

I. THE FOUNDING AGE

The Christian faith entered the Far East with the Spanish Armada, which gave the name of its king, Philip, to the Philippines, one of the largest groups of islands in the area. In the train of the Spanish conquistadors, Dominican and Franciscan friars followed. People believe that a chaplain of one of these ships set foot on Samarai, where a recent monument remembers the celebration of the first RC mass at Rowen Point, Samarai, in 1605. However, these state-sponsored missions of Spain and Portugal (under the so-called patronage system) were nothing more than a fleeting contact.

The mission era in the Pacific, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants, started in the 19th century. It was a voluntary movement, and, although RC authorities encouraged it (such as Pope Gregory XVI, a former prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide), it was mainly carried out by new religious groups from France. One of these societies, that of the Picpus Fathers (SSCC), began its work in 1827 on the Hawaiian Islands, which were not so far off, and to which Protestant preachers had gone already. They are still famous, through the name of Fr Damien De Veuster. However, no further expansion from Hawaii to PNG occurred, and the second contact did not enter into the local history either.

Things became different when another French group, that of the Society of Mary (or the SM Fathers), entered the area. In 1845, they were entrusted by "Rome" with the whole of Oceania. As a matter of fact, these French missionaries reached out from Fiji and Samoa to the islands in the west, around today's PNG. They opened missions on Umboi, now Rooke Island, near Lae, and on Woodlark Island, off Samarai. In 1848, with the death of Mgr Jean-Georges Collomb on Rooke Island, the Western Oceanic mission of the SM Fathers ended in disaster. Then, the remaining Marists concentrated

on Eastern Oceania, while, 45 years later, they returned to the present PNG, and resumed work on the North Solomon Islands.

Meanwhile, “Rome” strongly pushed other mission societies to occupy the abandoned battlefield. This happened, especially, because some Protestant churches had established themselves on Tahiti, in the east, and began to reach out towards the unevangelised shores of the West Pacific region. In 1852, the arrival of the Italian Fathers of Milan (or the PIME Fathers) re-established, for a short while, the RC presence in these lands. But, once again, with the death of Fr Giovanni Mazzucconi in 1855, a provisional end was made to the Italian endeavour.

A Roman presence would not be established again before 1882, when the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), a third group of French missionaries, landed near Rabaul, with the assignment of converting Melanesia and Micronesia. We will return to them in due course, but, now, we want to pursue the Christianisation of PNG, from 1870 onwards.

1. The London Missionary Society

New Guinea, being an island close to the Australian continent, was the most obvious area of expansion, both for the British Crown, politically, as for the established church, religiously. Now, the Church of England was mainly concerned with British citizens, and left it to voluntary agencies to worry about the heathen in foreign parts. This explains the emergence, in the Church of England, of several mission societies, some of which were more Protestant (as the societies, which came about in the wake of the Evangelical revival of the 19th century), while others were more Catholic (as the ones associated, in the 18th century, with the Oxford movement). The LMS belonged to the first group, and was, for the period starting now, the first to enter the local apostolic scene.

The LMS society had been founded in 1795, by two Anglicans, John Eyre and Thomas Haweis, together with one independent Christian, David Bogue. Soon afterwards, the group became the rallying point, in Great Britain, to undertake mission work overseas. As time went on, the Society established a closer association with the English Congregational church. Elements of this were the greatest reliance on the Bible, a strict Sabbatarianism, and also the active role entrusted to the laity.

An important stage was reached, when, in 1840, the LMS came to the Loyalty Islands, including New Caledonia and Tahiti. But, in this French-dominated mission, they met a fierce opposition from the RC missionaries. Eventually, one of the LMS preachers, the Revd Samuel McFarlane, was accused of desecrating a church building, and left the island.

This incident was, for him, and also for the Revd Archibald W. Murray, and eight families of Loyalty Island teachers, the opportunity to transfer their mission to the Torres Strait Islands. They were now under English, that is, under Queensland, rule. From past experience, they carried with them an antipathy against whatever was Popish and French. In no time, they made the small Murray Island into the main centre of their outreach.

From Murray Island, the LMS tackled “the great region of darkness and sin”, that is the southern coast of Papua, from the Fly River, at one end, to East Cape, at the other end. Experienced missionaries, like the Revd William G. Lawes, from Niue, and also the Revd James Chalmers, from the Cook Islands, soon joined the group. In 1874, Lawes was appointed as the first resident missionary at Port Moresby, a site already reached three years earlier. Christianisation proceeded, according to each one’s ability and liking, with McFarlane scattering Polynesian evangelists, and the linguist Lawes rather opting for a more intensive work.

On the island of Yule, the LMS had placed, in 1872, a teacher from Mare, Waunaea, but, four years later, after the murder of Dr

James and Captain Thorngren, the Society withdrew him. In addition, the people of Yule moved to the New Guinea mainland, to the nearby station of Delena. They first lived around the LMS teacher, Henere, and, from 1894 onwards, around the European missionary, the Revd H. M. Dauncey, previously the LMS preacher at Vanuamai.

