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Bountiful Harvest: The Churches in Papua New Guinea

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CHAPTER ONE

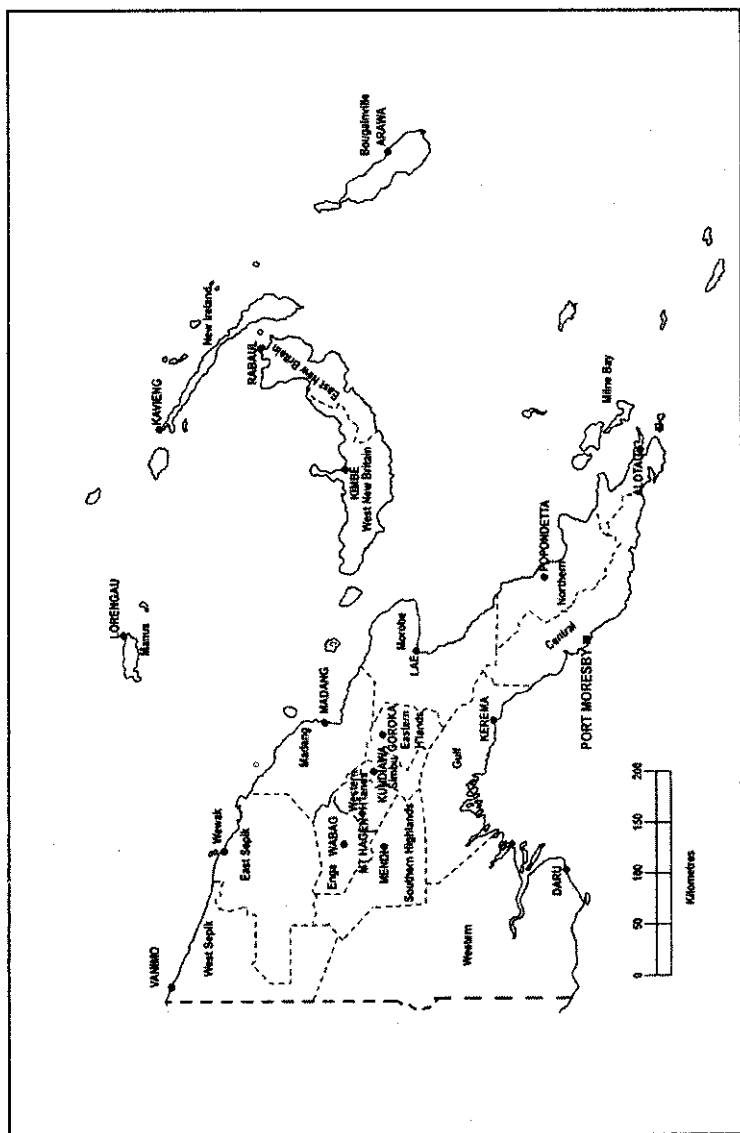
Introduction

People have lived in the islands now known as Papua New Guinea for at least 50,000 years (Rynkiewicz 2004:17). Successive migrations east from Southeast Asia and west from Pacific islands have created a unique cultural diversity. In 1545 Spanish explorer Ynigo Ortiz de Retes named the main island "Nueva Guinea" because, in his view, the indigenous people looked like those on the Guinea coast of Africa. Several years earlier, Portuguese explorer Jorge de Meneses had named it "Papua," a Malay word for the frizzled quality of Melanesian hair. European navigators visited the islands and explored their coastlines for the next two centuries, but little was known of the inhabitants until the late 19th century. After experiencing the colonial presence of Germany, Great Britain and Australia, Papua New Guinea (PNG) became an independent nation in 1975.

French Catholic Marist missionaries first landed on Woodlark (Murua) Island in 1847. However, the effects of malaria on the missionaries and influenza on the indigenes soon brought an end to the project. The Marist missionaries were replaced by those from the Institute of the Foreign Mission of Milan (PIME), however, confronted by the same difficulties the surviving Catholic PIME missionaries left in 1855. The next group of missionaries, from the London Missionary Society, arrived on the South Papua coast in 1871. They used evangelists from Polynesia (Samoa and the Cook Islands in particular). Shortly afterwards, Wesleyan Methodists arrived in the Bismarck Archipelago and the Catholic effort began again with German and French missionaries in the islands of New Britain, Papua and along the New Guinea north coast. They were followed by Lutherans, Anglicans, Seventh-day Adventists and the Liebenzell Evangelical Mission. Thus, in the pre-World War I period there were seven denominational groups working in PNG.

After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, much of the Lutheran missionary work was continued by the American and Australian Lutheran Churches. Also, between the two world wars, the Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM) entered Papua.

