

II. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

The founding age of the historical Christian missions came to a close with the great period of turmoil in Europe. Although this time did not affect, too much, the various denominations in PNG, it dried up the sources of supply for staff and funds. It also added new responsibilities to the missions, once the Australian Army had occupied ex-German New Guinea. But the material pinch did not prevent the churches from expanding, or, rather, consolidating, the positions of the past. For our purpose, we will concentrate here, once again, on the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans, and only on those places in the country, where the two groups met, or where their spheres of action overlapped with the territories held by other churches.

1. The Roman Catholic Expansion

In his early reply to the government, Bishop Navarre had pointed out two things: one, that his missionaries were sent to New Guinea as a whole, and two, that “for the time being”, for reasons of courtesy, they would not go to Port Moresby, where the LMS had already settled. Logically, then, he refused to go to Eastern Papua, because that would put him even further off from his objective of the New Guinea mainland.

Although Port Moresby was then still a small township, the move to become the future capital was already on the cards, among other reasons, because it had a good harbour. The place increased, especially after the First World War, when RC office workers and business people, including Chinese, came from all over the country to the administrative centre of PNG. Only then, the Roman Catholics consolidated their presence.

In 1919, Fr Edward Van Goethem began building the church of Our Lady of the Rosary, in Musgrave Street, dedicated by Bishop de Boismenu, in October, 1923. In that year, too, a second Catholic school for migrant Catholics followed, at Ela Beach (to be transferred to Badili in early 1928), while, in June, 1926, St Michael of Hanuabada opened, as the third Catholic school in the same locality. Already, in 1923, the Australian, Fr Michael McEnroe, arrived, to be the parish priest of the whole area, down to Brown River in the east, a position he held till 1947.

While the combined efforts of RC Fathers and Sisters went on, the people began to see how various missions vied for their allegiance, and not always refrained from slandering one another. Since some of the locals were perplexed, it is only normal that they asked yet another party, that is a representative of the government, what was the true religion.

One of the civil officers, writing under the nickname Lagani-Namo, published his ideas on the matter in the September, 1930, issue of *The Papuan Villager*, at a time when Bishop de Boismenu was in Europe for his fourth *ad limina* visit. In less than one page, he compared Methodists, Anglicans, Romans, SDAs, and the LMS, to as many companies of mountaineers, who, each from its own side, ascended Mount Victoria. During the climb, they never set eye on one another, yet in the end they all reached the same summit, heaven.

The LMS missionary, Benjamin T. Butcher, who relates the story, adds, with approval, that here was the answer of a man, who understood how there were “many missions, but only one God”. Yet, the RC church sent a stern protest against the story, threatening to forbid its adherents to read the paper, should another such article be published again. Whatever one thinks of who was right or wrong, the letter to the editor clarifies the RC outlook, and the kind of indifference it was sometimes faced with, in what was then called the Territory of Papua (1906-1942).

While this was going on, the Yule Island missionaries urged their Australian confreres, not only to help out in Port Moresby, but also to take over the eastern end of the island, up to then, mainly under the influence of the Kwato Extension Association. Now, before accepting the offer of the French Fathers, in August, 1921, the Australian MSC delegated Fr John Doyle and Brother E. Baker, from Thursday Island, to make a feasibility study.

Although they were able to buy some properties in Milne Bay, and on Normanby and Fergusson Islands, they were not well received by the local people, who ran away, and closed their doors, whenever they sighted a RC missionary. Naturally, the final report was negative, because Fr Doyle felt that the existing missions already cared well for the people, and that it would cost the Roman Catholics too much to buy properties, and to run their own boat service between the islands.

The 1921 plan for Samarai was then kept in abeyance, while some suspected a certain insistence from higher authorities, when, in 1926, the Roman Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith entrusted the whole region to the Australian MSC. It subsequently nominated the reluctant Fr Doyle as its first Vicar Apostolic. This rather professional approach did not escape the attention of the Protestant missionaries in the area. The Revd M. K. Gilmour, the Chairman of the Methodist Missionary Society, was very active to enlist the help of all like-minded missions to stop any RC encroachment into their territories. The Protestants knew, of course, about its recent purchase of properties in Milne Bay, and about the canvassing of support in Canberra, and they did all that was possible to stop the menace of a new mission.

The government was involved quite early in the piece, among others, in its dealings with C. C. Abel, the chairman of the Combined Missions Committee, who, in 1930, wrote to the Lieutenant-General and Government Secretary, H. W. Champion. As a matter of fact, the whole problem had already been one of the great concerns of Champion's predecessor, Sir Hubert Murray.

