

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

CHOISEUL AND THE MISSIONARIES

The Methodist Mission on Choiseul, Solomon Islands, 1905-1941.

LYNNE MCDONALD

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy at Massey
University, Albany

December 2009

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Graham, without whom I may never have heard of Choiseul.

ABSTRACT

This project will examine the impact and the progress of Methodist missionary work on Choiseul from 1905 to 1941. The predominant European contact on Choiseul was with missionaries and this was significantly more recent than many of the other islands in the group. Choiseul was unattractive for settlement or commercial development because the lack of arable land meant that it was unsuitable for large plantations to be established. A lacuna exists in the current historiography of the Solomons with regard to Choiseul. A study of the Methodist Mission on Choiseul offers the opportunity to examine the development of the mission, and the people on the island during the period under study, and fill that gap. The nature of conversion to Christianity on Choiseul, and the way the missionaries, including European, Solomon Islanders and Pacific Islanders, operated, cooperated, and disagreed with the Choiseulese and with each other will be examined to help answer the question, to what extent was Choiseul a Methodist, or a missionary, island.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of a thesis is not accomplished by one individual. It is the combined effort of many people who become entwined in the Herculean task of producing a coherent work. I would like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Peter Lineham for believing in me, and for his continual encouragement and patience. Associate Professor Hugh Laracy had confidence that I could do it, and contributed his time, knowledge, and his wicked sense of humour unstintingly this year. Choiseul is finally being 'done'! Leanne and Dot, in the office probably do not realise what an important role they play in encouraging students with their friendliness. Thank you. To my proof readers Ellie and Michelle – may you never have to worry about another ellipse, passive tense or missionary again (until the next time)!

Archivists at the Mitchell Library, and the Uniting Church Archives, both in Sydney have provided an invaluable service. Christine Gordon at the Uniting Church Archives has been particularly helpful in photocopying for me. Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn helped me make contact with Rev. Barry Dangerfield, from Queensland, who willingly answered my questions. The staff at the Methodist Archives in Auckland was amazing. They pulled out box after box, searched the depths of the archive and produced what I was looking for. Jill Weeks – thank you so much. Thanks go to the retired missionaries and their families who contributed written material and photographs. Special thanks go to the family of Coralie Murray. I am very grateful to the Wesley Historical Society for their financial support through the Smith-Gilmour Scholarship. This has been extremely helpful.

My family have put up with the stresses and mess of a thesis. Liz – thanks for lunches, Sarah – thanks for puddings, and Rob – thanks for marrying Michelle and providing me with a very useful resource in her father, and thanks for a place to stay on the Gold Coast! My husband Graham has endeavoured to answer many questions about Choiseul and has helped with the research at the archives. Thank you for your patience as I try to fulfil my dream – I love you all.