Servicemen returning home from the Pacific Islands campaigns of World War II were instrumental in stimulating an interest in the world's 'last great unknown' and many other denominations and



Papua New Guinea

interdenominational missionary groups began to arrive. These included the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, the South Seas Evangelical Mission, the Christian Brethren, the Australian Churches of Christ, the Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission, the Nazarene Mission, the Apostolic Church Mission and the New Tribes Mission. Prominent among the "third wave" (Garrett 1997:311) of Pentecostal-type missions were the Four Square Gospel Church, the Christian Revival Crusade and the Swedish Pentecostal "Philadelphia" Church. Whereas in 1927 there were 531 missionaries in the area comprising Papua and New Guinea, by 1971 there were 3,411 (Pech 1985:58). By 2001, with localisation of the churches, the number of expatriate personnel in PNG was reduced to 2,832 non-citizen church workers, including the 50 non-citizen staff in the two church-run universities (Dept. of Labour and Employment, 2001). However, churches and church groups continue to multiply. By 1971 there were over 30 denominations working in PNG and currently the number is difficult to ascertain, depending on how one counts local churches and fellowships. This chapter aims to shed light on the present situation of the churches and church groups in Papua New Guinea at the beginning of the 21st century.

Basic Information

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is an independent state in the South Pacific. The country includes the eastern half of New Guinea, comprising 85 per cent of the total area and over 600 smaller islands. The total land area is 462,840 sq km and the coastline extends for 5,152 km. The population according to the year 2000 Census is 5,190,786 with a growth rate of approximately 2.7 per cent per annum the population is estimated to be 6,296,873 in 2006.

PNG is divided into twenty provinces as follows:

Province	Population	Province	Population
Western	153,304	Eastern Highlands	432,972
Gulf	106,893	Morobe	539,404
Central	183,983	Madang	365,106
National Capital District	254,158	East Sepik	343,181
Milne Bay	210,412	West Sepik	185,741
Northern	133,065	Manus	43,387
Southern Highlands	546,265	New Ireland	118,350
Enga	295,031	East New Britain	220,138
Western Highlands	440,025	West New Britain	184,508
Chimbu	259,703	Bougainville [autonomous]	175,160

(Source: Papua New Guinea 2000 Census. National Statistical Office).

PNG lies just below the equator. The islands and coral atolls are mostly of younger volcanic origin, but the mainland is a massive rugged cordillera, with wide alpine valleys. There are at least 100 volcanoes, many still active. The climate is tropical, with a northwest monsoon from December to March and a southeast monsoon from May to October. The terrain includes swamps, coastal lowlands and rolling foothills, but is mostly rugged and mountainous. Tropical and sub-tropical rainforests cover most of the country. The highest point is Mount Wilhelm (4,509m). Almost a quarter of the country is over 1,000m above sea level and temperatures can fall to below freezing in parts of the Highlands.

The capital city is Port Moresby with a population of 250,000. Roads out of Port Moresby do not connect with other major centres, so air transport is essential for travel. The government operates a national radio station and a network of provincial stations. Funding problems and non-payment of power bills have taken some of the regional

radio stations off the air. There is one private commercial station and several church-run radio stations. Two daily newspapers are foreign owned. A weekly newspaper in Tok Pisin is church-owned. There is one national television channel, though reception is poor in many places because of the mountainous terrain. Telephones are available in urban areas along with Internet links. A mobile cellular phone network exists and is being developed. Communications equipment is sometimes dysfunctional due to environmental conditions or vandalism. The average annual income is US\$560 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2006). The local currency is the kina with a value at the beginning of 2007 of US\$0.33 and Aus\$0.43.

Land Ownership and Tenure

Land is of high value in PNG. Customary tenure accounts for 97 per cent of the land and a large proportion of the remaining 3 per cent is land alienated by the government to provide for towns, missions, plantations and other commercial ventures. Land is integrally related to many aspects of daily life: social, political, economic and spiritual. Total alienation of land is incomprehensible to most people. It is said: "You can't sell your land, just as you can't sell your mother." Land does not belong to people, but rather people belong to the land. PNG is made up of many different kinship based societies and each has its own customary land laws that vary from place to place. The great majority of the populace (87 per cent) lives in rural areas depending upon agricultural production. Even if living in towns, most people retain customary rights to land in their 'home' areas to which they will return at retirement, if not before.

There are two principal types of land rights in PNG. Proprietary rights give the proprietor the right to decide who will occupy or use the land, for what period of time and for what purpose. User's rights, on the other hand, are those rights obtained through occupation and use of land granted by a proprietor. Proprietary land rights are acquired principally through inheritance or by marriage. They may also be obtained through gift, purchase, exchange or conquest. In patrilineal societies a man inherits proprietorship from his male ancestors. His wife, marrying into his clan from another, generally relinquishes her rights to her father's land and gains user's rights through her husband. In matrilineal societies the woman inherits land from her mother and it is the husband who gains user's rights through his wife. Customary land is held in common but production is largely dependent upon individual effort, particularly that of women.

Today the traditional subsistence economy is gradually giving way to a cash economy and there is increasing demand for individualisation of tenure. Moreover, there is increased realisation of the value to landowners of royalties from the exploitation of natural resources. Accumulation of wealth can lead to jealousy and attempts by others to reduce the entrepreneur to his or her former status. Conflict over land and resolving those conflicts plays an important role in Melanesian social life. With population growth, there is now intense pressure on land in some areas. Groups expand their claims into what were previously vacant buffer zones between groups and disputes arise as a consequence.

