

### **III. FROM MISSION TO CHURCH**

After the two previous periods, each one about 30 years long, and both concluded by a disastrous World War, we now enter the next phase of mission history. It begins after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, when the whole area was thrown into the Pacific War (1942-1945). On the other hand, it leads to one of several high points in PNG history, such as, politically, the attainment of self-government and independence (1973-1975), and religiously, the establishment of the local hierarchy, first among the Roman Catholics (1966), and, then, among the Anglicans (1969). The latter date would surely have been earlier, had the eruption of Mount Lamington not wiped away a whole generation of church leaders, and, thus, retarded developments in the New Guinea Mission. Still, the two dates of ecclesiastical independence are the convenient resting points for the third segment of our overview.

#### **1. A Colony Becomes an Independent State**

The surroundings, in which the missions were to take the step towards becoming full-fledged churches did not happen in a vacuum. One of the reasons was that those in charge of political life shared a common concern for the well-being of the same people, who were also adherents of different churches. Again, the leadership, exercised by Papua New Guineans on the local level, benefited their greater duties on the national level, or the other way around. Collaboration became imperative, and also much easier than any time before.

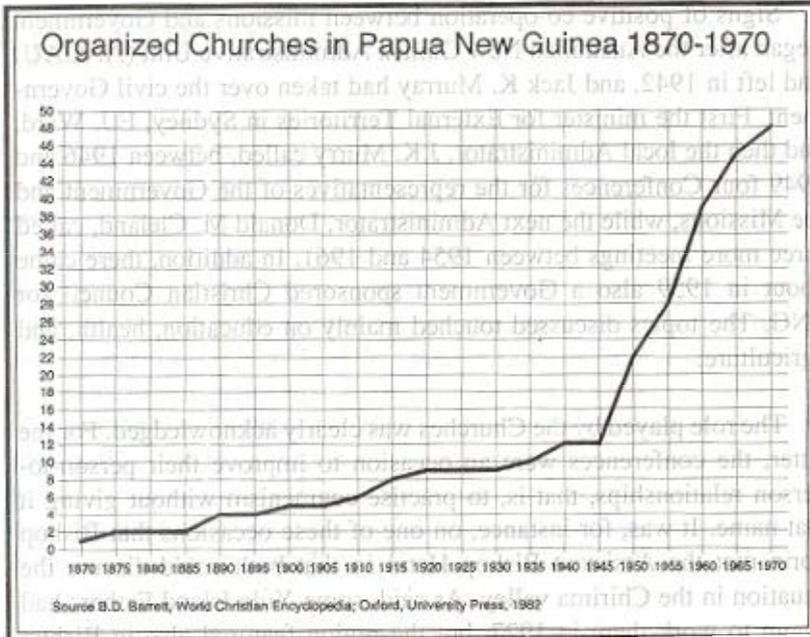
There were some negative elements in the nation building done by the government. Insofar as they appealed to have German missionaries replaced by other nationalities, they multiplied the number of incoming missions without, in the end, being able to limit their entry.

Signs of positive cooperation between missions and government began after the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) had left in 1942, and Jack K. Murray had taken over the civil government. First, the Minister for External Territories in Sydney, E. J. Ward, and then the local Administrator, J. K. Murray, called, between 1946 and 1949, four conferences for the representatives of the government and the missions, while the next Administrator, Donald M. Cleland, called three more meetings between 1954 and 1961. In addition, there came about, in 1959, also, a government-sponsored Christian Council for PNG. The topics discussed touched mainly on education, health, and agriculture.

The role played by the churches was clearly acknowledged. For the latter, the conferences were an occasion to improve their person-to-person relationships, that is, to practise ecumenism, without giving it that name. It was, for instance, on one of these occasions that Bishop Sorin met Assistant Bishop Hand, so that both could discuss the situation in the Chirima Valley. As said, some Yule Island Fathers had begun to work there in 1927, but the region featured also in Bishop Strong's post-war plan of the Four Valleys (see below). Since the Anglicans did not plan to advance in that area, the RC missionaries were allowed to go on with their work.

Meanwhile, the time had come for the Administration to cater for the "new tribes" discovered in Central New Guinea, and, for which pacification, it needed, very much, the help of Christian missions. The older churches were not asked to do the work (as happened with the German Lutherans), or they could not fulfil the immense job (because they did not have sufficient volunteers), or also they declined to accept the task, because it would spread them out too thinly. Consequently, the administration called upon other mission agencies to help out.

With this, we leave the so-called secular field, and address the religious problems proper, and, among others, those caused by



Australian and American army men, visiting PNG for the first time. Many of these soldiers encountered, now, a kind of indigenous Christian, who differed from the stereotypical poor and wild pagans they had heard about. They were the famous “Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angels”, with a kind of honesty, loyalty, and courage, which the Europeans were not accustomed to. In short, to paraphrase the title of a book by H. Van Dusen, the Allied military “found the church in Papua New Guinea”, whereas, conversely, Papua New Guineans finally got the chance to show Christ to the outside world – to adapt yet another formula, once used by Bishop Strong.

From this encounter, derived the fact that World War II created a great interest in the South Pacific. Australia appreciated that the region was a defensive screen for its national security, while America, after, the war, became even more convinced of its “national calling”, so that many of its citizens perceived a personal responsibility to proclaim the gospel to PNG, the last unknown land

on earth. This sense of mission was particularly strong among North American Evangelicals.

