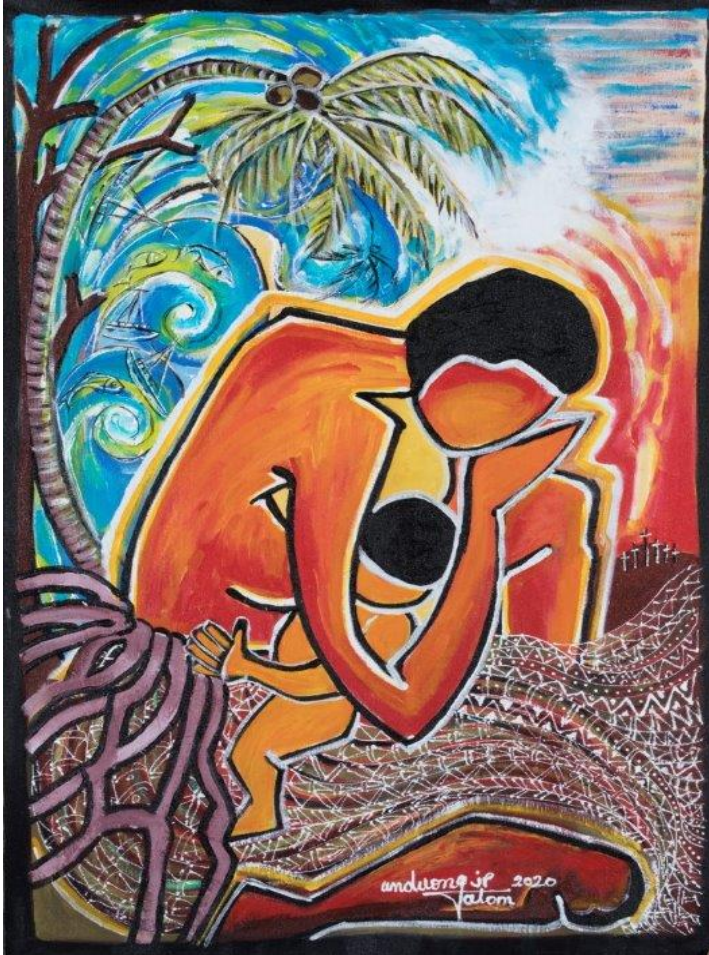


Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

# WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

‘Build on a strong foundation’



Service written by the Christian women of Vanuatu

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## GREETINGS FROM THE SCOTTISH CONVENOR

‘Build on a strong foundation.’

Vanuatu proudly waves its flag and its coat of arms with the words, “In God we stand,” for anyone to read. This faith carried them through Cyclone Pam and the Coronavirus pandemic.

With the writers of the 2021 service, let us pray that communities around the world may exercise the attentive listening and responsible action that grows out of our united prayers. What better way to do this than in taking these words from the material sent by the writers for the Children’s Service. ‘Be good listeners to God’s Word, be obedient to His ways, put God first in all you do, build wisely for eternity.’ It is the children who call us to reflect on this message for today and to respond in actions to God’s call.

Please involve children, young people and younger women in your preparation and worship as you prepare for the 2021 services and as we look towards 2022. Tell us about your service and send photographs.

May we know the inspiration of our Heavenly Father and may we all respond to the call to action in our personal lives and our communities as we continue to build a strong foundation for the International Conference in Scotland in 2022.

The past months have not been easy for anyone but as life begins to return to some form of normality, may we, inspired by the fellowship and community spirit that brought us through the pandemic, renew our efforts to help and fundraise. It isn’t too late to volunteer!

May God bless you all.

*Margaret Broster*

## **A letter from WDP International Committee Executive Director**

Dear WDP sisters and friends,

**“Build on a Strong Foundation”**

**Prepared by WDP Vanuatu**

**March 5, 2021**

It is with joy that we share the materials prepared for the 2021 WDP celebration. One of the first things we learn with Vanuatu women is that, “Land to a Ni-Vanuatu is what a mother is to a baby.” The relationship with land is at the foundation of the Ni-Vanuatu identity and spiritual strength.

We listen to their voices through the worship service, which invites us to focus on the Bible story in Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus tells a story about the kingdom of heaven using the image of a house and the land on which the house is built. Choosing the land on which to build the house is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. The combination of considering the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels.