In PNG a church must be legally incorporated under the Companies Act before it can hold title to land in its own name. In the past Papua New Guineans were very accommodating about releasing land for use by the churches. Nowadays, however, there are many land disputes over church-held land, with 'landowners' claiming that they were never paid for the land or that the payment was inadequate and that the church is in unlawful occupation of all or part of it. The reasons for such claims may be genuine land shortages, bad feelings about profits people believe the church is making from the land, or disillusionment with the church or with Christianity.

The People

Indigenous Papua New Guineans account for 98 per cent of the populace, with Micronesians, Polynesians, Chinese, Europeans, Australians and other expatriates making up the remaining 2 per cent. The indigenous people are often divided into four broad ethnic groups: New Guineans from the north of the main island, Papuans from the south of the main island, Highlanders from the mountains and Islanders from the many islands mostly east of the main island. There is, however, considerable cultural variation within each of these groupings. Papua New Guinea has thousands of separate communities, some with only a few hundred people. They are divided by language, customs and tradition.

The separatist struggle in the neighbouring Indonesian province of Papua, formerly known as Irian Jaya, prompted the flight of thousands of Papuans into Papua New Guinea from the mid-1980s onwards. Many of them remain within PNG, some in border-area jungle camps.

The UNDP Human Development Index for 2006 ranks PNG at 139, indicating that Papua New Guineans have a poor quality of life as

measured by life expectancy at birth (55.7 per cent), adult literacy (57.3 per cent — female as percentage of male 80.3 per cent), combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio (41 per cent) and GDP per capita (US\$2,543). The Human Poverty Index (HPI) places PNG 75th out of 102 developing countries (last amongst all Pacific countries).

Language

English has become the principal language of education, administration and commerce. Melanesian Pidgin (Tok Pisin) has developed naturally as the dominant lingua franca. It is often used for communication between members of different ethnic groups. Early colonists and their indigenous labourers developed it. It has roots in English, German, Portuguese and the local languages, particularly those of the island of New Britain. Hiri Motu is also used in many parts of the Papuan region. Linguists have catalogued more than 800 distinct languages in PNG, making it the most linguistically diverse country in the world. The languages show great genetic diversity, with a major division between Austronesian and non-Austronesian — the latter being more archaic and seemingly not related to any languages outside of the Papua New Guinea area. The country's vernacular languages are now being used in early education and adult literacy programmes. In isolated rural areas, many women and older people know only their local language. The churches have played an important role in the study and promotion of indigenous languages. The New Testament is already translated and published in 157 of these languages, with many translation projects in process.

Health

Christian missions have played an important role in the establishment of health services in PNG. Recognising the church contribution, the government is committed to funding a major part of Church Health Services budget.

The churches run almost half the health facilities in the country. In 2007 the distribution of the 622 facilities run by the churches was as follows: Catholic 32 per cent, Lutheran 14 per cent, United Church 13.3 per cent, ECPNG 9 per cent, Seventh Day Adventist 8 per cent, Anglican 4.2 per cent, Baptist 2.5 per cent and 17 other church agencies making up 17 per cent (calculated from data from the PNG

Department of Health, Church Health Services, 2007 National Budget Reference).

Despite the efforts of many dedicated people, the health situation in the country is worsening:

- Life expectancy at birth 54 (lowest in Oceania – e.g. Fiji 67).
- Infant mortality ratio 73 per 1,000 live births (highest in Oceania – e.g. Fiji 19).
- Under 5 mortality ratio 102 per 1,000 live births (highest in Oceania – e.g. Fiji 23).
- Maternal mortality ratio 370 per 1,000,000 births (highest in Oceania after Solomon Islands).
- Percentage of GNP expended on health 2.3 per cent (lowest in Oceania – e.g. Solomon Islands 11.6 per cent).
- Expenditure per head US\$27 (lowest in Oceania – e.g. Fiji \$55).
- Doctors per 100,000 people 7 (lowest in Oceania – e.g. Fiji 37).

Five major issues contributing to this situation are the following:

- a) People, particularly rural women and children, are dying from easily preventable and treatable diseases. Currently in Papua New Guinea 15,000 babies less than 1 year old die every year; 13,000 children from 1 to 4 years old die each year before reaching their fifth birthday; and 220,000 out of the possible 560,000 children under 5 years are not receiving proper nutrition. 3,700 mothers die each year from complications of childbirth.
- b) Resources are limited. Real per capita spending on health is declining.
- c) Management is inefficient.
- d) Accessibility to basic health services is inadequate.
 - Half of all children are not immunised.
 - 60 per cent of pregnant women are not supervised during childbirth.
 - 70 per cent of rural communities do not have access to safe drinking water.
- e) Community support for health services is generally poor and individuals and communities are not encouraged to improve and maintain their own health.
 - In some places, health staff are frequently harassed,

- equipment stolen and facilities vandalised.
- Many parents do not bring their children to receive basic health services such as immunisation.
 - Health workers do not frequently undertake public awareness and community education.

