Chapter 2

Changes in Mission Policy, 1894-1975

In 1894, under the leadership of Cecil Wilson, a new era began in the activities of the Melanesian Mission. It was a time when the Mission recognized the need to assess its performance during the first forty-five years of its establishment and where it was necessary to make changes and to set new goals for the future. Many things had happened in Melanesia during this period and it was the right time for an evaluation to be made. One problem that had become very clear during this period was the difficulty of separating Christianity as a religious enterprise from Christianity as an agent promoting a particular vision of civilization. That is, Christianity and Western civilization seemed to have a symbiotic relationship so that one could not be promoted without the other. It was under such an atmosphere that Cecil Wilson took charge of the Diocese of Melanesia. He could therefore be described as one who was involved either in "dismantling" or "building up" of the Diocese. Montgomery, an Australian bishop who had travelled in Melanesia, describes the work of Wilson as follows:

> I know no one whose work needs our appreciative sympathy more than Bishop Cecil Wilson. He came as a very young bishop to a diocese dominated by the great personalities of the Selwyns and of Patteson, and with a distinctive tradition created by them. He came, too, just at the time when the necessity for great changes

> had become apparent, not because the old traditions were not noble and wise, far from it, there never was a mission more nobly planned; but because a silent revolution had passed over all mission work everywhere.[49]

This statement by the Tasmanian bishop summarises the fundamental reasons for the need to change the approach to the work of the Melanesian Mission during this period. Montgomery said:

> I have no doubt whatever that were the Selwyns and Patteson alive today they would show their statesmanship by adapting themselves to the changed conditions. It is no real loyalty to those great men to keep blindly to their methods in times which have changed so completely as ours have since they planned the Mission.[50]

However, in spite of the logical reasons given by Montgomery to pursue change, some of the missionaries who worked under the regime of the Selwyns and Patteson had reservations about the appropriateness of some of those new approaches. For instance, Robert Codrington, a former senior missionary of the Mission said;

> Bishop Selwyn in a cutter among untouched savages is not like Bishop Wilson in a 500 ton steel steamer among people who talk pidgin English.... We were not in all respects models no doubt but in that we were good missionaries – we desired to know and live with the natives. I fear that there has been in that respect a considerable deterioration in Norfolk Island and a change in the

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[49]Montgomery, 259.

[50]Sara Harrison Sohmer, "A Selection of Fundamentals": The Intellectual Background of the Melanesian Mission of the Church of England, 1850-1914 (UMI Dissertation Service, 1988), 108.

way of look at the working of things.[51]

Another former missionary Walter Ivens expressed the view that the new approaches could not achieve greater things without being "imbued with the traditional methods of the work which we inherit from the great men of the past."[52]

On June 11, 1894 Cecil Wilson was consecrated third bishop of Melanesia in Auckland, New Zealand, and on June 29 was enthroned at the diocesan headquarters on Norfolk Island. Representing Melanesia on these two occasions were the first two Melanesian priests, George Sarawia and Henry Tagalad. Cecil Wilson was educated at Tonbridge and attended Jesus College in Cambridge, and like Patteson, he was a good cricket player.

Decision to Establish Schools in Melanesia

As the new leader of the Mission, Wilson's first task was to improve the quality of education for catechists at the Norfolk Island Central School by recruiting more trained teachers from England. However, while maintaining and improving the Central School was necessary, he believed that the time was right to establish village schools on the islands. Before he was consecrated bishop in 1894, Wilson had bought a piece of land on Gela, in the Solomon Islands, and

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[51]Ibid., 109.

[52]Ibid., 109.

it was there in 1896, that Siota School was established. Later Bunana and Pamua schools on Gela and Makira respectively in the Solomons, and Vureas on Motalava in Vanuatu were opened. In the meantime, other schools for Ysabel, Guadalcanal and Malaita were being proposed.

However, the decision by Wilson to move the Diocesan headquarters to Siota did not come until towards the time of his retirement, so he decided to leave it to his successor to implement. One reason for this decision was that Melanesia was less isolated than it used to be. When the Solomon Islands were declared a British Protectorate in 1893, the Melanesian Mission was no longer the only agent of missionary activities and source of outside contact in the islands a status which the Mission had enjoyed for forty-five years. After the establishment of the Protectorate, the Government realised that it needed to be financially self-supporting so it invited overseas companies to establish large-scale coconut plantations in the Islands. The government also recognised that the presence of more mission agencies would speed up economic development, so it invited other missions into areas where there had been no mission activities. The Roman Catholics arrived in 1898, Methodists in 1902, South Sea Evangelical Mission in 1904, and Seventh Day Adventists in 1914. These new missions moved in with enthusiasm, so that by 1914, the Melanesian Mission was merely a partner among several missionary organizations in the islands.