In Jesus’ story, the wisdom of the builder of the house comes from hearing and acting on the word of God, which is a word of love. This is the foundation on which our sisters call us to build our homes, our nations and the world. A call of faith to be earnestly considered when responding to the prayer of commitment: “What is the house that you would build?”

The Vanuatu sisters praise God for fertile land, the sweet melody of the birds and for the sound of children. All of these together reflect their way of life and their everyday struggles with production of food, care for the environment and the education of children. Those challenges are reasons to praise God for being the source of their strength while they pursue opportunities in education, keep children away from malnutrition and provide alternatives to young people. In receiving their voice as a gift of wisdom, we share their hope and creatively engage our communities in “Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action.”

We want to thank the church women leaders who came together as World Day of Prayer to develop the worship service. As always, it is a collaborative grassroots ecumenical women-led effort. If your WDP Committee wants information about projects and initiatives in Vanuatu, please contact us.

May the everlasting God, on whom Vanuatu stands, be the one who inspires communities around the world to exercise the attentive listening and responsible action that grow out of our united prayers.



*Rosângela Oliveira*

## **Preparation Notes**

Plan well in advance of the day of the service: Invite an intergenerational group of girls and women to lead the service. This year, the worship material does not indicate leaders by numbers. Please mark the readings for each leader taking part, according to the size of your local group.

Prepare garland necklaces known as *salu salu (saloo saloo)* at least for the leaders and readers of the worship service to wear. Or invite local congregations to make enough for everyone to wear one! (Google ‘Vanuatu Lei’ for photos and ‘easy paper flower necklace’ for ideas.)

Options to consider: you may wish to choose a short familiar chant to sing between each section of the Voices from Vanuatu. Short prayers of confession and commitment based on the context of your community may be included as indicated on p7 & p8. You may wish to devise a creative or dramatic reading of Matthew 7:24-27.

Rehearse! The leaders will need to rehearse how they will process as they enter the sanctuary (see p5). If possible, have one person competent to beat a gong/drum. The service will be much richer if the leaders lead confidently and clearly – help this to happen by having a full run through in situ.

Practical set up for the service: Prepare a table with a large candle, which should be lit before worship begins. Choose which of the following will be carried in the procession and added to the table, and which will be already on the table - flag of Vanuatu; a banner saying, “Build on a Strong Foundation”; craft items common to Vanuatu (such as sandalwood oil, baskets, beads, conch shells or necklaces); food items (such as root vegetables); a Bible.

Bible Text Matthew 7:24-27, the main text for, “Build on a strong foundation”, focussing on living wisely, should be used for the meditation, sermon or group reflection, allowing us to listen to the word of God, reflect on its message for today and consider how to respond. The Group Reflection (p12,13) may be used in the service or in a small group Bible Study. There is further Bible Study material for small group use on p18-21.

## **Commissioning Prayer**

Towards the end of the service (p16) there is the option of using this prayer, by kind permission of EJNI World Day of Prayer. Some groups use this and find it very meaningful and helpful.

## WORSHIP SERVICE

### **PROCESSION**

*A woman holding an open Bible leads; a few women and children follow, carrying Vanuatu flag and products/symbols chosen beforehand. Singing and dancing up to the altar, they place Bible and products on a table there.*

### **WELCOME**

**Leader:** Welcome to the 2021 World Day of Prayer, prepared by Christian women of the Republic of Vanuatu. We welcome our sisters and brothers around the world in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Vanuatu's culture, languages, traditional values and spirituality have their source in the population of mostly Melanesian and minorities of Polynesian origin. The black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fish, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest all make the islands a pristine environment, while they are also vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes.

In times gone by, each island and village had its own chief and style of governance; its own gods and language. Houses were thatched, constructed from leaves and trees, using stone axes. Women and men would come together at the Farea - the village meeting house - to discuss major issues.

Vanuatu is a small country in the South Pacific Ocean, a Republic formed in 1980 after independence from a French and British Condominium government. Today, Vanuatu proudly waves its flag and its coat of arms declares, "In God we stand."

