

EPILOGUE

In our essay, we have not addressed the reasons why Romans and Anglicans ever separated in the 16th century, mainly because this is an imported issue, of little interest to people living in PNG. This is especially so, now that many countries of the Commonwealth have no living relationship with British history, and have become independent states. Let us simply say that the English Reformation was a mixture of “theological conviction and political advantage”, and that, at one stage, Roman Catholics used to stress the former, and nowadays have more attention for the latter. What remains, then, of the religious differences?

Especially since the Second Vatican Council, many theoretical and practical changes have occurred in Roman Catholicism, which were the avowed aim of the one-time Archbishop of Canterbury, who introduced *The Book of Common Prayer*. Since these changes are already part and parcel of RC daily living, it is good to remember them at present.

Thomas Cranmer fought for a simplified, understandable, vernacular liturgy, instead of an elaborate, silent, and Latin ritual. He, too, promoted the reception of holy communion under both species, and wanted the eucharist to become a community celebration, thus superseding the older practice of Holy Mass, as a private devotion of priests, turned away from the people, or being without a community. His plea for more scriptural readings has also been heard, so that quite a few other churches have adopted the new Roman lectionary, with its much-greater scriptural content than before. To this, one can also add Cranmer’s plea for more-frequent sermons, or homilies. Furthermore, there is his opposition to, what he called, the RC cult of images, which has had its effect, for instance, on church architecture of the last decennia. And, finally, there is his opposition against enforced celibacy for the clergy, which the Latin church of the West has actually not abolished, but

for which it is beginning to allow some exceptions (as there have always been, e.g., in the Eastern tradition). Even this point shares in the flexibility, which characterises much of post-Vatican II church life. One tends to agree here with the Anglican Evangelical theologian, who said about the Reformation: "It has done its work."³⁶

It might be clear that the 16th-century reasons no longer hold water. Again, we do not live anymore at the beginning of mission history, nor at the time of Archbishop de Boismenu. Instead, we might now look back at the long road to unity, travelled by Romans and Anglicans in PNG. The guiding posts for this exercise are the words of Cardinal Basil Hume, when he wrote about *The Experience of Ecumenism* (1989), and distinguished five stages of interchurch relationships: confrontation, coexistence, cooperation, commitment, and communion. This applies to PNG as well.

Between Romans and Anglicans, there has never been a state of confrontation, or competition, although one cannot ignore a few individual cases, where one missionary refused to shake hands with the "opposition", or his whole group believed that there was, at most, doubtful salvation possible outside its own church. In fact, nationalistic prejudices sometimes won the day over doctrinal differences, which remained minimal.

The basic quality of relationships was that of coexistence, also fostered by the geographical distance between the different areas, in which the two sister churches operated. If there was any separation of loyalties, this occurred between "evangelicals" and "Catholics", thus drawing together both Romans and Anglicans. Famous here is the word of Archbishop de Boismenu, who once said about the Church of England: "They are all right."

Cooperation has existed in the country as long as feasible, often also encouraged by the government. There might not be many local schemes of union in PNG, but the country is rather special, in having so many organisational links, of which, some were listed

above, while others (such as Lifeline, the Police Chaplaincy Board, the Bible Society of PNG), and the Summer Institute of Linguistics are rarely mentioned. On this level, the impulses of Rome – especially of the Second Vatican Council, and of the 1983 Code of Canon Law – cannot possibly be ignored.