Although a professing Roman Catholic, Murray had not shown any religious bias, because he was well aware that the other missions favoured the existing arrangements. For him, the practice should remain in force as it was, and not be changed, without full consultation with the missionaries. Still, he was against extending the policy, because of its defects: it did not indicate any inland limits of mission influence, it was never applied to town allotments, with their white and mixed-race populations, and it was not agreed to by the single biggest group of expatriate missionaries, the Roman Catholics. Finally, on the legal side, there was a clash with Australia's constitution. In addition, the practice was very critically seen by the League of Nations, which had given ex-German New Guinea to Australian Trusteeship, and which had encouraged the abolition of mission territories in places such as Tanganyika and Sudan. In this situation, H. W. Champion could only repeat to C. C. Abel what his predecessor had already said, namely, that he had no legal grounds to enforce the gentlemen's agreement from the past. To do so would be showing religious intolerance.

It must be noted that one dissenting voice against the Congregationalist and Methodist moves came from the Anglican Bishop, Henry Newton. He was made the third Anglican Bishop of New Guinea (1922), and wrote, in 1931, to M. K. Gilmour that, in all fairness, the Roman Catholics had some justification for expansion, because, in the past, they had been allowed only a small stretch of coastline, whereas the other churches could not say the same.

This type of argument had never been used before, and showed some cracks in the non-Catholic camp. It linked, once more, Anglicans and Romans, as it had done before. Another incident of this same character, without giving the year, is referred to by Pastor Butcher, where he describes a sports rally in Isuleilei, which the host people wanted to conclude with a common Holy Communion service. Here, too, in typical RC fashion, the Anglicans forbade their adherents to share the rite with the Methodists and the LMS.

As far as our case goes, it would be unfortunate to ignore how frequently there was actual contact between Bishops de Boismenu and Newton. We know, for instance, that Beatrice, the wife of the Kwato bigman, C. W. Abel, who lived and died in New Guinea as an Evangelical Anglican, said of Bishop Newton that he was “a Roman, out and out”. In addition, several other indications have survived, showing that, not only H. Newton, but also his predecessor, and his follower, entertained excellent relationships with the mission of Yule Island.

The RC drive towards the east went ahead as planned, first by sending, for instance, the Australian, Fr John Flynn, who was based in Koki (Port Moresby), and visited Samarai in 1931. Then, in 1932, the mission sent the Australian, Fr Francis Lyons, with his several local helpers. Still, in that year, a Catholic school was opened on Sideia Island, while, in 1934, four Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH), from Yule Island, came to the same place. The real founders of the diocese were Frs Hugh Tomlinson and Bernard Baldwin, both MSC, and fresh arrivals from Australia. Special care was taken by the new Vicar Apostolic, John Doyle, to avoid proselytising among the native population. Still, his method of working through schools, unavoidably gave rise to it, because, sometimes, the majority of school pupils were not Roman Catholics at all.

Besides arranging for Australian Fathers to go to the east, the French, themselves, expanded towards the north, in the Anglican-claimed Chirima Valley (1927), and towards the west, to places, such as Toaripi, and down to Daru, both erstwhile LMS territories. For such plans, they had to wait until local people offered them their ground, or until they, themselves, could buy land from expatriate owners. Both ways entailed the disadvantage of not ending up in the middle of the indigenous population, or, also, of obtaining a plot of ground in a place, which was closer to another mission station than the government would have liked. But it clearly showed that, with the development of the country, the rules, which were never

intended to settle later situations, could no longer be applied without further adjustment.

The Vicariate Apostolic of Papua was not the only place occupied by RC missionaries. There were other MSC Fathers in Rabaul, SM Fathers in Bougainville, while the Society of the Divine Word (SYD) occupied Alexishafen and Wewak (Madang), respectively called the Vicariate Apostolic of East New Guinea, and the Apostolic Prefecture of Central New Guinea. The size and importance of these regions added practically four more “dioceses” to that of Yule Island, as becomes clearer from the following statistics.

Statistics of Roman Catholic Mission Personnel in PNG						
	Foreign Priests	Brothers	Sisters	Teachers Catechists	Catholics	Catechum
Rabaul	44	37	92	301	25,595	10,000
Papua	26	22	71	70	11,629	900
East NG	21	20	38	65	9,891	2,700
Centr NG	7	2	13	14	3,995	725
N Solomon	18	4	22	193	8,262	2,800
TOTALS	116	85	236	643	59,372	17,125

Source: C. Streit, ed., *Atlas Hierarchicus*, 1929, 44.