Competition among the different missions may have been a factor in the growth of the Church during this period.

Changes on the Life of Melanesians

The return of the Melanesians who had worked in sugar-cane plantations in Queensland led to the formation of South Sea Evangelical Mission and also contributed more broadly to the changes that occurred during this period. In 1907, nine thousand Melanesians returned to the islands with experiences and life-styles they had acquired in Australia.[53] They had been exposed to some aspects of Western civilization and Christianity, so their return had some impact on the life of the people in Melanesia. Men and women started wearing European clothes, hats and shoes, and pidgin English became popular. In fact, this was the beginning of the establishment of pidgin English in the islands. Those who became Christians while in Australia wanted to continue with what they had been used to, so they wanted the prayers to be said in English and not in their own languages. The Europeans who had taught them the Christian faith in Australia followed them to the islands, and thus began the, SSEM, a zealous organization that stressed Melanesian leadership.

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[53]Fox, 44.

Major Developments

No doubt, Wilson was the architect of the second phase of the Melanesian Mission which lasted about eighty years. It would probably be right to say that much of what is seen in the Church of Melanesia today are fruits of the tree that Wilson planted. He initiated changes not only in the approach to work, but also in structure and institutional aspects. Two major development which occurred during this phase were the "westernization" of the Mission and the establishment of the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

(1) **Westernization:**

Under the westernization approach of the Mission, the following notable changes occurred.

(a) The relocation of the Diocesan headquarters from Norfolk Island to Siota in Solomon Islands. Although the decision to move the Central School to the Islands was made during the time of Wilson, it was not implemented until 1919. Wilson retired in 1911, and Cecil John Wood who succeeded him had also retired in 1918 before the move occurred. The move came at the beginning of John Manwaring Steward's episcopacy and it allowed the bishop and all missionaries to live permanently in mission stations and schools in the Islands. The wooden buildings at Norfolk Island were pulled down and put up at Siota and at other mission

stations to house the missionaries. St. Barnabas Chapel was given to the people of Norfolk Island to use, and Norfolk Island joined the Diocese of Sydney. The placing of missionaries in the mission stations resulted in the development of teaching institutions, and that was a move away from the old village instruction approach. As expected, the continuous presence of the missionaries in the Islands made quite a difference in the growth of the Church. To compare the growth rate of the Church during the second phase of the Mission's operation, Darrell Whiteman presents the following statistics:

Year	No. of baptized converts	No. of schools
1894	8,929	122
1910	13,125	352
1918	14,194	318
1934	29,081	413
1942	35,000 est.	no returns

(b) The recruitment of women missionaries. Another new development under the leadership of Cecil Wilson was the recruitment of women. This does not mean to say that women had never been involved in the activities of the mission because from the time it was founded, Sarah Selwyn and other missionary wives had always played active roles in training the girls

at the Central School. Janet Crawford quotes Sarah Selwyn who wrote in 1866;

> A word too must be here said about the female department on which so much depends. What will do more for any set of people than carefully trained mothers, for be the fathers what they may, instructed, wise, and good, and as polished as you please, ignorant wild unnurtured mothers will neutralize any advantage to the children. Mrs. Pritt's department therefore of training the women stands in a high, almost in the first place, and to her chiefly is due the care which converts the raw material into a very useful fabric with the orderly habits and neat ways that tell so much in domestic and social life. For the most part the women are the wives of some scholars, and they learn in school like the rest, and in an industrial way become quick little seamstresses and tolerable washers and ironers.[54]

The only reason that white women were discouraged from going to the Islands was that it was dangerous for them because of the climate, violence and malaria. The first white woman who tried to go and live in the islands was Helen Rossiter, wife of Dr. Henry Welchman. She went to live with her husband on Gela in 1896, but unfortunately she died just after a few months in January 1897, and this re-inforced the belief that the Islands were unsuitable for women missionaries.