From his first arrival in Papua, the Revd Dauncey was a most respected man. He arrived in Papua in 1888, and would devote 40 years of service to the mission. Father G. Gennoch MSC admitted that the Revd Dauncey trusted Sacred Heart missionaries, and sincerely loved them, although, through his upbringing, he was an independent churchman, a bit like the Evangelical Anglican, John H. Newman, who, in the end, became a Cardinal of the RC church.

On one occasion, the Revd Dauncey set forth a clear account of the LMS faith. There was, for him, no church, no superior, nor any other guide in the faith. And, whenever like-minded people met together, they formed a Congregational Union, in which anybody could read the scriptures, and explain them. This was, of course, a far cry from the tradition-bound Frenchmen living across Hall Sound Bay!

The presence of the RC missionaries used to dictate the priorities of the LMS. At the very beginning, still on Thursday Island, McFarlane tried to keep the MSC away from Yule Island. But Bishop Navarre did not accept this, nor McFarlane's suggestion to settle in Fairfax Harbour (over against Port Moresby), nor his idea to move to the Louisiade Archipelago, at the far east of the island.

Meanwhile, the LMS had abandoned the view of changing its headquarters from Torres Strait to Yule Island, while the Society began to concentrate its activities mainly on the Papuan Gulf, just to stop the other mission. In 1900, for instance, the Society got very worried when the Roman Catholics obtained their first plot of land in Daru. And then there were the actual clashes between the opposing missions on Yule and elsewhere.

In September 1888, with the arrival of the then Lieutenant-Governor, William MacGregor, the government realised that the small band of LMS missionaries could not possibly do effective work over the 800 miles of coastline of Papua. MacGregor, therefore, aired the idea of attracting other missions also, and approached both Methodists and Anglicans.

MacGregor's previous experience with the governor of Fiji, and high commissioner of the Western Pacific, had put him in contact with the Methodist church, for whom he had only good words. Now, he asked the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia to occupy the islands to the east of New Guinea. Although the governor did not act on church instructions, he plainly entered in the LMS spirit, as appears from the later comment of R. W. Thompson, the Foreign Secretary of the Society, when writing to the Revd James Chalmers. In this letter of 1891, Thompson agreed that RC missionaries might be better than nothing, but that he had little or no hesitation in trying to keep them out altogether. Such an opinion was consistent with the view of all missionary societies at the time – including the Roman Catholics – who saw themselves as the only bringers of salvation, and tried to ward off all outsiders, as unwanted intruders or rivals.

Following a suggestion of Samuel McFarlane, the governor favoured a delimitation of the mission boundaries. A meeting was held by the heads of churches, in Port Moresby, on June 17, 1890. The comity agreement then reached, provided:

“That . . . so as to use, to the best advantage for the native population, the force available for mission purposes, and in order to prevent, as far as possible, further complications re missionary boundaries, we express the opinion that, as the missionaries of the London Missionary Society have agreed, to make the boundary of their mission at Ducie Cape, on the north-east coast, that the Anglican mission should occupy the coast from Cape Ducie to Mitre Rock, on the north-east coast of New Guinea, and that the Wesleyan Missionary Society

should occupy the whole of the outlying islands, with the exception of those islands lying west of Rocky Pass, on the south-east coast of New Guinea.”¹

Subsequently, on August 14, 1890, the three Protestant groups held a further mission conference in Port Moresby, now on the possible transfer of South Sea teachers from one mission to the other. Another meeting was held at Kwato, on May 8, 1893, discussing native marriages, Sabbath observance, and principles of Bible translation. The administration tried hard to make the Roman Catholics enter the covenant, in order to serve the best interests of the country, but it was all to no avail. The Sacred Heart Fathers of Yule Island did not sign the text, nor did they otherwise signify that they agreed with it. Nevertheless, the arrangements between the three non-RC missions regulated, for many years, the expansion of the churches. It became the foil, against which most of the decisions, and most of the future difficulties, can be judged.

In a way, the government’s position was not always clear, with the LMS blaming the administration for lack of assistance, and the MSC accusing them of discriminating against their apostolate. Surely, the decisions of successive administrators were not consistently leaning towards one side only. MacGregor, for instance, is known for his *bon mot*:

“I make no distinction between the different missions. I am most anxious to see a Christian catechism brought to every tribe in this colony. To what sect that catechism may belong, is, to me, as far as religious teaching is concerned, a matter of complete indifference.”²

He was also known for appealing to his immediate superiors, both in Queensland and in London, to legislate on the spheres of influence. And he even appealed to Cardinal Mieczeslaw Ledochowski, in Rome, to get rid of the troublesome Archbishop Navarre. On the other side, the RC historian, André Dupeyrat, calls this Protestant Scotsman, a man of good faith, generally sympathetic

towards the missionaries. He recalls that, on one occasion, the governor showed his liberality towards Fr H. Verjus, and that, on another occasion, he saved the life of Fr G. Gennoch. So he deserved – at least at the beginning – to be recognised as a benefactor of the French mission.