It has been said that Bishop de Boismenu was not very practical, that is, as far as pick and shovel were concerned, but he did give his missionaries the guidance they expected of him. When new outposts were to be made, he was always with his coworkers, while, all the time, he gave a lot of thought to the existence of competing mission societies. As said already, he had brought up this subject with Pope Pius X, before, in Rome (1901), and was rightly proud that some of his own ideas were taken up by the mission encyclical *Maximum illud*, of Pope Benedict XV (1919). In the matter of an authentic baptism, his views well preceded the insights of Vaticanum II, and of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

In 1934, he took the initiative to write to all the mission agencies in Papua, to find out exactly what they thought about baptism. Apparently, he could live with a lot of different rules and approaches. However, here was the basic link with the source of grace, and which affected the regular state of most Christians, who were married people. He, thus, sent out a questionnaire to 54 European ministers, belonging to six different missions, and also solicited the opinion of the famous Roman theologian, Fr A. Vermeersch SJ.

The results of his inquiry were published, in January, 1936, in a ten-page Latin document: *De Baptismo Haeticorum nostrum in ordine ad Matrimonium*. In general, the bishop urged his collaborators to always make the necessary investigation, till, at least, a reasonable presumption was reached, or till his office could be consulted. For him, the case of baptism was most important: hence, also, by a tiny doubt, whether a baptism was valid, a RC re-baptism was required, whereas when there was a serious doubt about the validity of a previous baptism, the permanent, sacramental marriage was not affected (as, also, the old canon 1118 said, because such a marriage was indissoluble before God).

As to the specific results obtained, the bishop noted a general doubt regarding the translation of the biblical formula from Matt 29:19 – a fact which also held for the RC versions. As to the other churches, Bishop de Boismenu had no difficulties with the Anglican concept, mentioned in the first place, basing himself on the reply of his colleague, Bishop Newton.

Nor did de Boismenu have serious objections to the answers from the Interdenominational Fellowship of Papuan Christians (Kwato), and the Unevangelised Fields Mission (Daru), or with the replies received from the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia (of Salamo, on Fergusson Island). The latter added that, in Papua, they used to enjoin baptism, even though this was against their own church rules. As a matter of fact, the Methodists said, no rite was, in itself, essential to salvation, because to be “a Christian”

was not yet to be “a church member”. Still, the RC bishop felt that there was sufficient agreement, even though the standpoints were very different.

On the other hand, the bishop made some remarks about the baptisms of the SDAs (because they said that the sacrament was secondary to an adult’s conversion). However, seeing that the LMS practice differed, even within the same district, and that the accompanying doctrine was so different from that of all other missions, he concluded that the LMS sign of being a Christian showed hardly one case where it could be regarded as a Christian sacrament. In such a situation, therefore, the (first) administration of baptism was called for.

Let us add that this negative attitude of the bishop was not a total write-off of the LMS approach. Thus, when the Society notified him, in 1936, of certain criticisms against the book *Papouasie*, of Fr Dupeyrat, he concluded his answer with the following confession:

“I wish most sincerely that your Society may, one day, put its undisputed dedication in the service of the church, which always expects your return, and will greet it with the greatest joy”.¹⁰

Child of his time, Bishop de Boismenu saw only the one possibility of “conversion” and “return” to the Master’s fold, so that the Chairman of the Papua District Committee somewhat amusingly replied that:

“People of the prophetic tradition and vision smile at the possibility of “return” to sacerdotalism”.¹¹

In light of the attitude described, one should also read the pastoral letter of the same year, now written in French, about the Protestant danger. Although technically the French equivalents for “sects”, and “heretics”, “apostasy”, “crime”, and “error”, applied to

all non-Catholics, its truth varied in application from the LMS to the Anglicans, and was especially directed towards the first group, which his staff most met in its daily apostolate.

The 1936 letter was full of good advice. His staff should not get carried away, by being obsessed by the Protestant presence, but adopt a religious point of view. They should, in all circumstances, imitate their divine Master, and show the patient love and tolerance of Jesus, and have the necessary respect for each one's God-given freedom. They should even try to see the situation from the point of view of the others, who were now losing ground, and believed that their opposition to the Roman Catholics was a service rendered to God. If they kept quiet, no battle should be started, but, otherwise, no compromise could be entertained. They were "poor souls", "pitiable heretics", "our Protestants".

On the negative side, Bishop de Boismenu also warned that his missionaries should never try to solve their problems before a civil court, and went even so far as to say that, if ever a RC mission agent should lose his life, nobody should expect him, the bishop, to point a finger to the culprit. Such a conciliatory spirit, together with his diplomatic decision to work in the Owen Stanley Ranges, no doubt, explains why the intra-denominational relations lost much of the aggressiveness once attributed to them.

