that brought a sense of pride to the mission. It was a wake-up call for the mission to improve on its already reputable nursing standard to be able to offer much better health services to the sick. M.L. Curtis stated:

You will understand why we have to send nurses home if they are lacking in intelligence and common sense, because even if they fluke a pass in their exam, they could easily kill patients through carelessness.⁷⁴

More important still, the government curriculum was taken as a new external standard that Church of Melanesia nurses had to try to achieve. It gave morale, confidence and recognition to nurses beyond the mission boundary. This was necessary to boost the health services and general performance.

This was also an honoured personal achievement. It gave the girls self-confidence, high self-esteem and high morale that could bring about better performance and improved services. It gave them an external qualification recognised outside their own area. This could provide them better employment opportunities elsewhere in the different clinics or hospitals throughout the islands, of which most availed themselves.

⁷³ This was still the practice in the early 1970s. St. Clare's Hospital had trained nurses but who were not registered nurses. They became known as Aids. See Hellen Barrett, "Medical Report Solomons – January 1973," *Diocesan Conference January 3rd -12, 1973*, Honiara: Diocese of Melanesia, 1.

⁷⁴ M.L. Curtis, "Rondonala and Iowa," in *Southern Cross Log*, 53.

Whilst the nurse trainees and the registered nurses were different in status, their goal remained common. That common goal was to heal, restore and lessen suffering either directly or indirectly. Hence in this context, whatever the discussion, it refers to both. The only difference lay in the rate of supervision where the trainees could require a little more than the qualified nurses.

iii) Nurses in hospitals and mission stations

The registered nurses generally had two areas within the mission in which they carried out their duties at this stage. The first was in the mission hospitals, initially in Fauabu followed by Kerepei and St. Clare's in Taroniara some years later.⁷⁵ The eight hour shifts in the hospitals reflected a 24 hours a day caring for the sick. This covered not only the many aspects of medical attention, but also other areas believed to be factors contributing to the healing and restoration of the body, mind and soul of the sick.

Inspired by such motivation the hospital's daily life routine began with prayers. The day started at 6 am with the Morning Prayer in the hospital wards and at 8 am in the chapel. The Evening Prayer was at 5.30 pm in the wards and 6.30pm in the chapel.⁷⁶ The nurses were the catechists who officiated at the prayers and the scripture readings. The theology behind this of course has a deep meaning, covering many important subjects. However, what needs to be understood is that every aspect of health and medical work done through the doctors, Sisters, nurses and orderlies was seen as the manifestation of God's gracious love. The integration of medical science and religion therefore was always an acceptable synthesis in the church's healing ministry. Less wonder therefore that the daily work of the hospital or dispensaries had to begin and end with God.

Apart from the hospital responsibilities, the nurses with the doctor or Sisters also made occasional visits to surrounding villages. They attended the sick, old and lepers, while giving vaccinations to children. Inspections were generally

⁷⁵ St. Clare hospital was opened in 1963. Kerepei was built in 1937. See Sandra Weston, "It is a great venture," *Southern Cross Log*, no.19, (December 1965): 121.

⁷⁶ H.M. Webster, "Fauabu Hospital Nurses," *Southern Cross Log*, no. 93, June 1966, 39.

made regarding the village surroundings and the health of the people.⁷⁷ Along with this, discussion of health and instructions were always delivered. Reaching out to the 'unable' was an extra task but was equally important, reflecting the commitment to caring, healing and wholeness of the church.

The second area was that of the mission schools and institutions looking after the health and welfare of students. The nurses that served in these institutions also served the public. On many occasions tours were made to villages that often took few days.⁷⁸ Apart from mission hospitals and institutions, there were others who served in the government hospitals in the urban areas and rural clinics.⁷⁹ This became the common trend some years later as more government clinics and hospitals were established. The government thus became the major employer of nurses.

The nurses who worked in the hospitals were directly under the supervision of the doctors and Sisters and were exposed thus to gain new knowledge and experience. In other words, learning was an ongoing process especially with difficult medical cases that demanded the attention of the doctors and the Sisters. Those who worked in the government hospitals, however, were far more privileged than those in the mission hospitals.⁸⁰ One of the disadvantages of this, however, was that the nurses in this environment were not always at liberty to exercise independence. They remained subject to the doctors and Sisters.

Even so, there were also nurses in the community clinics who did not have the daily supervision of the doctors and Sisters. These nurses were independent and in many circumstances made decisions on cases by themselves, even if

⁷⁷ Marion Gray, "Never a dull moment" *Southern Cross Log*, No. 106, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, December 1971, 91.

⁷⁸ Hopkins, *Melanesia To-day*, 77. See also "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12 that mentions Margaret Namoi who did medical work at Siota after her graduation. See Staff Nurse Vida, "A District Medical Trip" *Southern Cross Log*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, No. 78, Sept. 1962. 82-83. Maravovo Boys school, Fiu in Malaita, Tasia in Isabel were some examples of the stations. See also *Melanesian Mission*, Broad Sheet no.3 July 1963, 1. Melanesian Mission, *About Melanesia: Medical Work in Melanesia*, Melanesian Mission: n.p. No.4, 1935, 5.

⁷⁹ "Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany, Fauabu: Oct 1962 to September 1963," *Southern Cross Log* No. 83, Dec. 1963, 117.

⁸⁰ The government's conditions were better in terms financial remuneration. However, this was not the reason for seeking employment with the government. The government had more clinics and hospitals that required more nurses.

they did not want to. They became vulnerable to criticisms regarding some faults that were either inevitable or were not of their own making. These were the challenges that they faced but which, at the same time, gave them experiences that they could not have achieved otherwise. The experience attained in such circumstances was useful in building up confidence and morale especially by reasons of healed recipients.

iv) Nurses and the village dispensaries

Simultaneously, there was still another category of nurses who were unfortunately not employed by either the government or mission. The lack of financial resources could have contributed to this. However, despite the fact that this has been seen as negative, it was from such a situation that the concept of village dispensaries came to birth.⁸¹ It solved some of the difficulties and so became part of the health development established in most of the islands. The goal was similar to that of the hospitals and clinics but had a much lower profile or expectation. Yet the sicknesses encountered in these dispensaries were not in any way different from those encountered in hospitals and the clinics. The environment was almost the same with the same common diseases such as malaria, hookworm, elephantiasis, leprosy and TB.

With the few special treatments that the dispensaries were capable of, nothing more than what they achieved was expected. The dispensaries were set up in the villages consisting of a small building built out of local materials. The drugs available were limited basically to those needed for common sicknesses. Even with the limited medicines available, the sick were examined and treated. Sores and yaws were dressed. Children were given vaccinations.⁸² Moreover, their services reached out to many others, especially to the elderly and children who were unable to make it to the hospitals and clinics that were several miles away.

⁸¹ Hospital was the term often used by the people even if the facility was merely of a dispensary standard or even lower.

⁸² Martin Maneia was one of those who set up dispensaries in the villages and did amazing medical work amongst the people. See "Fauabu Diary," 7.

The nurses worked mostly on a voluntary basis, expecting a meagre or even no financial recompense.⁸³ This was probably one of the major differences between those who worked in the government or mission clinics and those in the village dispensaries. The poor circumstances surrounding the dispensaries' working environment could mean, for some nurses, prevention of their expectation for future advancement while, for others, it could mean the end of their employment opportunities. These circumstances, however, did not deter them from doing the service they loved.⁸⁴

The nurses in the dispensaries also shared similar experiences as to those employed in the government or the mission clinics. They were lone workers having no one else to consult with in the difficult cases, except on occasions when the mission medical teams were touring. They did all that they could, attempting to fulfil the roles of nurses and orderlies at the same time. The lack of communication equipment such as radios and telephones also made consultation over distances impossible.

The success of these dispensaries became very obvious in the 1960s. They spread widely with trained nurses reaching out to most islands. This seemed a very small and unimportant health development, but was one that reflected the advancement and consolidation of the people's standard of health and hygiene.⁸⁵ The nurses became familiar with the people of the villages so that shyness and prejudice were broken down. Opportunities were provided for the training of young people to assist with dressings and other simple treatments. And dispensaries were easy to access for many people.⁸⁶ The weaknesses and the challenges of course were inevitable but had to be accepted as ways to learn and gain experience. At the end of the day, the roles of the nurses in the dispensaries, on a similar basis to those in hospitals and clinics, revealed the work of healing as manifested under none other

⁸³ Note that the dispensaries were administered by two kinds of people. First was by the trained nurses who set up dispensaries in their homes. The second were those under the care of teachers who may have been trained the basic roles. Similarly there were also dispensaries in schools that the students took care of.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, *Challenge in Melanesia*, 27 noted that by 1959 a nurse trainee got nothing in the first 6 months, then 2/- per month with an increment of 1/- until they got 5/- per month by the end of their training. If this was for those in hospitals then a much lesser rate of pay was expected from the village dispensaries.

⁸⁵ A.T. Hill, "Bishop's Log" in *The Southern Cross Log*, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), no. 80, March 1963, 11.

⁸⁶ Hopkins, *Melanesia To-day*, 79.

than the ethos of Christian love and service. The contributions they made were signs of sacrifice and were certainly not in vain.

v) Nurses as health educators and teachers

"Prevention is better than cure" was an important premise in the development of the health and medical services studied here. This was implemented through education and teaching to overcome ignorance of diseases and their causes and to show how they could be prevented or cured. Obviously this was a necessity especially as most of the diseases affecting the people resulted from an unhygienic lifestyle. The common view of Melanesia as having problems of poor sanitation, poor ventilation, poor drainage, dirty surroundings and over-crowded homes provided genuine concern. Most of the diseases experienced in Melanesia resulted from these poor conditions. Besides being physically ill, the people were also mentally affected. Their overall performance was thus much lower than expected.⁸⁷ Socio-religious, socio-economic and socio-political obligations were therefore poorly performed, creating poor conditions that were detrimental to their whole life.

Education and instruction covered simple community matters and personal hygiene rules combined with spiritual teachings.⁸⁸ Topics included proper sanitation, clean homes, clean bodies and proper diet. This instruction was in the form of public talks to village communities. Special attention was also given to schools in the areas,⁸⁹ probably with the conviction that children could easily adapt to a new life-style. These simple subjects, however, were not easily implemented by the people to shape a new life-style. To do so was to break down the kind of life people had lived and adapted to for centuries. Retrospectively, it was a life inherited, passed down from generation to generation for ages so that transformation was not an easy expectation. In particular, the people had always believed that sickness was a predicament culturally and religiously orientated. In hindsight the nurses themselves, being

⁸⁷ Hopkins, *Melanesian To-day*, 74.

⁸⁸ Melanesian Mission: Supplement to the A.B.M. "REVIEW", October 1947, 3.

⁸⁹ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 22.

Melanesians, were also influenced by these beliefs. The nurses were therefore required to transform themselves to ultimately become teachers both in words and in practice. They achieved this by their improved health in their physical appearance:

Their health is good, and they are scrupulously clean. They swim or wash at least three times a day, and wash their hair everyday of their lives. . . . Every month they spring-clean the whole hospital . . . Every bit of the concrete is scrubbed with a coconut husk and sand, until even the shallow rainwater gutters shine. . . . It is no wonder that when our nurses go back to their villages, and their people build a dispensary for them, unexpected visitors often find them looking after patients very carefully in a spotless palm-leaf house. They pride themselves on the standard of their maternity nursing, and one can only guess at the number of lives they have saved.⁹⁰

George R. Hemming who was once the doctor in-charge also stated:

It is most striking to see how the health of the nurses improves after a few months in school. They came here thin and weakly, but with regular food, reasonable work and general care their health improves in a remarkable way. They are in marked contrast physically to the girls of the same age seen in the villages.⁹¹

Such was the practical outcome that became part of the pre- and post-recovery model of nurses. This was important example for patients and the general populace in Melanesia.

vi) Nurses and social responsibilities: Orphanage

For many reasons the social responsibilities of nurses extended further than the boundaries of their normal hospital duties. With the lack of proper ante-natal care, not to mention the cultural regulations governing this subject, delivery complications were a common occurrence. Worse still, there were mothers and infants who died, especially those who failed to attend ante-natal clinics regularly and those who attempted delivery in village environments. It was then with the dilemma of a 'dead mother with a living child' that the role of an orphanage became a necessity.

⁹⁰ Mitchell, *Challenge in Melanesia*, 28.

⁹¹ George R. Hemming, "The Mission Hospital Fauabu," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No.25 (June 1947): 26.

Records have revealed that Dr. Maybury began the care of orphans in 1930 even before the recruitment of nurses.⁹² There was one orphanage in 1930 and another two were added in 1932. However, the 1952 Annual Report stated that the number of orphans had decreased to four. They were between one and four months old. Obviously there were inconsistencies in estimating the number of orphans over the years. By 1954, the statistic had once again increased to nine and to fifteen in 1963.⁹³ In spite of the inconsistent statistics, the presence of orphans was constant. The care of orphans was to become the nurses' additional social responsibility on top of their medical/nursing duties. The nurses played the role of parents and guardians. And though this meant sacrificing some of their time, energies and resources, the girls were enriched by this experience. The two years of orphanage responsibility, though it may not have been a duty-bound responsibility, was a practical learning experience for motherhood. The children were given back to their families when they were big enough to be fed with local food.⁹⁴ This was a responsibility connected with the Mothercraft Training program that was also part of the mission ministry.⁹⁵

Another social responsibility that the Melanesian nurses contributed towards was companionship. Without the Melanesian nurses, the hospital could be a very lonely place to work in, even with the presence of the sick patients. Those who initially started the hospital, especially the doctor and Sisters and even their successors in later years, had many hurdles to overcome.⁹⁶ The pains of loneliness and isolation, let alone the lack of comfort and security, were some of the major obstacles. There could be no reason to think otherwise especially in an environment totally different from the staff.

⁹² "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 3, 4.

⁹³ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12, 13. See also "Annual Report of the Hospital of the Epiphany, Fauabu: Oct 1962 to September 1963" *Southern Cross Log* No.83, Dec. 1963, 118. Orphan care was also done in other hospitals such as St. Clare Hospital, Taroniara. See Weston, "It is a great venture," 122.

⁹⁴ Marion Gray, "Never a dull moment" 92. Note 'orphanages' in Western understanding commonly refers to establishments that care for children without parents until adulthood. The Melanesian understanding however refers to children without parents who are cared for until at a time when members of the extended family or even other community members are ready to take up the caring responsibility. The orphanage responsibility therefore is shorter in terms of time and very temporary.

⁹⁵ See section on 'Mothercraft and Infant Welfare' in chapter seven.

⁹⁶ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 254. This was the general view and one which was real.

However, there was some relief in the situation through the presence of Melanesian hospital workers where the nurses played an important role.

Apart from the relationship bond formed through the health profession that they shared, there were other areas of interaction between the European staff and the Melanesian nurses. These interactions gave opportunities to learn from each other. They nurtured respect and understanding for building a stronger united community when sharing and participating in other areas. In a brief report of 1966, there were games taught and played; dancing was organised every Tuesday night and choir practice held on Wednesday nights. The nurses' club met every Friday night and the Mothers' Union Associates on the last Monday evening of every month.⁹⁷

Among many other events, a particular circumstance affirmed the value of the companionship offered by the Melanesians. In this specific circumstance, Sister Curtis was accused of the death of a patient named Iowa. With the very critical situation that Iowa was in, it could have been wise not to force Iowa to be taken to the hospital. Sister Curtis, however, could have been ignorant of any repercussions should Iowa have died. As it happened, Iowa died three days later. The situation of course had Curtis under pressure through being condemned as responsible for Iowa's death. Curtis later stated that she found comfort and strength in the work-boys. These could probably be the dressers, orderlies and the gardeners who gave her constant advice.⁹⁸ It is, however, surprising that the Melanesian nurses were not mentioned in this circumstance. I can only assume that they too were in the state of fear, knowing very well the hostility of the hosting island – Malaita.

Further, in the face of such difficulties, the European Sisters were highly commended. Dr. Hemming, the medical officer in-charge of the mission hospital, echoed that even in the absence of doctors, "they (Sisters who Europeans) had handled all sorts of medical and surgical cases with great skill

⁹⁷ Webster, "Fauabu Hospital Nurses," 40. The dancing refers to Scottish dances. See "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978", 20.

⁹⁸ Curtis "Rondonala and Iowa," *Southern Cross Log*, May 1963, 53.

and courage," of course with "relatively simple procedures that saved many lives and relieved more suffering."⁹⁹

Fox also stated:

They (Sisters) had been the salt of the earth, for they came for love not for pay and lived in rough places among rough people, in a climate that tries the strength of Europeans. They have done all sorts of jobs, faced cheerfully earthquakes and hurricanes and the danger and discomfort of travel in small boats or canoes in bad weather; their fare has often been only native food; they have suffered from malaria, blackwater fever and other tropical diseases and they have set an example of courage, patience and cheerfulness which shames the rest of us.¹⁰⁰

Considering these circumstances, one could only construe that it could have been intolerable if there were no joy and happiness in the working environment. The girls were not only working colleagues but also social friends. Apparently, the girls were the Sisters' and European teachers' helpers and companions who helped them to overcome social, psychological, cultural and environmental difficulties.¹⁰¹ The girls filled the places of their loved ones in many ways. In their loneliness and struggles, the girls were their companions, a source of hope and strength. The nurses gave meaning and purpose to the mission endeavours superseding the negativities. If the Sisters were the salt of the earth, then the Melanesian girls could be the preservative agent that continued to keep the salt fresh. These contributions could not be taken lightly. Less wonder then that Sister Pam Crawford stated: "What marvellous days they were with these delightful girls – they saved my sanity many times and always managed to keep me laughing."¹⁰²

6. The Leprosy colony

i) Background information of colony

⁹⁹ George R. Hemming, "The Mission Hospital Fauabu," *Southern Cross Log*, (London: Melanesian Mission) Vol. 54 no. 4, October 1947. 61. Note that this is the same article found in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No.25, June 1947, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 254.

¹⁰¹ "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 11.

¹⁰² "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978," 12.

One of the common epidemics that the Melanesian Mission, together with other missions, successfully improved to a great degree was leprosy. Leprosy was a serious and widespread condition that affected the health of both adults and children in the islands. It was a disease that ate away parts of the body, especially the fingers, limbs, toes and feet. Being disfigured and in the absence of limbs and fingers, a victim could not function successfully.¹⁰³

As with other diseases, the initial work amongst the lepers actually begun outside of the hospital environment. In this regard every missionary, regardless of their specialties, was a medical worker. The ethos 'jack of all trades master of none' was an important guideline and was applicable to all missionaries. Later in the 1890s, with the arrival of Welchman who was a doctor by profession, some kind of medical services in Isabel began. Russell Marshall followed at the Welchman Memorial Hospital at Hautabu in 1911 which he helped to build.¹⁰⁴ However, a more formal set-up was initiated by Maybury – the first doctor who established the hospital of Fauabu in 1929 with 25 lepers.¹⁰⁵ It is important to note that the treatment of leprosy was always an integral part of the whole health system in the Melanesian Mission.

In 1933, Maybury's leprosarium was closed due to the inadequate resources of the mission, both in terms of finance and staffing. It was again re-opened in 1938 but with a low profile.¹⁰⁶ A Leper Colony was then established and continued to be supported by the New Zealand Leper Trust Board.¹⁰⁷ It was built apart from the main hospital vicinity and became known as St. Francis' Leper Colony. It was common to have more than a hundred patients accommodated at one time but that was still inadequate to host all leprosy

¹⁰³ Note that 'leprosy' was a disease campaigned against not because it had cultural, religious and biblical links but that it was for medical and health reasons. And for Melanesians, lepers were not marginalized in the same manner as in the Jewish world. Lepers lived in the same community and even to the extent of rearing a family. The term 'leper' with it's negative connotation became only known when lepers were segregated through the introduction of 'leper colonies.'

¹⁰⁴ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 248.

¹⁰⁵ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isle*, 249. Cf. W.H. Baddeley, "Precis of Report by the Bishop given at a meeting of the General Committee," Church House: Westminster, http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/baddeley_report1936.html. doc (accessed October 9, 2008) The first Leprosy dispensary built at the time of Maybury was at Qaibaita built by funds British Empire Leprosy Relief Association. See also "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978", 3.

¹⁰⁶ Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 269.

¹⁰⁷ A.T. Hill, *Diocesan Synod 1962: Bishop's Charge*, Honiara: Melanesian Mission 1962, 8.

patients. In 1963 there were 120 patients in the Leper Colony, but the statistics were not always consistently kept. However, in the 1960 Report, The World Health Organisation estimated about 500 lepers in the Solomon Islands.¹⁰⁸

ii) Melanesian Participation

There were several major activities that Melanesians took part in for the leprosy campaign. For example, in 1929, Brother Barnabas Bambau, a native from Gela and a leper, was in charge of the lepers. It is merely related that he was a chief and teacher.¹⁰⁹ However, being a member of the Melanesian Brotherhood, much was expected of him. He was a catechist responsible for the daily services and scripture readings. He was an evangelist whose task was to reach out, teaching the Christian lepers and converting the heathen ones. He was to live the gospel and be a model of Christ, giving encouragement, hope and healing to his fellow lepers. Heathenism of course was still extensively practised at this time. To some extent he was the chaplain responsible for the spiritual well-being of the leper patients. His role as a brother no doubt conferred on him a lot of trust by the doctors, Sisters and nurses as well as the patients.

Another example is Timothy Titiulu who became the chaplain in 1939 and did the same kind of ministry as Brother Barnabas amongst the lepers. This time, however, Timothy was a priest serving as a chaplain to the colony. In the course of service and being in regular contact with the lepers he became a leper himself.¹¹⁰ Becoming a leper tells a story much more explicit than just being a normal priest and chaplain. Timothy acted as a doctor or a nurse who continued to touch the lepers. He was a friend and a companion who ate and drank with them. He was a brother who shared accommodation and bedding with them. These were services of care, sacrifice and a selfless life manifested in Christ-like love. There is no doubt that Timothy became an agent of conversion and inclusiveness for those whom he served unselfishly.

¹⁰⁸ Pamela Crawford, "Leper Colony Fauabu: Annual Report –June 1960." In *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 68, No. 4 Dec. 1960.

¹⁰⁹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 249. See "Fauabu Diary 1928-1978", 3. Note that according to Fox, the surname of Barnabas was Bambau while the "Fauabu Diary" recorded it as Babua.

¹¹⁰ "Fauabu Diary", 5.

With the intervention of World War II, Timothy was placed in charge of the leprosy colony.¹¹¹

By 1960 there were two inpatients in the leprosy colony who also became teachers of the lepers. Women patients on the other hand, also taught other women patients some craftwork. Nester was one of them who produced beautiful woven bags that went to the Red Cross fete in Honiara.¹¹²

The leprosy colony, however, also had lepers who had other sicknesses. Malaria, TB, yaws, ulcers, polio and other tropical diseases¹¹³ were common and demanded medical staff supervision. Apart from the Sister who often was in charge of the colony, there were also dressers as helpers. They handled most cases in consultation with the Sister and the doctor who were the overall staff in charge of the hospital.¹¹⁴ Nurses only became available later.¹¹⁵

The fact that leprosy cases were in their hundreds in the villages and islands, the nurses and others who participated in the campaign to relieve leprosy had to venture to them. However, reaching out to villages even in the same island was difficult, let alone among the different islands scattered miles apart. This was relieved by the arrival of the *Fauabu Twomey*, a fifty-five feet motor vessel in 1957. The nurses and workers of the colony were able to visit lepers on a more frequent basis. The lepers who were in a more serious condition were transported to the colony while those that had been healed were taken back to their homes.¹¹⁶

This leads us to reflect on the Melanesian contribution to the lepers through the work and responsibilities of the boat crews. Similar to those who manned the hospital launches, as mentioned earlier, the responsibilities of the crews of the *Fauabu Twomey* probably demanded more because of the extensive travelling between islands. Much heavier seas, strong winds and

¹¹¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 250.

¹¹² "Fauabu Diary", 16.

¹¹³ See James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia and Polynesia*.

¹¹⁴ "Fauabu Diary", 9 & 14.

¹¹⁵ Joy Ofala was the nurse and Samuel Leufi, Bartholomew Bauro and James Idutee were the dressers of the leprosiom working with Sister M.I.A. Cubitt in 1952. See "Fauabu Diary", 11.

¹¹⁶ *Melanesian Mission*, Broadsheet No.2 February 1963, 1.

unpredictable weather were experienced. It must not be forgotten that the nature of such travelling could mean leaving families for days. Other responsibilities included the different kinds of physical work that were done by the Melanesian work boys.¹¹⁷

At the end of the day, one can only affirm the words "Lepers are cleaned and the poor have the gospel preached unto them."

Conclusion

Healing and restoration had always been part of the Melanesian world. As previously indicated, some cultural and spiritual concepts of sicknesses could be similar with some of the incoming Christian concepts. Sickness was an epidemic resulting from the intrusion of spirits either by accident or intention. But even by accidental intrusion it could still be the result of negligence and breaches of cultural or religious norms leading to the spirit's intentional intrusion. In the final analysis, both the accidental and intentional intrusions were therefore consequences of what the society referred to as evil. The healing of such diseases thus could only be achieved by way of cultural and religious remedies. In connection with this concept, Dr. E. E. Claxton referred to the work of Dr. Newsholme, Medical Officer of Health for Birmingham, whose Hospital Sunday sermon at St George's Church, Edgbaston reflected on:

. . . how sin, failure to obey the laws of living and living together, has produced the ill-health, disease, and casualties for which our hospitals cater. Medical, he continued, must not be content to deal solely with man's physical complaints. The next great advance would be the inclusion of the spiritual in treatment."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ See earlier discussion on the hospital. The same duties and expectation were also in the Leper Colony. The gardens however were more productive than hospital gardens. The garden boys had always worked hard and had generally supplied the colony and the hospital with food from the gardens. In 1957, the colony had 46 gardens that were adequate to feed the patients. This was supplementary to the ration provided by the mission.

¹¹⁸ "Spiritual in Medical Treatment" *The Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, No.23, September 1946, 19. This was taken from "The Birmingham News".

The above concept is a debatable issue especially with non-believers who could be in strong opposition. However, the point is not whether one believes or not, but the fact that the Melanesian worldview about sickness was to some extent attuned with Christian views, while the modern medical services and approaches were beyond their understanding. The disbelief of modern medical services and approaches, however, was merely an initial one-off attitude. Modern medical services, therefore, became accepted later when substantial healing results were seen and experienced. It became an additional healing ministry in the Melanesian world.

In view of the above, the medical services not only played important roles in the healing of the many tropical diseases, but became an agent of 'conversion and inclusiveness' that would otherwise not have been possible. These principles have been illustrated earlier. Conversion occurred through the healing of Soga, whilst inclusiveness has been illustrated by Heinrich Kuper's story.¹¹⁹ These are two examples, but there are many more stories that demonstrate how healing was a catalyst for conversion and inclusiveness.

Inclusiveness however must be looked at in two aspects. The first is the inclusiveness of the medical services into the Melanesian healing perception. And the second is the inclusiveness of Melanesians into the new healing medical field.

Another dimension of inclusiveness concerns the concept of gender roles, responsibilities and privileges. In this context, whilst cultural norms were sacrificed, the lives of women and girls were improved with their gaining much more liberty and sense of satisfaction. This was almost the beginning of realising that women and girls who were seen traditionally as only domestic workers could do more than the cultural expectation allowed. Their work as orderlies and nurses in the medical field was, without doubt, acknowledged and even highly appreciated by the Melanesian communities. Again, this was how the work of Melanesians in multiple positions and diverse tasks were indispensable for the work of the mission in the area of health care.

