



Nambawan!

Global Mission's Vanuatu Newsletter



Pacific Vision

Vanuatu

September 2020



Builinda Presbyterian Church, Santo before Cyclone Harold ...



And after ...

After being a year full of promise, 2020 has turned out to be a challenging year for Global Mission; but most challenging of all for the people and nation of Vanuatu. As well as dealing with the widespread damage caused by Category Five Cyclone Harold on the northern islands in April, the entire country of Vanuatu has been severely impacted by Covid-19. Although the virus has not entered the country, the effects of the worldwide pandemic on Vanuatu's tourist-based economy has been significant for businesses, institutions and families, with the long-term outcomes still unknown. This has added importance to the PCANZ's financial support for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu's Cyclone Harold recovery rebuild. The Moderator's Appeal has so far raised more than \$69,000, with donations still coming in. While the rebuild will take a long time, some progress is already under way. Read the latest news from Vanuatu inside ...



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

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Houses were wrecked on Santo; these home owners survey the damage. The one on the right is (was) the Pastor's house at Banibani

The PCANZ made a grant for emergency aid to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu immediately after we received the news about the damage caused by Cyclone Harold. The PCV used these funds, along with money donated from many Presbyteries, congregations and communities within Vanuatu, to distribute aid through the National Disaster Management Office. Emergency aid was sent to the islands of Pentecost, Santo, Malekula, Ambrym, Paama, Epi and also to Tanna which was also dealing with an outbreak of ashfall from Mt. Yasur.

In response to this grant we received a letter of thanks from PCV General Secretary Pastor Allen Nafuki. In his letter he said, "Category 5 Cyclone Harold swept through the Pacific wreaking havoc in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga. In Vanuatu it affected the Banks/Torres, Santo, Malekula, Ambae, Maewo, Pentecost and Ambrym. There was extensive damage to buildings, dwellings, nature, plantations, food crops and associated businesses and livelihoods."

Along with many kilograms of rice, non-food items were also sent and these included clothing, shoes, kitchen utensils, bedding, towels, mattresses and pillows, mats, sewing material, water and water filters.

A separate grant was also given to Talua Theological Training Institute which suffered extensive damage. Pastor Allen explained, "PCV's theological institute, Talua, has been damaged beyond the capacity to recover sufficiently to resume its training programme." A subsequent decision was made to close Talua until April 2021 to allow the building repairs to be made. These repairs are being carried out by local labour, with teams from several communities being organised to help.

The PCV's General Assembly for 2020 was cancelled and re-scheduled for August 2021.

Grateful thanks are due to the many congregations and individuals who have contributed to the Moderator's Cyclone Harold Appeal. As of August 31st, \$69, 370 had been raised—a fantastic effort. These funds are being distributed to the Presbyteries of Santo, Laurua, North Malekula and Ambrym, and also the PWMU (Presbyterian Women) to support recovery programmes in their respective areas.

Below: A truck loaded up with rice ready to be shipped; and aid arriving at Malo island, off the coast of Santo.



RSE Workers Waiting to Go Home

Hundreds of Vanuatu Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) workers have been in New Zealand waiting to go home. In an article on the Vanuatu Daily Post's online edition on August 28, Vanuatu's COVID-19 spokesperson, Dr. Len Tarivonda, confirmed that 800 Ni-Vanuatu RSE Workers in New Zealand were ready to return home.

"The Ministry of Health and Air Vanuatu are ready to start repatriation of seasonal workers in New Zealand and Australia, but await the green light from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finalise their arrangements, then the repatriation programme can start," he said.



The Vanuatu government is using Air Vanuatu for the repatriation of RSE Workers and nationals who wish to return to Vanuatu from New Zealand and Australia. They will have to travel back to Vanuatu on scheduled cargo flights. 350 have just been repatriated from Marlborough in mid-September.

"We want to ensure that in everything that we do for our Ni-Vanuatu Workers to come home, we are absolutely sure that all preventive COVID-19 strict measures and controls are fully complied with and applicable so that COVID-19 does not enter Vanuatu by any slight mistake. We are talking about the movement of a lot of people to be repatriated and therefore need strict COVID -19 measures in every step and every move we make. We are talking about lives. Our aim is to keep COVID -19 out of Vanuatu at all costs," Dr. Tarivonda concluded.