(Source: PNG Ministry of Health, National Health Plan 2001–2010, Vol 1).

Leading causes of mortality (1997–99) are the following: pneumonia (16 per cent), malaria (12 per cent), perinatal conditions (12 per cent), tuberculosis (7 per cent) and meningitis (5 per cent), accidents and violence (4 per cent). (Hospital admissions for accidents and violence amount to 8 per cent.)

Malaria, filariasis, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis are diseases transmitted by mosquitoes and constitute major health problems in PNG. Malaria is causing much suffering and death in increasing numbers and severity in all regions. Malaria control measures have been on the decline since the mid-1980s. Three out of every four patients with *Falciparum* malaria are resistant to commonly used drugs such as chloroquine.

Tuberculosis-related morbidity and mortality have increased due to inadequate case detection and treatment compliance, poor sanitation, overcrowding and poor nutrition. Drug supply is unreliable and resistance to commonly used antibiotics is increasing. Typhoid is the most serious of food and water-borne diseases and is endemic in a number of provinces throughout PNG.

HIV and AIDS were first identified in PNG in 1987 and is rapidly spreading. As of the end of 2005, 14,164 people had been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome in Papua New Guinea, 2005 Annual Surveillance Report, National AIDS Council Secretariat and National Department of Health). However, the total number of HIV infected persons in PNG is thought to be much higher since statistics depend on testing practices in each province and their manner of reporting and therefore many cases are not recorded. AIDS is already a leading cause of adult medical admissions and deaths at Port Moresby General Hospital. In PNG, HIV is affecting young, sexually active adults who are also in the most economically productive age groups. This has major socio-economic implications for the nation. As more parents die of AIDS, more children are orphaned. Diagnoses and quality treatment are hampered by a lack of laboratory services.

Until recently lifestyle diseases were not a public health problem in PNG, but there is now an increase in diseases associated with excessive consumption of alcohol and of foods and drinks high in sugar, fat and salt. There is an increase in diabetes, heart attacks, strokes and certain cancers, especially in urban populations with their changing diet and activity patterns.

Mental health services are inadequate. Many people are living with added stress due to the breakdown of traditional norms and family ties. The increasing rate of substance abuse such as marijuana and alcohol, the high incidence of domestic violence against women and the deteriorating law and order situation, bear evidence to the difficulty experienced by individuals and the community in adjusting to this changing environment.

Economy

The PNG economy is small in global terms but relatively large in the Pacific context, having a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2006 of K17,269 million (US\$5,698 million). With substantial mineral deposits, plentiful forests and bountiful tropical waters, PNG could be a rapidly developing country. However, in economic terms the nation has made little progress in the past decade. The local currency (kina) dropped from par with the Australian dollar in 1996 to Aus\$0.43 in 2007 and the per capita income only increased from Aus\$1,200 in 1970 to Aus\$1,340 in 1999. There has been a steady decline in infrastructure and services in recent years, particularly in rural areas.

These economic problems have resulted principally from the inability of the State to effectively address problems such as lack of road maintenance, high crime rates and a declining interest in mineral exploration activities. Money has been spent on projects that do not generate growth, or in inefficient ways that have hampered growth. The 2006 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index ranks PNG at 130/163 along with Indonesia, Burundi and Zimbabwe. With only 200,000 people having wage employment, income tax is not a major income earner, so taxes have increased to pay for basic government services. Recent budgets have included anticipated proceeds from the privatisation of state enterprises such as the national airline and the telecommunication services — actions that did not eventuate.

Since 2003 there have been signs of improvement in the national economic situation, with stabilisation of the exchange rate, a budget

surplus, a real growth rate of 3.7 per cent and growth in both the mining and petroleum sector accompanied by recovery in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Total public debt which had been 71.9 per cent of GDP in 2002, fell to a Treasury and Bank of PNG estimate of 42.5 per cent in 2006. Nevertheless, while there is evidence of growth, the economy remains fragile. In the provinces, local level governments appear to have little financial backing and many families are feeling great hardship, faced with increasing food bills and high school fees.

Mineral deposits, including oil, copper and gold, account for 84 per cent of export earnings (66 per cent of GDP). PNG's agricultural exports (principally copra, coffee, cocoa and tea) had been stagnant for the last ten years or more (with the exception of oil palm), but in the recent years there has been a resurgence in commodity prices. Agricultural and marine products and other non-mineral exports accounted for 11 per cent of exports in 2006 (8.7 per cent of GDP) and forestry products in 2006 were valued at K580.6 million, or 3.3 per cent of GDP.

In the 2000 Census, 18.4 per cent of respondents over 15 years old said they took part in money sector activities. The majority worked in gardening and fishing for money. 7.9 per cent said they had a job with a wage. The 79.4 per cent over 15 years who said they were involved in non-monetary activities mentioned gardening and fishing for their own use, helping their families, housework and studies. (3 per cent did not state their role in economic activity.)