According to the data, published in D. B. Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia*, PNG counted, in 1982, at least 80 organised church groups. Their number has grown steadily from the beginning till the end of World War II, when it reached only a dozen. However, from 1945 onwards, there was a steep and steady rise in numbers. If one compares Barrett with a more-recent government paper, which lists over 150 church organisations in PNG, one must conclude that the figures of the *Encyclopedia* are rather on the low side, although still eloquent in the tendency shown.

According to another source, one sees that, on a world scale, there were, in the early 1920s, some 14,000 foreign, that is North American Protestant missionaries from the Evangelical sector. In the mid-1980s, this total became 39,000 career missionaries, to which one can add another 30,000 short-term overseas workers, from the same persuasion. This figure, too, gives us some indication about the PNG situation.<sup>14</sup>

Although the new churches were all Protestant, they were not all of the same kind, in theology. Historically, the terms Protestant and Evangelical were first used interchangeably, but now the latter term was opposed to those of the mainline churches. They included fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and Holiness Wesleyans – not to count the independent, more ephemeral, faith missions. One can count, here, the Assemblies of God, the Church of the Nazarene, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, a service organisation, like the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, or even a like-minded group, such as the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, who came only in 1948.

There were other differences as well. In lifestyle, the new churches were usually made up of affluent Americans, with budgets to shame all pre-war missions, and to impress the materialistic Melanesians. Finally, all these groups were against organised religion, whether under the aegis of Rome, or of the World Council

of Churches. “Ecumenism” did not belong to their exclusivist vocabulary.

With such a great number of missions coming to PNG, and treading almost on one another’s toes, the government could only forbid the access to “restricted areas”, where personal safety could not yet be guaranteed. Later on, it could only impose the rule of a one-mile distance between the various missions. It so happened, in the early 1950s, that, in Tari, four competing missions settled in the smallest possible area, and that, in Goroka town, around 1980, there were some 43 denominations for a population of not quite 19,000 people.

Mainline churches felt particularly sad, because the newcomers were “sheep stealing” among their own, baptised members. The latter were now degraded to nominal Christians, who did not recognise Jesus as their personal Saviour, or, also, who were not impressed enough by the nearness of the Last Day. In practice – the old churches felt – the affiliation to a new group was often the stepping stone to leaving Christianity altogether, so that, for this reason, too, they waged a war against pre-war and post-war “sects” alike.

Up to the 1960s, the government viewed political independence as being beyond the horizon. But then, things took a quick turn, leading up to self-government in 1973, and, two years later, to political independence from Australia. What happened, at the time, in the churches, was only the ecclesiastical counterpart of what occurred in the country at large. To these independence movements, in RC and Anglican churches, we will now turn.

## **2. The Establishment of the RC Hierarchy**

The RC missions have known a gradual branching out of overseas missionaries till they reached all borders of PNG. There is, however, an important distinction, before and after 1966, that is,

between the missions given to the care of certain religious societies (under the so-called *jus commissionis*), and the newer local churches, with their own residential bishops, and supported by an increasing number of lay people and local priests.

At one stage, as we saw already, the MSC were assisted by the SVD, who assumed north-east New Guinea (1896). On another occasion, the SM Fathers resumed their activities in the North Solomon Islands (1898). On its own ground, that is, in British New Guinea (from 1906 onwards, called Papua), mission stations spread out from Daru to Samarai, while, in German New Guinea, the same occurred in the area between the Admiralty Islands and the Gazelle Peninsula. This matter is not very relevant, though, for the dealings between the RC and Anglican missionaries.

The coming of World War II put a halt to all this progress, cutting off supplies from overseas, and flattening, in PNG, what 50 years of expansion had managed to build up. Especially at this juncture, there was no time for internal Christian squabbles and aggression.

After the war, there was a slow reconstruction, together with a constant distribution of responsibilities to new agencies. The latter relied mainly on help coming from Australia, and from the United States. They turned the four mission centres of Vunapope, Kieta, Yule Island, and Alexishafen/Wewak into 15 independent dioceses, which were clustered around the four metropolitan sees of Rabaul, Port Moresby, Madang, and Wewak, all elevated, in 1966, to the rank of Archdioceses. This was the time, when people wanted to make sure that nobody else would build on their foundations. Thus, jealousies were easily kindled, and led, in some places, to a “race for territory and converts” between the various missions. For our purpose, it might be appropriate to zero in on the progress in the RC missions.

Almost 50 years after the French Fathers had landed on Yule Island, the next new diocese in Papua was entrusted to the

Australian MSC Fathers. They resided around the island of Samarai, and in the townships of Sideia and Alotau (1941). Before that, the two nationalities had worked together, and, for a while yet, internal contacts would not be stopped (e.g., when French missionaries wanted to improve their English, and started their career in Eastern Papua).

Another early division occurred in Central New Guinea, when, in 1952, Australian Franciscan Friars settled in Aitape, thus leaving the older centre of Wewak to the continued care of the SVD.

Between 1957 and 1959, a whole spate of divisions was put into practice, spearheaded by Mgr R. Carboni, Apostolic Nuncio in Sydney. On the side of Rabaul, the provinces of New Ireland and Manus were entrusted to the American MSC (1957), while under Mgr André Sorin, the French MSC saw their see transferred from Yule Island to Port Moresby, and sections of their old vicariate given to the American Capuchins, around Mendi, and to the Canadian Montfort Fathers, who occupied Daru (1958). The next year, Yule Island regained its independence, under the new Bishop, Eugene Klein, successor of the deceased Bishop Sorin.