In all these conflicts, therefore, it should be noted, that the government, itself, was not formally part of what one could call the “MacGregor Settlement”, nor that it added any new regulations or ordinances to enforce it. One reason for acting as it did was public security, or the fear of a French *coup d’etat* (in case French war ships would be heading for Yule Island). Another reason was the defence of internal law and order, by which it tried to prevent fighting between opposed groups of missionaries.

2. The Sacred Heart Mission

After the departure of the French Marists, and the Italian PIME Fathers, no attempts were spared to find another RC congregation to take on the responsibility for New Guinea, and the adjacent islands. “Rome” did not omit to build up its case. Not only could it rely upon the reports from naturalists, and from Protestant missionaries, or from such adventurers, as the Marquis de Rays, but it acted also upon its own RC explorers, originating from Northern Queensland, who personally went to study the situation in Papua.

As a result, in June, 1881, one Father John Cani reported to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, in Rome, the positive chances along the Papuan coast. His list of possible locations included Maiva, about 22 miles to the west of Hall Sound, and also Yule Island. This island had formerly been occupied by the LMS, who had now transferred to Delena, opposite the former ancient station of Yule. Fr Cani had made sure to have the permission of the local chiefs, and also the assurance of the Revds Chalmers and Lawes, who promised not to place South Sea teachers in the villages around Waima.

As said before, when the MSC society accepted New Guinea, the missionaries first reached Rabaul in 1882. Then, two years later, they made a second attempt to establish a base on Thursday Island. Here they picked up some Filipino pearl fishers, who then became the first RC catechists in New Guinea. The following year, in 1885, they landed on the island of Yule, as another jumping board to reach Port Moresby, and the rest of New Guinea. It was not long before a clash broke out with the government, and with the LMS. The first bone of contention became Yule Island (1885-1887); then came Vanuamai (1891-1896), closely followed by Waima-Kivori (1897-1901).

At their arrival on Yule Island, the MSC Fathers bought, for their immediate needs, a piece of ground from one Rauma Kaima. Then, in 1885, they began to work on the island, from where the South Sea teacher, Waunaea, had left. They naturally believed that the LMS had abandoned the place for good. However, the LMS at Delena expressed their earlier rights, also saying that the location of the new establishment was far too close to Delena, being, as it were, "in another part of the same village". Still, in 1887, in the interest of peace and goodwill, W. G. Lawes withdrew his teacher, Ratsu, and the island became the headquarters of the RC mission.

Another clash followed, in Vanuamai, among the Pokao people. Here, too, a Protestant teacher had lived and left. But when, in 1891, the Roman Catholics flew their improvised flag of the Sacred Heart, Frank Lawes, the brother of the great LMS minister, came to trample the emblem underfoot. In the end, MacGregor could only repeat his disapproving words, while the LMS had to leave the stubborn locals to their own devices.

Faced with such difficulties, Bishop Navarre appealed to the Congregation of the Faith. The Office in Rome had always been credited with issuing the assignment to convert New Guinea, even though it left the actual policies to the people on the spot. In a letter from the Congregation, dated January 28, 1889, Rome encouraged the bishop to further oppose the powerful government. Still, it

blamed the bishop for lacking in diplomacy, when dealing with his civil opponents.

Soon afterwards, a third conflict emerged at Waima-Kivori. The Roman Catholics, and later, among them, also Fr de Boismenu, did not budge one inch. Therefore, when, in 1889, Beata Kupa asked the Roman Catholics to settle at Waima, notwithstanding the presence of several Samoan evangelists, they agreed, in no uncertain terms. Consequently, the Yule Island mission appointed, one after the other, various missionaries of its own to the place. And since the government refused to allocate them a piece of ground, they bought, in 1899, a plot at Ovia Pokina, from the European, Jean Oberleuter. In addition, in 1900, they acquired, at Ama Pokina, another hectare from the Australian company, Burns Philp. In doing so, they circumvented the law on the transfer of native properties, and robbed the government of its main ground to expel the Catholic missionaries from Waima.

Even though the Revd Dauncey wrote, in 1905, that spoiled relations with Roman Catholics had been the “major problem” for the previous 20 years, one must add that, in this part of the world, the opposition between the various churches was minimal, in comparison with the Polynesian experience in Tonga, the Loyalties, etc. Actually, in 1898, MacGregor admitted that, in British New Guinea, there was hardly such a thing as sectarianism, while, with the benefit of hindsight, the LMS historian, Patricia A. Prendergast, could recently write that, if, in PNG, church relations were not always cordial, they surely were not surrounded with the degree of bitterness and intensity found in nearby places.

