

# PARTNERS

MAGAZINE OF THE ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSION – AUSTRALIA LTD

**THIS EDITION**  
Invitation to share in  
God's Mission



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**Front cover photo:** Eucharist at the summit of Mount Pasi Pasi, PNG during the annual ABM Modawa Pilgrimage in August. © ABM/Meagan Morrison, 2013.

# Our Invitation



**Dear Friend,  
Welcome to the 2014 Autumn edition of Partners.**

The apostle Paul spent a considerable amount of time writing letters to the Churches which not only dealt with issues of church order, but also sought to build connection between and across faith communities. Paul recognised that it was important for us to listen and learn from each other and understood that we all had a role in God's mission.

During my time at ABM, I have come to value enormously the long term relationships which have been built with Partners. Following in the footsteps of Paul, these relationships continue to allow us to work together and create opportunities to listen and learn from each other. As these partnerships develop,

so too, does the sense of invitation – the invitation by God, that lies in mission.

As ABM's Education Officer, Greg Henderson, writes in respect of a Pilgrimage – that it is "a personal invitation from God, comprised of [God's] offer, and dependent upon the pilgrim's acceptance" – the same can be said about all mission. It is an invitation from God to us all as individuals or collectively as communities of faith, to share in God's mission. All of the stories that are featured in this edition, are invitations to commit to and engage in mission in different ways and in different places.

I invite you to read this edition of Partners looking specifically at the invitation that lies in each story.

Yours in Christ

**The Rev John Deane**

# South Sudan Conflict Leads to Emergency Appeal

**As the situation worsens in South Sudan, with tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) needing emergency relief aid, ABM has launched the South Sudan Conflict Emergency Appeal in support of its partner, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSSS).**

Violence has been escalating and has resulted in many people fleeing from their homes, impacting significantly on other states and surrounding countries. People are dying from hunger and disease.

There have been over 1,000 deaths with an estimated 194,000 IDPs, many seeking refuge in UN camps and also in church compounds.

The Most Rev Dr Daniel Deng Bul Yak, Archbishop of the ECSSS wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury appealing for assistance in the church's response to internally displaced and injured persons and to advocate for successful peace talks in Addis Ababa.

Christopher Brooks, ABM's Fundraising Manager said ABM responded to the call by establishing an Emergency Appeal.

"ABM has been supporting the Relief and Development arm of the Episcopal Church – Sudan Development Relief and Advocacy

(SUDRA) – to respond to several resource and conflict caused emergencies over the past two years, since the country voted to be independent of Sudan in January 2011," he said.

"It is essential that we continue this partnership and support in this time of great need. There have been plenty of causes to give to recently with the disaster in the Philippines and Christmas but the people of South Sudan need our support in this time of crisis so we aim to raise \$50,000 to assist the church to meet urgent needs of displaced and injured people, particularly in Bor Town and nearby areas."

The SUDRA Coordinator, the Archbishop and other church staff are leading the response and have travelled to Bor and Aweiral areas, where much of the fighting continues to take place, to assess the situation.

The church has an infrastructure capable of responding to these emergencies and an excellent network to ensure that emergency



People from Bor who fled to Aweiral to escape the fighting. © SUDRA, used with permission.



food and medical supplies get to where they are most needed – a network that complements large agencies and the UN response.

The crisis has stemmed from fighting in the capital, Juba, that broke out in late 2013 between soldiers loyal to both sides after President Salva Kiir accused the ex-vice President, Riek Machar, of attempting a coup, which he denies. The politicians are from different communities which has caused the violence to take on ethnic undertones.

Unfortunately, peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, have been delayed once again due to further disagreements. The South Sudanese rebels and government negotiators are expected to meet to try to negotiate a ceasefire.

Please donate to this Emergency Appeal and help the people of South Sudan.

Give online at [www.abmission.org/southsudan](http://www.abmission.org/southsudan) or phone 1300 302 663.

The full letter from Archbishop Deng Bul Yak is available at [www.abmission.org/southsudan](http://www.abmission.org/southsudan).