¹¹⁹ See discussion about Kuper's in situation in Santa Ana, 171-172.

Their difficulties, however small in extent compared with the European missionaries, did not lessen their problems. The Melanesians were equally affected in cultural and social ways. Total freedom to live and work was constantly under the threat of fear and anxiety.¹²⁰ It was under these circumstances that they were always conscious about the 'allowables and the non-allowables' of the people with whom they lived and who surrounded them. After all, the dressers/orderlies, nurses and work boys were not always from the particular area they served. The deep cultural and social diversities of Melanesia thus were factors to be considered.

The work of health and medical services in which Melanesians participated could also be seen indirectly as missionary in nature, attempting to develop the wholeness of humanity. They became missionaries to their own people through their direct or indirect participation in these services. They assisted in healing and restoring the physical afflictions of the body. They became not only agents of 'transformation, conversion and inclusiveness' in terms of spiritual, social, economic and political well-being, but became responsible for the maintenance of that well-being.

Having examined the roles played by Melanesians in the healthcare service, the next subject will be the industrial development in Taroniara. Apart from economic reasons, Taroniara had been important in the initial and back-up service for the development of the church in Melanesia.

¹²⁰ "Fauabu Diary", 2.

Chapter Six

Taroniara: “Useful industry”

Introduction

Taroniara is in Florida – an island locally known as Gela, close to Tulagi, the capital of the Solomon Islands from 1897 until after World War II. Historically, Taroniara first became the Melanesian Mission headquarters established by Bishop Walter H. Baddeley in 1939.¹ It was the residential site of the Diocesan Bishop and the mission administration. The name was chosen in honour of Stephen Taroniara – a Melanesian who died of arrow wounds during the fatal wounding of Bishop John Coleridge Patteson in Nukapu.² Its ideal location being close to the capital, with a good harbour, Taroniara became the ideal choice for the industrial development of the mission. Selwyn’s ethos of “useful industry” was to be executed there as an expansion of the small scale development already undertaken in the mission schools.³

As more development occurred, Tulagi could no longer satisfy the requirements for the administration, political and economic development of the islands. Honiara, a post-war centre in Guadalcanal, was then chosen as the new capital in 1947. The Bishop’s residence, with the Cathedral, were also transferred to Honiara whilst the major activities of the Melanesian Mission remained in Taroniara.

New major changes took place in 1970 when the new administrative building was built in the very central part of Honiara in an area where the All Saints Cathedral was. In the meantime the new cathedral was also built some two or three kilometres east of the previous cathedral location. Adjacent to the administration building was the printing press, previously transferred from Taroniara in 1970. In the same building were also the Diocesan Store and Education Office. Within the same vicinity was Patteson House that

¹ H.W. Bullen, “Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara” 21.11.1972: Report for the diocesan Conference 1973.

² Hilliard, *God’s Gentlemen*, 66ff.

³ “Useful industry” had been part of the school programs from the beginning. See chapter three, 153ff.

accommodated members of the Community of the Sisters of the Church and the Society of St. Francis Brothers.⁴

This chapter examines the roles of Melanesians in this industrial field. The aim of course was for the church to become productive and self-reliant in its mission and services to all the islands for which it was responsible. The establishment of mission stations in terms of schools, hospitals and plantations in the different islands made such development very demanding. The need for engineering, construction, joinery and electrical work were ongoing in the mission stations. Machines and equipment such as generators, tractors and VHF/HF radios demanded constant repair and service. Likewise the construction and repair of classrooms, staff houses, clinics and furniture were endlessly demanding. The printing of literature for schools and the mission and the local churches was needed. The islands, being surrounded by sea, essentially needed ships and the service of seafarers and marine engineers to man them, also the engagement of boat builders, engineers and electricians to maintain sea-worthiness and safety standards of the ships legally required by the maritime authority.

Taroniara was then made the Technical Training Centre providing training in marine engineering, seamanship, boat-building, electrical, construction, carpentry and printing.⁵ Many became qualified tradesmen taking up work that was simultaneously available in the industry. Taroniara thus became not only the largest establishment integrated into the structure of diocese, but became also the life blood of the mission providing the necessary services as mentioned.⁶ By 1972/1973, the total establishment of Taroniara comprised 74 personnel. The breakdown was as follows: Engineers 13; Joiners 18; Carpenters 22; Storemen 2; Boat-builders 10; Electricians 5 and Labourers 4.⁷ Note that the

⁴ These two religious communities were new establishment within the Diocese. See Frances, "The Sisters of the Church settled in Honiara," 12 and Ngalihesi, "The Society of St. Francis and the Franciscans in the Solomon Islands," 15ff.

⁵ Alfred T. Hill, *Southern Cross Log*, No 80, March 1963, "Bishop's Log," (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 13. See also *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 76 No.1, May 1968, 20-22.

⁶ The author refers to the schools, hospitals and plantations as satellite stations.

⁷ Peter Shield, "Taroniara," 7. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference.

number of seamen is not recorded here but they could make up a good number as there were number of ships in the fleet.

It is from the Taroniara perspective that this chapter examines the data, taking account of the major roles Melanesians played. Yet this does not suggest the exhaustion of other minor roles of Melanesians as well as the many limitations they contended with.⁸ First, discussion deals with the work of the Mission Engineers. This section consists of the marine engineers, electricians and boat builders. The second section covers the Building Construction group consisting most of builders and carpenters. The third part covers the responsibilities of the printing press. Finally, the role played by the ships and seafarers is discussed.

Note that in the context of Taroniara as a technical provider, there are some difficulties in directly examining the specific roles of Melanesians because of their technical nature. In such a situation, the roles could only be explicitly explained through the examination of the general roles of the individual departments. In other words, the contributions of the Melanesians could only be seen indirectly from the results of the contributions made by their departments.

1. Mission Engineers

The Mission Engineers made up the biggest portion of the industry undertaken in Taroniara - providing Marine Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Boat building.⁹ These were trades that the mission fleet of ships depended on for their regular checking and maintenance. Besides, there were also mission stations with generators, vehicles and other electrical equipment that were also in constant need of maintenance or repair. These were indispensable ongoing functions in the mission satellite stations. Don Ruxton in his article stated:

⁸ The work of the plantations was an example of this. See also discussion in the conclusion.

⁹ Note that apart from the ships, the Marine Engineering also worked on generators and vehicles such as land rovers and tractors.

The station perhaps brings even more problems than the classroom. There are always buildings on the verge of falling down, or electrical or mechanical apparatus not functioning.¹⁰

The above statement was made in 1960, but the need was always there since the first mission stations were established, let alone requirements of the ships. There were reports that in the 1930s much work had already been done by Fletcher with the limited facilities available.¹¹ The work progressed slowly and, by 1960, Taroniara was moving into the mechanical age. By then Melanesians were trained and were operating lathes, oxy-acetylene welding plants, drill presses, valve grinders and the like.¹²

A visit by R.P. Garrity, the General Secretary of the Melanesian Mission in England, stated in 1962:

Taroniara had reached its present excellence, highly mechanised with up to date equipment. Most of the equipment and electrical installations were done by the workers so it cost very little. There were teams of boys who learned engineering and boat building.¹³

Hence Taroniara gradually developed to its peak from 1969 to 1970.¹⁴ We will now examine the various departments and the roles they played in the development of the church.

i) Marine Engineering Department

Thomas Alfred Hill early in his episcopal term¹⁵ decided to have two ships for the mission – one for the bishop and another for cargo. During this time funds for the replacement of the *Southern Cross VII* were generously provided by the people of England, Australia and New Zealand.¹⁶ However for some reason, it was further decided that, instead of implementing the 'two-ship' scheme, all maintenance of mission ships was henceforth to be done in

¹⁰ Don Ruxton, "Island of Paradise?" *Southern Cross Log*, No. 69 June 1960, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 59. Don however had not included ships.

¹¹ W.H. Baddeley, "The Bishop's Annual Report 1938", 9.

¹² "Station News," in *Southern Cross Log* Vol.70 No.4 Dec 1962, 105-106.

¹³ R.P.Garrity, *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 70 No.4 Dec 1962, "Afternoon Meeting" (Honiara: Melanesian Mission, 116-117.

¹⁴ H.W. Bullen, "Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara", 21.11.1972. (Report for the diocesan Conference 1973), 1.

¹⁵ This could be in the late 1950s. Thomas Alfred Hill became Bishop of Melanesia in 1954. See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 294.

¹⁶ Note that the Southern Cross VII was retired in 1954. See Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 260.

Melanesia rather than in Auckland. This was an indirect call for the upgrading of the workshop in Taroniara which was given approval by the General Synod in New Zealand.¹⁷ Consequently, machines and equipment were bought and installed; and men were trained both locally and overseas.

The Marine Engineers workshop played several important parts both on the stations and ships. It was the very heart of the mission on which the life of both the mission stations and ships depended. First the mission stations were equipped with various machines and types of equipment. Taroniara being the workshop's centre was expected to offer the major work requirement for the mission stations and ships. Taroniara could be referred to as the powerhouse, for without it many things could not have advanced to the level achieved.

From the travelling statistical information given,¹⁸ it was absolutely necessary that the mission ships could not go without maintenance and repairs on a regular basis. Analysis made on the little information recorded by Fox reveals that there had been major and minor work done on the ships.¹⁹ Without counting the launches, the mission had the *Southern Cross I-VIII* which was run by two engines, the *Baddeley*, the *Selwyn*, the *Fauabu Twomey* and the *Patteson* to care for in the 1960s. With the bigger ships alone, there were already six engines to care for. This was a big responsibility for the marine engineering workshop. Besides this, there were times when salvage work was done, for which machines and equipment of wrecked vessels were recovered and taken back to Taroniara where they were dismantled, cleaned and repaired.²⁰ This information could leave little doubt of the amount of engineering work required.

Having said this, and, apart from the responsibilities demanded by the ships, the engineering department also attended to generators, tractors, land rovers, lawn mowers and other machines that required regular maintenance

¹⁷ "Head of Taroniara Brian Ayers," in *Melanesian Messenger*, Easter 1967 30-31.

¹⁸ See statistic on last paragraph, 228. Its source can also be found on 228 fn 82.

¹⁹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 260ff.

²⁰ "Another Southern Cross is on the way," in *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 68 No. 4, 1960 (London: Melanesian Mission), 109.

and repair. These were important plant and machines in the mission stations. Schools such as Pawa, Alangaula, Maravovo and Selwyn later in the 1970s and Colleges such as Siota and Kohimarama and the Fauabu Hospital had generators. These stations alone already accounted for seven generators, let alone those that were on board the ships and those in Taroniara. The generators were needed for night activities such as urgent medical operations, night classes in schools and also church services and other activities at night. In Taroniara alone, many of the workshop machines were power-driven, including those in the printing press. Generators were therefore needed for many purposes. For this reason, they were in operation on a daily basis, increasing the rate of 'wear and tear.' Regular checking and maintenance by the engineering department were thus essential.²¹

In regard to the land rover, its use was in Fauabu mainly for the work of the hospitals. The vehicle enabled the nurses to reach out to communities that were far from the hospital. This enabled more drugs and medicines to be taken by the health workers and thus more people could be treated in a single tour. The very sick, urgent cases with the disabled could be taken to the hospital in good time. As Fauabu was several kilometers from Auki,²² the land rover became useful for the transportation of hospital materials, equipment and medicines. With these advantages, the land rover was a useful asset for the efficient operation of the hospital. But because of the very poor condition of the roads, extra care was needed by means of regular maintenance and repairs.

Another item of equipment used by some of the mission stations was the tractor. Tractors were used mainly in schools and plantations. In schools they were used for the cultivation of the land for root crops such as sweet potatoes and yam, banana and vegetables. 'Self-sufficiency' was an important call and, with the help of a tractor, mission schools adequately produced most of

²¹ As a student at Maravovo in the 1960s, Taroniara engineers were occasionally seen getting the generators apart and then re-assembled them again. This of course had some of the boys attracted to the engineering trade.

²² Auki was and is the government station so that materials and other things for the hospital and staff can be bought or picked up from there.

their local food. Similarly, firewood was a necessity for the school kitchens that catered for more than a hundred boys. Firewood was cut several kilometers inland, and often loaded on the tractor. In the event of building or repairing houses, the tractors also became important for the loading of building materials. They also played an important part in the plantations for the transport of firewood and copra to ports for shipment or to Honiara.²³ It could not be far from the truth to say that tractors were more crucial on the plantations than at schools. The plantations would need many more tons of wood for the tons of copra to be dried.

Still as important, in the case of Maravovo school, the tractor was the only means of transport to Honiara which was more than sixty kilometres away. The fact that it was uncomfortable and slow did not hinder its importance in terms of emergency medical runs, student excursions to town either for education, sport or religious activities.²⁴ This was the 'tractor era' in Melanesia.

A simple calculation of the above information reveals that the performance of the mission stations was, to some extent, at the mercy of the engineering department. However difficult the situation was, bogged down by inadequate manpower and financial resources, work continued consistently. Men were not only trained to become qualified tradesmen but to become faithful and committed to their call to serve the mission.

There was a time when the industry lacked supervision especially in the most crucial times but this also did not hinder progress.²⁵ The men who were trained, though with little educational background, took the responsibility of seeing the work continued. Many of course were trained locally at the Technical Training Centre but there were also two potential men who were given

²³ Note that there were plantations on the other islands outside of Honiara such as Pawa and Alangaula that needed ships whilst the plantations at Maravovo and Taneba were accessible to Honiara by road.

²⁴ Being a student in one of the mission schools in the 1960s, the author in this context is writing out of experience. Experiences revealed that life in the schools could be extremely difficult in the absence of a tractor. The road from Maravovo to Honiara as mentioned was a three to four hours journey given the condition of the road. Now it can take less than an hour.

²⁵ This was in the 1970s. This was an important period leading to the church's independence in 1975.

overseas scholarships in the mid-1960s. Frederick Merevale and Alick Kuper were sent to New Zealand to be trained as fitters and turners.²⁶

ii) Boat Building Department

The Boat Building department was also very closely associated with the shipping fleet. Considering again the number of ships the mission had, the Boat Building department was an important asset. Generally, it was true to say that being exposed daily to conditions provided by the sea and weather, 'wear and tear' could be more rapid than for buildings on the land. But there was also the critical condition of the ships that were salvaged such the *Fauabu Twomey* which required major work. Two successful stories of this department were the completion and launching of the *Joseph Atkin* in 1953 and the *Charles Fox* in 1972.²⁷

The second major refitting of the *Southern Cross IX* done in Taroniara in the first half of 2000 by Melanesians supervised by Drumond Ama²⁸ was another classical example. The professionalism and excellent workmanship revealed in that project was a reflection of the Taroniara Technical Training Centre. Drumond and those who assisted him were then the products of Taroniara. The first refitting, ten years prior to the second, was also done by Melanesians but under the supervision of Brian Ayers. This is strong evidence that Melanesians through the boat-building department involved much in the boat-building industry that contributed to the growth of the church.

iii) Electrical Department

With the major development taking place in Taroniara, and also in the satellite stations, electrical engineering capability was indispensable. Selwyn College had its water supply pumped by an electrical pump; Fauabu hospital

²⁶ "More students than ever before," in *Melanesian Messenger*, No 85, June 1964, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 52. The author understands that for some unknown reasons, Alick Kuper is not included in the article. However, the author understands that Alick Kuper had never returned to the Solomon Islands, let alone the Melanesian Mission. In 1999 and 2001, Alick Kuper was still in Auckland as he was an occasional visitor to the author's home.

²⁷ John W. Chisholm, "The Bishop's Annual Report 1971," in *Southern Cross Log* No. 107, April 1972, 21.

²⁸ Rolland Gito, *Melanesian Messenger*, March 2005. Although this is outside the thesis period, it draws out the fact that such a commendable work was done by Melanesians and supervised by a Melanesian who was a product of the 1960s Taroniara.

could not do very well without power. Likewise the rice processing machines in Pawa and Maravovo would have been useless without power.²⁹

Besides this, there were radios installed in most satellite stations and ships.³⁰ This was important equipment through which views, needs, instructions and advice were communicated from one station to another. In other words, up-to-date information about the mission was now possible and immediate and urgent needs could be addressed in good time. Again these machines were so delicate that their care was highly demanding. For this reason, their maintenance and up-keep were in the hands of the electricians.

The Taroniara station alone, even in the absence of the satellite stations, still warranted the service of electricians. The existence of heavy machines and equipment demanded increased electrical power and good qualified tradesmen to handle them. This was a matter demanding the machines not only be workable but that they be maintained to a standard of safety for the sake of those who handled them. For this reason, these electrical machines and equipment were checked regularly for their safety – a requirement that was undertaken by the Electrical Department.

Having said this, and despite the fact that the Engineering departments had a reputable record amongst Melanesians, it did meet many challenges. Some of these challenges even brought the industry close to bankruptcy. There were several reasons for this: discontinuity of technical experts and supervision; discontinuity of local trained men; non-payment of services rendered to other ship owners,³¹ and; the lack of administrative and managerial skills.³² These guaranteed the 1973 call for a hard decision to be made: whether the industry should be allowed to continue.³³

²⁹ In Pawa, Maravovo and other mission schools, remnants of rice processing equipment can be seen.

³⁰ Record shows that even telephone had been installed in Pawa School. See R. H. Standley, "Reflections from Pawa." This is curious given the view that the telecommunication technology was still far beyond reach in Melanesia.

³¹ Peter Shield, "Taroniara," 5. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference stated the *Mandola*, *Vatupura* and the *New Galama* as private ships that did not pay for services rendered. See also "Head of Taroniara Brian Ayers," *Melanesian Messenger*, Easter 1967, 31.

³² These were challenges that generally affected the whole operation, i.e. all departments.

³³ Peter Shield, "Taroniara," 2. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference.

2. Building Construction and Joinery Department

Immediately following the Headquarters' transfer from Norfolk Island to Melanesia, stations were established primarily as residences for the missionaries and mission activities. Builders and tradesmen of course came but it was not unusual to have missionaries who were at the same time builders or tradesmen or engineers. They were "jacks of all trades" and could supervise in most areas but inevitably needed the support of Melanesians. In the course of time, and as Melanesians attained training and experience, they became responsible for the many aftermath constructions and repair work. James Manebona and Moses Teui were sent to New Zealand in the mid 1960s.³⁴

On an occasional basis, these men either re-built or repaired school and clinic buildings destroyed by natural disasters such as cyclones or by wear and tear because of the weather conditions. For examples, Rota and Alangaula schools were just two examples that were completely destroyed in the 1972 cyclone and entirely rebuilt and repaired.³⁵

Within the period examined by this dissertation, there were large projects undertaken by the Building and Construction Department. As classical examples, let us briefly examine two projects. These were very important projects in the mission because of they brought about new changes in the church as we will see.³⁶

The first project was the St. Nicholas Primary School built in 1964 when the first three classrooms and a teacher's house were built by the mission's builders. This was to be the first multi-racial, full-range primary school for Anglican students living in Honiara.

³⁴ The author came to know these men because of his yearly visits to Taroniara for school holidays.

³⁵ "Diocese of Melanesia: Education Report to Conference," 5.

³⁶ There were also other major school projects such as the Jejevo Primary School in Isabel and St. Nicholas Primary School in Honiara in the 1960s. St Nicholas first classrooms and a teacher's house were built in 1964 by the mission builders. See D.C Ruxton, "Education" Report for the May 1965 Synod held in Pawa. Also "Education Report to Conference 1969," 5.

In 1968, construction work on the new Selwyn College began on the previous site of the then Najilagu Primary School east of Honiara.³⁷ Staff houses, boys' and girls' dormitories, classrooms, dining hall, kitchen laundry and toilet facilities were built. Pipes were laid for the station's water supply system. The importance of Selwyn College was that it was the first secondary co-educational boarding school for the church. Tradition was challenged and many people were not in agreement with the new change. Nevertheless it went on and, as happened in many other areas of life, its challenges and assumed negativities were superseded by the results it produced.

In the above context, advantages therefore outweighed the disadvantages. The mission now was operating one secondary school rather than two as practiced for some years.³⁸ And because the new secondary school was transferred close to Honiara, it was cheaper in many ways. Major school requirements of rations, school materials and many other necessities were close by, for which land transport was more efficient than the ships as in the past.

The new location was also a bonus as it was no longer in isolation from other secondary schools. The King George VI Secondary School owned by the government, and the St. Joseph Secondary School of the Roman Catholic Church, were only several kilometers apart. Regular meetings and 'comings together' through academic, religious and social activities were instrumental in fostering a much closer and mutual relationship. In many ways, it broke down barriers of differences and misunderstandings, creating a healthy environment where respect and tolerance were practically exercised. On the other hand, there were new opportunities for contributing from their commonalities for the common good of the nation and of the churches and communities.

The same was also applicable to the personal interaction between boys and girls who for the first time came to live together in a new environment. This

³⁷ "Education Report to Conference: Diocese of Melanesia 1969." 5, 7. See also "Selwyn College," in *Southern Cross Log*, No. 101, July 1969, 53.

³⁸ Pawa and Pamua were the two for boys and girls respectively. See Chapter Four, 145.

provided a space with the opportunity for work, worship, play and study to be done together. In other words, it created a situation where some principles of gender equality and unity were achieved in practice through shared activities mentioned earlier.³⁹

Likewise, the Catechist school at Kohimarama also went through a new construction phase to allow the establishment of a new theological college. The school was renamed Bishop Patteson Theological Centre (BPTC). More staff houses were built, as were students' homes, toilet and laundry facilities. A library and classrooms were also built with the chapel in the very centre. Some of the previous facilities left by the previous institution continued to be used but were gradually phased out as new replacements were built.

This was a very important development compatible with the current stage of the nation's development. New theological understandings, which of course were western-based, could not be totally avoided. However, the new establishment provided the opportunity for advanced learning and facilitated the means for searching new approaches that could be relevant in the Melanesian context. After all, the 1970s brought new social challenges with new lifestyles that disturbed the traditional way of life of that time.⁴⁰ Less wonder then that the church must live up to the times so as to be able to have answers to these issues. The establishment of BPTC was to adapt to this changing situation.

These were the latest examples of the construction work that the mission builders did. There were many other institutions including schools, hospitals and church buildings that were also constructed initially or maintained on a maintenance and repair basis. However, what is important is the fact that the mission builders had a heavy responsibility in the work of the mission through the unending demands of construction, maintenance and repair.

³⁹ Cf. George Arthur, "Co-Education in practise," in *Southern Cross Log* No 90, Sept. 1965, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 84. This is an article about the Vanuatu experience which is similar to Solomon Islands.

⁴⁰ Francis Bugotu and Tony Hughes, *This Man: A Play written to mark the Consecration of the new Cathedral of the Diocese of Melanesia*, Honiara. 1970.

3. The Printing Press

Before the official beginning of the Melanesian Mission, Selwyn, at his own expense, had established a press at Kohimarama (New Zealand) in 1845. Even if the press was initially for New Zealand, it also became an important asset for Melanesia at its inauguration in 1849.⁴¹ In 1864 when the Melanesian headquarters were transferred to Norfolk Island, along with many other items was the Printing Press. It was transferred for the second time to Hautabu in 1920⁴² when the Melanesian Mission headquarters were transferred to Melanesia. During World War II in 1942, it was destroyed by the Japanese. Hence, all printing was then done at Summer Hill in Sydney until 1952 when the press was re-established in Melanesia, but this time in Taroniara.⁴³ Due to the rapid political, commercial and social development in the 1960s, and because Honiara inevitably became the political, administrative and commercial centre of the islands,⁴⁴ it was commercially convenient to have it transferred to Honiara in 1970.

The transfer was important for a number of reasons. First, it provided access to more customers making it more commercially viable. The printing of literature was opened up to other areas rather than merely printing religious literature. This allowed the industry to expand, thus providing extensive services beyond the boundary of the mission or the churches.⁴⁵ At the same time, it provided more employment opportunities to Melanesians in the printing industry. In other words, the printing press had been able to enhance economic and social development that directly benefited Melanesian employees as well as

⁴¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 265.

⁴² Hautabu is on the western part of Guadalcanal adjacent to Maravovo which then was a school for the mission. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 265. Hautabu was then only the location of the Printing Press. The headquarters was of course in Siota on the island of Gela.

⁴³ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 267.

⁴⁴ Cf. Alfred T. Hill, "Bishop's Charge Diocesan Synod 1965," 14. He said "We are in the most interesting days, and the future will depend much on how we act now. With fully elected Local Councils and a partly elected Legislative Council in the Solomons, much greater political responsibility is being placed in the hands of Melanesians." There is no mention of commerce or social responsibilities but it is understandable that economy and social growth are components in the same triangle with politics.

⁴⁵ M. Norris, "Printing Office Report" for the 1965 Synod. Mr. Norris stated that when this was opened up in Nov.1964, demand for printing by private business houses was beyond them. Financial income was also good as services were paid on time.

indirectly benefiting members of their extended families, or communities, and the church.

Initially the establishment of the Printing Press was mainly for the printing of Melanesian Mission literature as mentioned earlier. However, its long term aim was not to be restricted merely to Melanesian literature as this was incompatible with the ethos of “useful industry.” However, regardless of whether it was profitable or not, it is important for this thesis to examine some of the literature printed for the mission and its contribution to the growth of the church. It was through this also that Melanesians played their part.

First, the printing of the Book of Common Prayer was highly important as an identity of Anglicanism. As Marion J. Hatchett claimed:

A distinguishing mark of the Church of England at the Reformation was the establishment of one uniform liturgy. . . it (Book of Common Prayer) possessed a liturgy true to the Scriptures, consonant with the practice of the early Church, unifying to the Church, and edifying to the people.⁴⁶

In addition, the Book of Common Prayer was the authorized liturgy for corporate prayer. Simultaneously, it naturally provided formative elements for private prayers through the provisions of collects, psalms and various rites. The Common Prayer Book was also a teaching material resource of the Church.⁴⁷ This view was further supported by Marion J. Hatchett who quotes John Seldon:

To know what was generally believed in all Ages, the way is to consult the liturgies, not any private Man's writing. As if you would know how the Church of England serves God, go to the Common-Prayer-Book, consult not this nor that Man.⁴⁸

These two statements are examples supporting the importance of the Book of Common Prayer. They were relevant not only for people whose faith was already firm and sound, but equally relevant for less experienced Anglicans

⁴⁶ Marion J. Hatchett, “Prayer Books” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK, 1988 and Minnesota: Fortress Press 1988), 131.

⁴⁷ Louis Weil, “The Gospel in Anglicanism” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK, 1988 and Minnesota: Fortress Press 1988), 58-59.

⁴⁸ Marion J. Hatchett, “Prayer Books,” 131.

which was the case in Melanesia. The Book of Common Prayer was so important that it was always a priority for the printing press. By 1938, the prayer and hymn books were printed in thirty different languages.⁴⁹ This ensured the liturgy was performed in accordance with tradition. But more essential was the fact that Melanesians were able to pray in their own different languages and thus worship became more meaningful. Christianity became contextualized.