In 1959, too, the diocese of Alexishafen was divided. On the one side, the dioceses of Goroka and Mount Hagen came about, still catered for by the SVD Fathers, while, on the other side, the diocese of Lae went to the Dutch Mill Hill Fathers. With the vicariate of Vanimo given to the Australian Passionists (1963), most of the present dioceses were set up, being a total of 15 circumscriptions for the whole Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

In practice, the borders of each Vicariate Apostolic tended to coincide with the borders of a civil province, although there were some exceptions, usually dictated by established mission policies. It is, however, significant that Oro Province did not receive any RC See, but was attached to Port Moresby, in the Central Province. It does not seem that the paucity of Roman Catholics was responsible for this fact (because, at the time, Daru, too, had only a few baptised

Catholics), but, rather, the fact that Popondetta was the traditional centre of the Anglican Mission, and that RC missionaries did not want to create any interference with them.

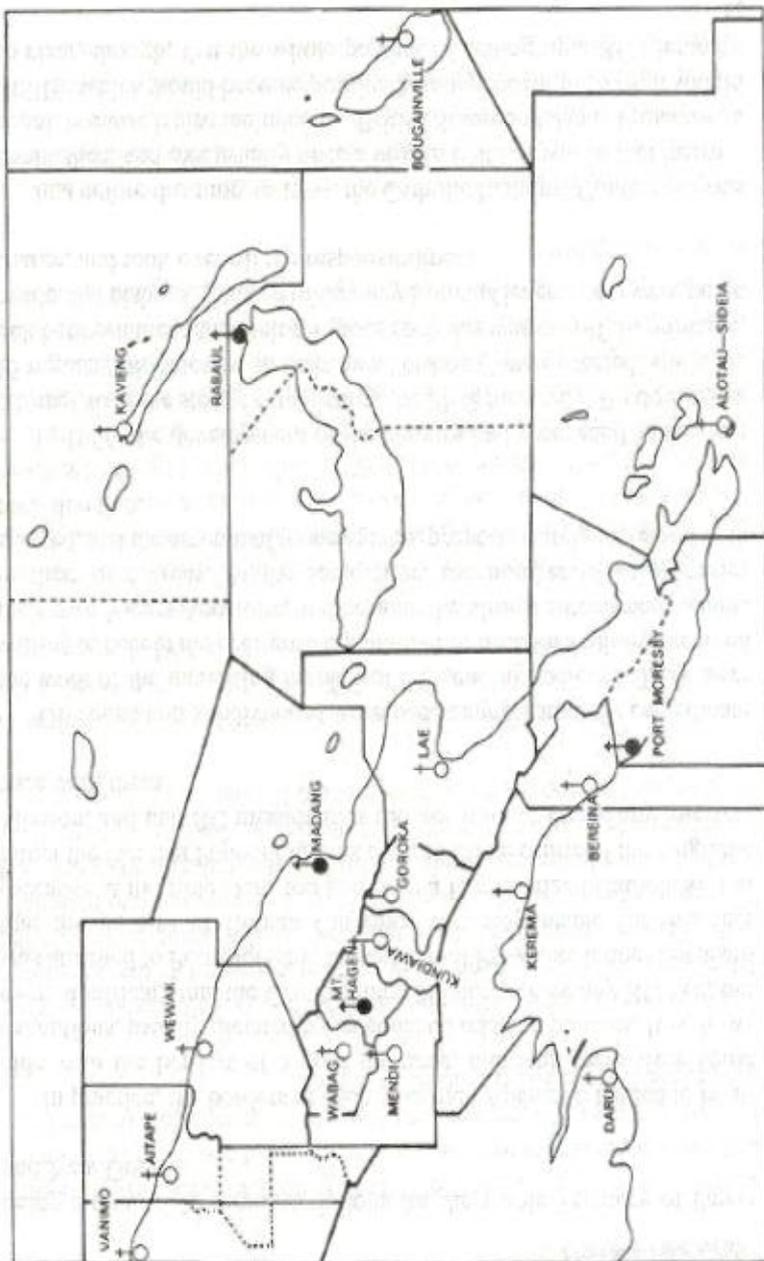
Divisions and subdivisions were necessary to properly coordinate the work of the increasing number of RC sending societies. They were willing to accept the ever-growing number of mission stations, receive their own Vicars Apostolic, and become the almost-autonomous agents in their own areas. At the same time, the number of missionaries allotted, and the amount of money given, proportionately increased with each division.

In 1966, the development of the country had proceeded so far, that “Rome” took the step of establishing the PNG hierarchy. By doing this, 15 regular “dioceses”, with their own “bishops”, were created, while the link between them, and their religious societies, was cut off. In principle, residential bishops (instead of faraway Roman Generalates) were put in charge, and took over all the responsibilities.

Just before this time, in 1964, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference was established, and met, usually once a year, in PNG. It was, in fact, international, because it also included the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP), which would become politically independent in 1978. It should be clear, though, that the whole process of setting up a RC hierarchy was an internal RC matter, quite independent of the Anglican presence in the Pacific, and obeying its own impulses. A lack of ecumenical concern for Anglicans, in some particular RC dioceses of PNG, was, therefore, not surprising, if there was no visible presence of the Anglicans in that particular place.