The traditional Melanesian economy was based on forms of exchange. Exchange expresses and cements a relationship, with a meaning beyond the material worth of the goods exchanged. With the introduction of cash and the modern economy, the pig has remained an important item of wealth, but other valuables have gradually been replaced by cash. As cash is more readily available, there has been an inflationary trend in traditional exchanges such as bride-price and compensation payments. In this process, PNG communities are losing their economic self-sufficiency and are becoming vulnerable to fluctuations in the world market. Increasingly, there are disparities between rich and poor, leading, potentially at least, to new forms of social conflict. One witnesses the emergence of a class system based on access to resources. The question of economic justice and the distribution of economic benefits is a very real one for the churches in PNG today.

Education

Formal education was introduced by early missionaries in both Papua and New Guinea. Commenting on education prior to World War II, John Kadiba says: "What little education the Colonial Administration achieved was through the mission agencies, which were solely responsible for educational work until 1941" (Kadiba 1989:279). The government has since gradually taken on the responsibility of providing educational facilities. However, it was not until 1985 that government school enrolments were higher than those in the mission schools (Fergie 1993:15). At present the two work in partnership and mission agency schools provide services in primary, secondary and tertiary education, including two major church-run universities. Church agencies staff comprise 48.7 per cent of the teaching service at the level of primary education.

In the year 2003 the number and percentage of church agency schools within the 7,758 schools in the country was as follows: Elementary 2,115 schools (50 per cent); Primary 1,701 schools (53 per cent), Secondary 47 schools (28 per cent); Vocational 56 schools (43 per cent); Teacher education institutions 6 (75 per cent). There are also church-run schools for the disabled. Within the church agency itself the contribution of staff to the church agency at primary level is as follows: Catholic 52.1 per cent; Lutheran 17.8 per cent; Evangelical Alliance 11.6 per cent; United Church 11.7 per cent; Anglican 5.5 per cent; Seventh-day Adventist 1.2 per cent. (Education Statistics of Papua New Guinea 2003, charts 2,3,16 and 27.)

The education development budget amounts to about K100 million each year (approximately 2 per cent of GNP), funded mostly by donors outside of PNG, the largest share coming from AusAID. In 1996 PNG began the phased introduction of a new education system across all provinces, 2004 being the target date for completion. The intention of the reform was to have an education system which would better promote integral human development and at the same time preserve and improve standards of education throughout the nation.

The reformed system also aims to adequately prepare school leavers to return to their communities where there should be traditional work and opportunities for community-based employment. This applies to approximately 85 per cent of the population. The major source of employment for these citizens will be their own subsistence and small-scale, community-based commercial enterprises. Education should prepare them and their parents for this reality. Only 15 per

cent of the population find paid employment in the government, business and service industries. Their education will have provided them with the academic and technical skills to allow them to partake in tertiary education.

The structure provides for nine years of basic education (three years elementary and six years primary) and four years of secondary education. Grades 9 and 10 (lower secondary) have parallel provision for vocational education. Technical training for employment is located in technical colleges. Tertiary education includes universities and a range of colleges, including teacher education institutions and technical colleges. Also, open learning is provided through the College of Distance Education and other distance education providers.

Through the éducation reform there is now recognition of PNG vernacular languages as media of instruction for elementary education, with bilingual provision to Grade 5. Unfortunately orthographies and other important linguistic tools are available for only a small proportion of these languages. In 2004 there were 410,000 children in elementary schools, 48 per cent of the students being girls.

Implementation of the reform has been hampered by lack of adequate resources, political interference, shortage of teachers, communication and transport problems, community apathy towards education and low teacher morale, especially in remote schools where there is a high level of teacher and pupil absenteeism. Many young people finish their formal education with a feeling of having failed. At the secondary level there have been outbreaks of disturbing social patterns of behaviour, including the use of drugs and alcohol and an interest in the occult.

School fees are a burden for many parents. In the 2002 election year the National Government provided additional education subsidies, which meant that most parents did not have to pay school fees. With the elections over, school fees are a nightmare for school administrators and a heavy burden for parents. Children attending elementary school pay at least K100. Secondary school students pay over K1,000 and university students pay between K3,500 and K15,000. Understandably, certain churches and faiths (Islam) that are known to assist with school fees are appearing as a tempting proposition for both students and parents.

Government

In 1884 Germany claimed the northeastern quarter of New Guinea and Britain claimed the southeastern part. German New Guinea was placed under Australian military administration in 1914. After the Pacific War, Australia took over the administration of both territories, Papua and New Guinea. The first House of Assembly was established in 1964, self government was declared in 1973 and independence on 16 September 1975.

PNG is a constitutional monarchy with a 109 member unicameral national parliament elected for five years by universal suffrage. The parliament has been styled on the British Westminster System. Parliament elects the prime minister, who then heads a government that normally comprises an uneasy coalition of small unstable parties and independent MPs. For 20 years after independence the government existed at three levels: national, provincial and local. Provincial Governments were abolished in 1995 and replaced with a local government structure headed by governors. The Chief Justice is appointed by the Governor General on the proposal of the National Executive Council.