This article first appeared on our website on 6th January 2014. As the situation changes rapidly, please go to [www.abmission.org](http://www.abmission.org) for the latest update.

### **In December 2013, ABM's Philippines partners sent updates on the work they have been doing to reach communities devastated by Typhoon Yolanda.**

The Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) continues to work with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), in coordinating logistics and using the latter's networks to maximise efforts to distribute and support humanitarian relief activities. ECP has also commenced planning for the next phase of their relief and rehabilitation work.

The Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) through its own Task Force Emergency Relief (TFER) did its own assessment; many of its congregations were located in the areas directly affected by the super typhoon.

The Emergency Appeal ABM launched following the typhoon has so far raised \$335,000. Thank you for your ongoing support of ABM's Emergency Appeals.

ECP plans to use remaining funds collected by ABM from its generous donors, (and other Anglican partners), to assist communities (around 4,000 households) in more remote parts of the typhoon-affected areas in a long-term and sustainable recovery.

In this phase, people will be assisted to re-build their houses and farmlands, develop new or improved sources of livelihoods where needed, and install new solar lighting systems to replace those destroyed in the typhoon. While these communities are re-building their lives, the church will continue to provide emergency food, all sourced locally from community projects not affected by the typhoon, to ensure the local economies are strengthened.

Another facet of the longer term recovery is that the church will partner with selected social enterprise organisations to help them rebuild typhoon-damaged infrastructure and equipment and get them back on their feet so they can resume their work of helping the economically marginalised local communities to access economic opportunities.

ABM's donors can be confident that their funds are continuing to be used to meet the needs of communities badly affected by the typhoon, and will make a lasting difference as people are assisted to rebuild their lives and have a more secure future.

# Anglican Alliance program celebrates first graduate from Zambia

**“The Agents of Change program has made me realise that the passion I had to serve the community can come true...”**

Isaac Nhdlovu who works for ABM’s Partner, Zambia Anglican Council (ZAC), graduated from the Anglican Alliance’s ground-breaking Agents of Change course in late 2013. His success was welcomed by the Anglican Alliance chair, Archbishop Albert Chama, who said that Isaac has blazed a trail for others to follow and would inspire his fellow students around the Communion.

Archbishop Chama said, “Agents of Change is a rigorous academic course, developed for the Anglican Alliance by The Open University in the UK. Completing it requires commitment, especially for people who have work and family obligations.”

The course is completed by distance learning and aims to equip global Anglicans who are on the frontline of community development.

Isaac commenced the Agents of Change program in 2012 and completed the six modules: consultation, inclusion, governance, protection



Isaac Nhdlovu outside the cathedral in Lusaka, Zambia. © Anglican Church of Zambia, 2013.

of vulnerable people, finance and work programming. Each module involved reading, practical activities, and discussions with a support group of fellow students.

The lessons learned in each module had to be applied to a practical program so that at the end of the course Isaac had a proposal for a project that could be completed and bring benefits to his community.

Supporting him in his project work has been Eleanor Sanderson, a lecturer in development studies in New Zealand. She said that Isaac’s

project work was comparable with some of the best she had ever seen.

Isaac’s project is to set up a motorbike ambulance service to provide access to health services. This especially targets pregnant women who often need emergency assistance and cannot travel the long distances to get to a hospital.

This course assignment was not just an exercise for Isaac – it is his vision and long-term goal to have sufficient funding to set up a motorbike ambulance project in his own local community.

Isaac said, “The Agents of Change program has made me realise that the passion I had to serve the community can come true... Looking at the high rate of maternal mortality in the rural areas and the transport problems which people face in rural communities, I thought I could do something to help improve access to good health, instead of letting people die in their homes due to a lack of transport.”

Married with two children, the 37 year old found it challenging balancing family life and work commitments with finding time to study. The course has been a real sacrifice for Isaac and his family.