In the years after the war, the hand of “Rome” was not only visible, by dividing the PNG mission field, but also it was active in shaping the theological opinions adhered to. These opinions somehow clashed with the ecumenical spirit, which blew, in the world at large, especially since the World Council of Churches was

CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA.





established in 1948. It is important to note that Cardinal Alfred Ottaviani (who, in 1953, also became Cardinal-Protector of the MSC Society) was, from 1959 onwards, the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in Rome. He was universally known for his traditionalist opinions, and would have a great influence on the preparation of the Second Vatican Council. He signed the well-known Instruction of the H. Office, *Ecclesia Catholica*, dated December 20, 1949, which practically closed the door for any ecumenical ventures in the Roman church. Here, one reads, under n. 11:

“As to the manner and method of procedure in this work, let the bishops . . . be on their guard, lest, under some false pretence, for instance, by stressing things, on which we agree, rather than those on which we disagree, a dangerous indifferentism be fomented, particularly amongst those who are less thoroughly grounded in matters theological, and not so well trained in their religious practice. For they must beware, lest, from a spirit of “irenicism”, as it is called now-a-days, Catholic tenets . . . are so whittled down, and, somehow, made to conform to heterodox teaching, as to jeopardise the purity of Catholic doctrine, or obscure its clear, and genuine, meaning.”<sup>15</sup>

One can read here, too, that it remained prohibited for Roman Catholics to read works written by non-Catholics, or, also, that discussions with other denominations were not allowed, or only permitted after obtaining all necessary permissions from the proper authorities. This document is generally considered as stating the official RC position on the matter in the early 1950s.

The passage, quoted above, appeared three years after A. Sorin became Vicar Apostolic of Port Moresby, but the document did not receive any official echo in the RC mission. Still, Mgr Sorin did not have the broad-mindedness of his predecessor. So, when, in 1947, two French missionaries sailed from Marseille to Port Moresby, and had given one of their chalices to an Anglican priest

to celebrate Holy Mass, they were rapped over the knuckles by the bishop, because he felt that their action had shown an unwarranted *communio in sacris* with the Church of England.

Now, in the late 1940s, there was, at the Holy Office, also a broader trend of opinions, exemplified both by the Letter of August 8, 1949, and by the Response of December 28, 1949.

The Letter concerned one Fr Leonard Feeney, who so strictly interpreted the adage *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, that he relegated all Protestants to hell. Here “Rome” took up the insight of Pope Pius XII’s Encyclical *Mystici corporis* (1942) that one could belong to the church, either in fact, but, also, through desire, not only as expressed by a catechumen, but, also, as found in the life of a good Christian. At the time, however, this particular Letter, addressed to the Archbishop of Boston, was not widely known, and was never officially circulated in Papua.<sup>15a</sup>

The other document, quoted above, appeared in the official journal of the Vatican (which means that it affected all Roman Catholics), and addressed baptisms administered in certain “sects”. It is revealing to note that this Response was more generous than the Guidelines of Bishop de Boismenu (because now “Rome” declared that baptisms administered by others were presumably valid). Consequently, in 1951, Bishop Sorin amended the 1936 instructions of his predecessor, and had his own *Notes Théologiques* of 1947 repealed, requesting even that his staff should sent back all existing copies to his office.

To this action, on a diocesan level, one can add the regional conferences, or moral cases, discussed in Port Moresby, for 1954/1955. These concerned one Father Francois, who asked himself whether, in his dealings with Protestants, he was exaggerating in one way or the other, and the case of one Father Henri, who simply refused to baptise all children of mixed marriages. The latter was reprimanded, but the other’s case is still

more illuminating, because its solution treated of the relation between Catholics and Protestants in general.

Bishop Sorin recognised that the stress on preserving the faith (among Catholics), and on showing fraternal love (to non-Catholics), had varied in history, although there was a continuously-growing softening of disciplinary measures against the outsiders. As in the time of Bishop de Boismenu, he underlined the example of Jesus, and the subsidiary role of the church in leading people, in their union with God. Nevertheless, compared with today's judgments, Bishop Sorin was still pre-Vatican II in his outlook. In short, we can maintain that, on the diocesan level, the openness towards other Christians did not die with Bishop de Boismenu, but that it continued, unhindered, in Catholic circles.

When, in 1960, Bishop Eugene Klein succeeded Bishop Sorin, the same policy continued. On the one hand, there were, for instance, some Roman documents, which were taken into account (such as the Decree *Matrimonia mixta*, to be mentioned below). Hence, the new bishop recalled, to his coworkers, that all marriages contracted before a non-Catholic minister remained invalid, and that, in mixed marriages, strict promises were required, regarding both the Catholic baptism and the education of the children. Again, he published a negative answer regarding the admission of high-church Anglicans to Holy Communion. This was, then, the official adherence to Rome, in one RC diocese, in July, 1966.

Coming down to the grassroots level, good relationships were prevailing, not so much with the Anglicans (who were rarely met in this particular mission), but with the United church followers, who, through mixed marriages, sometimes made up half of the population in a given parish. The opening of the RC church at Kavora village (Terapo), in Bishop Klein's diocese, is one of the examples of this living together. The ex-LMS carpenters added the porch to the church building, while one Protestant deacon, after recalling his previous opposition to the RC newcomers, said to the local missionary:

“Now you have come. We know that you are friends. You preach the same Christ, in whom we, too, believe: I am old, and I do not want to change. My wife is your friend, and she does not want to change either. However, our children are free. They know the two missions. It is up to them to make a choice.”<sup>16</sup>

As a matter of fact, the deacon had his son baptised by the church of Rome. Then, when the moment came to open the new church, each of the villages, or groups, made a public donation. The Congregationalists won the race, and so obtained the right to “cut the ribbon”, and open, officially, a RC church in their midst. This happened back in October, 1961.