For the subsequent years, it appears that the guidelines, given in 1936, were having their effect, because there is no later pastoral letter devoted to the issue. However, it was customary that, each year, a few "case studies" were taken from the daily problems of a missionary. The details were sent out, written answers were expected, and followed up, by public discussion, when the Yule Island Fathers met for their yearly retreat, at the beginning of July. One can reckon that, in his long administration of about 30 years, the bishop submitted, yearly, two moral cases to his staff, but those concerned with intra-denominational difficulties are not more than three, or only five, per cent, dating from the years 1939, 1944, and 1945.

The first moral case concerns one Father Paul, who validly, but still too easily, baptised young people, without thinking enough of their future family situations, which would hinder the profession of the Catholic faith. Another concerns one Father Arnold, who, in re-baptising two Anglicans, did not, in time, obtain the necessary permission to remarry them also (since the man had formerly been joined to a Methodist woman). Finally, in the third case, one Father Timotheus was eventually blamed, because he considered a particular Anglican marriage as invalid, whereas, in fact, it was a real sacrament. In each case, the bishop manifested a great prudence, showed respect to the relevant ecclesiastical canons, and also used the opportunity to teach his Fathers the meaning of the faculties he had granted to his coworkers.

A bishop is nothing without his staff: fathers, brothers, sisters, catechists, teachers, all engaged in administering sacraments, building roads, running schools, instructing people, and so on. While, occasionally, there were localised confrontations, the fear of treading on one another's feet was not great. Bishop de Boismenu did not rub in the encyclical *Mortalium animos* of Pope Pius XI (1927), neither did his subjects use to write about the "sects", except one article of Fr J. Dubuy, in 1929, and the sections on the spheres of influence, in the 1935 book of Fr A. Dupeyrat.

Especially after World War I, the bishop's heart was turned towards localisation, on all levels. Only the Handmaids of the Lord, founded in 1919, proved to be a lasting success. The first local seminarist died overseas (1922), and the second candidate, the future Bishop Louis Vangeke, was only ordained in 1937.

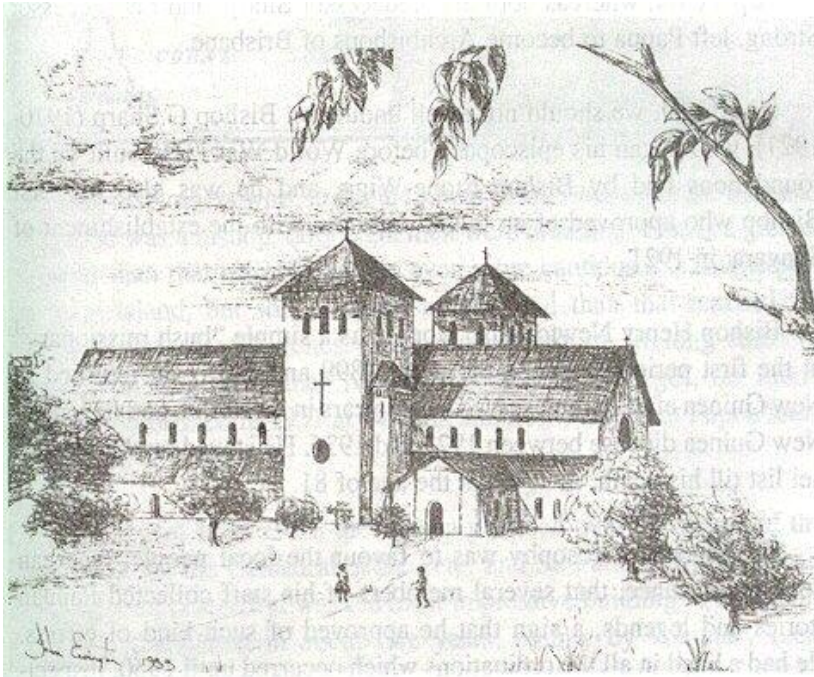
Some have believed that the failure to reply more generously to the Pope's call for indigenous vocations was mainly due to the bishop's low esteem for the local people. But his high respect for the local "nobility", such as elders and chiefs, his professed aim that native clergy should be formed, like priests in Europe, and not like an inferior clergy, and the fact that he sent his candidates to France and Madagascar does rather suggest the opposite. One can also

consider that the bishop's cautious approach to administering baptisms would apply *a fortiori* to the ordination of local priests, at whatever level this would be. And, finally, there was the *jus commissionis*, which Rome had given to a definite society, to which the bishop, too, belonged. Thus, all French MSC would make it a point of honour to keep to the job, once given, even though local recruits would not be forthcoming. The fact remains, though, that we still have to reckon with part of de Boismenu's bad luck, and that, from the start, the Anglican church was more successful in localising its leadership.