However, it was not easy to provide the Book of Common Prayer in everyone's language as there were so many different languages.⁵⁰ It was therefore not always true to say that the prayers were understood by everyone. Nevertheless, it provided a language that became understood to some extent, even if not completely. This was more relevant and easy than using English which was more foreign than the neighbouring language.⁵¹ In addition, the Common Prayer Book fulfilled the concepts of unifying the church and edifying the people. In this regard, the Book of Common Prayer helped further to put into practice the meaning of a corporate prayer in which the whole community participated. The priests had their roles to play, whilst the community members also had their parts to play. Women and children became equal participants with men. This was a new experience, unlike in the traditional religion that was more influenced by cultural customs.⁵²

Besides the Book of Common Prayer, the Scriptures were also printed in a number of languages, but to a comparatively lesser extent. The work on the Scriptures of course was not only intensive but also extensively demanding so that its production was minimal compared with the Book of Common Prayer. Nevertheless, the printing press did print the Scriptures in some of the Melanesian languages, although they were not familiar to all. And even if this

⁴⁹ W.H. Baddeley, "The Bishop's Annual Report 1938," 9. This information was provided by Fred Isom who was the Melanesian printer.

⁵⁰ "Languages in the Solomon Islands," http://ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=sb (Accessed 10 January 2013). There are about 74 languages in the Solomon Islands.

⁵¹ An example was in Isabel in which the BCP, Scriptures and Hymns were in the Bugotu language and used by all the people regardless of their languages and areas of residence. Sa'a was also one of the languages used in the same way. See "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 Aug. 1961 18.

⁵² Traditional religious functions tended to be restricted to males only. See Chapter One and Seven.

was still insufficient, at least the Scriptures were translated in some of the Melanesian languages that reached out to the wider Melanesian community.

The third kind of literature printed was the mission's history books,⁵³ school teaching books, magazines and mission papers such as the Bishop's Pastoral letters, Synod and other conference minutes and reports. These were either done by individual persons or through the church magazines and booklets such as the *Southern Cross Log* and the *Melanesian Messenger*. At this stage these types of literature were the only available effective means of communication to the people of Melanesia as well as to friends and supporters overseas. These publications covered religious, economic and social development reports as well as requests concerning the needs and support of the missions. Through them, religious teachings, instructions and other pastoral matters were conveyed to clergy and the people by the bishop or his subordinates. Effective communication was done by paper and relevant literature for which the printing press was part of the system, despite the fact that a large portion of the Melanesian population was illiterate.

Without prejudice, the work of the printing press continued in this regard because of two important processes. First, the few who were literate were able to read and convey information to the illiterate who then passed it on to others orally. This was an integration of literature and oral tradition on display. The second process was self-education. Experiences revealed that with the daily sighting of books and writings, many Melanesians became readers. In particular, the Book of Common Prayer that was highly valued by every Anglican adherent became undoubtedly a self-teaching material to many Melanesians because of its daily use. The long and medium term impact was beneficial to many Melanesians. Consequently, many Melanesians with no formal education were able to read and sing the prayers and the hymns respectively in their own languages. Exotic aspects of the new religion were minimized because participation in church worship and services became contextually meaningful.

⁵³ Fox, *The Story of the Solomons*. See also George Sarawia, *They came to my Island* are two examples of history books.

The specific roles of Melanesians in the printing industry prior to World War II are not clear, although it is believed that Melanesians had some small parts to play.⁵⁴ Retrospectively, the re-establishment of the printing press in Taroniara in 1953 was to be a timely event. With the financial assistance of 4000 pounds from the Australian Board of Mission (ABM), the expansion of the printing press was possible. The building was extended to accommodate the arrival of new machines for fast and quality printing, folding and guillotine (cutting in sizes).⁵⁵ This called for more training for Melanesians to handle these machines effectively and responsibly. This was a new experience from the old method when all books were hand set. Subsequently by the 1960s most of the setting, typing and other duties of the press were in the hands of Melanesians, producing some 11,000 books.⁵⁶ A critical call for more men was made in 1965 when the printing press opened its doors for commercial printing.⁵⁷

As a result of the above, more Melanesians were recruited. However except for one, many of those employed were class four graduates. Most therefore were limited in knowledge and were unable to learn more than what they already knew.⁵⁸ Nevertheless there were capable Melanesians who were greatly involved with the printing machines. Hubert Kelema, George Fagono, John Steward and Henry Wood were such men.⁵⁹

The transfer of the industry to Honiara in 1970 opened up more opportunities. Work became more commercialized with an increase in turnover as it was more central.⁶⁰ It aroused public awareness and thus started to attract recruits from secondary schools graduates. By this time and before the

⁵⁴ Walter H. Baddeley, "Bishop's Annual Report 1933-34," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the activities of the Mission and other notes* No 4[4] July 1934, 17. In this report, the bishop stated that Fred Isom the printer had a small native staff. See also Hawkey, *Martyrs' Harvest: How a film was made*, 10.

⁵⁵ *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 August 1961, in "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," 17-18. See also George Fagono, "Printing," in *Melanesian Messenger*, August 1964, 11, who stated that included in the new machines was a Linotype Machine. See also M. Norris, "Printing Office Report 1965."

⁵⁶ Alfred T. Hill, "Bishop's Charge: Diocesan Synod 1962," 7. See "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," in *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 Aug. 1961, 18. Included in the 11,000 books were the Sa'a Prayer Books, Bugotu Hymn Books, the Faith of the Church and other mission publications. See "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," in *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 Aug. 1961, 18.

⁵⁷ M. Norris, "Printing Office Report 1965," 1.

⁵⁸ M. Norris, "Printing Office Report 1965," 2.

⁵⁹ "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," *The Melanesian Messenger* No.2 Aug. 1961 17-18.

⁶⁰ David Hastings, "Report of the Diocese of Melanesia Press for the Diocesan Conference 1973."

independence of the church in 1975, a new organizational structure was in place. Important industrial responsibilities - managerial, administrative and technical - were in the hands of Melanesians. In the position of Factory Manager was Henry Wood with Mathias Papao as his assistant and Nelson Rofo as the Bookkeeper. Nelson Osimae, Richard Dini, James Eta, Judah Mamanu and Moffat Morea were supervisors in the different areas of responsibility.⁶¹ Book binding on the other hand was manual and thus demanded more men and women who became very skilful with time.

Generally, the Melanesian Mission Printing Press has been both beneficial and burdensome. On the positive side, it has been an asset that provided the very necessary materials, as mentioned above, greatly needed by the mission. Because of a number of factors, such as labour and rental costs, the printing of literature in Melanesia rather than overseas was able to be done at a much lower cost.⁶² Secondly, it provided training and jobs for Melanesians, especially junior primary school dropouts. This encouraged young Melanesians with a feeling of self-esteem and usefulness about themselves that they might not otherwise have had. But more than that, and contemplating the fact that the mission was the employer, much appreciation and gratitude were given to the church by Melanesians. In addition, the mission ethos and rules for conduct and behaviour were powerful influences in many young Melanesian Christian lives.⁶³ Thirdly, apart from printing literature for the Melanesian Mission, the press also provided printing services for other sister denominations' literature.⁶⁴ This was already a sign of ecumenical co-operation - the basis on which respect and tolerance could be learnt and experienced. In this way, the missions, regardless of their

⁶¹ "The Provincial Press 1976," Report for the General Synod, Sept. 1976, 3.

⁶² M. Norris, "Printing Office Report 1965," 2. Mr. Norris mentioned as an example that it would cost 60 pounds for the production of 1000 copies of *Messenger* in Australia while it cost 40 pounds for 1600 copies in Melanesia.

⁶³ Statistics are not available but it was normal that most Melanesians initially recruited for Taroniara were young and unmarried. Many of them then married later whilst living and working in Taroniara.

⁶⁴ An example of this was the *Methodist Hymn* printed in Taroniara. The "Provincial Press 1976," 2 states some work was done for SICA, at the same time wanting to organise the selling of books by the South Seas Evangelical Church. This was an approach to "inter-denominationalism." Equivalent to this was also the proposal put forward by the Printer for a combined paper with the United Church in 1970. See David Hasting, "Report of the Diocese of Melanesia Press for the Diocesan Conference 1973," 3.

differences, knew that it was the same and one gospel that they were custodian of and proclaimed to the same people.

In contrast to the above, the printing press also experienced failures and difficulties. Melanesians with the right level of education were not always available.⁶⁵ Many of those who were trained and had the potential often moved to other places or back to the villages. The mission would then re-start the recruiting and training process, further incurring unnecessary time and financial costs.⁶⁶

Secondly, most work required to be printed came into the press initially in hand written form. As usual, handwriting usually started off clearly but then became unreadable towards the end. And because of the existence of different languages often not known by the printing personnel, words could not always be deciphered.⁶⁷ This was not only frustrating on the part of the printers, but could be costly in terms of time.

Thirdly, printed literature was often accepted without payment or partial payment. Moreover, printing orders made were often not collected for many months or even years by those who ordered them. This was a waste of human, financial and time resources. Unfortunately, the local churches were some of those who caused such difficulties, leaving unpaid bills for the production of language prayer books and hymns.⁶⁸

But this was not disloyalty or infidelity on the part of the churches as Melanesians were inclined to claim or think that anything the mission owned was their own. In other words, the concepts of "payment corresponded to non-ownership" and "non-payments corresponded to ownership." The churches/Melanesians therefore thought it was illogical to pay money to the

⁶⁵ Cf. The "Provincial Press 1976," 6 -7.

⁶⁶ "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 Aug. 1961, 17-18.

⁶⁷ "Working in the Printing Office at Taroniara," *Melanesian Messenger* No. 2 Aug. 1961, 18-19. Because of communication and transportation difficulties, it was not easy to get back to original writers for clarity on the necessary enquiries.

⁶⁸ M. Norris, "Printing Office Report 1965," 2. Mr. Norris gave an account that the local churches had not always been able to pay out the cost e.g. Vaturanga Prayer book, Lau Prayer Book and also Gela who paid only part of it.

printing press which they owned. Experience showed that this was a Melanesian mentality for some decades.⁶⁹

Fourthly, inevitably, apart from wear and tear, the depreciation of machines was also accelerated by environmental conditions. The high humidity and being located in the coastal areas made the machines very vulnerable to rust. Consequently, tasks on the instalment and replacement of parts were done by engineers flown from Australia,⁷⁰ again another costly undertaking.

However, having said this, Melanesians through the printing industry contributed to the growth of the church. For so long, it incurred financial losses yet it remained standing amidst the many challenges. It played its part as the mode of communication for mission work. It provided the scriptures and the prayer books in some of the languages. Teaching materials and instructions were made available. Information regarding Melanesia, its achievements, difficulties and needs both locally and overseas, was able to be communicated. It was based on this that R.P. Garrity, the General Secretary, Melanesian Mission in England, applauded the “work of the Printing Press as outstanding.”⁷¹

4. Shipping and seafarers

The Melanesian Mission spread over many hundreds of square kilometres of sea covering many islands, miles apart. The use of ships/boats and the service of seafarers is thus imbedded in the mission's history, begun as it was by Bishop Selwyn, the founder of the mission. The lack of infrastructure, such as proper roads and the thick jungle, made movement by land difficult. Selwyn said:

⁶⁹ Cf. Alfred T. Hill, “Bishop’s Charge: Diocesan Synod 1962,” 10-11. Another similar example was the usual free travelling on the mission ships. This is not often heard of, but Melanesians tend to consciously think that being an Anglican was the criterion for a free passage on Melanesian Mission ships. It took decades for Melanesians to realise that meeting cost to stay alive was a universal requirement at all levels. Appreciably, the churches became aware that as much as they owned the mission assets, they must at the same time support them by settling payments due to them. Cf. also John W. Chisholm, “Bishop’s Address: Diocesan Conference January 1973,” 4, in which he was concerned with the laxity of the payment of school fees in mission schools.

⁷⁰ M. Norris, “Printing Office Report 1965,” 2.

⁷¹ R.P. Garrity, “Afternoon Meeting” Southern Cross Log, 116-117.

It is, not to establish Mission Stations at first, which would involve a great cost, require a great number of missionaries and risk a great loss of life in the first instance; but to have Floating Mission House; with Bishop, Teachers, School, Portable Printing Press on board.⁷²

It was crucial then not to be without ships/boats and the service of seafarers. Hence, it was important, as a general rule, that missionaries for Melanesia were able swimmers, paddlers, sailors and rowers.⁷³

Because of this, the Melanesian Mission always had ships. The *Southern Cross* was the mission's flag ship – the first being wrecked in Auckland in 1860. From then on, there were a number of them similarly named serving the islands one after the other, the current one being the *Southern Cross IX*.⁷⁴ Other ships also joined the *Southern Cross* in the course of history – the *Patteson* in 1933, *Baddeley* in 1956, *Fauabu Twomey* in 1957, the *Selwyn* in 1964,⁷⁵ and *Charles Fox* which was built and launched in Taroniara in early 1972.⁷⁶ Besides these, there was also the “mosquito” fleet made up of launches such as the *Mavis*, *Gwen Mary*, *Hilda* and *Sarawia*.⁷⁷ The name “mosquito” could have been given as an analogy because of their small sizes but heavily engaged in mission work. But at the end of the day, they served the same mission for the same purpose.

With the geographical circumstances embracing Melanesia, the very words recently voiced by Wilson Mapuru – “seafarers as lifeline of the nation”⁷⁸

⁷² Evans, *Church Militant*, 125.

⁷³ W.G. Ivens, “Notes and Writings on Melanesian Mission,” 1907. http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/ivens_hints1907.html. doc (accessed 3/12/2008).

⁷⁴ Luke Foai, “The Southern Cross and Seafarers during the Melanesian Mission 1860-2000” (Diploma Project, Bishop Patteson Theological College, 2011), 3-4. Accordingly, three of them were wrecked, the fate of one not known and four sold. Out of the four, two were unsuitable for Melanesia and ministry.

⁷⁵ *Southern Cross Log* Vol 72 No. 2, London: Melanesian Mission, May 1964, 48-49 and “M.V. Selwyn,” in *Southern Cross Log* Vol. 72 No. 86, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, Sept 1964, 85. Note that this was another *Selwyn* built in Ballina other than that described by Fox. That *Selwyn* was bought and renamed by Walter H. Baddeley in 1947- *Mendana* being its original name.

⁷⁶ John W. Chisholm, “The Bishop’s Annual Report 1971,” in *Southern Cross Log* No. 107, April 1972, 21. See note 29.

⁷⁷ See picture and description on *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No. 27, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, March 1949, 47. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 261. The term “mosquito fleet” is used as well as names of other launches.

⁷⁸ Alfred Thomas Hill, “Bishop’s Farewell,” in *Melanesian Messenger*, Easter 1967, 3. See also Foai, “The Southern Cross and Seafarers during the Melanesian Mission 1860-2000,” 13. See also Rolland Gito, “Sea

holds substantial truth. Taking this as the yardstick, there couldn't be less truth in its full applicability to the work of the Melanesian Mission. In this context then, we need equally to say that "ships and seafarers were the lifeline of the mission" for many reasons.

Under the then current circumstances of the islands, ships were almost the only possible modes of transport in which people, goods and services were transported from one place to another. The mission ships did this in the name of mission work. Major religious events of the mission such as church synods, meetings and conferences could not have been possible in the absence of shipping and seafarers. The bishops, clergy and the MBH would not have been able to perform their episcopal, pastoral and evangelization duties expected of them. Confirmations, ordinations, baptism, teaching and counselling would not have been possible. Prayer books, mission magazines and papers would not have reached members of the mission.

Likewise, the ships and seafarers were also important means by which medical personnel, equipment and supplies were transported to mission clinics and hospitals and from medical centres to villages. Schools and educational activities would have been inoperative without teachers, students, school materials and rations that all required transport. At the same time, technicians and tradesmen could not have reached out to the satellite stations for the needed construction and maintenance of buildings, plants, machines and equipment. A statement by Bishop Hill, in his 1965 synod charge summarized the work of the ships and seafarers appropriately:

I say "well done." All of us know our dependence upon shipping for getting from place to place and for the receiving of our stores regularly. Thus we should appreciate the onerous work done by them and those who sail them.⁷⁹

Having given a brief discussion on the tasks undertaken by the ships, some statistics would be useful for a better understanding of this matter. For good

Sunday in Honiara," in *Melanesian Messenger*, July 16, 2008. Gito quotes this from Wilson Mapuru who was then the Chaplain of Seafarers in the Solomon Islands.

⁷⁹ Alfred T. Hill, "Bishop's Charge Diocesan Synod 1965," 11.

reasons⁸⁰ the mission's fleet according to the "1973 Shipping Reports" revealed a non-profitable financial statement. The statistics are as follows:⁸¹

Name of Ship	Operation Cost	Income	Profit/Loss
<i>Southern Cross IX</i>	\$23,240	\$3,330	
<i>Fauabu Twomey</i>	19,114	4,517	
<i>Baddeley</i>	13,303	2,619	
<i>Ebb Tide</i>	8,920	788	
<i>Charles Fox</i>	4,069	225	
<i>Sarawia</i>	338	-	

In addition, a comparative statistic for the amount of services rendered by the *Southern Cross VII* alone in two years was: in 1934, there were 15 voyages covering 17,891 miles and calling in 305 ports. The 1935 statistic showed an increase so that the number of voyages made was 25 covering 18,180 miles between 398 ports. On these voyages there were onboard a total of 9,589 native passengers with 28,767 meals prepared.⁸² These were statistics only for the *Southern Cross*, but the same was expected from the rest of the mission ships, although probably on a lesser scale. These data suggest the following reflections regarding the mission ships.

i) Floating mobile churches

⁸⁰ The services such as schools, hospitals, plantations and local churches were scattered out in the many islands including New Hebrides which is now Vanuatu. The voyages made were not commercial but services that did not expect to make money.

⁸¹ Statistical information was for the period of nine months ending 30 March 1976 taken from a "Shipping Report" in 1976. Though 1976 is outside the time period of this thesis, it could be taken as a sample relatively of the same nature for the past decades. Cf. the cost of the *Southern Cross V* in 1928, 29, 30 and 31 was 8,875, 7486, 7214, 8,122 pounds respectively. See Walter H. Baddeley, "Precis of a Report by the Bishop [Walter Hubert Baddeley] given at a meeting of the General Committee", Westminster, 29 January, 1936. http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/baddeley_report1936.html (accessed 25 November 2008)

⁸² "M.V. *Southern Cross VII*" *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, (Sydney: Melanesian Mission, No. 50, Jan 1936), 9. Note the statistic for meals prepared in 1934 is not available which does not suggest that there were no meals prepared. Probably the distance travelled in 1964 could be the record as it travelled 25,770 miles. See "Olla Podrida", *Melanesian Messenger*, August 1964, 3. Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 91 in which he gave a three months statistic Dec 27th 1933 to March 23rd 1934.

The expression “floating mobile churches” implies that the church was moveable. Quite similar terms - the “floating Cathedral” and “The Church afloat” were used referring to the *Southern Cross*.⁸³ What could be done on land could also be done on the ocean - an indication that mission was to be equally undertaken both on land and sea. Much theological reflection could be related to this concept including the revelation of God’s majestic nature through the ocean. In this context, as well as providing some Christian understanding of God’s creation, it helped people at the same time to see and acknowledge God. Everybody is not the same so that, whilst there were people who experienced God’s revelation on land, others could do likewise on the sea. The ships, however, could have provided that one portion of revelation experience in the oceanic environment both in good and bad times. This is faith building through the work of nature.

Most of the *Southern Crosses* had chapels especially set aside and, as in a village Christian community, they played a very central part in the life of the ship.⁸⁴ In other mission ships that did not have a special space as a chapel, the centre of the ship served this purpose. Needless to say, however, the importance of the chapel was not in terms of the space but in terms of the daily morning, evening and night services conducted. On an occasional basis, when the bishop or the clergy were on board, the Eucharist was celebrated, sermons preached and the scriptures studied.⁸⁵ With this understanding, the ships were not merely symbolic; rather they were churches located on the ocean with outdoor altars, pulpits and a lectern. The ships genuinely provided a place where the Eucharist was celebrated and the gospel was read and preached.

The built-in chapels that appropriately identified the ships as the “floating mobile churches” were regarded as equally holy and sacred. Apart from the

⁸³ “An Ideal Investment: ‘Things that are seen? . . . or ‘not seen?’” in *Southern Cross Log*, No. 8 January 1925, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 21. “The Church Afloat” was used by H.V.C. Reynolds. See H.V.C Reynolds, “Southern Cross IX.” in *Southern Cross Log*, No.78, September 1962, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 77.

⁸⁴ “How ‘Southern Cross’ returned to the Solomons,” 37.

⁸⁵ Walter H. Baddeley, “Bishop’s Letter,” in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the activities of the Mission and other notes*, No. 4[4] July 1934, 36. Walter stated that between Dec.27 1933 and March 23 1934, there have been more than 1,350 acts of communion.

maritime rules, there were mission rules and disciplines⁸⁶ that everyone on board was to comply with. It was a Melanesian worldview that failure to comply with the requirements could result in consequences.⁸⁷ It is not surprising then to see/hear testimonies of people's conversion or religious experiences on board these ships. These testimonies show that the concept of a "floating mobile church" with its aura of holiness and sacredness, reinforced by its rules and discipline, had some impact on the lives of Melanesians. There have been testimonies affirming spiritual nourishment that helped people to grow in maturity in their Christian lives. Undeniably, the ships and the environment in which they functioned also provided avenues where direct and indirect teaching of Christian principles for Christian living was possible. And in these circumstances it was possible to have non-Christians on board who probably experienced their first taste of Christian worship and service.

Melanesians had almost from the beginning been part of this special ministry. As usual, first, this was through being casual workers, mainly for the lowly kind of tasks as cleaners and tea boys. Fox however hinted that William Sinker who brought out *the Southern Cross V* to the islands in 1903 mentions the first Melanesians trained as crews.⁸⁸ By 1966, Healy, the captain of the *Southern Cross*, was the only European on the list of seamen. However, his resignation gave way for John Filei who successfully passed the necessary marine tickets to take up command in 1968.⁸⁹ He became the first Melanesian Master on the ships, followed by many others. The same also occurred in the Engineering Department. Since then, Melanesians have been totally responsible for the Mission fleets.

ii) A mobile home and hospital

⁸⁶ This covered rules and disciplines similar to those in Taroniara where Christian moral ethical standards were strictly adhered to.

⁸⁷ Melanesians had their own interpretation about such consequences, taking into consideration the fact that ships were holy and sacred. Cf. *Southern Cross Log* Vol. 70 No. 4, Dec 1962, "Afternoon Meeting", 119. R.P. Garrity stated that Melanesians assumed that the loss of one the *Southern Crosses* was due to the non-permanence of a chapel onboard. See also Foai, "The Southern Cross and Seafarers during the Melanesian Mission 1860-2000," 3. Cf. *Melanesian Messenger*, December 1962, 28 and Whitemen, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 297.

⁸⁸ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 258.

⁸⁹ "Staff Notes," *Southern Cross Log*, No. 100, April 1969, 5. Others such as Luke Seuea were also the next senior local masters. See also "Olla Podrida," *The Melanesian Messenger*, Christmas Edition, 1967, 11-12.

If the ships were “floating mobile churches,” then they could simultaneously be floating mobile hospitals and homes at the same time. This was a call for pastoral ministry in which social responsibilities were displayed.

The provision of health and medical facilities was an important ministry of the mission. And with the reasons and information already provided in chapter four, it is only appropriate in this section to illustrate that the ships in reality played an important part in health care and medical services. Unlike other ministries of the mission, apart from the bishop's episcopacy, health and medical services occupied a special place in the mission. The allocation of ships and launches such as the *Fauabu Twomey*, *Mavis* and the *Gwen*⁹⁰ testify without doubt to this fact. The *Fauabu Twomey* was provided by the New Zealand Leper Trust Board and was purposely assigned for the leprosy campaign in the islands in 1957.⁹¹ Reports showed leprosy as a very common epidemic widely spread in the many islands in Melanesia.⁹²

The ships became homes of doctors and nurses with their patients and medical supplies. They became places where suffering and pain were addressed to bring about healing and restoration. Apart from the hospitals and clinics, the ships played their part for which the love, care and compassion of Jesus for the sick and disabled were witnessed.

Even if there were no medical workers on board, the seafarers were always expected to create an environment of love, care and compassion for those who were on board. This is not to suggest that the seafarers were expected to perform at the level of medical and health workers, but they were expected to render services to the sick and the disabled on board as best they could.⁹³ The requirement of being “amateur doctors” was a necessity, made even

⁹⁰ “Southern Cross VII,” in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other Notes*, No. 44 (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), July 1934. 28. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 261.

⁹¹ See Chapter Five, section on ‘Leprosy Colony,’ sub-section Melanesian Participation.

⁹² James, *Diseases commonly met with in Melanesia*, 27. James refers to the Pacific for which Melanesia is included.

⁹³ See statistic on page above. There is no breakdown that categorises the kinds of travellers. But being aware of the critical health hazard in Melanesians, we cannot rule out that included in the 9,589 passengers could also be sick and disabled ones. This is just an illustration of the kind of ministry that the ships did in terms of health and medical services.

more apparent by the 1973 Diocesan Synod call for a trained health worker on each of the mission ships.⁹⁴

Most of the ships were homes providing hospitality to the many thousands that travelled on them. Luke Foai provided a structure for which the *Southern Cross* was manned by different departments, the Steward Department being one of them.⁹⁵ Its responsibility was to make the ship as homely as possible; the rooms were cleaned as well as the showers and toilets. It was also responsible for the ships' rations. The business of the kitchens was also under its responsibility so that meals were prepared at the right times. In a nutshell, the provision of 28,767 meals on board the *Southern Cross* for the year 1935 speaks loudly for these stewards.⁹⁶ Equally important was the safety of passengers. Whilst for many reasons, comfort was not always available, safety remained the priority. For this reason, the Steward Department was to see that passengers were told about the rules of safety.

However, behind the scenes, what was even more important was the outcome of the services rendered. Christian works of charity were not only an important identity of these ships. In the statistical travelling information provided above, we are not told exactly who the travellers were.⁹⁷ But we could work it out with other available information and with our understanding and experience of the conditions of the first half of the 1900s. The travelling passengers therefore no doubt were diverse and varied in nature, consisting of Christians and non-Christians, men, women and children, sick and healthy. And for many of them, the ship's environment was foreign. They were strangers in a strange environment wrapped in loneliness, fears, anxieties and worries. They were vulnerable, subjected to many kinds of danger. It was under these circumstances that the work of all the crews, but more especially the Steward Department, was important. They were required to provide an environment embraced by love, sincerity and affection in which passengers

⁹⁴ See "Motions tabled for Synod: Motion no. 63," Diocesan Synod, May 1965. The proposed motion was in regards to the idea as stated for consideration.

⁹⁵ Foai, "The Southern Cross and Seafarers during the Melanesian Mission 1860-2000," 13, 18.

⁹⁶ M.V. "Southern Cross VII," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No. 50 (Sydney: Melanesian Mission, Jan 1936), 9.

⁹⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 91. Fox however mentioned that there were boys, girls, teachers and clergy.

felt a sense of belonging, unity and companionship. This was evangelism through works of Christian charity and many times unconsciously offered.

5. Difficulties and challenges

Much has been said about the contribution of the ships and seafarers. But they were also part of this world and thus subject to many difficulties and challenges. The seafarers were social human beings and, being at sea for long periods of time could cause social problems. Families were often left behind for long intervals.

