

Nambawan! Global Mission's Vanuatu Newsletter



Pacific Vision
Vanuatu

September 2019



PCANZ Moderator Right Rev. Fakaofu Kaio addresses the members of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu General Assembly. Fakaofu and his wife Ruth accompanied Global Mission Coordinator Phil King to Vanuatu for this year's assembly, which was held in Baiap village on the island of Ambrym. Hundreds of delegates to the Assembly and the PWMU Conference travelled from throughout Vanuatu to spend time celebrating their life together during this week-long event. This was the first time the PCANZ has had a Pasifika moderator attending a PCV Assembly, and it was an enriching experience for all concerned. The week in Vanuatu was an opportune time to connect with many members of the PCV who are hosting teams on various projects, and to make plans for new personnel to serve in Vanuatu next year. Although there are no PCANZ personnel serving in Vanuatu this year, there has still been plenty of activity with new and ongoing projects taking place. As well as this, July and August were busy with two programmes hosting members of the PCV here in New Zealand for events in July and August.

Read on for more information ...

Wakatipu Church Bush Mission Support

The Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church has been supporting the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu's Bush Mission outreach in the highlands of Espiritu Santo island for a few years now. Led by Wakatipu minister Carlton Johnstone, a team (including Carlton's wife Sarah and children Holly and Max) made another visit in July. They have developed a good rapport with the Bush Mission workers and villagers, and are building an impressive partnership with them. The Johnstones and Wakatipu members Iraja Max and Roberto were joined by Hannah and Kayla from John Knox Church Rangiora and despite the consistent rain, they had an amazing time sharing in some remote villages. There were three reasons why Global Mission Coordinator Phil King approached the Wakatipu parish about supporting the Bush Mission a few years ago. He knew they had a mission focus, and that they had a large Portuguese speaking Brazilian membership. The island of Espiritu Santo (which means "Holy Spirit") where the Bush Mission is located was named by a Portuguese explorer and still retains its Portuguese name. Among the gifts the Wakatipu group took were football shirts for a village football team – perhaps they will play like Brazilians!



Howick Church Team Supporting Education on Erromango

After first visiting in 2018, Bronwynn Croxford from Howick Presbyterian Church returned to Erromango Island in July, with a small team of four. They are building connections with the school and village in Dillons Bay (also known as Williams Bay) and helped with laying the foundations for a new library at the Williams Bay School. Erromango has a small population and lacks resources so it is great to see this kind of supportive relationship being developed. Phil King said, "I visited Erromango on study leave last year and am really pleased to see this partnership evolving. Erromango is less well-known and harder to get to, but has a fascinating history, beautiful coastline and forests, and a very welcoming community, so is well worth the effort to visit."

Below: Team members Tania Georgeson, Bronwynn Croxford, John McWilliams and Will Jones with Williams Bay Secondary School Principal Billy Singo and another staff member; Will looking out to sea on Erromango's stony beach with two locals.





New Teachers at Talua Theological Institute

The PCANZ will continue its tradition of supplying teachers at Talua Theological Training Institute on Santo next year. Dannevirke teaching couple Brian and Ally Mackay will be serving on campus at Talua for the full year in 2020. Ally will teach English and Brian will teach IT and offer administrative support. The Mackays have taught at Dannevirke High School and been active in their church as youth leaders and elders for many years. Phil King says, "I first met Ally and Brian when I was a young parish minister in Waipukurau in the early 1990's. They have faithfully served their church and community for a long time and I'm stoked that they are willing to give a year's service at Talua. I think they will make a great contribution and add value to our partnership with the PCV." Ally and Brian served on a short-term mission in India in 1989 and have always been open to another global mission experience. They will leave for Vanuatu in early February.

Donations Invited to Support Ally and Brian Mackay at Talua

Global Mission is inviting donors to offer financial support to help meet Brian and Ally's financial target of \$20,000 to help cover their costs for the year. Donations can be made online to 02 0500 0086963 10, reference "Mackays" – or cheques to Global Mission, P.O. Box 9049 Wellington 6141.