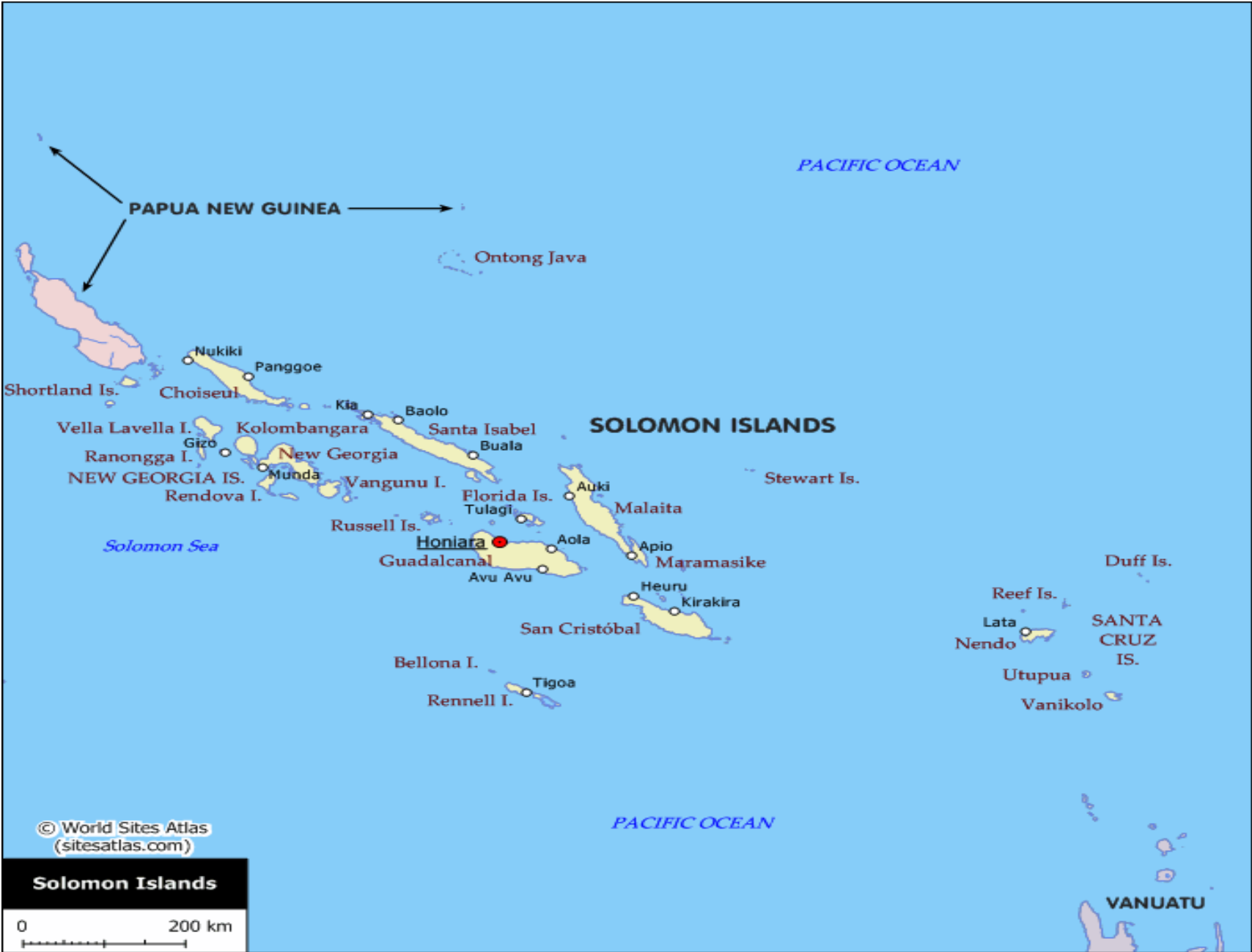
Glory be to God for his help and strength.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

