PAPUA NEW GUINEA CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

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Dear friends and supporters,

In July, I had the opportunity to meet Bishop Reginald Makele and Annsli Kabekabe, who was attending as the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea's youth representative. They were in Belfast for the Anglican Consultative Conference.

As is often the case at such gatherings, there were debates about the Anglican Communion's relationship with the See of Canterbury: whether references to being in full communion should remain or be removed. Predictably, strong views were expressed on both sides. Yet these discussions serve as a reminder that we are still some way off from a point where we not only understand our differences, but are able to enjoy them.

At heart, the question is whether Communion is simply a diplomatic nicety or a convenient liturgical prop, or whether it reflects something deeper. In her sermon at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, Sarah Mullally repeated words from Michael Ramsey that seemed particularly relevant:

> *'While the Anglican Church is... clumsy and untidy; it baffles neatness and logic. For it is sent not to commend itself as the 'best type of Christianity', but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church...'*

Archbishop Leonard Dawea of Melanesia, who was also present at the Conference and 'leading' the Melanesian delegations, offered another important perspective. He spoke of Anglican provinces as being of the 'seed' of Canterbury: through St Augustine, sharing a common inheritance and a common origin. The churches of Melanesia have shown considerable agility in navigating the politics of the Communion, forging a path that is distinctly their own, a coming together that is their own and not driven from outside.

That sense of coming together is something that our newsletter seeks to foster in its own distinctive way. Its circulation extends far beyond England and Scotland, reaching readers in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, while its readership is broader still. It is read by retired missionaries (though, as we know, missionaries never truly retire!), by overseas partners of the Church, and by clergy and parishes across Papua New Guinea. It is, indeed, one of the valuable contributions that the Church Partnership makes.

In the same spirit, our daily prayer guide for ACPNG helps to sustain those connections. It reminds us that, despite many challenges, the Gospel continues to be proclaimed, and pastoral care given. Here again, Michael Ramsey's vision of a Church rooted in its context, rather than one simply ordered and managed, comes to mind.

These are all reasons for hope and encouragement. **- William Spooner, Chairman**