**The Agents of Change program has made me realise that the passion I had to serve the community can come true...**

Isaac has worked with the Anglican Church of Zambia for the past 14 years. He currently has a demanding yet rewarding role working with the Zambian Bishops, the General Secretary and the National Programs Office facilitating administrative matters and event management.

In fact, Isaac regularly facilitated ABM staff when they visited ZAC. Following a trip to Zambia in July, ABM's Africa Program Officer Beth Snedden said, "Isaac was not only our driver for our three day monitoring trip (1,400 kms); he was also a strong source of information about the culture and the places we visited.

"What impressed me the most though was that after seven hours of driving on the first day, he said he needed to work on his Agents of Change assignment. Strong dedication and commitment to his study, and to his end goal of inputting back into his local community," Beth said.



A Petauke village. © ABM/Beth Snedden, 2013.

The Most Rev Albert Chama, who is the Archbishop of Central Africa (including Zambia) said he was delighted to see the first student of the Agents of Change program come from one of the pilot projects in Lusaka.

He said, "So many congratulations to Isaac and every blessing on his work as an Agent of Change here in Zambia".

Zambia's success in the Agents of Change program is expected to continue as the Rev

Gabriel Phiri and the Rev Edwin Mwanza are also nearing the end of their studies.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby said, "The Agents of Change program is one of the most exciting innovations from the Anglican Alliance. I am delighted to see this collaboration and over the last 18 months we

have seen the potential of this partnership to bring the best approaches in distance learning to strengthen the skills of Anglicans working with their churches in the development of their local communities."

For more information on the Agents of Change program, visit <http://www.anglicanalliance.org/agentsofchange>

To find out about ABM's projects in Zambia visit the website [www.abmission.org](http://www.abmission.org)

(Article sourced from Anglican Alliance website with permission, and adapted by Beth Snedden and Elizabeth Baker)

# News Snippets

## The Most Rev Dr Mouneer Hanna Anis dated 15 January 2014:

### Egyptians write their Future

Bishop Mouneer Hanna Anis of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt wrote following the referendum in Egypt.

“Once again, the Egyptian people have surprised the world. The supporters of the former President Mohammed Mursi called people to boycott the Referendum. Surprisingly enough, millions of people went to the polls to vote! Going to the polls was risky because of those who were trying to use violence to scare people from voting, but the army and the police exerted a great effort to protect the polls and to give assurance to the people who would like to vote.

Unlike the previous Constitution that was written under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, the new Constitution affirms equality and the rights of women within the Egyptian society. It was a phenomenon to see crowds of women at each poll, many of whom queued for hours to vote. Some of them were singing and rejoicing, and even dancing, before

and after they cast their vote. There was a general spirit of joy among the people of Egypt who voted, in a way that never happened before. We, alongside other Christian denominations, encouraged the people of Egypt to fulfill their civil duty to vote and to pray for the future of Egypt.

The new Constitution affirms the rights of citizenship, and prohibits all forms of discrimination. It has clauses that ensure the development of education and health care for every citizen. I can see my beloved country standing on the doorstep of a new day. Do pray that the hopes and dreams of millions of people, of a more settled, secure and democratic country, will be fulfilled.”



### Young Anglicans Share their Faith

In late 2013, ABM staff enjoyed a visit from a youth group (pictured above) from St Albans, Yarrabah, in Queensland. They were in Sydney for a week of mission. Staff were entertained by performances from the youth group as well as rapper 'Stain' (Eddie) and poet Jess, both from Fusion Australia. It was great to meet them and to see young Christians expressing their faith in such creative ways!

### Online Resources

There are plenty of resources for you on ABM's new website!

Visit [www.abmission.org](http://www.abmission.org) to stay up-to-date with news. You can also download copies of past Partners' magazines, the 2014 Prayer Diary and Project Book.

ABM also has a YouTube channel which is home to some videos showcasing our Partners' work. Just search Anglican Board of Mission in YouTube and discover the great stories we are able to share.