Ships and seafarers were many times confronted with unfavourable weather. With the kind of weather, sea and climate experienced in the Solomon Islands, rapid depreciation and wear and tear of engines, machines, equipment and the hulls and superstructure of the ships were unavoidable.

Rough seas and bad weather were common especially in the cyclone prone-period which fell between January and April or June/July. During this period trends of current were often not known and, in addition, haze and rain could cause poor visibility. As a result of this, the *Southern Cross VI* was grounded on Aneityum Island on 31 Oct 1932.⁹⁸ Likewise, the *Southern Cross VIII* was pushed ashore at Marovovo by bad weather in 1960.⁹⁹ Both *Southern Crosses* were never recovered. The *Fauabu Twomey* also was wrecked in Rua Sura, Makira.¹⁰⁰ Apart from these accounts there were many other examples of the dangers that seafarers encountered every time they travelled.

Conclusion

Taroniara both as a person and as a location had a special place in the history of Melanesia. As a person, Taroniara was a Melanesian who was also killed with the first bishop of Melanesia, John Coleridge Patteson. And as a place, it was the headquarters and then developed as the centre of industry

⁹⁸ "The ship that will never return," in *Southern Cross Log*, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission, No. 38 Jan 1933), 6. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 259. Note the month of Oct is not within the cyclone season yet there were always dangers regardless of whether it is a cyclone season or not.

⁹⁹ "Another Southern Cross is on the way," in *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 68 No. 4, 1960 (London: Melanesian Mission), 109.

¹⁰⁰ Brian Ayers, "The biggest Job of its kind," in *Southern Cross Log*, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), No. 80, March 1963. 28-32.

for the Melanesian Mission. The ethos of “useful industry” was its mission, through the work of the departments. First, there was the mission engineering department that consisted of the marine engineering, electrical, boat building and the construction and building section. Second was the Printing Department which is not only of historical value but played a very important role in the mission. Finally, was the shipping and seafarers department - a major part of Taroniara because of its huge shipping fleet. It is not possible to discuss the Melanesian Mission without considering the ships and seafarers.

From the above examination, little could be inferred about the financial income of Taroniara's industrial endeavors under the inspiration of the ethos, “useful industry.” However, the general view given by those who were given the responsibility to oversee the industry was critical. It could be argued that Taroniara failed to make any profit and thus did not deserve being a model for “useful industry.”

The statistic¹⁰¹ provided earlier is only an example for a particular period of time yet speaks loudly for almost the entire period of Taroniara's existence. Taroniara's financial loss was due to the following reasons.

First, there was a lack of trained Melanesians for managerial and administrative positions, left unexpectedly by European experts because of unforeseen circumstances.¹⁰² Often this was not a failure on the part of Europeans who were in charge. However much they would have liked to improve the situation, it boiled down to the fact that conditions of service in the mission were unattractive. After all, the term ‘mission’ often was correlated with ‘sacrifice.’¹⁰³ The better qualified Melanesians therefore went to institutions such as the government and private enterprise.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ See note 81.

¹⁰² Brian Ayers resigned in 1970. See H.W. Bullen, “Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara,” 21.11.1972. The unexpected departures of European missionaries was for personal or family that had forced Melanesians to take on responsibilities. To say generally that indigenization was sudden is not absolutely true for the whole church. There were ministries in the church that could have been indigenized long before.

¹⁰³ Peter Shield, “Taroniara,” 5. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference. The starting wage for recruits in Taroniara in 1973 was seventeen dollars per month. However there had been already some concern about the conditions of service as discussed in the 1965 synod. See “Motion tabled for the Synod 1965: Motion No. 63: Condition of Services and Suggested Salary Grade for the mission.” The “Salary Grade” consisted of ten

Second, Taroniara's momentum was disturbed by World War II. Many of its facilities were destroyed so that it had to make a new start. The facilities in Taroniara, as well as the Printing Press at Hautabu, were destroyed. Apart from Taroniara and Hautabu, other mission stations were also destroyed. As a result, a lot of money that could have been used for the furtherance of the then existing development went for the reconstruction of these facilities. In addition, the post-war period saw Tulagi, the capital, transferred to Honiara. This was an administrative and commercial drawback as it cost more to reach because of the distance. Despite this, Taroniara remained the industrial powerhouse and the Technical Training Centre of the mission.¹⁰⁵

Third, Taroniara suffered a lack of continuity in terms of human expertise and resources that had great impact on its commercial and administrative operation. The resignation of Brian Ayers in 1970 saw the gradual decline of the industry.¹⁰⁶ This was a rapid contrast given the fact that it had just enjoyed its peak up to that year.¹⁰⁷ The perception was that, whilst the Melanesians showed capability in the different practical trades, business management and administration were still beyond them. Taroniara was an establishment too big and sophisticated for Melanesians to administer in a business-like manner. In addition, recruitment of apprenticeships was beyond the financial capacity of the industry. Consequently, Taroniara lost money and became a burden instead of providing benefits for the mission.¹⁰⁸

Fourth, Taroniara was unable to receive payment for some services rendered. For example, Prayer Books and Hymns printed by the printing press were either taken without payment or at half payment by the local churches. Worse still, piles of these materials could remain in the workshop for months and even years. This was a loss of resources in terms of materials and time. In the same

grades beginning with grade one as the highest and ten as the lowest. The grade for most workers in Taroniara were not spelled out clearly but the seamen, labours and unskilled men were in nine which had the basic salary of 36 pounds per annum.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Shield, "Taroniara," 2. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference.

¹⁰⁵ H.W. Bullen, "Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara," 21.11.1972: Report for the diocesan Conference 1973. 1. The Printing Press however was transferred to Honiara in 1970. See section on Printing Press.

¹⁰⁶ See Peter Shield, "Taroniara," 2. A Report prepared for the 1973 Diocesan Conference.

¹⁰⁷ Refer to note 12 on p3.

¹⁰⁸ H.W. Bullen, "Diocese of Melanesia – Taroniara," 21.11.1972: Report for the diocesan Conference 1973. 1. Note that other reasons such as the effect of the WWII as mentioned earlier must also be noted.

way, private ship owners were unable to settle their bills for services rendered by the Mission Engineers Department. On the same note, the mission ships themselves were unable to collect revenues expected of them.

Factors including but not limited to these affected the financial prospects of Taroniara. And with the many adjustments made over the years, it still proved difficult to reverse the situation. As mentioned earlier, Taroniara almost fell to its knees in the 1970s. This was a critical economic reality yet was not seriously considered.

The response given to the call for the cessation of the industry as mentioned earlier revealed that the mission was not prepared to consider this. The mission of course believed that whilst Taroniara was a place for which Christian stewardship was to be exercised, it must not forget the essential services it provided for the sustenance of the daily services provided by the satellite institutions. The general view therefore suggested that the diocese was responsible for its continuity.¹⁰⁹ However, their concerns must not be viewed as being negative on the part of the diocese. The diocese as usual with trust and faith believed that, if it was God's way, it would continue and it did, of course, with ups and downs.

Simultaneously, the Melanesian Mission's priority principle was spiritual development. Its aim was to draw more Melanesians into knowing and living the gospel. Developments of other kinds therefore were merely supplements to this endeavour. And supported by experience, the mission was aware that historically it did not make a profit in terms of money, but it did show profit with new souls and continued to sustain them. After all, the mission was always at the mercy of the kindness of missionary-minded people and organizations who offered so much of their resources for the enhancement of the whole mission, of which the industry was part. This was the meaning of mission in the context of Melanesia that nurtured and developed the church in Melanesia. In other words, the functions and contributions towards the spiritual well-being of the church far outweighed the losses it incurred. Priority was therefore given

¹⁰⁹ See "Minutes" Monday 8 January 1973 Morning Session. Diocesan Synod, 1973. This was a response to the Peter Shield view.

to the spiritual life of the church rather than to money. Taroniara, although economically unviable, was still spiritually profitable. Besides this, Taroniara was a model of “useful industry” as it well-served the village churches that became self-sustaining in many ways.¹¹⁰

Moreover, Taroniara, being a place of training and working, also played an important social role in bringing Melanesians of different ethnicities together. Here Melanesians learned to live in a new community where a new set of principles and disciplines came into play. They learned to pray together, work together, eat together and play together. Differences in terms of culture and tradition were met with compromise and tolerance.

Everyone who trained, worked and lived in Taroniara as seafarers, engineers and builders were equally called to be missionary-minded. Love, obedience, respect and trust for each other therefore were the expected norms. It was a place where personal discipline and behaviour were expected to develop with the sense of commitment and sacrifice. In this way, those who experienced life in Taroniara became disciplined Christians and disciplined Anglicans. This was half-consciously realized.

Taroniara in the final analysis was a reflection of the theme: “Let your light shine before “people” so that they may see your good work and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Mtt5:16). Under the banner of this theme, there were three important concepts to be learnt “Christianity in Industry; the place of the Church in the World; Christianity not a ‘thing’ for Sundays, but a way of life seven days a week.”¹¹¹ This also refers to ‘industrial mission’ or ‘practical Christianity’.¹¹²

This chapter covers the final role of Melanesians in the mission institutions. The next subject will be the roles of Melanesians in the community village

¹¹⁰ This is the general view expressed in Chapter Seven regarding the roles of men and women in the village churches.

¹¹¹ *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 76 No. 1, May 1968, 20-22. These were views compatible with the Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission (ITIM) in Australia.

¹¹² Hilliard, *God’s Gentlemen*, 224-225.

churches, often in isolation from mission institutions, as examined in the previous chapters.

Chapter Seven

The Roles of the Community: Men and Women in the Village Community Churches

Introduction

Chapters three to six examined the participation of Melanesian men and women under the direct supervision of European missionaries in the mission institutions. As little discussion has been devoted to the roles of the ordinary Melanesians in the village churches, it could seem that the village churches were not part of the whole mission. As a result, their contributions were often undermined, denying them the acknowledgement they deserve. This led many Melanesians to think negatively about their own capabilities, and erroneously be of the opinion that their contributions were merely second-class.

However, based on the 2008 statistical data, Eighty-four percent of the population live in rural villages.¹ This expresses that the Church in Melanesia was and is still a rural church, administered and cared for by ordinary Melanesians in villages.

Hence, this chapter divides into two sections. The first part examines the general contributions of the community, covering the village communities' acceptance, allegiance, enthusiasm and moral support. These behavioural factors remarkably led Melanesians to take on other important responsibilities examined in this thesis. The second contribution by the communities was through sacraments, worship and prayers. These stimulated spiritual growth of the church. Another communal role was the provision of resources that helped the church grow physically. Finally, the communities are shown to be agents of evangelism and re-evangelism through 'people movements.'²

¹ 'Village' in the context of Melanesia refers to villages characterised by a subsistence kind of life. Comparatively, the rural population percentage would have been higher than 84% between 1925 and 1975, the period of this research.

² See discussion in the Thesis 'Introduction' and chapter seven, 252ff.

The second section of this chapter examines some of the major roles of both men and women, either through organisations or as individuals. This includes the roles of catechists, guild of servers, the traditional chiefs and elders and the Mothercraft and infant welfare. Let us now examine the roles as mentioned above.

1.The general contribution of the local village community

The 'communities' in this context refers to the post-conversion communities that were understood as 'church' rather than 'mission' which refers to the whole Melanesian Mission. This is intentional to distinguish that the people's major roles were mostly geared towards their local 'churches' rather than the 'mission' with missionary supervision.³ Analogically the 'mission' was the vine and the 'churches' were the branches, and to a large extent were already autonomous. There are a few reasons for this.

First, Melanesians were generally identified with rural villages – most of them isolated from mission stations that were in the form of schools, colleges, hospitals and industrial stations. Whilst the established mission stations were authentic and purposeful, they remained the prototype-establishments of St. John's College in New Zealand or Eton College in England. An observer commented about Pawa School as the "Eton of the Pacific,"⁴ indicating that more energy and resources were put into the mission stations. The statement of Darrell Whiteman summarises this well.

Missionaries became increasingly institutional caretakers, stationed at educational, medical, and administrative centres, while the development of a basic understanding of Christianity at the village level was relegated to a place of secondary importance.⁵

³ Cf. Leslie Fugui, "Religion," in *Ples Blong lumi: Solomon Islands the Past four thousand years*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva and Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies USP, USP Honiara Centre, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1989), 90.

⁴ Cf. Leonard Alufurai, "Here follow some words from the clergy and laymen of the Diocese," in *The Melanesian Messenger* (Easter 1967): 15.

⁵ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 213. This became more obvious during the reign of Walter H. Baddeley between 1932 to 1947.

This left the responsibilities of the village churches almost absolutely in the hands of the local people. These responsibilities became more demanding as the church grew.⁶

Secondly, the structure of the church as being catholic or universal was a concept too broad and sophisticated for Melanesians to understand easily. This however was an advantage. It created the sense of ownership that the local church was theirs and that they were accountable for its growth. The idea of getting direct, external, financial assistance from the mission was therefore not in the minds of Melanesians except for the provision of hospitals, education, clergy and prayer books. Even with these, some form of payment was required.⁷ This implies that the local 'church' was almost from the beginning an entity that practised self-reliance in terms of its daily operations.

Thirdly, other circumstances such as the lack of resources were beyond the missionaries' control.⁸ This indeed made it difficult for the missionaries to effectively supervise the local churches. By 1942 there were only six missionary clergy compared to twenty-one in 1911.⁹ The need for an increase of missionaries became seemingly a distant reality so the philosophy of the 'black net' floated by the 'white corks' was effected in the village context. This left the church administration, finance, worship and prayers or other church activities inevitably in the hands of Melanesians. However, even if the administration and financial records could were poor they were not crucial as they did not mean much for many Melanesians who were illiterate. What mattered most was the consistent and continual survival and growth of the local village churches through church attendance, increasing membership, church allegiance and the life of people. Having said this, let us now examine the roles played by Melanesians in the village church context.

⁶Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 197. Fox stated, as an example, that there were missionary priests in the districts such as Welchman who eventually was replaced by a Melanesian clergy.

⁷ The payment of schools fees was already a practice in the 1960s. People were requested to contribute fruits and vegetables as payments for hospital services. Prayer Books and Bibles were not free of charge.

⁸ See Chapter One and Two stating some of the reasons of the difficulties experienced by missionaries.

⁹ Cf. Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 153 and various *Southern Cross Logs*. In the *Southern Cross Logs* of July 1933, Jan. 1942 and March 1966, there were 10, 6 and 5 missionaries respectively.

i) Acceptance, allegiance, enthusiasms and moral support

The missionaries, regardless of their professions, were the greatest mentors of Melanesian conversion. Their sacrifices and industrious efforts and energy, with their resources, were factors contributing to this. Subsequently, Melanesians accepted their religion with allegiance and enthusiasm in the hope of some returns. This was 'reciprocity' in practice. Besides this, accepting the foreign religion with its culture and practices meant sacrificing the traditional religion, its culture and practices. David Wallace Akin mentions:

Conversion is often portrayed as an act of betrayal, selfish materialism, or weakness. . . . People know that conversion would mean giving up many of the things they value most.¹⁰

This could be a hypothesis subject to debate. However, for Melanesians, even seeing and admiring an advanced new lifestyle at this point of time, did not necessarily mean fully accepting the new religion as it was communicated to them.¹¹

Prior to 1920, and even to some extent after the 1920s, the infamous activities such as tribal wars, head-hunting, sorcery and payback were components of Melanesian society. These activities caused suffering to many people and were commonly condemned; yet they were nevertheless the accepted norms in a Melanesian society. These were norms that were discovered not by accident, but learnt by experience in the course of history, and had become purposeful and meaningful in Melanesian society. They evolved as vital components that instinctively governed their daily lives and gave them their identity. Ironically, this was their comfort zone and a change from this was only experienced and accepted later in time. In Malaita, C.E. Fox mentions that treachery and murder were the marks of bravery and esteem; yet "leave them alone in their happy ignorance"¹² was the prevailing ethos in that time. Ross McDonald also briefly wrote about Kwaio's concept of 'stealing' as the

¹⁰ David Wallace Akin, "Negotiating Culture in East Kwaio, Malaita, Solomon Islands," n.p. UMI Dissertation Services, 1993, 503.

¹¹ The concepts of syncretism and nominalism believed to be current issues in Melanesia supports this idea.

¹² Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 49.

“badge of Kwaio courage.”¹³ From the above, the concept of “One man’s meat is another man’s poison” was applicable, only to be found void later.

This could be the reason why J.M. Steward states: “The Native is inherently ‘conservative,’ all innovations are ‘anathema’ to him at first, but patience and courtesy will soon bring him round.”¹⁴

There are also accounts of harsh and discriminatory treatment of Melanesians by those who came to Melanesia both in the pre- and post-conversion period.

The High Commissioner ten years before World War II states:

The white man who, having failed in all else drifts out to the islands, is often not a type that is fit to be trusted with authority over natives. An oath or a clip over the head are not a proper method of dealing with a coloured man. It is difficult to eradicate from a certain class of white men the idea that a black man belongs to an inferior order of creation, against whom the argument of foul mouthed abused backed by feet or fist is obviously reasonable.¹⁵

Peter Corris writes about the labour traders who came and lured Melanesians as cheap labourers: “The business of recruiting and returning the island labourers was never free from violence and controversy.”¹⁶ Even the ordinary traders exercised the process of ‘by hook or crook’ to fetch ‘fresh tucker’ from the indigenous people.¹⁷ In addition, Melanesians were exploited of their natural resources facilitated by the “Waste Land Regulation” formulated by the colonial government in 1900, 1901 and 1904. Many thousand acres of unoccupied land were taken from Melanesians and sold to planters and traders.¹⁸ This was land alienation in practice.

¹³ Ross McDonald, *Money Makes You Crazy: Custom and Change in the Solomon Islands* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003), 47.

¹⁴ J.M. Steward, *Melanesian Mission: Occasional Papers No.4. Hints on District Work*, 8. http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/steward_hints_1926.html (accessed 10/11/2008).

¹⁵ Quoted by Laracy, *Pacific Protest*, 4.

¹⁶ This is a statement from Peter Corris’ sighted from the editorial introduction to Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade* xix. Peter Corris was the editor of Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade*.

¹⁷ Dickinson, *A Trader in the Savage Solomons*, 44.

¹⁸ See John Ipo, “Land and Economy,” in *Ples Blong Lumi: Solomon Islands the Past Four Thousand Years*, ed. Hugh Laracy (Suva and Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies USP, USP Honiara Centre, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1989), 125-126. See also Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 125, 127-134.

Similarly, within the mission circle, the ill-treatment of Melanesians by the missionaries also existed.¹⁹ The master/servant relationship was silently alive in the mission stations.²⁰ Some Melanesians were bullied and assaulted, although very little was recorded.²¹

Experiences in the 1950s and 1960s, however, have revealed that there were Melanesian teachers who, under the inspiration of missionary discipline, had exercised corporal punishment. There were cases that were serious in nature causing harm and pain to those who received corporal punishment, yet they were still categorised as discipline within the mission. Consequently, Melanesians whose lives had been characterised by violence and killing generally received the whole drama as being part of the disciplinary system. They did not of course need to be manipulated to accept it as justice. Going through such punishment was a privilege of going through pain for correction. It was a symbol of honesty, obedience and allegiance to the church. Fallowes told Darrell Whiteman in a personal communication:

I remember the day when two men arrived in a canoe all the way from Kia to Mara-na-tabu (a distance of 110 miles). I greeted them warmly and was taken aback when they said, "we have come to be beaten. Our Chief will not allow us to attend prayers until you have punished us."²²

Fallowes further mentioned that those who had been thrashed "remained perfectly loyal" not wanting to assist the police in their investigation regarding the common assault charges brought against him (Fallowes) by the colonial government.²³

¹⁹ Fox, *Kakamora*, 134. See John Gutch, *Colonial Servant* (Padstow: T.J. Press [Padstow] Ltd, 1987), 119. Gutch gave a brief account of a Melanesian boy killed by his English teacher.

²⁰The Fallowes Movement and the Men's Association were formed out of Melanesian discontent. There were some inputs by missionaries who believed that not enough was done or delegated to Melanesians. See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 211. Fox also shared the same sentiment as Fallowes. Cf. also Fox, *Kakamora*, 134.

²¹ See letters to the editor regarding the Poole case - about the murder of a Melanesian by a European teacher. *The Melanesian Messenger* (Easter 1963), 24-26.

²² Cf. Fallowes' "Principle of discipline by 'thrashing'." See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 206-207. Fallowes was charged by the government and later returned to England. The Fallowes' movement was suspiciously subversive against the mission's wishes.

²³ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 207.

A larger test of the Melanesian allegiance occurred during World War II when the Japanese failed to influence the Melanesians to be on their side. A writer in the *Southern Cross Log* wrote that:

Solomon Islanders have also done the cause of freedom lasting service by exposing the hollowness of the Japanese pretence that the war in the Pacific is a racial struggle in which brown and yellow people are uniting to rid themselves of their white oppressors.²⁴

In supporting the above, Melanesians showed their allegiance by escaping with the missionaries to the villages on the hills where they were cared for. Moreover, up in the hills, the Melanesians continued to conduct the daily prayers and to live according to Christian rules and disciplines. Coincidentally, the situation also provided an opportunity to show what Christianity means to the non-Christians, now that they were in the areas more accessible to them.²⁵ These were signs of spiritual growth in the difficult times that could not have come about without being aligned with and loyal to the mission. Their acceptance of and allegiance to the mission therefore must not be misconstrued and watered down to mere theory.

Another reason for Melanesian allegiance was the link with the concept of *mana*.²⁶ Traditionally, Melanesians understood *mana* as a spiritual power that facilitated miraculous events and attainable only through allegiance and faithful prayer to the gods. With this in mind, Melanesians accepted the new religion because of the *mana* mediated by the missionaries and later by the Melanesian clergy. Fox states that “gardens were blessed for good harvest,”²⁷ as were houses, canoes and fishing nets.²⁸ Evil spirits were exorcised. Healing miracles, calming of rough seas, moving of mountains and many other

²⁴ *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 49 No. 4, London: Melanesian Mission, Oct. 1943, 41.

²⁵ *Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 49 No. 4, Ruislip: Melanesian Mission, Oct. 1943, 41. Wood, one of the nursing sisters in Faubu stated that “The so-called ‘heathen’ was also co-operative” during the war.

²⁶ *Mana* is a fundamental concept in the Melanesian Anthropological field as it closely related to the religious and social livelihood of the people. Anthropologists, historians and theologians such as R.H. Codrington and C. E. Fox had contributed to the concept of *mana* in Melanesia.

²⁷ C.E. Fox, “St Michael’s Pamua 1911-1912,” *Southern Cross Log*, 15 Feb 1913, 136.

²⁸ Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in the Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity* (Christchurch, Canberra: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury and Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2005), 288. See also Charles W. Foreman, “The South Pacific Style in the Christian Ministry,” *Missiology: An International Review*, 1974. 426.

miracles were experienced.²⁹ These had a strong impact on Melanesian allegiance and commitment to the church as a result of the *mana* revealed through what the Melanesians believed to be miracles. This was one of the factors that drove Melanesians to undertake other tangible responsibilities as discussed in this chapter both on a communal and an individual basis.

ii) A sacramental and praying community

The Church has sacraments deeply embedded in prayer. There are seven sacraments recognised by the Anglican Church.³⁰ However, the development and the theological understanding of the sacraments are beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet what matters here is the direct impact of the sacraments on the spirituality of Melanesians. In other words, for Melanesians the many theological concepts and expressions of sacrament were difficult to understand, but it was not difficult to practically relate to them. For Melanesians the important understanding of the sacraments was that they were simply forms of prayers for a specific blessing. Furthermore, the general understanding of the sacraments as being related to grace, mysteriously attained through visible signs/symbols was compatible with most traditional beliefs of Melanesian religions.³¹ As an example, let us examine the sacrament of the Eucharist to see the participation of men and women (community) that had impact on the spiritual development of the Church. The Eucharist is taken as representative of the other sacraments.

The sacrament of Eucharist is not only historically validated but also central in the life of the Church. Walter Cardinal Kasper expresses this as follows:

The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life of our church and of each individual parish community. It is the most precious of all the treasures that we – as church – possess. It is the heart of our church. Everything else tends toward the Eucharist, and from it goes forth the power that

²⁹ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 340. See also *The Melanesian Messenger*, Easter 1966, 20. Cf. "Report on Outer Eastern Islands Archdeaconry," Diocesan Conference 1973, 3.

³⁰ Regardless of the ongoing debates, the sacraments that were generally accepted by the Anglican Church were the Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, Confession, Holy Anointing and Matrimony. Anglican people in the villages have been brought up with this understanding.

³¹ The word and the theological meaning of 'Grace' may not have the exact interpretation in Melanesian religion. However, the concepts of "*Mana* or power or strength" could be equivalent. The differences however could be in terms of the signs/symbols and their meanings.

imparts vigour to every other sphere of church life – and not the least the power we need in our own personal life.³²

Given the fact that Melanesians were still young and fragile in terms of their Christian faith, the Eucharist played a large part in the development of the church through these perspectives.

First, the Eucharist provided an environment where unity and allegiance became realised in a new sense. Traditional unity and allegiance in the Melanesian context were restricted within a specific sphere governed by restricted common bonds. These common bonds often were very exclusive, being of the family or clan or language or village-based. The Eucharist, on the contrary, was more inclusive in nature – regardless of the different conditions and circumstances. The only prerequisite was for the people to believe in God and to be baptised and confirmed. Christian virtues of love, peace and unity were extended beyond the traditional boundaries. There was freedom of movement promoting better relationships with others who were once enemies. Life was much safer and more secure and so the church continued to grow under these circumstances, affirming Augustine's simple statement of the Eucharist as the "sign of unity and the bond of love."³³

Eucharist also has a communal function in which the people of God in a specific place assemble to offer praise, thanksgiving and sacrifice to God through a meal. Importantly, it expresses what the living and the dead could offer to God. In other words, the Eucharist is an important institution where the living and the dead are connected to offer together what is due to God.³⁴ It is where God the transcendent is encountered by the community of believers.³⁵

The above concept was very much in line with the Melanesian concept of their world and the spirit world. In other words, Melanesians had their own means that facilitated their meeting with their ancestral spirits. Feasting

³²Walter Cardinal Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity: The Eucharist and the Church* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004), 13.

³³Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity*, 105.

³⁴Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity*, 35.

³⁵Lawrence B. Porter, *A Guide to the Church: Its Origin and Nature, Its Mission and Ministries* (New York: Society of St. Pauls, 2007), 22.

ceremonies, sacrifice offering, prayer and worship offering were special occasions in which they and their ancestors were believed to be connected.³⁶ This is equivalent to the belief that the Eucharist entrenched in prayers was the means of the living meeting the dead. This therefore supports the importance of the Eucharist and prayer as being two undivided components as seen earlier. In short, by participating in the sacrament of the Eucharist, people instinctively participated also in prayer, the life-blood of the church.

In summary, the sacrament of the Eucharist is a form of liturgy highly theological and socio-cultural, therefore a powerful instrument of unity. Even if Melanesians did not fully understand the many sophisticated theological meanings of the Eucharist, Melanesians had always been convinced that the Eucharist was the highest form of liturgy. The spiritual importance of the Eucharist was so formidable that serious offenders of religious 'taboos' would choose to endure hard thrashings rather than be excommunicated.³⁷

Socio-cultural barriers in terms of tribal differences and rivalries were broken and compromised. Past sour relationships were improved. The 'we/ancestors' traditional relationship became a theological truth. New communities were established under the new meaning of love, minimising suspicion and promoting respect and better understanding of each other. This helped spiritual growth and maturity supporting the idea of John Stott who believed that "small groups, Christian family fellowship groups, are indispensable for our growth into spiritual maturity."³⁸ The Eucharist was a powerful spiritual instrument that attracted and mobilised people into the church. Whilst the other sacraments could do likewise, they would not probably do so to the same extent as the Eucharist.