The same can also be deduced from Archbishop Navarre’s *Handbook for Missionaries*, a booklet of over 100 pages, published in 1896, and in which Protestants feature only three times, occupying less than one full page. This shows that, even in such a document, written for internal use, non-Catholic missionaries did not loom large. In addition, the Bishop was surrounded by such valuable helpers as G. Gennoch and H. Verjus, whose broad-

mindfulness was admitted by the most unsuspected sources, such as W. G. Lawes and W. MacGregor.

Finally, especially since A. de Boismenu made his influence felt, there was a practical concentration on different fields of action, with the MSC Fathers rowing up the St Joseph, or Angabunga, River, and opening up the Kuni district (from 1900 onwards), and the LMS mission personnel rather working along the southern coast of New Guinea.

It will cause no surprise that such a gifted missionary as Alain de Boismenu, who arrived back in January, 1898, and became, the following year, the coadjutor of Bishop Navarre, initially took over the standard opinions of the French mission. For this, we can, among others, refer to his very long letter to the MSC scholastics of Canet, and also to his more-official address to the Catholic Congress of Melbourne, both dating from 1904. The first letter (which runs over 40 pages in the *American Annals*) speaks about the daily concerns of the missionaries, and is totally silent about the Protestant mission.

The other document specifically addresses the issue of the spheres of influence, but sees them as an anomaly, for the Australian administrators, since it was jeopardising their much-vaunted fair play, and contradicting their religious feeling, enshrined, in paragraph 116 of the country's Constitution. However, after discussions with Cardinal Francis Patrick Moran, and other bishops, in Melbourne, and after reading his text before the members of the congress, Mgr de Boismenu was dissuaded from airing his views in public. The local authorities felt that the time was not ripe, and that, in fact, greater harm could be done by starting a public debate.

As is known, in 1906, a Royal Commission of Enquiry visited British New Guinea. Subsequently, the coadjutor got the chance to detail his remarks about what he felt to be "a discrimination against the Roman Catholics". Unabashed, he asked from the government:

“(our) entire share of freedom, recognised in the whole British Commonwealth, no more, no less”.³

But this time, too, his voice was not heard, and, in 1908, Minister Alfred Deakin stood with the Commission’s recommendations, thus upholding the status quo, and using the ground laws in Papua to stop any missionary from entering a village claimed by another Christian mission.

Meanwhile, effective expansion was taking place. To the township of Samarai, short visits by de Boismenu are recorded, from 1902 onwards, while the place was also visited by the Australian, Edward A. Bailey, whom Bishop de Boismenu ordained in 1912. In Port Moresby, after the first recorded Catholic baptism, by H. Verjus, in 1889, a school for European children was opened in 1911, while, in 1917, four Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) moved to Musgrave Street to occupy one of the cottages of Mr B. W. Bramell, the then Commissioner of Native Affairs and Control. In 1914, the first resident priest, Fr Dennis Elliot, was ordained, but he quickly died of blackwater fever.

In both ports of entry to British New Guinea, Samarai and Port Moresby, Roman Catholics began to realise how many of their own migrants lived outside the areas of active missionary involvement. Their attention went first to the white settlers, but quickly other baptised Catholics joined them, so that the occupation of cities became another way of undermining the spheres of influence, so dear to those in authority.

A major change was to come about. By 1903, Pope Pius X had taken over the reins of Pope Leo XIII, and, in 1911, Bishop de Boismenu was due for his second *ad limina* visit in Rome; this was one year before the Father would become Vicar Apostolic of Papua. Still, it marks a turn in his thinking. On November 11, he discussed, with the Pope, the burning question of either opposing the Protestants, or showing his fear, and lack of courage. But then, the Pope pronounced these liberating words:

“No. Work on virgin ground. It is not fitting to engage in a fight. . . . Protestants are, somehow, our helpers. . . .”⁴

How this impressed the Bishop, is made clear in his private diary, by writing Pius’ words in red, and with capitals. They are the very motto, under which the 34 coming years of his office will take shape.

3. The New Guinea (Anglican) Mission

The Pacific area came to the attention of the Church of England sometime back in 1841, when Samuel Marsden turned his attention to the New Zealand Maoris. Although he, himself, belonged to the Church of England, the Anglicans obtained a real foothold in the region only in 1841, when George A. Selwyn became the first Bishop of New Zealand, with a diocese reaching to a latitude far beyond Japan! Even though this point of reference was a slip of the pen (34 degrees “N” instead of 34 degrees “S” latitude of the equator), the Bishop accepted the challenge and intended to evangelise the whole of Melanesia. He actually came as far as Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, leaving it to his successor, John C. Patteson, a bishop since 1861, to establish the Anglican Province of Melanesia.