One could say much more about the way Roman Catholics consolidated their positions between the two wars, and especially about the impact left by its long-time Bishop, A. de Boismenu. Let us simply conclude with one of his last visitors, the Dominican, Fr M. H. Lelong. We can repeat with him that only the clash with the LMS was, in the bishop's mind, the one great problem of his career, even worse than facing, say, the custom of cannibalism, which he had met in the mountains. On the other hand, he was most supported by the attitudes of the successive Anglican Bishops: G. Sharp, H. Newton, and P. N. W. Strong, with whom he lived on the best terms. Of their church, the old bishop used to say: "they are all right".

2. The Anglican Advance

Whereas the period between the wars, among Catholics, receives some unity, by having the same bishop all the time, there were, between 1910 and the Second World War, three different bishops for the (Anglican) New Guinea Mission. It can be repeated that all of them were on really good terms with their counterpart at Yule Island. From Bishop de Boismenu's writing, we gathered already, that he considered Bishop Sharp to be one of his friends (as he said in 1913, in a letter to his sisters), and that when, in October, 1947, he heard of the death of Bishop Newton, he noted in his diary he had lost one of his good friends.



The Cathedral at Dogura, drawn by the Revd John Ewington.

As to Bishop Strong, it is reported that he told his own entourage that, when the old French bishop met him for the first time, Bishop de Boismenu fell on his knees and asked for his episcopal blessing. We know, also, that it was claimed, in 1963, that, when Bishop Strong was consecrated in London (1936), a Greek Orthodox, or an Old Catholic bishop had taken part in the ceremony, a detail that would make Strong a validly-ordained bishop, even in the eyes of strict Roman Catholics. We do not know, however, whether Bishop de Boismenu was aware of this fact.

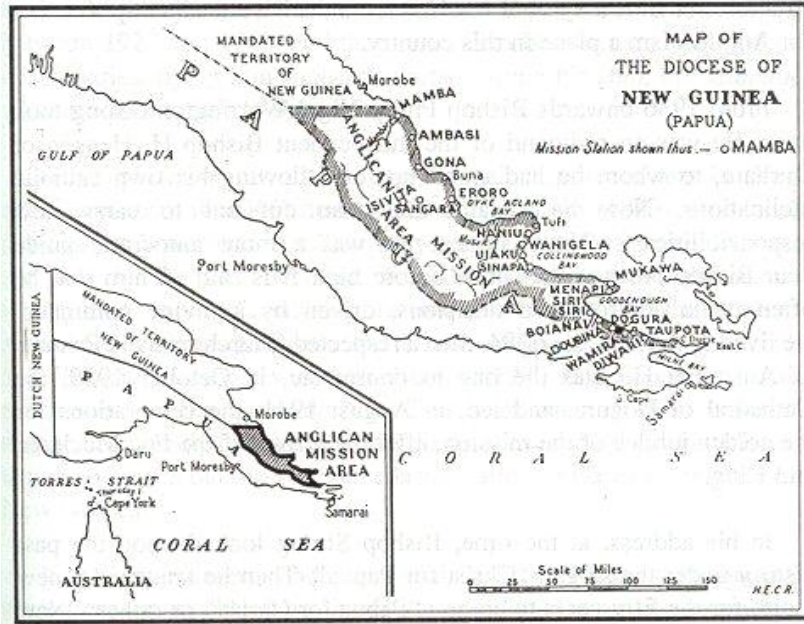
In their own right, the successive bishops of the Church of England showed a steady relationship to their work. A reliable sign of this is that Bishop Newton (who, by the way, was the only Australian Anglican bishop, ever) was called away from Papua to

become the second Bishop of Carpentaria, whereas both his predecessor Sharp, and his successor Strong, left Papua to become Archbishops of Brisbane.

At present, we should not dwell unduly on Bishop G. Sharp (1910-1921), who began his episcopacy before World War I. He built on the foundations laid by Bishop Stone-Wigg, and he was also the first bishop, who approved of an inland mission, with the establishment of Sangara, in 1921.

Bishop Henry Newton also worked as a simple “bush missionary” in the first period, between the years 1899 and 1915. He returned to New Guinea, after having served seven years in Australia, and he led the New Guinea diocese between 1922 and 1936. He stayed on the personnel list till his death in 1947, at the age of 81.