However, in the 1900's, Cecil Wilson recruited women, and initially they went to the Islands in groups of two or three and established women's stations. In 1905, they started a station on Gela in Solomon Islands, in 1906

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[54]Crawford, 58.

on Pentecost in the New Hebrides and in 1909 on Mota, in Banks and Torres, New Hebrides.[55] The aim of the women's stations was to provide training for Melanesian women similar to the women's programmes which were offered at Kohimarama, Auckland and Norfolk Island. The training "focussed on good Victorian values of cleanliness, obedience and good manners, with emphasis on reading and writing and understanding Christianity through Bible stories".[56] During this period, the missionaries believed that women in Melanesia were not treated like human beings, but were seen as "little better than pigs."[57] One main task of the women missionaries therefore was to educate the Melanesian society to believe that women are equal partners of men, and to teach women about self esteem in order to improve their condition in the Islands. However, a missionary by the name of Charles Brook who worked on Gela in the Central Solomons in 1867 said that the missionary view about the place of women in the Melanesian society was an exaggeration based on a lack of understanding of the situation in Melanesia in those days. He said that he observed on Gela that women were respected as leaders in their communities. They

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[55]Whiteman, 178.

[56]Ibid., 178.

[57]Florence Coombe, School Days in Norfolk Island (London: S.P.C.K., 1909), 123.

"occupied an influential social role in village affairs, as messengers, mediators between enemies, and negotiators of the loans."[58] That observation by Brook is, in fact, true in matrilineal societies in Melanesia, and the same is true in Ysabel where land ownership is passed on through women. The exclusion of women from some religious and social occasions in Melanesia was in fact the work of the missionaries, because in those days all missionaries were males. However, as time went, women joined the mission as nurses and teachers and thus began the contribution of women missionaries in the areas of health care and education, as they went around establishing clinics and girls' schools throughout the diocese. By 1935, there were twenty-six women who were posted in different schools and clinics throughout the diocese.

(c) Language: Another issue which was debated during Wilson's time was whether or not English should replace Mota as the language of communication and instruction in the Mission schools. No clear decision was given, but Bunana School which had used English was allowed to continue using English, while the other schools to use the native language of the area. But after some years, it was decided that English would be used for a trial period in all schools. The trial lasted for two years, and then all

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[58]Hilliard, 150.

school reverted back to Mota. This was the beginning of the Mission becoming focussed on the schools to the detriment of the welfare of the masses in the villages. The Mission emphasized the development of boarding schools such as Pawa, Maravovo and Alangaula for boys; and Pamua and Bunana for girls; and hospitals and clinics such as Fauabu and St. Clare's Taroaniara; and the Ship-yard Training School and Printing Press at Taroaniara to portray the achievements and the image of the Mission. These were all positive undertakings because they attempted to target the children and young people as the adults were committed to their old ways of life and were very slow in accepting change. However, there seemed to be a deviation from the original aim of the mission to develop "a village-centred native civilization suited to the Melanesian climate and social environment."[59] That idea had been abandoned, and the confidence and trust which the Selwyns and Patteson had placed in the Melanesians had disappeared. Wilson believed that Melanesians could not carry out any task with competence without continuous supervision by white missionaries, so he had to recruit more European missionaries. When he became a bishop in 1894, there were only nine European missionaries in the Mission; eight years later, in 1902, he had increased the number to twenty-eight.

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[59]Hilliard, 259.

(2) **Establishment of the Anglo-Catholic Tradition**

Another development during the second phase was the establishment of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. At first, the move created some concern among the missionaries themselves. Some of the older missionaries who were recruited under phase one of the Mission were uncomfortable with some of the things that the young priests introduced. Selwyn and Patteson were moderately high church in orientation, but John Cecil Wood, who became the fourth bishop in 1912, was the first bishop to be regarded as a strong Anglo-Catholic. It was from him that Melanesians saw for the first time a bishop wearing a cope and mitre during his enthronement at Norfolk Island. The Melanesians who were ready to sing him a welcome hymn were so awestruck they could not sing when they saw him in his episcopal vestments.[60] During his term in office he recruited strong Anglo-Catholic missionaries, and those who were not were more or less forced to comply.

