



Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Easter 2026 Newsletter

PNGCP is the UK-based mission agency dedicated to raising awareness of, and support for, the Anglican Church in PNG

GLORY RESTORED

Mid-March saw the rededication of St Peter and St Paul's Cathedral at Dogura after the most substantial renovation since it was built 87 years ago. The two-year programme included structural and roofing repairs, replacement of all plumbing and electrical services, complete external and internal decoration and renewal of the frescoes in the apse. The restoration of this iconic 'Norman Romanesque-style' building, once the largest and tallest in PNG, was made possible through generous grants from Dogura-born Governor of Milne Bay Province, Hon. Gordon Wesley, and Alotau District Member, Ricky Morris. The Provincial Government Works Unit carried out the maintenance work in partnership with Dogura Diocese, the Cathedral congregation and local artists.

Hosted by the Bishop of Dogura John Dubabagi, Acting-Archbishop Nathan Ingen was the main celebrant at the Rededication Service, with Hon. Gordon Wesley cutting the ribbon to officially reopen the Cathedral. Other guests included the RC Bishop of Alotau Jacek Tentej, New Guinea Islands Bishop Reginald Makele, Port Moresby Diocese's Vicar-General Fr Lollington Wiam, and Hon. Ricky Morris from Alotau. The previous day, the Acting Archbishop had visited St Barnabas Hospital to bless their new conference room.

Historically, this massive building was completed just before the outbreak of World War II. It took five years to finish and remains a testament to the manual labour of the local community who constructed it without modern machinery. The rejuvenated Cathedral will now also provide an administrative base for the Anglican Health Services in Milne Bay.



Heavenly view on Cathedral Rededication Day



Wamira dancers lead Acting Archbishop Nathan to Cathedral



RC Bishop Jacek, Acting Archbishop Nathan, Bishop John & Hon. Gordon Wesley



Packed cathedral for the Rededication Service



Newly restored frescoes above the High Altar

CHURCHES' NURSING SCHOOL

The St Barnabas School of Nursing at Alotau in Milne Bay Province has been jointly run by the Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Churches in PNG for many years now. All the tutors are local people and the courses are well regarded by the students and registering authority. At any time, there are 130 students resident on site taking the main three-year course for male and female students from across PNG.



Anglican Board members – retired Bishop Tennyson Bogar (Chair); Bishop John Dubabagi; Gloria Warren (centre) with Srs Ann Albert & Bettina Ilaisa

MODAWA GROWTH

Bishop Jeffrey Driver reports: “This year we have our second intake into the David Hand School of Teaching, with students not just from Oro Province but from other parts of PNG. We have been working to put the finishing touches to our new female dormitories as we seek to accommodate a growing student body.

We have been granted permission to deliver a Diploma in Nursing from 2027. This is a step up from the health worker certificate that has been delivered in the past. We still have much to do before we can deliver this programme, including the building and furnishing of a “nursing lab” (clinical practice ward). A memorandum of understanding has already been signed with the Provincial Government for nursing practice placements at Popondetta General Hospital.

In Australia, a tax-efficient “Modawa Partners” trust is raising funds and the Scottish Episcopal Church, through its Global Partnerships Committee, has adopted Modawa as a ‘strategic partner’ and, together with other support, has already funded the training of 12 priests at Newton College.

My current focus is to provide support and guidance around governance and institutional organisation: working on a response to an audit by the Department of Higher Education; developing a five-year budget; doing some policy development with members of the Governing Council; and fitting in a little teaching. Challenges remain and are substantial but what we are doing is worthwhile. If there is anything that offers hope to a developing and struggling country, it is the education of future leaders. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers.”