The protracted Bougainville conflict dominated PNG politics for a decade (1989 - 1998). The conflict began over the Panguna copper mine and developed into a secessionist war. The Bougainville Peace Agreement signed in 2001 called for regional autonomy and in 2006 this finally came into effect. Bougainville is now commonly called the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG).

Politics is business. Rural Development Funds (slush funds) are allocated to each MP for expenditure in his or her electorate (K250,000 as 'discretionary' and K250,000 as 'non-discretionary' funds). Corruption and the culture of exploiting public office for personal gain seems to have become entrenched. There is also a growing culture of compensation demands for land used for schools, missions, airstrips, roads and other public infrastructure.

Attempts to reform the political system include the Integrity of Political Parties Bill (December 2000) and a change to limited preferential voting. The Integrity of Political Parties Bill provides for the registration of political parties, the public funding of registered parties, limitations on contributions to party funding, the rights of independent MPs, financial incentives to encourage parties to nominate women candidates and restrictions on 'party hopping'. Unfortunately the

system does not seem to be working. The capacity of most local-level governments is weak and in most provinces planning and budgeting is dominated by national MPs. The introduction of preferential voting to replace the first-past-the-post system is designed to allow for wider representation for MPs. In recent times some candidates were winning with less than 10 per cent of the vote in their electorate.

Politics and religion are distinguished but not separated in Papua New Guinea. Churches, particularly the established mainline denominations, are involved in the political education of the people and in reminding the political world that its real task is the attainment of peace and justice and the development of a more human world.

Spirituality

Scholars and missionaries have become increasingly interested in how Papua New Guineans themselves understand and interpret the religious dimension of their lives. Bernard Narokobi, philosopher, lawyer and former Speaker of Parliament, claims that Melanesians do not differentiate between religious and non-religious experience. The Melanesian worldview tends to be an integrated one, not divided into religious and non-religious, or natural and supernatural as it tends to be in Western rationalism. Papua New Guineans are born into a spiritual and religious order and much of their lives are devoted to the maintenance and promotion of that order. Departure from that received spiritual order is thought to lead to some form of punishment upon oneself or one's children.

The traditional worldview is changing today with the influence of Christianity and modern education. Nevertheless, the Melanesian worldview continues to influence people's values, emotions and behaviour. In growing crops and in fishing, in warfare and trading, in seeking good health and fertility and in the building of happy social relationships, skill is necessary, but efficacy comes primarily from the spiritual realm. Christian prayers may be substituted for traditional ones to ensure success in fishing. Christian blessings replace charms for protection from malicious spirits. But to a large extent the traditional function of religion continues — to ensure well-being and success, or 'blessing' in the various tasks of life.

The salvific concern of traditional spirituality in Papua New Guinea is not centred around issues such as how to come to terms with the

sinful nature of human beings. Rather, salvation is seen as fulfilment in every aspect of life, be it health, success, fertility, respect, honour or influence over others. Ultimately it is the absence of such negative forces in life such as sickness, death, defeat, infertility, or poverty. It is the evident possession of abundant life and effective living showing itself in harmonious relationships. It is somewhat akin to the Old Testament idea of 'shalom'.

CHAPTER TWO

The Religious Situation in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is called a 'Christian' country. The preamble to the PNG Constitution pledges to "guard and pass on to those who come after us our noble traditions and Christian principles that are ours now." However, the term 'Christian' is a general term that needs study and explanation, since there are almost 200 Christian churches and organisations in the country, many having very different beliefs and practices. The last official census in PNG was in July 2000.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) has released official figures and in addition, the writer has obtained other unofficial data from the NSO, both of which will be considered in this study. The official figures given for religion refer to citizens in 'Private Dwellings', with a total population given of 5,140,476. However, there were also 50,310 people who are either non-citizens or living in non-private dwellings, who are included in the official total population figure of 5,190,786, but not included in the official figures given for religion and religious affiliation. Though the difference between the official figures of citizens in private dwellings and the total population is not very significant, amounting to less than 1 per cent, the writer will at times refer to these figures from the total population (see especially Table 2).

Official and Unofficial Data

Official figures for Citizen Population in Private Dwellings are shown in the following table.

**Table 1: PNG Citizen Population in Private Dwellings by Religion
(2000 Census)**

	Total	Males	Females
Citizens in Private Dwellings	5,140,476	2,659,394	2,481,082
Christians	4,934,098	2,550,114	2,383,984
Anglican	166,046	87,096	78,950
Evangelical Alliance	266,598	134,548	132,050
Evangelical Lutheran	1,001,005	523,363	477,642
Roman Catholic	1,391,033	724,242	666,791
Salvation Army	10,377	5,401	4,976
Seventh-day Adventist	520,098	266,690	253,408
United Church	591,458	307,711	283,747
Pentecostal	440,904	221,424	219,480
Baptist	130,987	67,625	63,342
Other Christian	415,592	212,014	203,578
Other Religions	72,406	37,253	35,153
Bahai	15,408	8,211	7,197
Church of Christ	20,516	10,464	10,052
Jehovah's Witnesses	20,625	10,427	10,198
Other religion	15,857	8,151	7,706
No Religion	30,733	17,813	12,920
Not Stated	103,239	54,214	49,025

(Source: National Statistical Office, 2000 Census Basic Tables – National Level, Table A6).