One of the reasons often given for the establishment of the Anglo-Catholic tradition in Melanesia was that Melanesians were traditionally expressive people and it was believed that a ritualistic liturgy would attract them. The new things they introduced were mainly liturgical rituals. They included brightly coloured vestments, positioning of the altar in the east, making the sign of cross, and the

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[60]Whiteman, 333.

terms "Mass" or "Eucharist" were used to replace the Melanesian word - "Ganarongo" which means "Holy Feast" in Mota and was originally used by Patteson. Young Melanesians who trained for the priesthood were taught to perform the priestly functions in a Catholic manner. Priests were called "father", and the Bishop was said to have taken the place of the Apostles. Sung Eucharist and Sung Evensong were introduced. Private confession became part of preparation for Holy Communion, and during Holy Week priests often made themselves available in the Church to hear private confession. Patronal festivals were observed and celebrated with dancing and feasting. The different liturgical seasons were strictly observed and celebrated by distinct liturgical rituals. During the entire season of Lent, fasting was encouraged and the stations of the Cross would be re-enacted during the Evensong every Friday and concluding on Good Friday with different forms of service, usually matins in the morning, ante-communion at mid-morning and a three hour service on the "seven words on the Cross" from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. On Palm Sunday, there would be procession with palms, and on Rogation Sunday there would be a procession through the village to bless houses, schools, clinics, garden, canoes, the sea, rivers and the cemetery.

During the time of John Steward who succeeded Cecil Wood, an agreement was reached to establish uniformity in liturgical rituals throughout the diocese

so as not to confuse the Melanesians with the high and low church practices. And in 1926, a conference agreed that the Melanesian Mission would identify itself with the Catholic tradition of the Anglican Church and passed a resolution that the Holy Eucharist was to be the main service of worship in all schools and churches and that "the catholic faith be taught in its entirety throughout the Mission."[61] However, so as not to create conflict with those who associated themselves with the low church tradition in New Zealand and in other parts of the Anglican Communion, the decision to be identified with the Anglo-Catholic tradition was not highlighted as an important issue in the mission.

The strategy that they used to establish the Anglo-Catholic tradition was to place missionaries in schools and then Anglo-Catholic rituals were taught there. As young men and later, women, returned to their villages as teachers, catechists and nurses, so spread the Anglo-Catholic tradition. A sense of reverence and orderliness became an important part of the liturgical rituals along with strict use of the Prayer book. It became clear that faith formation was nurtured by the liturgy, and therefore the emphasis in the training of catechists and priests was on how to perform and lead a good liturgical worship. The effort placed on how to prepare a good sermon and on study of the scriptures in general was minimal. Priests therefore seemed to have been trained only to distribute bread and wine

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[61]Hilliard, 234.

at Holy Communion. This seems to have formed the mentality and attitude of the members of the Anglican Church in Melanesia who appear to be passive and reserved when it come to anything religious or scriptural. Their Christian life had been shaped by the idea that only priests can perform religious activities and the laity are there only to obey and say "Amen". Most people in the villages would not even say grace before their meals. It is not because they could not do it, but because they feel unworthy to say it. There is a tendency to believe that only priests and catechists are worthy to say a prayer.

Paternalism

Certainly the circumstances and situation had made changes inevitable, but in the course of bringing about changes, two main factors played an important part: One was missionary paternalism. There was lack of trust in the Melanesian clergy and teachers. Wilson believed that "white corks would always be necessary to support the black net."[62] There was a widespread belief by some European missionaries during this period that Melanesians had not really understood in depth what Christianity was all about. Whatever Christian experience they had was merely superficial, and therefore close supervision by European missionaries was necessary. Another aspect of paternalism was that

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[62]Whiteman, 199.

Melanesians were regarded as "morally unworthy"[63] to take on leadership positions in the Church. The missionaries believed that Melanesians could not control themselves and indulged in adultery and fornication. But if there was truth in that concern, the way to alleviate the situation would have been to work alongside them and help them to master the desired qualities and not to suppress, undermine and discriminate against them.

A few events had shown that there was a division between the European missionaries and the native clergy and teachers. In the 1870s, Melanesian clergy and teachers used to be paid a yearly salary of £25 and £10 respectively. But during the time of Wilson, the rate was reduced to £15 and £3. In 1911, a conference was called and all the white missionaries attended, but the Melanesian clergy were not invited.[64] Racial divisions were even more apparent during the time of Bishop Baddeley (1932-1947). For instance, when Southern Cross VII arrived in 1933, only white missionaries were invited on board to celebrate the arrival of the new ship. In the earlier days such an occasion would have been attended by both the European missionaries and the Melanesian clergy. Whiteman describes the event,

> Despite the efforts of the Mission to hide behind the transparent shield of financial exigency, it is clearly

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[63]Hilliard, 154.

[64]Whiteman, 201.