### **3. The Anglican Province of Papua New Guinea**

The Pacific war came, first, to New Britain where, under continuous air raids, most of the mission stations were flattened, and the bulk of the personnel died. As a matter of fact, both the RC and the Anglican missions ignored official advice to withdraw to safety. Illustrative is the famous radio message of Bishop Strong, broadcast to his personnel on January 31, 1942. He urged all of his coworkers to stay, saying:

“God expects this of us. The church at home, which sent us out, will surely expect it of us. The universal church expects it. The tradition and history of mission requires it of us. Missionaries, who . . . are now at rest, are surely expecting it of us. The people, whom we serve, surely expect it of us. Our own consciences expect it of us. . . . If anyone had required us to leave, then we would have had to obey God rather than men. . . . We have made our resolution to stay. Let us not shrink from it.”<sup>17</sup>

The enemy attack was blind, and made no distinction as to which mission one belonged, and so, it happened, that only a few

people went through the war unscathed, while the majority experienced hardships, or lost their lives. The Anglican parish priest, Fr Romney Gill, survived the hostilities by moving from one hiding place to the other, whereas the RC Fr, Heinrich Bender MSC, was left in peace, because the enemy considered him as a harmless scientist, mainly interested in exotic flora and fauna. Again, Fr James Benson, the parish priest of Gona, first lost his way in the bush, and finally was interned in the Ramale camp, where he spent most of the wartime period with some 140 RC mission personnel.

Although there are cases where outsiders, or lapsed Christians, betrayed the missionaries, one minor incident well indicates that early catechesis on New Britain had done its work well. About 1945, a Japanese prisoner of war tried to open a ciborium from the RC church of Vuvu (on the Gazelle Peninsula), but could not. After him, an Anglican soldier managed to do it, so that the children present spontaneously explained that the first could not, because he was a pagan, but that the other was able to do it because he was an Anglican, and “Anglicans and Roman Catholics are the same”.<sup>18</sup>

Port Moresby, and Papua, in general, stayed outside the fighting zone proper, since the adversary was halted in the ranges, on the Kokoda Trail. But the place had to deal with Japanese air raids, and with a great influx of Allied soldiers. In April, 1942, Fr Michael McEnroe departed for the army, and left the keys of the RC chapel at Bomana in the hands of his Anglican counterpart, Fr Henry Matthews. Bishop Strong noted in his diary that this was a rather wonderful gesture from a man who, in the past, “had been rather prejudiced against the Anglican church”. In a moment of need, he knew who were his true friends. As to Fr Matthews, then Anglican rector of St John-on-the-Hill, in the city, he soon found out that he could not enrol as a chaplain (because he had reached retiring age), and, afterwards, died at sea, together with the people he wanted to save.

The negative result of the whole operation in PNG and the Solomon Islands was that up to 95 percent of mission buildings were destroyed. Churches, hospitals, schools, rectories, convents, and all the rest, no longer existed, while 11 Anglicans died, 15 Lutherans, 24 Methodists, and 188 RC Fathers, Brothers and Sisters. In addition, one could list the various war cemeteries left behind in the country, plus the 18,000 or so Japanese soldiers, whose bodies were usually repatriated after the war. When, eventually, post-war reconstruction came, it differed from place to place, with, initially, not much help coming from the sending countries in Europe.

There were also positive results of the war, especially on the local population, made by American and Australian soldiers. In the army, the Papua New Guineans met yet another type of white man. Usually, these soldiers were young, and inexperienced in the bush, or were also in need of shelter and assistance. But they were, as a rule, generous in payments and handouts, and were often not impressed by differences of colour and race. Some of them were also practising and believing Christians.

One such group were the Anglican soldiers of the gun batteries and workshops, belonging to the Australian Imperial Forces in Port Moresby. They had refurnished the St John's church, vandalised by the ill-disciplined military force, some time earlier. Later, they met regularly for the Padre's Hour to discuss with their chaplain, Fr F. M. Hill, various religious and moral issues. So, they talked also about the unity of Christendom, and showed interest in the efforts towards reunion. They never could understand the failure of Rome to enter into negotiations with other churches.

After the war, the Anglican missionaries were the first to resume their work, in full strength. They started along the south coast of New Britain, which was, then, still part of the Archdiocese of Melanesia. Their early coming even created the opportunity to treat the RC promises as "lies", because the Sacred Heart Fathers were much slower in returning to the south coast of the island.

Bishop Strong did not lose any time in resuscitating his earlier plan of expansion. First, the strategic centres of the New Guinea Mission should be built up to the strength required, then made into natural bases, then used to occupy the four unevangelised valleys.

Starting from the south-eastern end of Papua, an Anglican drive had to come from Wanigela, up into the Musa Valley; from Eroro, towards Managalasi; from the more-inland station of Sangara, into the Chirima Valley, and, finally, from the head stations on the Mambare River, into the Goilala area. This four-pronged attack was to cover the whole mission area. But more was in store. There were still the vast regions on the New Guinea mainland, to the border with Dutch New Guinea, and there were, also, all of the New Guinea Islands.

The request of the Anglican bishop to get 12 new priests and 40, or more, other recruits, to realise the “Great Forward Movement” did not materialise. What he got, however, was a young dynamic missionary, Fr Geoffrey David Hand, ordained in 1942, and arriving in PNG only four years afterwards.