It should be noted that the official figures in Table 1 are misleading and use different categories from those of previous census results, making comparison and analysis very difficult.

Unofficial data from the National Statistical Office giving more detail on churches in PNG is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Religion - PNG Citizens and Non-Citizens. Total

1	None	31,397	30	Asia Pacific	590
2	Anglican	167,534	31	Australian Church	2,570
3	Evangelical Brotherhood	101,646	32	Bamu River	230
4	South Seas Evangelical	48,891	33	Brethren	49,057
5	Church of Papua	99,146	34	Many Lands	313
6	Wesleyan	11,533	35	Union Mission	21,262
7	Church of Manus	6,728	36	Nazarene	32,870
8	Lutheran	974,136	37	Faith Mission	5,870
9	Gutnius Lutheran	29,610	38	Hohola Mission	31
10	Roman Catholic	1,406,299	39	Independent	838
11	Salvation Army	10,427	40	New Guinea Gospel	276
12	Seventh-day Adventist	522,661	41	New Life Mission	7,547
13	United Church	586,006	42	New Tribes	27,549
14	Kwato Church	9,061	43	Paliau (Makasol)	401
15	Assemblies of God	138,532	44	Plymouth Brethren	690
16	Revival Crusade	61,971	45	Presbyterian	141
17	Life Centre	27,080	46	Tiliba Mission	14,892
18	Lighthouse Church	1,237	47	Village Mission	8,026
19	Four Square Gospel	76,558	48	Other Christian	143,252
20	Rhema Fellowship	2,520	49	Bahai of PNG	15,480
21	Wewak Fellowship	473	50	Buddhism	800
22	Other Pentecostal	134,902	51	Churches of Christ	20,619
23	Baptist	130,524	52	Islam	756
24	Boroko Baptist	67	53	Jehovah's Witnesses	20,850
25	Sepik Baptist	323	54	Judaism	46
26	Sovereign Grace	249	55	Hindu	475
27	Tokarara Christian	104	56	Other Religion	15,287
28	Western Highland	1,086	57	NR (Not Reported)	110,747
29	Apostolic	101,053	58	NA (Not Applicable)	7,477

(Source: Printout from NSO).

The list in Table 2 provided by the NSO is not exhaustive. This writer has found more than 180 different churches and church bodies in PNG. Some names and categories in the above table call for further explanation.

- The 'None' category may be a place for respondents who follow traditional Melanesian religious beliefs and practices,

since there is no such category provided in the list of religions (Zocca 2004:63).

- With the Lutheran entries in #8 and #9 there is obviously some confusion since in the figures for the Enga Province, the numbers for Gutnius Lutheran are lower than those for Lutheran. Since in Enga the majority of Lutherans are members of the Gutnius Lutheran Church it is obvious that many Gutnius Lutheran respondents simply gave their Church as 'Lutheran' and thus were counted in the wrong category.
- The official census total for Seventh-day Adventists is 522,661 (#12). However, Seventh-day Adventists themselves claim only half that number. Possibly the SDA number is inflated in the census because census workers counted all members of an SDA-led household whether they attended Sabbath School or not. This raises the issue of how churches count their members. Seventh-day Adventists count the number attending Sabbath School. Some churches count adult baptised members. Other churches, particularly those that baptise infants, count adults and children.
- It is difficult to know how census officers assigned responses to the general 'Other Pentecostal' category (#22). In fact, the coding list used for processing the 2000 census responses has many inadequacies. It appears that churches with 'Pentecostal' in their name were assigned to the Pentecostal category, those with Evangelical in their name were assigned to the 'Evangelical' category and all the rest were put in the 'Other' category. In Table 3, (E) indicates membership in the Evangelical Alliance and (P) indicates that the church is a Pentecostal church. Thus, at least one church in the 'Other Christian' column could be classed as Pentecostal. Moreover, 10 churches in the 'Other Christian' column and 5 churches in the Pentecostal category are members of the Evangelical Alliance. Classification into single categories is difficult because churches may be members of several of those categories. It should be noted that in PNG there are 22 churches, 13 missions, 17 agencies and one observer in the Evangelical Alliance.