Each Sunday at the Modawa Institute there is an “Agape” meal after Church - none of the students have much but, sharing what they have, the food of the poor becomes a biblical feast



+Jeffrey leads a tutorial in the College Chapel



Modawa partners - +Jeffrey with Provincial Governor; Kokoda Track Foundation CEO & Education Sector Chair

HIV CRISIS IN PNG

The global trend of HIV infections has been declining, with a 39% reduction in new cases since 2010 due to improved prevention, testing, and treatment. However, Papua New Guinea (PNG) presents a stark contrast, as HIV infections have nearly doubled over the past decade, rising from 6,000 annually to around 11,000 in 2024. Approximately 120,000 people are currently living with HIV in PNG, yet fewer than half have access to life-saving treatment. This is largely due to stigma, limited healthcare access, and low awareness. In 2024 alone, over 11,000 deaths were attributed to AIDS-related illnesses, prompting the government and the United Nations to declare a national HIV crisis. This surge places significant strain on PNG’s already fragile healthcare system and limited financial resources.

Dr Glen Mola, Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Port Moresby, highlights varying infection rates across regions. Urban areas show increasing prevalence, while rural areas differ widely depending on cultural attitudes toward sexual behaviour. In some communities, early sexual activity is accepted, contributing to

higher transmission rates, whereas others maintain strict taboos. In Port Moresby, widespread antenatal testing suggests infection rates have reached 3.5% of the population there.

Prevention strategies emphasise the importance of condom accessibility, yet distribution remains inefficient, with many donated supplies going unused and expiring. Improved availability, particularly in both urban and remote areas, could significantly reduce infections. Dr Mola would like to see ACPNG, through its Anglican Health Services, become a thoroughly effective agent and promoter of condom availability in Oro, Milne Bay and the Highlands

In the Highlands, Mathew Kuraiwae has been involved in ACPNG's work to tackle HIV for over 20 years. Currently reviewing HIV prevention work in the eight isolated parishes of the Lower Jimi Deanery, he confirms a low rate of infection. For example, at the end of 2025, Togban Health Centre had two confirmed cases registered. As at Koinambe and Tsendiap, these health centres provide education, testing and counselling services to the local communities.

A FORCE OF NATURE

Jesicah Ingen is the latest of ACPNG's unsung heroes and heroines we feature. When I first met her over 20 years ago, as a young mother, wife to the then 'barefoot bishop' based in Simbai, she was undertaking arduous patrols to work with women throughout this mountainous area - with two pre-school children in tow! Wherever she went, whether strengthening the work of the Mothers' Union or establishing a pioneering women's literacy programme, she was greatly respected by the older women she was working with and an inspiring role model for the younger ones. Editor.

Jesicah writes: "I come from Togban in Lower Jimi, Jiwaka Province. I completed Year 10 in Notre Dame Catholic High School (Mt Hagen) in 1994 but didn't make it to secondary school. I went back home and joined the parish youth for two years until I met Fr Nathan Ingen (now Acting Archbishop and Diocesan Bishop of Aipo Rongo). We married in 1996 and have three beautiful children: Ernest who, having completed a Political Science degree in PNG, is now working with Anglicare in Mt Hagen; Stella is teaching at Ainong Primary School in Simbai; and Elizah currently in Year 11 at Mt Hagen Secondary School.

It is very challenging being a priest and bishop's wife and mother here in the diocese. Delivering the Gospel to our people in widely-dispersed rural parishes without road links to towns relies on small MAF planes or lengthy, strenuous walking. The prices of goods and services are rocketing nowadays and I have to tend the land to produce food for my family. Our people have too high expectations of the support that a bishop's wife will give her husband but, for 30 years now, I took up all the challenges and did my best to do something.

Amongst my achievements, some 500 - 600 Christians have graduated from the adult literacy programme I introduced in 2003. It gives me joy that most of the children I taught over 10 years in Sunday School at Simbai, including Ernest, now have jobs in towns. Working with Mothers' Union has included: conducting Bible studies; training them to take up leadership positions in parishes; teaching parenting classes to all parents; and leading mission work to our local prison and hospital in Mt Hagen. I have also been ACPNG's Gender Equality Officer and serve on the International Anglican Family Network. At the end of the last Lambeth Conference, I was given the great privilege and opportunity of being chosen as one of five participants to speak to all the assembled bishops and spouses.