Fr Hand was first put in charge of Sefoa, near Tufl, and then of Sangara, so that he quickly learned the language, and got used to the bush ministry of the mission. In 1950, he was made Assistant to Bishop Strong, and first Archdeacon of New Guinea. While he had his residence in Madang, the coastal town between the headquarters of Dogura and the beckoning border of Dutch New Guinea, his first assignment was to boost the Anglican presence in New Britain, and in the Bismarck Archipelago at large, (as was asked by the faithful adherents of the Church of England). The area had been transferred, in 1949, to the New Guinea Mission, after the islanders had asked the Church of England for greater consideration, and, after an agreement had been finalised with the Melanesian Mission, during an encounter of the bishops concerned, at the Lambeth Conference of 1948. In addition, he also had to establish an Anglican presence in the New Guinea Highlands.

His arrival was not the only sign of Anglican vitality. There was, also, in the time of Bishop Strong, the Diocesan Conference of 1947, the first after World War II, which reaffirmed the extension plan towards the islands and the highlands. Yet, the main expression of life was found on the educational level, with, in 1948, the opening of the Martyrs' Memorial School for boys at Sangara, and, in 1950, the beginning of the Holy Name School for girls at Dogura. In the same year and place, the St Barnabas Hospital began accepting medical orderlies, while, again in Dogura, both teachers and evangelists were trained, and informal education was given, according to the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme. As mentioned already, there would be also the Newton Theological College, established in 1951.

But then, disaster struck. In January, 1951, during the summer holidays, Mount Lamington blew up, and, in one stroke, the volcano wiped away the administrative centre of Higaturu, and a whole generation of church leaders, assembled at Sangara for their in-service training. Some priests, 30 teacher-evangelists, and thousands of people lost their lives, and the whole country, including some RC churches, held memorial services for a loss on such a scale. For the Anglicans, many long-cherished plans were shelved, while Assistant Bishop Hand was called back for two years to help restore the losses in the region.

As early as 1953, Bishop Hand was again walking up and down the south coast of New Britain, usually arriving on the trading vessel *Maimuna*, and advancing on foot to the Whiteman Ranges. He celebrated the eucharist, performed marriages, and, in the eyes of all, did not spare himself one bit.

In his first year already, the new station of Apugi was established. His RC counterparts were, in Pililo, the Irish, Fr John O'Hanlon, and, in Valanguo, the Austrian, Fr Alois Hartmann, both of the MSC mission of Vunapope (Rabaul). The particular national background of each missionary, and also the chequered mission history over the last 20 years or so, were not conducive to hearty



had, before the war, made contact in the area, and even had one or more catechists from there, but it had never established a mission station.

On his second visit to Aiome, Bishop Hand was met on the airstrip, by 25 catechists in uniform, flanked by the Father, who refused to shake hands with the “opposition”. Bishop Hand submitted the matter to the newly-appointed Bishop of Madang, Adolf Noser, who asked:

“Give me two months to get around my diocese, to see what I have got, and to get my act together, and then I will answer you.”<sup>20</sup>

The result was that the RC missionaries kept to the north-east side of the Ramu River, and the Anglicans to the south-west side – as is the case, even today. Agreements like this – also between Anglicans and Lutherans – have assured that the mainline churches in the Schraeder and Bismarck Ranges, have maintained religious peace ever since. Thus, once again, a division of terrains was made (as had occurred, at one time, between the Yule Island Fathers and the Dogura mission).

The Chirima Valley also numbered among the places, which Bishop Strong had wanted to win over to the Anglican church. This did not happen in his time, nor during the period of Bishop Hand. Still, an arrangement was reached, and the actual extension was pushed ahead, by the Roman Catholics.

In 1955, the offer came to the New Guinea Mission to employ again the Melanesian Brotherhood, which 30 years earlier had begun to evangelise the south coast of New Britain. The bishop was happy with the offer, and, in the following year, a group of ten Brothers began working in the Highlands, with their headquarters outside Goroka. The bishop assured for them an expatriate Anglican chaplain, who also cared for the Europeans in the town. Wherever the Brothers went, they were the first to make new contacts, and so,

