



Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Christmas 2025 Newsletter

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

DOGURA CATHEDRAL MURALS

Following much-needed repairs to the roof of Dogura Cathedral, a landmark visible on its plateau from miles around, comes welcome news concerning the internal murals. A group of local artists, led by Charlie Nebita, is undertaking the restoration and replacement of the original panels that formally graced the apse behind the High Altar. White ants had literally made a meal of them and caused their downfall. As the photos reflect, whilst this iconic building is being internally redecorated, these new panels are being created on fresh board and being skilfully and colourfully copied from the broken and faded originals.



The artistic 'A-Team' including former Martyrs School pupils



Stripped frescoes on floor in foreground



Faithfully copying an original

How was this all made possible? When in London recently, Bishop John Dubabagi explained that the simple answer was a grant of K500,000 (approximately £90,000) from Gordon Weston, Governor of Milne Bay Province. Gordon is a committed Anglican from Wedau, on the coast near Dogura. This generous grant covered the Milne Bay Works Department undertaking the roof repairs and redecorating the Cathedral inside and out, including the murals - and he hopes to donate further to help refurbish Dogura House and Bishop's Cottage. Hallelujah!



A replacement fresco takes shape...



....and develops....



....and comes alive again for future generations

On hearing of the death of Fr John Ewington (obituary in PNGCP News on page 8), Charlie Nebita, one of the artists working on the restoration of the murals, posted the following comment: "On behalf of my artist brothers I convey our Deepest and Heartfelt Condolences to the family. We only got to know him through finding his signed name behind one of the original boards of late Fr. James Benson's painted murals at St. Peter's & Paul's Cathedral, Dogura. It's been five months since we started painting and what a time to receive such news when we are just about to finish."



PARTNERS' PNG VISITS

Bishop Peter Ramsden writes: "During September there were two overseas groups visiting PNG: a pilgrimage group from the Diocese of Norwich led by Bishop Graham Usher, and those attending the Partners' Meeting from New Zealand (Bishop Andrew Hedge from the Waiapu Diocese and Mark Mitchell from Anglican Missions NZ) and UK (PNGCP Chair William Spooner and me). The timing of the visit coincided with Martyrs Day and also preparations for the PNG 50th



St John's Cathedral Port Moresby ready for Martyrs' Day. The extra flags show where the martyrs came from



Visit to Goroka and the Parish of Movi, in the Siane Valley. L to R: +Andrew Hedge; Mark Mitchell; David Seine, former Eastern Highlands Police Commander, who drove us over the Daulo Pass to the Siane; William; +Peter



Movi mission station in the Siane Valley, Chimbu Province, two hours drive from Goroka which comprises a church, school and health centre



The Movi welcome coincided with the big end of school term gathering and start of the 50th anniversary celebrations



People thought that William was the Chair of the Australian Government's Church Partnership Program (CPP)!



+Andrew with an Asaro Mudman



Modawa Institute, Popondetta. L to R: +Peter; +Andrew; +Graham & his Chaplain, Canon Sally Theakston; William



New building under construction for the Modawa teachers' school

Anniversary of Independence celebrations. Thanks to Thelma Guni's suggestion we visited Movi in the Siane Valley, Chimbu Province, a traditional Anglican "preaching, teaching, healing" station in the Aipo Rongo Diocese. I was delighted to revisit my former parish of Goroka, having re-built the St Francis Church there 30 years ago. It was William's first visit to the PNG Highlands."

The following photos and articles reflect something of the hospitality, richness and experiences enjoyed by the visitors.



New water tank as part of the programme funded by PNGCP to refurbish Newton College student family houses



Martyrs' Day at Martyrs' School - student gospel dancers



Processing to the Martyrs' Day Service



Photos of the 12 martyrs on the altar



The new Brothers' House at the school, part-funded by PNGCP, to house the SSF and MBH brothers for their chaplaincy role



Back in Port Moresby the streets were being decorated for the 50th Independence Anniversary



Drinks reception at the British High Commission for +Graham, the Norwich pilgrims and the NZ and UK groups



Dr Glen Mola prepares for the Independence anniversary with staff at Port Moresby General Hospital

GOROKA & THE SIANE

PNGCP Chairman, William Spooner, writes: "Together with our friends from New Zealand - Bishop Andrew Hedge and Mark Mitchell from Anglican Missions NZ – Bishop Peter Ramsden and I travelled to Goroka and the Siane Valley.

