

## PUBLIC LECTURE

# Christianity and the Shaping of Vanuatu's Social and Political Development



RELIGION AND SOCIETY  
RESEARCH CENTRE / PEACE AND  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GROUP

### Speaker

Professor Matthew Clark  
Deakin University

### Date and Time

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2015  
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

### Venue

Bankstown Campus  
Building 23.G.40



### RSVP

[SSAP-Research@uws.edu.au](mailto:SSAP-Research@uws.edu.au)  
By COB Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2015

### Abstract

The Pacific island state of Vanuatu has been considerably shaped by its Christian heritage. Indeed, the role of the various Christian Churches has been pivotal in the development and sustenance of Vanuatu prior to and since its Independence. These Churches include Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal and evangelical denominations. Missionaries and later local Church leaders were involved directly in Independence movements and shaped the legal and social infrastructure of this nation. This involvement and influence has continued to the present. This paper will consider the role the Church has played in the development of Vanuatu. Firstly, this paper will present case

study analysis of both the historical and contemporary role the Church has played in the development of Vanuatu. This review will consider the impact of both key individual Church leaders who played central roles Vanuatu's Independence. Secondly, the paper will consider the contemporary role Christian Churches play in the provision of social service – including education and health – across Vanuatu. This paper will conclude that Christianity has therefore played and continues to play a central role in the political and social development of Vanuatu.

### Biography

**Professor Matthew Clarke** is Head of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University (Australia). Matthew has worked in the international development sector for more than 20 years. His research interests include aid effectiveness, the Millennium Development Goals, HIV and AIDS and disability-inclusive development. Much of this work has focussed on the Pacific region. More recently Matthew has focussed on the intersection between religion and development. His books in this area include *Development and Religion: Theology and Practice*, *Islam and Development: Exploring the Invisible Aid Economy*, and *Handbook of Research on Religion and Development*.

**This Public Lecture is an Open and Free Event**