# AID ANGLICANS IN DEVELOPMENT

A SUPPLEMENT OF *PARTNERS* – THE MAGAZINE OF THE ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSION – AUSTRALIA LTD



**WE CAN  
END POVERTY  
2015**  
MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

## Millennium Development Goals

- 1 End Poverty and Hunger
- 2 Achieve Universal Primary Education
- 3 Promote Gender Equality
- 4 Reduce Child Deaths
- 5 Improve Maternal Health
- 6 **Combat AIDS and Malaria**
- 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8 Strengthen the Global Partnership

[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

# UNDERSTANDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

There are 8 Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the international community in 2000. Each goal is broken into measurable targets and indicators.

In this edition of *Anglicans in Development* we take a closer look at Goal 6.



## TARGETS

- 1. Halt and begin to reverse, by 2015, the spread of HIV/AIDS**
- 2. Achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it**
- 3. Halt and begin to reverse, by 2015, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases**

## QUICK FACTS

- > Worldwide, the number of people newly infected with HIV continues to fall, dropping 33 per cent from 2001 to 2011.
- > In 2012, 290,000 fewer children under age 15 were infected with HIV than in 2001.
- > A record 9.7 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV in 2012.
- > In the decade since 2000, 1.1 million deaths from malaria were averted.
- > Treatment for tuberculosis has saved some 20 million lives between 1995 and 2011.

Source: UN 2013 Fact Sheet

## COMBATTING HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis represent a major challenge to all facets of development. The cost of sickness can be measured in economic terms as well as in terms of human suffering, so improved public health should underpin all community development.

Mosquito nets are cheap to produce and effective against the spread of malaria. The greatest challenge is often distributing the mosquito nets to the areas where they are needed most. This is where churches can play a vital role in protecting the health of communities in poorer or more remote areas. The Zambia Anglican Council has distributed more than 650,000 mosquito nets under a Nets for Life program.

It is not just logistical challenges that need to be overcome in

order to prevent the spread of disease. Some diseases like HIV are associated with great stigma and widespread misunderstanding. Greater understanding of how HIV is spread and how it may be treated is essential if people living with HIV are to be treated with dignity and communities are to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

ABM's China Partner, The Amity Foundation, is a Christian initiated organisation that has been working to improve health outcomes in poorer, rural areas of China since the 1980s. One current Amity project that ABM is supporting seeks to combat HIV/AIDS and improve public health in Yunnan Province, located in the far southwest of China along the borders of Myanmar (Burma), Vietnam and Laos.

The project will improve the care and support of people living with HIV by providing opportunities for social interaction, counselling and nutrition assistance, as well as physical check-ups. Amity will also work closely with the local health services to upgrade their



A health worker educates villagers about health issues. © ABM/Amity 2011.

ability to manage HIV and related conditions. This is important because currently, almost half the health workers in the project area are unaware of how HIV is spread and 91% of people living with HIV

feel excluded from the general community.

Activities to reduce the stigma around HIV/AIDS are an important part of efforts to reduce the spread of the disease and ensure

that more people are able to live healthy, productive lives. Please pray for the work of The Amity Foundation and everyone working to combat the spread of infectious diseases.

**THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) ARE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL GLOBAL ANTI-POVERTY PUSH IN HISTORY.**

**LET'S STEP UP ACTION TO THE 2015 MDG TARGET DATE AND BEYOND.**

**MDG6**



COMBAT HIV/AIDS,  
MALARIA AND  
OTHER DISEASES



**9.7 MILLION  
PEOPLE  
WERE  
RECEIVING  
LIFESAVING  
MEDICINES  
FOR HIV  
IN 2012**



**1.1 MILLION  
MALARIA  
DEATHS  
WERE  
PREVENTED  
IN THE  
SPAN OF  
10 YEARS**

**LET'S  
STEP  
UP**



**7 MILLION PEOPLE  
STILL LACKED  
ACCESS TO  
ANTIRETROVIRAL  
THERAPY FOR  
HIV IN 2011**



**80% OF  
MALARIA  
DEATHS  
OCCUR IN  
JUST 14  
COUNTRIES**

# ABM's Encounter Visitor From PNG



**Fr Grayson Elea from Popondota Diocese in Papua New Guinea is currently visiting Rockhampton Diocese as an Encounter Visitor.**

He arrived in Australia just prior to the Christmas celebrations for a three month visit.