> evident that the missionaries' relationships with Melanesians were far more racist and paternalistic than they had been in the earliest period of the Mission.[65]

Thus, the aim of Selwyn and Patteson to build an indigenous church had been abandoned by their successors. For instance, Patteson' idea to translate the Bible and Prayer Book into the different vernaculars ceased. The printing press which was established from the time of Selwyn and Patteson has been maintained to this day, but its original purpose to print Bibles, prayer books and hymn books in the different languages has not been continued. Instead it became involved more in commercial printing and publishing. In 1968, ninety seven years after the death of Patteson, John Chisholm who became the tenth bishop of Melanesia stated that a malaise is seen in the Church "by the policy of teaching and worshipping in English, with the result that there are many who have never worshipped or heard the gospel in their own language."[66] But this concern expressed by Chisholm had been raised by Ivens back in 1907. He believed that Mota and other native languages should continue to be used in the activities of the Mission. However, the argument used in favour of the introduction of English was that they "saw English as the only route to the

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[65]Whiteman, 201.

[66]John Wallace Chisholm, "From the Bishop of Melanesia". In Pan Anglican: Review of the World-wide Episcopal Church. (Connecticut, U.S.A.: Church Missions Publishing Co., Spring 1968), 58.

integration of Melanesians into the commercial and technological world."[67] Nobody could deny the importance of English in the world of commerce, technology and development, but lack of appreciation for the native languages had always been a matter of concern for Patteson and those who shared his views. Sara Harrision Sohmer quotes Codrington as saying that "Patteson used to become quite angry with those who maintained that the speech of savages could not properly be called language."[68] In 1931, a decision to change the language of the Mission from Mota to English was made and implemented. The culture of the people was not considered to be of any value, so, the rich heritage of the Melanesian culture could not even be accommodated to become part of the Melanesian Christian culture. This was because the missionaries saw in the Melanesian culture nothing beyond head-hunting, cannibalism, and polygamy. Thus, western Christian tradition was rigidly imposed as normative of Christian life and worship. Melanesian tunes, songs and instruments were never encouraged in worship. Hymns were translated into native languages, but sung with English tunes.

Paternalism became part of the Mission administration and positions of responsibility were reserved only for white missionaries. Melanesians were

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[67]Sohmer, 109.

[68]Ibid., 225.

never given the chance to work alongside their European counterparts, so they could not experience what responsibility and decision-making were all about. They were expected only to carry out the orders that were delegated to them. This is one of the reasons why Melanesians even today still associate the Church with the missionary paternalism. They have lost what was originally their tradition. From the second generation of Melanesian Christians, the only Christian tradition they know has been the western tradition which the missionaries introduced, thus they claim it to be their own and are very defensive of it.

The second major factor for change was the common belief among the missionaries and staff of the Colonial Government that the Melanesian race was heading to extinction. Wilson recorded that, "a dying race should not promote contempt, but sympathy, and with sympathy help we are placed then by God in His infirmary, to work amongst a dying race."[69]

As the Islands were exposed to outside contact many foreign and epidemic diseases such as influenza, dysentery and whooping cough to which the natives did not have immunity spread and killed many people in the islands. Southern Cross, the flag ship of the Mission, was one of the main carriers of such diseases. After its visit, many people in the villages would die. For instance, in 1931,

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[69]Whiteman, 202.

1100 people died of influenza on Malaita. Big villages had often been reduced to a few people and that was one of the reasons for the slow growth of the Church. Thousands of people were baptized each year, but the number of living Christians more or less remained the same. In 1894, there were 8900 baptized Christians but, in 1914, after ten years, there were only 12,700 Christians.[70]

In view of this, Charles Woodford, the first Resident Commissioner, in the Protectorate wrote in 1909 that,

> nothing in the way of the most paternal legislation or fostering care, carried out at any expense whatever, can prevent the eventual extinction of the Melanesian race in the Pacific. This I look upon as a fundamental fact and as certain as the rising and setting of the sun.[71]

Believing that the Melanesian race would become extinct, a government proposal was sent to the Colonial office in London to import indentured-labourers from India, as happened in Fiji, to work in the European-owned coconut plantations in Solomon Islands. But to the disappointment of the Colonial Government and the Lever Pacific Plantations Ltd., the India Office refused the application in December 1911.

So it was such paternal attitudes and misconception by the missionaries that shaped the Church in Melanesia. Progress was very slow and the route taken

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[70]Hilliard, 156.