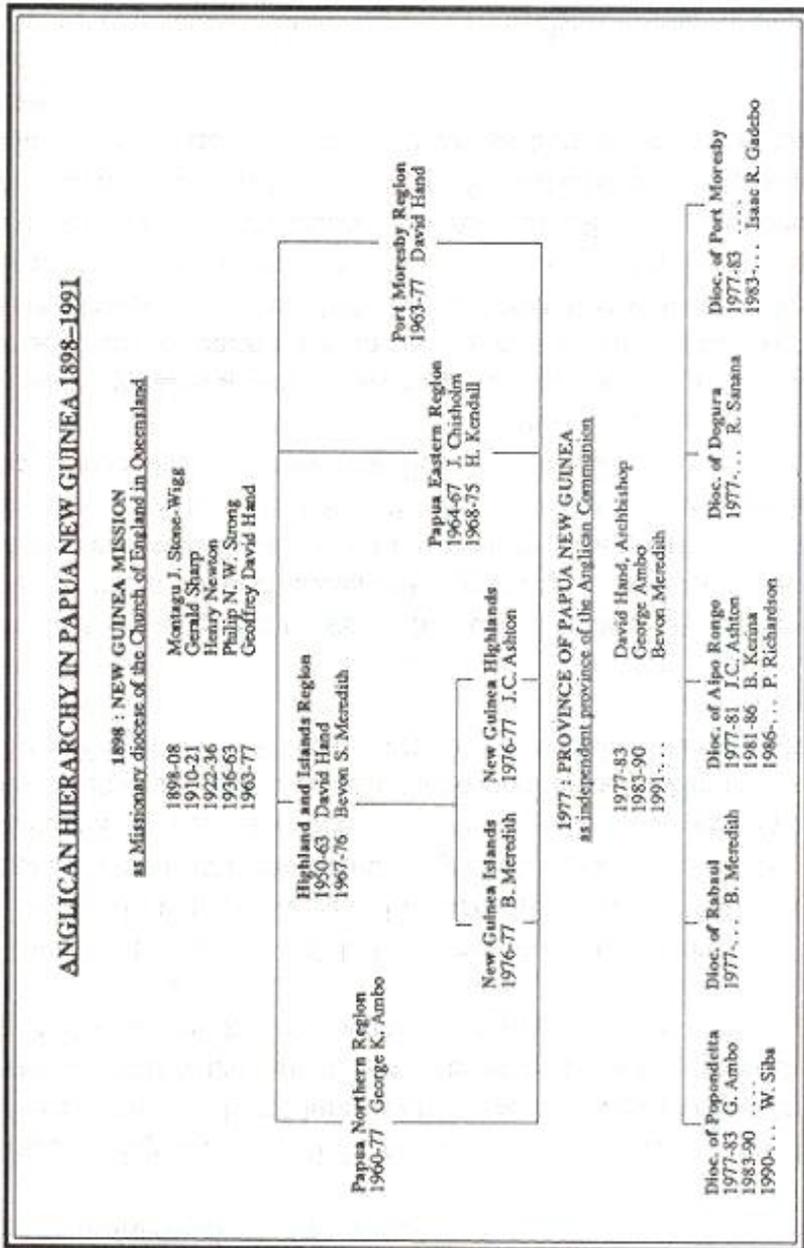
they assured the foundation of the stations of Movi (1951), and of Koinambe, Aiome, and Simbai (1956), respectively, in the Siane, Jimi, and Schraeder Valleys. Their work was a success story, and accounted for several new branches on the Anglican tree. In 1961, there were 40 staff in the Highlands, while eventually the number of believers in the Simbu, Western Highlands, and Madang Provinces, would be almost as high as those from all the other Anglican areas, reckoned, in 1958, to be around 100,000 baptised members.

Assistance came from other religious societies as well. Years in a row, there had been the request of Bishop Strong to the Society of St Francis (SSF), the largest order for men in the Anglican communion, and of which the Bishop himself was a Tertiary. Unfortunately, the answer had always ended with the paucity of the people available. So, in 1959, Bishop Strong admitted:

“I think I understand, and so I go back to New Guinea in the second, and 20th year as bishop, without the Brothers I was promised 18 years ago.”<sup>21</sup>

But, starting in March 1959, the Brothers did come, and, from their new parish in Koki (Port Moresby), they began to cater for indigenous migrants coming to the capital. Soon, they branched out to other centres, both in PNG, and in the neighbouring countries.

The arrival of another religious congregation for men, the Society of the Sacred Mission (of Kelham, England), planned for 1950, did not eventuate. But, in 1951, the Community of the Holy Name Sisters came to Dogura, to start the Holy Name School for girls. They went, in 1964, to Popondetta, and also assisted in the foundation of the Community of the Visitation, a group of local sisters, who found their own identity in 1977.



In the 1960s, the Great Forward Movement came to an end. Most of the future places and institutions had been set up, George Koiaio Ambo had been consecrated as the first local bishop (1960), and after Bishop Strong was translated to Brisbane, the Bishops of Queensland appointed Bishop David Hand to be the first diocesan Bishop of PNG.

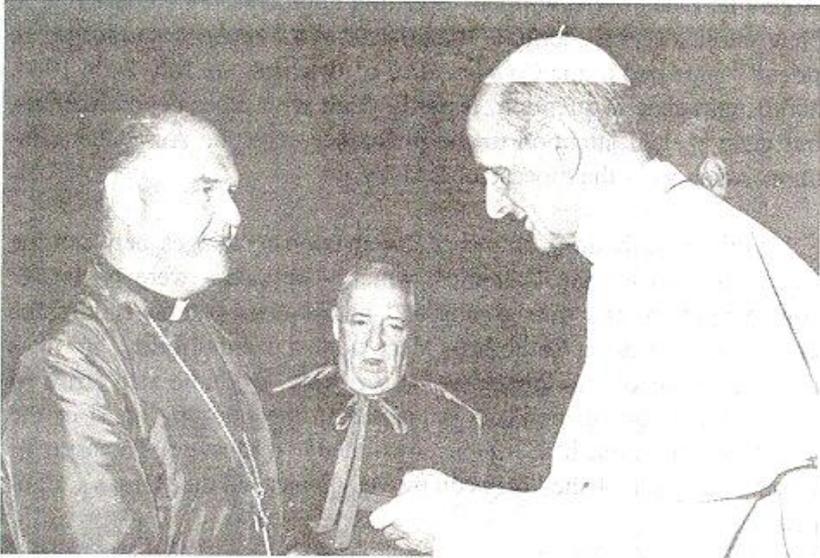
It was a great occasion for the Anglicans in PNG. Congratulations were sent to the retiring, and to the incoming, bishop, from various corners, including, for instance, the RC Archbishop of Madang, A. Noser, while, at Dogura, an impressive ceremony was staged for Bishop Hand, then over 13 years an Archdeacon and Assistant Bishop in the country. Some RC priests attended the festivities, for instance, the well-known Fr Bernhard Franke MSC, of Rabaul, who “sat through several Anglican Masses”.