ABM's Encounter program offers participants the opportunity to learn from ministry and life in Australia and also provides insight for ABM about experiences in our partner countries.

Fr Grayson has preached to congregations and in fact preached for the first time in Australia at St John's South Sea Islander Church on Christmas Day.

Fr Grayson has also visited the North Rockhampton Nursing Home and six households as part of the pastoral visiting program and has received very positive feedback.

He will continue to spend time in Rockhampton Diocese and experience church life in Australia and take his learnings and experiences back to Papua New Guinea.

Find out more about the ABM Encounter Program at [www.abmission.org/pages/the-encounter-program.html](http://www.abmission.org/pages/the-encounter-program.html)

**In 2013 Fr Rickson George Maomaoru, a school chaplain in the Solomon Islands, spent three months in Australia.**

He spent time visiting schools and in a Parish and explained he learnt so much, including that the liturgy was different here from what he is used to in the Solomons.

"Some are evangelical, some are very traditional, and what I can tell from that is we need a balance of the liturgy to be inclusive for everybody and it's very important for me to learn about the liturgy here."

"I'd like to thank ABM for their vision about this Encounter Program because that's the way we can enrich each other and we can experience that spiritual enrichment of how we should see different people, and we connect with each other and strengthen each other through this kind of program."

"To me I see that this work must be strengthened and continued, and I think if we continue we will see a lot of fruitful ministry and a lot of

good things will come out of this program.

"My prayer is that God will continue to bless you as you continue to look more outer vision into the world and I think your engagement and your commitment in this work are the reality of the five marks of mission."



# The Beauty of Invitation

## A small group of pilgrims from the ABM Auxiliary recently found new meaning in God's invitation to journey in the Philippines.

It is becoming commonplace to hear the word 'pilgrimage' being used these days. We hear of people going 'on pilgrimage' to various places such as Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain and the holy sites of Jerusalem. There is the option to visit these places as part of a tour group, but more and more people are opting for an authentic experience rather than the stop-go-take-photo whirlwind that most of us know is characteristic of your typical tour group – an experience that transforms and changes the way you see and experience life... and God.

So then, what makes a pilgrimage different to a tour? Well, "a lot actually", was the first response made by my fellow pilgrims after reflecting on their journey to Sagada, high in the Mountain Province of the Philippines. It has been said that "A pilgrimage differs from a tour. It is a personal invitation from God, comprised of [God's] offer and dependent upon the pilgrim's acceptance... A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to which the pilgrim joyfully responds 'yes' to God's invitation." The idea of invitation not only has a lot to say to us about the nature of pilgrimage, but also on the nature of God's

mission and how the church participates in partnership in that mission. More on that as we progress...

Day one saw us become well acquainted with traffic in Manila, not to mention the first and second gears of our vehicle before winding our way up to the bustling Baguio City. Upon arrival we were greeted with a lively Children's festival at Christ Church Kias where pilgrims Lyn Hall, Mary Catford and Leonie Henderson witnessed some outstanding performances by children and youth of the local church community. The ABM Auxiliary supported Christian education in the Philippines last year, so this was a special opportunity for the auxiliary members to observe some of the great things that the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) is doing with younger generations.

We were fortunate enough to have been able to visit a number of Sunday schools in greater Baguio City before journeying further north to Sagada. One of these Sunday schools was St Polycarp's in greater Baguio City. After joining together in worship with the local congregation



Children at St Polycarp's Sunday School.  
© ABM/Greg Henderson, 2013.

we were invited to meet the church's Sunday school teachers and the children who were busy colouring and drawing on worksheets that were purposefully linked to the themes of the lectionary cycle.