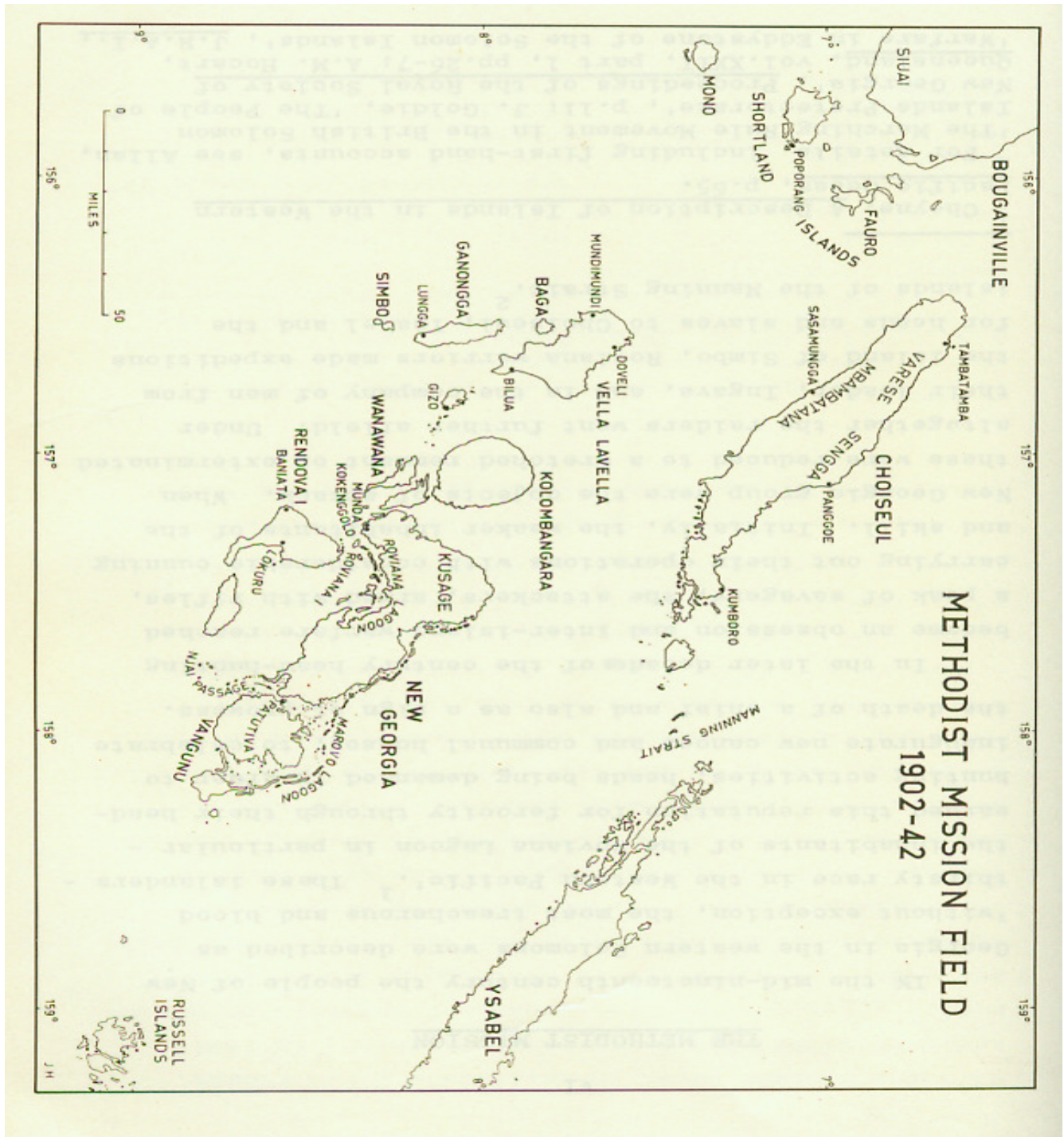
Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of illustrations	iv
Maps	v-vii
Abbreviations	viii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: ‘Only One Degree Removed From an Animal	7
Chapter 2: ‘Free Children of Nature, . . . Who Must Be tamed’.	26
Chapter 3: ‘Come Over and Help Us’	45
Chapter 4: ‘A real good, sensible Christian woman’	70
Concluding Thoughts	91
Appendix: Photographs of the mission and the missionaries.	92-96
Bibliography	97

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Map 1:** Solomon Islands
- Map 2:** Methodist Mission in the Western Solomons
- Map 3:** Choiseul
- Figure 1:** An early photograph of Sasamuqa
- Figure 2:** Boy with ulcers caused by Yaws
- Figure 3:** Mrs Rooney and early women converts
- Figure 4:** ‘Waiting’.
- Figure 5:** Navala, a Choiseul chief
- Figure 6:** Brass Band trained by Tongan missionary Paul Havea
- Figure 7:** Rooney’s first house at Sasamuqa
- Figure 8:** The missionary’s first house at Senga
- Figure 9:** Metcalfe and his teachers
- Figure 10:** Ivy Metcalfe and her charges
- Figure 11:** Sister Muriel Stewart and Dr Clifford James
- Figure 12:** Mrs Rycroft
- Figure 13:** Sister Lily White
- Figure 14:** Sister Grace McDonald
- Figure 15:** Sister Ethel McMillan
- Figure 16:** Sister Jean Dalziel
- Figure 17:** Synod at Babatana 1925
- Figure 18:** Kindergarten at Senga with Sister Lily White
- Figure 19:** Senga Church
- Figure 20:** Tramping across Choiseul. John and Ivy Metcalfe with helpers



David L. Hilliard, "Protestant Missions in the Solomon Islands, 1849-1942", (Australia National University, 1966).





ABBREVIATIONS

AMMR	Australasian Methodist Missionary review
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
MAA	Methodist Archives Auckland
MOM	Methodist Overseas Mission Australia
NLA	National Library Australia
NZMT	New Zealand Missionary Times
NZMWMU	New Zealand Methodist Women's Missionary Union
OD	Open Door
PMB	Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
UoA	University of Auckland
WPHC	Western Pacific High Commission