Having discussed the sacrament of Eucharist, let us now further discuss the concept of prayer and worship. Prayer and worship is a responsibility in which

³⁶ See discussion in Chapter One, section 'Melanesian Traditional Religion' which can be interpreted to provide a similar view.

³⁷ Cf. Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 206-207.

³⁸ John Stott, *The Living Church: Conviction of a lifelong pastor* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 93.

the believing community interacts with God. Praying and worshipping therefore is a communal participation characterised by sincerity and honesty through oracles, singing, rituals, and gestures.³⁹ These ceremonies and functions were important for the spiritual interaction with God. In this context, the members of the Guild of Servers were responsible for the altar and sanctuary services whilst the choir led the singing of hymns and the liturgy responses. As Richard Godfrey stated regarding a service held in Buala village:

The whole service was chanted and most beautifully rendered. There was a fine big choir, the women's voices were very sweet and amazingly high, there were treble and bass voices, but the harmony was their own native harmony.⁴⁰

Importantly, these were practices compatible with most Melanesian religious traditions. Fox states that:

The Melanesian had ceremonial, so to speak in his blood; his life before conversion was full of ceremonial. Often we can make a Melanesian understand with an outward symbol much better than with words. It is an outward and visible parable to him.⁴¹

A.I. Hopkins added that:

...they had hundreds of religious duties to perform, prayers and incantations to learn, sacrifices to offer, innumerable religious customs to follow blindly, birth customs, marriage customs, death and burial customs, and score of others. They had feasts to prepare or attend, and dances and singings.⁴²

In considering the above, we can see why the Anglican worship and prayer tradition was meaningful and easily adapted by Melanesians.⁴³ An improved version of worship and prayer function became further evident through the assimilation of some cultural traditions with the ecclesiastical traditions, be it in

³⁹ Ellison Suri, "Using Indigenous Music and Art in Christian worship and Education," in *Christ in South Pacific Cultures*, ed. Cliff Wright and Leslie Fugui (Suva: Lotu Pasifika Productions, 1986), 62, 66-68.

⁴⁰ Richard Godfrey, "1928 Synod Trip," *Diary of the Reverend Richard Godfrey*, http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/godfrey_synod_1928.html. doc (accessed June 11,2011).

⁴¹ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 245.

⁴² Cf. Hopkins, *From Heathen Boy to Christian Priest*, 10.

⁴³ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 334.

the form of arts, crafts, chants, dances or songs.⁴⁴ This was contextualisation in practice but deeper than that was its sacramental nature. It reminded Melanesians of their cultural roots and identity and their meaningful application into their new adapted Christian spirituality. Hilliard refers to this as the 'Melanesian Mission Ethos.'⁴⁵ Simultaneously it helped missionaries to be inclusive into the Melanesian Christian spirituality. Subsequently, contextualisation created new and exciting experiences that helped to solve spiritual boredom and meaninglessness suggested by other authors. D.C. Hotton states that the rid of the war-like situation by pacification brought about boredom unless they were revitalised through contextualisation into the current life-situation.⁴⁶ Many of the cultural dances performed today for entertainment purposes resemble the past war-like activities.⁴⁷

In summary, the above discussion on Eucharist and prayer signifies that both were strong agents of unity and solidarity of the church.

iii) The community and its resources: Land, material and finance

The term 'resources' in this context, generally refers to the land, the resources on land and human labour. However, this section only examines the resources of the land and the things on it whilst the subject of human resources is examined under the topic of gender roles of men and women.

The local community people were owners of the land and the provider of human resources - two most important resources required for the initial establishment of the village churches. Both resources were usually given by the community either free of charge or with a little payment or compensation that were met by the people themselves.

Land provided for the erection of the church building was often located in the centre of the village, an implication of its importance. Besides the land, building materials comprising of stones, gravel or sand, sticks, posts, leaves

⁴⁴ An example of this was the installation of the Paramount chief in Isabel by the Anglican Archbishop of the Church of Melanesia. See also Geoffrey M. White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 247. Cf. also Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 35.

⁴⁵ Cf. also Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 35.

⁴⁶ Cf. Horton, *The Happy Isles*, 163.

⁴⁷ Tom Russell, *I have the honour to be* (Spennymoor: The Memoir Club, 2003), 95.

and strings came from the lands owned by the people of the community. These again were either given free or for little money.⁴⁸ European building materials were then unavailable or expensive beyond the financial capability of the village communities.

Consequently, as time went by and as the islands became exposed to external and internal trade, finance became inevitably important. Money as a legal tender and a powerful resource for economic growth was gradually understood. This was further encouraged with the arrival of the Americans during the World War II when, hundreds of Melanesians were employed as labour corps and generously paid more than by previous employers.⁴⁹ Melanesians by now were more aware of the importance of finance as an additional resource to land and materials for the growth and survival of the church. Land and the materials were no longer sufficient by themselves and finance to some extent became even more crucial than the two former commodities.⁵⁰ Melanesians also felt its indirect impacts on their spiritual well-being to some depth.

However, the availability of finance amongst Melanesians was also limited because of factors beyond them. The Education level was low and schools were inadequate for formal government employment. The economy of the islands was so small that it allowed employment only for a few people, most of whom were men employed on the plantations. The remittances were often sent back to the home villages⁵¹ to supplement the little income derived from the little copra, trochus shell and turtle shell produced in the villages. These

⁴⁸ See *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes*, No.24 (March 1947): 15, 25. The Mothercraft Training centre in Malaita was built on local building materials and labour generously provided by the local communities. Other examples were the establishment of schools in Gela and Litogahira School in Santa Isabel. See *The Melanesian Messenger* (Easter 1964): 16-17 and H.V.C.R, "Mission Schools in the Solomons," in *Southern Cross Log* (No.77 June 1962): 7.

⁴⁹ Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 252.

⁵⁰ Solomon Islanders started to pay tax under the 1920 Tax regulations. See Whiteman, *Melanesians and Missionaries*, 250. Melanesians therefore began to realise that they were also obligated to contribute to the government. Likewise, the same obligation was given to the church but based on a voluntary basis.

⁵¹ Tom Russell, *I have the honour to be*, 95. See also Harold M. Ross, *Baegu: Social and Ecological Organisation in Malaita, Solomon Islands*, Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1973, 66. See also Jan Sanga, "Remembering," in *Ples Blong Lumi Solomon Islands: The Past Four Thousand Years* (Suva and Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific in association with the Solomon Islands Extension Centre, the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education, 1989), 20-23.

were purchased by the Chinese and European traders who went from village to village by boat.⁵²

With the limited economic resources and opportunities available, finance was difficult, yet the determination, commitment and sacrifice to improve church buildings by using western building materials were high. Many local communities therefore undertook church building projects under extreme financial stress, resulting in the many years of construction time. The up-keep and maintenance of church with the provision of linens, and candles, wafers and wine remained largely the responsibility of the Church Vestry Councils within the village communities.⁵³

In addition, whilst the stipends of the clergy in the districts⁵⁴ were the mission's responsibility, their accommodation and gardens were in the hands of the village communities. Apart from this, the Church Vestry Council also cared for the welfare of the catechists who were solely responsible for the daily functions of the church.

The above shows that the village churches led by the Church Vestry Councils had always exercised self-reliance. Very little or no assistance came directly to the village churches from the mission headquarters.⁵⁵ These were expressions of allegiance and commitment translated into practical realities, and speaks loudly about how important a church was in the life of the local communities.

⁵² Gutch, *Colonial Servant*, 113 & 114. Should there have been trading stations even before the 1870 as Hilliard mentions, there could have been many more during the period covered in this study. See Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 101. See for an example also Dickinson, *A Trader in the Savage Solomons*, 112.

⁵³ Cf. notes on the Church Association that states that not all the aims of the association were achieved but some of the major ones did. Its members that made up the congregation established a firm financial undertaking that paid the costs of their own Melanesians staff. See F.W. Coaldrake, "The Church Association," *The Melanesian Messenger* (August 1963): 30.

⁵⁴ A district comprises of several villages therefore several churches.

⁵⁵ Coaldrake, "The Church Association," 27.

iv) Melanesians as agents of evangelisation and re-evangelisation

The village communities mentioned earlier were not only the first to be converted prior to or within the period covered by this thesis, but were also the on-going fields of evangelisation either by missionaries or by the community members themselves. In the latter context, the converted Melanesian communities became the 'People Movements' who successfully evangelised and re-evangelised the unconverted and the backsliders who returned to heathen ways after been baptised.⁵⁶ The structure of the 'People Movements' is unclear.⁵⁷ However, their evangelisation strategy was through oral traditions and the display of Christian life. In Melanesia, oral tradition was a powerful communication vehicle so that the gospel was fluently transmitted from one person to another or from one community to another. At the same time, the converted communities by now lived in a Christian environment governed by peace, unity and freedom. Traditional practices such as sorcery and witchcraft were minimised. This was a powerful model of a new, better life attracting the unconverted communities to conversion.

Tippett, states that most of the 12,000 adherents of the Melanesian Mission at the turn of the 20th Century were the work of the people movements. It gained momentum in the second quarter of the 20th century, substantiated by the rate of development and growth in terms of the number of churches built and their membership.⁵⁸

The obvious importance of this was that evangelisation and conversion were ongoing processes undertaken by the whole community. Success or failure was everybody's concern. Retrospectively, the difficulties and the failures experienced did not hinder the process nor did they 'kill' the evangelisation work of the church. Rather, they became experiences to learn from so that

⁵⁶ See also *Offices and Prayers of the Melanesian Brotherhood* (Honiara: The Provincial Press, 1997), 145 for the collects said for the 'backsliders'. See also the *Companion Handbook of the Melanesian Brotherhood* (Honiara: The Provincial Press, 1983).

⁵⁷ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 42-44. Note that the time period of this movement appears prior to the period of this thesis. However, its strategy no doubt was an on-going strategy operating between communities.

⁵⁸ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 37, 43. Note that that civilisation in terms of materialism was not a lone guarantee for conversion but civilisation in terms of emotion and feelings were also something to consider.

the Melanesians' village communities became better and more effective agents in evangelisation work. Tippetts states:

Had it not been for those people movements in Isabel and Florida, the growth of the half-century (church) would have been very small indeed. . . There is a real atmosphere of a Melanesian Antioch. . .⁵⁹

Further analysis of this provides a convincing argument that it was from the same principle that the community of the Melanesian Brotherhood was established.⁶⁰

v) Co-ordination and decision making

The establishment of Church Vestry Councils, Guild of Servers, Companions of the MBH, Sunday Schools, Mothers Unions and the Men's Associations were some of the set-ups in the village church structure. They played different roles in the life of the church though there could be some overlap expected both in terms of responsibilities and membership.⁶¹ This was a blessing for those who saw the different roles as complementary.

However, besides this, there was also a temptation to see the different set-ups as being opposed to each other. Especially in the early stage of the church, there could have been pride and prejudices creating competition, suspicion and disunity. Fox wrote about the fear of Ini Kopuria regarding the temptation of being more holy than the ordinary villagers by the companions.⁶² This fortunately did not happen because of the ability of the villagers to properly co-ordinate the different organisations. In this regard, the village communities must be commended for it could have been a set-back in the life and the growth of church especially during its young life.

At the same time, these village organisations were important for the ordinary Melanesians as a foretaste of higher responsibilities. In other words, it was through these little set-ups provided for in the canons that the village people had the opportunity of becoming members of the higher structures of the

⁵⁹ Tippetts, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 37, 38.

⁶⁰ Cf. the discussion on the chapter regarding the MBH for comparison.

⁶¹ Discussion on the responsibilities of each body will be discussed later.

⁶² C. E. Fox, "Companions & Brothers" *The Melanesian Messenger*, Jan. 1964, 28.

mission.⁶³ This was a blessing in view of the limited opportunities often given to the few Melanesian elites.⁶⁴ It was in the light of this situation that the village communities in their simple set-ups within their communities, had no choice but to make decisions regarding their churches. This empowered the local Melanesians in decision-making, independent from missionaries.

In summary, the Melanesians participated in two things. The first was that they were capable of co-ordinating harmoniously the different set-ups in the village churches. The village churches continued to sustain themselves and their growth was because of the unity between the people and in particular of the different set-ups. Secondly, the village churches, through the provisions in the canons or policies of the mission, were given the opportunity to be represented in the higher decision-making bodies of the mission. Their experiences in the set-ups in the village churches, small as they were, helped them to participate in the higher profile discussions of the mission. In this way, the village churches also participated in the decisions for the development of the whole mission.

2. Other roles of men and women in the village communities

Most Melanesian societies were male-dominated⁶⁵ and for this reason, their involvement in the affairs of the community was inevitable. They were husbands, fathers and uncles, responsible directly for their families, as well as the responsibilities required of them by their tribes or clans. They were the sources of security and safety, both for the village and for their own families. The men to a large extent were the custodians of tradition and culture as well as leaders of religion. They were the power and authority of the village, though at times could be the source of weaknesses. Let us now examine some of their specific roles.

⁶³ The higher church structures included the Church synods or boards or councils.

⁶⁴ This refers to educated Melanesians who were not ordained. Francis Bugotu was one of the educated Melanesians. He outstandingly contributed in the affairs of the church through education and made the first Melanesian lay canon in the Anglican Church of Melanesia. See R.P. Garrity, "Afternoon Meeting," *The Southern Cross Log*, Vol. 70 No.4 (Honiara: Melanesian Mission, Dec 1962), 118. This was an address given to the Melanesian Mission members in UK.

⁶⁵ The residue of this can still be seen today in the church, state and rural community structures and organisational roles.

i) The roles of the Catechists and Guild of Servers

The ministry of catechists corresponded to the call of God to teach and prepare catechumens to understand and to live Christian lives. This was therefore a special ministry for a special purpose. Gloria Durka in a little book convincingly emphasises this aspect. It was a ministry that demanded full commitment and dedication to the church. It was therefore a ministry that did not accidentally occur but a ministry called into existence from God and the Christian community for God's purpose.⁶⁶

The beginning of the Melanesian mission was the training of teachers who were in fact catechists. Besides being teachers, catechists were also liturgy facilitators responsible for the daily services of the churches. The ministry of catechists was important given the fact that it was almost one of the first formal ministries held and executed by Melanesians. The ministry of the catechists however, was basically a lowly village vocation which was practically difficult for the missionaries.

At first, catechists often were chosen amongst men who held some recognition in the community. At this stage, education was not a crucial requirement since there was no formal education. Consideration of their previous cultural and social status and responsibilities in the communities where they lived were the important criteria. Such considerations definitely became useful assets in the ministry of catechists. With this understanding, catechists were men who already held the respect of the people culturally and socially.⁶⁷ Subsequently, by being entrusted with the new responsibility, it was hoped they would continue to have the same influence over the community within the context of the church.

Another category of men who joined the ministry of catechists was the former brothers from the MBH.⁶⁸ With experiences in the MBH and further training in the catechist schools they were better equipped for church responsibilities in

⁶⁶ Gloria Durka, *The Joy of being a Catechist* (New York: Resurrection Press Ltd, 1995), 13.

⁶⁷ The same condition also applied in the Methodist Church in Fiji. Cf. Lange, *Island Ministers*, 139-140.

⁶⁸ See chapter on the MBH.

the village communities. Becoming catechists was merely an extension of their evangelistic work carried out whilst being members of the MBH.

Later catechists were recruited from primary school drop-outs who were unable to find jobs in urban and semi-urban establishments.⁶⁹ Some of the recruits were very limited in knowledge and hard to teach, due to the lack of adequate training facilities and resources. Some catechists therefore became passive and outdated, becoming a burden to evangelical work rather than a channel of evangelisation.⁷⁰ This slowed down the expounding of proper teaching.

Besides this, a few men with outstanding calibre who returned from the schools were immediately appointed to community and church responsibilities. They were easily trained because they were knowledgeable. They made good catechists and carried out the responsibilities expected of them. These catechists often had the confidence of the people but there were not always enough of them.⁷¹

Regardless of the different levels of the catechists' capabilities, as mentioned above, their roles remained important, as discussed below.

First, teaching was a crucial responsibility in every sphere of life. In Melanesia, the catechists were also village teachers, responsible for the village or district schools. This explains two things: Firstly, it explains why some of the first formal schools were mainly for the training of catechists.⁷² Secondly, people accepted the call to be missionary teachers because they were catechists at the same time. This led three young Melanesian teachers for missionary work amongst Polynesians in the far-off and isolated island of Tikopia. Reports in 1934 state that there were only two visits made to Tikopia – one in 1931 and the other in 1934. During this period, the local people were spiritually well

⁶⁹ Cf. *Southern Cross Log*, (September 1962): 90.

⁷⁰ This is not to suggest that these were the only limitations of the catechist. Immoral and human weaknesses were also experienced. Cf. "Report on Outer Islands Archdeaconry," Diocesan Conference 1973. 2.

⁷¹ Alfred T. Hill, "Bishop's Charge: Diocesan Synod 1962," 13.

⁷² Siota in Gela and Maravovo in Guadalcanal were schools for the training of teachers who at the same time were catechists.

cared for by the local teachers without the oversight of priests.⁷³ Simultaneously there were also teachers from Isabel - Jeremiah, James, Arthur and John who obeyed the call for Santa Anna.⁷⁴ Catechists/teachers had been therefore important agents of literacy and the knowledge about God and the church, and at the same time were liturgy officiators who led the people to worship and prayer.

Second, as more people specialised in teaching, it lessened the teaching roles required by the catechists. This gave the catechists more time to carry out their ecclesiastical responsibilities, which included the caring for the church building, its surroundings, its equipment and its inventory. Because of their daily presence in the church, they were in the best position to know all about the church. There was no other person more familiar with the church building and its inventory than the catechist. It was common for records not to be properly kept so the only responsible persons who could give the most accurate information regarding the church properties were the catechists.

Third, the worship and prayer life of the villages depended very much on the catechist. Regardless of whether the priest was present or not, the daily morning and evening services, except for the sacraments such as the Eucharist or Penitence, were officiated by the catechist.⁷⁵ The daily reading of the scriptures was the catechist's responsibility. The time for the beating of the church drum for prayer was in the hands of the catechist.⁷⁶ The vocation of catechist may seem simple, but it demanded great commitment and sacrifice, especially in terms of time. Analogically the catechist was the clock and the caller for the daily worship and prayer life of the community. Failing this simply meant no communal worship and prayer. Other church programs even if they were not directly the responsibility of the catechist, such as those

⁷³ Walter H. Baddeley, "Bishop's Letter," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes* No 4[4], July 1934, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 32. Cf. Walter H. Baddeley, "Bishop's Annual Report," in *Southern Cross Log: A Journal of the Activities of the Mission and other notes* No 4[4], July 1934, (Auckland: Melanesian Mission), 12.

⁷⁴ *The Southern Cross Log*, No 8, Jan 1925, Meshes in "The Black Net with the White Corks." Auckland: Melanesian Mission, 17-18.

⁷⁵ Cf. Mothers Union, *Women in Melanesia* (Westminster: n.p., 1960), 4.

⁷⁶ In the pre-Christian era, the drum was an important method of communication from one village to the other or within a village. Usually drums were beaten with different tones to transmit different kinds of messages which could be either a call to be ready, or a call to come together.

of the Mothers Union and Sunday Schools, still were conducted in consultation with the catechist.

The priests were in charge of the districts that comprised of several villages. However, the inadequate means of transport and the weather did not always allow consistent regular visits for teaching and pastoral caring. Under these circumstances, the responsibilities of the catechist could be enormous, involving taking complete charge of the village churches most of the year.⁷⁷

In the absence of priests, for example, the catechist was responsible for the death and funeral rites. These were circumstances that could not be postponed or put off. This made the work of the catechist crucial and they became the right hand persons for the priests.⁷⁸ It was therefore not uncommon to see the vocation of the catechist as a stepping stone to the ordained ministry. There were catechists who became deacons and priests in the church.⁷⁹

Often the lack of academic theological knowledge of the catechists mistakenly compels us to think otherwise - that their roles were low in status. However, whilst the lack of theological knowledge could create difficulties in carrying out the roles expected of them, the vocation of catechists remained indispensable in the development of the church. Virtues of faith, spiritual maturity, discipline, hard work, enthusiasm and other leadership qualities were important criteria for this vocation. Gloria Durka appropriately said:

Life for most people is spent doing a lot of ordinary things. The ordinary is limited but there are some in the community who are called to see the extraordinary in the ordinary. Catechists are such people.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Cf. *Southern Cross Log* (September 1962): 90.

⁷⁸ This is still practised today.

⁷⁹ Lange, *Island Ministers*, 288. Lange here did not mention catechists but teachers. However, the teachers were also catechists and especially those assigned to roles in the church. Cf. The Rev. H.J. Nind, *Southern Cross Log* no. 38 (Auckland: Melanesian Mission, Jan 1933), 8, for which George Kiriau, a teacher, became later ordained.

⁸⁰ Durka, *The Joy of being a Catechist*, 13. Durka works at Fordham. She is not connected to Melanesia but her discussion on the teaching role of a catechist is applicable in Melanesian context. As one coming from a Melanesian village where catechists played important roles in the church, I could easily understand her contribution regarding the roles of catechists.

This is grace revealed through the ordinary functions that many times had been taken lightly.

Undeniably, this was the basis of the spiritual life of the community that depended on the commitment and enthusiasm of the catechists. Catechists in both good and bad times were spiritual leaders but in a very humble and unrecognised manner. A Melanesian clergy told Bishop Walter Baddeley of the WWII spiritual situation:

In their villages - perhaps after just one or two days of upsidedownness - daily prayers have gone on, morning and evening, in the village church or in a temporary hutment in the gardens in the hills.⁸¹

Whilst such a great responsibility took a fair amount of time and energy, the reward given to them in monetary terms was not always sufficient. It was by counting on these that Alfred Thomas Hill, a bishop in Melanesia, also stated “catechists or village teachers are so responsible for the spiritual life of the villages.”⁸²

Today it is unfortunate that the catechists are less acknowledged because they are regarded as of a less educated brand. Their training had been inadequate, leading to passivity and obsolescence. In addition, the availability of more trained priests, teachers and lay workers with different knowledge and skills took over the traditional responsibilities that were once held by catechists. This left the catechists to serve merely in the churches as officiators of the daily church services – an important contribution for the nurturing of the people's spirituality.

ii) The roles of the chiefs

The mission had always recognised chiefs as the traditional leaders of the people whom they wished to evangelise because of their traditional roles in

⁸¹ Walter Baddeley, “The Bishop’s Report – 1942,” *The Southern Cross Log*, Vol 49 No3, July 1943 (London: Melanesian Mission), 29. Though there is no mention of Catechists in this statement, with the amount of ecclesiastical duties undertaken by them, it is almost an absolute truth that Catechists had been the instrument of the daily services.

⁸² Alfred Thomas Hill, “Pastoral Letter from the Bishop to his Clergy,” February 13, 1956.

the community.⁸³ Geoffrey White viewed the significance of the chief as a symbol of custom and identity closely related to indigenosity.⁸⁴ In examining this view, the chiefs in the Melanesian communities were simply overseers of the whole governing system of the community whether it be political, social, cultural or religious. In other words, the chiefs were the custodians and defenders of their tradition so that they were often highly respected by their communities.⁸⁵ They were authentically the important point of compromise between the old and new traditions. Recognition of this therefore led missionaries to respect and honour the chiefs. Little wonder then that the chiefs' approval and favour were often sought on the arrival in the villages. This was a matter of both protocol and strategy, consciously knowing that to gain the chiefs' favour was to win the heart of the community, as demonstrated in the context of Sulufou village:

. . . [Sulu Vou] has as its headman the chief priest of heathenism in those parts, and he is now coming over to Christianity and building a school. This will mean that the people of the other artificial island will follow suit.⁸⁶

White also states: "Nineteenth-century Anglican missionaries sought to convert 'chiefs' as primary conduits for the work of missionization."⁸⁷ Along with conversion, the chiefs became the new representatives of the new establishment carrying out responsibilities required by the mission. With the knowledge the chief had, little as it may be, it was still a privilege as he had more access to the missionaries in terms of acquiring new knowledge and

⁸³ The term 'chief' is said to have no relevance in Melanesia as it did not exist because of its poor social structure. Rather what Melanesia had was the "Big Man" that often performed almost the same responsibilities as the chiefs in the Polynesian context. They were at the same time identified with wealth such as a large house, a large garden, number of pigs, domestic workers etc. Cf. White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 235.

⁸⁴ White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society" 231.

⁸⁵ Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 212

⁸⁶ "The Rev. H.J. Nind," in *Southern Cross Log* no. 38 (Auckland: Melanesian, Jan 1933), 8.

⁸⁷ White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 233. Cf. Jocelyn Linnekin, "New Political Orders," in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, ed. Donald Denoon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 194.

material possessions. The recognition given to chiefs in this context was a confirmation given for their past roles.⁸⁸

Earlier on, we mentioned that almost the entire governing system of the village community revolved around the chiefs. They were the life-blood of the community and the community owed its solidarity to them. Solidarity was fundamental for unity, peace and communal activities that could only be upheld through devices that the chiefs used in their supervision responsibilities. Let us examine a few of these responsibilities.

The chiefs were the custodians of traditions and culture.⁸⁹ This was accepted by the church owing to the fact that there were issues that could not be dealt with without the chiefs. The issues of property disputes over land, canoe trees, nut trees and sea boundaries were often brought before the chiefs. The villages also had their own codes of conduct/behaviour expected to be adhered to by all community members. Those who were in breach of these codes were brought before the chiefs who would decide on the verdict. Occasional soured relationships between families or individuals for different reasons were brought before the chief. In most cases the verdict given by the chiefs, whether it was through advice, reprimand, warning or compensation, was final. Through these roles, the chiefs were able to maintain or restore unity and peace in the villages. They became important partners sharing the responsibilities with the priest and catechists as instruments of community unity and cooperation. Subsequently, the spirit of unity and cooperation in the community also reflected the unity of the church.

The colonial administration also recognised the importance of chiefs as overseers of law and order. This was inevitable as the colonial administration lacked human resources to sufficiently monitor and oversee every village. The appointment of the chiefs as the representatives of the colonial

⁸⁸ White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 231. White refers to a reference in which 'traditional chiefs' were advising the local government and also the possibility of including representatives in provincial government. They were also provided with judiciary power to hear and make decision on customary land issues.