His general philosophy was to favour the local people. One can note, for instance, that several members of his staff collected Papuan stories and legends, a sign that he approved of such kind of efforts. He had a hand in all the ordinations, which occurred until 1950, respecting the wishes of those, who wanted to delay their ordinations, and refusing, also, others who, in his judgment, were unsuitable for the task. While he was a bishop, only eight men were ordained. This is a greater number than that achieved by his even-more-cautious RC counterpart at Yule Island, but still a much smaller total than that reached for ministers in other churches, which did not require lifelong commitments. He lives on in the “Newton Theological College” for future priests, established in 1951, at Dogura, and now situated at Popondetta, in Oro Province.



On August 10, 1934, the bishop presided over the laying of the first stone for the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul at Dogura. For a long time, this cathedral was the most impressive building in the whole of PNG, completed in about five years, mainly by voluntary local labour, and dedicated just before the outbreak of hostilities. Its solid structure remains a symbol of Newton's decisive leadership, to carve, for Anglicanism, a place in this country.

From 1936 onwards, Bishop Philip Nigel Warrington Strong took over. He was an ordinand of the independent Bishop, H. Henson of Durham, to whom he had stood up for, following his own catholic inclinations. Now, he became the man cut out to carry new responsibilities in New Guinea. He was a more-autocratic guide than Bishop Newton had been before him. It is said of him that he often made controversial decisions, driven by a divine command. He lived to the ripe age of 84, then a respected churchman, and

Primate of Australia. He was the one to consecrate, in October, 1939, the Cathedral of Dogura, and led, in August, 1941, the celebrations for the golden jubilee of the mission, after the arrival of Frs Maclaren and King.

In his address, at the time, Bishop Strong looked upon the past history, under the slogan “Christ for Papua”. Then, he launched a new motto for the 50 years to come: “Papua for Christ”, or rather: “New Guinea, all of it, for the Lord”. In fact, following the Dogura festivities, he embarked on a jubilee visitation of all the districts in his diocese. Most of the time he was impressed by the people’s resolve,

“to undertake evangelistic campaigns among the heathen. In the Boiani area, to the mountain people of Denewa; in the Menapi area, to the inland people behind Kolebagira; in the Wanigela area, to the Dorii people; from Eroro, to the Managalasi people, and so on”.¹²

At the time, these were only plans, which had to wait for some years before they could be put into realisation.

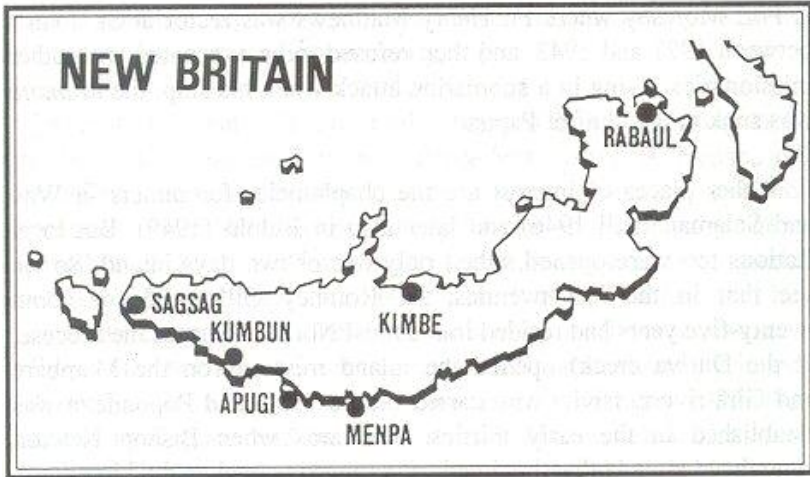
While generally allowing others to go their way, the Anglicans, too, did make some progress in this second period. One place to be recorded is Port Moresby, where Fr Henry Matthews was rector at St John’s, between 1927 and 1942, and then refused to be evacuated with other missionaries, dying in a submarine attack, when his ship, the *Mamutu*, was sunk in the Gulf of Papua.

Other places of interest are the chaplaincies for miners in Wau and Salamaua (till 1946), and later, also, in Bulolo (1949). But local stations, too, were opened, albeit only one or two days inland. So we see that, in the late 1920s, Fr Romney Gill (who, for about 25 years, had resided in the most northern part of the diocese, at Duriva Creek) opened the inland missions on the Mambare and Gira Rivers. Isivita was started before 1930, and Popondetta was established in the early 1930s. This was when Bishop Newton

announced, already, that the time had come to evangelise the hinterland, that is, to branch out from the old coastal stations towards the interior of New Guinea.

