



Vanuatu missionaries return

Six New Zealand volunteers, who for the past few years have been engaged in a variety of Global Mission roles for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV), came home at the end of 2018 with a singularly changed perspective on life.

Despite encountering different challenges, each has returned re-invigorated in their faith and with a new appreciation for the impact mission work can make.

Neville and Gloria Jones took up their Global Mission role in Vanuatu shortly before Cyclone Pam hit in 2015. The category five storm caused widespread damage and changed their mission from teaching to disaster recovery; it also made full use of their background in the New Zealand Army.

The couple had been part of an earlier mission team and have served with a regular church outreach in Vanuatu for several years. Gloria has applied her skills in dental outreach work and helped with children's reading.

"The Vanuatu people are very community-orientated, and while at times working on my own with the village people was challenging in material terms, relying on God for everyday needs was very enriching," she says. "It has changed my life a lot. Material things, money, are not that important."

Neville agrees, describing their years of mission as among the "most enriching experiences" he has had. "The challenges were many, but it has taught me that God takes care of our needs." He suggests global mission work isn't for everyone but urges those called to it to allow themselves to be led by God.

Martyn and Annette Vincent visited the Jones' in Vanuatu just after Cyclone Pam, later completing a mission tour of their own. Martyn applied his accountancy background to assist PCV and quantity surveyor Annette used her skills in the



Rev Dawn Daunauda with her Diploma One class at Vanuatu's Talua Theological Training Institute.



Annette and Martyn Vincent during their Global Mission tour in Vanuatu.



Global Mission volunteers Gloria and Neville Jones with the President of Vanuatu, Tallis Obed Moses, his wife Estella and their grandsons, who visited the Jones' before their departure.

healthcare sector and in administration. Both say they have grown spiritually.

"Doing something like this for someone else, especially overseas, was quite a step for us in terms of our faith. I have come back knowing that God has a plan for all of us, and that mission work is as much about spreading His word as it is about helping people," says Martyn, an ordained elder with the Knox Christian Centre in Hamilton East.

Annette helped deliver a sweeping new health programme at village level. "I found the call to make myself available to do anything that was needed very humbling."

The "selfless dedication" of both couples was noted by PCV before they left Vanuatu, with thanks given for their service at the 2018 PCV Assembly.

Presbyterian Church Global Mission Co-ordinator Phil King said all six of those now back in New Zealand had been well accepted in their roles because they respected the culture of Vanuatu and the leadership of the PCV.

"They were excellent ambassadors for the Christian faith, as well as for our Church," he adds. "It's important for us to look beyond ourselves; to share our faith, our experience and our resources, both human and material with the worldwide body of Christ. In doing so, we are enriched."

Another Global Mission volunteer, registered nurse Nicola Young, arrived in Vanuatu just before Cyclone Pam struck. After initially helping with emergency response, she moved into a health sector role, aligning with the PCV for the last two of her four years there.

Nicola found the "marked difference" in the way of life both enlightening and challenging, and said an outsider's perspective around the lack of resources emphasised the unimportance of material possessions. "It helped us review what we think we need in life. The Ni-Vanuatu people have strong family values and the church is often central to life. They are very resilient, consciously humble and patient people."

Phil King and Global Mission worked hard to ensure the volunteers' work had sound local buy-in, she says.

Anglican minister Rev Dawn Daunauda spent 10 months teaching at Vanuatu's Talua Theological Training College. After being caught up in evacuations linked to the Nelson fires on her return, then re-settling into an interim position in North Canterbury, she is grateful for the lessons the islands gave on living a simpler life.

"Life in Vanuatu poses different challenges," she says, "but the blessings far outweigh the challenges."

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)