**The Prayer of the Anglican Church of Melanesia**

The Anglican Church of Melanesia serves the peoples of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. These islands and peoples live literally the other side of the world; it takes 26 flying hours to get the Solomon Islands as they are a 4 hour flight flying NE out Brisbane. I have had the privilege of visiting the SI three times, the third time in 2014 as a representative of the Melanesian Mission UK, of which I am a trustee, at the triennial General Synod of ACoM.

My time as a trustee and the visits I have made to the SI have taught me many things. It is often said that those who live in developing world countries, who have little compared to those of us who live in the developed world, are happier and full of joy. My experience of the people of the SI would echo this observation. Of course there are issue, but the SI are rightly termed the ‘happy islands’.

It is important the peoples of the SI live in tune with nature. So, if the tide does not allow a boat to dock in the harbour no-one panics; they wait until it safe to do so. If the bishop is late (i.e. by a day and night – that is considered late!) for a Confirmation service because the river has flooded, they delay the celebrations until he arrives. Now of course, it is not possible to transfer this attitude to the UK context. Or is it? I have certainly been challenged to think through my understanding of time.

The prayer of the Anglican Church of Melanesia reflects the primary mode of transport. It echoes God’s almighty hand in creation and in vivid language comforts and challenges us to have trust in God on the voyage of life. It is very appropriate for us as an island nation at all times, especially in the times we are living through.

‘O Jesus, be the canoe that holds me up in the sea of life; be the rudder that keeps me in the straight road; be the outrigger that supports me in times of temptation. Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day. Keep my body strong so I can paddle steadfastly on the voyage of life. Amen’

With my prayers for you and the parish.

Martin

Revd Martin Cox