**Song:** **Father we love you** (Mission Praise 142/ Singing the Faith 6)  
*Donna Adkins © Maranatha Music*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

*(Someone blows a conch shell or beats a drum. Then the leader reads.)*

**Leader:** Let us hear the words in the first verses of Psalm 127 (NIV).  
Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

**All: Happy is everyone who trusts the house-builder, God.  
Let us be one of those! Amen.**

**Song: Listening to the Voices from Vanuatu**

*Adapted from a hymn written by WDP Vanuatu.*

*Tune 8787D - many will fit – suggest Ode to Joy (CH4 173) or Lewis Folk Melody (CH*

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Leader:** Let us be thankful for the great things God has done.  
Holy, Holy, Holy God,  
Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them,  
You are present in the history of your people, yesterday to today.  
Loving God, on whom Vanuatu stands, we adore you.  
For our fellowship with each other and with sisters and brothers  
around the world gathered by World Day of Prayer,

**All: We thank you.**

For the great and wonderful things in our lives and nations.  
For the authority, wisdom, knowledge and understanding  
You grant us, to care for all beautiful islands and countries,

**All: We thank you.**

For the fertile lands, for the fresh air, clean environment,  
beautiful sunshine, blue seas and still waters of Vanuatu islands.

**All: We thank you.**

For the sweet melody of the birds, the sound of land animals,  
the mystery of the fish in the sea and rivers. For waterfalls that  
rain down and serenely declare your greatness and power,

**All: We thank you**

For children singing, laughing, shouting; for the prayers and  
songs of old and young, manifesting the joy of your love,

**All: Praises, glory and honour be to you alone forever.**

**Life-Giving God, receive our praise.**

## **Prayer of Confession**

**Leader:** Let us confess to God, who is faithful and just to forgive us.  
(1 John 1:9).

Our Father in heaven, your name is holy. We stand in your  
house of grace to confess that we have listened to your words

but have not acted on them. We do the things we should not do and leave undone the things we should.

*(Silence)*

We face adversities and challenges in our homes and nations. We build our homes, thinking we are building on the words of Jesus Christ, but actually building on sand. We long to be changed. Restore us, that we may do what is right and just.

*(If desired, insert here a short prayer of confession based on the local context)*

Creator God, we confess that we have polluted the environment and harmed the creatures of the sea by throwing rubbish into their habitats. We endanger marine life and ruin sustainable livelihoods. We know we can change.

*(Silence)*

We confess and regret our wrongdoing and commit ourselves to fulfilling the mandate to be good stewards of your creation.

**All: God, hear our prayers.**

### **Prayer of Commitment**

**Leader:** God is looking for a house to live in. Where is the house that you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?  
(Isaiah 66:1-2, NIV).

We come humbly before you and pray that you will grant us your Spirit of wisdom and knowledge.

*(Silence)*

Teach us to discern the truth. Lead and guide us that we may live in a way that is pleasing and acceptable to you.

*(If desired, insert here a short prayer of commitment based on the local context)*

Humbly we offer ourselves to be a house that you can dwell in.

**All: By the power of your word, transform our lives and our nations. Make us a household of justice and peace. Gracious God, accept our commitment.**

**Song: Christ be beside me** (Church Hymnary 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 577)

*St Patrick's Breastplate adapted James Quinn. Tune: Bunessan*

## LISTENING TO THE VOICES FROM VANUATU

**Rhetoh:** This is the story of Rhetoh. She is the second child from a family of eight. Rhetoh left school at 11, as her family could only afford continued education for her older brother and not Rhetoh, as she was the second born and a girl. One day, hearing there was a sewing class for girls at a local centre, she applied and was accepted, but was disheartened that her dad had no money to pay the fees, and nor did she have her own money to finance her studies.

With a strong desire to enhance her education but no opportunity to do so in the formal school system, Rhetoh turned her attention to the church as a place of learning. She joined the youth group, attended bible studies, and later, got involved with the women's ministry. With determination and faith, she found ways to educate herself and acquired skills to earn a living. She now makes items and sells them at the Mamas' Markets where other women like her, with little education, provide for their families with their new skills.

Blessed with three children, Rhetoh and her husband care for their God-given family, praising God for the blessings of their lives. Rhetoh thanks God for being the source of her strength, and for helping her put into practice what she has learned. She has become strong and wise in the Lord.

*(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah' MP 149)*

**Reader:** In Vanuatu, many children in the rural areas walk long distances to school. Some have to leave home and attend boarding school from a very young age. Education for all is not mandatory. The school system is either in French or English. Bislama is a learned language to overcome communication barriers in the towns, but in rural areas they also have their own languages. Equal access to school for boys and girls is still a work in progress.