New Britain deserves a special mention here. Till the time that the region ceased to belong to the German colonial empire, there were hardly any people of the Church of England on the island. They were, rather, not allowed by the Germans to have residence, for political reasons. But, when the Australian Commonwealth took over the government, of the many who flocked to the administrative centre of Rabaul, a great number were Anglicans. In 1924, Fr Fred Bishop became the first resident parish priest, who cared for the European population of the township.

Closer relations between Melanesia and New Guinea must have begun around 1919. Indeed, we are lucky to have a letter of John M. Steward, Bishop of Melanesia, written on December 11, 1919, to Gerald Sharp, Bishop of New Guinea. In this letter, the Bishop of Melanesia asked his colleague, very privately, what he and his clergy thought of a united Province of the Pacific. The occasion for such a request was that, in the intercession leaflet of the *Australian Board of Missions Review*, the two existing dioceses had been named together. Was this a sign of things to come? The letter was probably a consequence of the June, 1919, decision of the Australian Board of Missions to include the ex-German islands in the Diocese of Melanesia. To this, the Melanesian Mission had agreed, in August, of the same year. The idea of a new diocese was revived during the Lambeth Conference of 1929, in which the island of New Britain became placed under the new Bishop of Melanesia, F. Molyneux, residing at Siota, in the Solomon Islands.



The first evangelists to New Britain, who had arrived, in 1916, among the Arawe people, on Kaptumete Island, were Lutherans, from across the straits. However, the Revd E. Bamler, of the Neuendettelsau Mission, on Siassi Island, granted, still in 1925, that three or four Lutheran evangelists would work for the Church of England before the Anglican, Fr Vernon H. Sherwin, could find helpers of his own. The replacement arrived in the same year, when six members of the Melanesian Brotherhood, arrived in Rabaul, and later moved southward, around the centres of Kaptumete and Sagsag. This indigenous order was a rather-recent foundation, where the native religious consecrated themselves for one year at a time, and specialised in breaking the ground for a first contact with Christianity. For them, New Britain was the ideal place.

This is really the beginning of the “Anglican Mission” for the local people on New Britain, as distinct from the “Anglican church” for expatriates in Rabaul. Practically, both mission work and church apostolate depended, then, on the support of New Zealand and the Solomons, even though, politically, since 1920, the island belonged to Australia. Only in 1932, when Fr Harold Thompson transferred from the New Guinea Mission to New Britain, to train local

evangelists, a first sign of greater collaboration within the Territories of Papua and New Guinea came about.

Around the 1930s, the RC Mission moved, also, towards the south coast of New Britain; founding Kilenge in the west, in 1929, and, in 1931, establishing Malmal in the east. Before that, in 1925, one Amga, from Pililo, had been recruited by the Australians to become a policeman. In Vunapope, he learned to know the Roman Catholics, was baptised as Carl, and further trained at the Taliligap catechist school.

When, in the early 1930s, he returned to his Arawe people, he could do the work of a catechist, and, in 1932, welcomed the future Bishop, Leo Scharmach, the first RC priest in the area. He, himself, travelled the whole south coast to win converts. Subsequently, between 1935 and 1939, Catholic parishes were established in Turuk, Valanguo, and Uvol. Partly due to the theological climate of the time, proselytising methods were not always shunned, and the coexistence of the two Christian missions did not always foster good relations. In short, mutual relationships were not so happy on New Britain as they had been in Papua. Many years later, Fr Alfred Hill, the future Bishop of Melanesia, and then, already, a good friend of Fr Scharmach, could say, with tongue in cheek, and probably with some exaggeration,

“In the good old times, we built a church, and they burned it down, and they built a church, and we burned it down.”^{12a}

This point deserves our special interest, also, beyond New Britain. Let us recall that there had been no friction with the Methodists when, in the beginning, C. W. Abel surveyed the East Cape, till the Anglicans would come. Neither was there any strife, in 1915, (right before the appointment of Fr Newton to a bishopric in Australia), when the Church of England took over the Torres Strait Islands from the LMS. In fact, the London Society felt that it had done its work there, and that the needs and openings in New Guinea had become greater. Again, from the time of Copland King,

and during the hassles after World War I, there had been good relationships between Anglicans and Lutherans, so that, in 1925, they were quite willing to assist the Anglicans to open up an area on New Britain, where they themselves had begun working in 1916. In 1937, the relationship with the Lutherans soured, when the Australian Board of Missions heard of local difficulties and raised its objections.