One teenager circled the room offering encouragement and assistance to the younger ones as they happily added life to their previously black and white stencils – he was the Sunday school teacher. But he wasn't the only one – two other teens were teaching in the adjacent room and some others gathered to meet us and share with us how they run their classes each Sunday. They told us that it is quite common for teens to



Sunday School lesson at St Polycarp's.  
© ABM/Greg Henderson, 2013.

accept the invitation to serve God and others in this way in the Philippines.

For these teens, teaching Sunday school is a way of passing on what they had once received. The ECP has been promoting the concept of 'receivers to givers' in many areas of its work by inviting people to explore ways in which they may participate in God's mission by using their abilities and strengths. If you ask these teens why they teach, they say that it makes sense to teach the younger children. They were once the ones sitting with pencil and crayon in hand. Now they gratefully contribute to the life of the church and mentor their brothers and sisters in Christ

until the younger children are old enough to do the same! All of this comes by saying 'yes' to the invitation.

Our journey to Sagada was not only one of more windy roads and breathtaking mountain scenery, but also one full of invitations to stop and share meals and stories with local church members – authentic invitations of

fellowship. Along the way we regularly met with the ECW (Episcopal Church Women) who are a network of women committed to supporting the work of the ECP who take a prominent role in a wide range on community based projects. And what an inspiring bunch they were! One group ran a local canteen that was open seven days a week in one of the economically poorest places in the Philippines, another group supported families in grief after the death of a community member and yet another maintained an organic farm used to demonstrate to local farmers the many benefits of sustainable organic farming practices.

All of these women (not to mention their male

counterparts in the Brotherhood of St Andrew in the ECP) had answered 'yes' to the call and invitation to be God's agents of love, hope and justice in their part of the world. Their invitation to us pilgrims was to share with them some of our story and to hear some of theirs over food, laughter and much conversation. We moved on in our journey after these times of fellowship with a new perspective on what it means to be partners in mission and an appreciation of the beauty and non-coercive nature of invitation.

Our pilgrim group found that saying yes to the invitation of going on pilgrimage to the Philippines is just a shadow of the invitation of God to partner in mission on the pilgrimage journey of life. It is a glimpse of the bigger picture: We saw and experienced this as we were welcomed, generously fed and sustained on our journey by brothers and sisters in Christ who we had never met, who taught us what mission looks like in their own context and of the many ways God's spirit is already working in places that many of us would least expect.

Needless to say, the pilgrims were thankful they were not on a tour!

**Greg Henderson**  
Education Officer

# Vanuatu and VIP Toilets!

**Sabene Gomes visited Vanuatu to meet with ABM's Partner, the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) and to monitor our projects. ABM currently funds the Water and Sanitation project and the Literacy project in Vanuatu.**

During her visit, Sabene met with staff at ACOM's office in Luganville on the island of Espiritu Santo. She noticed that the CPP (Church Partnership Program) Coordinator, Joses Togese, is very well respected within the communities in which they work.

"Joses has established a good relationship with key community members such as parish priests and school principals who seem very comfortable in approaching Joses with their concerns and issues," she said.

ABM has been working with ACOM in implementing water and sanitation systems in the Dioceses of Vanuatu and New Caledonia, and Banks and Torres.

Sabene visited some of the water projects and



One of the VIP toilets in Vanuatu. © ABM/Sabene Gomes, 2013.

was happy to see that many people were using the water tanks funded by ABM.

"While I was at one of the sites, I actually saw some people coming up and using the water tank which was a really good thing to see.

We also got reports from the majority of the priests in that area of people bringing empty bottles to fill them up and then using them at home," she said.

"I really think it's benefiting the community and



even the surrounding communities where the tanks are, so that was very impressive.”

Sabene reported that new VIP (Ventilation Improved Pit) toilets are being installed in some of the targeted communities. These systems came out of a government initiative to improve and create public awareness about safe sanitation practices.

At one of the project sites, VIP toilets are being used strictly for demonstration purposes so that people, especially children, can be educated about using the toilets and safe clean water practices as well such as washing their hands.

