

Commendation of Rev Tom Roberts' Ministry at Talua

February 2022

Rev Tom Richards has spent the past nine years in Vanuatu beginning his ministry at Enefa Ministry Training Centre in Tanna. In 2018 he moved to the larger bible college, Talua Theological Training Institute (TTTI), where he is the Curriculum Developer and lectures in Systematic Theology. The work of the Institute is to train theologically literate pastors to plant and support churches across Vanuatu.

For family reasons, Tom moved back to Perth, Australia, in 2022. His plan is to continue providing full-time support to TTTI to address their curriculum development needs as required by the government's newly established Vanuatu Qualifications Authority (VQA) which regulates the country's post school education and training. Curriculum development is a very important and influential ministry. Tom will be ensuring that it is done contextually so that it supports Talua and allows the indigenous lecturers to do what they do well (teach in their context). What is needed most for Talua is a comprehensive system of theological education. The goal is a curriculum that takes people from where they are to where the church needs them to be. To begin many will start with literacy bridging courses, before they move on to certificates in ministry and after completion, they will enter a BTh program. Preparing this material is a complex process. The basic certificate course taught over one-year requires time spent conducting Quality Assurance conferences and ends with over 200 pages of paperwork necessary for the accreditation application. To complete the whole curriculum at a suitable level will require over three years work.

Tom is ideally placed to continue to facilitate this curriculum development. Having taught at all levels from certificate to degree he understands not only the teaching aspect necessary to create the courses but has expertise in curriculum development. His experience in ministry in Vanuatu ensures that the end goal of the whole project is to equip well-prepared ministers for the gospel from the context, for the context.

Overseas Council Australia (OCA) partners with over 100 bible colleges throughout the developing world. We have a commitment to all the elements needed for good training of pastors and church planters in each of those different contexts. By partnering with the best bible colleges in each country we ensure a strong base for training leaders and thus provide the church with what they need most: well-trained, bible-based, pastorally competent ministers of the gospel.

OCA has supported TTTI since 2016 with library books, faculty development and IT through our Pasifika Strategy. These investments will undergird the value of a good curriculum that Tom work to build with the faculty of the college.

OCA does not provide funds for faculty salaries and so Tom requires funds to keep this valuable ministry of curriculum development to proceed.

I encourage you to support the vital work of Rev Tom Richards so he can complete the project for TTTI.

In Christ's service,



Rev Dr Stuart Brooking

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