

FFWPU UK: We will never forget the wonderful people of the Solomon Islands

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Susan Crosthwaite, a former missionary to the Solomon Islands in 1982, sends a commemorative message recalling the warm-hearted welcome she received and a recent providential encounter linking her back to Oceania.

Beloved brothers and sisters of the Unification community of the Solomon Islands - may our hearts resonate as we commemorate and celebrate God's great treasure, your Solomon Islands home. Congratulations to Heavenly Parent, True Parents, and all those who have invested heart, love, and life into building the culture of true love in your community.



In August 1982, when I was 27, I landed in Honiara, and began three months immersed in your astoundingly beautiful country. I was immediately surrounded by caring and delightful people. For some weeks I lived with a lovely family at Kola'a Ridge, and in the midst of their natural family culture I began to adjust to the climate, the food, and the attitudes. I found it all warm-hearted and attractive.

Travelling by bus between home and the centre of town, the library, or the market, I often caught myself wondering: "when will someone be unfriendly to me?" It just never happened. I was astounded by the natural kindness, curiosity, friendliness, and welcoming spirit of Solomon Islanders. That spirit is one of the most outstanding features of your people - a quality God created and nurtured with profound pride, knowing it would be a great gift to the world.

Surely John Coleridge Patteson was similarly struck by these qualities when he carried out his mission work some 150 years ago. He was a careful student of what is good and beautiful about Melaneseans, and stood against compelling converts to adopt European customs for the sake of external appearance. As Father Moon reminded us - where does God live? Where is his home? God's home is in the middle of our heart. Patteson appreciated the essential goodness of your people, and that's perhaps why he was respected, and even beloved.

Recently I had a powerful experience of how invisibly Heavenly Parent is involved in our lives, and it's related to my bond with you, the beautiful Solomon Islanders. Last month my husband Ashley and I attended a family summer camp with about 110 people of all ages - a tradition here in England we've been involved with for more than 20 years. I was asked to lead a two-hour sharing for the married sisters, and I prepared carefully, choosing the theme of friendship.



There were 21 sisters in that gathering, most of whom I knew. One new acquaintance - who has now become a friend - is Min Julie, whom some of you might know. She has lived in the UK for about 12 years. In the days before camp, while I was packing, I thought about bringing a little photo album that I had put together in 1983, after leaving the Solomons. I simply thought it might help me introduce myself to people at camp.

Minju's sharing in the sisters' gathering was fascinating, and I wanted to talk with her again afterward. In that conversation we discovered we both had strong connections with Australia and the Solomon Islands - and then I knew the real reason I'd brought the photos. We had such joy looking at them together. Minju had been a missionary from Korea to Oceania in 2005. Who inspired me to bring the photos? Who knew that Minju would be there to appreciate this connection so deeply? Only God could have organized it. Why? So we could celebrate our common love for Oceania, and in

particular your country, precious to both of us.

I sincerely hope you'll all be reminded through this little story that you are not forgotten - neither by heaven, nor by those of us who have had the good fortune of meeting you in person. Reflect with gratitude, and let this commemoration energize you. Everyone has a unique and irreplaceable contribution to make. As you continue forward, appreciate your roots and one another. Bring out your shining wisdom and righteous creativity to serve and protect your country, and God's hopes and dreams for the Solomon Islands,