USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS
1845-1966

by

Hugh M. Laracy

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Australian National
University.

November 1969.
This thesis is based on original research by the author while a Research Scholar in the Department of Pacific History of the Australian National University from 1966 to 1969.

Hugh M. Laracy
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE vi
ABBREVIATIONS xii
NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF PLACE NAMES xiii
TABLES AND MAPS xiv

I INTRODUCTION 1

II THE VICARIATE OF MELANESIA, 1845-55 15

III MISSIONARY EXPANSION, 1898-1966 60
   i The Setting
   ii The South Solomons
   iii The North Solomons

IV EVANGELIZATION, 1898-1966 132

V MEDICINE, EDUCATION, CONSOLIDATION, 1898-1966 195

VI WAR, 1942-45 257

VII THE MARISTS AND THE INDIGENOUS CHALLENGE TO COLONIALISM, 1946-66 275

VIII EDUCATION, 1946-66: THE LINKING OF CHURCH AND STATE 336

IX SOLOMON ISLANDS CATHOLICISM, 1946-66 378

APPENDICES :

A Catholic missionaries in the Prefecture and Vicariate Apostolic of Melanesia (1845-55) and of the South, North and Western Solomon Islands (1898-1966).
A i Melanesia
A ii South Solomons
A iii North Solomons
A iv Western Solomons

B Letter of Reverend C.E. Fox to Father E. Babonneau S.M.

C Letter of Mamatau to Sekata.

D 'The Teaching of the Catholic Church.'

E Two petitions for Masses, Kwaio district, Malaita 1966.

F Shipping contacts of the Catholic missionaries in the Vicariate Apostolic of Melanesia, 1845-56.

G Total living baptized Catholics in the prefectures and vicariates apostolic of the Solomon Islands, 1900-66.

H Pupils attending Catholic mission primary schools in the prefectures and vicariates apostolic of the Solomon Islands, 1900-66.

I i Guadalcanal - Catholic population, 1913-65.
   ii " - Annual baptisms, 1898-66.

J i Malaita - Catholic population, 1913-65.
   ii " - Annual baptisms, 1913-66.

K i San Cristobal and Ulawa - Catholic population, 1913-65.
   ii San Cristobal and Ulawa - Annual baptisms, 1913-66.

L Buin and Siwai - Annual baptisms, 1906-42.

M Buka - Annual baptisms and Catholic population, 1910-61.
N  Annual expenditure and income from mission plantations, North and South Solomons, 1901-56.


BIBLIOGRAPHY
THIS study seeks to trace, account for and evaluate the development of Catholic (in the sense of Roman Catholic) missionary activity in the Solomon Islands. In more general terms, it attempts to examine the efforts made to establish a European institution in a changing but resilient Melanesian cultural environment. The subject is, therefore, considered in the broad context of culture contact, for Catholicism was not planted in the Solomon Islands as an isolated or merely religious phenomenon. It came as part of a broad range of European influences which, by the end of the nineteenth century, had begun to make a significant impact on the lives of the islanders. Moreover, although the missionaries' efforts necessarily reflect their own assumptions regarding their task, these were also shaped, and their effectiveness largely determined, by the environment in which they occurred.

Focussing on the interaction of forces of indigenous and of exotic origin, the study readily falls into three parts, which correspond to three phases in the recent development of the Solomon Islands - early contact, colonial, and post-colonial. In the first period, 1845-55, the missionaries were confronted with a society in which traditional values and procedures were still virtually intact and in which Christianity was unable to gain a foothold. In the second period,
1898-1942, on the contrary, as a result of increased contact, the situation had changed markedly, and the missionaries succeeded in winning a large following in nearly every part of the group. Even so, their work was far from complete. In the third period, 1946-66, the years since the Second World War, with the future of European domination becoming less secure they have been forced to pursue new goals - to offer more advanced social services than in the past and to make serious efforts to ensure the vital coincidence of self-rule in Church and State.