⁸⁹ See the general statement of the importance of chiefs in Chapter One, section 'Leadership: Chiefs and Elders.'

administration was an expansion of their traditional roles and authority.⁹⁰ In this context, the chiefs played the role of the government, administrating and enforcing regulations so that people lived healthy and peaceful lives. There were hygiene rules on sanitation and the environment such as kitchen and pig fences. There were rules for the upkeep of community social amenities and infrastructure. In addition, there were also rules of moral and ethical conduct pertaining to slander, adultery abusive language and disorderly conduct. These were some of the regulations that were enforced by the chiefs.⁹¹

The whole intention was to bring about peace, happiness and healthy life, free from traditional rivalries, fears, suspicions and prejudices. Over time, the succeeding generations became even more optimistic about the roles of the chiefs. The report of the Provincial Government Review Committee 1986-87 made the call to have the full participation of chiefs in the development of Solomon Islands. This was on areas where the government was less effective but for which the chiefs had direct authority and knowledge.⁹² In recognition of this, the government in 1985 extended the power of the chiefs as magistrates to hear customary land disputes.⁹³

One of the prominent features of Melanesia was community life, be it religious, social or economic. The clearing of virgin and thick bushes; the cutting down of trees; covering and draining of swamps; the digging of ground and hills and the building of houses were administered by the chiefs. Village ceremonies such as feasting and reconciliation were communal responsibilities also under the responsibility of the chiefs. Subsequently, this simply demanded some proper administration of labour for the right distribution and utilisation of labour resources. It was through the commitment

⁹⁰ White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 201. Chiefs and other men were members of the 'Native Council' formed by the colonial administration in Isabel. Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 110.

⁹¹ Cf. Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons*, 111. Note that Bennett refers to 'headmen' who were often the chiefs at the same time.

⁹² Cf. White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 229. See same page for the same sentiment shared by Vanuatu and 214ff a brief examination on the recognition and renewing of the 'paramount chief' in Isabel by then a member of the Governing Council of the Solomon Islands.

⁹³ White, "The Discourse of Chiefs: Notes on a Melanesian Society," 230-231.

of the chiefs that these developments were undertaken as part of their contributions in the mission.

Because of the traditional respect and allegiance given to the chiefs and empowered further by the colonial administration, the churches used the chiefs as one of the channels in enhancing growth and sustainability. It was through this power and authority that the village churches were built and the Christian principles of living were advocated. Embedded in this was the demand for all to be responsible for the upkeep of the church and compliance with ecclesiastical moral requirements.

Church buildings were often bigger than others, built purposely to accommodate the whole village. The construction work of a church building therefore was more demanding than the normal family house. The church being a special house also demanded skills through the utilisation of 'native industries.' This involved the skilled work of arts and crafts in terms of drawings and decoration, for example, with carved reredos inlaid with mother of pearl.⁹⁴ These pieces of work, apart from their artistic appeal, had their story to tell. Melanesians therefore can be seen as capable of talking theology not by words, but through arts. The works of art were so rich and powerful that not only did they become representative and symbolic of God, but were informative of God's transcendence, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence.⁹⁵ Albert C. Moore emphasized the power of arts by supporting David Freedberg who said: "Artworks can have a 'presence' which moves us beyond words, even to tears."⁹⁶ The church buildings therefore, were constructed in a way to be sacramental in nature. For Melanesians, the church building was the visible sign of life in its totality. It was the powerhouse for strength, security, healing, restoration and good harvests.

⁹⁴ Most village churches were decorated by crafts and symbols with inlaid shells and pearls. See Helen Barrett, "Mothers' Union on Santa Isabel," *Southern Cross Log*, No. 77 (June 1962): 55. Cf. also Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 97. Hilliard was referring to the Banks in New Hebrides now Vanuatu but the same was also experienced in the Solomon Islands. Cf. also Suri, "Using Indigenous Music and Art in Christian worship and Education," 62.

⁹⁵ Cf. Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 70. Fox expressed the Melanesians arts used in houses which the bishop wanted on the cathedral. In short, the bishop believed that these arts could be used as Christian expression of reverence and worship.

⁹⁶ Albert C. Moore, *Arts in the Religions of the Pacific: Symbols of life* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1995), 12, 19.

iii) Mothercraft and Infant Welfare

A Melanesian woman once said, "I seek a wife for my son who will be a good worker, a true helpmate, who will stay at home and cook, and tend the children."⁹⁷ This was a traditional call for good mothering characterised by hard work with good personality. This statement, of course, may satisfy the general spectrum of Melanesian women's traditional roles. However, this did not suggest that these were adequate in the context of the Church. For this reason, mothercraft and infant welfare teachings were introduced to improve the responsibilities of women so that they became better mothers in the community.

A good mother reared good children who became better parents later. The church could only grow and become mature if it had good congregations made up of good families. In saying this, the final hypothesis was that the church historically owed its strength to people nourished and shaped by families for which the women were undeniably the prime executors. Stead, a missionary nurse had often stated: "Teach a mother and you teach a whole family."⁹⁸ This quotation was related to Dr. Aggrey's statement from Africa: "If you educate a man you simply educate an individual; if you educate a woman you educate a family."⁹⁹

The first Mothercraft training took place at Siota in 1940¹⁰⁰, covering nursery, dispensary and hygiene. Nursery was important as women discovered new antenatal methods that saved many lives of women and children. Obstetrics was certainly very primitive with cultural obstacles to overcome. Women were sent in a hut apart from the village for delivery and there remained for many days. Food and fire were not allowed to be taken to the woman as childbirth was understood to be defiling. However, other women were allowed to make visits whilst husbands were not. In many cases children died as well as the

⁹⁷ E.W., "Modern Girl," in *Southern Cross Log*, (1963), 119.

⁹⁸ Anonymous, A document on "Evangelism among women," 2. This is a quotation from Dr. Aggrey of Africa

⁹⁹ Quoted by M. Inagle, "Correspondence," *The Melanesian Messenger*, (Dec 1964), 30.

¹⁰⁰ Melanesian Mission, *Mothercraft in Melanesia: The Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides*, (Auckland: The Melanesian Mission, Southern Cross Booklet No. 8, 1946), 6.

mothers. With ignorance, this was acceptable and practised for generations because it was part of the culture and religion.¹⁰¹

However, with the introduction of mothercraft teaching that brought new knowledge and techniques, some changes became evident. Catastrophic delivery experiences were lessened, saving the lives of many mothers and children, as the mortality rates showed.¹⁰² However, even for the children who were fortunate to have survived such cultural delivery practices, there continued to be concerns because of the health threats surrounding them and their environment.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, many Melanesians at this point of time understood the improvement as being the result of appeasement of the spirits,¹⁰⁴ and not a medical or health achievement.

Women became better in looking after themselves during pre-pregnancy and post-pregnancy. Diseases and their causes with preventive measures were taught, helping people turn away from sorcery and witchcraft superstitions and beliefs as the causes of illness and death. These beliefs and practices passed down from generation to generation over centuries, however, and were not easy to change.

At the outset, some improvements were made when the sick were attended to and nursed. The homes and food preparation became cleaner and healthier. Babies and children were looked after better and later grew up to be healthy mothers and fathers. The community became generally healthier and thus grew in numbers, reflected in the growth of the number of churches. Better health implied better education, preparing the children of the time to be leaders of the future. These were the very people that the villages, especially the churches, depended on so much as they tried to establish themselves to become indigenous.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Harold M. Ross, Baegu: *Social and Ecological Organisation in Malaita, Solomon Islands*, 180.

¹⁰² Melanesian Mission, *Mothercraft in Melanesia: The Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides*, 3-4.

¹⁰³ Melanesian Mission, *Mothercraft in Melanesia*, 3-4. Cf. Dickinson, *A Trader in the Savage Solomons*, 201 who said that the condition was vile. Women and children were covered with ulcers, sore and the environment with flies.

¹⁰⁴ Melanesian Mission, *Mothercraft in Melanesia*, 3-4.

Finally, the focus on mothercraft and child welfare was an indispensable program. It was a form of education that taught Melanesian women and girls ways for better health and a better living environment.¹⁰⁵ Those trained were then sent back to villages to teach other women the best nursing, dispensary work and hygiene practices. This was not easy, given the fact that most Melanesian societies were patrilineal in nature and gave women very limited opportunity to contribute in societal affairs. As well, there are the difficulties of making changes when cultural practices had been handed down through many generations. In other words, these women had to battle against the cultural “taboos” that often led to the pains and suffering of women and children in Melanesia.

Conclusion

This is an important chapter as it reflects on the role of the village community. An important re-emerging theme is the lack of or limited education of the rural congregation. Yet, their invaluable contribution was felt throughout the church. This was inevitable because the church in Melanesia from the beginning was a rural based institution – a characteristic that continues in the twenty-first century. This was part of Selwyn’s vision on the Melanesian Mission ethos centred in the concept of ‘native ministry.’ Similarly, this was the “Melanesian way” in which David Wetherell echoes the importance of a village church in Papua New Guinea: “Here in a village, where most Papua New Guinea live, Christianity has taken root and flourished like the Modawa tree that grow out of a corner post of the first chapel at Doguru.”¹⁰⁶

Another ideology revealed in this discussion is the concept of unity in terms of responsibilities between the community and individual. The two are complementary and thus cannot be separated in the development of the church. The contributions of the community were signs of acceptance, allegiance, enthusiasm and moral support of the new religion. Their contributions included the giving up of resources and the unity of worship and

¹⁰⁵ “Melanesian Mission: The Bishop’s Annual Report 1938,” 6.

¹⁰⁶ David Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission*, 330.

prayer life led by the catechists. The catechists were also initially teachers. Their roles as teachers, however, gradually faded away.

Supporting the social structure and requirements of the village was directly the responsibility of the chiefs and elders. In general, they were the administrators of village life, enforcing regulations pertaining to social, cultural and political requirements.

Finally this chapter examined the roles of women promoted through the mothercraft and child welfare program of the church. In this arena, it points out the fact that the women were silent contributors in the development of the church. The improvement of family life was in the hands of the women and it was not easy. Good families produced good children who were members of the church. Having good and healthy families therefore reflected in the healthy and dynamic church for which the women played important part.

In the final analysis, if we are to understand the Melanesian Church, it is not enough to know the urban and semi-urban church since the village community church makes up the large proportion of the whole church. The ethos of a statement by a former archbishop was and is still a genuine representation of the church today:

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.¹⁰⁷

This is the last but not the least of the roles played by Melanesians as it represents the majority of the Melanesians. At some point of time, each Melanesian regardless of profession and status will eventually return to a village which he/she calls home and be a participant of that village church. In this context, a village is where all expertise, skill and experiences in chapters

¹⁰⁷ Pogo, "Ministry in Melanesian," 109. The local parishes and districts refer to both the urban and the village community congregations. However the village community congregations were and continue to dominate in numbers because of the rural population as mentioned.

three to six will finally be consolidated. All that is to be theologically reflected in the next and final chapter.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion: Theological Reflection on the roles of Melanesians in the development of the Church of Melanesia

Introduction

Because of the missiological nature of this dissertation, this chapter provides some theological reflections on the different kinds of roles played by Melanesians. Throughout history, the Church has always understood its call to be missionary. Two scriptural texts, known as Jesus' 'Great Commission'¹ and 'Peter's Declaration',² are explicit indications of the Christian missionary vocation. While this call to be missionary is understood as a universal dictum, various methods, models and approaches to mission are used according to diverse historical, cultural and other circumstances. A helpful way of understanding these diverse missionary approaches is through the prisms of proclamation ('sending out'), witness ('gathering in') and solidarity ('walking with'). All three approaches can be observed in the missionary roles of Melanesians in the Solomon Islands.³

The farewell message of Bishop Alfred Thomas Hill⁴ acknowledges almost every aspect of the mission area of work except the contributions of local men and women in the local churches as examined in Chapter Seven.⁵ Nevertheless, Hill's words are still adequate as a summary of the overall roles of Melanesians.

There has been much sowing of the Gospel of our Blessed Lord, the watering of it, the tending of it, and there must be our thanksgiving for God's increase. There are the school-teachers, men and women, who have given such wonderful service for the education of the young, so necessary for the growth and the development of these islands. There are also those engaged as doctors and nurses, the healing instruments of Christ. There are the captains and crews of our ships, who do so

¹ Matt 28: 19-20.

² Matt 16: 13-16; Mk 8: 29 and Lk 9: 18-20.

³ Chapter three to seven examines these roles.

⁴ Alfred T. Hill was the ninth bishop in Melanesia from 1954 to 1967.

⁵ The work in the plantations and gardens were closely associated with village people.

much for the running of our vessels, the very life-line of this island diocese. There are also the artisans or tradesmen at Taroniara, who by their faithful work have done so much for the maintenance of our ships, for the repairing and building of establishments. There are also those engaged in Press with the printing of our books of worship and educational works. Then there are also those engaged in our offices, so necessary for good administration, and also the workers in the gardens and coconut plantations, which contribute so much to the economic life of the diocese. There are the members of the Mothers' Union, which has so much expanded in these last years and has contributed to the deepening of the family life in Melanesia. To one and all, I offer my sincere thanks.⁶

The chapter outlines the MBH approach to mission under the ethos of 'true religion' and through the missionary approaches of proclamation, witness and solidarity. Evangelism is demonstrated through: explicit proclamation of the gospel/scriptures; the witness of community, prayer and worship; forming relationships of trust and solidarity through which the Gospel is contextualised.

The chapter also provides an extended reflection on education and health care interpreted through the missionary ethos of 'sound learning and healthy living.' The approach to mission through human resources and economic development, associated with the ethos of 'useful industry,' is further investigated.

Finally the chapter investigates the manner in which Melanesians played an important role in the inculturation of the Christian Gospel. This includes specific reflection on the understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel through traditional Melanesian culture. There is a genuine, at times profound, dialogue between Melanesian culture and Scriptural data that is only possible on account of the leadership roles played by Melanesians. The argument is made that there were many ready-made cultural elements in the Solomon Islands that provided ready soil for the planting of the Gospel.

In other words, the chapter is really an exercise of reflecting on the roles of Melanesians in the contextualization and inculturation of the Christian Gospel to Melanesian cultural forms and values. This is a task that can only be done

⁶ Alfred T Hill, "Bishop's Farewell," in *Melanesian Messenger* Easter 1967, 4.

effectively by Melanesians themselves through proclamation, witnessing and especially in solidarity with other Melanesians. It is noted that inculturation can be both 'for and against' and open to the charge of syncretism.⁷ And whilst some of the cultural values are open to the prophetic call of the Gospel, inculturation and contextualisation still plays an important role in providing authentic meaning of the Gospel in Melanesian cultural means.

1. The 'Great Commission' and 'Peter's Declaration'

The Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you"⁸ is historically, sociologically and theologically significant in the initial life of the mission. It is a call to Christians both on a personal and communal basis, justifying a religious obligation for the salvation of humankind and the extension of God's kingdom. This is the 'apostolic' nature of the church which the Melanesians capably executed in their Christian evangelisation.⁹

However, the Great Commandment would not have been obeyed without knowing and believing in the Messiahship of Jesus in the same manner as Peter's "Declaration about Jesus."¹⁰ Peter's statement "You are the messiah" was an important affirmation that inclined Peter and the other disciples to reach out beyond their own space and proclaim the gospel. It was the starting point of Christian ministry.

'Messiah' in Hebrew means the 'anointed one,'¹¹ often referring to prophets or priests or kings. The messiah was therefore expected to come from this category of people. However, from the Christian perspective, this was not fulfilled until the coming of Jesus, though there were still people who did not believe in him. Jesus of the gospels was of course complex in character. For

⁷ See discussion below in the same chapter.

⁸ Matt 28: 19-20.

⁹ Cf. Annemarie C. Mayer, "The Church as Mission in its Very Life," in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 101 Issue 1, April 2012.

¹⁰ Matt 16: 13-16; Mk 8: 29 and Lk 9: 18-20.

¹¹ Jn 1: 41.

some, Jesus was the Son of God,¹² for others he was a king while others said he was just a religious leader or a prophet,¹³ or a magician who also performed miracles and wonders.¹⁴ Still for others, he was one of the sons of Joseph and Mary,¹⁵ a mere human being like anybody else. At the trial, Peter pretended not to have known Jesus because of fear.¹⁶ Regardless of the different views about Jesus, Peter at one point of time made an important declaration that Jesus was the messiah, meaning Christ - a title given to Jesus in early Christianity.¹⁷

Peter's declaration had already been expected, given the fact that Peter was a disciple who walked, talked, ate with and shared in many parts of Jesus' life. Peter had witnessed the power and authority of Jesus in the miracles Jesus performed. The healing and restoration of the sick, the feeding of the multitudes and the raising of the dead were revelations of that power and authority.¹⁸ Peter had witnessed the spirituality of Jesus revealed in his holiness, perfection, righteousness and high standard of moral life. Peter, being a close disciple, had witnessed Jesus' intellectual teachings.¹⁹ With these experiences behind him, Peter knew the uniqueness of Jesus, based on first hand evidence rather than from hear-say evidence.

The 'Great Commission' therefore was a call for every Christian to undertake mission work, whether for 'conversion, re-conversion or the continuous nurturing' of Christian life in a Christian community. This is an ideology equivalent to the process of not only 'planting or establishing the church but also re-planting and maintaining the church.'²⁰

¹² Matt 16: 16.

¹³ Lk 9: 19; John 6: 14.

¹⁴ In the Judaic world, the performances of wonder done by magicians were also believed to be common. See Act. 13: 6ff. Daniel 2: 2ff, Gen. 41: 8ff.

¹⁵ Matt. 13: 55.

¹⁶ Matt 26: 69-75; Mk 14: 66-72; Lk 22: 54- 62; Jn 18: 15- 62.

¹⁷ Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone: Part 1 Chapters 1-15* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002, 2004), 215.

¹⁸ Matt 13. 54.

¹⁹ Matt. 13: 54. If this was the response of the people, Peter's optimism of Jesus who witnessed much more of Jesus' teachings could definitely be greater.

²⁰ Donal Dorr, *Mission in Today's World* (Blackrock, Co Dublin: The Columba Press, 2000), 193.

In the final analysis, the 'Great Commission' and Peter's Declaration' are two fundamental stimuli that influenced Melanesian Christians who responded in their different roles²¹ towards the development of the Church. They were 'sent out'; 'gathered in' and 'lived and worked in solidarity with' Melanesian non-Christians as can be seen in the later reflections.²²

2. Theological Reflection of the roles of Melanesians

i) The Ministry of Melanesian Brotherhood

The ministry of the MBH is reflected through the perspective of 'true religion' and what can be called the three foundational images of Christian mission: proclamation ('sending out'); witness ('gathering in'); solidarity ('walking with').

a) The Ministry of Preaching and Prophecy: Proclamation

As we have seen, the Melanesian Brotherhood was established as a religious community of local brothers whose lives, structures and practices were explicitly oriented towards Christian conversion of other Melanesians through the proclamation of the Gospel. Their emphasis therefore was closely related to the Christian concept of 'true religion' that is centred on the person of Jesus. The whole spectrum of Christian theology is about faith in God manifested in the life and work of Jesus and revealed through the Holy Spirit. Christian life, based on this theological concept, was interpreted by the MBH in relation to the 'Great Commission' that justifies God's call for humanity to continue Jesus' mission through preaching the Gospel.²³

Appropriately, Selwyn's mission approach under the concepts of 'true religion,' 'sound learning' and 'useful industry' have their own areas of responsibility in the development of humanity, yet they were interwoven. However, for Melanesians, 'true religion' was more important than 'sound learning and useful industry.' The Melanesian world was then substantially governed by the culture of religion and spirits. Spiritual life therefore took

²¹ For clarity, the roles referred here are those discussed in Chapters Three to Seven.

²² Cf. Gerard Hall, "Christian Mission Today," in *Compass: A Review of Topical Theology* 41/3 (Spring, 2007): 3-10. Gerard Hall uses the terms: 'sending out'; 'gathering in'; and 'solidarity with'.

²³ Cf. Dorr, *Mission in Today's World*, 189 – 190.

priority over mental and physical well-being²⁴ so that 'God first and all things will be added to you' was the prevailing concept. Others of course do not agree on this.²⁵ This also prompted the MBH to take on the role of converting their brother and sister Melanesians as their priority. The first evangelisation tasks by the MBH under the 'sending out' approach therefore was the ministry of proclamation and prophecy.

The ministry of proclamation was the re-telling of God's story as revealed in the Scriptures. Melanesian experience has revealed that God's story as told in the Scriptures had much impact in their lives. The stories were not only interesting but also meaningful. Many of the biblical stories were replications of their own stories in terms of form. For example, the Biblical Creation story²⁶ found similar concepts within traditional creation stories. The David and Goliath story²⁷ was compatible with Melanesian 'custom stories' of the strong against the weak.²⁸ Likewise, the miracles of Jesus also fit well in the Melanesian context because traditional Melanesians lived in a world of miracles. Anything that was rationally inexplicable was considered a miracle, pointing to god(s), in the same way as the biblical stories point to God.

With the above understanding, the aim was for the MBH to have God revealed in their own Melanesian stories. This was proclamation – converting the God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures to become the Triune God of Melanesia. The gospel was no longer foreign, but became a Melanesian gospel speaking the Melanesian language. In addition to this was the prophetic part of the gospel. This was the voice that echoed the cultural 'dos' and 'don'ts' in Melanesia. The MBH provided this voice and many times with

²⁴ Cf. Dorr, *Mission in Today's World*, 88-89. Dorr states the implementation order of the nine 'Paths' of Pope John Paul II depended on circumstances.

²⁵ Cf. Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 120 who states, "Relatively few of the thousands who came over to Christianity were actually won for Christ by education. The value of education has been basically post-conversion." Cf. Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 93.

²⁶ Gen 1 & 2.

²⁷ 1 Sam 17: 21-29.

²⁸ Sethael Kelly, "The Guadalcanal Giant," in *Custom Stories in the Solomon Islands*, ed. Dick Keevil (Honiara: Solomon Islands Museum Association, 1972), 33-34. Myths about Giants killed by youngsters are common in many parts of Melanesians.

excruciating difficulties especially regarding the 'do not's' that were poles apart from the ethic of the gospel.²⁹

b) The ministry of Worship and Prayer: Witness

The second ministry that was appropriately undertaken by the MBH under the 'gathering in'/witness approach gave emphasis to community life, worship and prayer. The emphasis here is on the witness of the believing community: daily worship and prayer, the Eucharist and other forms of liturgy based on the Common Prayer Book. When the MBH were 'sent out', one of the most important ministries that they were to undertake was worship and prayer. This was important for two reasons.

Firstly, prayer was a source of power for the whole mission. This power was the *mana* which Melanesians highly believed that the MBH possessed. *Mana* was not a hypothesis or paradox but real for traditional and Christian Melanesians. For this reason, Melanesian non-Christians demanded miracles almost in the same way as saying: "Heal me, then I will become a Catholic."³⁰ This could be termed as the '*mana* cult' almost in the same manner as the 'cargo cult.' This is based on 'reciprocity' one of the most important Melanesian cultural practices. The acceptance of European culture or religion was based on the belief that they too would become like Europeans with material possessions. Subsequently, many Melanesians claimed to have witnessed *mana* being translated into action by the church, especially by the MBH, whether in terms of blessing or curse. In many circumstances, non-Christians came to believe that the Christian God was more powerful than their own gods and, on this basis, were lured into Christianity.

Having said this, the concept of *mana* is closely associated with the life of worship and prayer and is therefore deeply Christological. Even though the Scriptures do not provide us information about Jesus' prayer timetable, we

²⁹ Denton Lotz, "Paradigm Shift in Missiology," in *Evangelical Review of Theology* Vol. 32, Issue 1 (Jan. 2008): 18ff. Lotz demonstrates that accommodation, indigenization and contextualisation – all elements of a contextual theology – are integral to contemporary missiology.

³⁰ Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 78.

know that Jesus was a man of prayer. He prayed for long hours,³¹ and he prayed until sweat became like blood flowing from his body.³² Likewise, members of the MBH imitated Jesus, by dedicating much of their time in praying. Its strength depended much on its spiritual life, deeply rooted in God and nurtured by the daily Eucharist, prayers, meditations, reading and studying of Scriptures and adhering to the doctrines of the church. As an ideal, nothing came before God. From a Melanesian perspective, the *mana* that was possessed by the MBH therefore came from Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The second reason for the ministry of worship and prayer was the 'gathering in' of the people. Worship and prayer was always a communal activity so that MBH became the focus of unity and solidarity - religiously, socially and culturally. Words, songs, rituals and gestures, congregationally done, further enhanced this. The incorporation of some of the Melanesian cultural and traditional values with Christian values also created a strong bond of unity.³³ Ennio Mantovani states:

Rituals reveal the values of the people, the true concerns of the people. They communicate the worldviews of the people. To disregard traditional rituals is to condemn oneself to be ignorant of traditional religion and value systems. Words can deceive but rituals, if properly understood, reveals the truth about a people's deep feelings, beliefs and values.³⁴

c) Contextualisation: Solidarity

In the same way as the gospel, worship and prayer were also contextualised. This helped Melanesians experience and understand Christian worship and spirituality as expressions of the Melanesian soul. Hence, it also led the newly converted to full participation, giving them a sense of unity and identity with the mission. This could have been difficult to achieve had it not been for the

³¹ Mk 14: 32-42.

³² Lk 22: 44.

³³ Evidenced by the indigenisation of worship, prayers by incorporating cultural rituals/dances into the Christian worship. Hymns and versicles were also incorporated into cultural tunes and harmonies.

³⁴ Ennio Mantovani, "Ritual in Melanesia," in *Point: An Introduction to Melanesian Religion: A Handbook for Church Workers*, Series No.6, ed. Ennio Mantovani (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1984), 169-170. Mantovani may not explicitly relate this view with Christianity, however his view is equally applicable to Melanesian Christian spirituality.

MBH's ability to 'walk with' their Melanesian brothers and sisters, establishing relationships of trust and tolerance.

Contextualizing Christianity in Melanesia means that Jesus becomes a Melanesian Jesus. This can be achieved only when proclamation and witness are complemented by a relationship of mutuality or solidarity leading to a deep dialogue between Christian and Melanesian values. This can be seen in the manner that the MBH engaged with their fellow Melanesians in regard to the interpretation of miracles. Regardless of the absence of miracles, many Melanesians were attracted to the Christian way on account of the quality of communal life fostered/embedded in worship and prayer – and the relationship of trust established between the MBH and ordinary Melanesians. Of course there were Melanesians who remained unconverted because they saw no justification and meaning in becoming Christians. However, there were conversions even if it meant Christo-paganism resulting from syncretism. Some believe Christo-paganism to be the root of nominal Christianity in Melanesia.³⁵ While for some, there developed a new product seen as Melanesian Christianity in reality.³⁶ The lack of miracles was thus not a hindrance to many Melanesians becoming Christians because they were able to find many points of convergence between the Christian Gospel and Melanesian values.

In summary, the 'sending out,' 'gathering in' and 'walking with' approaches enabled the MBH to translate the *mana* into Christian forms of ministry, worship and works. It brought Melanesians of different ethnicities together and transformed their differences into a uniting mechanism for the execution of the gospel. The MBH spirituality therefore can be trusted as a reflection of Melanesian Christian Spirituality bringing the sense of identity and belonging in

³⁵ This is a debatable subject especially when we only look at the incorporation of some traditional cultures with Christian cultures as syncretistic rather than contextual. Cf. the concept of Christo-paganism rooted in neo-pagan syncretism. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 350. Also Nigel Kelaepa "Contextualisation: A Paradigm Shift towards addressing Christian Nominalism." Bachelor's Thesis, Bishop Patteson Theological College, 2009. 32-33.

³⁶ This is where many Melanesians fit in.