**Mothy:** This is the story of Mothy. She and her little brother grew up in a single parent home. When their mother re-married, she left the children with their grandparents. After Mothy's dad remarried, he took the children to live with his new family. After their



stepmother had children of her own, her attitude towards Mothy and her brother changed altogether.

As there were more children to feed, and no room in the house for all of them, Mothy had to find her own food in the streets and slept outside the house in a shack. She used an old copra sack as a blanket to protect her from the cold.

She met some Christians who told her that God loved her. Mothy could not understand this kind of love in the midst of her suffering, but she decided to trust that God would take care of her, even though her family was not sheltering her. This trust grew inside her and became the foundation of her life. She is now strong in her Christian faith, and shares her story with others that we should trust in God and his provision.

Today, she prays for children like her, growing up almost by themselves. May they know that God loves them and may children in every country around the world find a home.

*(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah')*

**Reader:** Vanuatu's estimated population growth is one of the highest in the Pacific region. Malnutrition is a concern in both rural and urban areas. Although there's a strong tradition of growing organic food in gardens, the powdered milk and junk food industries are gaining access to babies and children.

**Jacklynda:** This is the story of Jacklynda. She comes from a rural village. From her youth she had dreamt of working in tourism in Port Vila. She travelled there to get a job in hospitality, but she didn't have the training for her dream job. Jacklynda has no family in Port Vila, so she is living on the outskirts of the city, having no money for proper accommodation, food or the fare to return to her village. She knows that this is not the plan God has for her, but she doesn't know what to do. She prays that the rural area of Vanuatu be valued and young people find the opportunities they search for in their own communities. She trusts that God will provide for young people to grow and contribute to the wellbeing of Vanuatu.

*(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah')*

**Reader:** With 75% of the population in rural areas with few employment options, young people have to migrate to the city. They go with minimal education and no trained skills to enable them to get work. High unemployment amongst young people creates a generation that sees no future, which is a great loss for the country. There is a need for policies and programmes for the betterment of the rural area, where the young people can stay in the community to be educated and have jobs.

**Song: Jesus Christ is waiting** (CH4 360)  
© WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G5 9JP, Scotland. Tune:

## LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

**Leader:** Let us hear the Word of God according to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 7, verses 24-27, where one of Jesus' parables is recorded:

“So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them is like a wise person who built their house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

“But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them is like a foolish person who built their house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!”

*Please use the parable and theme “Build on a strong foundation” to elaborate the meditation, sermon or group reflection.*

### **Introduction to the Group Reflection:**

Our reflection is based on three chapters of Matthew's Gospel known as the Sermon on the Mount - the teachings of Jesus on the Kingdom of heaven. The parable of the house builders concludes the teaching that begins with the Beatitudes, found in Chapter 5. Jesus' words herald a new and challenging way of living.

The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount encourage two things: **hear and act** or **listen and do**. The Kingdom Jesus proclaims will grow depending on the choices people make and the actions people take. The final picture in his teaching on the mountain is a short parable of comparison. The house of the wise builder was safe and secure in the storm while the house of the

foolish one was lost. It is wise to hear and act on Jesus' words, building firm foundations in life. It is foolish not to, and a weak foundation leads to disaster. Let us consider this carefully in making our own decisions in life. Reflect on the following questions and share your thoughts with someone near you:

At the conclusion of his teaching, Jesus emphasises hearing and acting.

- How has WDP helped you to hear and act on the words of Jesus?
- In your own context, how do you build strong foundations in community or Christian fellowship? Can you share an example from your experience?
- How does the story of the wise and foolish builders challenge you in your Christian discipleship today?

**Conclusion:** Let us rise and build our homes, our nations and our world on the words of Jesus, who reminds us of the golden rule - "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you." This is the guiding principle of Jesus' teaching for us today. This is our solid foundation.

