



Global Mission Newsletter



GlobalMission Update

February 2025

This newsletter summarises recent news with our Global Mission partners in Vanuatu and Myanmar, and so combines the two newsletters, Mingalaba and Nambawan into one combined Global Mission Update. Note that apart from the front page, most of the content of this newsletter was prepared prior to the earthquake that rocked Port Vila, Vanuatu in December last year.

EARTHQUAKE APPEAL FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VANUATU



Presbyterian Church
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Vanuatu Earthquake

Most of you will have seen the news reports of the 7.3 magnitude earthquake that rocked Port Vila, Vanuatu on December 17th. The final official death toll was 14, with over 200 people injured. A Vanuatu Daily Post news report in January stated that 2,800 people have been displaced and need temporary accommodation. The Port Vila CBD was severely hit and the demolition of buildings is under way. Many schools have been affected and education will be seriously disrupted. As well as the physical damage, the earthquake left a deep psychological impact on many people. A news report on February 10 said that many residents are still struggling with trauma one month after the disaster. It highlighted that people of all ages continue to experience fear and distress, with many still afraid to sleep inside their homes at night. To help with this, a group of mental health professionals was deployed by the New Zealand Government this month. This support is acknowledged as being incredibly valuable. See the full story [here](#). Photos of the devastation caused by the earthquake can also be found online.

Earthquake Appeal for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Earthquakes of this magnitude with this level of impact are unfamiliar to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, so we have offered to help with providing structural engineers to give building assessments. We are grateful to two engineers who have agreed to donate their time for this purpose. Their assessments will take place in March. Anticipating significant earthquake repair costs going forward, Global Mission is launching an earthquake appeal for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. Funds can be banked into the Global Mission account, 02 0500 0086963 10 with the reference PCV Earthquake Appeal. Please send an email to Katrina Graham, katrina@presbyterian.org.nz confirming the donation so a receipt can be emailed.



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St. Kentigern Presbyterian School Project at Popowoh School, Vanuatu

Note that this refers to work carried out prior to the earthquake.

In this photo, principal Willie and Elder Ann Karie, with Council for World Mission General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum and his wife Ha Young Do inspect the new playground at the Popowoh School near Port Vila. Popowoh is one of the many schools managed by the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. The playground was transported to Vanuatu in a container and was constructed by a team from Saint Kentigern Presbyterian Schools in September. The project also included building a toilet block and water system including new tanks, and painting classrooms. They made amazing progress in a very short period of time. Unfortunately some of this work has been damaged by the earthquake. The need for schools in this region is growing as families from other islands in Vanuatu are arriving in Port Vila looking for work and seeking cheaper areas to live. So the Popowoh community is growing and the school is strategically placed to meet a need for education there. Saint Kentigern will continue with developments at Popowoh again in 2025—depending on whether the earthquake has caused damage that will require repairs first, therefore slowing down their plans. See the photos below. And St. Kentigern College is intending to send a team of senior students to Onesua Presbyterian College this year to renew their connection and discern how they can share in partnership.

Other opportunities exist to support mission in Vanuatu so contact Global Mission Director Phil King if you are interested in learning how you or your congregation can be involved.



Popowoh School is quite a long way out of Port Vila and so was far removed from the dramatic and extensive damage that affected the Port Vila CBD – but signs of the earthquake were still evident, as these photos reveal. The verandah that covered the entrance to the kindergarten worked loose from the wall and fell off. Some water tanks fell off their stands and were damaged beyond repair, so need to be replaced. And a photo above shows some cracking in an exterior wall. This is the kind of damage that needs closer inspection to determine what repairs or other action might be needed before the project can proceed.

Partnership Visit to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV)

In October Phil King travelled to Vanuatu and met with the PCV Assembly staff in Port Vila, reviewing programmes and planning ahead. This included feedback on the chaplains training programme that was held in June, the attendance of PCV youth leaders at Connect in July, and a visit to Popowoh school where Saint Kentigern Presbyterian School in Auckland has made an impressive contribution. He also visited Onesua Presbyterian College, and then had the honour of preaching at Paton Memorial Church in Port Vila on Sunday October 20th. However the main purpose of this visit was to accompany Council for World Mission (CWM) General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum in conversations with the PCV about their prospective membership in CWM. As a church that was established through the work of the London Missionary Society in the Pacific, the PCV belongs within the family of CWM but for various reasons did not become a member when CWM was formed in 1977. This process is now moving forward and as well as correcting an historical anomaly, it should bring considerable benefits to the PCV in the future.