News From Talua Theological Training Institute

Rev. Cassandra Nixon from Australia - via Australian CMS (Church Missionary Society) has been filling the English teaching role at Talua this year. Cassandra shares news from Talua:

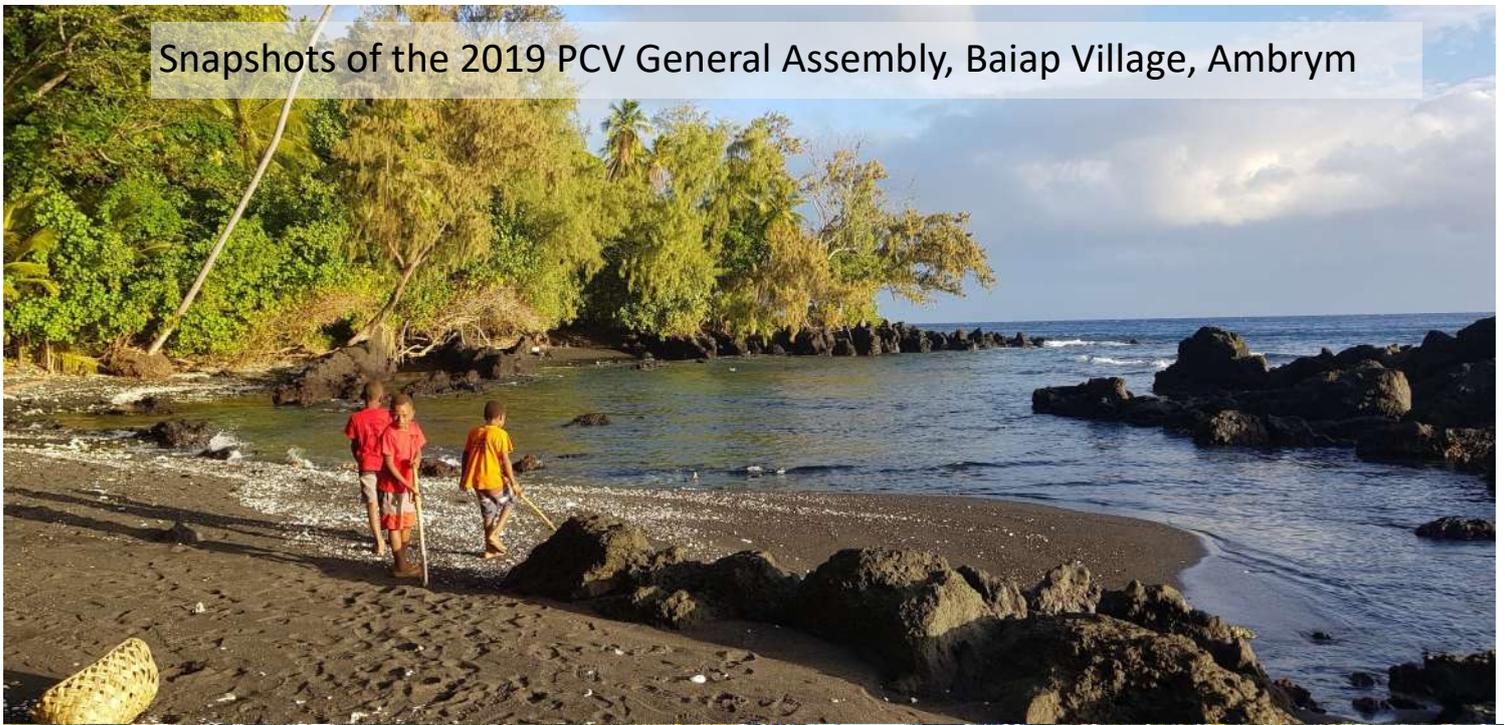
"I've been at Talua for six months now, living in a house built and maintained by New Zealand Presbyterians, thank you! And special thanks for the new stove and extra batteries for the solar system which runs the lights when the generator isn't on, and the freezer.