**OFFERING** (*as usual in the community*)

**Song:** **I'll hide God's word inside my heart** (JP 378, adapted)

*Original version: Peter and Hanneke Jacobs*

*Tune: LM – suggest Fulda (CH4 363/ StF 418) or Church Triumphant (CH4 129)*

**Offering prayer**

**Leader:** Gracious God, we worship and thank you for all the blessings you have given us – families, friends, homes, food and water. We praise you for enabling us to be creative and to support our families. We offer you a small portion of these blessings of money and service. We dedicate them to the ongoing work of World Day of Prayer, that these gifts will be shared with communities in need, here and around the world. Amen.

**PRAYERS FOR VANUATU AND THE WORLD**

**Prayer of Intercession**

**Leader:** Let us be united in prayer with Vanuatu and the world.

Everlasting God, the God on whom Vanuatu stands,  
help us stand for peace in our families and in our nations.  
We commit the leaders and people of Vanuatu  
into your wise hands.  
Help us stand against the forces of injustice and division  
present in our nations.  
We pray that in Vanuatu and everywhere,  
we can all live in unity, love and peace,  
respecting and celebrating ethnic and cultural diversity.

**All: Bind us together in love, peace and joy.**

**Leader:** We ask for your protection for people living in places prone to  
cyclones, hurricanes and volcanoes and the damage they cause.  
We bring you our concerns for those suffering from addictions.

**All: Almighty God, protect our communities from disasters and  
suffering. Heal the souls of your people; let them feel love.**

**Leader:** Let's pray together the Lord's Prayer.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;**

**thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our  
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Song: Let us build a house** (CH4 198 / StF 409))

© GIA Words & Music: Marty Haugen Tune: Two Oaks

### **Commissioning Prayer** *(Optional)*

*Pass the large lit candle from the table to a representative of next year's  
host church and say the following prayer:*

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the World Day of Prayer which is  
taking place throughout the world today, and has been prepared by the  
Christian women of Vanuatu.

Many Christians gather together to praise you and we thank the Priests/  
Ministers/ Pastors and people of ..... *(host church)*  
for hosting this world-wide service of prayer in Scotland.

With joy we pass this candle to ..... (*rep's name*)  
who represents ..... (*next host church*)  
who will host next year's service, prepared by Christian women of  
England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

## **SENDING AND BLESSING**

**Leader:** God's dwelling presence is in and with us.  
Let God guide you, lead you, restore you, and heal your nation.  
Let God's will be done in your house, as it is in heaven.  
Go, and build your house wisely, according to Jesus' words.  
Go with these blessings  
in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.

**All:** **This is our strong foundation –  
we will follow Jesus,  
who is the way, the truth and the life.  
Amen.**

**Recessional: The day you gave us** (CH4 220/ StF 147)  
*John Ellerton Tune: St Clement*

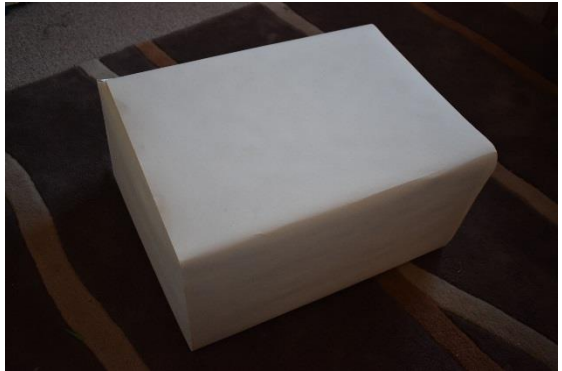
# World Day of Prayer Bible Study

## Bible Study 1 Advice for Living Matthew 5-7



Simple materials to have ready before you start:

- one large cardboard box, covered in advance with plain paper.
- several sheets A4 coloured paper
- one very small box each, which group members could be asked to bring (Have a few spare ones to hand)
- felt pens, coloured pencils, paints – whichever you wish
- Prittsticks, or similar glue and spreaders, and/or sellotape
- some further decorative materials, such as recycled wrapping paper, tissue paper, old magazines to cut up
- ask the group members to bring a Bible, use your church Bibles, or print out copies of Matthew Chapters 5-7



When your group gathers:

1. Open with a song (sing it, listen to it, or both!) that relates to any part of the Sermon on the Mount, such as, ‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.’
2. Invite people to see the big box as the 'rock' in the parable at the end of chapter 7; the foundation we build on.
3. Invite people to look through the chapters and copy out verses, as simply or elaborately as they wish, onto strips of paper cut from the A4 sheets, or footprint shapes. Glue or tape these onto the big box.