Melanesia.³⁷ The Church in this sense then became Melanesian in form, attracting new converts and strengthening the faith of those who had already become members. In this way, the MBH contributed to the growth of the church in Melanesia, both numerically and spiritually.³⁸ The 1929 Melanesian Mission Report states:

The whole movement [MBH] is remarkable as an evident growth of the Mission work and a leading of the Holy Spirit towards a following of the Divine method as typified by the first sending forth of evangelists by our Lord.³⁹

ii) Contextualization and Solidarity through Social Services: Sound learning

The approach of solidarity can also be recognised in relation to the ministry of social work and service. For the sake of brevity, we will concentrate on just three social service areas: education, healthcare and charity. Historically and missiologically, education and healthcare had always been part of the Christian ministry. Donald Dorr refers to them as two of the effective 'vehicles of evangelisation'⁴⁰ because of their direct and indirect influences on the lives of the people. Hence, both have their foundation in the life and ministry of Jesus who was an educator, healer and charity worker. This was a ministry of serving others, reflecting God's service to humanity. The roles of Melanesians therefore were in continuity with Jesus' ministry passed down to the apostles and the faithful throughout history.

a) Education in general: Jesus' perspective

In normal circumstances, education is perceived as the passing on of knowledge from one person to another. Today there are many ways of doing this and with the technology available much had been achieved. However, in the Melanesian context in the period this research has covered as

³⁷ See Carter, "Transforming Missionaries," 336ff. There were various common elements that were Melanesian in culture and practice that, helped the spirit of nationalism. See also Macdonald-Milne, *The True Way of Service*, 156. Brian quotes Charles E. Fox. See also Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 51 who shared the same view.

³⁸ See the same chapter, note 171. See also Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 44-45, 50-53.

³⁹ *The Southern Cross Log: Melanesian Mission Annual Report Number*, New Series No. 27, Auckland: Melanesian Mission, Oct. 1929, 21.

⁴⁰ Dorr, *Mission in Today's World*, 226ff. Cf. Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals," 93ff states "Selwyn's concept obviously depended on Education," the "sound learning" essential for sound religion." This relates to the process of 'educating, converting then sending.'

discussed in Chapter Four, education was mainly centred on literature that involved schools. This was regarded as formal education - involving the interaction between teachers, students and books.

The Scriptures inform us that Jesus was a teacher but was more of a moral teacher than an academic. Consequently, this poses two different opinions surrounding the educational status of Jesus – an educated and an uneducated Jesus. Paul Foster's statement implies this:

Many reconstructions of the life of the historical Jesus have tended to portray him as being born into illiterate peasant stock. By so doing, significant statements in the Gospels, both canonical and non-canonical, are ignored.⁴¹

A. Milliard shared almost the same view:

The literacy situation in Jewish society differed from that in Graeco-Roman society in a notable way because there was a strong tradition of education in order that men, at least, should be prepared to read from the Scriptures in synagogue services.⁴²

In the pages of the Scriptures, Jesus was not an academic but he was a man of wisdom in accord with his divine nature.⁴³ This justified the scriptural evidences of Jesus' sophisticated and philosophical teachings and sayings.⁴⁴

Another appropriate view of Jesus' education was by Dido who mentions:

. . . a threefold aspect of Jesus' education: the home, the synagogue, and the workshop. 'In the house he received the counsels of his father and mother; in the synagogue he learned to read the Torah; in the workshop he learned a trade.'⁴⁵

⁴¹ See Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus: The search for a plausible context," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* Vol. 4 Issue 1 (2006): 7-33,

<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/ehost/delivery?sid=a7dceb42-06d3-46> (accessed August 4, 2012).

In view of this in the same article, Foster brought out opinions of contrast between scholars like D.F. Strauss who was optimistic and J.D Crossan who did not share this view.

⁴² Foster, "Educating Jesus," 12.

⁴³ Foster, "Educating Jesus," 8-9. See also ⁴³ Karen Jo Torjesen, "You are the Christ: Five Portraits of Jesus from the Early Church," in *Jesus at 2000*, ed. Marcus J. Borg (Boulder, USA and Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1998), 81ff.

⁴⁴ Jesus was ac person with an exceptional intelligence arousing curiosity and amazement as he has no formal education.

⁴⁵ Foster, "Educating Jesus," 8.

Dido's statement above, exegetically expresses the opinion that Jesus did lack formal education but was educated in other ways. Crossan was aware that 95% to 97% of the Jewish population were illiterate,⁴⁶ and Jesus at the same time had no formal education, but he did not believe that Jesus was illiterate. In Luke 4:16-21 Jesus took the scroll and read. Hence, Crossan believed that the use of metaphors, imageries and aphorism intelligently presented Jesus as an 'orally brilliant' person.⁴⁷ In addition, the debates Jesus had with the scribes and the Pharisees leaves no room to doubt his sophisticated knowledge and wisdom. "Where then did this man gets all this" ⁴⁸ is not only a question that raises speculations regarding Jesus' intellectual source but exegetically confirms that Jesus was highly intellectual.

The above briefly discusses the ongoing debate regarding Jesus' educational background. In the final analysis, Jesus was literate even if there are no explicit information about his education. The fact that he was not a student in a formal educational institution does not rule out his exceptional knowledge. Jesus had been a recipient of that knowledge in an educational method not known to humanity. Christianity refers to this as from God. In receiving this knowledge Jesus reached out in ministry.

However, for Melanesians, formal knowledge came through formal education though as Christians the divine intervention could not be ruled out altogether as in the case of Jesus. Historically, however, when Melanesians received education they simultaneously received the gospel. To be formally educated made it easier to be converted. In other words, the school environments have been one of the healthiest avenues for the breeding and nurturing Christian life theoretically and practically. Students were able to read and write making communication of the gospel easier for the teachers. This is the gospel that brings about spiritual, physical and mental well-being to the full. Through education, students sought the gospel whilst teachers conveyed it.

⁴⁶ Foster, "Educating Jesus" 10 &12.

⁴⁷ John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus and the Kingdom: Itinerants and Householders in Earliest Christianity," in *Jesus at 2000*, ed. Marcus J. Borg (Boulder, USA and Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1998), 52.

⁴⁸ Matt 13: 54.

b) Literacy as a basis of evangelisation and teaching

Jesus was a moral teacher. M. Ebner called Jesus a wisdom-teacher, as shown by the forms of his teaching conducive to the Galilean peasant culture.⁴⁹ This is a theory that did not support Jesus as being literarily educated. Dido's term, Jesus as being a 'wisdom-teacher', however implies that there is a contrast between being 'wise' and being 'academic.' There seems to be an understanding that his 'wisdom was a result of divine provision' whilst 'academic knowledge was a human provision.' Hence, it was wisdom that enabled the vibrant ministry of Jesus and influenced crowds. Even if Jesus was not an academic, his spiritual literacy overshadowed his lesser academic status.⁵⁰

Other scholars, including Karen Jo Torjesen, refer to Jesus as "Divine Wisdom" (Sophia) because he was the Logos incarnate.⁵¹ This is a subject of its own but the bottom line is that Jesus, for Christians, was God. In view of this, Jesus' intellectual knowledge would be beyond human reach. It is the embodiment of knowledge in existence in time and outside of time, in creation and outside creation. Paul's theology points to the fact that "Divine Wisdom that affirms God being the source of knowledge and wisdom, kept hidden from the powers that rule the visible cosmos."⁵² Paul also said: "For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. . ."⁵³

"Go and learn what this means"⁵⁴ "Have you never read the Scriptures?"⁵⁵ "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry..."⁵⁶ Jesus may seem sarcastic in these circumstances but they again reveal Jesus' superior knowledge over those who in his society thought

⁴⁹ See Foster, "Educating Jesus: The search for a plausible context," 9-10.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gal 1: 11-12. "...the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For Paul such knowledge was superior than human knowledge.

⁵¹ Torjesen, "You are the Christ: Five Portraits of Jesus from the Early Church," 74ff. This is a concept based in John 1: 1ff.

⁵² Torjesen, "You are the Christ: Five Portraits of Jesus from the Early Church," 77. Cf. Isa 40: 13-14, Pro 8: 22-31 and Job 38: 2-39.

⁵³ 1Cor 1: 25.

⁵⁴ Matt 9: 13.

⁵⁵ Matt 21: 42.

⁵⁶ Matt 12: 3.

otherwise. For Christians, Jesus was all-knowing, not because he attended formal academic schools or colleges, but because he was divine.

With a little literacy supported by his wisdom, Jesus was highly esteemed by many including his foes. Jesus dialogued, argued and challenged the professionals who held positions of power in his world. Geza Vermes states:

. . . the evangelists so often depict Jesus involved in scholarly controversy and exegetical debates with Pharisees, Sadducees and Lawyers, should we not assume that he too belonged to the intellectual elite, and as he always wins argument, that he was more learned and possessed greater expertise than his opponents.⁵⁷

Foster quotes from Meier:

. . . Jesus' own preoccupation with the Jewish religion, and the debates over Scriptures that Jesus held with professional scribes and pious Pharisees during his ministry all make his ability to read the sacred text a more likely hypothesis.⁵⁸

Jesus was a man not only unique but ahead of his contemporaries, an implication that Jesus was educated and knowledgeable. Alternatively, if Jesus was not educated, he would have been a victim of ignorance and thus would have been condemned and immaturely prosecuted. In such circumstances, Christianity as a post-resurrection religion would probably be uncertain of survival. In other words, Christianity is religion based on belief and faith in the resurrection of Jesus.

Taking these viewpoints into account, the world of Jesus was far different in many ways from Melanesia. With the very limited and basic educational resources available, most Melanesians remained illiterate.⁵⁹ However, what qualified them to become teachers was the call and affirmation of the "Great Commission" and the declaration of "Jesus as the messiah." This is not

⁵⁷ Geza Vermes, *Jesus in His Jewish Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 27. See also on the same page of Bultmann's view expressing the same sentiment. The Sadducees were wealthy and powerful consisting of chief priests and high priests with political influence. They held seventy seats of the Sanhedrin ruling party. The Pharisees were temple officials and who were well versed in the Laws – the bedrock of Israel's religion. See Matt 9: 14; 15: 1-9; Mk 7: 1-23; Lk 11: 42.

⁵⁸ Foster, "Educating Jesus: The search for a plausible context," 13. See also J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1.

⁵⁹ Illiteracy or little education remains critical obstacles in Melanesia today.

to say that, to be an effective instrument of the gospel, one has to be less educated. Of course, to be well educated would be creditable but to be less educated would not be to any lesser extent effective. All that was needed by the less educated was to listen, obey and love the call of God. The Great Commission and Peter's declaration is therefore a call of discipleship that many Melanesians both clergy and the laity effectively carried. In particular the mission of the MBH travelling from one place to another converting people for Christ.

In the matter above, the Great Commission was a call of God for Melanesians to follow God's purpose. It was not a call for a lonesome mission, nor was it a mission in isolation from the Trinity. As part of the commission, Jesus made a solemn promise to the disciples: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."⁶⁰ This was a promise affirming 'Emmanuel' – 'God is with us.'⁶¹ At the same time, it was a call for partnership between the Trinity and Melanesian Christians. This is a partnership presenting a community that is sacramental in nature – witnessed by the life of virtues that are believed to be the fruit of the spirit.⁶² In other words, it is a community in which the disciples were visible witnesses of Christ and empowered by the invisible grace of God who is Trinity.

c) Literacy: The way of knowing the gospel

Hilary Janks states a few important views of Paulo Freire. Literacy is the disciplined art of 'knowing' through the process of reading and writing in a profound language. Words help to interpret the world and the minds of others. Literacy is a powerful tool that breaks "the 'culture of silence' of the poor and deposed"⁶³ in order to bring about changes. After all, history reveals that literacy has been an agent that has contributed to the concepts of the Enlightenment. In the same way, literacy has been an important agent of the gospel from the very beginning of Christianity. Luke the evangelist indirectly points to this as a purpose for his writing:

⁶⁰ Jn 20: 21.

⁶¹ See Matt 1: 23.

⁶² Cf. Matt 7: 16 - 20.

⁶³ Hilary Janks, *Literacy and Power* (New York and London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2010), 13ff.

I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.⁶⁴

Accordingly, the gospel is Jesus Christ – the Son of God who came for the salvation of humanity so that humans can become members of the Kingdom of God. The truth that lies behind the gospel is that the way to salvation into the Kingdom of God is only through Jesus Christ. In other words, in the writings of the gospel, one could read of the life, ministry, death and resurrection – the only true way to the Kingdom of God.

Similarly, in view of the canonical writings, one of St. Paul's methods of teaching, instructing and even reprimanding the early church communities was through his writing.⁶⁵ St. Paul even then instructed them to read his letters aloud to the people.⁶⁶ Generally, St. Paul's letters point to the importance of a Christian life expected in a Christian Church. Paul emphasises the subjects pertaining to the Church Orders, covering the codes of conduct of the members and church leaders. These were meant as guidelines to uphold standards of morality⁶⁷ to be in line with the Christian faith. The life of constant prayer, worship, the Holy Eucharist and the reading and studying of the gospel were part of the code.

Evidently, St. Paul also pointed to the need for mutual relationships that would encourage mutual support, responsibility and care for one another. Socially, these were guidelines believed to breed virtues that would uphold respect and consideration for others. St. Paul believed that the solidarity of communities depended very much on right relationships. Much of this information was communicated to the early Christian communities through literature.

In hindsight, the introduction of schools in Melanesia by the missionaries was therefore geared towards educating Melanesians. The blending of literacy

⁶⁴ Luke 1: 3-4.

⁶⁵ See the Canonical Writings for which Paul's writings make up at least 14 Books of the New Testament - a considerable portion of the Scriptures. Some however are subject to debate.

⁶⁶ 1Thes 5: 27.

⁶⁷ 1Thess 4: 1-8; 1Cor 5: 1-13. These are only examples - there are of course other Scriptural references.

and oral traditions fashioned Melanesians into becoming knowledgeable, with confidence and effective in the Christian mission outreach. In the same way as the gospel, the conducting of prayer, worship and the Eucharist was through the reading of the Prayer Book. The Anglican Church, as the 'Church of the Book,' justifiably reflects this hypothesis.

Comparatively, Melanesians had little literary knowledge yet they understood themselves to be called by God to evangelise their own people. Their little literacy knowledge was no hindrance to the call. Melanesians were empowered with authority through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus words: "But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything. . ." ⁶⁸ After all, every sphere of mission belongs to God. Melanesians were merely carrying out the mission on behalf of Jesus who is God and who said: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ⁶⁹ Melanesians in their own context have proved this in that the growth of the church has gained steady momentum from the 1920s. ⁷⁰

Conclusively, literature is all about the knowledge of writing and reading – an art commonly resulting from education institutions such as schools, colleges or universities. The other spectrum discussed is about the knowledge of literature incorporated with divine wisdom as experienced in the mission institutions. Many positive experiences for the promotion of a quality life were achieved under these circumstances. ⁷¹

Subsequently, literacy is the life-blood of the church because it is a powerful tool of communication. The dissemination of information regarding instructions and advice to the churches and people was achieved through newspapers,

⁶⁸ John 14: 26.

⁶⁹ John 20: 21.

⁷⁰ This is an era where the mission was tangibly established in Melanesia and involved Melanesians more in the affairs of the mission as evidenced in the previous chapters.

⁷¹ This is the general view throughout Chapter Four. Cf. Paul Collins, *Between the Rock and a Hard Place: Being Catholic Today* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2004), 74ff. As example, Collins mentions in the context of the Catholic Church the sense of belonging in a community, a deeper spirituality that led to a firm belief in God through consistent prayer life and Scriptural Studies.

magazines and letters.⁷² God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit wrapped in the gospel are communicated to humankind through literature. To be without literacy in today's world is to be without communication, often leading to ignorance. Many undesired effects on lives, whether personal or communal, can be caused by the lack of literacy. In Melanesia, suspicion, enmity, distrust and other traditional barriers were partly syndromes of an illiterate community.⁷³ The fact that the church is a community of people therefore makes literacy indispensable.⁷⁴

iii) Contextualization and Solidarity through Social Services: Healing Ministry

The healing ministry has always been an important part of the Christian mission as an alleviative response to pain and suffering. Healing and pain are therefore inseparable. The experience of pain and suffering could be physical, spiritual or mental but these are often inter-related and naturally interconnected. Initially Selwyn indirectly confirmed this when he wished Melanesians "to come sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed in their right mind. . ."⁷⁵ This is a missiological call equally demanding faith with works as stated by St. James.⁷⁶

The healing ministry in the church in Melanesia recognises and offers three strands of healing services: the medical and health services provided by doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics; the healing rite of the church performed by the clergy or lay workers and the traditional healing performed by traditional healers.⁷⁷ Whilst the first two are generally acceptable, the

⁷² See example of letters and information by bishops and those in authority to clergy or people variously mentioned within the thesis. This is common in very organisation. Cf. Russel Shaw, *Nothing to Hide: Secrecy, Communication and Communion in the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 76-77.

⁷³ Cf. Jon Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Customs: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomons* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 121. Fraenkel quotes John Roughan, *Pacific News Bulletin* 2001, who states that those involved in the Solomon Islands ethnic war were people with less formal education.

⁷⁴ Cf. Russel Shaw, *Nothing to Hide: Secrecy, Communication and Communion in the Catholic Church*, 76.

⁷⁵ See Chapter Two note 121 and 122 for the exegetical interpretation. See also Chapter Five for an equivalent.

⁷⁶ Jas 2:14ff. This is about 'justification by faith and works.'

⁷⁷ Some discussion have been made earlier in Chapter Five.

authenticity of traditional healing is often under question, especially by non-Melanesians.⁷⁸

a) Healing as God's expression of Love, mercy and compassion

Healing as a means of conversion in Melanesia is understood as an expression of God's love, mercy and compassion. In the Old Testament, God's love, mercy and compassion were revealed through the healing activities of the prophets.⁷⁹ Above all, God's love, mercy and compassion were fully and completely manifested in Jesus. Jesus did not only teach but practiced healing.⁸⁰ He then commanded the church to do the same in the power of the Holy Spirit. The healing ministry therefore has its origin in Jesus, who is the head of the church. For this reason, Melanesians see the three strands of healing mentioned above as evidence of God's providence.

Hugh Laracy has expressed the view of the Catholic environment in Melanesia that the mission stations were "safe havens from malevolent spirits."⁸¹ This conviction developed because of the Melanesian traditional hypothesis that all kinds of sickness were caused by spirits. Related to this was the silent voice, "cure me and I will become a Catholic."⁸² However, this was not only a Catholic experience, but was a representative experience of the wider story of Christian healing in Melanesia. Healing therefore became a powerful bait for conversion⁸³ in the early years of the mission, regardless of the healing strategy.

In the early stage of the mission, medical healing through medicines was seen as spiritual intervention in the same way as seen in the healing ministry of the church through prayers and the use of oil or water.⁸⁴ The same outlook again

⁷⁸ See Church of Melanesia Liturgy, Worship and Doctrine, *Blessings for the Priest's Manual* (Honiara: Church of Melanesia Commission on, 2007), 31. The *Manual* provides a form of words for priests to bless herbal medicines.

⁷⁹ As examples are the healing of Miriam (Num 12), bites of poisonous snakes (Num 21), the Shunammite woman's son restored by Elisha (2Kg 4)

⁸⁰ Matt Chapters 8 and 9 are all about Jesus' healing miracles except the stilling of the storm.

⁸¹ Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 78.

⁸² Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians*, 78.

⁸³ Dorr, *Mission in Today's World*, 226ff. See also introduction to this chapter.

⁸⁴ Oil and water are two elements commonly used in the healing service of the church. See Dorr, *Mission in Today's World*, 87.

is applicable to the traditional healing through herbs and other natural products. Given that this was the view of that time, Melanesians cared less what healing process was used; after all, they were all God-given gifts. Today this has changed slightly yet it is still an important Melanesian conviction that the whole spectrum of healing stems from God. As an example, the "Thanksgiving Service after sickness"⁸⁵ is a popular rite of the church used by many who have recovered from illness, even if the church had no direct part in the healing process.

Whilst the healing ministry itself is seen as an expression of God's love and compassion, it can also be seen as a facet of the gospel. The love of God is the gospel revealed in Jesus who did not only preach but lived by love, mercy and compassion. The gospel was Jesus who with love, mercy and compassion healed and liberated those who were afflicted by ill-health, both physical and spiritual. This was itself the gospel. Comparatively, Melanesians who participated in the healing ministry, whether through medical science or a healing rite of the church or through traditional healing, were therefore not only instruments of the gospel; they were the gospel. They were the expression of God's love, mercy and compassion manifested in Jesus who came and restored the broken in body, spirit and mind.

Returning again to the statement, "cure me and I will become a Catholic," this attitude may to some extent have contributed to the evangelisation process. However, the fact that there were also people who were not cured would simultaneously undermine such a claim. Nevertheless, this was not so, conversion continued to take place even in circumstances when people did not recover. One of the missiological experiences that confirmed this view was the recognition that the concept of healing as an expression of God's love, mercy and compassion was not only seen through the process of being healed, but equally in the process of dying. Both living and dying belong to God, embraced by the hope and faith in the resurrection.⁸⁶ This is an

⁸⁵ This is not in the Priest's manual, the prayer and collects are taken from different compilations depending on the clergy's wish.

⁸⁶ This is a theological outlook based on the resurrection manifested in Jesus.

important theological understanding of the healing ministry of the church in terms of life and death. Such was also compatible with the Melanesian worldview so that it significantly contributed in the conversion process. For both traditions, death was merely moving from one state of life to another.⁸⁷

b) Health and Medical Services: A Healing Ministry of the Church

Not every need was common to everyone. For example, not everyone received direct benefit from the schools or mission employments. Not everyone was a member of one particular mission or church nor was everyone Christian. However, without the slightest doubt, everyone was affected by sickness in one way or another so that everyone at some point of their lives, required healing. Healing was and is a common denominator regardless of status, ethnicity, language, customs or religion. Healing was therefore a liberator.

If Jesus is the healing model as the gospels reveal and as mentioned earlier, then the church's healing ministry can be seen in two ways.⁸⁸ Firstly, the accounts of the healing narratives of Jesus in the gospels are miraculous in nature. This faith healing has many times raised controversy undermining its credibility today. However, this does not mean that it no longer occurs. In Melanesia, though it is not extensively discussed in Chapter Five, it was a significant aspect in the healing ministry of the church.⁸⁹ The acceptance of this by Melanesians was not a problem because this fitted well in the Melanesian socio-cultural and socio-religious framework.

The second view concerns the health and medical services provided by doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics. How does this fit into the gospel if it is going to be based in Jesus? Jesus, of course, was not a medical doctor and there is no direct scriptural evidence that there were hospitals or clinics. If this was so, then how do we justify the health and medical services as being part

⁸⁷ There were designated places in Melanesia believed people would go when they die. This relates to the concept of ancestral spirits common in Melanesia. See Codrington, *The Melanesians*, 146ff.

⁸⁸ In Melanesia, traditional healing is the third approach which is believed to be part of God's gift.

⁸⁹ In Melanesia, the concept of *mana* as examined in chapter three is a related form of faith in the healing ministry.

of the church's healing ministry? How can Jesus be recognised in the services rendered by doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics?

Firstly, just because there is no direct scriptural evidence about hospitals, medicines and doctors and nurses does not mean that there is no room for them in the gospel. The parable of the Good Samaritan⁹⁰ implies that there was some kind of medical attention given to the wounded victim. The victim was treated with oil and wine and his wound bandaged. Oil and wine of course do have some chemical properties that are medically useful.⁹¹ The victim was then taken to an innkeeper who continued the service. This was a service closely related to medical/hospital care rather than the usual miraculous healing of Jesus. Jesus also said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."⁹² Physician in its right sense was understood to refer to a medical doctor and not to a miracle worker. Jesus would not have used the term 'physician' if it was not in existence. In many of Jesus' teachings, he used common analogies and allegorical examples in conveying messages. The same could also have applied to this situation. Exegesis of these narratives leaves little room for any negative opinion regarding the health and medical service's eligibility as part of the Church's healing ministry.⁹³

Secondly, some of Jesus' healing practices showed themselves to be sacramental in nature. The gospel according John, narrates the healing of a blind man by Jesus. Jesus "spat on the ground and made some mud with the saliva and spread this on the man's eye" and then sent him to the pool of Siloam to be washed.⁹⁴ Saliva, ground and water were used in this healing yet this healing is considered as a miracle, because the three elements were believed to be scientifically useless for the healing process. However, this is

⁹⁰ Lk 10: 33-34. Cf. Ja 5: 14.

⁹¹ It requires scientific testing to prove these claims that this thesis is unable to do. Common human experience however can tell us so.

⁹² Matt 9: 12. This was said in a different context, but the fact he said it connotes the knowledge about physician as doctors. See also Mk 5:26 that refer to physicians who failed to heal a woman suffering from haemorrhages and Col 4:14 that refers to Luke as the dear physician.

⁹³ There are debates related to this where the paradigm of the healing ministry of the church today is based on Ja 5 rather than on the type of healing presented through the activity of Jesus.

⁹⁴ Jn 9: 6ff.

also a representative story symbolising healing as God's grace resulting in faith through works. Relatively, Melanesians through the centuries have been using herbs, roots, fruits, animals for healing. Melanesians regarded these elements as instruments of the spirits or super beings. The scientific understanding of the herbs, roots and fruits as medicines was still beyond the knowledge of Melanesians.

Thirdly, there is the general theological concept that 'everything corresponding to goodness' is God-orientated. At the end of the day, every good done is for the glory of God. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."⁹⁵ St. Paul also said, the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.⁹⁶ In view of this, there is no difficulty in accommodating the service of doctors and nurses in the hospitals and clinics. In practice, these services are merely demonstrating the love, kindness and generosity of God, manifested in Jesus and flowing through the Holy Spirit operating in those acting in good will.

More persuasive still, the healing services provided by the health and the medical facilities were even more effective than the Melanesian's own traditional methods. Comparatively, the new God of the new healing services was therefore more powerful than their own god(s). Melanesians could now understand why the daily worship and prayers in the wards were part of the hospital routine.⁹⁷ They could now relate to the work of Christian doctors and nurses in the same way as to their traditional healers, only that the Christian doctors and the nurses with their drugs were more effective.

The Melanesian interpretation was that Jesus heals. This was the good news so that those who recovered in response further spread the good news that Jesus heals. Consequently, Melanesians became evangelists proclaiming and witnessing for the Christian God.⁹⁸ This pattern was also an experience of

⁹⁵ Matt 5: 16.

⁹⁶ Gal 5: 22.

⁹⁷ Refer to section on 'Nurses in hospitals and mission stations' in Chapter Five.

⁹⁸ A classical example is the story of the converted Soga, a chief in Bugotu, Santa Isabel. See Chapter Five.

Christian evangelisation in the New Testament. Those who healed went out proclaiming Christ even when they were strictly not to tell anyone.⁹⁹ Healing occurred from whatever methodology used – whether by miracle through the church or by medical therapies, this was a source of faith for Melanesians. Healing therefore was obviously sacramental for Melanesians in which God's invisible grace was experienced. Melanesians came to understand this through their own traditional understanding of healing. This was an example of a sacramental inculturation of the gospel.

iv) Human Resource Development through 'Useful Industry'

This section reflects on the subject of the mission regarding human resources development. It connects to the early historical mission's ethos of 'useful industry' that was expounded, thus becoming a major feature of mission development from the 1930s in Taroniara. This reveals the theological and missiological meaning of human resources in relation with the gospel. However, our reflection will be limited to certain subjects.

a) *The historical Jesus and the concept of work*

The historical Jesus according to the Scripture has never been detached from the world and from humanity, both in his life and his teaching,¹⁰⁰ let alone his transcendent role as the Creator.¹⁰¹ At twelve Jesus was an assistant carpenter, a tradesperson. Apart from this, there is no scriptural evidence of other trades he might have undertaken in his lifetime in the world. However, there were other different trades in and outside the Mediterranean world. A prayer for daily work by John W. Stott summarises this well.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at the carpenter's bench didst manifest the dignity of honest labour, and dost give to each of us our tasks to perform, help us to do our weekday work with readiness of mind and singleness of heart, not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as thy servants, labouring heartily as unto

⁹⁹ See the story of the leper in Mtt 8: 2- 4 and the blind beggar in Jn 9.