[71]Ibid., 157.

by the Church to where it is now was lengthy. There was a big difference between the approach pursued by Selwyn and Patteson and that introduced by Wilson. Selwyn and Patteson wanted to teach the Melanesians how to fish for themselves, while Wilson wanted the missionaries to be there all the time to fish for the Melanesians.

During the seventeen years of Wilson's episcopacy, he ordained only three Melanesian clergy. Under Selwyn and Patteson's approach, the first deacon, George Sarawia first came into contact with Selwyn and Patteson in 1858 and 10 years after, in 1868 he was ordained deacon. Patteson's untimely death in 1871 did not allow him to ordain Sarawia to the priesthood, but Sarawia's ordination in 1873 would still be seen as part of the work and plan of Selwyn and Patteson. However, since Wilson's change of approach, it took the church in Melanesia 114 years before its first assistant bishops, Dudley Tuti and Leonard Alufurai, were consecrated on November 30, 1963. It took Dudley Tuti and Leonard Alufurai another twelve years to become Diocesan bishops when Melanesia gained its independence from the Province of New Zealand and became a Province of its own on January 26, 1975. The consecration of Tuti and Alufurai was the second to be performed in Melanesia. The first time was in 1954 when Alfred Thomas Hill was consecrated ninth bishop of Melanesia in Honiara by the Archbishop of New Zealand. The other consecrating bishops

during that historic occasion were the Bishop of New Guinea, his assistant bishop and the Bishop of Dunedin.[72] The occasion was symbolically important to the Melanesians, not only because it was the first time they had witnessed such a religious and solemn ceremony, but because Hill was the first bishop to be chosen by a body comprised of a majority of Melanesians. Hill was chosen in July 1953, by thirty-nine Melanesian clergy and nine European missionaries at a General Synod. This was the first General Synod since 1928.[73] Hill joined the Melanesian Mission in 1936. But before that he had other occupations in life among them being a captain "of a 20,000 ton ocean liner."[74] At the time of his election he was headmaster of All Hallows Senior Boys' School, Pawa. Prior to that, selection and consecration of bishops had always been done in New Zealand. However, at the time of independence, the first Archbishop, John Wallace Chisholm was still an European missionary and had he not lost a battle with cancer four months after becoming the archbishop, it would probably have taken a few more years before a Melanesian would become archbishop. Nevertheless, on November 1, 1975, Norman Kitchener Palmer, a Melanesian priest became the first Melanesian archbishop. It had taken 125 years for the

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[72]Reginald Herbert Owen, "The Church in New Zealand." In Pan Anglican (U.S.A.: Easter 1955), 8.

[73]Whiteman, 281.

[74]Ibid., 294

Church in Melanesia to become self-governing.

However, paternalistic attitudes during this period were not only found within the missionary circle, but also in the staff of the Colonial Government and among the planters and traders. Thus in the 1930s, the Islanders started to feel the effect of the paternalistic treatment from the different missions and the colonial government and were becoming uneasy with the socio-political situation when the war started in the islands.

The impact of the war not only tested the loyalty of the Melanesians, but also gave them fresh and new ideas of showing their discontentment with the paternalistic attitudes of the missions and the government. The arrival of the Allied troops — Americans, Fijians and New Zealanders to fight the Japanese brought a lot of things that were new, foreign and strange to the islanders. They saw for the first time "the dangers in the war by land, sea and air."[75] They also saw for the first time a large supply of food, tents, mosquito nets, trucks and mechanical and electrical equipment which were just disposed here and there and were given freely to the islanders. However, the Americans introduced more than material things, they also related well with the natives. The good relationship which the Americans had with the natives resulted in the formation of the Marching Rule Movement, probably based on nationalistic ideas to show

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[75]Alfred Hill, "Melanesia". In Pan Anglican (U.S.A: Fall 1958), 24.

Melanesian discontent with the missionaries, and government and plantation owners. To show that discontent, the natives boycotted working in the European-owned plantations and that badly affected the economy of the country. In the early 1950s, only plantation-owners who treated the natives well were able to recruit workers. The boycott was also extended to some of the missionaries which led to some of them leaving the mission work. Many Anglicans were associated with the movement and "personal relations between priests and people were difficult for a time."[76] The Movement also linked with cargo cult beliefs in which they expected ship loads of cargoes from the United States to give them a luxurious and prosperous life. They opposed the British rule, but there was no open violence. In describing the situation in the years after the war, Bishop Hill said, "there were repercussions" and "the years that followed were difficult."[77] The Melanesian Mission was greatly affected during this period. Because of the activities of the Marching Rule Movement, many catechists were put in jail thus disrupting the routine of daily morning and evening services in the villages.