Our visit began in Goroka, where we were warmly welcomed by Fr Fabian and the parishioners of St Francis. From there, we embarked on the long and winding journey over the mountains into the Siane Valley, led by David Seine, a member of ACPNG's Provincial Council and a respected senior lay leader.



Part of the Movi welcome party



PNGCP Chair William receives his welcome garland

The Siane, which first received missionaries in the 1950s, offered us an extraordinary welcome that coincided with Papua New Guinea's 50th Independence Day celebrations. We were greeted with traditional dances, the appearance of a mudman, and the honour of blessing a newly constructed podium at the local school. It was evident how deeply the communities of the valley respect and appreciate David's ongoing leadership and service. A generous lunch followed, complete with speeches and a lively master of ceremonies who occasionally struggled to keep the programme on time! It was a privilege to share this visit with David, Andrew, and Mark, demonstrating the Church's ongoing interest and commitment to the life of these communities.



A welcome 'encounter' from an Asaro Mudman

Villages like those in the Siane - where many needs remain - are precisely the kind of places our newly launched **Small Grants Scheme** (see below) seeks to support. Whether through repairing rectories, improving health centres, or installing water tanks, the Scheme provides a timely and practical means to strengthen the Church's work and make a tangible difference in the lives of the people it serves."

Following the recent launch of **PNGCP's Small Grants Scheme**, we are awarding 9 grants to projects from the original 27 applications for the purchase of:

- hymn books, prayer books, sewing machines and material to make clothing, stoles and cassocks in Popondota Diocese
- musical instruments for youth participation in church services in Aipo Rongo Diocese
- solar water pumps for two aid-posts, bales of second-hand clothing for mobile resale along the south coast, hymn books, prayer books, sewing machines and material for clothing and ovens to bake items for sale in NGI Diocese

PNG GOLDEN JUBILEE

PNG is still a UN Least Developed Nation and oft-criticised in the international media for issues like law and order, leadership, domestic violence and access to essential services as challenges facing this country of nearly 12 million people. However, at such a time of celebration for this young nation it is important to register some of the many strengths of this richly-endowed country, including the natural resilience of the population, the continuing optimism for the future and the enduring strengths of traditional systems. Dick Kolai, formerly Aipo Rongo Diocesan Secretary and now back at Newton College as Senior Tutor, posted recently:

"This year PNG is celebrating 50 years of independence and i can proudly say that our democracy is well and alive in a third world country when many other parts of the world have failed. This in a country with such diverse cultures and languages. The people of PNG have made history surviving for 50 years without disruption to the parliamentary process. The PNG government has now linked Milne Bay and Lae to Port Moresby by road and, by 2030, PNG will be totally linked by the major road network. In the Highlands, a road is close to remote Simbai and should reach there by December." As these photos illustrate, celebrations were held across the nation and wider...



Holy Name Kebara celebrates



Talasea Gala Night in Kimbe NGI



St Michael & All Angels, Mt Hagen combined Independence & Patronal Festival Celebrations

NORWICH TO NEW GUINEA ISLANDS

Here, Revd Phil Charlesworth, a key member of the Norwich – PNG Link, describes his experience of a twelve-day, faith-affirming visit undertaken by seven pilgrims from the Norwich Diocese in early September whilst partners from PNGCP and New Zealand’s Waiapu Diocese were also being welcomed by ACPNG:

“It was the first PNG visit for Bishop Graham Usher from the Norwich Diocese. We started our pilgrimage with a visit to Diocesan Bishop Reginald Makele and his church members in Kimbe, NGI, and were able to join the Diocesan Health Secretary, Dieni Tapi, and his bride for their wedding celebration. Later, we saw the amazing work of Dieni and his team at the health centre in Kimbe. Bishop Graham and Bishop Reginald presided at eucharists in Kimbe church on the diocesan compound and we also visited St Lawrence village and its church.