¹⁰⁰ His daily interaction with people, either confrontationally or not, and with the natural environment supports this theory.

¹⁰¹ See Jn 1: 1-3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."

thee and not unto men, so that whatever we do, great or small, may be to the glory of thy holy name.¹⁰²

Jesus' teachings provide numerous references to different types of work. The parable of the "Prodigal Son"¹⁰³ illustrates that the sons were workers in the fields. Their livelihood depended on the work they did on the farm. Likewise, Jesus refers to himself as the "Good Shepherd"¹⁰⁴ who cares for the sheep. The parable of workers in the vineyard¹⁰⁵ illustrates the different hourly work by different workers who were yet paid equal wages. The parable of the house built on the rock and sand by the wise man and the foolish man respectively illustrates the building trade.¹⁰⁶ These are example of the nature of work implied in this section.

Also surrounding Jesus in his ministry were men and women such as Peter the fisherman and Matthew who was an office worker.¹⁰⁷ Mary Magdalene out of whom seven demons had been cast and her sister Martha were hospitality providers. Records also show women such as Salome, Joanna, Susanna and others not mentioned by name that provided companionship and resources for Jesus.¹⁰⁸ The provision of the two fish and five loaves of bread by the little boy was a contribution towards Jesus' ministry. Besides these, Judas Iscariot was the treasurer of the group,¹⁰⁹ an indication that Jesus' ministry was also supported by funds contributed by members.¹¹⁰ This illustrates that Jesus' ministry was not only divine but also materially supported. It was a result of work and labour. Correspondingly, the Church would not miraculously survive through prayer alone but equally required practical work. This substantiates the teaching of James: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you

¹⁰² See *The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer* (London: SPCK, 1995), 325. The prayer has been written by John W. Stott,

¹⁰³ Lk 15: 12

¹⁰⁴ Jn 10: 7-16.

¹⁰⁵ Matt 20: 1-13.

¹⁰⁶ Matt 7: 26

¹⁰⁷ Peter and Andrew were fishermen and Matthew a tax collector, examples of men working with Jesus.

¹⁰⁸ Matt. 27: 55-56, Mk 15: 40-41; Lk 8: 3; 10: 38-42; Jn 11: 2. Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *Jesus and the Gospel Women* (London: SPCK, 2009), xiv.

¹⁰⁹ Jn 12: 6; 13: 29.

¹¹⁰ Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *Jesus and the Gospel Women*, (London: SPCK, 2009), 133ff.

have faith but do not have works? . . . So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."¹¹¹

The above analysis informs us that the concept of work was an important ingredient in the mission work.¹¹² Jesus' early life was supported by carpentry work done by his earthly father, Joseph. He was later a helper in the workshop. The parables are examples of analogical narratives Jesus used in his teaching to transmit the gospel as related to different aspects of life. However, these parables were stories of real practical events associated with human survival. They were events that also can be interpreted as revealing a theology of the 'work and labour.'¹¹³ Finally, even in the absence of explicit and extensive scriptural evidence of Jesus being a tradesperson, there is still ample evidence of people supporting his ministry through their resources. These resources were the result of labour by men and women.

b) Lay Co-workers in different vocations

"My Father is still working, and I also am working."¹¹⁴ Jesus said this when confronted by the Jews for curing a man, who was sick for thirty-eight years, on the Sabbath. The issue here was that Jesus justified the work done on the Sabbath, which was religiously illegal. More important still, this was a representative statement applicable to work or labour of any nature. Based on this statement, God who created, continues to create. St. Paul reflects this well when he said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one that plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."¹¹⁵ The work of creation is thus an unceasing function begun and sustained by God and co-opted by humankind. In this regard, the world is a sacramental entity representing the Kingdom of God that continues to demand re-creation. Humankind created in God's own image is therefore not a senseless dogma but substantiates the many purposes for human

¹¹¹ Jas 2: 17. Though James may not necessarily refer to 'works of hand,' the implication could still refer to transmitting theory/concept into reality.

¹¹² Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen*, 33.

¹¹³ Note that there are of course other theological interpretations expressed in these narratives.

¹¹⁴ Jn 5: 17.

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor 3: 6ff. Paul went on to say that with God's grace we are capable builders who must build on the foundation that Jesus Christ laid.

existence in which re-creation is embedded. The work of re-creation therefore must be good as God's own work is good.¹¹⁶ The benchmark is established by the fruit they bear.¹¹⁷

In 1 Corinthians: 12, St. Paul uses the body as a metaphor for the different gifts. These were spiritual gifts, all God-given to be used for a common good. St. Paul says that everybody is different in terms of gifts. There are apostles, teachers, prophets, discerners, and healers, none of whom can function independently. God gives different kinds of gifts to be utilised in a corporative manner for the well-being of a community. Paul then further developed this view using the analogy of the human anatomy with reference to the Church. Every part of the body has its usefulness, essential for the well-being of the body. No part is indispensable on its own.¹¹⁸ This was displayed by the different roles undertaken by the Melanesians.

The danger of the above metaphors occurs when they are interpreted literally, so that their meaning as representations of the whole pack of 'work' in the Christian community is undermined. A few years back in Melanesia, the secular types of work were regarded as being worldly and the tendency was not to blend them with religious functions. Deeply entrenched in the minds of Melanesians, especially Anglicans, was that the church was merely to be concerned with the Scriptures and the Prayer Book.¹¹⁹ This mindset disposed Melanesians to think that the work of the mission, including the ministry of evangelisation, was solely the responsibility of the clergy or those directly related to the mission such as the MBH.¹²⁰ All others – the laity – saw themselves as mere spectators in the mission work.

The establishment of Taroniara was therefore important in a number of ways. Of course, Taroniara developed industrial prospects, and, from the services it

¹¹⁶ Genesis 1: 31. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. This is the summary acknowledging the Creation story in Genesis 1. See also Ps 92: 4 – 5 "For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord!"

¹¹⁷ Matt 7: 16-20. This is an allegory. Jesus says that grapes are not produced by thorn . . . good trees do not bear bad fruit and vice versa.

¹¹⁸ 1Cor 12: 14ff.

¹¹⁹ This directly refers to the ministry of the Words and the sacraments.

¹²⁰ This is an experience up till late 1970 probably a legacy left by the colonial church.

provided, its intention was to contribute to the financial cost-cutting of the mission. Though the financial and economic undertakings failed, as previously examined ¹²¹ the Taroniara establishment had other potential. Socially, it provided opportunities for employment in which Melanesians earned some economic power, not only for themselves but also for extended families.¹²² Remittances were sent home to villages to support and improve village life. School fees were met, better homes were built, furniture was purchased, kitchen utensils for the food preparation improved, and better clothing was obtained. Subsequently, these had a significant impact on the life and growth of the church, either directly or indirectly. Better homes signified life characterised by peace, and joy, unity embedded in love, concern, and care. These were fruits of a healthy and growing church.

In addition, the Melanesian laity also realised that they too have very important roles in the mission, without being clergy or members of the MBH. The people became aware that they were not spectators. They had duties to perform that enhanced the work of the clergy or the bishops or the teachers, doctors and nurses. Without them, it would certainly have been difficult for evangelisation and conversion. Every work by men and women was indispensable for the extension of God's kingdom. The mission does not only consist of the bishops, or the clergy or the MBH, nor is it all about the Scriptures and Prayer Book alone. Mission is all about people with the different positive contributions each provides. St. Paul refers to this as the Body of Christ with different parts – playing equal parts for the building up of God's Church. The work of a villager as a gardener is as important as of the engineer, or a priest.

c) Works: Wealth or Poverty

It is common for Melanesians to be complacent and tolerant of poverty and suffering as being a normal experience in the ministry of the church. In other words, the clergy and those who were assigned to mission work were influenced to associate with the terms 'sacrifice and tolerance' with 'poverty, low wages and even being prepared for martyrdom.' Part of the reason for

¹²¹ The financial loss in Taroniara is a re-occurring issue in chapter six.

¹²² This was part of the Pacific culture – Polynesian, Micronesians and Melanesian.

this acceptance could have been influenced by the lives and example of the missionaries. But what does the scripture say about poverty, suffering and wealth? Taroniara was a place where theology was done in practice. It attempted to answer some of the misinterpretations regarding God, humanity and resources, in particular regarding wealth and poverty. This section seeks to reflect on two perspectives of influence.

First, the opinion that to serve the church was to accept suffering is rooted in some of the teachings of Jesus. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me;"¹²³ The implication here was that to be the disciple of Christ was costly. It demands the sacrificing of material possessions, homes, friends and loved ones. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."¹²⁴ This is again a statement affirming that to be a disciple of Jesus, one must also share the kind of difficulties Jesus faced in his ministry. However, the promise of eternal life as a reward for the pains and sufferings of discipleship made this call even more worthwhile. Jesus said:

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel will save it.¹²⁵

Another example of Jesus' teaching is the story of the rich man and Lazarus.¹²⁶ This narrative has been misinterpreted, assuming that Jesus condemned the rich man; rather Jesus condemned the way in which wealth was selfishly used. St. Paul's teachings about the danger of the 'love for money by church workers'¹²⁷ and about 'love of money being the root of all evil'¹²⁸ have often been misconstrued to mean that clergy and others working for the church must remain poor. Such misinterpretations created a mindset that led to the erroneous conviction that the church was an institution for the

¹²³ Lk 9: 23.

¹²⁴ Lk 9: 58.

¹²⁵ Mk 8: 34-35. Jn 12: 25-26.

¹²⁶ Lk 16: 19-31.

¹²⁷ 1Tm 3: 3.

¹²⁸ 1Tm 6: 10.

marginalised or those on the fringe.¹²⁹ Down the line, the clergy and those who directly worked for the church were expected to live a life of sacrifice and poverty.¹³⁰ On the contrary, the needs of the clergy or church workers are no less than the needs of others. The misconception that was sometimes made was the equalisation of 'simplicity with poverty,'¹³¹ forgetting that God's will for us is to live in simplicity, but not without food or clothes or home.

In the Melanesian Christian spirituality, wealth was therefore considered evil in contrast with the true theological understanding that it was a blessing from God. The acceptance of excruciating circumstances poses questions regarding the gospel's assumed justification of extreme poverty that was injected, either intentionally or unintentionally, in the minds of Melanesians for decades.

The establishment of Taroniara, though, if it did not have a direct impact on this dilemma, it did at least give some practical meaning to the concepts of poverty and wealth. Taroniara also indirectly, yet significantly, taught Melanesians the importance of finance in the life of the church and for the people. The establishment of Taroniara was a model illustrating the theological meaning of finance. Many considerations can be discussed about finance, but what needs to be understood in this context is that finance is God's gift to humankind. Without finance, nothing much can be achieved, including the work of the church. Finance is a key factor in any development, whether it be in a state, or a village or a church. The Book of Ecclesiastes states "money meets every need."¹³²

Furthermore, Taroniara also reminded Melanesians that work was to be rewarded. The principles of reciprocity and stewardship are applicable here. Every work was expected to be good; after all, humankind is only a steward responsible for the proper use of temporal goods. St. Paul also reminds us that

¹²⁹ Cf. Chapter Four. In here, it states the big contrast in terms of government teachers who were paid many times better than teachers of the mission. As a result, it reflects also the employment intake - the better and the more intelligent students took up employment with the government and the private sector. The left-overs were for the churches.

¹³⁰ Cf. salary scales between government teachers and mission teachers as in Chapter Four.

¹³¹ Cf. Carter, "Transforming Missionaries" 336-337. This reflects the life of the MHB.

¹³² Ecc 10: 19.

life can only be sustained by work. Paul himself, not wanting to be a burden to others, was a tent-maker – a profession that financially supported him and his ministry for Christ.¹³³ Paul's statement is a reflection of the importance of practical work adequately rewarded for the propagation of the gospel. For this reason, Paul condemned laziness.¹³⁴ There were reasons for this that are still applicable today. Laziness brings poverty¹³⁵ that can lead on to social problems such as crime and immorality. Our talents, skills and shrewdness are gifts given to us by God. We are only managers, so we are held accountable for them to use in serving one another. Our care for the other is equally our care for the church. To have enough is what matters, but to be wealthy is a blessing and must be used for the enhancement of God's kingdom. To be poor because of wastefulness and laziness is by contrast a curse and thus must be rectified. There is no place for laziness in Christian life. The same attitude towards work and wealth was also practised in Melanesia, in a different way. Taroniara showed Melanesians in real practice the meaning of God's gifts and their application in the life of the state, the church, community and human beings in their various needs. Taroniara was a venue where Christianity and the European culture of capitalism had tremendous impact on Melanesians. This is faith demonstrated by works.

The implication here is that the Christian knows and believes in Jesus and expresses this through the performance of loving deeds. St. Paul states, “. . . the only thing that counts is faith working through love.”¹³⁶ St. James also further states:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or a sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.¹³⁷

¹³³ Act 18: 3. Cf. Gunther Bornkamm, *Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), 69 who said that Paul was an employee of Aquila – tentmaker himself.

¹³⁴ Rom 12: 11, Matt 25: 26, in the parable of the talents Jesus condemns ‘laziness’.

¹³⁵ Cf. Prov.10: 4.

¹³⁶ Gal 5: 6.

¹³⁷ Jas 2: 14-17.

3. The Holy Spirit, the Gospel and Inculturation

The roles of Melanesians, as discussed in Chapters Three to Seven, are incorporated into the mission of the church, which authentically corresponds to the mission of the Holy Spirit.

Adam Dodds has said the mission of the Holy Spirit points to Christology as its centre. Dodds believes that without Christ, the Holy Spirit could not have been sent. Hence, if the Holy Spirit was not present how can the church be empowered to do mission pragmatically, as seen through the roles of the Melanesians? Just because the Holy Spirit was sent after Christ does not mean that the Holy Spirit was a replacement or a substitute for Christ. Rather the Holy Spirit's function is to continue Christ's ongoing historical mission.¹³⁸ This is an irony that cannot be fully explained.

"Behind it all is God"¹³⁹ is a very important theological statement deeply embedded in faith. Jesus also said to Peter after Peter's declaration of the messiahship of Jesus: "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."¹⁴⁰ This is to say, that there were events and incidents prior to, or during the course of evangelisation in Melanesia that were believed to be the action of God through the Holy Spirit. They were vehicles put in place by God in preparation for the reception of the gospel.¹⁴¹ This is partly enhanced by inculturation made understandable by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Adam Dodds shares the same sentiment:

It is a truism to say that the church's missionaries do not take God to a people, but the omnipresent God is already at work in all people and he brings missionaries to those in whom he is already at work. It has been the experience of countless missionaries that God has been at work in non-Christian

¹³⁸ Adam Dodds, "The Mission of the Spirit and the Mission of the Church: Towards a Trinitarian Missiology," 210. Cf. Alister McGrath, *The New Lion Handbook: Christian Belief* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2006), 91-92. Alister McGrath, in referring to Jn 14: 16 says that Jesus had to depart from the disciples in order for them to enter into the fullness of the experience which God promised. The Holy Spirit was to enhance this.

¹³⁹ A quotation of Archbishop Temple that Bishop Hubert Walter Baddeley used. See Chapter Two.

¹⁴⁰ Matt 16: 17; See also Paul in 1 Cor 15: 50 and Gal 1: 16.

¹⁴¹ There are scholars who believe in Jn 16: 8-11 as the foundation to the belief that God was already amongst non-Christians people before missionaries arrived. See comments by Hugh B. Boe under the subject *Mana* in Chapter One. See Mantovani, "Ritual in Melanesia," 178-179 in which he expresses the same line of thought.

peoples and cultures, preparing them for the reception of the gospel often centuries before missionaries arrive.¹⁴²

But what was actually in Melanesia that God utilised in preparation for the gospel? Several aspects could be considered but for the purpose of illustration here, let us consider 'traditional culture'.

The world of Jesus was far different from the world in Melanesia, yet there were possible avenues for concession between the gospel and various Melanesian religious, social, cultural and economic beliefs and practices. Retrospectively, there were cultural and social structures providing standard codes for moral behaviour, reconciliation regulation of relationships and working activities. In addition, religious consciousness was already deeply imbedded so that the concept of priesthood, with religious responsibilities such as worship, prayers and sacrifices, was also already operative. Likewise, some knowledge of economy, for which the principles of trade, buying and selling had long operated.

In light of the above, and prior to the arrival of Christianity, Melanesians had already practised ethical principles – a symbol of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes Christians have been blind to this, and condemned pre-Christian practices instead of accommodating their relevance to interpret the gospel. The roles of Melanesians as examined in the previous chapters must therefore be seen as a continuation of the socio-cultural, religious and economic responsibilities that were already in place before the missionaries arrived. The difference, however, was in the approaches made and their facilitation in achieving their ultimate goals.¹⁴³ It was therefore the work of the missionaries to unpack the gospel in ways that would bring Melanesians to believe in Jesus.

One of the modes of this evangelisation was the utilisation of Melanesians who, through their membership of the MBH, further unpacked the gospel with Melanesian traditional inputs. In this way, the triune God who was already in

¹⁴² Adam Dodds, "The Mission of the Spirit and the Mission of the Church: Towards a Trinitarian Missiology," 213.

¹⁴³ The ultimate goals for both traditional religion and Christianity were unity, solidarity and peace. The difference however is based on the area of their application.

Melanesia was revealed to Melanesians and ultimately converted them. This supports the contention that Christ was already in Melanesia before the missionaries arrived.¹⁴⁴ Besides this, it also supports the claim that there were some traditional practises used for the transmission of the gospel. The missionaries knew very well that this could be best done by Melanesians.

Unlike St. Peter who met Jesus personally, Melanesians met Jesus through missionaries. But many more Melanesians met Jesus through Melanesians who displayed the power of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. The conversion of Melanesians by the Melanesians in the light of Melanesian religion and culture was an important part of their evangelisation and must not be underestimated.

Gernot Fugmann states:

Religion and faith are intrinsic to all Melanesian cultures, and are essential part of human self-understanding, enabling people to live together and to comprehend their cosmic world.¹⁴⁵

Fugmann's statement is a clear declaration that the world of Melanesia is a world dependent upon religion. It is a world where faith played an important role so that whatever was humanly unexplainable could only be explained through the perspective of religion. Whatever was achieved was the work of religion and what could not be achieved was still believed to be achievable through the power of religion. This is essentially the concept of *mana*. Melanesians viewed religion as a means of attaining *mana*.¹⁴⁶ This was fundamental to every aspect of life whether it be social, economic or political and regardless of the complexity and diversity of the prevailing religious norms.

This is not to say that the Melanesian traditional religion was pure and nor were other areas of the culture. The important understanding, however, is that God is always at the forefront. Before the missionaries, the Holy Spirit was

¹⁴⁴ See statement of Hugh. B. Boe, under section *Mana* in Chapter One.

¹⁴⁵ Gernot Fugmann, "Fundamental Issues for a Theology in Melanesia," in *Point: An Introduction to Ministry in Melanesia: A Handbook for Church Workers*, Series No. 7, ed. Brian Schwarz (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Services, 1985), 73.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. 11. Cf. also Nick de Groote ed., *Grace and Reciprocity: Missiological Studies* (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Services, 2002), 133ff

already preparing for the gospel. God often uses what seems to be unfit and impure in the eyes of humankind to be instruments of his will and purpose – while the Holy Spirit is an important agent in this process. This is historical as we know Christianity in the first century was also heavily influenced by Greek culture and later by European culture as it moved west. Likewise, the inculturation of Christianity in Melanesian though may seem syncretistic is not entirely out of place.

4. Purpose and significance of this thesis

There has been much historical literature relating the Church of Melanesia. However, this thesis is different in the way it focuses its examination on the roles that Melanesians contributed through the eyes of a Melanesian. The period covered by this research, 1925-1975, generally was the peak of the Melanesian participation under the missionaries. Charles E. Fox refers the period 1919-1928 as the golden age for the Church in Melanesia.¹⁴⁷ This was possible for a few reasons. First was the transfer of the headquarters to Melanesian soil, including the establishment of training facilities, schools, hospitals and economic development in 1920.¹⁴⁸ Second, is the formation of the Melanesian Brotherhood (MBH) and also the 'people movements' that were important developments by Melanesians.¹⁴⁹

This research is significant in several ways.

Firstly, this work is possible because of the writing of many people about Melanesia, both religious and secular. However, the subject based on the roles of Melanesians in the development of the church is fragmented, except for the MBH, about which different authors have written. This research therefore is an outcome of the blending of the different literature that is available in different forms.¹⁵⁰ This research is therefore not only a new beginning but a call for an extensive and comprehensive study of

¹⁴⁷ Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 73.

¹⁴⁸ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 45. See also Fox, *Lord of the Southern Isles*, 71, 73.

¹⁴⁹ Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 45.

¹⁵⁰ See bibliography.

Melanesians in the life and work of the Melanesian mission in the Solomon Islands.

Secondly, it reminds Melanesians that their roles were also missionary in nature in the attempt to develop the church by developing themselves. This was done through the ethos of 'true religion, sound learning, healthy living and useful industry.' Melanesians saw their responsibility towards the church under the aspiration of the 'black net floated by the white corks.'

Thirdly, this research helps us to make comparison in the mission strategies between the different periods. Even if this research is for a period more than thirty-seven years ago, there are important issues and factors that are currently comparable and appropriate for today's situation. In other words, what was in the past, its strengths and weaknesses, point us to the current and future mission of the church in Melanesia. Today the 'black net is floated by the black corks.'

Fourthly, this research is the first comprehensive historical record of the roles of Melanesians in the Anglican church in Melanesia. However, this research is not exhaustive but at least provides historical/missiological literature in this specific area. It therefore provides a basis for further research not only on the topic of this thesis, but also on other subjects related to Melanesians and the church.

Fifthly, this research will help Melanesians today to know the roles played by their forefathers and mothers in the development of the church. This reminds Melanesians that they have important roles to play in the development of the church. Melanesians became aware of their responsibilities required of them towards God and others through the church.

Finally, the examination of the Melanesians' contributions helps us in the process of inculturation or contextualisation. Many of the Melanesian contributions were influenced by their cultures and environment and thus it is justified to see these cultures through a Christian perspective. In this way Melanesians are able to identify themselves in a church that is Catholic in

nature but Melanesian in form. God therefore became a universal God, as did Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Jesus, being the heart of the gospel, is also the heart of the mission in Melanesia. The goal of the Melanesian mission was to develop the whole fabric of Melanesian life as demonstrated in the life and teaching of Jesus.¹⁵¹ The Melanesians in becoming Christians became also the instruments of the gospel. Their roles as examined were therefore to assist the conversion of Melanesian non-Christians, re-conversion of Melanesian fallen Christians and maintenance of Melanesian Christians. In this way, Melanesians could become whole in spirit, mind and body, reflected by a life enhanced by a mutual relationship with God and demonstrated by a life richly blessed by good and fruitful interests and opportunities.¹⁵²

The approach that the Melanesians took was initiated by G A Selwyn's slogan "true religion and sound learning and useful industry."¹⁵³ Above all, the whole of this extensive and mysterious mission enterprise was made possible only through their belief in Jesus as God. In this sense, Jesus is the foundation and Melanesians merely partners in the proclamation and extension of God's Kingdom. Jesus is understood as the revelation and benchmark for this mission made known to Melanesians through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The overall responsibilities undertaken by Melanesians can also be considered as an expression of their Christian faith in which they embraced God, the world and one another. This can be demonstrated by the measure of their support, allegiance, commitment and enthusiasm towards evangelization or mission work. Melanesians in their roles have proved their effectiveness in the proclamation (sending out), witness (gathering in), and solidarity(walking with) mission images. Their being Melanesians gave them extra advantages over their missionary supervisors as 'solidarity' implementers, while missionaries were

¹⁵¹ This refers to the whole being of a person – physically, spiritually and mentally.

¹⁵² There are many aspects of 'good life' but in the context as discussed, it would cover good education, good health and skills in trade.

¹⁵³ Note that 'Healthy living' as in Chapter Five as my own addition was probably seen as part of 'sound learning'

primarily instruments of proclamation and witnessing. It would not be wrong to refer to Melanesians as Michael Green says for other evangelists.

There can be little doubt that the main motive for evangelism was a theological one. These men did not spread their message because it was advisable for them to do so, nor because it was the socially responsible thing to do. They did not do it primarily for humanitarian or agathistic utilitarian reasons. They did it because of the overwhelming experience of the love of God which they had received through Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁴

The responsibilities covered in the last five chapters are the ministry of the Melanesian Brotherhood; the ministry of Education and Training; the ministry of Health and Medical services; the ministry of Taroniara and the ministry of Men and Women in the village community churches. These ministries as mentioned earlier all encapsulated the concepts of "true religion, sound learning, healthy living and useful industry." In their own perspectives and of course with merit, they played equal parts in being custodians and disseminators of the gospel of love, the very centre in the Kingdom of God. This is so because the Christian gospel is also a Melanesian gospel.

The Melanesian mission ethos of "true religion, sound learning and useful industry" on which most of our examination has been based can be also be seen in the light of three important concepts - 'faith, theory and practice.' Faith, theory and practice have functioned interdependently, alongside each other under the banner of the 'mission.' This was the model in Jesus' ministry that Melanesians subconsciously believed in and executed. Jesus was the subject of faith. He taught and practised that faith extensively. As the Vatican document *Dialogue and Mission* states:

The life of Jesus contains all elements of mission. In the Gospel, Jesus is shown in silence, in action, in prayer in dialogue and in teaching. His message is inseparable from his deeds; he

¹⁵⁴ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Guildford: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), 286-287. *Dialogue and Mission: The Attitude of the Church towards the followers of other Religions* (Vatican City: Columban Mission Institute, 1984), 6.

announces God and His reign not only by word but by his deeds and works which complete his preaching.¹⁵⁵

Finally, a simple pamphlet states:

. . . these school boys [and girls - *my addition*] are first 'learners' of the Faith and the Life, then they go back to their people as the Lord's witness. This is, of course, Melanesia's greatest contribution to its salvation. Silver and gold have they none, but they gave and still give themselves for the work of the Lord.¹⁵⁶

Much has been contributed by the Melanesians, yet their roles still remain impure, insufficient and inadequate. Likewise, Melanesians also in the course of their pilgrimage were impure, insufficient, inadequate, but were never dispensable. They were weak and fragile but never stagnant. They fell and seemed dead, but they rose with even more composure to move on. The Triune God has been their strength and *mana*.

The roles of Melanesians in the foundation and early development of the Church of Melanesia have not been sufficiently appreciated. In particular the church today would not be genuinely Melanesian without the many and varied contributions demonstrated in this study.

¹⁵⁵ Dialogue and Mission: *The Attitude of the Church towards the followers of other Religions* (Vatican City: Columban Mission Institute, 1984), 6.

¹⁵⁶ *Melanesian Mission, 1849-1949*, 3.

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