The students are from all the many islands of Vanuatu and are committed, keen and enthusiastic. They struggle to pay their fees, and their children's school fees (school isn't free here). For example, one of my students is spending the current two week's holiday scraping out the "meat" from the shells of dried coconuts (to make copra to sell) to raise her College fees for Term 3. Many will stay at College for the holidays because two weeks isn't long enough to get by two or even three boats to their home island and back again. Some just couldn't pay the fare for the trip. But don't visualise them as unhappy, they are full of life, faith, music, good humour and energy for sports and fishing (for food, not recreation!).

A month ago I accompanied about 10 of them to a nearby small island called Araki for a weekend of field work. After a journey in what seemed to me a perilously overloaded boat, it was a joy to see them interact with the teenagers and children, lead a village-wide interactive Bible study, teach the women a new craft skill (making baskets which they will be able to use and sell; they already weave mats and the walls for houses, but not baskets). On Saturday night they entertained the village with their string band, singing and dancing, and on Sunday they led the service and preached. Then the village entertained us to a lunchtime feast, and sent us home with lots of fruit and vegetables from their gardens, loading down the boat even more!

Everywhere I go in Vanuatu the name of Talua is known and respected, and people are delighted and especially welcoming when they hear I am teaching there.

Snapshots of the 2019 PCV General Assembly, Baiap Village, Ambrym



Top: Local boys enjoyed showing us their backyard in the afternoon sun.
Above: How to travel in Vanuatu; and a delegate walks through Baiap village after a meeting.
Right: How the hungry are fed— teams of volunteers worked long hours feeding all the delegates for the week-long Assembly.
Below: Another way to travel— Moderator Kaio squeezing into a small charter plane en route to Ambrym Island for the Assembly.
Below right: Delegates enjoying a catch up in the Baiap village community meeting space .





Top: Delegates at the General Assembly. When the Assembly is held in a village setting, a temporary meeting hall is constructed by the hosting community, using local materials. The delegates wear colours related to their presbyteries. It is still largely male-dominated, but more female delegates are attending each year.



Left: PCV General Secretary Allen Nafuki with Fakaofu and Ruth Kaio, on the historic landing site at Pango, Efate island, where the first Samoan missionaries came ashore in 1845.

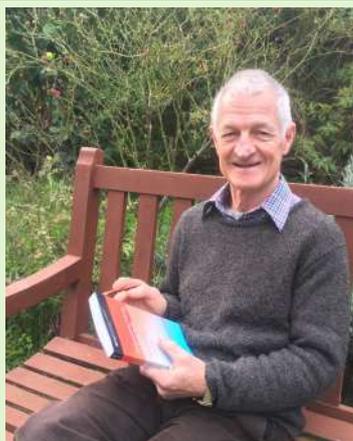


Below: Beautiful sunset on Ambrym. The photo is slightly enhanced but it was almost as good as this!



PCV Youth Leaders Programme

In July Global Mission hosted five youth leaders from the PCV for a two week programme culminating in their attendance at the Presbyterian Youth Ministry's national youth leaders training weekend, Connect, at Ohope marae. This was a programme they shared with five youth from the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. After a two day orientation and a multicultural programme at St. Helier's Church in Auckland, our Vanuatu team was hosted at Mangapapa Union Church in Gisborne, where Rev. Paula Levy is the minister. They contributed to Sunday worship and shared in the church's outreach programme that week. Connect was a real highlight with some members of the team lamenting that it was only held over a two-day weekend, because they were enjoying the input so much. Southern Islands youth representative Welle Taforua sent a message after his return home, saying that he gained a lot from his time in New Zealand and that his Presbytery's youth were grateful for the opportunity that had been given. There were lots of positive outcomes from this programme and Phil King hopes PCANZ can continue to offer opportunities like this in the future.