It should be noted here that Bishop Selwyn himself made his lasting imprint on the future Anglican Mission. He never trod on ground held by other missions; he trained local evangelists, in preference to expatriate staff, and he encouraged Melanesians to keep to their own ways, as long as they were not clearly in opposition to the gospel. Yet, all these nearby events belong to the prehistory of the Anglican New Guinea Mission, which has fully been described in *God’s Gentlemen*, of D. Hilliard (1978). We will concentrate here on the PNG situation, drawing especially on D. Wetherell’s book, *Reluctant Mission* (1977), which details this story till 1942.

We have to wait until 1888, that is four years after Captain James Erskine proclaimed “British New Guinea” to be a colony, before the Australian Board of Missions gave any thought to the conversion of the land. First there was a private tug of war going on between Bishop Alfred Barry, of Sydney, and Bishop G. H. Stanton, of North Queensland. Each one tried to thrust the responsibility for New Guinea on the other, and nothing happened. Still, the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts) set at least £1,000 aside, to assist in planting the New Guinea Mission. This also ended SPG involvement, and put the Australian church, that is, especially, the North Queensland Diocese, in charge of the enterprise.

Then came the turnabout, when Albert Alexander Maclaren, a Scots priest from Queensland, and also a convert from Presbyterianism to the Anglican church, offered himself for the assignment. At that time, he had shown already his interest for the coloured people, by caring for the sugarcane workers around Mackay. In 1890, he became the first private secretary of the then Lieutenant-Governor, William MacGregor, and so, got the opportunity to explore various parts of the colony. At the same time, he could look out for a suitable place to establish the future mission of the Anglicans.

In May, 1890, the party visited the Mekeo district, where there was a meeting with the young Bishop Henry Verjus. They also visited the LMS and MSC schools. It was probably on this occasion that Maclaren went to say his prayers at the Catholic chapel, and felt refreshed by the sight of a place of worship. Subsequently, Bishop Verjus could remark to MacGregor:

“They tell me he is more a Catholic than I am.”⁵

From his side, the bishop gave to Maclaren his photo, asking him to remember him in his prayers, and wishing him all success in his work.



Revd Albert Maclaren.



Revd Copland King.

It had been the initial idea of Governor MacGregor to assign to the Anglicans the Fly River area in the west, while John Douglas, the Special Commissioner, with residence at Thursday Island, had suggested that they make their headquarters on Bentley Island, in the east. Hence the confusion, which arose, when, later on, MacGregor, too, offered Eastern Papua to the Church of England, while the LMS also claimed the north coast of British New Guinea. This problem was sorted out when, in July, 1890, the famous comity agreement was reached among the three Protestant churches. It was mainly due to the courteousness, and spirit of understanding, of Maclaren that the understanding came off as quickly, and as well, as it did.

Soon after the said meeting, the Revd Copland King joined the New Guinea Mission. The two pioneers landed near Dogura, close to Wedau village. On St Laurence Day, August 10, 1891, they officially began their mission work. Sad to say, Copland King became sick almost immediately, and, within five months, his friend Maclaren was carried away for good. He died of malaria at sea, on December 27, 1891.



The Modawa Tree. The corner post of the first church at Dogura took root and grew.

The character of the two missionaries was not altogether alike. Maclaren is known for his catholic tendencies (as the remark, above, of Bishop Verjus showed already, while, also, W. G. Lawes considered him to be “very high”). Although born and brought up an Evangelical, he became, by choice, an Anglo-Catholic, full of sympathy with the Oxford Movement of his day. While a priest with the labourers on the sugar fields, he offered himself to Bishop Barry, the Primate of Australia, and was chosen to lead an Anglican Mission to New Guinea.

As an avowed high churchman in the, otherwise, low Anglican diocese of Sydney, Maclaren had planned, among other projects, to open, in British New Guinea, a sisters’ convent, while in Sydney he once was refused permission to officiate among a predominantly unsympathetic audience. Still, when visiting the old LMS missionary, Lawes, he joined him in his family worship, and in their common service. Of this he once wrote:

“Surely, in a heathen country, we don’t want to shock the poor natives with our unhappy divisions. . . . I trust that I am, nonetheless, a Catholic in the deepest sense.”⁶

The right hand, and successor, of Maclaren was the Revd C. King, who, for seven years, became the head of the New Guinea Mission. He was, theologically, the exception. Brought up as Sabbatarian, and a staunch Evangelical, he surprised his family by joining the ritualistic Maclaren, whom he followed scrupulously. At Dogura, for instance, he refused to remove the cross from the altar, because Maclaren had put it there. Again, he showed no ambition to extend the missionary boundaries beyond those laid down by his deceased friend, even when, in 1893, MacGregor threatened him with calling in the Sacred Heart Fathers of Yule Island. Finally, when the Sydney authorities pressed him to become the new Bishop of British New Guinea, he firmly declined. Instead, he kept to his interest in theology, linguistics, anthropology, and botany.