4. Intersperse the making time with continued singing or listening to songs related to these chapters, or sing and write simultaneously! Invite people to offer any other songs, remembered even from childhood, that put any of these verses into music.

This should all be a relaxed, informal time, gradually decorating the 'rock' with the teachings that give our lives a strong foundation. When the big box is covered as much as the group wishes, each person could take their little box and decorate it with their name and any words of commitment, or simply some designs and patterns as they choose.



5. Finish with each person placing their little box on the 'rock' as a sign of building on the strong foundation of Jesus' teachings.
6. A final song could be sung ('The wise man built his house upon the rock' maybe!) or use the responses below, to finish.

For the Word of God in Scripture

**Thanks be to God**

For the Word of God among us

**Thanks be to God**

For the Word of God within us

**Thanks be to God**

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

## **Bible Study 2 More Positive Teaching: Matthew 6**

*a retelling, with some paraphrasing, of familiar teachings of Jesus, with 'do not' reframed as 'do'.*

### **Concerning charitable giving**

“Practise your good habits quietly and unobtrusively, so that only God will see; for then you will have a reward from God in heaven.

Whenever you give money voluntarily, do it simply and soundlessly. Keep the business of your left hand out of sight of your right hand. So your giving should be done in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you.

### **Concerning Prayer**

And whenever you pray, find a quiet place where you can be alone, out of the way of spectators. Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, use simple, honest words, straight from your heart. Your few words, sincerely spoken, will be heard. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And guard us against the time of trial,  
as you rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

### **Concerning disciplines of denying**

And whenever you practise a discipline of denying yourself something so as to concentrate on prayer, look content and normal, no different from how you look on any other day. Wash your hair and your face, so that your discipline keeping may be seen only by God who is in secret; and God who sees in secret will reward you.

### **Concerning Treasures**



Keep yourselves detached and unconcerned with wealth, possessions and material gain, which can be consumed and broken and stolen; and store up for yourselves treasure in heaven – justice, compassion, peace - which last forever. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### **The Sound Eye**

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; so make sure your eye stays well, so that your whole body will be spared the darkness. If the light in you keeps its brightness, the whole of you will be sound!

### **Serving One Master**

You can serve only one master; a slave will only be devoted to one master. Be sure it is God you serve; God alone, your one and only Master.

### **Be Trusting**

Therefore I tell you, be trusting and content about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, and about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing! Be reminded of this by the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns - God feeds them. And you are of much more value to God than birds! Living in trust lets you savour every single hour of your span of life. And be content about clothing, reminded by the lilies of the field, how they grow, neither toiling nor spinning, yet surpassing Solomon in all his glory. God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven. How much more care he will take to clothe you. So live in trust, saying, 'Yes, we will eat' and 'Yes, we will drink' and 'Yes, we will have something to wear'. Trusting, you can let go of such concerns and rest in God who knows that you need all these things. But above everything, be concerned for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

So have trust and be content about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring what it will. Today's living is enough for today."

*Questions for Open Discussion: This chapter has seven sections of teaching. Which do you find most challenging? Most encouraging? Most important for you in following Jesus? What else comes to mind as you reflect on them? In what ways, if any, did you understand or appreciate these teachings differently by reading the chapter 'in the positive'?*

## Artist Biography and Statement



Juliette Pita is currently the most well-known artist in Vanuatu. She was born in 1964 on Erromango Island, the third of eight children, and is now a widow with three children and an adopted niece.

Her talent was discovered early on. With no school on Erromango, she went to boarding school in Tanna, and was always the best in art classes. She then moved to Efaté to attend Lycee. A family friend paid her fees and took her in. Juliette was the first woman to graduate from the Institut National de Technologie du Vanuatu (INTV). She never imagined making money from her art but believed God had plans for her, and now gives what she earns to anyone who needs help.

With the independence of Vanuatu in 1980, Juliette felt that she had to show with her work that her country was mature enough to be independent. In 1994, she had her first exhibition in Paris, and later exhibited in Sydney, New Caledonia, and across Europe. Her motifs are taken from the traditional culture of Vanuatu and from her current life. She works part-time as a fabric painter for sarongs that tourists can buy in the city centre. She also sells her paintings to those who come on cruise ships to Port Vila. Her children and nieces and nephews are also artists and sell paintings to pay their school fees.