I have always wanted to be a teacher in a remote community where it is difficult to recruit and retain staff. Having now completed a three-year teaching diploma, I can realise my dream when my husband retires. God is good!"



Leading a children's day in Goroka



Working with women in Mt Hagen prison



Pre-election community advocacy about family life and social issues



Invited speaker on last day of Lambeth Conference

PNG, ACPNG & PNGCP NEWS

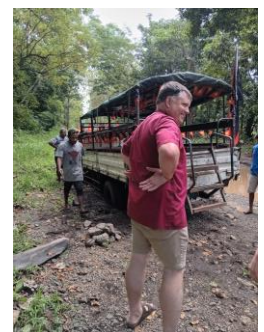
- Warmest congratulations to Katie Drew, Executive Director of sister mission agency, the Melanesian Mission (UK), on her award of the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the 2026 New Year Honours List for services to UK/Solomons relations.
- Acting Archbishop Nathan Ingen did not attend the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent installation because of his concern over the uncertainty of the Middle-East situation and the likely impact on international travel.
- With the death of Sr Beverley Tumbari in February, the Community of the Sisters of the Visitation in PNG has not only lost its leader but its most widely-known personality. Diminutive she may have been, but a larger than life character she certainly was. It was not her first spell as Guardian of the Order in a career including being Girls' Chaplain at Martyrs' School and working with a series of troubled and troublesome girls and young women on the Hetune campus. Many visitors will fondly remember her stories, her amazing hospitality and her welcoming 'restorative' soup. She has been laid to rest in her birthplace, Warina, in St Francis parish, Sairope. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.
- Sad news from the North Coast of Tasmania of the death of retired Bishop Denys Ririka on the eve of his 75th birthday in January. He enjoyed a happy retirement there with his wife, Lesley, and their daughter, Anne, and was fully and successfully able to indulge his passion for fishing. His lengthy ACPNG involvement included service as a curate and priest in Koinambe and Lae before being based in Goroka as one of the two 'barefoot' Assistant Bishops working with Archbishop James Ayong in Aipo Rongo Diocese. Our thoughts and prayers are with Lesley and Anne at this time.
- After the 2025 Norwich Link Pilgrimage to PNG, which included a visit to Martyrs' Memorial School, the Bishop of Norwich's 2026 Lent Appeal will help children from Anglican clergy families complete their education there. Bishop Graham Usher's first ACPNG visit had included an introduction to 'the Land of the Unexpected'. In a tight schedule, the party's eagerly anticipated visit to Dogura was affected by flight delays, the truck transport to Awia getting bogged down and boat engine trouble during the coastal trip. Consequently, they arrived to visit Dogura Cathedral after dark and had to leave at first light, 5.45am, the following morning.
- PNGCP Chairman, William Spooner, will spend two months at the Modawa Institute of Higher Education this Spring. He said: "I am very much looking forward to returning to PNG. Modawa is a jewel in the crown of the Anglican Church - the 'engine room' that helps form the Church's next generation of clergy. Its expansion into education and health reflects the Church's threefold ministry of healing, teaching and preaching. This growth will help equip younger people with hope and opportunity as they shape their nation and serve their communities in the future."



Sr Beverley (2nd left) at Hetune last year



+Denys, Anne and Lesley in retirement in Tasmania



+Graham's transport awaits a tow out of the mud

MEMORIES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA PNGCP Trustee, Janet Wells, has drawn together a rich collection of personal stories from 156 UK men and women who, over some 77 years, served as mission volunteers in a wide range of roles with the Anglican Church in PNG. It provides an entertaining window into, not only the work and contribution of the church, but into one aspect of the development of this young nation, as well as reflecting the profound impact PNG and their experiences had on these incomers. To obtain a copy of this illustrated book, price £15 plus £3.99 p&p, please initiate your request by providing your name and postal address through the PNGCP postal or email address below.

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