Randall Prior Book - Contextualising Theology in the South Pacific

Many PCANZ visitors to Vanuatu, especially those who have attended PCV General Assemblies, will be familiar with the Rev. Randall Prior of the Uniting Church of Australia. After many years of interest and research on the oral culture of Vanuatu, Randall has recently written a book entitled "Contextualising Theology in the South Pacific – The Shape of Oral Cultures." Randall said that the book sets out in a systematic way some of the basic elements of Vanuatu cultures. He hopes this may be of relevance to visitors to Vanuatu, and especially those involved in theological work or service projects. Global Mission congratulates Randall on this publication. It is available by from various online booksellers.

PCV Chaplains Attend Church School Conferences in New Zealand

An unexpected invitation from the Anglican Schools office led to the attendance of two Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu School chaplains at two church schools conferences in Auckland in August. Revs. Carl Nial and Kevin Dalesa were invited to attend the conference of the New Zealand Association of RE Teachers and School Chaplains which was organised by the Anglican Schools office this year. The conference is designed as professional development for religious education teachers and chaplains. This event at King's School in Auckland was followed by the Presbyterian Schools Conference at St. Kentigerns College, so they had a full week of learning. Their context in Vanuatu is very different to what they experienced here, but it was a valuable week of new input and connecting for them. It was really good to be able to offer this opportunity to our partner church. Thanks to the Rev. Reuben Hardie of St. Kentigerns School (and family) for hosting our two visiting chaplains for the week.



School Library Support

Some members from St. Margaret's Presbyterian Church in Christchurch have been supporting the wages for a librarian at Seaside School in Port Vila for a few years. This has helped to establish the role of the librarian in the school. The project is now coming to an end and the responsibility for the librarian's wages will be included in the school's annual budget. Schools in Vanuatu are generally under-resourced and so the principal has been very grateful for the support. Thanks to the members of St. Margaret's who have faithfully supported this.



For those interested in supporting education in Vanuatu, the PCV has been opening new schools recently like this one pictured here (Macses) and some of them need libraries to be built, and of course after that, books to fill them. Please contact Global Mission coordinator Phil King if you are interested in helping with this kind of project, either financially or in person.

Combined Churches Project in Port Vila

In October this year, a team of seven men will be going to Port Vila to assist the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) enlarge a number of homes that it owns. The PCV has a block of nine affordable homes (units) that it rents out to families that can't afford more expensive housing. These units are strongly built (we can testify to this as they withstood Cyclone Pam with almost no damage) yet affordable and are in demand as they are located very close to the centre of Port Vila. The team is planning on closing in the verandahs of six of the units so they will be able to house larger families. The team this year represents a number of different denominations including Presbyterian, Baptist and Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

Another exciting development is that there are now four different Presbyterian Churches involved in fundraising for this mission partnership, including Hibiscus Coast, Mairangi and Castor Bays, Albany, and St George's Takapuna Presbyterian Churches.

Paul Fransham (On behalf of The Hibiscus Coast Presbyterian Church Vanuatu Mission Team)

Highgate Church and Rangī Ruru School Joint Project on Paama

Students and staff from Otago Polytechnic School of Engineering will continue work begun by a previous team in 2018 in and around Liro on the island of Paama in September. The projects undertaken by the team have a focus on water retention and reticulation, and sanitation. Highgate Presbyterian Church (Dunedin) and Rangī Ruru Presbyterian Girls' School (Christchurch) have begun preparation for community service project teams to travel to Paama in the July 2020 school holidays. The principal focus of their service will be with Vaum Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Liro. This may include continuing the work begun by the 2018 Highgate team of interior painting of classrooms.



For Rangī Ruru Girls' School this will be the first time a team has travelled to Paama, though not the first time they have had groups travel to the Pacific to complete service projects. In this photo, some of the youth members from Highgate 's visit in 2018 are painting rooms at the local clinic.

Contact Global Mission Coordinator Phil King, phil@presbyterian.org.nz, if you are interested in finding out how you, your congregation, youth group or church school can contribute to our partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.

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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