**“Cyclone Pam II: 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 2015”** shows a mother bending and



praying over her child. The waves crash, but a palm tree bends protectively over them. The woman's skirt is modelled after the traditional clothing on Erromango. On the horizon, small crosses represent the lives taken by cyclone Pam. During the cyclone, Juliette and her neighbours took refuge in a container. They could see nothing and could only pray. In the morning they climbed out to see that almost everything was destroyed. A hut behind Juliette's studio, built traditionally using palm trees, withstood the cyclone with big trees above it deflecting the wind. Juliette believes God heard their prayers and that nature protected them that night.

## Background on Vanuatu



- Vanuatu is in the South Pacific Ocean.
- It comprises about 82 islands, 65 inhabited.
- 560 miles from N to S.
- A volcanic archipelago prone to earthquakes and cyclones
- Land area 5,700 square miles.
- The capital is Port Vila, on the island of Efate.

- English and French are the adopted official languages of education.
- The economy is agriculture-based, and economic growth is based on tourism, construction and offshore financial services.
- Women make and sell clothes, traditional woven mats and baskets at the market places to earn money to help support their families.
- It is a tax haven that earns income from company registrations, fees and an offshore shipping registry.
- A huge gap has been created between the haves and the have-nots. Islanders flood the towns hoping for jobs that are nonexistent or for which they lack the necessary qualifications.
- Yams, bananas, taro, kumara, cassava fruits and nuts may be organically cultivated. Coconut, coffee, sandal-wood, white-wood, cocoa and kava are all cultivated to earn a living. Fresh water is obtained from coconuts; copra for coconut oil for cooking, as well as for body and hair lotions. The coconut tree is regarded as the tree of life because all its parts are useful.
- Most arable land tends to be used for cash crops and cattle rather than food crops, leading to malnutrition.
- The Government subsidises tuition fees for the first 6 years of education. Secondary education is only available to those who can afford it.
- 75% of the population live in rural areas, which are very under-resourced in transport, communications, health work and facilities.
- Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are big concerns. Unprotected wells, springs and surface water are poor water sources.

## TIMELINE

**19<sup>th</sup> Century** Missionaries brought Christianity

**1980** Vanuatu became a Republic founded on traditional values, Christian principles, and faith in God.

**2015** Cyclone Pam struck the islands. 96% of the crops were destroyed. Around 75,000 people needed emergency shelter.

**2017 & 2018** Manaro volcano erupted on the island of Ambae – the entire population of about 11,000 people was evacuated.

**2018** Government law passed banning the use of plastic bags in Vanuatu.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The 2015 World Risk Report, based on the chances of experiencing earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts and sea level rises, placed Vanuatu at number one of 173 countries, with a 36% chance. Rising sea levels threaten to erode the land; and pollution from vehicle fumes, oil from boats, and plastic waste badly affect the environment.

### FLAG



### FLOWER: HIBISCUS



### POPULATION

- 1/3 of the population are young people aged 12-30.
- 5% of the population do unpaid work for goods for community consumption.
- 16% of those aged 15-29 in urban areas have some access to the internet; only 3% in rural areas.
- Most young people have mobile phones and a radio.
- By the age of 17, 3% of girls are legally married.

## **WOMEN**

In both public and private sectors, women are 40% of the labour force compared to 60% of men, but in the subsistence economy, women are 49% and men 41%. There are more female headed, single parent households with children, grandchildren or extended family members compared with male headed households. Despite this, the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men. Men 70.1 and women 74.1.

In the current parliamentary democracy, there are provisions in the Constitution for gender equality, but no political will to implement it. Religious institutions are not doing their part to encourage women to use their potential. The fundamental rights of women would greatly improve if the government, different religious groups and chiefs cooperated in the effort to address the gender inequality.

## **CHRISTIANITY**

Approximately 83% of the population is Christian, with Church of Christ Presbyterian the largest denomination, and also Anglican, Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist churches.