All the cases of strife recorded were rather isolated incidents. They were not unlike the one of 1900, when some Protestants had not liked the Anglican intrusion into their territory, by opening the St Paul's school on Samarai Island. In addition to this first factor, one should also be aware of a nationalistic element present. This would explain a lack of collaboration between a German missionary and a British subject, even if both of them were Catholics, or even if both of them were SVD or MSC Fathers. Furthermore, it would make it easier for an Englishman, of a different religious persuasion, to work together with another Englishman, and make it more strained for a "Protestant" missionary, either from the United Kingdom or Australia, to display a heartfelt welcome for a "catholic" missionary, from either Ireland or Germany.

As regards the RC exploration and occupation of the Chirima Valley, in 1927, one suspects that Bishop Newton had already realised that there were no inland borders the missions had agreed upon, or, also, that he, himself, did not have the material means of occupying this particular valley. We know, however, that Bishop Newton had his doubts whether the efficiency of the Roman method would be greater. On the other side, he also said, in 1934, that there should not be too much concern about the expansion drive of the Roman Catholics, but more about the encroachment of the SDAs, who, sometimes, appeared in places, which were already in the hands of another mission. About the latter situation, he wrote in his report of June, 1936:

"Hitherto, we had been able, on the whole, to confine our teaching to "positives". For the protection of our people, we

may have to introduce something negative, explaining where others are departing from the catholic faith and order. It is sad, but it will be a necessary punishment for the sin of our division.”¹³

The opinions of Bishop Strong would not be much different from those of Bishop Newton. He, too, had his questions with the Roman approach in the Pacific. He once described their work as an ambition to achieve political supremacy, by influencing the governments, via rapidly-developing parochial schools, Catholic youth organisations, and other societies. He, too, warned first on some quasi-Christian groups, and advised on the ways to follow with his own staff, so that they, too, could cope with the opposing forces.

The strength of Bishop Strong’s group of coworkers was not exceptionally great, but quite adapted to the then existing needs (even though it is well known that comparisons across the board are difficult to realise). Discounting both the retired expatriates and the licensed Papuan teachers (who also did active evangelistic work), we have the following picture for a total of 59 Anglican mission workers:

Statistics of Church Personnel in the New Guinea Mission							
Bishops		Priests		Deacons		Laypeople	
Act.	Canon	Mel.	Expat.	Mel.	Expat.	Mel.	Expatriate
1	1	10	13	2	2	3	3m+24f

Source: New Guinea Mission, *Occasional Papers*, 1942, inside cover.

With such a backup group, things would have been very different for the Anglicans, had various calamities not befallen them in PNG.

In the previous pages, we have not surveyed all the developments, which united Anglicans and Romans. One of these

was, surely, the Government and Mission Conference on Education, held in 1941, which brought representatives of the two groups together. Then there are, also, the visits to Europe, for Roman Catholics to make their decennial *ad limina* visit to the Pope, and for the Anglicans to attend, every ten years, the Lambeth Conference in London. Here, most of the respective bishops could encounter one another, a thing, which did not so easily happen in the mission, itself. Even though there are no specific minutes of these encounters, it was an appreciated occasion to talk about priorities, and to take decisions of mutual interest. One may easily suspect that the relations with the other church featured on the agenda, but this can, as yet, not be substantiated.

Conclusion

The above discussion allows us to draw some tentative conclusions for the period between the two World Wars. As with all wars, this period lends itself easily to be seen as a break. Pastoral action was, for a time, not only slowed down, but, in the case of the Japanese onslaught, almost reduced to nil. In addition, a new situation was created, once the victorious troops had left, and a new civil administration had taken over. Then, a general interest in the Territories of Papua and New Guinea came about, not only in Australia, but also worldwide. With regards to the past 25 years, or so, one can make the following observations.

One, the two missions concerned, but especially the Roman Catholics, desired to expand in all directions to reach new tribal groups. Still, the Anglicans also branched out, especially to New Britain, while both churches did not neglect the expatriate population, either, both in the townships and in the mining areas.

Two, each group showed more clearly its own physiognomy, with the Catholics regularly looking over their shoulder to the central authorities in Rome (e.g., by quoting the 1917 Code of Canon Law, or insisting on the same international standards before

ordaining indigenous priests), and the Anglicans being very much concerned with the ways and the wishes of the local people. They considered having a local bishop, well before World War II began.

Three, the presence of such eminent bishops as A. de Boismenu and H. Newton, made sure that, although there was overlapping, e.g., in the cities, there were no actual clashes, and each mission contributed, in its own way, to abolish the “spheres of influence”, till the idea was completely abandoned after the Second World War.

We do not want to say that all this amounts to ecumenism *avant la lettre*, but, surely, it was a kind of pre-ecumenism, which was not only based upon good personal relationships, but considered, already, the others as a sister church, on a way to God, which was all right.