

Solomons Songsheet

NEWS FROM DAVID COLLINS
SERVING IN SOLOMON ISLANDS WITH
WESLEYAN WORLD MISSIONS

April 2016



Welcome to Planet Paradise

“Welcome to Planet Paradise!” I said to Boyd Baker and Ken Hills from Australia earlier this year as they arrived in Noro on the ship from Honiara. I'm not entirely sure why I thought to say that. But since then, I've considered my description of the Solomons an apt depiction of this place: yes, it's beautiful, lush and green, where orchids grow outside in people's gardens; but, it's also another world, one where I'm slowly adjusting to a different life.

So what more can I say about these first six months of living in the Solomon Islands, seeking God and His will and acting that out with the people around me?

First, it's been hard. Never in my life do I recall another time when I seemed to make so many mistakes, offend so many people, forget so many appointments, lose so many items, break so many things (including inflicting damage to two vehicles—my own and one other—in an accident back in January) and generally find myself surprised! Speaking with another expat from Honiara recently, who's lived in the Solomons for a number of years, he commented on how moving to another country can so completely disorient you, especially one so different to what you've known.

It's like you have to ramp up your thinking ten times to keep pace with what's blindly happening within and around you. Just when you imagine you're beginning to work it all out, something else comes along that sends your head into a spin.

Of course, God has sought to work in me through this period! As I look back, I see these last six months of my life have been a season of considerable spiritual formation and growth; in ways that may not have taken place if I'd kept my more comfortable life back in Oz. On numerous occasions, I've had to lean on God because I knew I had nothing else. This has led to my prayer life developing, as I've learnt some things from my fellow Solomon Islanders, who often tend to know much more than me about constantly and completely depending on God for everything.

ENCOURAGEMENT GROUP

One of the great outcomes from this spiritual formation and growth has been the times I've met for prayer with Jeff and Shelly Davies, my fellow Wesleyan missionaries, living on site at the training centre. Joining us more recently has been our intern, Richard Soto and his wife, Justina, also residing on the property with us with their two sons, Kalie and Elrich (Richard Junior) and other Solomon Islanders when they've been present.



Recently, we commenced an Encouragement Group (aka Class Meeting) for the purpose of personal sharing and accountability. We've also started two Morning Prayer meetings. Both of these have helped us face the challenges of the day as we've looked at the impossibilities but acknowledged our God of creative possibilities!

I've been greatly heartened lately by the great things God has been doing in the lives of people in our church from across the Solomons. So far this year, we're on to our third short course; first a children's ministry course in Noro delivered in conjunction with Wycliffe Solomon Islands, and now (as I write these words in late March) we're working our way through the Inductive Bible Study Course for the second time (as we follow up our night course held in Munda through February and early March with our current course taking place in Honiara).

As I've always found in the Solomons, God's people here have a great hunger to learn. We now charge students fees, which they pay in advance, for these courses; a figure that amounts to more than most people earn in a week! But, we still find many willing to make the sacrifice, not having computers or even electricity, and yet completing their assignments revealing remarkable knowledge and skills.



Class in Munda



Richard Soto Teaching in Honiara

At present, I'm working on getting our campus library set up as a computer lab. Having found one of the textbooks we will use for a course in June/July in a form that we can view on a screen, I believe each of the students we'll have (likely 30-50) will now have a chance to read this document, greatly contributing to their understanding.

Of course, we still have a long way to go with our campus development. Most of the site remains a jungle and most facilities we have at present are at best basic.

But I can see much has been achieved even in the short time I've been living here. I now have an office with electricity (and therefore an electric fan, which is most needed in this climate to survive) in the training building. We have books on the shelves in the library in the same location.

Very soon the next container will arrive which includes a stack of items that will improve in the development and amenity of this place. One item I'm looking forward to seeing with my own eyes is a little scooter I've already named Kimba the White Lion (a colour it probably won't stay for long though).

We only have one road to travel beyond Noro down to Munda which I like to call The Garden Way (if you want to go anywhere else you get in a boat or plane).



HOW CAN YOU JOIN ME IN CONVERSATION WITH GOD?

Praise

- For the many new students enrolling in courses we've held this year in three locations
- For Richard Soto's one-year internship program commencing in preparation for him and his wife, Justina, to return to study in PNG next year
- For the new training room getting set up with the principal's office and library now in use

Prayer

- For my trip to Australia through April, time to relax and prepare for future ministry
- For preparations being made for two courses held back to back in June/July in Noro
- For the AWSOM team preparing to join us in ministry training for the Godliness course in June/July

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