Table 3: 2000 Census Code Divisions of Evangelical Alliance, Pentecostal and other Christian

Evangelical Alliance	Pentecostal	Other Christian
Evangelical Brotherhood	Assemblies of God (E)	Australian Churches of Christ Mission (E)
South Seas Evangelical	Christian Revival Crusade	Bamu River Mission
Evangelical Church of Papua	Christian Life Centre (E)	Hohola Christian Mission
Evang. Wesleyan Church	Gospel Lighthouse Church (E)	Independent Christian Mission (P)
Evangelical Church of Manus	Four Square Gospel (E)	New Guinea Gospel Mission
	Rhema Fellowship	Apostolic Church of PNG (E)
	Wewak Christian Fellowship (E)	New Life League Mission (E)
	Other Pentecostal Churches	Plymouth Brethren
		New Tribes Mission
		Christian Union Church (E)
		Faith Mission (E)
		Church of the Nazarene (E)
		Asia Pacific Christian Mission (E)
		Christian Brethren Church (E)
		Paliau Christian Native Church
		Presbyterian Reformed Church
		Christian Missions in Many Lands (E)
		Tiliba Christian Mission (E)
		Village Church Mission
		Others

(Source: Printout from NSO).

- In the 2000 official census results, Baptist Churches are amalgamated under one name 'Baptist'. This is new, as in the 1990 Census results they were grouped into the 'Other Christian' category. This is just one example of discontinuity between the 2000 Census codification and previous ones. In Table 2, #23–28 and possibly #39 are Baptist Churches. However, if the names of independent Baptist Churches are included, the number surpasses 35.
- 'Asia Pacific' #30 stands for the Asia Pacific Christian Mission (the former Unevangelised Fields Mission) which is now amalgamated with the Evangelical Church of Papua (#5).

- 'Australian Church' (#31) presumably stands for the 'Australian Churches of Christ.' This in itself presents a problem because there are several different Churches of Christ in PNG. However, further on (#51) there is a major error in assigning the category 'Church of Christ' to the Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). How is one to know whether those in the 'Church of Christ' category are in fact members of one of the Churches of Christ, or are from the Latter-day Saints (Mormons)?
- Moreover, why are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses (#53) assigned to the 'Other Religions' category in the official results in Table 1? Admittedly these churches have doctrinal differences with the other major Christian churches, but this is hardly reason to include them in a non-Christian category along with Bahá'í (#49), Buddhism (#50), Islam (#52), Judaism (#54) and Hinduism (#55).
- The category 'NA' (#58) meaning 'Not Applicable' refers to persons in non-private dwellings such as prisons, hotels, hospitals and persons on board ships. Their numbers were recorded but not their religious affiliation.

These comments illustrate how one must be critically discerning in using data, both official and non-official, from the PNG 2000 Census.

Interpreting Census Results Over Time

The National Statistical Office of PNG has released figures from the censuses of 1966, 1980, 1990 and 2000. Difficulties with the 2000 Census data have been noted above. Such discrepancies only increase when one tries moves to diachronic analysis of data on religion.

The 1966 and 1980 censuses asked about religion only in urban areas (Urban = <500 persons). Only samples were used for rural areas as the respective statistics reveal the great variance in church affiliation in the different provinces of PNG. These are largely due to historical factors and early comity arrangements whereby some missions co-operated in not encroaching on another's territory. Thus, the Northern Province is predominantly Anglican (60 per cent), while the majority of the population in the Morobe province are Evangelical Lutheran (70 per cent). The historical territorial factor could well bias the results of sampling in rural areas.

The NSO admits that because of differences in the nature of questions asked in the censuses and also the non-uniformity in the coverage in terms of population and geographical areas, it is not possible to carry out a valid comparative analysis at the national level for the 1966, 1980 and 1990 censuses. Only the data for 1966 and 1990 can be compared at the national level. The 1980 data for urban areas can be compared with the urban area data of the 1966 and 1990 censuses. The NSO notes that data for rural areas in 1966 were subject to sampling errors (National Statistical Office 1994:174).

Moreover, there are inconsistencies in recording names of religions and churches throughout the censuses from 1966 until the present day. The names from the four censuses are set out in Table 4 on the following page. The 1966 Census results attempt to list most of the churches known at that time. It is the only one to include ancestral beliefs. The 1980 and 1990 lists are not so exhaustive but include some new groups which were not listed in 1966. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses and Gutnius Lutheran appear in 1980 and Pentecostals and Bahá'í appear in 1990. Some churches appearing in the 1966 list, such as Papua Ekalesia and Methodist, had by 1980 become part of the United Church of Papua New Guinea.

The 1966 Census counted both 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' persons. From 1980 onwards census results give religious data for both 'citizens' and 'non-citizens.' In the 1990 and 2000 official census results, data for both citizens and non-citizens is available, though official summary tables list figures for the citizen population only.

Because of the Bougainville crisis, the people of the North Solomons Province were not included in the 1990 Census. Bougainville was estimated to be 75 per cent Catholic at the time. David Vincent has adjusted the figures to estimate a Catholic population overall of 30.2 per cent, rather than 28.3 per cent based on the official 1990 Census figures (Vincent 1993:40-41). Researchers must take into account that Bougainville was not included in the 1990 Census, since a direct comparison of results for 1990 and 2000 in which Bougainville was included could produce biased results.