Catholic missionary work in the Pacific has not attracted much critical attention from historians. There is a large literature, mainly in French and mostly concerned with Polynesia, but it is of a more or less propagandist kind, owing more to a spirit of piety than to the comprehensive examination of sources and prone to considering the missionary enterprise almost exclusively from the missionaries' point of view. Even the best of the early works, those published in the 1880s and 1890s by Monfat (Samoa, Tonga, Solomons) and Mangeret (Wallis and Futuna) were written to edify as well as to inform. The same is, unfortunately, true of useful later works such as those by Blanc (Tonga and Fiji), Sabatier (Gilberts), Darnand (Samoa), and Douceré (New Hebrides). Certainly, the relative neglect of the field is now beginning to be remedied and relevant guide lines are emerging. In 1968 Dupeyrat's valuable history of the Catholic mission in Papua, published in 1935, was joined by O'Reilly and Newbury's scholarly edition of
Laval's account of the Catholic mission on Mangareva. Nevertheless, there is nothing on the Pacific comparable to the studies written on Africa by Hastings, Todd, and Roland Oliver.

The Solomon Islands also lack adequate historical treatment. Studies of European imperialism in the Pacific have touched on them, but the first major historical publication to deal specifically with them is, appropriately, Jack-Hinton's recent account of their discovery by Europeans. Also important is Hilliard's thesis (1966) on the Protestant missions in the Solomons. To this work the present study owes much.

Although scattered and fragmentary, the available source material for the present work is extensive. It includes a considerable body of anthropological writing on the Solomons, some of which, by Hogbin and Keesing, has dealt perceptively with indigenous Christianity. Unfortunately, the most ambitious attempt, Tippett's Solomon Islands Christianity, is both historically unreliable, and is primarily concerned, despite its title, with the Anglicans and the Methodists. I have also drawn on: the plethora of travellers' tales and memoirs that the group has inspired; government reports and unpublished official documents, especially for the years up to 1916; certain indigenous writings; interviews with participants during a field-trip to the Solomon Islands from August to November 1966; and various official mission histories, including a Catholic one. The latter is Raucaz's, In the Savage South Solomons, first
published in French in 1925. But the main source has been papers in mission archives.

Unfortunately, most local records relating to the period 1898-1942 were destroyed during the Second World War, although other destructive agencies such as climate, tidal waves, mice and men, have, before and since, also taken a heavy toll on documents. On the other hand, a large amount of primary material has survived outside the group. Thus, an invaluable source for the northern Solomons has been the letters, journals and reports gathered on Bougainville and Buka in 1934-5 by Father Patrick O'Reilly S.M. of Paris. The largest and most complete range of archival material, covering Catholic activities in the whole group from the beginning to the present, is preserved at the Marist Fathers' headquarters in Rome. Were it not for these two deposits, and a smaller one at the Marist base in Sydney, 'Villa Maria', it is doubtful if the pre-war mission history could have been written in any detail, for very little Marist source material is available in print. Nor is much available on microfilm. It was necessary for me to visit the above archives - for which opportunity I am grateful to the Australian National University.

The danger in relying heavily on mission material is plain. How accurately does it present the other sides of the story - those of the government and of the islanders? At best, the answer can only be an approximation. Yet this does not seem to preclude the attainment of a useful degree of accuracy. There is
the leavening of other sources mentioned; there is the fact that most Marist material consists of informal, private correspondence in which the writers generally presented their observations factually and without varnish; and there is the fact that the large number of correspondents ensured an appreciable spectrum of discussion and opinion on most matters regarding the conduct of the mission and its relations with others. While it has not been possible to give a detailed account of the effects of missionization on the islanders - such would appear to be a task for the anthropologist rather than the historian - the material has, at least, been sufficient to establish their positive role in the making of Solomon Islands Catholicism.

Most of the documents consulted for this study were in French. I have, however, preferred to render quotations from them into English, as acknowledged in the footnotes. There, too, the location of documents has generally been stated, but no place of location is given for mission station journals where this is indicated in the title (e.g., 'Journal of Rokera').