The best tribute one can still give to King, is to meditate on the letter he wrote to a Sydney church paper, on October 12, 1903. He, here, undertakes to defend the Anglo-Catholic trend taken by his mission diocese, and says that it is much better to teach the creed (that is, in its non-evangelical version) than not to teach it at all. That is exactly what King did, in following the trace of Maclaren, or, also, in supporting Bishop Stone-Wigg, whose ideas differed from his own. The letter, referred to, is preserved in King’s biography, and concludes pathetically:

“Pardon my length: I am excited. Pardon my incoherence: I am tired. Pardon my brevity: I have not said half enough.”⁷

The stamp of King on Papuan Anglicanism is unmistakable, still, these days.

The bishopric, refused by King, was assigned to a canon of the Brisbane Cathedral, the Revd Montagu John Stone-Wigg. He became the first Bishop of New Guinea, in 1897, and held this office

till he resigned, in 1908, for reasons of ill health. He, too, was a high churchman, as many have witnessed. Charles Abel, of Kwato, once said that it was impossible for a Congregationalist to come to any terms with him, while the LMS, as a whole, was offended that Bishop Stone-Wigg dared to doubt the validity of their ordinations. Similarly, while Governor MacGregor used to express his utter dislike for such “Popish trappings” as crucifixes, candles, incense, pictures, and the like, they found acceptance in the eyes of the new bishop, even though it cost him the financial support of the Anglicans in Sydney, the most populous diocese in Australia.

One point, which explains Stone-Wigg’s direction is his esteem for the guidelines of the UMCA (Universities’ Mission to Central Africa). It was the most Anglo-Catholic of the missionary societies, and wanted to run missions by a celibate clergy, and by communities of sisters. This was in line with the bishop’s basic thinking. Then, there were also the Roman Catholics themselves. When Stone-Wigg, for the first time, went on home leave, and spent three weeks in Rome, he daily attended Holy Mass, and visited many churches. But, in British New Guinea, he did not always show this attraction to the Romans. This might explain his advances near the Mambare River, and in Samarai, which were partly done to stop, or, otherwise, to hold the fort, against the RC missionaries.

Also famous, in this regard, is Stone-Wigg’s protracted discussion with the government about who properly deserved to be called “the Catholic Mission”. In 1905, the government had officially accepted the title, instead, of “the Sacred Heart Mission”, to indicate the RC group of Yule Island. But the Anglican bishop was quick to point out that the Church of England, in all its official documents, and in the actual words of its services, similarly used this title. He added that the general meaning of such a title was quite in line with British usage, while “the Roman Mission” could better refer to the Roman Catholics. After all, the Anglican church had always claimed to preserve the traditions of the ancient church, as known, e.g., from scripture, the Fathers and the first Councils.

To finish the story, let us add that, two years later, a final reply was received from the Australian Department of External Affairs, to keep the status quo of 1904. Still, the incident shows that, within the Anglican group, there was the awareness that it was itself truly Catholic as well.

The first Bishop of the New Guinea Mission did much for his diocese, especially in terms of personnel and money, and – as said – also in covering new terrain. He generally favoured the local people and the local ways. When W. G. Lawes urged him to condemn Motuan dancing, he remained silent, and when the Resident Magistrate, C. A. W. Monckton, advised him to arm his missionaries against the locals, he refused to do so. Also, towards the end of his episcopal term, between 1906 and 1908, he accepted some 25 Melanesians from the North Queensland sugar fields, and employed them as evangelists, rather than have them sent to a homeland, at which some of them had not lived for many years.

Stone-Wigg's stand on liturgical matters, and on native affairs, is indirectly also important for his critical attitude towards the expatriate settlers, and the "White Australia" policy in general. Still, he sent King and two nurses to the gold fields of the Northern Division. He also sent two lady teachers to open a school in the township of Samarai, an act, which was called "monstrous" by some of the Protestant missionaries, who considered the place as entrusted to them only. He finally began an Anglican chaplaincy in Port Moresby.

As a matter of fact, both the Church of England (as being the principal church of the Commonwealth) and the Roman Catholics (as being part of an even greater, that is, worldwide organisation) could not ignore the call of their faithful in other places as well. In doing so, Bishop Stone-Wigg made clear that, the Anglican church understood the needs of the white people, and of the indentured labourers, differently from the way the government would have liked it. The pastoral concern for the miners, and the schools for

white and mixed-race children, indicated that he had not written them off at all.

After the departure of Stone-Wigg, it took two years before the second bishop was appointed to New Guinea; it was the Revd Gerald Sharp, fresh from the United Kingdom. He became, in 1921, Archbishop of Brisbane. His call from England stresses, once again, the lasting links between the New Guinea Mission and the British mother church.