Back in Port Moresby, pilgrims visited: St Mary’s church, Gerehu, whose tower has a bell from Norwich diocese; Port Moresby Nature Park with over 550 native animal species in its tropical gardens; and the WWII War Graves Cemetery with its moving memorial to those who sacrificed all for freedom in the Kokoda Track campaign of 1942.

Pilgrims then travelled to Popondetta where they were able to join the moving Martyrs’ Day service at Martyrs’ School. Providing bursaries for Martyrs’ School students from poor backgrounds will be the headline project for the 2026 Lent Appeal in Norwich Diocese. That evening, Bishop Lindsley Ihove joined us for a gala supper at Birdwing Butterfly Lodge, hosted by its charismatic proprietor, Polycarp.

The following day we visited: the Melanesian Brothers; St Margaret’s School of Nursing; Popondetta Cathedral; the Sisters of the Visitation; and the Franciscan Brothers. The next day, we visited St Margaret’s Clinic, Oro Bay – and swam in Oro Bay!; later visiting Newton Theological College and the road-side memorial at the place where two of the PNG martyrs, teacher Mavis Parkinson and nurse May Hayman, were killed by the Japanese in 1942. Bishop Graham, his chaplain, Revd Sally Theakston, and William from PNGCP also visited Dogura Diocese but transport difficulties by air, land and sea, limited their stay.

In Port Moresby again, we were hosted by the British High Commissioner to PNG, Anne Macro. The following day some of the Norwich pilgrims visited the museum and other sites in Port Moresby while Bishops Andrew and Peter, along with Mark, William and I, joined three of the PNG bishops and Port Moresby’s Vicar-General for the 2025 Partners’ Meeting. The final act of the day – and pilgrimage – was a supper to celebrate Bishop Graham’s birthday.

We had an exciting and awe-inspiring few days and, particularly for those visiting PNG for the first time, it was an opportunity to witness the unifying power of the Holy Spirit across continents and cultures.”



+Reg celebrates a Wedding Eucharist at PNG Martyrs, Kimbe



Young locals in Port Moresby Nature Park



Students at ACPNG’s School of Nursing in Popondetta



Choral welcome at the Melanesian Brothers’ HQ Dobudoru



Informal reception at the UK High Commissioner’s residence

MODAWA DEVELOPMENT

The Modawa Institute of Higher Education continues to build towards the future, following formal recognition by the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. Bishop Jeffrey Driver writes:

“The **David Hand School of Teaching** has welcomed its new head, Jean Ifuda. A woman with an Oro Province background, Jean is a very experienced educator and was previously an Education Department nomination for the Moresby South electorate for a King Award knighthood medal. Her pedagogical and administrative experience will be of great assistance, as she works with Principal Fr Gabriel Manae in the overall running of the institution.

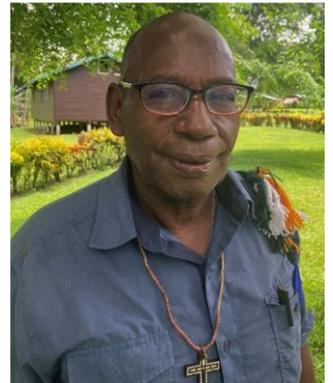
The School of Education’s Year Bachelor of Education (Primary) class is moving towards the conclusion of its first year, and planning is well underway for the year ahead. A new female boarding facility is well advanced in construction thanks to support from an Australian Incentive Fund, the Williams Trust (NZ) and the Kokoda Track Foundation. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on 25th September to celebrate the completion of the first of three buildings in this complex. These buildings may also provide some interim classroom space, while other construction progresses.



Site clearance for new buildings



New female accommodation block takes shape



Fr Gabriel Manae

Planning for next year in the School of Education is well underway, with library and IT resources identified. The intention remains for all students in the School of Teaching to be provided with a laptop.