However, under Hill's leadership, Melanesians were given positions of responsibility for the first time. Whiteman quoted Hill as acknowledging that

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[76]S.G. Caulton, "The Matching Rule: A Polictical Development in Melanesia." In Pan Anglican (U.S.A.: Easter, 1955), 61.

[77]Hill, 26.

the activities of the Marching Rule Movement were expressions of the fact that Melanesians were ready to take on responsibilities.[78] In 1956, Hill appointed Dudley Tuti and Leonard Alufurai as rural deans of Ysabel and Malaita respectively. Nevertheless, Charles Fox, one of the senior missionaries during that time felt that Hill was still not delegating enough responsibilities to the Melanesians. Whiteman quotes Fox as saying in 1956 that,

> Bishop having announced he was giving the Melanesians more power has ingeniously made all the white clergy deans or archdeacons so that the gap is greater than before. It ensures the domination of the Melanesians by Europeans.[79]

And in 1961, five more rural deans were appointed raising the number to seven. However, one of Hill's plans was to see a Melanesian Assistant Bishop during his time and that came into reality on November 30, 1963 when Tuti and Alufurai were consecrated. In the same year, the composition of the Mission staff was made up as follows: 57 European missionaries, out of whom there were — 1 bishop, 13 clergy, 21 teachers, 10 medical personnel and 12 supporting staff in the areas of printing, building, engineering, etc. and 1,546 Melanesians which included — 101 clergy, 820 catechists, 80 Melanesian Brothers, 292 teachers, 81 medical personnel and 170 supporting staff working on ships, in

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[78]Whiteman, 294.

[79]Ibid., 295.

printing, in maintenance, etc. The ratio between the European missionaries and the Melanesians is 1:29, but the Melanesians were regarded as people who "lack the culture and background of their European colleagues."[80] So if there was any resentment by the Melanesians during this period, it was about inequality. In fact the Melanesians were excited about the activities of the Mission, and they wanted the missionaries but not inequality. They saw the training and education provided by the Mission as a means of acquiring the whiteman's material goods and also as an avenue to go to the land of the white man where those things were believed to be plentiful and readily available.

The Establishment of the Melanesian Brotherhood

However, if there was anything during the second phase of the establishment of the Melanesian Mission that reverted to the plans and vision of Selwyn and Patterson, it was the establishment of the Melanesian Brotherhood in 1925. This was a religious order founded by a Melanesian named Ini Kopuria. He was born in the Visale area of Guadalcanal and attended Pamua School and the Central School at Norfolk Island. He then joined the Colonial Government's Native Armed Constabulary Force and worked on Guadalcanal. In 1924, he had an accident and was admitted in hospital, and during his time in hospital, he went through a series of religious experiences. These prompted

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[80]Ibid., 294.

the desire to start a community for young men who would spread the gospel to the non-Christian on the islands. He said, "I have visited all the villages as a police sergeant... and they all know me why not go to them now as a missionary?"[81] Bishop Steward supported the idea, and the Melanesian Brotherhood was formed. The rules of the order were made to reflect what Melanesians could cope with. That is, young men could join the order and serve for a number of 5 or 6 years, and then if they want to leave, they could be released. But while a brother, one must observe the three promises of celibacy, poverty and obedience. The main mission of the order was to carry out primary evangelism in the non-Christian areas. The brothers were to go two by two to the non-Christian villages, and when the non-Christian accepted their teaching, permanent teachers and catechists would then move in. They had no permanent homes except the Households in the different islands and the Headquarters at Tabalia on Guadalcanal to which they would return for a time of study and rest. During their tours, they relied entirely on the hospitality of the people, but they were always aware that sometimes it was not forthcoming. This order certainly fulfilled the plans and visions of Selwyn and Patteson — Melanesians to evangelizing Melanesia. But since its establishment, the mission of the order has extended beyond Solomon Islands to Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New

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[81]Hilliard, 227.