Whereas Bishop Stone-Wigg had laid the foundations, the new Bishop, Gerald Sharp, began to build, with no mean success. By 1910, there were about 1,000 baptisms a year, to which one can add about the same number of confirmations. The keynote of his time was that, in spite of all physical and temporal disaster, the work of God went straight on. There were setbacks, like the emergence, in 1912, of the Baigona cult, one of the first recorded cargo movements in the Colony. There was also the loss of Henry Newton, who, in 1915, became Bishop of Carpentaria, on Thursday Island. But there were also happy events, such as, in September, 1914, the ordination of the first two local deacons, one of whom, Peter Rautamara, later became the first Papuan priest.

After the end of the First World War, the responsibility for ex-German New Guinea was thrust upon the Papuan Anglicans, whereas, up to that time, it belonged to the Melanesian Mission. For a while, nobody really knew what to do about it, and no extra help was forthcoming from anywhere. The Anglican expansion, however, went ahead in the direction of Port Moresby. Bishop Sharp visited the town again in 1912, when there was no Anglican priest or church there, and all non-Roman Catholics went to the Ela Beach church. He appointed, in 1915, Fr Robert Leck, from Victoria, to become the first resident priest of Port Moresby.

Of clashes, or particularly close cooperation, with Roman Catholics, nothing is known, except an occasional line in Bishop de Boismenu's private letters. He had met his Anglican counterpart

G. Sharp, and was deeply impressed by the bishop's high culture, and his sincerity for God's cause. On September 4, 1913, he wrote to his sisters:

"I am always convinced that, in these far corners of the earth, where the church cannot come yet, the good God performs His work through these good people. They are so close, yes, so close to us! This is so consoling, when one thinks of these immeasurable regions, of which we cannot possibly take care."⁸

Words like these, echoing those of Pope Pius X, surely intimate that the Roman Catholics were not going to work in a place, which was already well looked after by a church so close to their own.

4. The Other Denominations

Although the islands of the Louisiade Group were once visited by Catholic Marists, and, in 1855, honoured by the death of Fr Mazzuconi, they were never again a Roman stronghold. The sporadic visit by Roman Catholic, or, also, Anglican Fathers, to, say, Samarai, can most easily be compared to what happened in Northern Australia. Here, riding on horseback, the priests in charge, from time to time, visited their scattered faithful, only in Papua, the situation of an island church prevailed, depending on the availability of sea transport.

By 1890, on the request of the Administrator, William MacGregor, the elderly George Brown came to British New Guinea. He was the General Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and had arrived to assume, for his church, the eastern part of the Papuan mainland. The limits then reached, would stay on, in missionary geography, except that the Wesleyans would obtain some 20 miles of coast (to also have one mainland station, near East Cape), and take over, from the LMS, both Teste and Ware Islands.

But, the fatalities in Papua were numerous. For instance, in 20 years, the lot of some 50 men, women, and children, which W. E. Bromilow had brought from Australia, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa were all gone, some dying of fever, and others returning to their own land, broken down in health. Everywhere, the blood of martyrs became the seed of new Christians, with success coming in due time.

The approach of the Methodists had its own characteristics. George Brown is known for his word that no one could be expected to endanger his life in New Guinea. Hence, his missionaries were regularly armed, and were not used to the tradition of martyrdom, so often found among Roman Catholics and Anglicans. His group, too, definitely had the sense of mission in the British Empire, and were led by an awareness of urgency. The Catholic missions, on the other hand, often looked, with a critical eye, to the initiatives of the government, and could bide their time. Finally, instead of entertaining an accommodating attitude towards local customs (as mentioned earlier), the Methodists loved to give the full blast of Evangelical disapproval to persisting heathenism, even if they did not do it so strongly, as some LMS preachers, such as Charles Abel. On the other hand, they showed great interest in industry and sports.

It did not take very long, in fact, from 1908 onwards, before yet a fifth group of Christians tried to enter British New Guinea, the Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs). They started on unoccupied land, in the hinterland of Port Moresby, and first clashed with the Anglicans in 1917, when they applied for land in the Kumusi Division. The then Governor, J. P. H. Murray, did not see any objection, because there was no Anglican station in the neighbourhood. However, both the Anglican bishop and the resident magistrate strongly disagreed about the advisability, and, in the end, the Australian minister did not grant the permission sought.

The next year, the SDAs wanted to go into the Kukukuku area, also away from existing missions. Again, the missions opposed the positive opinion of the governor, and no result

followed. As a rule, the first SDAs worked spottily, in several distant locations, and caused no problems with the settled missions till after World War I. The two incidents reported above are useful to see that the SDA mission, too, did not agree with the official policy of the government, while the governor, himself, Sir Hubert Murray, showed a quite-impartial attitude in dealing with the whole matter.