Sabene also caught up with Ethel George and Edith Willie from the Mothers’ Union (MU) who work with ACOM on the Literacy Program in Vanuatu. The program relies on volunteers to be trained as teachers who can then go out and work within their communities.

They are hoping for a motivational skills workshop to assist them in ways to communicate with the public about the importance of voluntary services, and to get more people involved in teaching literacy.



Sabene Gomes, ABM’s Pacific Programs’ Coordinator, at the MU Centre. © ABM, 2013.

She is hoping to organise some workshops on capacity building in the future for the literacy teachers as well as MU workers.

From her visit to the project sites, Sabene

could see that in some locations, the local people have adapted their own systems and methods of doing things, so it is important that ABM is supportive of them and of the government’s involvement in the projects.

“Things are looking good, hopefully they’ll even be maintained in the future and we can continue to roll out our programs.”

“Overall I really enjoyed my experience in Vanuatu and I was really happy with the way things were working with the VCPP program. We’re trying to find ways to move forward and maintain our program for developing some sustainability.”

One of Sabene’s goals in her new role is to learn to speak Bislama, the local language spoken in Vanuatu, and also Solomon Islands pidgin.

She said, “I think people feel more comfortable and it’s a good way for me

to build relationships with them as well. . . Bislama is a good language to learn and hopefully then I can use those skills.”

Read more about our programs in Vanuatu and how you can support them at [www.abmission.org/pages/vanuatu.html](http://www.abmission.org/pages/vanuatu.html)

# Surprises in the Solomons

## **A week in the Solomon Islands visiting the projects and people that ABM supports provided the opportunity to share stories that might otherwise be untold. Elizabeth Baker writes.**

I've been lucky enough to travel to many different countries, some developed, some not. So when I was told I'd be spending a week in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, I thought I'd set my expectations appropriately.

I certainly wasn't expecting it to be a developed city and I was also not expecting it to be a remote village. Yet when I arrived in Honiara in August I was surprised.

Surprised at the village-style markets we saw on the street kerb immediately outside the airport, interested by the lack of infrastructure that was presented as we drove down the one main road and shocked at the stares I was getting as a blonde.

The surprises didn't stop there. I spent a week interviewing the people working and volunteering for the Anglican Church of Melanesia and its affiliated projects and was continually surprised by the wonderful work I was witnessing and the inspiring people I had the privilege to meet.

On day one I met Sister Doreen, a vivacious

woman filled with the strongest faith I have witnessed. Sister Doreen runs the Christian Care Centre, the only women's refuge in the Solomon Islands.

During my visit we were shown the sewing machines and material that is provided through support from ABM. So far in 2013 the Christian Care Centre has supported 70 women and 56 children.

**“It was clear that the work ABM supports is making real differences in the lives of locals in the Solomons.”**

Day two introduced us to the women of the Mothers' Union (MU) in the Church of Melanesia who volunteer their time to run the Positive Parenting Program that ABM funds.

These women are transforming communities by educating and empowering women with parenting skills and information that helps them to build community and strengthen values.



Positive Parenting workshop.  
© ABM/Vivienne For, 2013.

During the visit I was pleased to sit in on the first session of the Positive Parenting Program where I met seven women who were enthusiastic to learn. Jillian, a young woman with a 1-month-old baby confessed she knew nothing about child health, hygiene and disease. The majority of the group admitted to knowing little about how HIV and AIDS is spread.

Without this program, MU and ABM's financial support, these women would continue to lack opportunity to learn and more importantly, teach their families and own communities.

Mary, the Program Coordinator who works full time but in a voluntary capacity, told me, "It's hard work, but it's worth it. We value our work – it's God's work."





**ABM** Anglican Board of Mission - Australia  
**Working for Love, Hope & Justice**

### ***The Five Marks of Mission***

- **Witness to Christ's saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people**
- **Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith**
- **Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy**
- **Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation**
- **Protect, care for and renew life on our planet**

*Adapted from the Anglican Consultative Council*

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