Below and Right: Phil King meeting with Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu General Secretary Rev. Collin Keleb; and three of the PCV Youth leaders who attended the PCANZ Connect national youth leaders conference in New Zealand in July 2024, Josiah Ewai, Anna Daniel and Timothy Makekon. They reviewed their visit and made plans for 2025.



Phil King with staff at Onesua Presbyterian College. A team from St. Kentigern College in Auckland is planning to visit Onesua in July 2025. This was planned for 2024 but was postponed for a year. Plans are now moving forward again, with the Onesua College community eagerly awaiting the visit.



Council for World Mission General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum and his wife Ha Young Do visited the PCV with Phil King to discuss the PCV's membership in CWM in October. Their visit included a meeting with the Vanuatu President Hon. Nikenike Vurobaravu.

Talua Theological Training Institute



Our English teacher at Talua Theological Training Institute in Vanuatu, Jae Ahn, returned home in early December. We thank Jae for the excellent contribution he made at Talua which extended well beyond his English teaching role. He has served with dedication and sincerity, earning warm respect from the Talua community, and strengthening the PCANZ's longstanding commitment to supporting theological education at Talua. The English teacher position for 2025 has been filled by a Ni-Vanuatu teacher for the first time. Global Mission will be supporting this position financially so donations towards this are welcomed. This is an exciting new step which we hope will help the PCV develop their capacity to staff the college with Ni-Vanuatu teachers, and eventually also fund this themselves. A request for a business manager remains open—see this [here](#):

If interested in this, or learning about other ways you can support education at Talua Theological College or elsewhere in Vanuatu, contact Global Mission Director Phil King for more information, phil@presbyterian.org.nz.

Wanaka Presbyterian Church Team Visit to Talua

In October a team from Wanaka Presbyterian Community Church visited Talua Theological College and had a week sharing in life on the Talua campus. They met our PCANZ English teacher Jae Ahn, learned about his work there and shared in his classes. They engaged with staff, students and their families and contributed to the college's community life. The Wanaka congregation will now assess how they can develop their support for our work in Vanuatu. One way they have already done this is to send funds for the construction of a new permanent duplex for married couples, and another small maintenance project. Thanks to the Wanaka congregation for their generous support of Talua. You can see from these photos that they had an enjoyable time!



Snapshots from Vanuatu



The Mele Sunset Circus at Mele Beach near Port Vila; and staff, students and parents work together on the Popowoh School project.



Above: The playground is constructed at Popowoh School. Right: St. Kentigerns students enjoyed their service programme at Popowoh. Below, children at Talua Theological Training Institute enjoying their playground.



Below: the always busy and very impressive Port Vila market, showcasing the wide range of Vanuatu's fruit and vegetable produce.

Below left, Council for World Mission General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum hosted the PCV Assembly Office staff for an enjoyable dinner at the Moorings Resort in Port Vila.



News from the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

The Presbyterian Church of Myanmar manages Agape Hospital, a small hospital located in Tahan where the head office of the church is situated. The civil war in Myanmar has put pressure on a failing health system, and so Agape has become very important for the local community. At a meeting of Asian Christian hospitals in November, PCM General Secretary Rev. Pek Muan Cuang shared information on the collapse of the Government healthcare system and the need for private hospitals to meet the demand for healthcare. He shared a vision for the relocation of the hospital from its current location in central Tahan to the PCM Children's Centre, about a kilometre away. However, the unstable nature of the country makes it difficult to proceed much further at this stage; so in the meantime further research will be undertaken and decisions can be made when the situation improves.

The church is also very active in developing community schools to meet the need for education, which is suffering in the current context. Global Mission supports these community schools and is grateful for donations towards this which help to meet the costs of providing materials and teacher honorariums. Teachers are often former Government teachers who refused to work under the military junta and offer their services to the community schools.

Forced Conscription a Concern for Young Adults in Myanmar

In November, Global Mission Director Phil King attended a conference in Bangkok on Modern Day Slavery. While he was there he had the opportunity to meet with the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, Rev. Pek Muan Cuang, pictured below with his wife, and with PCM delegate Angela Van Lal Ruati. The situation in Myanmar remains critical as the country suffers under military rule with civil war conditions in many areas. Many thousands of citizens are displaced, some internally and others living as refugees in neighbouring countries. Early in 2024 the Myanmar military government introduced a forced conscription law which has created a climate of fear among young adults. As a result of this, many of them are leaving if they can find a route out of the country. It will take a long time for Myanmar to return to any kind of normality. Please continue to pray for them.



Thank you to everyone who financially supports our Global Mission partnerships. Donations are always welcome and allow us to achieve more. Online donations can be made to 02 0500 0086963 10. If making a new donation please send an email with contact details for receipts to katrina@presbyterian.org.nz