Whereas all the previous cases affected British New Guinea, or the Territory of Papua, we should also pay attention to the northern parts of today's country, PNG. This matter does not need to worry us unduly, because, in fact, both the north-eastern coast and the Bismarck Archipelago did not come under British, but under German rule. This led to a favouring of German Lutherans, around Madang and Finschhafen, and of German Roman Catholics, around Rabaul and Alexishafen.

It cannot be said that these groups were completely free in their activities, because, especially on the Gazelle Peninsula (where there was a previous presence of French RC missionaries), the colonial authorities were keen to favour "spheres of influence". Bishop Louis Couppe did his best to oppose this policy in German New Guinea, just as strongly as Bishop André Navarre did in British New Guinea. Each time, the main weapons were "reason" and "Rome", freedom of conscience, and the saving function of the church: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.

The civil administration in German New Guinea did not last beyond World War I, when an Australian military administration was set up. Then, under the Treaty of Versailles, enemy property, such as plantations and businesses, were handed over to the Reparation Commission, while German missionaries were marked to be deported. The Protestant missionary societies in Australia, via the United Missionary Council, and also the Anglican Province of Queensland, and the New Guinea Mission interceded for their German colleagues. First, these Germans were allowed to stay for a certain time, which was later extended, and finally – when Germany

had become a member of the League of Nations – the rule was no longer enforced. A similar action was initiated by the Catholic authorities, including Bishop de Boismenu, and the Apostolic Delegate in Sydney, to assist German RC missionaries. They were joined by the Anglican Bishop, H. Newton, as appears from a letter of thanksgiving, which Fr Heinrich Nollen MSC, of the RC mission in Vunapope, sent to him, for having pleaded in favour of the German RC missionaries of “our beloved mission” in Rabaul.⁹

In the course of time, here, too, loopholes were found in the law, so that the missions started overlapping, or also adapting, to the new political configuration. Already, in 1916, Australian SDAs and Methodists began to enter the Solomon Islands, which, up to that time, had been missionised by the Marist Fathers only. At that stage, the Marists had shifted their headquarters to Bougainville Island, thus preferring the more-centrally located Kieta to the rather isolated Shortland Islands.

Conclusion

We are now able to draw some conclusions from the founding age of the missions in PNG. We close, provisionally, with the war of 1914-1918, which raged upon the European scene, but left New Guinea very much alone. Still, locally, too, the dates are important, because the ties with Europe became cut, the generation of the pioneers was dying out, and soon the responsibility for the ex-German colonies would be thrust upon Papua, while also some new leaders were entering the scene.

A first characteristic we see is that PNG is an exception on the missionary scene of the Pacific. It has not one original, and predominant, church in existence, but it has five mainline churches. This excludes the SDAs, but includes, not only the Lutherans (which were again divided), but also the Kwato Extension Association (an early LMS offshoot, operating in south-eastern Papua, and which, for a while, would be united again with its mother church). This

may have something to do with the vastness, and the linguistic diversity, in PNG, and also with the prevailing social system, where local “bigmen” rule over a relatively small following. In Polynesia, on the contrary, there are many much smaller, and more homogeneous, islands, and these are ruled according to the chiefly system.

Secondly, the Melanesians’ peculiar situation of having many missions, or churches, also explains the mission zones, or the so-called “spheres of influence”, to avoid religious wars. Here the Anglicans, together with the SDAs and Roman Catholics, became the successful opponents of the government’s official policy.

Thirdly, on the theological level, and not prejudging the Lutheran identity, there is, on the one side, a lining up of Anglicans and Catholics, and, on the other side, a lining up of the LMS and the Methodists. The latter are supported by the Evangelical missionary societies, which are strongly opposed to the darkness of heathenism (including everything, which was of a pre-Reformation nature), while the Anglicans and the Romans were considered more lax in practice, and too staunch in doctrine. The latter, for instance, held most strictly that their church would be the only means of salvation. Each subgroup, however, tended to work independently.

Fourthly, we note that the type of Anglicanism, which came to PNG, was more of the ritualist type, stressing bishops and sacraments, although some of its individuals were rather Evangelical, or Reformed, Anglicans. This is mainly due to the imprint of the early missionaries, Fr Albert Maclaren and Bishop Stone-Wigg, and it links the local mission church to the Tractarians, or the Oxford Movement, in England, and to the Anglo-Catholics, in other early missions, such as South Africa and the West Indies.

Fifthly, the country was luckily spared religious wars, even though some historians have exaggerated the clashes between LMS and RC missionaries. The latter were really local incidents, offset

by various open-minded missionaries, such as H. M. Dauncey, and even W. G. Lawes, of the LMS, and some Roman Catholics as well.

As to the encounter between Romans and Anglicans, there was the distance between the spheres of action, exploited by the two groups. In fact, a huge mountain range separated the north-eastern end of the RC mission, from the lower western tip of the Anglican mission. In addition, clashes were also unlikely, because Anglicans, as such, were unknown to French Catholics (and the other way around), and because, from the start, there was a personal respect for one another's representatives.