The **Bishop Newton School of Theology** will go into 2026 with its existing cohort, with most students studying at the certificate level. The School of Theology has benefitted greatly from the expansion of Newton College into the Modawa Institute, as it means that the larger overall student body can better support the infrastructure required for education, as required for accreditation. Renovated classrooms, IT, an expanded library and better administration are all benefits of being part of a larger Institute. Also in 2026, Principal, Fr Gabriel Manae, will commence a part-time Master’s Degree at PNG’s Divine Word University, thanks to a scholarship from the UK’s St Augustine’s Foundation.

Meanwhile, Mrs Estelle Jojoba LM continues to work towards approval for the introduction of a **Diploma in Nursing**, to be based on the newly developed national curriculum. The Institute will need to be able to demonstrate that it has the staffing and infrastructure to be able to support such a programme. Mrs Jojoba brings a wealth of experience in nursing education, largely with the University of PNG, and is now working with a planning team to bring nurse education to the Northern Province.

As there is no permanent optometry facility in Oro Province, the Kokoda Track Foundation recently conducted an eye clinic for the whole of the college community. Students received free eye examination and glasses if needed.”

CHRISTMAS GIVING

The Modawa Institute is the most exciting and important development within ACPNG for quite some time. The crucial capital development of the site to house this initiative relies largely on overseas support for its achievement. Also, this time next year will see a larger than usual graduation of new priests from Newton College. With your help, PNGCP would once again like to equip each of the graduate’ wives with a sewing-machine and starter-kit to contribute to their ongoing priestly and family clothing needs and give them future income-generation potential.

A reliable new Singer sewing-machine costs £125 locally and a further £5 covers a starter-kit, including scissors, cotton, needles; etc.. This Christmas, after reading this newsletter, would you, your family, group or congregation feel able to sponsor a sewing-machine gift or make a capital contribution - any amount - to help speed the building programme along, please? The PNGCP Treasurer would love to hear from you or donate online through the website. Thank you!



AUSTRALIAN STUDIES

As Principal-Designate of Newton College, Fr Giles Motisi is currently undertaking further studies at Trinity College, Melbourne whilst also undertaking parish work. He reports: "After a challenging wait to sort out travel documents we finally arrived in Victoria, Australia in March 2025. I was accepted as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Moe New Borough in the Diocese of Gippsland. On the 9th of April 2025, I was inducted in the presence of Diocesan Bishop Richard Treloar, with Bishop Jeffrey Driver preaching and diocesan clergy present. My arrival coincided with the Holy Week liturgies, a rather busy and strange time to start.

Since we arrived in winter and found the place very cold, the parishioners have done everything to help us settle in, providing us with warm clothes, blankets and even a heater in the house to keep us warm. Julia and the children have managed well and we have settled in to the life here, with the children all in school. Because of our late arrival, I missed the first semester but did enrol at Trinity College for the second semester and completed my first unit. It has been very challenging for me doing parish work at the same time as studying but I have slowly found my way and hope to do well in my short term in Australia."



Fr Giles with +Jeffrey Driver



+Richard Treloar with Fr Giles & Julia

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP IN ACPNG

One of many strong, able women contributing to the development of PNG, Dorothy Siep is currently ACPNG's National Education Secretary. Having taught in various PNG schools, she has a bachelor's degree in Social Science (Geography & History) from Goroka University, later gaining postgraduate honours in Educational Leadership & Management. An Anglican priest's wife, in 2023 Dorothy was appointed by ACPNG's Provincial Council for three years to be the National Education Secretary (NES).

In the last two years, as well as having overall responsibility for ACPNG's many schools, Dorothy has had a number of other representational roles and opportunities including:

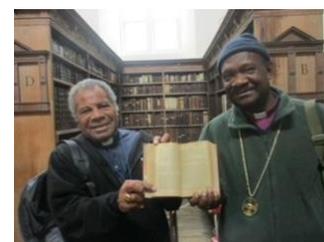
- being invited by the Philippines Episcopal Church to share the 'Philippines Experience' of Sustainable Development and how it might help move PNG beyond spiritual evangelism to include people empowerment and creating independence at individual, parish and community levels for the diocese and the whole church. This training has already proved useful in helping the Mothers' Union in Aipo Rongo Diocese.
- membership on the Governing Council of the Modawa Institute of Higher Education in Popondetta, helping ensure that graduating teachers will not only be well grounded in their course content, but also in the Anglican ethos.
- on behalf of ACPNG, contributing to a powerful and ambitious 'transformational vision' being promoted by the national Department of Education, seeking to shape education delivery to meet the social, spiritual, economic and political development needs and aspirations of the 21st Century. This bravely recognises the prevalence of intolerant behaviour, corruption, lack of ethical morals in business and public service, lack of proper leadership, nepotism, and rise of lawlessness and other issues that presently challenge the role of education in shaping the nation. In proposing a new direction and educational philosophy to be rolled out over the next 50 years, with the emphasis on 'leaving no one behind', the emerging vision puts much responsibility on the churches as key partners in PNG where 90% of the schools are run by the churches. The 'PNGETV 2075' Taskforce, which includes all Churches' Education Advisors and Mission Secretaries, is already hard at work.



- as NES, helping link Church and State, Dorothy is a member of PNG’s Teaching Service Council, dealing with matters of teachers’ education and qualifications, standards, salaries, etc.. This is a valuable opportunity to contribute as ACPNG has historically assumed mission work in remote and difficult areas where teacher-recruitment, engagement and retention is challenging. Such remoteness also affects infrastructure, school supplies and quality of teaching which, in turn, affects students’ performances against national standards.
- Dorothy’s influential work within ACPNG’s Mother’s Union has also been recognised in her appointment as a Trustee on the Worldwide MU International Committee.

PNG, ACPNG & PNGCP NEWS

- At the start of 2025, Betty Palaso took up her posting in London as PNG’s High Commissioner to the UK having previously headed up the PNG team in the Philippines. Representing PNGCP, Bishop Peter & Sue Ramsden, here with HC Betty Palasao, attended the PNG High Commission’s 50th Independence Anniversary reception in London
- Kudjip Nazarine Hospital, the sole major health facility in the Highlands’ populous Jiwaka Province, has had to drastically scale back its services and threaten closure due mainly to an increasing shortfall in, and periodic withholding of, government and local funding.
- Congratulations to Naomi Dubabagi, daughter of Dogura Bishop John & Primrose. Having completed a Bachelor’s in ‘PNG & International Studies’ at Divine Word University, Madang in March this year, she has been recently welcomed into a six-month traineeship with the European Union Delegation to PNG.
- Past PNGCP Chair, Bishop Nigel Stock writes: “My old friend and one-time parish evangelist, Philip Jiregari, now the Archdeacon of Port Moresby, has sadly had to have his leg amputated following gangrene. The PNGCP treasurer was wonderful in helping me to get some financial support to him.”
- PNG Bishops Reginald Makele (NGI) and John Dubabagi (Dogura) were in the UK this autumn to attend a course for new bishops in Canterbury. After time in London, Bishop Reg visited Norwich and Scotland whilst Bishop John was in Cambridge and the Midlands. Both also contributed to a quarterly PNGCP Committee meeting and a lively annual Supporters’ Day with over 40 participants.
- A warm welcome to Richard Chevis from Little St Marys, Cambridge, who has joined the PNGCP Committee.



+John & +Reg with Lucien Tapiedi’s prayer-book, Westminster Abbey

Sad news of the deaths:

- of John Ewington, peacefully in hospital in Devon. John first went to PNG to join the Oro Builders’ team between 1970 and 1972. After he was ordained and married Sarah, they returned to Bougainville, where they lived and worked from 1981 - 1987. Their daughter, Louise, became PNGCP General Secretary following Chris Luxton’s retirement. John was a gifted artist whose drawing of PNG martyr, Lucien Tapiedi, was used by the sculptor who made Lucien’s statue that now adorns the west front of Westminster Abbey. May John rest in peace and his family be comforted
- of Revd Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne. Whilst mainly involved with the Anglican Church of Melanesia where he was a priest, then Chaplain to the Melanesian Brotherhood and latterly Honorary Archivist to the Melanesian Mission (UK), Brian made several visits to PNG and was the longstanding representative of Ely Diocese to PNGCP.



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