Guinea and Carpentaria in Australia. One of the contributing factors to the rapid growth of the Church during this period was the ministry of the Melanesian Brotherhood. The difficulty they encountered was that the follow up work which they expected from catechists and clergy was sometimes not given, so that very often non-Christian villages which had been opened by the brothers either returned to traditional religion or joined other denominations. As Tippet quotes Coaldrake who was an Anglican observer in Melanesia,

> many converted by the Brothers could not be ministered to by the Church, because of lack of staff. The people wanted the Anglican Church but were taken up by the SSEC, SDA, Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahai or Roman Catholics.[82]

Because the Melanesian Mission demanded high academic standards and adequate experience and training before ordaining Melanesians to the priesthood, there was never enough clergy to support the Brothers. In each village there was a group of men and women who were called the Companions of the Brotherhood and their main task was to pray daily for the work of the Brothers and the salvation of the heathen. They also supported the brothers with money and other basic material goods. The work of the Melanesian Brotherhood and their Companions continues to flourish at the present time.

No doubt some of the changes which occurred during the second phase of

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[82]Tippet, 50.

the Mission were inevitable, and, of course, they were good for the people of Melanesia. For instance, 'education' and 'health care' were necessary to improve the life and health of the Islanders in general. The only area of regret is that changes were introduced in such a way so that Melanesian arts and values were not accommodated. The position taken during this period was more or less to entice Melanesians to accept and practise the Western ways of life rather than "developing an indigenous Melanesian Christianity suited to meet Melanesian needs and designed to help islanders adapt and live in a changing Melanesia World."[83] The original aim of the Mission to respect and appreciate the Melanesian culture and to allow Christianity to be established without imposing the sophistication of Western culture was not maintained.

However, looking at the changes and developments that occurred during the second phase of the activities of the Melanesian Mission, no one would dispute that the positive impact of those changes brought the Church to what it is today. If the Mission had maintained in entirety the plans of the Selwyns and Patteson, probably the Church of Melanesia would not have got this far — an independent Church within the Anglican Communion. However, the Church in Melanesia would have been better off today as a true Melanesian Church if Patteson's concern for the Melanesia culture — music, songs, instruments, arts and dance

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[83]Whiteman, 183.

had been maintained and accommodated to the Christian liturgy and worship. Patteson was fully aware of the fact that the approach that the Mission was adopting under his leadership was a slow process, but he wanted the culture of the people to be part and parcel of the Church. Writing in 1867, he said,

> To follow Christian teaching out in detail, to carry it out from the school into the hut... to get the men really to abandon old ways from a sense of responsibility and duty and love to God, this of course comes very slowly.[84]

Nevertheless, unlike his critics who saw Christianity and progress in the light of the number of baptized converts, his view of success and the progress of the Mission was judged in the light of context. As he wrote in 1866,

> I have for years thought that we seek in our missions a great deal too much to make English Christians of our converts. Evidently the heathen man is not treated fairly, if we encumber our message with unnecessary requirements. The ancient Church had its "selection of fundamentals." Anyone can see what mistakes we have made in India. Few men think themselves into the state of the Eastern mind. We seek to denationalise these races as far as I can see whereas we ought surely to change as little as possible — only what is clearly incompatible with the simplest form of Christian teaching and practice. I don't mean that we are to compromise truth but to study the native character.... Don't we overlay it a good deal with human traditions, and still more often take it for granted that what suits us must be

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[84]Charlotte Mary Yonge, Life of John Coleridge Patteson: Missionary Bishop of the Melanesian Islands (London: Macmillan and Co.,1875, Vol.2),165.

> necessary for them, and vice versa. So many of our missionaries are not accustomed, not taught to think of these things. They grow up with certain modes of thought, hereditary notions, and they seek to reproduce these, no respect being had to the utterly dissimilar character and circumstances of the heathen.[85]

What Patteson said above is what Wilson and his successors completely overlooked. Melanesians today are now trying very hard to recover their lost tradition. They want the Christian Gospel to be embedded within their culture and to worship God using their own songs, tunes and rituals but much has been lost. The attempt by those who try to recover and accommodate Melanesian rituals in liturgical worship is not without criticism from those who had been made to believe that Melanesian songs, tunes, instruments and art were satanic and therefore could be not be used in Christian liturgical worship. These issues will be discussed further in chapter five, but one thing is clear, had Patteson's concern for the Melanesian culture been implemented along with the institutional and structural changes which occurred during the second phase of the Mission's activities, Melanesia would not be struggling to bring about reforms in the Church today. Patteson might have failed in some areas, but in this one, he was well ahead of his time.

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[85]Ibid., 112.