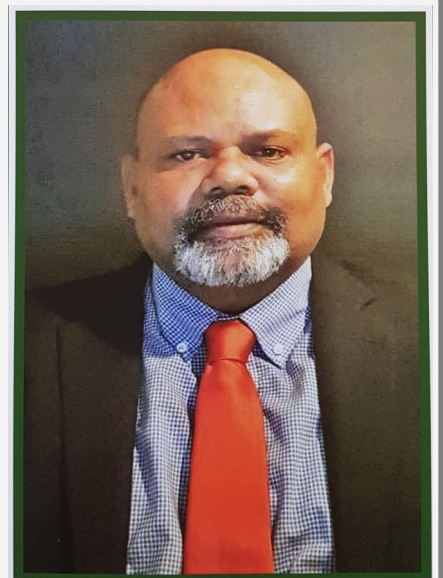
Covid-19 and Vanuatu's Economy

Covid-19 has been bad news for Vanuatu's tourist-based economy. There's not a lot of local tourism so businesses rely mainly on international visitors. Consequently, the country's economy has taken a big hit and many businesses have closed, with downstream effects impacting on many others. With international travel not expected to resume for some time yet, the short term future doesn't look very good, so we can only hope that when the borders re-open, tourism will pick up again and the economy can slowly begin to recover. The Department of Tourism is working on a Tourism Recovery Plan and is running workshops to assist tourism providers and community leaders to understand the plan, and how communities will need to prepare in terms of health and safety, and readiness of their businesses and staff. In our prayers for Vanuatu, let's include those working on economic recovery and the benefits it can bring to the country as a whole.

Death of Vanuatu High Commissioner Hon. Johnson Naviti

Vanuatu suffered a significant loss recently with the sudden and untimely death of Hon. Johnson Naviti, Vanuatu's High Commissioner to New Zealand. He was the first person to be appointed to this role. Mr. Naviti's funeral was conducted by PCANZ minister Rev. Hana Popea at St. Ninian's Uniting Church in Wellington, where Mr. Naviti and his family had been attending. PCANZ Moderator Right. Rev. Fakaofu Kaio and Global Mission Coordinator Rev. Phil King also participated in the service. His body was been returned to Vanuatu where a state memorial service will be held. His wife Tima and family have also returned to live in Port Vila. This is a sad loss to the New Zealand-Vanuatu relationship, and to the Vanuatu community and seasonal workers in New Zealand. Please pray for Johnson's family—he and Tima had three boys living with them in New Zealand and two adult daughters in Vanuatu. They were much loved and respected members of St. Ninian's Church.

"Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:16





Top: A resident of Tangoa island surveys the damage to his church.
 Above: The municipal building in Luganville, Santo.
 Right: The medical centre on Pentecost Island. Pentecost was one of the worst hit islands with reports of massive damage everywhere.
 Below: Twisted metal is all that remains of this building in Luganville.





Top: Aerial shots revealed damage to coconut plantations, and forests as well as properties. The photos in the middle reveal the damage to staff houses at Talua; and the lucky escape of the B.Min classroom as fallen trees somehow managed to avoid landing on it.

Above right shows some of the damage to the trees, local houses and grounds on the Talua campus.

Below: The community at Araki (an island to the south of Santo) had the resources and personnel to undertake the repairs to their damaged church. These photos show the before and after photos—so it's good to see that some communities have been able to move forward and manage their own repairs.



Otago Polytechnic Students Continuing with Development Projects on Paama

Cindy Mullins is a nurse educator at Otago Polytechnic. She and husband Mike are members of Highgate Church in Dunedin, and were introduced to mission in Vanuatu through Highgate's relationship with the church and community on Paama Island. Cindy and Mike's vision and leadership has seen this has grow into something much more extensive. Cindy tells the story:

The disruptive landscape created by COVID-19 has been significant for communities, both locally and globally. This has certainly been the case for students and staff at Otago Polytechnic's School of Nursing. In July 2020, nursing learners were planning to travel to Liro, Paama, Vanuatu to continue to build on the work previously undertaken by the Engineering School.

Learners and community stakeholders alike were disappointed not to be able to continue with the collaboration. But an idea for a virtual placement was developed and the idea of still engaging during such a difficult time was encouraging for all involved.

As part of the third-year primary health care community placement, learners work collaboratively with an identified community following an educational model known as the Community Health Assessment Sustainable Education (CHASE) model.

With this in mind, we began our focus on Paama in July, and brought aspects of the community into the classroom through technology, utilising guest speakers who have had extensive contact working in the community along with identified community stakeholders, as well as research. Despite limited data being available, the learners were very motivated and worked extensively to complete their work with help from these guest speakers.

We were not able to engage directly with the nurses in Vanuatu due to communication and technology issues, but were successful in connecting with Leiwani Pel Hoke, the School Principal and Richard Tatwin and Johnny Albert at PCV Health. This engagement enabled the students to find three areas of interest to focus and support the community to continue with the amazing work which is currently underway on Paama.

Their first area of interest was Oral Health, and they managed to fundraise \$1,300 to fund options to support rolling out the 'Gudfala Tut Skul Projek' run by the PCV for Vaum School to support oral health in the school for one year. They also developed a health promotion poster to be placed in the community and this is currently being translated into Bislama.

The second area of interest they focused on was fish farming and they put together easy to understand instructions on how to begin this for anyone in the community who would like to initiate this for their family.