## **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

In 1946, WDP was introduced to Vanuatu by Canadian Presbyterian missionaries. In 1981 Anglicans and Catholics joined in, then Apostolics and Church of Christ. The early 2000s saw the creation of the Women's Desk of the Vanuatu Christian Council. In 2011 WDPIC held workshops with the Vanuatu Committee who were reorganised ecumenically and they felt inclined to develop the resources for WDP 2021 in 2018. Working groups continued the year-long writing process of the materials. The Vanuatu Committee's prayer is that the ecumenical relationship they experienced during the blessing of working together for the 2021 programme will lift up the voice of Vanuatu women across the world. For many who participated in the writing process, this was their first ecumenical experience. All are confident that this will bring a new assurance to Vanuatu women's voices.

## **CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR**

The people of Vanuatu as they cope with the aftermath of category-5 Cyclone Harold which devastated the islands in April 2020. Recovery and rebuilding is an immense challenge.

## **World Day of Prayer Movement**

In 1910 more than 400 women met for the World Mission Conference (Edinburgh) bringing their experience and wisdom developed through years of ecumenical partnership in many countries. WDP was born. Today World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical prayer movement bringing together millions from over 100 countries to pray, worship and learn each year.

### **Through World Day of Prayer, people are encouraged:**

- to become aware of the whole world and no longer live in isolation
- to be enriched by the faith experience of Christians of other countries and cultures
- to take up the burdens of other people and pray with and for them
- to become aware of their talents and use them in the service of society
- to affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and both have immeasurable influence in the world

### **Scottish Committee Mission Statement**

As representatives of the churches in Scotland, and members of a world-wide movement of Christian women, we work to promote prayerful living and worship for men, women and children, and to raise awareness of the lives and concerns of others throughout the world, especially those who write the service.

We encourage ecumenical planning for World Day of Prayer services, facilitating them by preparing material supportive of the annual international theme and country. We generate resources in support of Christian literature distribution and projects giving practical help to people in the writing country.

More information can be found on our website [www.wdpscotland.org.uk](http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk) and on our facebook page 'World Day of Prayer Scotland'.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**'I know the plans I have for you'**

Service written by Christian women of England, Wales & N. Ireland

## Donations made in 2020

Scottish Bible Society	£ 7,500
Feed the Minds	£ 7,500
Charities of Zimbabwe	£ 6,000
International and European work of WDP	£ 3,000

For a full set of accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, please contact the Treasurer, **Suzanne Foster**, or view on WDP ([www.wdpScotland.org.uk](http://www.wdpScotland.org.uk)) or OSCR ([www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)).

## Plans for this year's funds

The principal aims of the WDP Scottish Committee are to promote the annual WDP service by producing and distributing materials; and to support societies giving physical or spiritual help to people in the writing country. By keeping our costs as low as possible, we can maximise the amount given.

This year we will be supporting Christian Societies which have projects in Vanuatu. Your service organiser has leaflets with information about them.

*If you are a taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your donation.* You can get a declaration form from your service organiser or from the website.

## Please give generously!

**Offerings** must be paid into a bank, with the bank giro slip provided, or cheques (payable to WDP Scottish Committee) sent to the WDP Treasurer, **Suzanne Foster**, by the end of April 2021 at the very latest.

There may be circumstances when the uplifting of an offering is not appropriate (some hospitals, residential homes or schools), but donations to cover the cost of materials are always welcome and can be sent at any time. Should a service be cancelled, a retiring collection uplifted in a church, or donations, would be most acceptable.

Offerings for the **Fellowship of the Least Coin** (FLC) need to be sent **separately** to **Suzanne Foster** and marked **FLC**.

**The Committee would like to thank the many volunteers  
up and down the country who help to organise and take part in services.  
Your contributions cannot be measured. Thankyou!**

## OFFICE BEARERS

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## COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Blair (co-opt)	Church of Scotland
Ann Bowie (co-opt)	Church of Scotland
Val Brown	Christian Aid
Alison Chalmers (co-opt)	Religious Society of Friends
Nina Cryne	Union of Catholic Mothers Scottish Baptist Women's Fellowship
Irene Houston	Salvation Army
Kathryn Howe	Salvation Army
Mary Kidd	Methodist Church
Joanna Love (co-opt)	Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community
Elizabeth Mackay	United Free Church
Mary Pickstone	Church of Scotland World Mission
Margaret Roy	Religious Society of Friends United Reformed Church Synod
Mary Welsh	Bishops' Conference of Scotland (RC)
Christian Williams	Congregational Federation
Ann Wren	Scottish Episcopal Church and Mothers' Union