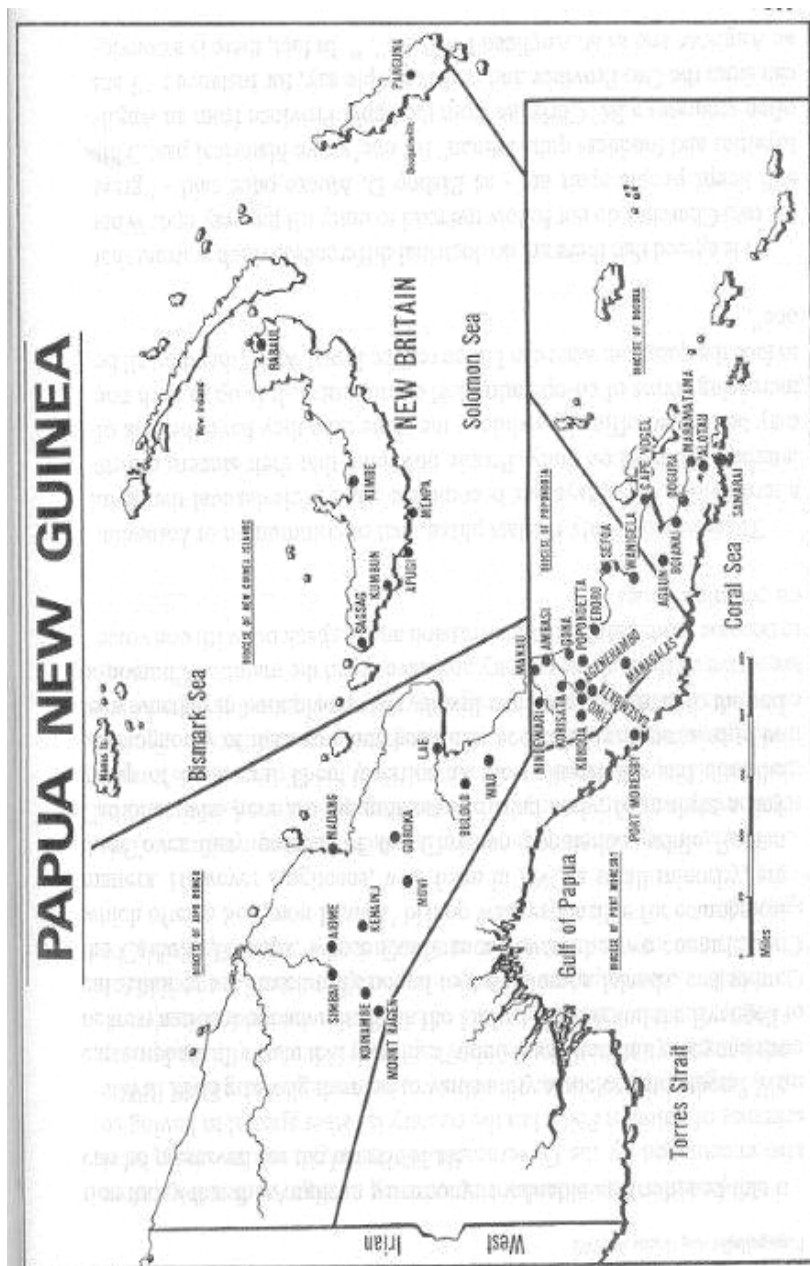
The next step, where we now are, is rather that of commitment. This relationship was particularly manifested through the many initiatives of Archbishops D. Hand and G. Ambo. They led to discussions among theologians, among bishops, and among the ordinary people. Such a move was indirectly also encouraged by the many revival groups, which are active all through the country, and have urged the mainline churches to become more faithful to their mission, and to speak out with one voice on common issues.

There remains only the last phase, that of communion, or *koinonia*, a term, which, these days, has become the great ecclesiastical theme in international talks on unity. People now pray that their sincere efforts may be blessed officially, while, at the same time, they have the task of increasing forms of cooperation and commitment. It is up to each one to face the question: what can I do to realise Jesus' wish "that they all be one".

It is agreed that there are no doctrinal differences, which warrant that the two churches do not follow the road to unity till the very end. What still keeps people apart are – as Bishop D. Moore once said – "great loyalties, and fondness quite human" for one's own historical past. This often separates a RC Christian from the Sepik Province from an Anglican from the Oro Province, and makes people say, for instance, "I am an Anglican, and as an Anglican, I will die".³⁷ In fact, there is a conviction today that the Anglican patrimony is valuable and rich, and that it can be preserved for the benefit of all.

Will PNG go along the road towards unity alone, or with others? We can emphatically state that there is a varied interest in unity, beyond the nearest national boundaries. Both the United

church and the Evangelical Alliance are structurally bound to the Solomon Islands, and so are the Catholic Bishops, whose Conference covers the two countries, in which, often, a Solomon Islands' bishop was responsible for ecumenical matters. However, Anglicans, who form, in PNG, a small minority, are, there, over 40 percent of the Christian population, while Roman Catholics, who here are the greatest Christian body, form, there, a tiny group of believers. Their insertion in the political life, and also the physiognomy of the two churches, differ accordingly. It remains to be seen whether, in both places, the two will walk the same road to the end, or not.



ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anglican Consultative Council
ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
CBC	Catholic Bishops' Conference
LMS	London Missionary Society
MCC	Melanesian Council of Churches
MSC	Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RC	Roman Catholic
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SM	Society of Mary (Marist Fathers)
SVD	Society of the Divine Word

NOTES

1. Cf. W. E. Bromilow, in J. W. Colwell, ed., *A Century in the Pacific*, 1914, p. 540.
2. Cf. W. MacGregor, in his diary, according to David Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission*, 1977, p. 75; see also A. Dupeyrat, *Papouasie*, 1935, p. 257 footnote.
3. A. de Boismenu, in *Proceedings . . .*, 1905, p. 275.
4. Pius X, Audience of November 22, 1911, quoted in G. Delbos, *The Mustard Seed*, 1985, p. 169.
5. H. Verjus, quoted by Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission*, p. 75.
6. A. Maclaren, in F. M. Synge, *Albert Maclaren*, 1908, p. 70.
7. C. King, quoted by G. White, *A Pioneer of Papua*, 1929, p. 64.
8. A. de Boismenu, Letter to his sisters, September 4, 1913, quoted by G. Delbos, *The Mustard Seed*, 1985, p. 69.
9. Quotation of H. Nollen MSC to H. Newton, c1921, by courtesy of David Wetherell, Geelong, Vic.
10. Quotation of A. de Boismenu, Letter to LMS, December 18, 1936, by courtesy of J. Garrett, Suva, Fiji.

11. H. Short, Draft reply (?) to A. de Boismenu, quoted by courtesy of John Garrett.
12. Ph. Strong, *Out of Great Tribulation*, 1947, p. 57.
- 12a. Personal interview with Fr Norbert Birkmann MSC, Mai, July 8, 1991.
13. H. Newton, *Report to the Secretary of the Church Assembly Missionary Council*, June, 1936, kept at Lambeth Palace Archives, London.
14. Cf. J. A. Carpenter/W. R. Schenk, eds., *Earthen Vessels*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990, p. xii.
15. Official translation from: *The Catholic Mind* 48 (1950), pp. 379-384, quoted pp. 380-381.
- 15a. Rome's position was no doubt known in the mission via such magazines as *L'Ami du Clerge* 62 (1952), p. 741; and *Ecclesia* 4-11 (1952), not to mention Henry M. Robinson's well-read novel *The Cardinal*, London UK: Macdonald, 1951, p. 88-89.
16. Quoted by A. Fournier, in *Annales* (Issoudun) (1966), pp. 160-161.
17. Quotation of Ph. Strong, in D. Tomkins/B. Hughes, *The Road from Gona*, 1969, p.27.
18. Personal interview with Fr John Dempsey MSC, Rome, August 21, 1990; a simpler story, based on the memories of RC nuns, is given by Bishop Leo Scharmach, *This Crowd Beats Us All*, 1960, pp. 2-53.
19. Quoted by L. A. Cupit, *Ecumenical Relationships in Papua New Guinea* (M.Th. thesis), Melbourne, 1976, p. 107 (with permission).
20. Personal interview with Archbishop David Hand, Port Moresby, June 4, 1990; see also: *The Times of PNG*, January 7, 1989.
21. Quotation of Ph. Strong, by courtesy of Mrs C. Luxton, London.
22. D. Hand, quoted by I. Hicks, "Trail-beating prelate would do it again", in *Post-Courier*, May 29, 1972.
23. Quoted by B. Pamley and M. Pamley, *Rome and Canterbury*, 1974, p. 349.

24. Cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 15, quoted after W. M. Abbott.
25. Ibidem n. 10 (Abbott, p.27).
26. Ibidem n. 10 (Abbott, p.29).
27. Vaticanum II, *Unitatis redintegratio* (Abbott, p.346).
28. Ibidem n. 13 (Abbott, p. 356).
29. Ibidem (Abbott, p. 354). Attention to this phrase was drawn by Archbishop G. Carey, in his address during the ecumenical service at Mount Hagen on August 8, 1991, printed in *The Times of PNG*, August 22, 1991.
30. Quoted by L. A. Cupit (see note 19), p. 160 (with permission).
31. Cf. P. Murphy, ed., *Report . . .*, 1970-1973, p. 1.
32. Ibidem, pp. 18-20.
33. This group of Swiss and French theologians, of various persuasions, named after the abbey, in which they usually met (since 1937), discussed, in September, 1971, the possibility of a common eucharistic faith.
34. Cf. C. Renali, *The Roman Catholic Church's Participation in the Ecumenical Movement in Papua New Guinea*, Rome, 1991, p. 102.
35. See, now, the ARC/USA Statement on Anglican Orders of May 8, 1990, quoted in *One in Christ* 25 (1990/1993), pp. 256-279. Cardinal Willebrands' letter is found, ibidem, p. 21, (2/1986, pp. 199-204).
36. Cf. J. de Sargé, *Christ and the Human Prospect*, 1978, p. 88.
37. Cf. the words of the Resident Magistrate to A. Musgrave, quoted in C. A. W. Monckton, *Some Experiences of a New Guinea Resident Magistrate: First Series*, Harmondsworth UK: Penguin, 1936, p. 213.