The final area of health focus was respiratory health and the work PCV is doing with building smokeless ovens. Learners developed resources to link good respiratory health with the use of these ovens and developing promotional information for the community. Leina Isno, a nurse in Dunedin who is originally from Malekula, is kindly helping with Bislama translation.

The love for the community in Liro has been well and truly developed within the learners, even without having been physically in the same place. We will continue to maintain contact and build on the learning this year and hope to travel to the community soon to fellowship with one another in person. Please feel free to contact Cindy Mullens, Senior Lecturer at Otago Polytechnic, School of Nursing for additional information at cmullens@op.ac.nz

Paama's natural environment provides a source of fun for these boys, and seafood for this fisherman on his outrigger canoe.



These Otago Polytechnic nursing students have been working on projects for the community on Paama island despite the challenges caused by Covid-19.





YUMI 40 - Vanuatu Turns 40 Years Old

Despite facing many challenges this year, the people of Vanuatu came together to celebrate the 40th anniversary of their independence on July 30th. The celebrations included a week-long public holiday and various public events throughout the country. This photograph was taken at Independence Park in Port Vila.

Before independence, Vanuatu was known as the New Hebrides and was ruled by a dual British and French condominium Government. The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu was a strong advocate in the move to independence and some of its ministers became leaders in the newly formed government. Vanuatu's current president, Obed Moses Tallis, is a minister and past Moderator of the PCV.

Update from Brian and Ally MacKay

We have been back in New Zealand for 6 months now, after having spent just 8 weeks at Talua Theological Training Institute, Santo, Vanuatu. We were very sad to leave Vanuatu but still feel it was the right decision at the time and it turned out that the flight we caught home was the last commercial flight out before borders were closed.

Vanuatu has still had no cases of Covid 19, which is great. Cyclone Harold brought great destruction when it passed over Talua and the islands nearby, two weeks after we got back to NZ. We were relieved to hear there were no injuries in our area but it was decided that Talua should close for a year while the damage to many of the buildings was repaired. The closure would, in part, have been so that the students could make arrangements to return with their families, to their home islands and villages. A few students have remained with the teachers at Talua. Work has commenced and it is heartening to see that working parties from other islands have come to help.

As for us - we did leave our hearts in Vanuatu. We stayed quite strongly connected for several months, marking work and doing some administrative tasks from afar. We appreciated the weekly Zoom meetings that Phil King organised to pray and provide whatever support we could to our brothers and sisters in Vanuatu. We have based ourselves in Whanganui. We managed to pick up some part time work at Whanganui City College which is paying the bills. We have been enjoying worshipping at St James Church and are loving the time we have been able to spend with our children and grandchild. We do look forward to returning to Vanuatu but are aware that the timing is in God's hands. At this stage we really don't know if it will be next year or some time further into the future.

Thanks to all who have been praying for us.



A map of the Santo Bush mission areas shows the extent of the work; and an example of the rebuilding that has been undertaken so far.

Santo Bush Mission Rebuilds After Devastation of Cyclone Harold

The Bush Mission region on Santo was very heavily hit by Cyclone Harold with extensive damage sustained across a wide area. Bush Mission director Pastor Tueni Won has been marooned in New Zealand, unable to return to Vanuatu since March, and has endured a frustrating six months. But he said the mission workers have been working really hard to coordinate the rebuilding and repair work themselves. "It has been challenging work but graciously managed. We give thanks to God."

Tueni said, "We were working with Samaritan's Purse of Australia to provide basic building materials and emergency food. This was done in June for the West Coast, and South Santo and Middle Bush area in September."

On the Mission Farm near Luganville, houses and gardens were extensively damaged by the cyclone. The mission workers are currently rebuilding damaged houses, reinstalling a water tank, and repairing the chicken house. They have replanted the gardens and thanks to Vanuatu's fertile soils and warm climate, some of the vegetables have already been harvested. But of course, there is a lot of work to do, and it will take time.

The Wakatipu parish has had an ongoing relationship with the Bush Mission, and sent a large donation through the Moderator's Cyclone Appeal fund to help them. With these funds, an allowance was given to the Bush Mission workers who had been receiving little or no income since the cyclone; as well as aid to families in the worst affected regions, and roofing and other materials to rebuild a church.

The photos below show the re-roofing of a new building at the Bush Mission farm; and a Bush Mission community who were grateful recipients of food aid after Cyclone Harold. Many gardens and crops were destroyed, making life difficult for residents in remote areas.



WHAT IS NAMBAWAN! NEWSLETTER?

Nambawan! is Global Mission's newsletter specifically dedicated to the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand's partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. Nambawan is Bislama (one of the three official languages of Vanuatu) and means Number One, or as we might say today, "Awesome!"

WHY AM I RECEIVING NAMBAWAN?

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