IT would be impossible to thank personally everybody who assisted me to carry out this study. Nevertheless, I must first thank the Marist Fathers who not only threw their archives open for me but were unstintingly generous with their hospitality and with assistance of every kind. Since it would be futile to attempt to distinguish between the levels of kindness I have enjoyed, I do therefore follow the geographical

Members of other religious congregations must be thanked also. Of the Marist Brothers, I thank Brothers Alban (Sydney), Donald (South Solomons), Finan (North Solomons), and Hilary (Rome); of the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary, Mothers Cyrilla (South Solomons) and Hortense (North Solomons) and Sister Emilienne (Rome); of the Sisters of St. Joseph of California, Sister Robert René (North Solomons); of the Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere, Father Carlo Suigo (Rome); and of the Order of Preachers, Bishop E. Crawford and Father C. O'Grady (Western Solomons).

Others who have notably assisted me belong to the Australian National University. Mr John Heyward drew the maps. Miss Patti Fryer, Mrs Robyn Walker and
Mrs Rosamund Walsh contended patiently with a succession of difficult manuscripts and typescripts. Finally, a most valuable contribution has been the advice of, and criticism of my work by, staff and students of the Department of Pacific History. I am especially grateful to Professor J.W. Davidson for his unfailing sympathy, and to my supervisor, Dr Dorothy Shineberg, for her encouragement and guidance and detailed attention to my drafts. Also to be thanked are Dr W.N. Gunson and Dr Deryck Scarr, who commented on most of what I wrote, and Dr D.L. Hilliard, now of The Flinders University of South Australia. However, my greatest debt of gratitude is to my wife, Eugénie, who assisted me at every stage of this work, from note-taking to proof-reading, no less than on the home front.
ABBREVIATIONS

A.C.P.F. Archivii Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide
A.F.M. Archivio Fratelli Maristi
A.M.O. Annales des Missions de l'Océanie
A.P.F. Annales de la Propagation de la Foi
A.P.M. Archivio Padri Maristi
A.S.M. Acta Societatis Mariae
B.A.H. Catholic Bishop's Archives, Honiara
B.S.I.P. British Solomon Islands Protectorate
C.O. Colonial Office
M.C. Missions Catholiques
M.E.O. Mission Education Office(r)
O.R. O'Reilly Papers
P.A. Prefecture Apostolic
P.I.M. Pacific Islands Monthly
Prov. V. M. Provincial's Papers, 'Villa Maria'
P.V.M. Procurator's Papers, 'Villa Maria'
S.D.A. Seventh Day Adventist
S.M.H. Sydney Morning Herald
S.M.S.M. Soeurs Missionnaires de la Société de Marie
S.S.E.M. South Sea Evangelical Mission
T.O.R.M. Tiers Ordre Régulière de Marie
T.P.N.G. Territory of Papua and New Guinea
V.A. Vicariate Apostolic
W.P.H.C. Western Pacific High Commission, Central Archives.
NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF PLACE-NAMES

In general, I have followed the conventions of the Naval Intelligence Division's handbook series on the Pacific Islands.
TABLES

I  The distribution of Catholics in the principal Solomon Islands, 1957  134

II Teachers trained in the Vicariate Apostolic of the North Solomons  351

III Primary class enrolments in the Vicariate Apostolic of the North Solomons  372

IV Non-indigenous Catholic missionaries beginning work in the Solomon Islands in the periods 1898-1942 and 1946-66  380

V Non-indigenous Catholic missionaries working in the Solomon Islands in 1942 and in 1966, respectively  380

VI Solomon Islands clergy and religious, 1966  382

MAPS

The Vicariate Apostolic of Melanesia, 1844-1889 following p.xiv

The Solomon Islands, showing Catholic mission establishments and their dates of occupation following p.498
THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF MELANESIA
1844 — 1989