Among the overseas visitors was, also, the freelance journalist, Douglas Rose, who used the opportunity to write a series of articles on church life in the Territory, and had promised them to various newspapers in Australia. One article, entitled “Startling approach to church unity in New Guinea”, and subtitled “Anglicans and Roman Catholics share priests”, appeared in the *Courier-Mail* of Brisbane, on July 24, 1964, and caught special attention. It partly dealt with other denominations, but gave special attention to the difference with the Australian situations, such as in the diocese of Sydney.

In his contribution, Mr Rose dwelt upon marriages between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, which – he said – were no longer considered to be of a “mixed religion”, nor required that the children be brought up as Roman Catholics. Of the dogma of infallibility, he wrote that RC priests did, no longer, take it seriously, while he also affirmed that an exchange of ministers happened in the outlying areas of the Territory. There was, in PNG – he concluded – “a substantial measure of church unity, established between the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics.”

Reactions were quick to come, and further printing of the article was stopped, while Bishop Hand sent a letter of apology to all the RC Vicars Apostolic in PNG. It would seem – Bishop Virgil Copas wrote to the editor of the newspaper – that local Christians were one in charity to one another, but not at one in doctrine and faith. Mr Rose had overlooked, e.g., the mandatory recourse to dispensations by the authorities, or presupposed some current misunderstanding of infallibility, which made it far too wide. He might not have seen the need of pastoral care – that is, of charity – for people living in isolation of their own ministers. With this, the incident died down.

In 1963, Bishop Hand took on his new responsibilities till, in 1973, he became the Metropolitan Bishop of Port Moresby, and the first Anglican Archbishop of PNG. As we will see, below, he was a very ecumenically-minded man, who, from the start, was engaged in the Melanesian Council of Churches, and in its various initiatives. In this capacity, he worked, in the mid-1960s, to establish an interdenominational Department of Religious Studies at the University. He was also the one who, in July, 1970, launched the idea of a dialogue between Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians.



Bishop D. Hand, received by Pope Paul VI, Rome, 1968.

Before becoming the leader of the Province of PNG, he led the famous Bishops' Walk from Gona, over the Kokoda Trail, to Port Moresby, held between May 17 and 30, 1972. This march was intended to raise funds for the Garamut Fund, to assist the Anglican ecclesiastical province, then in the making. But it was an ecumenical venture, too, because it enlisted, for the total stretch of 150 miles, or for a part of it, the participation of Archbishop Marcus Loane, and of his Archdeacon, John Reid, of Sydney, that of the United church Bishop of the Papuan mainland, Ravu Henao, and that of the RC Archbishop of Port Moresby, Virgil Copas. Said Bishop Hand about the 14-day trek:

“This walk was not just a money-making gimmick. It would have been worthwhile if it had raised nothing, because it was a demonstration of teamwork between people of different churches and traditions.”<sup>22</sup>

Five years later, the Anglican church in PNG could establish itself as the 27th independent province in the worldwide Anglican Communion. Before this, in the colonial time, Assistant Bishops, or Coadjutors, had already been installed for the Highlands and Islands (1950), for the Port Moresby region (1960), and then, also, for the Northern and Eastern Papua Regions (1960/1964). A recent development was the separation of the Islands from the Highlands (1976).

With this, five Anglican dioceses now existed; together they formed one single PNG province, comparable to the Province of Melanesia (in the Solomon Islands), and to the extra Provincial Diocese of Polynesia (still a missionary diocese of New Zealand). In turn, all three made up the South Pacific Anglican Council, with each one retaining the right to its own voice, both at the Lambeth Conferences, and in the Anglican Consultative Council. In PNG, Archbishop Hand was in charge, till he retired from his church responsibilities in May, 1983. On his farewell, the RC clergy of Port Moresby handed him a stola, a vestment to be worn at Mass. The Archbishop could quite lightly observe that this was an implicit recognition of his order – not unlike the gesture of the Roman pontiff, who gave his own ring to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, in March, 1966.

## **Conclusion**

The end of the mission era coincides with the end of the political dependency on the colonial power, Australia, although the respective ecclesiastical dates are spread over a period of about ten years. From this period, we can learn several facts about relations between the Anglican and the RC churches.

Firstly, we note, in general, that the mutual encounter between the mainline churches increased. This started from shared experiences during the Japanese occupation, till the common participation in the Government-Missions Conferences after World

War II. All this led to a wide cooperation in para-church activities, mainly in health and education.

Secondly, although the war provided a new start to pre-war apostolic engagements (as symbolised especially by the Anglican drive to take over the four unevangelised valleys), fresh difficulties arose from the many “sects”, which had entered the country, while the government seemed to be unable, or not prepared, to check their movements.

Thirdly, the divisions and subdivisions, which led to the establishment of 15 RC dioceses in PNG, did not affect, negatively, the relationship with the Anglican church. Instead, there were very good contacts between Bishop Hand, for the Anglicans, and, e.g., the Bishops Copas, Noser, and Sorin, for the RC side. In addition, the RC authorities were also loath to establish a Catholic diocese at Popondetta, in the traditional Anglican area.

Fourthly, the clashes, which did occur in PNG – and we gave two examples of them – were not a consequence of differing beliefs of the participants, but, rather, a consequence of their non-compatible national outlooks. They make, however, 1960 an all-time low in ecumenical relations.

Finally, it is noteworthy that various religious orders entered PNG, to assist the Anglican evangelistic work. This feature, too, brought out, once again, the Anglo-Catholic nature of the New Guinea mission.